

Lord, Please Raise Me Up When I Am Down



By Jan Brunette

Open with prayer, asking for the Holy Spirit's revelation of God's Word.

As a young adult, I once heard the quote, "If life is just a bowl of cherries, why am I always in the pits?" Eventually I learned that while most people are not always in the pits, there are circumstances that challenge the very fiber of our faith.

So where do we go when life gets tough and the world appears to be caving in? The gamut of emotions flooding our souls often confuses us and may even cause us to wonder where our faith stands. Rather than tell anyone, we bottle it up and discover a pit of loneliness and despair for which we are often ashamed.

Questions we cannot help but ask are

- Am I the only one who feels this way?
- Where and to whom can I go when I experience trials that squeeze my faith like a vise?
- Can and will God raise me up when I am down?

Believing in the power of God's Word, we entrust to the Holy Spirit the privilege of revealing the Father's love and the Son's grace in all our difficult circumstances. Viewing them through God's eyes enables us to see past the pain in order to experience His power. In the process, Christ's sacrificial life for us — along with pain and suffering — begins to make sense.

Am I the only one who feels this way?

Examine the following passages to discover individuals — powerful examples of faith — who experienced a sense of despair and loneliness.

Numbers 11:10–15	Moses
Ruth 1:19–21	Naomi
1 Kings 19:1–4, 14	Elijah
Psalms 22:1–2, 6–8	David (and even more, our Lord Jesus)
2 Corinthians 7:5 & 11:23–29	Paul
Luke 22:39–44 & Matthew 27:46	Jesus

And we thought we had a market on frustration, fear, and affliction! No matter what you are going through today, someone has been there before and someone is still there now.

Peter offers a wonderful promise from a loving God, opening a door of hope in the midst of our difficulties. Read **1 Peter 5:10–11** and write the promise in your own words. What does this promise mean to you personally?

Where and to whom can I go when I experience trials that squeeze my faith like a vise?

God desires to offer comfort and strength through His Word when our lives are confusing and seemingly without hope. Study these promises and observe how the negatives become positives.

Psalm 34:17–19

Psalm 42:1–2, 8–11

Psalm 63:1, 6–8

Psalm 73:23–26

Psalm 119:71–74

Psalm 139:23–24

It is often easy to **read** these words but difficult to perceive how they **apply** to us personally. Yet as we read and reread, praying for the Holy Spirit's wisdom, we begin to understand the Savior's love — even if we struggle with the mundane and daily grind of life.

Reread **Psalm 42:1–2, 8–11**.

As the writer expresses his desire to know God more deeply — to understand Him — he discovers a wonderful truth in verses 5 and 8. *Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and God... By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me — a prayer to the God of my life.*

The writer has learned to focus his heart and hope in his Savior and to honor Him with praise, even when it does not make sense. This is a bold lesson for us as well. Even when the exercises of life are more painful than several hours of strenuous physical exercise, we can be taught by His Spirit to fix our eyes, hearts, and minds on Christ.

Read the following verses to discover this truth in greater detail.

Isaiah 26:3

Colossians 3:1–3

Hebrews 12:1–3

I like to call this "eternalizing" rather than "internalizing" — focusing on the heavenly things of God rather than the unstable things of earth. As we learn to meditate on God's Word, we grow in the strength and wisdom that can only come from Him. We say with the Psalmist, *"Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare (Psalm 40:5).*

But then there is the matter of taking what we have learned and applying it to our lives even when we are encountering grief, depression, or despair. Often the greater the struggle, the more we grasp for control, desiring an explanation or a reason for what is happening. When there is none, we struggle and fight against God. But God, in His

Word, reminds us to trust Him for He sees things in the eternal realms and knows why He has allowed us to endure each experience.

Read the following verses to verify this thought.

Psalm 33:18–22

Proverbs 3:5–6

Isaiah 55:8–13

Offering our lives as living sacrifices, we pray that our confidence and trust in Him is our gift to Him — a spiritual act of worship (**Romans 12:1**). Believing His thoughts of love for us far surpass our thoughts, we honor Him by willingly suffering **for Him**, that **His glory** may be revealed.

Can and will God raise me up when I am down?

Buried with Him in our Baptism, we are also raised with Him in His resurrection (**Romans 6:3–5**). Knowing this, we can live lives of victory through Christ's strength and power in us. We can never specifically know when our time of trial and testing will end, nor do we always have an earthly answer as to why it had to occur. But knowing and believing that God's love rests in eternity, we find comfort in embracing that love. We need to remember that our suffering was not about us. It was about His glory being revealed in and through us, preparing us for a mighty work for Him. (See **John 9:3–4**.)

Read how Paul embraces the idea of inner renewal, the “raising” of our souls through struggles in **2 Corinthians 4:14–18**.

The final beauty is that God not only desires to give us the love of His Son, who gave His all for us, but to give us all things in the heavenly realms. Read together **Ephesians 2:6–10**.

Closing Prayer: Dear Father in heaven, I admit that during tough times, I am not so tough. I mask my feelings and sometimes even question Your reasons for allowing these things to happen. But I am asking You to reveal, through Your Holy Spirit, the amazing love of Your Son who gave His all for me. And as You graciously give me all good things from Your loving hand, may I lovingly receive them. Give me such a faith as this. In Jesus' Name, I pray. Amen.

Suggested Songs:

“Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing” [*LSB 528; LW 276; TLH 360*]

“My Faith Looks up to Thee” [*LSB 702; TLH 394; also LW 378*]

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