

Psalm 142 is a Psalm of David written when he was in “the cave.” Now the Psalm does not tell us what cave he was in. Perhaps it was the cave of Adullam (I Sam. 22:1) or perhaps it was the cave of Engedi (I Sam. 24:1-3). The Psalm is a “maskil” which means David wrote it for didactic and teaching purposes.

Now since David is in a cave, we can assume that he is living in a dark, damp, lonely cave. When you are in a cave you don’t have a lot of freedom and you are boxed in. The reason he is in the cave is because he was being chased in order to be killed.

Now I don’t know what the darkest most depressing time of your life is, but I doubt seriously that you were alone in a cave because someone was out to kill you. That is about as lonely and as discouraging a situation that one could ever imagine.

This is a great Psalm when you find yourself feeling alone and discouraged. When you find yourself in a depressing situation, this is the kind of Psalm that can really help.

PSALM 142 IS A PRAYER DAVID MAKES FOR THE PURPOSE OF BRINGING HIS SOUL OUT OF DARK, LONELY DEPRESSION.

Now David was a great man of God, but that did not mean he did not go through dark times that left him depressed. Just because one is right with God does not mean everything is always happy in life. Now when some people get really depressed, they think about taking some medication or ending their lives. David thought about praying to God.

It was Charles Haddon Spurgeon who said, “caves make good closets for prayer.” When we find ourselves in dark places and in the “depths of anguish,” thinking and feeling as if we are all alone in a dark world, we need to cry out to God. God wants us coming to Him in prayer.

I want you to notice that three times in these verses it is emphasized that David “cries” to the LORD (v. 1, 5, 6). There are two different Hebrew words used here. The word used in **verses 1 and 5** is the Hebrew word “za-aq” which specifically means to cry out because of some very real sorrow and hurt (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 251).

The word used in **verse 6** is the Hebrew word “rinnah” which speaks of a very emotional and mournful wailing (*Ibid.*, p. 771).

Combined, these two words clearly indicate that David was very low emotionally. He was emotionally and verbally crying out to God because of his depressing circumstances. He was alone in a dark, dingy cave.

There are four specific steps David took when he was emotionally low:

STEP #1 – He verbally cried out to God. **142:1**

Look very carefully at the emphasis on the fact that David cried out to God “with my voice.” He literally is using his voice to cry out to God. He is literally alone in a cave and he is literally verbally crying out to God with his voice. He is praying out loud and he is very emotional in the way he is praying.

So many people miss this critical fact. They become depressed and they want to crawl into some shell or cave and not talk to anyone. Many want to wallow in their self-pity and misery. What David did was literally cry out to God and talk to God. He literally used his voice to bring his supplications to God.

God desires that we come to Him. God wants us looking to Him and crying out to Him. When you are going through times when you are emotionally low, talk to God. There is no sense rambling to someone else because they cannot get you out of your dark cave experience, but God can. So when you are low, cry out to God.

STEP #2 – He describes his real trouble to God. **142:2-4**

David did not hold back one thing from God when he talked with God. He went to God and brought all of his complaints and troubles to Him. Here is a critical key to answered prayer.

God is willing to answer when one complains to Him, but not when one complains about Him. It is one thing to go to God for help and it is quite another to blame God for problems.

David had an open and honest relationship with God. He is not covering or hiding. He was hurting and he honestly talked to God about that. The word “trouble” (v. 2) is trouble that was tightly restricting him and boxing him in. David poured out his complaints to God and told him exactly what was binding him and bothering him.

Why would any person, who is in their right mind, go to some godless counselor and pay money because they are in depression, when you can go to God and who designed you and your mind? It doesn't make any sense. Why not share all of your troubles with the Lord? That is exactly what David did. I just recently told someone that there is a big difference between “Christian counseling” and “Biblical counseling.” They are not the same.

In **verses 3-4** David describes some of the trouble that overwhelmed him.

Notice in **verse 3** David was well aware of God and His sovereignty because he says, “You knew my path.” This is so important. David was well aware of the fact that God knew the truth. He is not making some up some delusional case about himself and he is not inventing things that weren't true. David was hurting and he has a legitimate right to hurt and he knew God saw that. So many people invent their own depression, based on something not even real. If we are going to cry out to God, it must be the truth. There are five specific realities that David brings out:

Reality #1 - God knew the path on which David walked. **142:3b**

God knew David walked on right paths. David lived life in light of the Word of God. He walked on the paths of righteousness. This is a critical key to having God get us out of depressing things.

God will not get one out of depression if one continues to walk on wrong, sinful, unrighteous paths. But if one is walking on paths that please the Lord, God stands ready to help.

When it comes to trouble in our lives, it starts when God wants it to start and it ends when God wants it to end. As we experience this, God watches the path upon which we walk.

Reality #2 - God knew that David's enemies had tried to trap him. **142:3c**

David had real enemies and those enemies literally did try to take his life. That is why he was in a cave.

Reality #3 - God knew that David was alone. **142:4a**

When this Psalm was written, David was all alone. Even though he was a spiritual man, he felt all alone.

Reality #4 - God knew that David had no escape. **142:4b**

Keep in mind that David was one of the best military soldiers who ever lived. He knew how to survive. If he says there is no means of escape, you may be certain that is the truth. Apparently, at this point, David had no means of escaping the cave. He had no way out. David knew it and God knew it.

Reality #5 - God knew David had no one to care for his soul. **142:4c**

God was David's only hope. There was no one looking out for him.

When you find yourself in this kind of cave of depression, cry out to God. No one else will care for you and your soul like Jesus. He is willing to help you in your hour of need.

STEP #3 – He verbally cried out to God acknowledging his special relationship with God.
142:5

David went to the Lord and he said God, "You are my refuge." You are my ability to survive in the land of the living. David was admitting his total dependency on God for survival.

God loves it when His people come to Him and communicate with Him exactly what He means to them. God wants us realizing and admitting that He is our refuge and that He is our life support.

Too many people think it is all about them in being able to succeed, when in fact it is God who gives us the very life we have.

STEP #4 – He verbally cries to God and specifically asks God to bring him out of depression.
142:6-7

David asks God to answer his prayer and bring him out of depression. There are six reasons why David cries to God:

Reason #1 - David is low. **142:6a**

There are many things in life that will bring you low:

- 1) Sickness.
- 2) Lose reputation.
- 3) Desertion.
- 4) Bitter disappointment.
- 5) Sin.
- 6) Lose job.
- 7) Lose loved one.
- 8) Lose sense of worth.

One of the best times to cry out to God is when you are low.

Reason #2 - David is surrounded by persecutors. **142:6b**

This was truly David's world.

Reason #3 - David is not strong enough to beat them. **142:6c**

Again David knows his own limitations. This is no whiny man; but he knew when he didn't have the strength to go on.

Reason #4 - David wants to give thanks to God. **142:7a**

Reason #5 - David wants to be surrounded by the righteous. **142:7b**

Reason #6 - David was to be bountifully blessed by God. **142:7c**

PRACTICAL LESSONS:

- 1. If you are depressed and you want out, verbally talk to God.**
- 2. If you are in a dark depressed state, go to God and pinpoint exactly why.**
- 3. If you are in a depressed state, do not isolate yourself in a cave; get around righteous people who love God's Word.**