

# God Is With You

By

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## Introduction

Throughout the Bible God comforted many people facing trials by saying, "I am with you." As I thought about this I wondered, "What does it mean to have God 'with you'? How does it apply to my trials? What can I expect to happen when He is 'with me'?"

A study of the scriptures reveals that one of the most comforting things a Christian can know when they are facing a trial is that God is with them. This lesson addresses the questions above and provides assurance for the Christian in the face of *any* and *every* trial they may face.

## Scriptures Used In This Lesson

Deuteronomy 31:1 – 8	Psalm 6: 8 – 10	2 Chronicles 20
Joshua 1:1 – 9	Psalm 28:1 – 3	Isaiah 41:9 – 11
Genesis 39:1 – 6, 19 – 23	Psalm 30	Isaiah 43:1 – 6
Genesis 26:1 – 6, 12 – 16, 23 – 31	Judges 7:14 – 25, 8:10	Zephaniah 3:16 – 18
Judges 6:1 – 16, 7:14 – 25, 8:10	2 Chronicles 17:1 – 6	Jeremiah 15:19 – 21
		Psalm 23

## Do Not Fear

As we study the Bible and look for times when God said, "I am with you", we see several patterns emerge. First let's read about Israel and Joshua. First read Deuteronomy 31:1 – 8. In this passage, Moses gives instructions to the nation of Israel before they cross into the Promised Land. In the first half of Deuteronomy 31:6 Moses tells the people:

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them ..." (NIV)  
(them refers to the nations occupying the land)

God tells His people not to fear the challenges before them. In the second half of the verse, He tells them why they should not fear.

"...for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." (NIV)

What challenges did the nation face?

- They were about to cross over into an unknown land that their parents had feared forty years earlier (Numbers 13).
- Their parents had angered God so much that they were forced to wander and die in the desert for forty years. I'm sure they did not want to make the same mistake.
- They were about to engage in battle against unknown enemies. Many men could lose their lives.
- They had to leave Moses behind. He was the only leader they had ever known.
- They had to put their trust in a new leader, Joshua
- They had to decide on whether God would be enough to give them security in this battle.

These are similar to challenges we face throughout our lives.

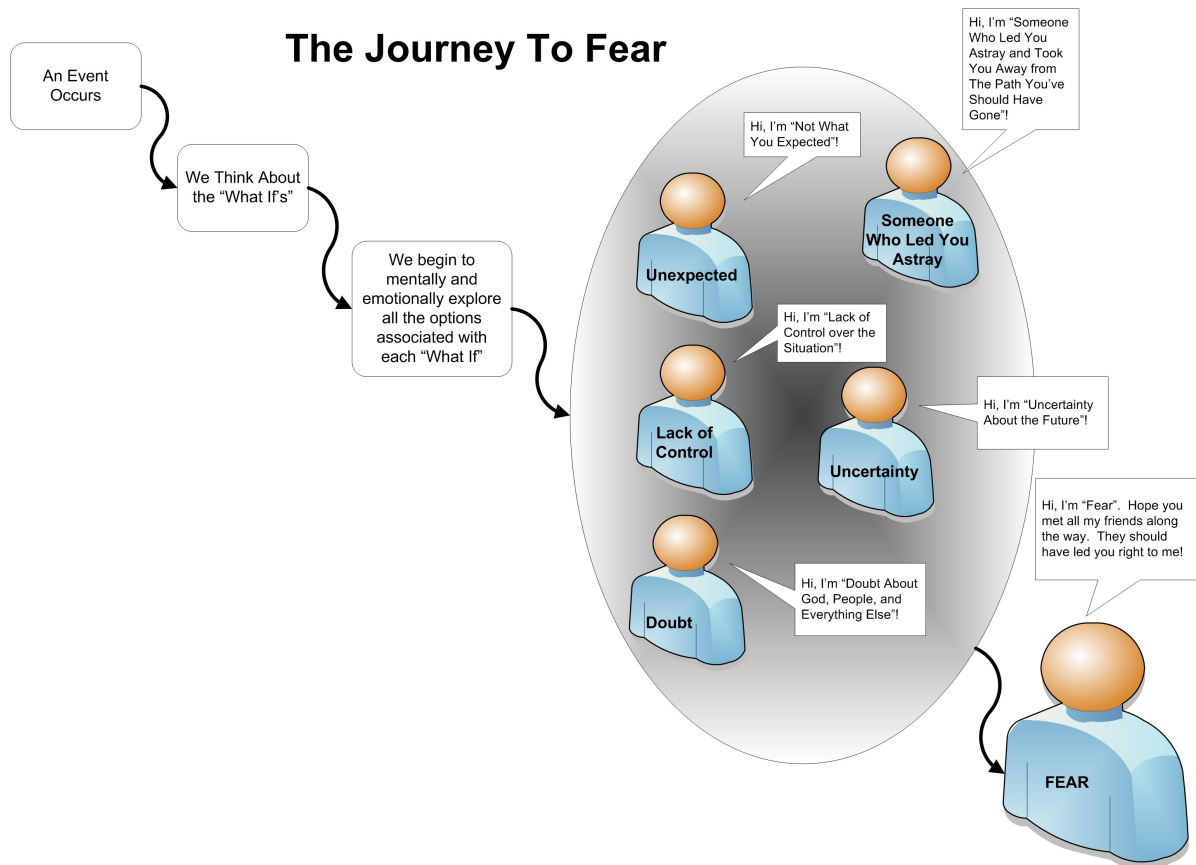
- Have you ever had to go someplace you had not gone before? Have you had to relocate to a new school, job, city, country, team or work location?
- Have you had to come up against obstacles you had not encountered before? Have you been given a tough assignment, new career, become a new spouse or parent?
- Have you had your "security" taken away from you and had to depend on something or someone extensively? Have you ever been laid off from your job and drained all your savings before finding a new job? Has someone you depended on for years, suddenly pass away? Have you ever had to move away from family and friends to a new place where you knew no one?
- Have you ever had a new leader, coach or boss and were not entirely sure of him/her or their intentions?
- Have you ever had to depend on God before and depend on Him to be "enough"?
- Have you ever had a close relationship end all of a sudden and now you are "all alone"?

All of these are challenges we have or will face at some point in our lives. Often fear comes in when we "think too much". Check out the diagram on the next page.

The journey to fear usually starts with an event. Most often it is unexpected and unpleasant. Let's say for example, you lose your job. Then we begin to think about all the "what if's" of the situation.

"...What if I don't find another job soon? What if my resume isn't good enough? What if my resume doesn't get to the right person? What if it does and I'm over qualified? What if I'm under qualified? What if I run out of money? What if I find another job and my old job calls me back? What if they don't call me back? What if I have to move? What if the kids don't want to move? What if we do have to move and the kids don't adjust? What if

they like the new place and I don't? What if I like the new place and they don't? What if my house doesn't sell soon? What if it sells too soon before I'm ready? What if..."



As you begin to review the “what if’s” over and over and over again, your emotions rise up. Then you’ll find the “Friends of Fear”, namely, Doubt, Uncertainty, Lack of Control, Someone Who’ll Lead You Astray, or the Unexpected. Notice how big Fear is behind his “emotional friends”.

God is well aware of our nature. He knows how easily we can go down the path of fear. That’s why Moses tells Isarel, “...Do not be afraid or terrified...” Why did the presence of God matter so much that He instructed them to be “fear-less”? It all has to do with who God is and what He had already done for them. God is all powerful, all knowing, and ever present. Throughout the Bible He declares Himself as “God Almighty”, “El Shaddai”. “El” is a word translated as “God”, and “shaddai” means “most powerful”. So if you have the One who is “most powerful” with you, you have no reason to fear.

As the creator of all things, nothing is beyond Him. And here is a short list of what Israel had experienced by the hand of God prior to this point:

- The Nile River turning to blood

- Locust eating all the crops of the Egyptians
- The Death Angel passing over them because of the blood of the lamb over the doors to their households
- Their freedom (exodus) from Egypt
- Crossing the Red Sea on dry ground
- The destruction of all the Egyptians who tried to pursue them through the Red Sea
- Water coming from rocks
- Enough quail to feed 2 to 3 million people
- Enough manna appearing to feed millions of people every day for 40 years

And so on.

So since God had done all of this, they had no legitimate reason to fear, and certainly, God had proved that He was *enough*.

*What has God done for you over the past year? Even if the past year has been “rough”, the fact that you are reading this study means that He has sustained you. Do you have a legitimate reason to fear? Why do you become fearful sometimes? What can you do about it to change...permanently? Do you truly believe that God is enough? Do you believe it enough so that it affects your actions and attitude throughout the day? Why or why not?*

**Key Point:** God Almighty, El Shaddai, is enough.

### **About Joshua**

Read Deuteronomy 31:7 – 8, and Joshua 1:1 – 9. The passage in Deuteronomy 31 relates Moses' instructions to Joshua and the passage in Joshua 1, God's instructions to Joshua. The three key verses are:

Deuteronomy 31:8

The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." (NIV)

And Joshua 1:5, 9

<sup>5</sup>No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. (NIV)

<sup>9</sup>Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." (NIV)

What are some of the challenges Joshua faced?

- Leading millions of people
- Crossing into an unknown land
- Leading a people who on several occasions wanted to stone (kill) Moses
- Wondering how many "bad habits" these people picked up from their parents from 40 years earlier
- Fighting unknown enemies
- Coming up with the right battle strategies and tactics to insure victory
- Feeding millions of people
- Resolving disputes among millions of people
- Taking care of his own family
- Keeping the people in right relationship with God
- Keeping himself in right relationship with God

God provided Joshua exactly what he needed; not only a word from Moses, but a word from Himself. And the main theme was, "Don't fear because I am with you".

*As you look back in your life, has there been a time when God provided you with the right words of encouragement at the right time, from the right people? How did it make you feel to receive it? How did you feel about God at the time? Did you stop and thank Him? If not, why?*

**Key Point:** God will provide all that we need to accomplish His goals for us, exactly when we need it.

### **Others Will See It**

Another one of my favorite examples of God being with someone is in the life of Joseph. Read Genesis 39:1 – 6, 19 – 23. In this passage, we see that Joseph was serving as a slave in Potiphar's house. God being with Joseph was so obvious, that an unbelieving Egyptian who worshiped false gods, left his entire household in Joseph's care. Potiphar may have worshipped idols, but he was not stupid; he wanted part of the blessings Joseph was enjoying because God was with him. Verse 3 says that "...the Lord gave him success in everything he did..." The success God gave him was visibly obvious.

On the surface Potiphar's actions may seem to be rooted in selfishness, but it was actually part of God's plan. By managing Potiphar's house, Joseph developed the skills he needed for God's ultimate role for him – to manage all of Egypt. God used this opportunity to give Joseph the training he needed.

In verses 19 – 23, Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph of trying to rape her. As a result, Joseph was thrown in prison. But the Bible says that:

“...the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden...” (NIV)

As a result, Joseph was put in charge of all those held in the prison; he gained more training in administration and managing large operations, which was a part of God's plan.

There are several key points that we need to review out of this

1. When God is with you, others will see it.
2. When God is with you, He will give you favor with others, even the ungodly.
3. When God is with you, you can “prosper” in the midst of being in “prison”.
4. Just because you are in “prison” (or going through a trial) doesn't mean that God isn't with you.
5. God may be preparing you for the next step in your life while you are in “prison”. Your “prison” experience may be what's needed for you to be successful in the next stage of your life.

So if you're in “prison”, don't fret; God is still with you.

**Key Points:** Items 1 – 5 above.

*Discuss the key points above. Have you personally experienced any one of the points above? If so, which ones? Do you know someone else who has? Do you have any doubts of any of them being true? If so, why?*

Another example of “Others Will See It” is found in Genesis 26 with Isaac's encounter with King Abimelech. Abimelech was a Philistine king who lived in Gerar, a town in south central Israel near Beersheba. He was most probably the son of the King Abimelech found in Genesis 20 who had an encounter with Abraham, Isaac's father.

Read Genesis 26:1 – 6. In these verses we see God instruct Isaac to stay in Gerar, and that He was with him and would bless him. Now read verses 12 – 16. Here we see how God kept His word in blessing

Isaac. He blessed him so much that the Philistines became jealous. Finally in verse 16, King Abimelech tells Isaac to move away from them, for he had become “too powerful” for them.

Next read verses 23 – 31. The night that Isaac arrived in Beersheba, the Lord appeared to him and said, in part, “...Do not be afraid, for I am with you...” Meanwhile King Abimelech, his personal advisor and the commander of his army came to meet with Isaac. Re-read verse 28. They saw “clearly” that the Lord was with Isaac and were so concerned that they wanted to make an agreement between their kingdom and Isaac.

God being with Isaac was so obvious that:

- Isaac became exceedingly rich
- Philistines became jealous
- The king became so concerned that he asked Isaac to move
- Later, the king and his associates acknowledged the blessings of God in Isaac's life (remember, the Philistines worshiped other idols, not Jehovah God)
- The king was so concerned about God being with Isaac that he wanted to make a treaty with Isaac.

On this last point, think about it – a king, the leader of the Philistine nation, wanted to make a treaty with an individual. That's how “obvious” it was that God's blessing was upon Isaac; so “obvious” that others (including the ungodly) could see it.

What does this mean for us? When God is with us, it will be obvious to others. Why is that? So God will get the glory and let others know He alone is the one and true God.

### **Doing What No One Thought Could Be Done**

The third benefit of God being with us is that we will accomplish things that are seemingly impossible or things that no one else thought we could do. A prime example of this is found in the book of Judges, chapter 6. Read verses 1 – 6.

In this passage the Bible describes the condition of the Israelites. They were a “defeated” people impoverished by the Midianites. The Bible says that the Midianites were so numerous that:

“...They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count the men and their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it...”

(Judges 6:5, NIV)

Have you ever been in a situation where you felt overwhelmed by your circumstances? Where there seemed to be enemies all around you or difficulties totally beyond your control with no help in sight? That's how Israel felt. In their hopelessness they cried out to the Lord.

Read verses 7 – 12. The good news in this passage is that even though Israel was the cause of their problems (v. 10), God, whose mercy is everlasting, selected someone to deliver them – Gideon. This should give you hope. If you repent from any known sin, God is faithful to forgive you and work in your behalf. His mercy endures forever. Don't be afraid to call out for mercy. Read the cries of David – one who stole another man's wife, sent her husband to die on the frontlines of a battle field, and committed adultery with her.

- Psalm 6: 8 – 10
- Psalm 28:1 – 3
- Psalm 30

The key is “repentance”. In the Greek, “repent” (*metanoeō*) means to change one's mind or to change one's mind for the better. When we “change our minds” about our sin, God is with us.

Notice the first thing the angel of the Lord said to Gideon, “The Lord is with you”. The angel even called him a “mighty warrior”. The irony of this is that this “mighty warrior” was in a place *hidden* from the Midianites.

Read verses 14 – 16. Notice the Lord's response when Gideon tells the Lord of his apparent “weaknesses”. The Lord didn't give Gideon the details of how the victory will be gained, or any specifics on the strategy that he'll use. What the Lord gave him was what he needed to accomplish the task, “...I will be with you...” By this fact, Gideon accomplished more than he could have dreamed.

The entire story is worth reading (Judges 6 – 8), but for our purposes read Judges 7:14 – 25, and Judges 8:10. Gideon, with 300 men, defeated 120,000 men because the Lord was with him. Gideon had accomplished what no one thought he could do.

*Are you in a situation where the odds seemed stacked against you? Is there anything in your situation that God has not seen before? Is there anything in your situation that is too powerful for God? Is there any detail of your situation that is hidden from God? If your answers to these questions were, “Yes, No, No, and No”, then think about and discuss what's possible for God to accomplish in your situation.*



### One More Example

One of my favorite chapters in the Bible is 2 Chronicles 20. There is so much to learn from this chapter, but I'll try to keep it focused on the scope of this lesson. First of all Jehoshaphat was a king of Judah (873 BC to 849 BC) who followed the ways of the Lord. As background read 2 Chronicles 17:1 – 6. Notice how Jehoshaphat was blessed by the Lord being with him.

Now read 2 Chronicles 20:1 – 4. Three different nations were coming to make war with Jehoshaphat. Again, like in Gideon's case, Jehoshaphat felt overwhelmed by his circumstances; so much so that he and the people became fearful. But the first thing he did was the best first step he could take: he called for a nation-wide fast and sought the Lord in prayer.

In your personal time of study, I strongly encourage you to study Jehoshaphat's prayer, not only what he said, but the structure of the prayer. Namely, what he talked about first, second, third, and so on. Think about why he structured the prayer that way, and using it as a model for your prayers.

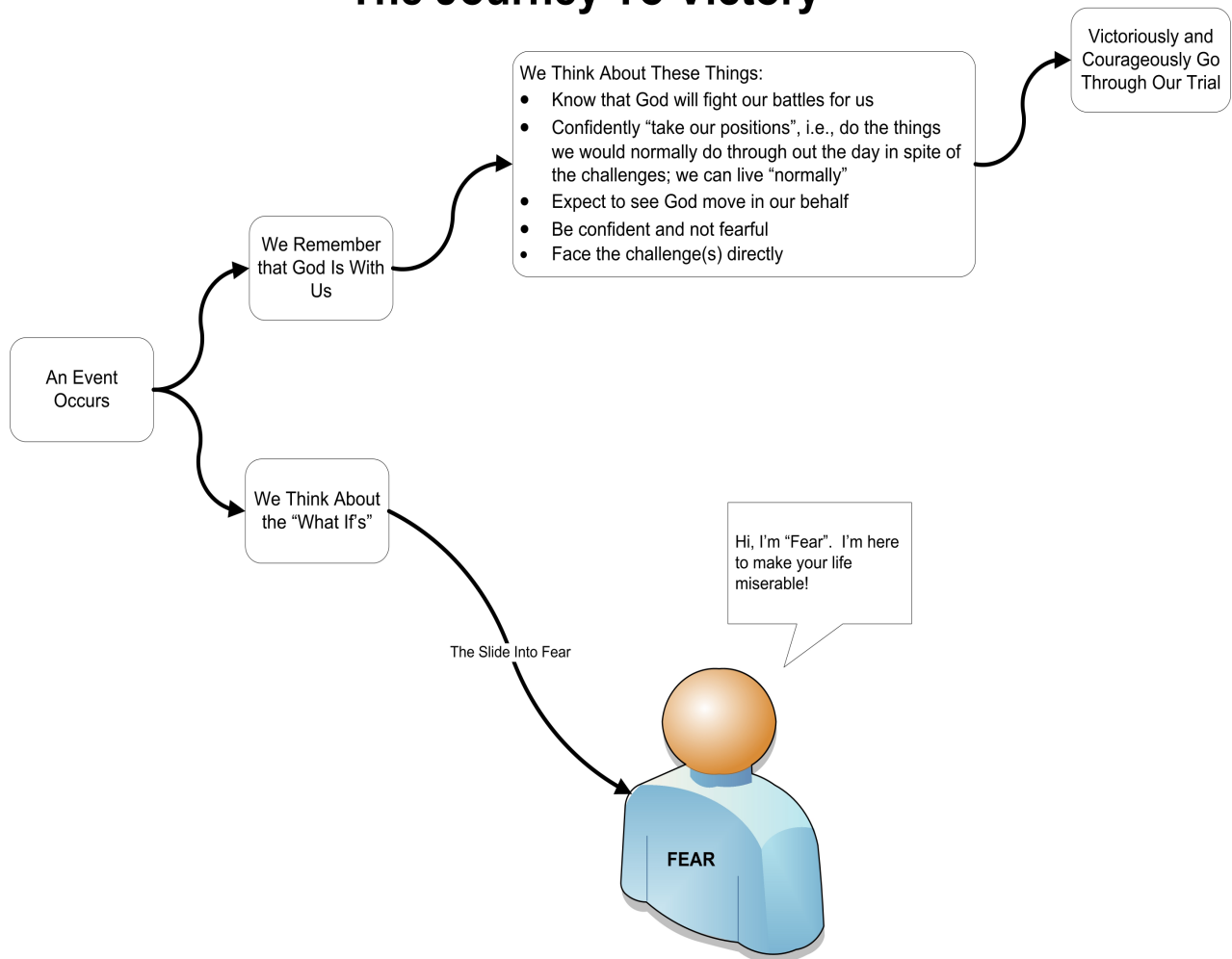
But for this lesson, read verses 14 – 17, in particular verse 17. After the nation prayed, the Holy Spirit came upon Jahaziel, a priest. Through him, the Lord spoke to Jehoshaphat. Verse 17 is full of hope and applies to our lives today. Because God is with us, we can:

- Know that God will fight our battles for us
- Confidently "take our positions", i.e., do the things we would normally do throughout the day in spite of the challenges; we can live "normally"
- Expect to see God move in our behalf
- Be confident and not fearful
- Face the challenge(s) directly

God is speaking to you in verse 17. This is why this is one of my favorite chapters in the Bible. With God nothing is impossible. There is an alternative to *the Journey to Fear*; it's the *Journey to Victory*.

When an event occurs, we have a choice as to what will occupy our minds: 1) focus on the problem, or 2) focus on God. What we focus on will become the guiding force in our lives. If we focus on the “what if’s”, then fear will begin to dominate our thinking and influence our actions. If we focus on “God is with us” and what that means, then the Holy Spirit will influence our actions. It boils down to a choice. One leads to victory and the other defeat.

## The Journey To Victory



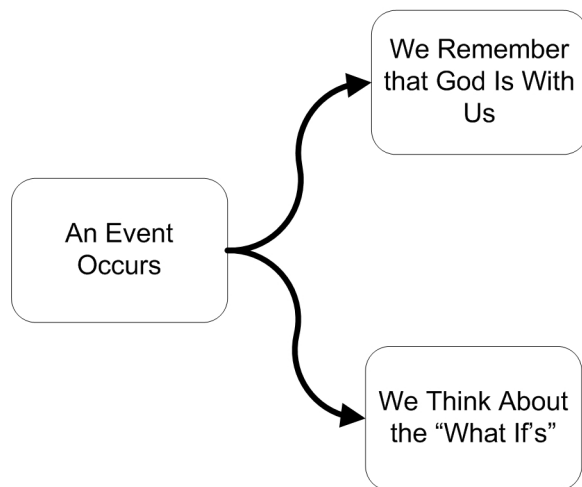
*Think about the last trial you experienced. What decision did you make? Why did you make that decision? If you chose the path to fear, what would you change now and why? When is the best time to help someone else? How would you help them?*

Now read verses 20 – 30 for the rest of the story. Notice verse 24. When they came to the place where they could see the vast army, all they saw were dead bodies. God fought the battle for them. The Israelites didn’t have to lift a finger and the victory was complete. When God is with you, He will fight your

battles and do what you could never do. His victory will be complete. Also notice what God *did not* use for the victory – their help. Sometimes if we try to “help” God, we can make matters worse. Be careful and be led by the Spirit before you try to “help” God.

## The Choice

**Key Point:** God’s victory is complete.



**Key Point:** God doesn’t need our “help” to accomplish only what He can do. Sometimes our “help” can make matters worse.

**Key Point:** Be led by the Spirit before you try to “help” God.

Another great benefit the Israelites received is shown in verse 25. There was so much plunder that it took three days to collect it. This really demonstrates the character of our God. He wants to do “extra” for us. Through this “extra”, He is glorified even more. Verse

29 tells us that everyone knew that there was a God in heaven. He provided convincing evidence of His existence and presence with Israel.

**Key Point:** When God does “extra” for us, He receives the glory, i.e., the credit for the good work and proof of His existence and presence in our lives.

**Key Point:** God’s “extra” is an expression of His love for us; an indication of the kind of “person” He is.

### Summary

This has been a long lesson, so I want to make sure we review some important points. When God is with you:

1. You have no reason to fear
2. God will do things that will be obvious to others
3. He will do what you cannot do

Also remember and *know* that:

1. He will fight your battles

2. You can confidently “take your position”, and live “normally”
3. God will move in our behalf
4. You can walk confident and assured
5. You can face the challenge(s) directly
6. God’s victory is complete

This is what “God is with you” means to you and what you can expect.

Finally I’d like to end with some words of encouragement. I cannot say it any better than the following scriptures:

- Jeremiah 15:19 – 21
- Isaiah 41:9 – 11
- Zephaniah 3:16 – 18
- Isaiah 43:1 – 6
- Psalm 23