

## Week 10 Day 3 | *The Lord Is: Close*

A few years back, I was in Tanzania with Here's Life Africa. It's an amazing ministry that takes the gospel out into the bush to evangelize and disciple the wonderful people of Africa. Now, the distance from Louisville (where I live) to Arusha (where we stayed) is about 8,100 miles.

For a little context, that's a little less than driving from the East Coast of the United States to the West Coast, then back to the East Coast, then one more time to the West Coast again. The journey required several long flights to arrive half a world away. Another world it was . . . new sights, sounds, tastes, and smells. While our hotel had modern accommodations and the people were welcoming, I felt very, very far from home.

At night, I was able to call my family. In that moment, I was instantly transported back to a very familiar, very comfortable place. Hearing the voices of my wife and children transported me. I felt the coziness of our house. I could see them in my mind's eye. I could hear the love in their hearts. While it seemed I was on a different planet, I felt close.

This, to me, is similar to how our relationship to the Lord sometimes feels. While at times it might seem like He's on a different planet, He's as close as a conversation. Actually, if He lives in our hearts, by definition He's closer to us than anyone else possibly could be.

Admittedly, it can be hard to feel close to someone we talk to but who doesn't answer us audibly. Someone we've never seen face to face. Someone we've never touched with our own hands.

However, we have assurances in Scripture that He is indeed with us wherever we are:

*"The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."—Psalm 34:17–18 (NIV)*

We see His closeness displayed again later in Psalm 145:

*"The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them."—verses 18–19 (NIV)*

Then again, we see His closeness in the New Testament:

*"Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."—Philippians 4:5–7 (NIV)*

We are nearing the end of what's arguably the hardest phase of the fitness journey, the fortitude phase. Success in this phase is often nothing more than showing up. Put one foot in front of the other, focus on the behaviors, and trust that the physical results will follow.

That's why recognizing just how close the Lord is to us is such an enormous help. It's like having running partners. They cheer us on, hand us water and energy gels, match us stride for stride, even hold our hand if necessary.

Yet our Lord is even closer than that. What's especially encouraging is the outcome of His closeness. It's what happens when you "cry out," "call on," relinquish anxiety and prayerfully "present your requests" to God.

He doesn't stop at just being close to us. Look back at each of the verses and you see He's at work. He "delivers," "saves," "hears," "fulfills," "saves" some more, and "guards" our hearts and minds!

While the Lord may feel a million miles away, the Bible makes it clear that He is close to you. He hears you when you pray, so pray. He hears you when you call, so call. He hears you when you cry out, so cry out. As you do, remember, after He listens, He supplies your needs.

So, call out to Him because He's as close as a conversation.

### Prayer

*Father, thank You for not only being close, but delivering me in so many ways. Will You forgive me when I seek deliverance from anyone other than You? Please help me to better rely on who You are and what You are able to do through me. Amen.*

### Meditation

The Lord is close . . . and able.

### Daily Spiritual Exercise

Continue to spend 10 to 15 minutes writing your own "The Lord is\_\_\_\_" devotional. Remember, you don't need to be eloquent to honor God by this exercise. The goal is to acknowledge who He has been, is, and will continue to be in your life. Don't get caught up in making it perfect. It's the pouring out of your heart that brings Him glory.