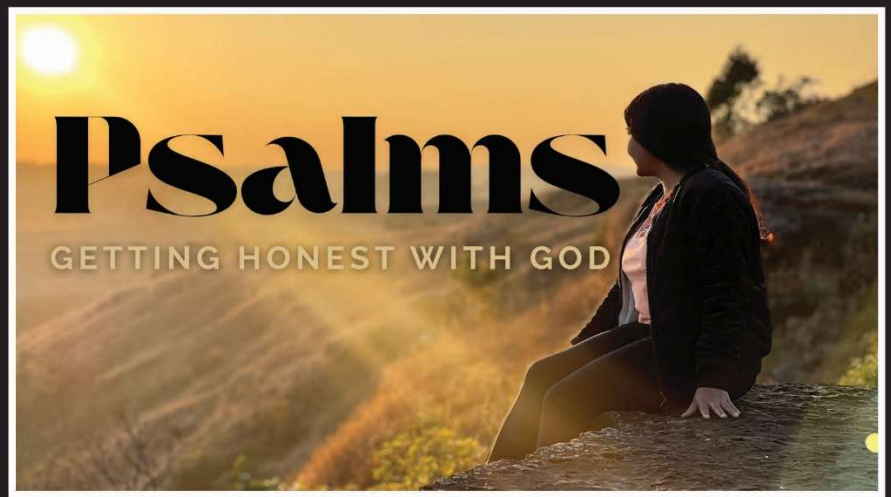


Midweek Study

Dr. Josh Franklin • Senior Pastor

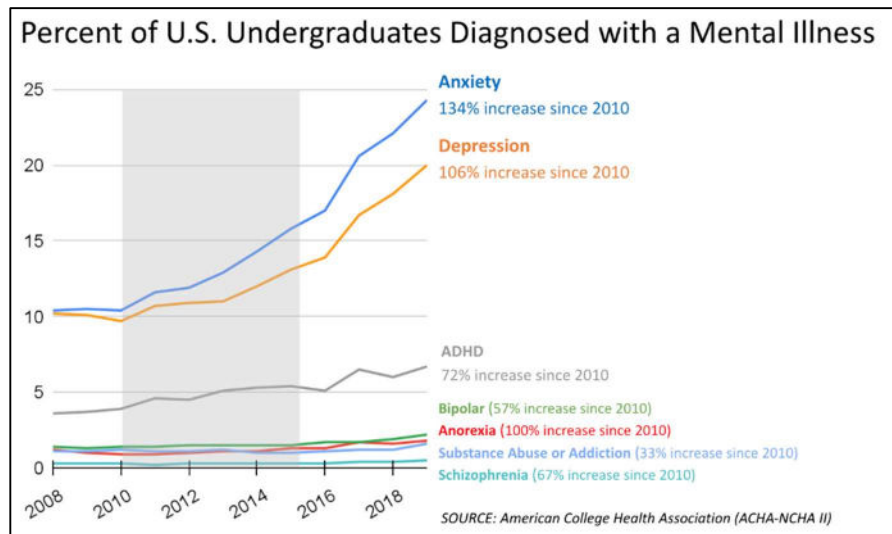


Finding God in the Struggle

Psalm 42:1-43:5

We are living in what researcher Jonathan Haidt calls "The Anxious Generation."¹ The statistics are staggering and sobering. Since the early 2010s, we've witnessed a dramatic decline in youth mental health that should alarm every parent, pastor, and person of faith. In 2023, half (50%) of adults ages 18-24 reported symptoms of anxiety and depression². Among young adults aged 18-25, anxiety rates have skyrocketed from 7.62% in 2010 to nearly 20% in 2022. Emergency room visits for self-harm among 10-14-year-old girls rose 188 percent during the 2010s.³

But here's what gives us hope: the struggles of this anxious generation are not new to God. Three thousand years ago, a psalmist penned words that could have been written by any young person today. In Psalms 42-43, we discover that the same God who met David in his darkest moments of despair is the God who can meet this generation in theirs.



Psalms 42 and 43 were originally one unified composition. Several factors demonstrate this:

- Psalm 43 has no title or superscription, making it unique in Book II (Psalms 42-72) of the Psalms
- The identical refrain appears three times (42:5, 11; 43:5)
- The theme and vocabulary flow seamlessly between the two
- Some ancient Hebrew manuscripts combine them as one psalm

"Psalm 42 is identified in the title as a *maskil*, meaning a psalm of instruction. In other words, here is wise counsel about trusting God through tough times. Although the author of this psalm is not identified, it was written by 'the sons of Korah' and was intended 'for the director of music.' The 'sons of Korah' or Korahites were Levites who were descendants of Kohath, the father of Korah (1 Chr. 6:22-48; 9:17-32; 2 Chr. 20:19). They produced and performed music while the tabernacle was in the wilderness and after the construction of the temple in Jerusalem (cp. Num. 26:11)."⁴

¹ The chart is from: <https://jonathanhaidt.com/anxious-generation/>

² <https://www.kff.org/mental-health/press-release/latest-federal-data-show-that-young-people-are-more-likely-than-older-adults-to-be-experiencing-symptoms-of-anxiety-or-depression/>

³ <https://www.anxiousgeneration.com/research/the-evidence>

⁴ Psalms 1-75, ed. Max Anders, vol. 11, *Holman Old Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2004), 221-229.

1) The Psalmist's **DESPERATION** (Psalm 42:1-4)

A. Spiritual Dehydration (vv. 1-2) - *"As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?"*

B. Emotional Devastation (v. 3) - *"My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, 'Where is your God?'"*

C. Painful Memories (v. 4) - *"When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast."*

2) The Psalmist's **DETERMINATION** (Psalm 42:5-43:4)

A. Preach to Your Soul (42:5, 11; 43:5) - *"Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance."*

Seven Things to Say to Your Soul⁵:

1. **Tune In:** "Awake, my soul" (Psalm 57:8)
2. **Look Up:** "My soul, put your hope in God" (Psalm 42:5)
3. **Calm Down:** "Be at rest, O my soul" (Ps 116:7); "I have stilled and quieted my soul" (Ps 131:2)
4. **Look Back:** "O my soul... forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2)
5. **Chill Out:** "Be at rest once more, O my soul" (Psalm 116:7)
6. **Press On:** "March on, O my soul; be strong" (Judges 5:21)
7. **Lift Up:** "Praise the LORD, O my soul" (Psalm 103:1)

B. Acknowledge God's Sovereignty Even in Suffering (42:6-7) - *"O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, and from the heights of Hermon, from the Hill Mizar. Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me."*

C. Cling to God's Character When You Can't See His Hand (42:8-10) - *"The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me—a prayer to the God of my life."*

D. Pray Boldly for God to Act (43:1-4) - *"Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man! For You are the God of my strength; why do You cast me off? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"*

3) The Psalmist's **DECLARATION** (Psalm 43:5)

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in his best-selling book *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure*, once wrote:
Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?⁶

⁵ From Jennifer Rothschild, *Self Talk, Soul Talk* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2007).

⁶ As quoted in Max Anders, vol. 11, *Holman Old Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2004), 221–229.