

## 4 Truths to Believe When God Seems Far Away

Rachel Britton | Author

2021 23 May



Photo credit: Unsplash/Ben White

The Bible tells us God's presence is everywhere and He is with us, yet we can still struggle to understand He is near us at all times. Sometimes it feels like God is far away – that He is no closer than a distant planet.

God's holiness and majesty can make us think He is not within reach. We read words like "he builds his lofty palace in the heavens" (Amos 9:6a) and, like with royalty today, we can think that only special people, those who are better Christians than ourselves, get to be intimate with God. Yet, the Bible reassures us God is close at hand and with us always, even as ordinary and imperfect beings. Throughout Scripture we see God is the One who draws close to us.

Here are four important truths we should believe and remember about God's presence when we feel forgotten or forsaken.



Photo credit: Unsplash/Greg Rakozy

## 1. God Draws Close to the People He Created

Right from the beginning of time God communed with the people he had created. [Genesis 3:8](#) says God walked in the [Garden of Eden](#) in the cool of the day, and this suggests God came to be with [Adam and Eve](#). How delightful it must have been for them to stroll with and talk freely with their Creator in the beauty of the Garden. Yet, on this occasion, God did not find Adam and Eve there to meet Him.

Instead of greeting their Maker, Adam and Eve hid when they heard the sound of the Lord God. “Where are you?” God called out to them. I sense God’s kindness and graciousness in this question. He already knew the sin they had committed. Here was their opportunity to come forward and confess. However, sin led them to fear God and feel shame before Him. And it resulted in separation from God, too. Banished from the Garden, Adam and Eve could no longer have unrestricted access to God.

Adam’s sin has affected our relationship to God, too. [Romans 5:19](#) says “through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners.” All of us are sinners and this leads to separation from God.

How often do we hide from God when we know we have done wrong, instead of coming out in the open? Our wrongdoing may make us fearful of God and even ashamed, but this should not stop us approaching God, admitting our guilt and asking for forgiveness. [Proverbs 28:13](#) warns and reassures us at the same time: “Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

I find so much hope in these words because even though our sin is detestable to God, He is always gracious towards us when we own up to it.



Photo credit: [©SparrowStock](#)

## 2. God Draws Close to Sinful People

The continuing story in the Old Testament shows God chose, and still chooses, to make His dwelling with sinful people. Yet, we also see that sinfulness entailed separation from God and required the Israelites to keep special stipulations for cleanliness and holiness.

In [Exodus 19](#), the people of Israel had to follow specific instructions; to consecrate themselves and wash their clothes before coming into God's presence. They were restricted from coming too close to God. When God descended in a cloud on Mount Sinai, only Moses could ascend the mountain and communicate with Him.

Then, when God's presence resided in the Tabernacle and Temple, only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place and only with a sin offering. God also required the people of Israel to be obedient and keep His commands, for then He would, as with [Adam and Eve](#), "walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people" ([Leviticus 26:12](#)).

Sadly, even from the beginning of the Israelites' [covenant](#) relationship with God and their agreement to obey everything the Lord asked of them, the Israelites, like Adam, quickly became disobedient ([Exodus 32](#)). Throughout the stories of the kings of Israel and Judah, and in announcements by the prophets, we know how much and often God's people rebelled against Him. Eventually, God's presence departed from the Temple ([Ezekiel 10:18](#)).

Yet, throughout the Old Testament we see glimpses of hope — God had not given up on being close to His people. God will take care of the chasm created by sin that we, as sinful people, are unable to overcome. God will reside with people again because a promise has been made: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" ([Ezekiel 36:26](#)).

God will keep company with sinful people again through the arrival of His Son.



Photo credit: ©Getty Images/AntonioGuillem

### 3. God Draws Close to Us through His Son

“Just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners” so the second half of [Romans 5:19](#) explains “also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”

Is it no wonder the gospels talk so much about the good news, and Jesus proclaimed at the beginning of His ministry that: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news... to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” ([Luke 4:18-19](#)).

How comforting to know we live in the time of God’s favor. That Jesus’ obedience unto death and His sacrifice is sufficient to allow us to “have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus” ([Hebrews 10:19](#)).

What delight to know “God with us” ([Matthew 1:23](#)).

What joy for us that God has not only taken care of the separation caused by sin but that, as ordinary sinful human beings, we can come to God’s throne with confidence ([Hebrews 4:16](#)). We are royal heirs. Nothing separates us from God when we have [faith](#) in Jesus Christ. Even when we lose our way or get tripped up by sin, we can come to God through Jesus and receive forgiveness.

When we are alienated from God, Scripture points to a relationship that can be made right because Jesus made it possible. God the Father, through his Son Jesus, has done everything to be inseparable from us. Jesus has stepped into the gap so we can come close to God.

I pray today you know the glorious hope you have through Christ, the joy of living eternally in God’s presence, and the comfort of God’s [Holy Spirit](#) living within you.



Photo credit: ©Getty Images/shuang paul wang

#### **4. God Draws Close to Us through His Spirit**

One more marvelous truth about God's presence with us is that our bodies house the [Holy Spirit](#). God no longer resides in a man-made tabernacle or temple but has come to live within His people. "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" ([1 Corinthians 6:19](#)).

With these truths from [Scripture](#), we should not feel God is distant from us. But, if there is any doubt, then we can take these words of the Psalmist and make them our prayer: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me" ([Psalm 51:1](#), 10-11). Amen

### **Related articles**

[5 Ways to Reconnect with God When You Feel Distant](#)

[Why You Should Be Encouraged That 'the Steadfast Love of the Lord Never Ceases'](#)

[How Is God the Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever?](#)