



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

DAY 1: HE IS A "WITH-US" GOD

Scripture Focus:

Isaiah 41:10 "Fear not for I am with you: Be not dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Psalms 15:11 "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Brief Thought:

When we are hurting it is easy to feel like we are all alone in our pain - like no one else understands the heartache we are experiencing. The world keeps turning, and maybe you are struggling to simply get out of the bed in the morning. Responsibilities, expectations, deadlines, others' needs - none of those things stop when we are walking through difficulty. Because of that, suffering really can feel so lonely.

Dear sister, God has not abandoned you in that space. Though Satan will most certainly try to whisper in your ear that He has. Though the world and all of its demands continue, our God is a God who is with-us when we suffer. He is an in-the-trenches with-us type God. Jesus left the joys of Heaven to come rescue us (Philippians 2), when Jesus left Earth, God sent the Holy Spirit to be among us, I have experienced God's nearly-tangible presence in the midst of trials, the Psalms reiterate over and over the nearness of God in the midst of pain calling God "our refuge" (Psalm 46, Psalm 91, many others). Jesus, a man well-acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3) knows the pain of a broken heart. He sees you, and He dives into that space to be with you when you hurt.

So, if you feel alone or afraid or downcast, know that God is with you. He is the One upholding you. It is in those secret places you have with the Lord, when your heart is shattered/broken/confused, the opportunity to know rich pieces of His character that you could not know by any other means. And while suffering hurts and we want it to (understandably!) end, the experience of the Lord's nearness can be so very sweet.





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Looking Inward:

I encourage you to answer these questions thoughtfully, with openness and honesty as you examine YOUR heart. If you want to be bold, answer them with a friend or family member! Make sure to keep it a safe, judgement-free zone.

1. When you are hurting, do you believe that the Lord is near?
2. If you do believe that He is with you in your pain, do you tend to think the Lord is near out of obligation, or because He deeply loves you and being next to you is right where He wants to be?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, I invite you to open the eyes of my heart to see You beside me, caring about my broken heart in the midst of very real pain. I believe You are here, even if I don't feel you. I want to experience Your presence and the joy that You offer in the middle of my circumstances that sting. I pray this with faith, even if only the size of a mustard-seed. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Reflection:

