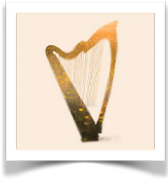


Study Guide for *Dangerous Songs: The Psalms and a Gloriously Disrupted Life*



Sadness

Chapter 4

Pages 71-90

First Words of Sadness

- Describe your relationship to melancholy, sadness, or depression. Maybe these experiences are part of daily life, maybe they are completely foreign to you.

Sing the Blues, Church!

- Listen to **Desert Blues** (Psalm 63). What does it mean to you that faithful suffering is explicit in the Bible?

In the Shadow of Pain

- When is a time you were disappointed with God? Sometimes such moments are when one's theology changes. How has your understanding of God changed?
- Listen to **Hear My Cry, O God** (Psalm 61). Which of the three lines is close to your heart today?
- It takes deep faith to pray a lament. What artists of music, film, theatre, poetry, or storytelling help you name and process life?

Car Crashes, Cancer, and Other Crises

- Listen to **Heal This Misery** (Psalm 6). It's natural to cope with crises in any number of ways. Is there any troublesome part of your life that is hard to tell the truth about— to others or to yourself?

After Another Shooting

- Listen to **Justice is On its Way** (Psalm 94). If you're part of a faith community, what have you sung or spoken together after tragedies?
- Listen to **I Love the Keeper of Life** (Psalm 116). It's not easy to live with the paradox of a world in crisis that is also in God's care.

The Depths of Depression

- Depression can be a delicate topic to explore. If you feel supported and safe, proceed gently. If not, come back to this section a different time.
- Listen to this song of longing and confusion: **Oh My Soul** (Psalms 42-43). Perhaps you have known pain like the psalm writers describe. If the Psalms were songs that Jesus and his first students prayed, may they be a comfort and courage to you today across the millennia.

Searching For Reasons

- The author suggests the Psalms are counter to a culture of denial, affirming truth-telling and the possibility of healing. Name places and people in your world in need of truth and healing.

Loneliness and Trauma

- Listen to **Lonely Bird Blues** (Psalm 102). How would it feel for your church to pray with such raw honesty about troubles?

Deconstruction Despondence

- Your sense of faith has probably evolved over your lifetime, and will probably continue to. Tell a personal story about a time your ideas about God changed. If you're with a group, affirm one another.
- Listen to **Let Us Go** (Psalm 39), a song of deep disappointment with God. Reflect.

Breaking Up With God

- Like a relationship with a person, there are ups and downs as you grow and change; Israel and *Adonai* certainly were passionate this way. Describe the texture and terms of your faith these days. Consider creating a kind of faith autobiography to narrate your spiritual journey.

When We're Overwhelmed

- From page 89: *"Lament psalms model for us an open-hearted, fearless faith. Transparency is such a relief. So much better than pretending we're OK or keeping secrets."* Discuss.
- From the bottom of page 89: *"The psalms show us that a rich life includes, and even requires, the presence of sorrow and grief."* To what extent does this ring true for you?