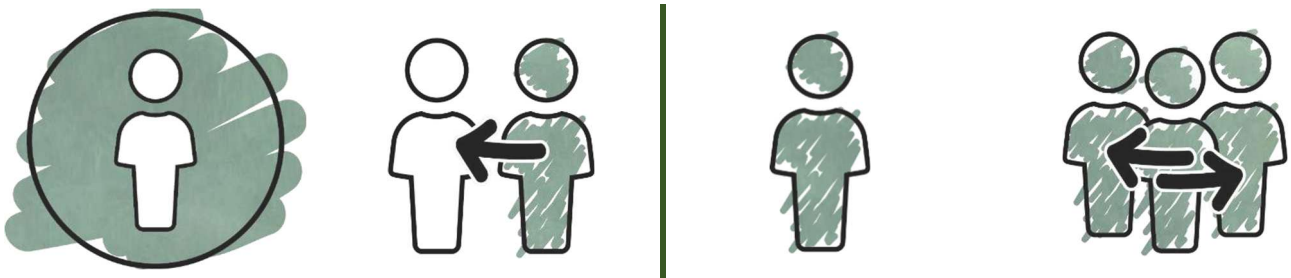
Four Categories of **Suffering**

The authors of Scripture were no strangers to deep grief. Whether it be suffering from friends, enemies, or personal sin, their problems were real and complex just like yours and mine are. By God's grace, we have these stories available to us that we might have someone to relate to and learn from (Romans 15:4). Let's look at one author: King David. If you've read the mini-book, *Help! I'm in Darkness*, you know that David endured extreme challenges (see page 16). He experienced all four categories of darkness during different points of his life.

How to do this study:

As you prayerfully read through the Scripture passages noted in the chart below, look for the different ways that David endured darkness. Use the space provided in the following pages to write in your own words what David experienced. Look for what David says about what he thought, wanted, felt, and/or did. Then consider how you may relate to David's specific experience of darkness. What can you take away from the biblical story—especially as you look for who God was for David and how God worked in David's life—that gives you hope and help for your own experiences of suffering?



Sin Around Me	Sin Against Me	Sin in Me	Sin with Me
Psalm 31: The **sin around** David Teenagers often suffer darkness as a result of living in a sin-cursed world (things like disease, natural disasters, and death).	**Psalm 3**: The **sin** of Absalom **against** David Teenagers often suffer darkness as a result of the wounds created by the sins of others.	**Psalm 32**: The **sin in** David Teenagers often suffer darkness as a result of the ongoing battle with sin they face in their own hearts.	**Psalm 51**: David's **sin with** Bathsheba Teenagers often suffer darkness as a result of uniting with others in sinful activity.

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Sin Around Me (King David and Psalm 31):

How does King David describe *sin around him*, and how does it affect him?

How can you relate to King David?

How does Psalm 31 give you hope and help in your darkness?

Sin Against Me (King David and Psalm 3):

How does King David describe *sin against him*, and how does it affect him?

How can you relate to King David?

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How does Psalm 3 give you hope and help in your darkness?

Sin in Me (King David and Psalm 32):

How does King David describe *sin in him*, and how does it affect him?

How can you relate to King David?

How does Psalm 32 give you hope and help in your darkness?

Sin with Me (King David and Psalm 51):

How does King David describe *sin with him*, and how does it affect him?

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How can you relate to King David?

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How does Psalm 51 give you hope and help in your darkness?

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We can take so much hope from studying David's experiences of darkness, and from how God worked in his life through those difficult times. God desires to work in your life too. Talk to Him about what you have learned through this study. Ask Him to keep bringing you into the light, as you seek to know and apply His Word to your own experiences. Also share what you are learning with a godly, trusted adult who can help you keep turning to God in your experiences of darkness.

Keep Going!

There are many other real-life stories included in the Bible that you can study in this same format. Elijah (1 Kings 19), Jeremiah (Lamentations 2-3), Job (Job 3:11, 10:1, 30:15-17), and the Sons of Korah (Psalm 42 and 43) are all examples of people who experienced darkness. Though each of them may not have experienced every category of darkness in the chart above, they are still *real* people with *real* struggles who provide *real* solutions through **trust** in the character and promises of God. You can relate to them in a real way. Which author will you study next?

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