

a. Asaph examines his thoughts

<p><b>1. My life situation.</b> <i>Time? Place? People? Events?</i></p>	<p>The "life situation" is not defined in detail in Psalm 77. Asaph calls it "the day of my trouble" (v2), a deliberately general description which fits many life situations.</p>
<p><b>2. My feelings</b> <i>Sum up your mood in one word if you can. Are you sad, worried, guilty, angry, ashamed, irritated, scared, disappointed, humiliated, insecure, anxious, etc? You may want to rate the intensity of your feelings [%].</i></p>	<p>Troubled (v2,3,4) [100%] Inconsolable (v2) [90%] Overwhelmed (v3) [90%] Cut off from God (v7) [90%] Pessimistic (v7) [95%] Insecure (v2) [80%] Scared (v2) [75%]</p>
<p><b>3. My thoughts</b> <i>What am I thinking of at this time? About myself? Others? The present? The future?</i></p>	<p>My past was all great but the present is all terrible (v5) God has cast me off (v7) The future is bleak and gloomy (v7) God's promises no longer hold true (v8) God has forgotten how to be gracious (v9) God has shut up his mercies (v9)</p>
<p><b>4. My analysis</b> <i>Identify false or unhelpful thinking patterns? False extremes, false generalisation, false filter, etc. (see lecture 3).</i></p>	<p>The psalmist confesses to wrong and unhelpful thinking when he looks at his thought patterns and says, "This is my infirmity" (v10). His "infirmity" or his distorted thinking includes: False extremes, false generalisation, false mind-reading (of God), false fortune-telling, false feeling-based reasoning (see lecture 3).</p>
<p><b>5. My behaviour</b> <i>Impact of 1-4 on me and my relations with others. Stop helpful activities? Start unhelpful activities? Reduced activity? Hyper-activity?</i></p>	<p>Crying (v1) Complaining (v3) Cannot sleep (v4) Cannot speak to others (v4) Cannot pray to God (v4)</p>

b. Asaph challenges his thoughts

Sometimes simply identifying such false thoughts and their impact on us can itself be a major turning point. However, to complete the process we should go on to formally challenge out false thoughts.

<p><b>6. My reasons</b> <i>Why do I believe the thoughts I listed in (3) are true? What evidence is there to support my conclusion?</i></p>	<p>The Psalmist is not explicit but does imply: This is how I feel This is how things look to me.</p>
<p><b>7. My challenge</b> <i>List evidence and reasons against the thoughts in (3). Think of what God would point to, to show you that your thoughts are not 100% true.</i></p>	<p>God's past dealings with his people have been similar (v10) God's powerful providence through the years (v11-20) God sometimes leads his people through deep waters (v19) God sometimes shepherds his people through the wilderness (v20) God will lead his people to the Promised Land (v20)</p>
<p><b>8. My conclusion</b> <i>Come to a balanced conclusion, which will also be truthful and helpful</i></p>	<p>Although I feel cast off and forgotten by God, He is redeeming me and leading me through the wilderness into the Promised Land. Unlike God's Word and works, my feelings are infirm - inaccurate and unreliable.</p>
<p><b>9. My new feelings</b> <i>Copy some or all of the feelings from (2) and re-rate them.</i></p>	<p>Asaph is not explicit but from his words in verses 13-20 we may reasonably imply that Asaph now feels a degree of confidence, optimism, safety, and comfort. Troubled [30%] Inconsolable [20%] Overwhelmed [15%] Cut off from God [30%] Pessimistic [10%] Insecure [10%] Scared [20%]</p>
<p><b>10. My plan</b> <i>How will I put the balanced conclusion into practice?</i></p>	<p>I will think more about God than myself. I will think more about God's deeds in the past. I will believe God's unchanging power and grace I will trust even when in the deep waters or in the wilderness.</p>