

If You Knew God Stood Next To You

A compilation

Very few of us understand the full meaning of the words in Matthew 1:23: “They shall call His name Emmanuel; which being interpreted is, God with us.” This short sentence reveals to us the grandest fact the world will ever know; that God, the Almighty God, the Creator of Heaven and earth, is not a far-off Deity, dwelling in a Heaven of unapproachable glory, but is living with us right here in this world, in the midst of our poor, ignorant, helpless lives, as close to us as we are to ourselves. This seems so incredible to the human heart that we are very slow to believe it; but the Bible teaches this as a fact. In the very beginning of Genesis we read of the “presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.” And from that time on He is revealed to us always as in the most familiar and daily [interaction] with His people everywhere.

In Exodus we find Him asking them to make Him a “sanctuary, that He might dwell among them.” He is recorded as having “walked” with them in the wilderness, and as “taking up His abode” with them in the Promised Land. He taught them to rely on Him as an ever-present friend and helper, to consult Him about all their affairs, and to abandon the whole management of their lives to Him. And finally He came in Christ in bodily form and dwelt in the world as a man among men, making Himself bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, taking upon Him our nature, and revealing to us, in the most tangible and real way possible, the grand, blessed, and incomprehensible fact that He intended to be with us always, even unto the end of the world.

Whoever will believe this with all their hearts will find in it the solution to every difficulty of their lives.

I remember when I was a little girl and found myself in any trouble or difficulty, the presence of my father or mother on the scene would always bring me immediate relief. The moment I heard the voice of one of them saying, “Daughter, I am here,” every burden and anxious thought dropped away. They did not need to promise to relieve me; the simple fact of their presence was all the assurance I required that everything now would be set straight and all would go well for me, and my only interest after their arrival was simply to see how they would do it all. Perhaps they were exceptional parents to have created such confidence in their children’s hearts. I think perhaps they were. But as our God is certainly an exceptional God, the application has absolute force, and His presence is literally all we need.

How often in the Bible He has stilled all questions and all fears by the simple announcement, “I will be with thee”; and who can doubt that in these words He meant to assure us that all His wisdom, and love, and omnipotent power would therefore, of course, be engaged on our side?

I remember to this day the inspiring sense of utter security that used to come to me with my earthly father’s presence. I never feared anything when he was by. And surely with my Heavenly Father by, there can be no possible room for fear.—Hannah Whitall Smith¹

“As I was with Moses, so I will be with you: I will not leave you, nor forsake you” (Joshua 1:5).

Moses was used mightily by the Lord, yet we all know he had his inadequacies and limitations too. Still, he was the vessel which God chose to work through as He carried out the plagues over Egypt, divided the Red Sea, and miraculously led and fed the children of Israel for forty years. That’s pretty big stuff. Can you imagine having to be Moses’ successor after all that? That’s exactly what Joshua had to do. I can’t even begin to imagine what Joshua was thinking at the time.—How can I possibly live up to Moses? But the Lord comforts and reassures Joshua and says, “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you!”

Those words for Joshua are also for us today. You know why? All the men and women who have done great things for the Lord were just ordinary men and women—with a great God. The same God who walked with Moses, Elijah, Daniel, and all the great men and women of God—is with us today!—George Whitten²

What does this mean, “God with us”? ... The Greek particle used here is very forcible and expresses the strongest form of “with.” It is not merely “in company with us,” as another Greek word would

signify, but “with,” “together with,” and “sharing with.” This preposition is a firm bond, implying, if not declaring, close fellowship. God is peculiarly and closely “with us.”

Christ Jesus was the man of men, the second Adam, the model representative man! ... You can scarcely find a halting place in the march of life at which Jesus has not paused, or a weary league which He has not traversed. From the gate of entrance even to the door which closes life’s way, the footprints of Jesus may be traced. Were you in the cradle? He was there. Were you a child under parental authority? Christ was, also, a boy in the home at Nazareth. Have you entered upon life’s battle? Your Lord and Master did the same. ... There is no pang that rends the heart—I might almost say not one which disturbs the body—but what Jesus Christ has been with us in it all.

Do you feel the sorrows of poverty? He “had not where to lay His head.”³ Do you endure the griefs of bereavement? Jesus “wept” at the tomb of Lazarus.⁴ Have you been slandered for righteousness’ sake and has it vexed your spirit? He said, “Reproach has broken My heart.”⁵ Have you been betrayed? Do not forget that He, too, had His familiar friend who sold Him for the price of a slave. On what stormy seas have you been tossed which have not also roared around His boat? Never a glen of adversity so dark, so deep, apparently so pathless, but what in stooping down you may discover the footprints of the Crucified One. In the fires and in the rivers, in the cold night and under the burning sun, He cries, “I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am both your Companion and your God.”—Charles Spurgeon⁶ When the times get rough and storms rage, when the nights get darker and the discouragement deeper, don’t give up! Just look to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith.⁷ Jesus is there with you. He is with you in the darkness. He is with you in the trial. He is with you in the depths. He is with you there because He loves you. He is there to pull you through.—David Brandt Berg

Our God is not some faraway disinterested being. He is a God who is personal, who has a relationship with His creation. He has made Himself known to us through His Word. He has shown us some of what He’s like. He is interested in us as individuals. He has made a way for us to live with Him forever, through salvation. Through belief in Jesus, God the Son, we become God’s children, which enables us to touch Him personally, to communicate with Him, to hear His voice, to share our hearts with Him. He communes with us, abides in us, and loves us. We commune with Him, abide in Him, and love Him. We have a personal relationship with the Personal God. How incredibly wonderful!—Peter Amsterdam

1 Adapted from *A Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* (1875).

2 <http://www.worthydevotions.com/christian-devotional/emmanuel-god-with-us>

3 Matthew 8:20.

4 John 11:35.

5 Psalm 69:20.

6 <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/spurgeon/sermons21.lxi.html>

7 Hebrews 12:2