

— IN THE — MEANTIME

The New Normal *Andy Stanley*

Scripture: *Matthew 11:2–3, 11; 4:12–13; 11:6; John 11:3, 5–6*

Idea: God is not **absent, unconcerned, or angry**. God can be silent and not absent.

Introduction

1. Over the next few weeks, we are going to answer the question: *What do you **do** when there's nothing you can **do**?*
2. What do you do when there's no way forward and no good way out?
3. There are problems for which there are seemingly no solutions—where there are questions, but no answers. It is what it is, and it looks like that's just the way it's going to be. Relationally, financially, professionally, physically, academically . . .
4. There are options, but not **good** ones: run, abandon, quit, give up, give in, drink; become jealous, resentful, angry. You compare yourself to others. Everybody else seems to have the family you were supposed to have. Everybody else seems to have the relationship, job, health, or opportunity you were supposed to have.
5. There are three things we are tempted to conclude:
 - I'll never be **happy** again.
 - Nothing **good** can come from this.
 - There's no **point** in continuing.

This week, I want to confront the primary emotion people feel when facing a new normal—the emotion that makes us want to throw up, panic, and run. We feel like life is out of control and God has let go.

I. God is not absent, apathetic, or angry.

- A. Embracing this is so much of the battle.
 1. We want to know God cares.
 2. We want to feel his presence.
- B. But when it comes to experiencing the presence of God, we are all hypocrites.
- C. How many of you would admit—and we are in church—there have been times when the presence of God was the last thing you wanted to be aware of?