

# Under the Circumstances

HOLDING ON TO GOD  
WHEN IT APPEARS GOD IS  
NO LONGER HOLDING ON TO YOU

## Under the Circumstances - Part 2

Our circumstances are volatile— things change rapidly, which may leave us wondering whether our ideas about God, the world, and our place in it are misplaced. Worse— well-meaning people may have taken promises from first part of the Bible out of context in order to make it seem as if we can divine the state of God's love for us by how well things are going in our lives. The good news is that Jesus makes it clear that our suffering on Earth is not a sign of how God feels about us— in fact, He shares in our suffering with us, because he endured and conquered shame and death on the cross, giving us the strength to live with hope in a world of chaos.

### Getting Started

1. Did you ever forge your parents' signature when you were in school? What for? Why?

### What About You?

2. Have you ever felt that God was blessing everybody else, while your life was defined by chaos?
3. Why is it so tempting to look at our circumstances in order to understand where we "stand" with God? What's wrong with doing this?
4. Have you ever seen somebody use promises God made to ancient Israel in ways that aren't appropriate for individual believers living in our period in history?



### **Look It Up**

*Luke 18:18, 22:20, Hebrews 4:16, 9:15, 11:32–40, 12:1–3,*

5. What is the nature of the new covenant that Jesus inaugurated with his blood?
6. What all did Jesus promise to believers under the new covenant? How is it different than the life of faith in ancient Israel?
7. Why do you think the writer of Hebrews takes such pains to list those who suffered in faith, rather than triumphed? What does it mean that the world was not worthy of them?
8. How do you understand the statement that Jesus “scorned” the shame of the cross?

### **Putting It All Together**

9. Are your eyes fixed on Jesus right now? What does that phrase mean in your current circumstances?
10. What needs are you experiencing right now? Will you commit to approaching God with confidence this week?
11. How does a person run the race in the manner described by the writer of Hebrews? What does this consist of?
12. Do you find it easy or difficult to believe that Jesus is with you in your suffering? How can you keep this reality in the front of your mind right now?

