

QUESTION: "I feel like I don't have a relationship with God anymore. I know no child of God lies awake at night because he can't sleep, and prays, and it feels like God is not listening to him, and it feels like demons are tormenting him no matter what I do. It's not fair! Why did He call me or show me, and then leave me? I thought He loved me so much, but like Esau, He hates me! I feel like Saul in the Old Testament. This depression really hurts, and I feel dead inside now. I just don't understand why He would leave me at 26 years old. All these people say God will always forgive, but I say different!"

ANSWER: Wow! There are a lot of facets to your situation and question here, so let's take them one at a time:

1. "I FEEL like I don't have a relationship with God anymore."

When you say "I FEEL like" this or that, you are saying that you are basing something on your emotions, your feelings. The Bible tells us that we are spirit, soul and body (I Thess. 5:23). **The SOUL is made up of your MIND, WILL and EMOTIONS.** The "natural man" is governed ONLY by his soul and bodily appetites, because he is spiritually dead (I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-5), but **the born-again Christian is to be governed and controlled by the Holy Spirit and our own born-again spirit**, which is created in the image of God (the "new man", see Eph. 4:17-24), NOT by our SOUL. **Our soul, which includes our EMOTIONS, is UNRELIABLE, and we must not trust it.** We MUST renew our minds with the word of God (Romans 12:1-2; Eph. 4:23) and we are RESPONSIBLE (using our FREE WILL) to be careful of what we put before our eyes and allow to enter our minds, because that will AFFECT our EMOTIONS (see Phil. 4:6-9). If you find that your MIND (thoughts) or EMOTIONS are **out of line with what God says**, you MUST NOT allow your SOUL to be the final authority. God's word must be the FINAL AUTHORITY, and **we are told to "take EVERY THOUGHT captive to the OBEDIENCE of Christ"** (II Cor. 10:3-5), which means you must deal with your thought-life and emotions, rather than ALLOWING them to rule and control you. The "flesh" or "old man" is the REALM of our FIVE PHYSICAL SENSES. We are commanded to "walk by FAITH and not by SIGHT" (II Cor. 5:7) and to not be "CARNALLY MINDED" (Romans 8:5-7). "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, and the evidence of **things NOT seen**" (Heb. 11:1), so FAITH is the opposite of living your life by your five physical senses and emotions.

All of this is YOUR OWN CHOICE to obey what God says in His word, or not. If you obey God and take every thought captive and "guard yourself", the wicked one (Satan) cannot touch you (see I John 5:18). It is when you FAIL to OBEY, and **you entertain or harbor those negative thoughts that are contrary to God's word** ("every high thing that exalts itself AGAINST God"), that Satan is allowed an entrance into your life (see Eph. 4:26-27). If this sin is not confessed and corrected, and if you CONTINUALLY entertain wrong thoughts, you give Satan "ground" and ALLOW him to build strongholds in our life. "Ground" means a sphere of jurisdiction that **we VOLUNTARILY give to the enemy**. Many people are MENTALLY LAZY and PASSIVE, and they ALLOW these wrong thoughts to control them, and ALLOW Satan to build stronghold after stronghold in their lives. They are saved, but they are miserable by their own CHOICE. They ask for OTHER PEOPLE to PRAY FOR THEM, but they remain in the same condition, because God has told THEM to do something about it, and they REFUSE to do it.

2. "I know no child of God lies awake at night because he can't sleep, and prays, and it feels like God is not listening to him, and it feels like demons are tormenting him no matter what I do."

You say that no child of God could be lying awake feeling as if demons were tormenting him, but of course they can! We know of many cases, in the Bible and among people we know personally, where a true child of God can be suffering from demonic oppression. The reasons for the demonic oppression could be a lot of things, but as soon as you start saying you don't believe what God has written in His word, and you go by your FEELINGS instead, you are in trouble, and you invite the devil and his demons to come and mock you and torment you. God has given YOU the authority to "tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:19), and YOU are the one who needs to stand up against those demonic forces and command them in the name of Jesus to leave you alone. You said it feels like God is not listening to you or answering your prayers, but He has told YOU what to do, and He's not going to do it for you! God has given YOU the right to use the mighty name of Jesus and command those demons to leave you alone! Just because they are tormenting you does not mean you are not a child of God. It just means you have been deceived and are believing the devil's lies instead of believing God's word. No, it may not be easy right away, but you must learn to STAND in the authority that God has given YOU, and the demons will have to leave you. They may come back and keep tormenting you for a while, because you have been such an "easy mark" and they want to keep you from being all that God wants you to be. If you keep standing firm in the word of God, instead of going by your feelings and emotions, they will have to leave you alone. "This is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith" (I John 5:4). Praise God!

- **I John 3:19-21** "And by this we KNOW that we are of the TRUTH, and **shall ASSURE our hearts before Him**. For **if our heart CONDEMNS us**, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God."

This word for "condemn" means "to find fault with", to blame. This is NOT talking about eternal condemnation, but about examining ourselves and CONFESSING our SINS to God. **See I John 1:9**. When we have confessed all of our sins to God, **we have CONFIDENCE** when we come before Him with our prayers. If you have examined your own HEART, to see if there is any SIN you need to CONFESS to the Lord, and you still feel condemnation even after confessing to God and repenting (turning away from that sin), then **Satan, not God, is the source of that condemnation or accusation**. Rev. 12:9 says that "Satan DECEIVES the whole world" - he will try to DECEIVE YOU, to make you think the condemnation is coming from God, when it is not! Some of you have been taught, quite wrongly, that God is just WAITING to catch you in some sin so He can smack you! No way! God loves you so much, that He (1) sent Jesus to pay for your sins, (2) He imputes Christ's righteousness to you, and (3) He has placed Jesus as your "advocate" or defense attorney against Satan (I John 2:1). If Satan accuses you before God, **Jesus INTERCEDES** and steps forward and says, "**That's already PAID for - it's covered by My BLOOD!**" (Romans 8:33-34). If Satan makes the accusations to you, **in your own thoughts**, that's where "taking your thoughts captive" comes into operation. You must recognize those thoughts as being AGAINST God's truth, and counteract with the word of God. James 4:7 says "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee (run away) from you." **RESIST Satan by quoting scripture** (God's word) OUT LOUD to him, and then BELIEVE GOD'S WORD, instead of Satan's accusations. Two things happen when you speak God's word out loud: first, it is a weapon against the enemy, and second, it allows YOU to HEAR the word as well, and gets that word down into your spirit.

3. "It's not fair! Why did He call me or show me, and then leave me? I thought He loved me so much, but like Esau, He hates me! I feel like Saul in the Old Testament."

You said, "It's not fair - why did God leave me?" If you know God's word at all, you should know that **God has promised NEVER to leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5)**. He has promised to give us ETERNAL life, not "temporary" life until you get in a funk and a pity party and keep saying that you don't FEEL like God loves you anymore. You said that God hates you like He hated Esau, and that you feel like King Saul. Well, God's word says He hated Esau because Esau despised his birthright (he didn't care about God's plan for him). That would be the same as you despising your salvation which was bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. We don't think that's the case with you, because you said, "I would do anything to have a chance to do it all over and start new. I thought He loved me so much!" Dear Brother, He does love you so much! Doesn't His word say, "For God so LOVED the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not PERISH but have EVERLASTING LIFE. For God did NOT send His Son into the world to CONDEMN the world, but that the world through Him might be SAVED"? Yes, that is what God's word says, and you should not call Him a liar! You need to repeat to yourself over and over again, and say it out loud, so the demons can hear it too: "For God so LOVED me that He gave His only begotten Son, that if I believe in Him, I will not PERISH, but will have EVERLASTING LIFE. For God did NOT send His Son into the world to CONDEMN me, but that I through Him would be SAVED."

I have RECEIVED Jesus, so to me He gave the power to become a child of God, even if I just believe on His name. I am one of those that the Father has given to Jesus, I have come to Jesus, and Jesus said, "Whoever comes to Me I will by no means cast out." Jesus will not cast me out or leave me, because Jesus said, "I Myself have said, I will NEVER leave you nor forsake you.' These things have been written unto me, who believes on the name of the Son of God; that I may KNOW that I have eternal life, and that I may continue to believe on and trust in the name of the Son of God. And I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate me from the LOVE of GOD which is in Christ Jesus my Lord. NOTHING can separate me from the LOVE of GOD which is in Christ Jesus my Lord! I am confident of this very thing, that God, who has begun a good work in me when I first got saved, will complete it until the day that I go to be with Jesus Christ.

- **Hebrews 13:5** "For He Himself has said, I will NEVER leave you nor forsake you."
- **John 1:12** "But as many as RECEIVED Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."
- **John 6:37** "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and him that comes to Me I will by no means cast out."
- **I John 5:13** "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may KNOW that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God."
- **Philippians 1:6** "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."
- **Romans 8:38-39** "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the LOVE of GOD which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Definition: "SEPARATE us from the LOVE of GOD" - Our position is "in Christ, seated with Him in heavenly places" - God placed us there, and **we did NOT do anything to earn** that position. God CALLED us, CHOSE us, and PREDESTINED us **APART from any goodness or works of our own**, so He is able also to KEEP US FROM FALLING, He is able to PRESERVE US and

prevent ANY PERSON OR THING from separating us from Himself. **It is NOT WE OURSELVES WHO HOLD ONTO GOD**, but **GOD who HOLDS ONTO US. NOTHING can separate us from God** and His love if we are His child through faith in Jesus Christ. God has made a **PROMISE that He will complete His work in our lives.**

- **Ephesians 2:4-7** "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great LOVE with which He LOVED us, even when we were dead in sins, has made us alive together with Christ (by grace are you saved), and has raised us up together, and has made us to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus."
- **I Thessalonians 5:23** "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you (MAKE YOU HOLY) completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, back to the rest of that sentence, "**I feel like Saul in the Old Testament.**" You shouldn't compare yourself to King Saul, either. When Saul disobeyed God, God took away an earthly kingdom from him and gave it to David. This has nothing to do with losing your salvation or going to heaven, but was concerning whether Saul and his descendants would be on the earthly throne of Israel. King David also sinned in his life, too, so what was the difference between the two men? Read Psalm 51 - that's the prayer of David after God revealed his sin to him, and David repented. David had tried to cover up his sin, but ultimately realized that God knows all about it anyway, just as with our sins. The Bible calls David "a man after God's own heart", even though he sinned and made mistakes in his life. David did some horrible things (adultery and murder), just as you said you had done. Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for ALL of our sins, David's sins, your sins, my sins, past, present and future. David looked ahead and believed God was going to send the Messiah to be the sacrifice for his sins, and we look back to the cross where Jesus already paid for our sins and bought us forgiveness and eternal life with God in heaven. Whether it is you, me or David, we all need to accept by FAITH the fact that Jesus took our place and was punished for our sins, and His precious blood cleanses us from all sin (I John 1:7-9).

4. "This depression really hurts, and I feel dead inside now. I just don't understand why He would leave me at 26 years old. All these people say God will always forgive , but I say different!"

We're sorry to hear about the depression, and maybe that is a medical issue you should have checked out. Whether it is a physical case of depression (because of a chemical imbalance in your brain, for instance), or just the product of negative thinking, you've allowed your thoughts to lead you away from God's truth. You have been listening to the devil's lies, and letting Satan mess with your mind. Stop it! God has given you everything you need for life and godliness (II Peter 1:1-4), He has given you the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18), He has given you authority over Satan and his kingdom (Luke 10:19), and so much more, but YOU must avail yourself of it all. YOU must put on the armor, YOU must confess your sins and ACCEPT God's forgiveness and cleansing from ALL sin (I John 1:9), and YOU must submit yourself to God, resist the devil, and EXPECT the devil to flee from you (also, stop being double-minded - James 4:7-8).

God has so much planned for you, and He loves you so much, but the devil wants to keep you sidetracked by your doubt and unbelief! No matter HOW you FEEL, the truth of God's word is that **you do NOT lose your salvation** once you are born again into God's family. Since you were NOT saved by your GOOD behavior in the first place, you do not LOSE your salvation by your BAD behavior. You didn't EARN it, you only had to

RECEIVE it - it is a totally free gift! **GRACE** means unmerited or UNEARNED favor - **being accepted and loved by God** when we have done NOTHING and CAN DO NOTHING to EARN or DESERVE it. Because **it is ALL God's work**, and not our own, NO ONE can "boast" of how their good behavior got them saved in the first place. The only "unforgiveable sin" is to NOT believe in Jesus and accept Him as your Savior - **every other sin** you could possibly think of was PAID for on the cross!

- **Titus 3:4-6** "But when the KINDNESS and the LOVE of GOD our Savior toward man appeared, **NOT by works** of righteousness which we have done, but **according to His MERCY He SAVED us**, by the washing of regeneration (being born again) and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us **ABUNDANTLY through Jesus Christ our Savior.**"
- **Ephesians 2:8-9** "For **by GRACE** you have been saved **through FAITH**, and that not of yourselves, it is **the GIFT of God; NOT of WORKS**, lest anyone should boast."

IN SUMMARY - The bottom line is that you must stop looking for confirmation of God's love or God's presence with you by fleshly and emotional "signs" or by your feelings. Many people, because of the kind of church they were raised in, or just because of their personality, want a "touchy-feely" kind of Christianity. They think if you stomp and shout or have a tingly feeling, that is a sign of spirituality. But those things are of the flesh and soul (emotions), not necessarily of the Holy Spirit or of your born-again spirit man. These people are always looking for an "emotional high" to judge whether they have had a true worship experience with God. If you are basing or judging spirituality by fleshly or soulish (emotional) experiences, you will get in trouble, and it will eventually lead to demonic deception. You see, Satan is more than willing to give gullible people a few "bells and whistles" or emotional jolts to keep them happy. That is why in I John 4:1 we are told to "Test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world". However, people who rely on their emotions and feelings for "proof" of spirituality are **NOT usually taking the time to "test the spirits" to see if what they are FEELING is really from God!** Does this mean we're saying you will never feel good after worshipping God, or that it is wrong to want to have a deep experience with the Holy Spirit? No, of course not! But you must not base your Christian faith on your emotions, or on experiences of any kind. **You need to BASE your FAITH on the written word of God, who promises that He will never leave you or fail you, and that His word holds true through every problem and storm of life.** The Apostle Peter, in II Peter 1:19-21, after describing the vision of seeing Christ in His transfiguration and hearing the voice of God from heaven, says that **"We have a MORE SURE word of prophecy"**! You might ask, "What could be more sure than seeing a vision of Jesus in all His glory, and hearing the voice of God the Father coming down from heaven?" Well, **Peter goes on to say that what is "more sure" than visions and voices is the written word of God, the Scriptures!** God has given us His WRITTEN WORD ("Scripture" means the WRITTEN word of God), which was originally given to holy men of God by the Holy Spirit. We must judge and test all so-called prophecies, visions, voices and emotional experiences against the written truth of God's holy word! Anything else will open us up to false teaching, false prophets, demonic deception and spiritual "shipwreck" and heartbreak. No, not losing your salvation, as that can't happen, but being sidetracked and made ineffective for any real service to God.

- **II Peter 1:19-21** "We have also **a more sure word of prophecy**; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place..... knowing this first, that no **PROPHECY of SCRIPTURE** is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."