

CLOSER

IN FAITH

Closer faith means:

- Leaning in
If God gets "quiet", we need to lean in closer
- Believing the unbelievable (Heb 11:6 – God rewards those who diligently seek Him)
- Engaging our faith – believing that things can change

Psalm 77:1-14 (GNT)

Verse 2: In times of trouble I pray to the Lord; all night long I lift my hands in prayer, but I cannot find comfort.	When things are not going well, we can feel abandoned by God
Verse 9: Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has anger taken the place of his compassion?"	We may feel we did something to anger God, and now we are "paying for it"
Verse 11: I will remember your great deeds, Lord; I will recall the wonders you did in the past. Verse 14a: You are the God who works miracles;	Remember that God came through in the past, even when we did not deserve it

Some definitions:

- **Impossible:** something not able to exist, not able to be done
- **Miracle:** makes the impossible possible
- **Faith:** complete trust, confidence in someone or something
Faith is the fuel of the kingdom of God, the catalyst that connects the miracle to the impossible

Real faith: leaning into Jesus to do the impossible, moving closer to God in a difficult situation. God responds to faith, not self-pity.

Two struggles (ditches) on the road of faith:

1. Hyper faith (irresponsible faith)

- We do nothing, expect God to do everything
- Scriptural examples of Jesus asking people to do something:
 - John 5:8* "Take up your bed and walk"
 - Luke 17:12-16* Jesus says to the lepers: "Show yourself to the priest"; they were healed as they went
 - John 9:6-7* "Go and wash ..."; *John 21:6* "Cast net on the other side", *Matt 17:27* "Cast your line . . ."
- Jesus asks us to do the easy part; He does the hard part. *God often won't do anything without us doing something.*
- Faith is a partnership

2. Un-engaged faith (over-responsibility)

- "You do not have because you do not ask God" (James 4:2)
- Feel we are responsible for everything, our attitude is "I can fix it, it's all on me"
- Too aware of our own failings, or feel like we don't deserve anything
- Afraid to be spiritual, to do something we have never done before
- Need to realize it's not as hard as we think it is

God can't get any closer to us than He already is, but we can get closer to Him

Consider and Discuss:

- Can you identify with Asaph in Psalm 77? Have you experienced feelings of abandonment or anger towards God?
- What do you do when God is quiet, and seems distant? What can or do you do to lean into God?
- Which "ditch" on the road of faith do you tend to end up in? Hyper faith, or over responsibility?
- Share a time in your life where God asked you to step out and "do something" in order to overcome a difficult situation or challenge in your life.