



Devotional Study Guide Journal

January 4th

God Sees You and Hears You¹

Sometimes it feels as if we are almost completely alone in the struggles we face. It seems that even those who are closest to us can't reach the lonely place where we are. Yet we can rest assured that even when others cannot see or understand what it is we are experiencing, God sees us and our pain, and He has deep compassion for us, even if our problems are our own doing.

In fact, one of His names is El Roi, The God who Sees Me. We learn of this name as we read of Hagar in the desert alone and pregnant. Even though it was Sarah's idea that Hagar go into Abraham for the express purpose of conceiving a son, it was unacceptable that she despised Sarah when the union was fruitful. Sarah complained to Abraham about her, and he gave her permission to deal with her maid as she pleased. When Sarah treated Hagar harshly, probably after being fed up with her attitude, Hagar fled.

So, there she sat at a spring of water in the wilderness. It wasn't her fault that Sarah gave her to Abraham so that he could have a son, but it was her arrogance that created the rift between Sarah and her. It was also her fault that instead of changing her attitude toward Sarah, she ran away.

What was God's response? Did He leave her alone in the wilderness to suffer so she could see the error of her ways? No, He gently corrected her. He sent an angel to help her see where to go from there. The angel instructed her to go back and submit herself to Sarah. He even told her to name her son Ishmael, which means "God will hear". So blessed by this heavenly visitation was she, that we read, "Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees (El Roi); for she said, 'Have I also here seen Him who sees me?'" (Gen. 16:13) Think of this, in just one story of one woman's *mistake*, two very important characteristics of God are revealed to us. He sees you, and He hears you. You are *not* alone—not ever.

So many times when we face hard times, the blame game begins. How did we get ourselves into this? “If I’d only—. I wish I hadn’t. I shouldn’t have. It’s all my fault. I deserve this.” Here is the good news. Even if our problems are our own doing or partially so, God still sees and hears us. He will help us. Consider, too, the superior relationship we have with God—that we are called his son or daughter. Would you leave your child in the wilderness *to die* to “teach him a lesson”? He will take care of us when we call on Him—even if the mess we are in was caused by us, even if we were acting irresponsibly. He will cause all things; yes, even our wrong decisions, to work together for our good.

“Father, I thank You that You see me right now—that I am not alone. You see me, and You hear me. You will bring me from this place of weakness into a position of strength.”

Psalm 40:1-3

I waited patiently for the Lord;

And He inclined to me,

And heard my cry.

²*He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,*

Out of the miry clay,

And set my feet upon a rock,

And established my steps.

³*He has put a new song in my mouth—*

Praise to our God;

Many will see it and fear,

And will trust in the Lord.

Have you ever found yourself in a painful or difficult situation that was at least partially your fault? Briefly record your experience.

How does knowing that when you face intense struggles, God sees you and hears you, serve as a source of encouragement to you personally?

We read in Romans 8:28 that “All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” This is a blessed benefit of the New Covenant. So powerful is our God that our pain and yes, even our mistakes and work together for our good. Yet it is so important we realize that even though all things work together for our good, that does NOT mean that God causes or “allows” evil to befall us *in order* to bring about good. Rather, when troublesome times happen as they do to us all, the principle is already in process—even these blows from life end up working for good to those who love God—all believers. Have you seen this New Covenant principle in operation in your life? Explain, if you’d like.

Finish this prayer.

*“Father, thank You for seeing me and hearing me at all times.
I thank You that I am not alone in this situation,
though it feels as if I am.
I ask You to...”*

