

# Letter 7

by James Bourne

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*The speaker shares their struggles with spiritual dryness and affliction, but holds onto the hope that God has a purpose in their suffering and will ultimately deliver them.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 27:14, Psalm 42:9, Psalm 88:14, Psalm 130:5, Lamentations 3:55

**Topics:** "Spiritual Struggle", "Divine Providence"

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## Description

James Bourne, in a letter to W. J. Brook in London, 1808, expresses deep struggles with feeling separated from God's people, walking in darkness, and being held in perpetual contempt. Despite crying out to God for deliverance and seeking restoration of God's presence, there is a sense of hopelessness and fear. Bourne clings to the belief that God has a purpose in his affliction and longs for a word of support to help him patiently wait for God's salvation.

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## Transcript

[To the Rev. W. J. Brook ] London, 1808.

Dear Sir,

I fear it can be no entertainment to you to hear how I go on, but I feel disposed to write, and may God enable me to do it in godly sincerity. My health is better, but I move very heavily on. I cannot get to hear the Word, being kept in such bondage and fear that I have not presumed to set my foot nearer than the top step of the gallery, where I can hear but little, and sometimes not at all. This is a sore grief to me, and I have cried bitterly to God to deliver me, but find no strength; and I now begin to fear that God has utterly separated me from his people, and that I shall be held in perpetual contempt. A little time past, I enjoyed his presence, and then I thought my afflictions were all the best things that could befall me; but I have lost all sight of his dear face, and all sense of his favour towards me; I walk in sore darkness and seem troubled on every side. If I could have ever so distant a hope that God would restore me, I think I should then be satisfied. What you told me in the vestry at Providence Chapel, is the only thing that has abode with me; and that was, that God had some purpose to answer in my affliction, and when that was answered he would remove the rod. Amen. If I could but fully believe this, I think I should then wait for the day in patience, for I have sinned against him.

I find at times uncommon energy in prayer to God in this trouble, but get no sensible deliverance. O that I could quietly wait for his salvation! I think I never asked you to write to me, but if God should put it into

your heart to do so now, how thankful I should be! Peradventure he may send a word of support by you.

Yours faithfully, J. B.

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