

DISTANT

DISTANT (PART 1)
WEEK OF MAY 17

This weekend, we kicked off a two-week miniseries with the message, *Distant (Part 1)*. We learned that the times in our lives when God is seemingly distant are actually some of the most important invitations He gives us to build intimacy with Him. He desires to take us deeper and grow, even through “distant” seasons.

PAUSE

Before you start the study, take a few moments and focus on the following passage of Scripture:

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

Psalm 23:4

STUDY

1. As you listened to the message this weekend, what did the Holy Spirit highlight for you?
2. This weekend, Dre kicked off the series with a powerful question, “*What Did You Expect The Christian Life To Be Like?*” Oftentimes, we can feel an emotional high when encountering Jesus at the beginning of our faith journey. It can be easy to expect that we will keep progressing upwards emotionally. However, real life is actually very different from our expectations—with twists and turns.
 - a. When you first pictured your walk with Jesus, did you ever expect to experience seasons of “distance” when God felt far? How so?
3. Dre used three landmarks to identify different seasons in our journey with God.
 - *The Beach* (Consolation): In this season, we feel emotionally connected to God. Giving Him our yes is easy and natural.
 - *The Desert*: In this season, some emotions are fading, and the journey is starting to cost more.
 - *The Dark Valley* (Desolation): In this season, we don’t feel God the way we once did. We feel like God is silent. We start to wonder if we are doing something wrong.
 - a. Reflect on the different seasons of your walk with Jesus. Can you identify specific times when you experienced seasons of *The Beach*, *The Desert*, or *The Dark Valley*?

b. How would you describe your current season now?

4. *The Dark Valley* can be a very intimidating season. Read the following passages:

- **Isaiah 43:2**

- **Psalm 23:4**

a. How do these passages speak into the reality of our experience of *The Dark Valley*?

b. If you have experienced *The Dark Valley*, how was it a season of growth and intimacy in your relationship with God?

5. Emotions are a gift from God in our spiritual life. However, we tend to gauge the health of our spiritual life by asking whether we “feel” God. This can be a dangerous place to be because each season (*The Beach*, *The Desert*, and *The Dark Valley*) is a purposeful gift from God to grow in deeper intimacy with Him.

a. How have emotions played a part in your relationship with God, for good or for bad?

b. How does trusting in Jesus’ leadership grow us through “distance”?

6. **Read Psalm 139.** In your own words, summarize each section:

- Verses 1-6

- Verses 7-12

- Verses 13-22

- Verses 23-24

a. What does this Psalm teach us about what God is doing in us, even in the seemingly distant seasons?

7. Dre taught us that “Distance” reveals our need for our Savior. Reflect on these areas below from the weekend message.

a. In your journey with Jesus, describe how “Distance” revealed:

- *What You Depend On*
- *Sin And Disobedience*
- *Wounds And Brokenness*

b. In your journey with Jesus, describe how “Distance” gave you an experience of:

- *Jesus’ Presence*
- *Jesus’ Love*
- *Jesus’ Power*

RESPOND

Read Psalm 46. Pray vehemently and ask the Lord to help you see Him in a new way through the different seasons of your journey with Him. Consider where He has taken you so far and thank Him for never leaving or forsaking you.