



Manna Curriculum

WHEN GOD FEELS SILENT · WEEK-01

Where Are You, God?

Complete Week Guide

Includes: Week Overview, Group Session, Leader Guide, Devotions (Days 1–4)

Primary Text: Psalm 13

Manna Curriculum — Bible Study

Where Are You, God?

Big Idea: God's silence does not mean God's absence.

Primary Text: Psalm 13

Week 1 Overview

Big Question

What do we do when God feels silent?

Anchor Truth

God's silence does not mean God's absence.

Primary Group Text

Psalm 13

Scripture (BSB): Psalm 13

How Long, O LORD?

For the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

1 How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?

2 How long must I wrestle in my soul, with sorrow in my heart each day? How long will my enemy dominate me?

3 Consider me and respond, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death,

4 lest my enemy say, "I have overcome him," and my foes rejoice when I fall.

5 But I have trusted in Your loving devotion; my heart will rejoice in Your salvation.

6 I will sing to the LORD, for He has been good to me.

Formation Aim

To help believers stay near God during seasons of silence, allow Scripture to shape honest faith, and let that trust naturally overflow into love for others.

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Week 1 Group Session

Group Session

Connect (0–10 minutes)

Purpose: Normalize the experience of silence and create safety for honesty.

Choose one:

- When God feels silent, what do you usually assume?
- Is silence harder for you than receiving an answer you don't like? Why?
- How do you typically respond when prayers feel unanswered?

Leader Note: Do not correct or spiritualize responses yet. Let experience be named.

Teaching (15 minutes — FULL SCRIPT)

Where Are You, God?

There are few things more unsettling in the Christian life than praying faithfully and hearing nothing in return.

Not rejection.

Not hardship.

Not even suffering.

But silence.

Silence leaves room for doubt to grow. It creates space for assumptions. And if we're honest, silence often feels personal. We begin to wonder whether God has turned away, lost interest, or simply moved on.

Psalm 13 gives voice to that experience.

David opens the psalm with four haunting words: **“How long, O Lord?”**

He repeats them again and again. This is not a polite prayer. It is not carefully phrased. It is raw, emotional, and unfiltered.

And Scripture preserves it for us.

That alone tells us something important: God invites honest faith, not polished performance.

David does not deny his pain. He does not pretend confidence he does not feel. He brings his confusion, fear, and frustration directly into God's presence. That matters, because many believers respond to silence by pulling away.

Silence tempts us to withdraw.

David does the opposite. He stays near.

Psalm 13 shows us the difference between unbelief and lament.

Unbelief says, "God is silent, so I'm done trusting Him."

Lament says, "God feels silent, so I'm coming closer."

David feels forgotten. He feels unseen. He feels as though God has hidden His face. Yet he keeps praying. He keeps addressing God by name. He keeps bringing his heart into the relationship.

That is faith.

The psalm moves through three movements: complaint, petition, and trust. And what is striking is that trust appears **before circumstances change**.

David does not wait for answers before trusting God's character. He anchors himself in what he knows to be true—God's steadfast love.

Silence does not mean abandonment.

Silence does not mean punishment.

Silence does not mean God has left.

Throughout Scripture, faithful people experience seasons where God feels distant. Job cries out. The prophets plead. Even Jesus, on the cross, cries, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*"

Silence is not the absence of faith.

It is often the place where faith is formed.

God is more committed to shaping our trust than providing immediate clarity. And Psalm 13 teaches us that faithfulness does not require answers—it requires nearness.

This is the truth that will anchor our entire study:

God's silence does not mean God's absence.

Discussion (50–55 minutes)

Movement 1 — Instruction

What Is True About God?

Scripture (BSB): Psalm 13

How Long, O LORD?

For the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

- 1** How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?
- 2** How long must I wrestle in my soul, with sorrow in my heart each day? How long will my enemy dominate me?
- 3** Consider me and respond, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death,
- 4** lest my enemy say, “I have overcome him,” and my foes rejoice when I fall.
- 5** But I have trusted in Your loving devotion; my heart will rejoice in Your salvation.
- 6** I will sing to the LORD, for He has been good to me.

- What does this psalm reveal about God's character?
- What does it show us about how God invites His people to speak to Him?
- How does God's steadfast love frame David's prayer?

Leader Note: Keep the focus on who God is before moving inward.

Movement 2 — Conviction

What Does This Psalm Expose in Us?

- What emotions does David bring honestly before God?
- Which of those emotions resonate most with your own experience?
- What do seasons of silence tend to expose in your faith?

Leader Prompt: “Silence doesn’t create doubt—it reveals it.”

Movement 3 — Correction

How Does Scripture Reframe Our Assumptions?

- How does Psalm 13 correct the idea that silence equals abandonment?
- What assumptions about God does David refuse to accept?
- How might this psalm reshape how you interpret silence?

Movement 4 — Training

What Does Staying Near God Look Like Practically?

- How is lament different from withdrawal?
- What practices help you remain present with God when clarity is missing?
- What might faithful endurance look like in this season?

Leader Note: Let Scripture define faithfulness—not emotional resolution.

Movement 5 — Mission

How Does Staying Near God Shape the Way We Love Others?

- How does withdrawing from God affect our relationships with others?
- Who is impacted by whether we stay near God or pull away?
- How might honest faith become a quiet witness to others walking through silence?

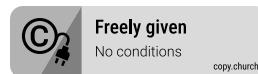
Leader Prompt: “Nearness to God shapes nearness to people.”

Commit & Send (5–10 minutes)

Shared Confession: **God’s silence does not mean God’s absence.**

Prayer of Sending: “God, teach us to stay near You and love faithfully even when answers are slow.”

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Week 1 Leader Guide

Leader Guide

Before You Lead

- Expect raw honesty
- Resist fixing or explaining away silence
- Trust Scripture to shepherd hearts

Tone to Set

- Safe
- Calm
- Honest
- Hopeful without forcing answers

Key Emphases

- God invites honest prayer
- Silence does not equal absence
- Faithfulness matters more than clarity
- Mission flows from staying near God

Leader Caution

Do not rush toward encouragement. Let lament do its work.



Day 1 — Instruction

God Welcomes Honest Faith

Read:

Scripture (BSB): Psalm 13

How Long, O LORD?

For the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

1 How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?

2 How long must I wrestle in my soul, with sorrow in my heart each day? How long will my enemy dominate me?

3 Consider me and respond, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death,

4 lest my enemy say, “I have overcome him,” and my foes rejoice when I fall.

5 But I have trusted in Your loving devotion; my heart will rejoice in Your salvation.

6 I will sing to the LORD, for He has been good to me.

Psalm 13 opens with a question many believers are afraid to ask aloud: “How long, O Lord?”

David does not begin with praise or confidence. He begins with honesty. Scripture preserves this prayer to show us something essential about faith—God invites honesty, not performance.

Silence often tempts us to clean up our prayers. We soften our words, hide our frustration, and try to sound faithful rather than be faithful. Psalm 13 confronts that impulse.

1. God Welcomes Our Real Words

David does not disguise his pain. He brings fear, confusion, and longing into God’s presence. This tells us that honest prayer is not disrespectful—it is relational.

Faith begins where honesty begins.

2. God Is Not Threatened by Our Questions

David asks “How long?” four times. God does not rebuke him. Silence is not a test we must pass—it is an invitation to deeper trust.

Questions do not push God away. Silence invites them.

3. God's Character Frames Our Lament

David's honesty does not end in despair. It is framed by trust in God's steadfast love. Lament stays near God even when answers are missing.

Reflect

- What emotions do you tend to hide from God?
- How does Psalm 13 challenge your view of prayer?

Pray

"God, help me come to You honestly."

Respond

What might change if you allowed honesty to shape your prayers today?

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Day 2 — Conviction

What Silence Brings to the Surface

Read:

Scripture (BSB): Psalm 13:1-2

- 1 How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?
- 2 How long must I wrestle in my soul, with sorrow in my heart each day? How long will my enemy dominate me?

Silence has a way of surfacing fears we didn't know were there. When God feels quiet, our hearts begin to fill in the gaps. Psalm 13 shows us what often rises first—fear of being forgotten.

1. Silence Exposes Fear of Abandonment

David fears God has turned away. Silence tempts us to believe we are alone.

2. Silence Exposes Our Need for Control

We want clarity, timelines, and reassurance. Silence reveals how deeply we crave certainty.

3. Silence Exposes What We Believe About God

Conviction helps us see where our beliefs drift from truth. God reveals these fears so He can reshape them.

Reflect

- What fears surface when God feels silent?
- What do those fears reveal about your trust?

Pray

“God, show me what silence is revealing in my heart.”

Respond

What fear might God be inviting you to name honestly?

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Day 3 — Correction

Letting Scripture Reshape Our Thinking

Read:

Scripture (BSB): Psalm 13:3-4

3 Consider me and respond, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death,
 4 lest my enemy say, “I have overcome him,” and my foes rejoice when I fall.

David does not stay stuck in fear. He brings his despair into God's presence and asks for renewed perspective. Correction happens when we allow Scripture to confront the lies silence whispers.

1. God Is Still Engaged

David asks God to “look” and “answer.” Correction reminds us that God is not distant.

2. God Values Our Trust

David's plea is rooted in relationship, not demand.

3. God Invites Us to Speak Faithfully

Correction reshapes how we speak to God during silence.

Reflect

- How does this prayer correct how you interpret silence?
- What truth do you need to believe more deeply?

Pray

“God, correct my thinking with Your truth.”

Respond

How might corrected thinking change how you pray today?



Day 4 — Mission

Loving Others from a Place of Honest Faith

Read:

Scripture (BSB): 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

Staying near God during silence changes us. It softens us. It deepens compassion. It equips us to love others not with answers, but with presence.

1. Silence Forms Compassion

Those who have waited with God learn to sit with others in pain.

2. Silence Forms Patience

Endurance becomes a gift we pass on.

3. Silence Forms Witness

Honest faith becomes visible love.

Reflect

- How has God used silence to shape your compassion?
- Who might be encouraged by your honesty?

Pray

“God, let what You form in me shape how I love others.”

Respond

Where might God be inviting you to be present rather than provide answers?

