



# Westwood Baptist Church

Grounded. Growing. Going.

Worship Guide for April 26, 2020

## Sermon Notes

### Why So Downcast O My Soul? Hope in God!

Psalm 42 -43

The Bible says we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Our brains are amazing in what they can do and how they do it. The brain helps us learn by remembering something in the past and automatically applying it to a present situation. Faced with new situations, our brains will apply rules based on prior events to match the current context. And there's a part of the brain that is especially wired to do this. Called the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC) — it is the brain's "pattern seeker". This brain region works hard to find old rules that can be applied to the here and now to circumvent the chore of new learning. (In case you're wondering, I didn't learn this in my electro-physiology class — because I never took that class — nor ventured near the building! I found it at <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/rewire-brain-get-out-of-rut-2018030913253>)

That our brain can be a "pattern seeker" is both helpful and harmful. The same brain function that can help raise us up to learn new truths or develop new skills can also help us stay down in the dumps. Discouragement and despair get to be a rut we find it hard to climb out of. "As people feel discouraged, they slip into a habit of negative thoughts—getting into a 'rut' that is literally descriptive of brain function. Any time that you repeatedly think the same thought, your brain recognizes that as significant and tries to help you out. It begins making it easier to think that negative thought by providing more blood supply and white matter to speed up processing. Thus, depressed mood and thinking increases in a vicious circle, and finding a pathway out of it gets harder and harder."

Psalm 42 and 43 helps us see how we can face and handle deep discouragement. If we are honest with ourselves, we will acknowledge that discouragement is a reality we all face and deal with (or don't) from time to time. In some cases, repeatedly and for long periods of time. "Why are you downcast, O my soul" is a question all of us have asked at one time or another.

The Psalmist does not leave us in the rut of discouragement and despair. His answer is, "don't just listen to yourself, talk to yourself!" Better yet, *preach to your soul!* Take yourself in hand, look yourself in the eyes, and preach this message: "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God" (Ps. 42:5,11, 43:5).

The Condition of Discouragement and Despair

The Causes of Discouragement and Despair

The Cure for Discouragement and Despair

# Weekly Discipleship Guide

## Sunday

*In your journal, reflect on today's sermon by answering the following:*

I never knew:

I was challenged:

I was reminded:

I was convicted:

A question I still have:

A truth I could share:

**Know**

## Monday

*Spend some time today doing the following:*

Read the sermon passage again.

Select a portion of this week's sermon passage to memorize this week.

Write your selected portion and read it to yourself at least 10 times throughout the day.

**Know > Be**

## Tuesday

*In your journal, spend some time writing about the following:*

Read the sermon passage again.

Write a prayer of response, guided by the passage.

(May include adoration, confession/repentance, thanksgiving, petition, etc...)

Write your selected portion of the Scripture several times to aid in memorization.

**Be**

## Wednesday

*Think about this week's questions for group discussion:*

How have you been prone to discouragement through this present situation? It is good to be open and honest in answering this question.

Have you made a habit of preaching to yourself? What does that look like? What is the result of doing so?

The beginning of Psalm 42 speaks of longing. What has this present situation taught you about the longings of your own heart? Are they rightly aimed? How might God be using this time to recalibrate, or re-aim, your heart?

**Be > Do**

## Thursday

*In your journal, spend some time considering the following:*

What insights have you had while internalizing this week's passage?

How specifically will you seek to apply its truths in your home/workplace/life in general?

**Do**

\*Use this guide to help you internalize this week's passage & message.

### Westwood Staff

**Gerald Hodges:** Lead Pastor

**Jonathan Taylor:** Associate Pastor

**Jim Fulp:** Counseling Pastor

**Jason Engle:** Pastor of Students  
& Discipleship

**Katie Austin:** Children's Ministry  
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### Contact Us

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### Church Office Hours

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8:00am - 1:00pm

*Other times by appointment.*

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