

Introduction

God Moments

Imagine that during the next few minutes, you were to have an extraordinary encounter with God. Everything else around you becomes dim. Your thoughts become incredibly clear. All your problems, large and small, are momentarily forgotten. And as improbable as it may seem, you sense that the God of the universe is trying to come close, break through your thoughts, and speak to you.

So you listen.

And in that moment, to your great amazement, you feel an outpouring of love from God. There are no words to describe the rush that washes over you. You aren't afraid, and you aren't ashamed. You realize that God wants to be close to you. You feel that he wants the best for you, even greater than you could imagine, and you sense that his feelings towards you are benevolent and pure. In that moment, you find yourself believing that God is on your side, and you feel that you can trust him, no matter what happens.

But then the moment fades. Your world pops back into focus. And all your problems, with their messy details and unanswered questions, return with a vengeance. So you sigh, shake

your head, and prepare to plunge back into normal life. But in that instant before you fully return, what would you do with the “God moment” you've just had?

Perhaps you might abandon it. You could simply dismiss it as wishful thinking, something no more real than a daydream. Or perhaps you might believe it. You could be firmly convinced that you heard from God. Or perhaps you would respond somewhere in between. You might hope that you really heard from God, but you honestly wouldn't be sure.

Regardless of your response, if you want to genuinely have such a moment with God (or you want to have these moments more often), then this book is for you. I believe it's possible to have such a moment with God. In fact, I believe you can have a lifetime of such moments, with each one reminding you that God is truly good, that God truly cares about you, and that God will never leave you.

These moments with God have changed my life. And I haven't just experienced them on days when I already felt that life was good. These moments have occurred in the midst of stresses at work, tensions at home, strained relationships, and money problems. They've appeared as I've been abruptly thrown into major life changes, like losing a job or having to relocate. They've helped me when I've wrestled with thorny issues, like facing a difficult decision or working through a personal failure.

These moments with God have also shown up on my worst days. Like the day I found out that my father had committed suicide. Or the day I discovered that my wife had terminal cancer. Even on those days when I felt my world was shaking and I didn't know what was going to happen next, God would remind me that he was still with me, and that he was on my side.

If in this moment you can believe that God is on your side, then you can face life with confidence, without fear and without shame. You can get involved in relationships without being

overwhelmed by them. You can take worthy risks and be at peace with the uncertainty they bring. You can have courage to choose the right and avoid the wrong. You can endure trouble or suffering without becoming bitter. If you stumble into wrongdoing (as we all do quite frequently), you can be sure that God will forgive you. And when someday you face your own death, you can be at peace because you know you're going to heaven with God.

But you can't fool yourself into that kind of certainty, even if you believe in God or have a sense that God exists. You must be convinced – for more than just a few moments – that God is for you and that he'll be with you always. Otherwise, you'll never quite be sure how God feels about you, or if he is truly on your side or not.

Unfortunately, we don't find that certainty easily. We all have difficulty seeing that God is on our side. This is not God's fault; it's just the way things are. But finding that certainty with God is what this book is all about.