Lisa Whittle

AN INTERACTIVE BIBLE STUDY

Includes Six-Session Video Series

KNOWS

6 Tough Questions for an Omniscient God (A Study of Nahum and Beyond)

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AN INTERACTIVE BIBLE STUDY

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Includes Six-Session Video Series

6 Tough Questions for an Omniscient God (A Study of Nahum and Beyond)

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Books for Courageous Women from David C Cook

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Am I Forgotten?

THE LORD IS GOOD, A STRONGHOLD IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE; AND HE KNOWS

THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM.

Nahum 1:7 (NKJV)

Memorize Nahum 1:7 this week by our repetition model.

To follow along in the God Knows book, read chapters 1 and 8.

Video and Outline

Stream the question 1 video (link on p. 17), and complete the session 1 outline below as you watch.

Group leaders: See the session 1 guide in the back (p. 207) for a group discussion plan.

•	Nahum is a book of	written by	to
	chronicle the oppression of	by	
	and, more specifically,	•	
+	In 1 Kings 11, God split Israel into two	kingdoms:	and
		As time passed,	·
	conquered the Northern Kingdom and	named	_ the capital. They
	had repented more than more than	years before during	· ·
	preaching, but they were now, in	time, more s	inful than ever.
	God would avenge their acts perpetrate	ed against the	So God
	gives Nahum a vision of	fall to	The vision
	includes a message for the	of God's people in _	
+	Nahum means and		
+	God knew the	of the larger story, just a	ıs He knows the
	of your story too.		
+	Psalm 139:7: Where can I go from you	r? Wh	ere can I flee from
	your?		



Setting the Stage with Nahum

Let's Start with ...

... Some Scriptural Context

In 1 Kings 11, God split Israel into two kingdoms: the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms. As time passed, Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom and named Nineveh the capital. Yes, it's the *same* Nineveh you may be familiar with from the story of Jonah and

REMNANT: A portion of people left after a disaster, especially a disaster identified with divine judgment. Especially in the Prophets, this term describes those who remain faithful to God despite suffering and who ultimately experience restoration.¹

the whale—the city that Jonah reluctantly warned to return to God more than a hundred years before (see Jonah 1 for more). They were idolatrous, evil people. Though they had repented when Jonah preached, they had fallen back into their wickedness and were now, in Nahum's time, more sinful than ever.

This was clearly displeasing to God. Their evil deeds would not stand, and God would avenge their acts perpetrated against the Judeans. God gives

Nahum a vision of Assyria's fall to Babylon. The vision includes a message for the remnant of God's people in Judah—those who have been faithful:

SETTING THE STAGE WITH NAHUM 27

This is what the LORD says: "Though the Assyrians have many allies, they will be destroyed and disappear. O my people, I have punished you before, but I will not punish you again. Now I will break the yoke of bondage from your neck and tear off the chains of Assyrian oppression."

"Look! A messenger is coming over the mountains with good news! He is bringing a message of peace. Celebrate your festivals, O people of Judah, and fulfill all your vows, for your wicked enemies will never invade your land again. They will be completely destroyed!" (Nah. 1:12–13, 15 NLT)

This faithful remnant has lived in oppression. But God has not forgotten them. Nahum, in his vision, sees a messenger coming with good news—a message of peace! The yoke of bondage (oppression) will be removed.

After reading this scriptural insight, how does it make you feel when it seems like you've been forgotten or abandoned by God, perhaps in a current situation?

In the past, what have you done when you felt alone or feared you were forgotten?

If you're like most people, you go inward. You isolate further, thinking no one sees you or understands.

But throughout Scripture, like in this passage in Nahum, we continually find comfort and hope by diving deeper into the character of God and understanding His sovereignty in our lives, despite lack of outward proof.

SOVEREIGNTY: God is free and able to do what He wants; His allencompassing rule over the entire universe.²

Nahum is a short three-chapter book full of prophetic poetry by the prophet Nahum. While this opening passage is full of strong chastisement for the Assyrians, it's ultimately focused on God in the midst of turmoil and meant to bring relief to the soul, which often feels tossed about by the dysfunction (and yes, combativeness) of the world around us.

Consider what the first chapter of Nahum tells us about God's character:

- He's a good God who is slow to anger.
- He's jealous and never lets the guilty go unpunished.
- He's so powerful the clouds are dust under His feet. (He also displays His power in whirlwinds, tornadoes, storms, hurricanes, avalanches, landslides, and earthquakes.)
- He knows all, including those who trust Him.

Which of these aspects of God's character do you most appreciate right now?

As important as community is, knowing more about God—not surrounding ourselves with more people, filling our calendars, being obsessed with social media—helps us feel truly connected to our lives.

Nahum might seem like an odd book of the Bible to study—a strange and unexpected place to find comfort and connection with God. But God is working deeper than surface level in our lives. The name Nahum means "comforted."³

There are no coincidences with God. He is thorough in how He shows us His love and care.

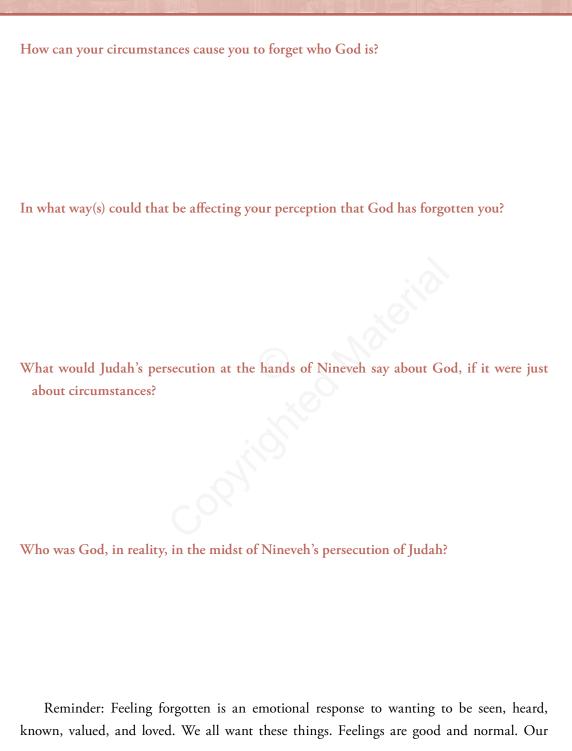
Let's Look at the Issue . . .

Every one of us has most likely experienced the feeling of being unseen, unknown, or disregarded. These are the feelings of being forgotten. They can be soul crushing, life altering, and future damaging.

There are two huge contributing factors to feeling forgotten: circumstances and culture.

Circumstances often lead you to forget who God is.

I sat in a small group circle with some women years ago. In particular, a young woman named Holly stood out to me, raw from her difficult circumstances, which had led to emotions that were telling her God had forgotten her. Her family of five—herself, her husband, and her three small children—was displaced from their home after a massive flood in their city destroyed it and all their earthly possessions. Having moved from hotel to hotel and then eventually being taken in by a kind family, they had been living a nomadic life, and it was wearing on Holly and her family. When I asked her what the biggest need of her heart was, she immediately said, "I feel forgotten." Did God see her family situation? And if He did, why did she feel so abandoned? Could He even be trusted?



WHAT IS FALSE? WHAT IS TRUE?

problem is when we try to tend to feelings with feelings rather than biblical truth. This is the plight of a lost society. Believers in Jesus know a better way.

Culture often leads you to forget who you are.

The truth is, culture isn't powerful. Does it surprise you to hear me say that since it often seems like it's beating down our faith? Based on the Word of God, culture does not hold power; God does. And even more, that power is available to us. (Read Ephesians 1 if you need to be reminded of this.) By staying aligned with Christ, we have the power to overrule the lies culture employs which cause us to forget who we are. Lies such as:

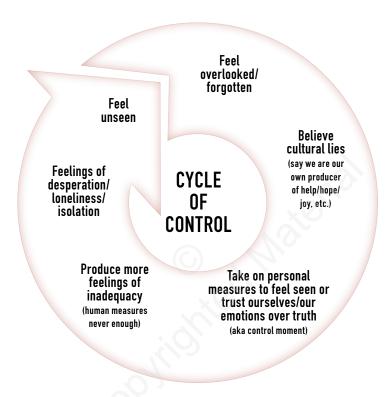
- Rely on your feelings more heavily than on God's Word.
- Be self-sufficient; help yourself; you're in charge of your success.
- Trust in cues, vibes, karma, and your gut to lead you.
- Believe everything your circumstances tell you about life.
- Do whatever you want, whenever you want.
- Hold people up to your standards and discretion of fairness.
- Base worthiness on cultural popularity measures.

In what ways have each of these cultural lies led you to believe lies about yourself and, more specifically, the lie that you are forgotten and alone?

When we feel forgotten (a human emotion that happens to all of us at times!), we have a choice. We can believe WHO GOD IS based on what we know to be true about Him (more on this in a minute), resulting in becoming settled and secure. Or we can turn from Him to

believe CULTURE'S INFLUENCE AND LIES, which lead us into what I call a cycle of control.

It looks like this:



This cycle will only leave us feeling more desperate and alone. When we experience emotions that are hard, human nature will always nudge us to control the situation however we can. I'm sure the remnant in Judah wanted to control their feelings of despair in their hard situation.

How are you trying to control your feelings of feeling forgotten right now?

WHAT IS FALSE? WHAT IS TRUE?

Only God, who made us, will ever truly know us and make us feel known.

We all feel lost at times. We all feel forgotten. Only God, who made us, will ever truly know us and make us feel known.

So What's the Truth?

What it looked like in Nahum's time: God was gone.

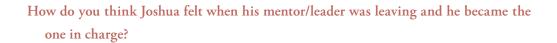
What does it look like in your life right now?

What was true in Nahum's time? God was there.

What is true (despite your feelings or what culture tells you) in your life right now?

From the Old Testament to the New Testament, we find this message of God in the character of His consistency: *I will never forget you. I am always with you.*

In Deuteronomy 31, Moses gives a sweeping speech in his last days both on earth and in leadership (not bad for a man who said he wasn't good at public speaking—Exodus 4:10). He speaks directly to his successor, Joshua, as all of Israel looks on and memorably says, "It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed" (v. 8 ESV).



Why would Moses speak about God's presence rather than give Joshua leadership tips at this moment?

What can we learn from this example?

In **Matthew 28**, we find Jesus having risen from the dead and appearing to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as proof (shout-out to our Lord for the value He placed on women in His story, even in this moment!). In His final words, He gave this comforting charge: "And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (v. 20b NLT).

Why would Jesus say this when He was going away?

How can the final twelve words of Matthew 28:20 be the answer in our moments of feeling forgotten?

WHAT IS FALSE? WHAT IS TRUE?

Key: Believe God's character in the midst of our loneliness. His Word hasn't changed.

And oh, I just have to remind us of a great story told in the Gospels about the hurting, broken woman who was looking for healing from her chronic bleeding condition. Because if anyone felt forgotten, it was her.

Read Matthew 9:20–22 to familiarize yourself with it—and keep it open.

This woman was an outcast. Imagine everyone knowing about an embarrassing medical condition you're suffering from, especially such a personal one. Then imagine your condition prevents you from entering the temple and, further, you're denied even physical touch from another human.

She was known and seen in her community but for reasons that felt labeling, marginalizing, and wounding. No one saw her as a beautiful daughter of God. So in her visibility, she was avoided, alone, uncared-for, and yes, unknown in the ways that truly mattered.

And yet ... God paused for her. He saw her for something else.

What did God acknowledge in this woman and call out?

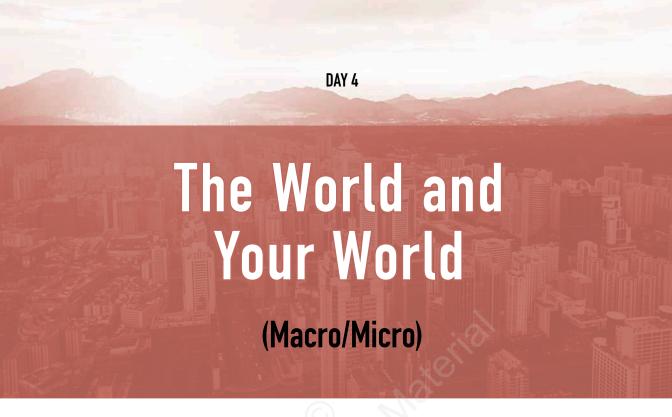
You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. (Ps. 139:2–3)

What do you need God to call out in you to feel seen right now?

Spend some time praying for that need of your heart.

Let's Summarize What Is False and True

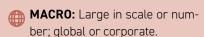
False	True
I can DIY my way to significance.	God loves me, even when my circumstances are hard.
My circumstances tell me if I'm abandoned, neglected, or alone.	God's character is why I can trust I am never alone.
Control brings me power, peace, and love.	God fights for me, but I must also fight things like self-focus and isolation by giving up control.
I am better off trying to do things myself.	God is with me, and I choose to follow Him.
l can make people want me.	God won't leave me.
My feelings always tell the truth.	I trust the Word to tell me the truth, even when my feelings threaten to take over.



Let's Break This Down Further ...

The question we all grapple with in this troubled world: Where is God in the midst of all this chaos?

Be honest; have you ever wondered where God is? What was your conclusion, or what are you still wrestling with?



MICRO: Small in number; individual or unit.

As we take a look at this macro and micro—the world and your world application in every session—consider this illustration for context.

Some years ago, when the iPhone's first huge wave of popularity was surging through our family, my teenagers introduced me to the idea of "sending me their location" as the most efficient way to get directions to wherever they were at the moment. "I'll drop you a pin, Mom," they would say, and soon I would receive a text with exactly where they were ... standing somewhere ... or in their car waiting for me. Dropping that red pin always worked, and I could always find them by following directions to it.

At the same time, I was becoming more proficient with Google Maps. Though I admit that sometimes I would zoom out too far and expand the map to the entire United States rather than a part of my city, that's part of the point. Both the red pin and the wider map are location points. In the case of God's omniscience, all our locations—wide-map views (macro = world) and precise red pinpointed spots (micro = individual)—are covered by His almighty lens.

To appreciate God's involvement with both the wider world and our individual lives *simultaneously*, we have to believe He is able to do both *thoroughly* and *consistently*.

Do you believe God can do a simultaneous, thorough, and consistent job of being fully involved in the world and in your life at the same time? Why or why not?

How have you seen God be thorough and consistent in your own life?

Proof in Scripture says He can and does all these things.

His original and continuing intent for the world speaks to His thoroughness.

God's original intent for the world:

THE WORLD AND YOUR WORLD 39

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

God's continuing intent for the world:

The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance. (2 Pet. 3:9 CSB)

How do the verses above help remind the world it's not forgotten?

His ongoing care speaks to His consistency.

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (Ps. 34:18)

What words from this psalm illustrate to the people of the world how deeply God knows and loves them?

His care for both wider global issues and intimate personal details speaks to His powerful ability to simultaneously nurture the world and every individual within it.

Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today

and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. (Luke 12:27–28a NLT) (macro/micro)

● Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. (Eph. 1:21–22 NLT) (macro/micro)

He calmed the storm to a whisper and stilled the waves. (Ps. 107:29 NLT) (macro)

And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows. (Luke 12:7 NLT) (micro)

You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. (Ps. 56:8 NLT) (micro)

In this moment, are you reassured more by how God is involved in the wider issues or the more intimate details of your life?

Even in the bigger acts of His power and care there is a tie to a personal mission—a mission involving His relationship with you, and your relationship with the world.

As God has not forgotten the world ...

And God has not forgotten you ...

He wants to work through *you* to let *the world* know He has not forgotten it.

THE WORLD AND YOUR WORLD 41

The equation:

God came to the world to save you.

God saved you to spread the gospel message (revisit John 3:16) to the world.

This is the ultimate purposeful equation.

How does this equation give you fresh insight into how you are not forgotten, but rather, a crucial part of God's plan for the world?

God doesn't need us, but He longs to work in and through us. He invites us into this great plan. As we shift from feelings-based realities led by our culture and circumstances and move to the truth, we cling to the knowledge that:

- God won't forget someone who is a crucial part of His plan for humanity.
- God can't forget someone He actively has a hand in sustaining.
- PS: God is God. He doesn't forget anything. This is merely a common-sense, human-thought-process example.
- 1. You are a crucial part of God's plan for humanity. Matthew 28:19 is the proof of that.

Read Matthew 28:19. Write it here.

It is easy to use the phrase "God's will for my life" as an excuse for inaction or even disobedience.... My hope is that instead of searching for "God's will for my life," each of us would learn to seek hard after "the Spirit's leading in my life today."

Making disciples is a two-part process. First, we tell people about Jesus so they will come to know Him. Second, we help develop people in their faith.

As we help the world understand that God has not forgotten it, here are some things to keep in mind:

- First, do our own inner work. Seek counseling, if needed, for our own issues related to feeling forgotten, often related to abandonment, loneliness, self-focus, and insecurity.
- Pray for a Jesus-first, people-second mission. This keeps us focused on helping people know they aren't forgotten rather than nurturing a hero complex in ourselves. Hint: We don't save people.
- Emphasize the big picture: the kingdom of God. We are going somewhere together; it is God's design and desire for us not to do life in a silo.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how committed are you to showing/telling people out in the world they are not forgotten by God?

1 5 10

Write the names of two people you know personally who do not know Christ and who struggle with feeling forgotten.

How does this remembrance that you are a crucial part of God's plan help motivate you to share the good news with them?

THE WORLD AND YOUR WORLD 43

2. Every moment of your life is no accident, but sustained; therefore, you cannot be forgotten. If you doubt that, look at Psalm 139:13.

Even if it were possible for God to forget us (which in His very nature, He cannot), in order to be forgettable, you would have to be an accident. This is an impossibility with God. Maybe you were told you were an accident. Maybe your mother and father didn't plan your conception. Maybe at one point in the heat of an argument, someone cruelly said you were a mistake or that she wished you had never been born. (Even if by a mad sibling in the heat of a childhood fight!) But here's some medical proof that's not true:

Each day, your heart beats around 100,000 times. This continuously pumps about five liters (eight pints) of blood around your body through a network of blood vessels called your circulatory system. This blood delivers oxygen and nutrients to all parts of your body to help your organs and muscles work properly.²

No, you aren't unseen or forgotten. You haven't slipped through the cracks. If you ever think this, please consider what it takes to keep just one human being—*you*—functioning on a daily basis. "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17). *You* are one of the "all things."

You are quite a thorough production. You aren't just "kind of" here.



© Lilanakani/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Even if you have decided not to be all in with your life, God is all in with you.

Have you ever felt like an accident? Does this illustration help you know that's not true? If not, what would it take for you to believe God's purposeful intention for you?

God created you to be reliant on Him; therefore, He won't forget you.

Read Genesis 3:19 and 2:7. What does the thought of being dust mean to you? What does God's "breath" mean to you?

God sustains all of His creation; therefore, He won't forget you.

Read Matthew 6:26. Answer the last question Scripture itself poses to you in that verse.

How does this make you feel, to consider that you're not really holding it all together, but God is?

You were wanted, planned, and created, and you are being sustained every day by a God who knows you. *Your* God. The world's God. Both–and.



Why God's Omniscience Matters

Let's Make the Connect ...

... God's Omniscience Brings Us Irrefutable Hope

Omniscience is having infinite awareness, understanding, and insight—knowing all. I love how

simply Scripture reassures us in 1 John 3:20b: "God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything."

So what is irrefutable hope?

Let's start with the definition of *irrefutable*. Google it. What are some of the adjectives that come up?

OMNISCIENCE: God's infinite knowledge and understanding of things past, present, and future.¹

In my search for a definition of *irrefutable*, I found this word particularly interesting: *indisputable*.



Look up Romans 5:5. What does it say hope will not do in that verse?

If hope cannot be disputed or disappointing in the hands of a God who knows all, then you don't just have to hope you are remembered by God. You can be sure you are.

It's important not only to know this but to consider the alternative:

If God doesn't know you, doesn't know your life, doesn't know about the things in this world going on (past, present, and future), and doesn't have your best interests in mind, then you should *despair*.

What results from a belief that God is not omniscient?

What would happen if God didn't exercise His omniscience constantly and for our good? Have you felt this way? (Be honest.)

WHY GOD'S OMNISCIENCE MATTERS 47

Do you truly believe that is what's happening?

Reread Nahum 1:1-15.

When the Judeans were being persecuted by the Ninevites, they needed to believe God was omniscient—that He saw and knew what was happening to them—especially because of the following reasons:

1. Pain relief. The people of Judah needed pain relief from the cruelty of the Ninevites. We also need relief from feeling forgotten in the midst of our pain.

How do you need pain relief?

2. Security during a crisis. The people of Judah needed the security and assurance that God was with them in their vulnerability. We also need to know that we are still seen, even when we feel unseen in our crisis and struggle.

Describe a time when you've struggled or been in crisis. Did you feel unseen? Why?

3. Confidence, even in questioning. The people of Judah needed the confidence that God had not forgotten them, though in their confusion it seemed He had. We need this type of confidence, even when we question God and His methods or timing.

Do you have confidence that God has not forgotten you, even if you don't understand your circumstances? Why or why not?

If God knows everything (and in that, we don't even understand its fullness), then we are solid and secure and have every reason to remain hopeful.

What are some ways God is showing you He knows about you right now?

What is a way	God's	work i	n your	life is	hard	to see	but yo	ou choose	to	trust	in	Him,	the
great Hope, a	anywa	y ?											

Which of these things would you love to have mos	st in your life? Rate them 1 to 3.
pain relief	
security or peace	
confidence	

Write out a statement about how God's omniscience can matter to your daily life, starting with "Since my God knows all about my life ..."

Look up these verses about God's omniscience. Write a circumstance in your life next to each one that could help you feel seen and known.

	Life Circumstance
1 John 3:20	
Nahum 1:7	
Psalm 139:1—2	
Romans 8:26–27	

What Do I Do Next?

Let's Get Practical

When I first started speaking, I used to get such terrible stage fright. I would be so nervous before taking the stage, sometimes I wouldn't want to go on. I remember asking a friend and veteran speaker how she spoke with such ease. She told me something I'll never forget, "I've experienced God come through for me so many times when I've been speaking, it has developed a deep sense of trust between us."

When you live feeling known by God, you won't try so hard to find significance everywhere else. This can be a true perspective shifter and lead to a new level of relationship intimacy with Christ.

Think of a time you tried to find significance—in a relationship with a person or in a job. How might have feeling known by God changed how you pursued that feeling of being known?

You have to pursue knowing Jesus to find significance in being known by Him. How are you actively pursuing knowing Jesus more?

You have to put yourself in situations where God can show His faithfulness to you in order to truly feel seen. How are you actively relying upon the Lord versus exercising your own control?

As your faith in God grows and your trust in Him aligns with the truth that your God knows, loves, sees, has not forgotten, and will not forget you, you will be able to:

1. Focus on the Fixer, Not the Problem

Write down 1 Peter 5:7.

How can you get *out of the habit* of sitting in your problems and get *into the habit* of taking your concerns, anger, sadness, and feelings of injustice to God? Get practical!

2. Pursue Community

Write down Galatians 6:2.

How can you pursue community rather than wait to be invited into a friendship? Write down the names of a few women whom you could invite for coffee or even just send a text of encouragement.

3. Ask for Help

Write down Proverbs 15:22.

How can you ask for the help you need in this season of your life? Who is this help going to be from?

I love you. Jesus loves you. You are not forgotten. You are always on your Creator's mind.