

Enjoying Jesus' Presence—No Matter How Discouraged You Feel

I get it. We all have those days. The days when the world feels more than tilted, it feels like someone picked it up and hurled it into a wall!

When you're digging your nails (if you didn't bite them off) into any semblance of what "happy yesterday" looked like. Felt like. That's when it gets tricky. When you try to wring joy out of yesterday's memory, as if God were more present then. God is in the now.

Sure you felt Him when things were great. We all do. That's the easy part. But what about today? What about this moment when pain and disappointment sit like a heavy weight upon your soul? How do you find Him now?

You find Him in a different way. You don't look for Him to pull you into your breakthrough, although He will. You find Him with His arms wrapped around you. Caring for you in your pain. Loving you. Drawing you into Himself. Into His strength. Into this precise moment. Not into the future and not into the past. He is your ever-present help, and He wants you to discover a secret.

You see, your happiness, mood and emotions may be temporarily affected by what's happening around you, but He is your source. This warm tangible knowing, right in the center of your spirit. A living, breathing God inside of you. A peace that is deeper than your pain. A joy that's louder than the deafening facts. And when you lean into Him and allow His love to fill you, it settles you in a way that doesn't make sense.

His love is alive. It's present. It defies the trial. It's in

a category of its own. You can step into it and find your balance for those days. In a way that absolutely contradicts what you see with your eyes, those days become one of your most precious. You've found Him! You've found the one whose grace and strength infuse every dark crevice of pain. And gracefully you find that you're OK. That you don't have to long for yesterday or wait for tomorrow. Even in your pain, Jesus is with you. The joy of now. The peace for the present.

Gretchen Rodriguez recently co-authored *Prayers on Fire 365 Days Praying the Psalms* and *The Divine Romance: 365 Days Meditating on the Song of Songs* with *Brian Simmons*. Their newest devotional, *Ever-Present Love: 365 Days Discovering Jesus in the Gospels* will be released September 4, 2018. (All three books published by *BroadStreet Publishing*.) She is a writer, dancer and ballet teacher. Her heart burns with one main message: *Intimacy with Jesus and discovering the reality of His presence*. She and her husband invested nine years as missionaries in Puerto Rico, along with their three daughters, and now make Redding, California, their home.

You can find Gretchen here: