

Under the Circumstances

HOLDING ON TO GOD
WHEN IT APPEARS GOD IS
NO LONGER HOLDING ON TO YOU

Under the Circumstances - Part 1

Our circumstances are volatile— things change rapidly in this chaotic world, which may leave us wondering whether our ideas about God, the world, and our place in it are misplaced. In responding to the death of his friend Lazarus, Jesus reminds us that circumstances are not necessarily a good gauge for who God is, or how He feels about us. This week, we are talking about the fraught process of holding onto God, when it appears that God is no longer holding onto us.

Getting Started

1. Do you have an all-time favorite halloween costume? Candy?
2. If you had to describe your current season of life using weather terms, how would you do it?

What About You?

3. Have you ever wrestled with your faith as a result of circumstances? When? What had happened? How did it all resolve (or not)?
4. Do you think that doubt, grief, or anger at God disqualifies a person from participating in faith? From following Jesus?
5. Do you find it easy or difficult to believe that God weeps with you? What gets in the way of this realization?

Look It Up

John 11:8–45

6. Have you ever paid close attention to the complicated emotions on display in verse 35, when Jesus breaks down in grief? What all is happening in this situation?
 7. How does Jesus meet Martha's anger and grief? What does it imply about how God views ours?
 8. Why do you think Jesus makes the extraordinarily strange statement that he's glad he wasn't present for Lazarus's death? How do you interpret his words?
 9. What does this entire episode in the ministry of Jesus tell us about the character of
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God? How He relates to humanity?

Putting It All Together

10. Are you ever tempted to think of God as petty or vindictive? Has it stifled your ability to be honest about your thoughts and feelings with your Creator?
11. Are you disappointed or angry with God about anything right now? Have you expressed these feelings in prayer?
12. Do you have any areas in your life right now where it seems like the purposes of God are completely beyond your ability to understand them?
13. Where and how are you currently struggling to believe? How can your small group be there for you in this time?