

In summary, how can we pray to God without being with Him? And how can we be with Him without thinking of Him often? And how can we think of Him often without forming the holy habit of being in His presence?

PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF GOD: Brother Lawrence

Nicholas Herman, (1611 – 1691)

My heart has heard you say, “Come and talk with me.” And my heart responds, “LORD, I am coming.” (Psa. 27:8 NLT-SE)

MEET BROTHER LAWRENCE

Nicholas Herman was born in eastern France in 1611. Not much is known about his life. He grew up so poor that as a young adult he served as a soldier so he could eat and provide for himself. Then after becoming injured he left the army and got a job as a footman, opening carriage doors for travelers and waiting on tables.

Nicholas became a follower of Christ at age eighteen and at about the age of forty he seems to have had a deeper experience with Christ that moved him to become a lay brother with the Discalced (Barefoot) Carmelites and joined their monastery community in Paris. There he took the name “Lawrence of the Resurrection.”

For most of the rest of his life he worked in the monastery kitchen until his last years in which he repaired sandals. It’s ironic that this barefoot lame monk fixed broken sandals so that other people could walk with more comfort! But that’s exactly the kind of humble and generous-spirited man that Brother Lawrence was.

How Did Brother Lawrence’s Story Become So Famous?

Nobody would’ve imagined that this poor, humble man would become famous, known to the world as “Brother Lawrence.” How did this happen?

He developed a simple way of praying from his heart which he called “practicing the presence of God.” And he learned to commune with God continuously, not only in church or personal devotions, but also as he worked in the kitchen, ran errands, or listened to people.

His genuine spirit, cheerfulness, and peace attracted people within his community to share with him and seek his counsel and prayers. Eventually people from other parts of France, common people and church leaders alike, wrote to him or visited him for spiritual guidance.

Brother Lawrence died in 1691. Father Joseph de Beaufort gathered as many of the monk’s letters of spiritual direction that he could find, along with four conversations that people recalled from their meetings with him, and in 1692 these were published as *The Practice of the Presence of God*.

In his preface to the first edition Beaufort wrote, “All readers, whatever your occupation, will find profit in this book for in it you will meet a brother busy as you are in outward activity... but a brother who, in the middle of all the demanding tasks, had learned how to wed contemplation to activity. For the past forty years our brother has hardly ever turned from the Presence of God.”

In the last four centuries untold millions of people have been drawn into a life of practicing God’s presence through Brother Lawrence’s warm-hearted letters of spiritual direction. These letters are so precious! Reading them opens us to experience God’s loving presence! ~ The SeedSowers

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE = MINDFULNESS = ATTENTIVENESS

Talking with Him... I have found that we can establish ourselves in a sense of the presence of God by continually talking with Him. It is simply a shameful thing to quit conversing with Him to think of trifles and foolish things. We should feed and nourish our souls with high notions of God which will yield great joy... ~ Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God

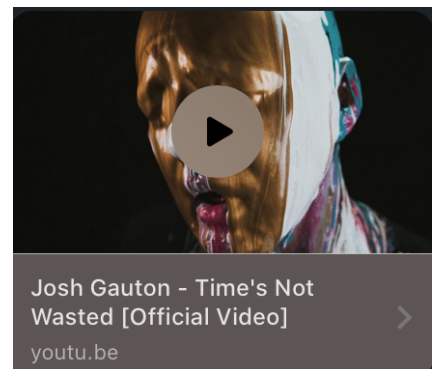
For the love of God... And so it is the same in the kitchen (a place to which I have a great natural aversion). I have accustomed myself to doing everything there for the love of God. On all occasions, with prayer, I have found [my work] easy during the fifteen years in which I have been employed here... ~ Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God

Tranquility in God... The time of business does not differ with me from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great a tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament. ~ Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God

The little things... We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed. ~ Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God

Pleasing to God... He does not ask much of us, merely a thought of Him from time to time, a little act of adoration, sometimes to ask for His grace, sometimes to offer Him your sufferings, at other times to thank Him for the graces, past and present, He has bestowed on you, in the midst of your troubles to take solace in Him as often as you can. Lift up your heart to Him during your meals and in company; the least little remembrance will always be the most pleasing to Him. One need not cry out very loudly; He is nearer to us than we think. ~ Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God

“Wasting time” on God... Do not be discouraged by the resistance you will encounter from your human nature; you must go against your human inclinations. Often, in the beginning, you will think that you are wasting time, but you must go on, be determined and persevere in it until death, despite all the difficulties. ~ Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God



Bonus #1: Inspiring song by Josh Gauton. “Time’s not wasted when it’s wasted on You.”

PRESENCE IN THE WORD

“If it is true that you look favorably on me, let me know your ways so I may understand you more fully and continue to enjoy your favor. And remember that this nation is your very own people.” The LORD replied, “I will personally go with you, Moses, and I will give you rest—everything will be fine for you.” Then Moses said, “If you don’t personally go with us, don’t make us leave this place.” (Ex. 33:13–15 NLT-SE)

My heart has heard you say, “Come and talk with me.” And my heart responds, “LORD, I am coming.” (Psa. 27:8 NLT-SE)

For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs. (Zeph. 3:17 NLT-SE)

For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.” (Matt. 18:20 NLT-SE)

You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever. (Psa. 16:11 NLT-SE)

For You bring me a continual revelation of resurrection life, the path that brings me to the overflowing joys; of the exquisite and eternal pleasures of gazing upon Your face. (Ps. 16:11 TPT)

THE HEART OF JESUS

Equipped for the journey... I will not show you what is on the road ahead, but I will thoroughly equip you for the journey. My living Presence is your Companion each step of the way. Stay in continual communication with Me, whispering My Name whenever you need to redirect your thoughts. Thus, you can walk through this day with your focus on Me. My abiding Presence is the best road map available. ~ Jesus Calling

Glimpses of heaven... There are actually more than four dimensions in this world where you live. In addition to the three dimensions of space and the one of time, there is the dimension of openness to My Presence. This dimension transcends the others, giving you glimpses of heaven while you still reside on earth. This was part of My original design for mankind. Adam and Eve used to walk with Me in the garden, before their expulsion from Eden. I want you to walk with Me in the garden of your heart, where I have taken up permanent residence. ~ Jesus Calling

Soaking in the Light... Let Me free you from fear that is hiding deep inside you. Sit quietly in My Presence, allowing My Light to soak into you and drive out any darkness lodged within you. ~ Jesus Calling

ABIDING IN HIS PRESENCE

Unceasing presence... The center of God's will may be the most dangerous place in the world for you. Jesus never promised easier lives for his followers. In fact, Jesus said it would be difficult. Even more so, the abiding life may result in more discomfort than a life apart from Christ. Failure then should not be understood as experiencing bitter tasting fruit. Rather, failure should be seen as distancing oneself from the true vine because of bitter tasting fruit. While Jesus doesn't offer easy lives, what he does offer is his unceasing presence. And with his presence comes transformation for the heart of an abider, making joy an option even in pain. ~ The Abiding Life

Deeper intimacy... Linger means to stay in a place longer than necessary. Joshua was a lingerer. Abiding is learning to linger in the presence of the vine; learning to intimately waste time with your source simply out of the love of being with him. Linger should be a defining factor of our relationship with Jesus because with a right heart, lingering creates the environment for deeper intimacy with Jesus. ~ The Abiding Life

Bonus #2: If you want to grow in experiencing the abiding presence of Jesus in your life, go onto YouTube and search any message by "**Eric Gilmour**." This young man has experienced Practicing the Presence of God in more depth, consistency and has a greater proficiency at articulating those experiences than anyone I've ever run across. Enjoy!

THE JOURNEY IN

1. Be intentional
2. Use your words
3. Focus on his character, not yours
4. "The distractions that bother you so much, don't really bother me!"... Jesus