



GIRLS RETREAT DEVOTIONAL SERIES:  
**An Invitation to see God's goodness  
in the Midst of our Suffering**

**DAY 3: HE IS A COMPASSIONATE GOD.**

Scripture Focus: Luke 7:11-17

"Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her (emphasis added) and he said, "Don't cry." Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people." This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country."

**Brief Thought:**

God's heart is tender towards you in your pain. Do you believe that? We see His heart well up with compassion towards this widow in this Luke passage. We repeatedly see His compassion towards Israel as they wander through the wilderness headed towards His promised land, we see His compassion towards the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. Psalm 86:15 says, "But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness." Mercy is always born out of compassion. When you see someone you love hurting, you hurt too. God is that way with us too as we see Jesus demonstrate over and over in the Gospels. He is not a mean-spirited God sitting on His throne, scowling down through the clouds saying, "Hmm, let's see if she is going to be faithful to me in this test." No! That is not the tone of His heart towards you at all! When you hurt, He hurts. Why does our loving Daddy allow us to hurt then, if He can make it all better? These are the same questions I asked during recent, painful seasons in my life. I came to find the answer lies in what we can learn about His heart when our dependence is more real to us.





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When life feels out of control, experiencing His presence in those times, the times we feel might really break us, are some of the hardest, yet the most spiritually rich times of our lives. Suffering makes us dependent. It makes us see our dependence more clearly. And dependence, dear one, is a gift. If we allow, it has the potential to spring-board us into a really rich faith. A faith rooted in the One who loves us with a tender love. A love big enough to die for us. That type of love hurts when it sees its beloved hurting. And that is the basis for a compassion that can make the hardest heart soft.

### Looking Inward:

1. Because your suffering can lead to a humble dependence that allows you to experience sweet aspects of the Lord's character, do you think you could ever view it as a gift? (This does not mean you have to like it/or want to suffer.

That is unrealistic, and not what the Lord asks of us)

2. Do you tend to view God as a moody "I'll get her" teacher or a distant, apathetic-towards-you type of God? Or do you see God as a compassionate Daddy who wants good for you, his daughter, even if it requires trials? (More on this on Day 6)

### Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, please help us to have a deeper understanding of Your heart towards us as we suffer. Please help us to have Your eyes for others as we see them suffering. Please help us to suffer honestly, not with disingenuous stoicism because we think (wrongly) that that is what You want from us. Please help us to experience Your compassion and be forever changed by it. Please help us to look on others, in their pain, with the same compassion You look on us, and find us merciful, Lord. Please help us to be slow to judge, and quick to show compassion. Your compassion is beautiful. Thank you for it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

*"We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer."*

*-Dietrich Bonhoeffer*





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Reflection:

