

Help When I Feel Flat

Proverbs 4:23 - “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

God is interested in our hearts. He’s the Great Physician who can diagnose and heal the complexity of our emotions.

The mantra of the age is “Follow your heart!”. But we’re better following Jesus as King of our heart. Our emotions are not a runaway train, we must protect and nourish our hearts.

Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”

Jesus can.

Many people are feeling “flat” these days! How can Jesus help us? His word gives us some causes and cures for this pandemic of flatness we’re feeling.

(Note - if you feel “flat” for prolonged periods, you would be advised to go to the GP, as you may be experiencing depression. God gives us doctors to help with this!)

Psalms 42:5

Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,

for I will yet praise him,

my Saviour and my God.

It starts with us asking ourselves a question: Why am I like this?

“Flatness” isn’t always bad. We’ve grown up on adrenaline thrills that have taught us flatness is a problem, but “normal” life contains sequences of highs, lows and in-betweens.

Ecclesiastes 3: 4

there’s a time to weep and a time to laugh,

a time to mourn and a time to dance,

Psalms 139:16

All our days ordained for us in his book

He knows the sorrowful days and the laughing days. And the in-between days

But what might be the cause of our feeling of flatness? Causes can be many (and not of all the suggestions below should apply at the same time!)

1. Overwork/ Exhaustion

Some have found themselves working too hard, leading to “burnout” and exhaustion. We can function at work, but then crash emotionally in other areas. The weight of others expectation of us (and of ourselves can be crushing)

The answer? See that God is the one who makes our work productive and find rest in him.

Psalm 127:1-2 Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. **It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.**

Jesus said in **Matthew 11:28-29** “**Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**”

Rest is a gift from Jesus in the midst of exhausting busyness - not the reward for completing your tasks.

2. Underwork/Laziness, leading to apathy

Some of us are feeling flat because periods of inactivity make us sluggish.

Proverbs 26:15

A sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth.

Burnout has its roots in Exhaustion. Apathy has its roots in Laziness.

Jesus knew how to REST well (in a storm!). But he also said “**My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work**” **John 4:34**

Rebuild disciplines. If nobody is willing to pay you, then volunteer and create work patterns.

Hebrews 6:10-12

We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

3. Health issues

Perhaps it's continuous low-level physical pain, hormone changes, poor diet, or sleep deficiency that is leave you feeling flat.

- i. Let God speak into your flatness.

1 Corinthians 12:7 I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

- ii. Keep reaching out to Jesus – like the woman with a long-term health issue.
Luke 8:43 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.
- iii. Normal stuff.
Don't forget pay attention to your diet, exercise, sleep. These even mattered for Paul!
Acts 9:18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

4. Walking away from God

We feel flat when we deliberately ignore God's commands or his promptings:

Psalm 32:4

For day and night

your hand was heavy on me;

my strength was sapped

as in the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you

and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said, "I will confess

my transgressions to the LORD."

And you forgave

the guilt of my sin.

5. Avoiding difficult things and conversations

Example: The Parable of the talents. Fear of the uncertainty of the outcome meant one of the servants didn't achieve what others did.

Matthew 25:25

So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

6. Over-exposure to news stories that accentuate fear of death, illness or separation

When things feel out of control, we lose hope.

Proverbs 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

Proverbs 25:28 Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.

We must control what we allow into our heads. We were made to live in a “village” where we can make a difference.

7. Change that happens at a speed beyond your comfort zone. Or not fast enough!

Some of us love change. Some of us hate change. The only constant in life is change. We ourselves are changing all the time (2 Cor. 3) But God is the constant within the change.

Psalm 42 concludes **“Put your Hope in God”**

Isaiah 40:28-31 gives us the medicine we need to take to do that:

Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

**The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.**

**He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom.**

**He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.**

**Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
but those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.**

**They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.**

Questions

- 1. Guard your heart v Follow your heart.** Are you prone to being overled by your emotions or not listening to them at all? What do you think “Guarding your heart” means for either of those tendencies?
- 2. All my days.** How do “flat days” help navigate the joy of “rejoicing days” and sorrow of “weeping days”?
- 3. How would you rate “flatness” as an issue for you right now?**
- 4. Which of the 7 areas do you think may be a contributory factor? What actions could you take?**
- 5. Be filled.** Flat tyres need fixed and filled. Pray to be filled with the love, joy, peace, power and grace of God afresh.