

FEBRUARY 3, 2013

INTIMACY WITH GOD THROUGH PRACTICING GOD'S PRESENCE 3

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

2 Timothy 4:6-8

In a competition the important thing is not so much how you start but rather on how you finish. Our Christian life is the same, we may not have started right but what really matters is how we finish the race. In order for us to finish well, we have to practice God's presence in our life.

The greatest example we have in the bible is the apostle Paul. In 2 timothy 4:7-8 he says ⁷" I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

We are also encouraged in Hebrews 12:1 –2 *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the ^{1b}author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

All of us was given a race to finish — whether it be to become a pastor, a doctor, and engineer — all of us has an assigned race. This has been ordained since before our birth. We have all been called not just to start the race but more importantly to finish it. But the ability to be able to finish well does not come from our own doing but rather it is God who will enable us to finish well.

In Phil 3:17-19 Paul reminds us that there are barriers to finishing well. He says "For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* ^{1a} appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things." He tells us that our appetite for worldly things such as lust, material possessions, and power can preoccupy our thoughts and that takes the place of God in hearts. Often times it is the little things that we often take for granted that can distract us from pursuing the road that has been set before us. It is also these distractions that can cause us to lose our intimacy with God.

God never designed us to run the race by ourselves. It becomes an impossible task if we attempt to do this by ourselves. God specifically designed our race so that we would depend on Him, turn to Him for provision, protection and even direction. It is His continued presence in our life that will allow us — enable us to finish well.

"To love moment by moment conscious of God's presence is the key to Christian living."

Nicholas Herman/ Brother Lawrence



380 S. Rosemead Blvd
Pasadena, CA 91107

Sundays
945 AM
Heart
Preparation

1000 AM
WORSHIP

Dgroup Schedules

Tuesdays
700 pm
1102 E Swanee Lane
West Covina, CA

Thursdays
730 pm
2617 N Parish Place
Burbank, CA

Fridays
700 pm
5124 Ashworth St
Lakewood, CA

Fridays
730 PM
4706 Ivar Ave
Rosemead, CA

Please contact Rey Bejerano at
6263545717 for venue changes

Six key points on how to live each day in the presence of God. (Brother Lawrence)

1. *Begin each day conscious of God.*
 - it is a good habit to begin the day with God. Often times we get distracted the minute we open our eyes and forget to spend those precious moments communing with God. We have to make a conscious effort in order to start our day right — to start our day with the Lord. It is with this constant awareness of God's presence that will allow us to enjoy intimacy with Him.
2. *Read God's Word daily.*
 - studying God's word is the only way that we can get to know Him better, the only way we can understand His plans for us, the only way we can understand and appreciate His character, His love and His grace. Let us develop a habit to start our day with God's word, so that we know what His plans and message for us is each day.
3. *Pray.*
 - prayer is our way of communicating with God. Let us not take prayer for granted. We are encouraged to offer our whole day up as a prayer and not just limit ourselves to our actual "prayer time". God wants to be in constant communication with us and He speaks to us not only in thunderstorms and earthquakes. . . But also in whispers and stillness.
4. *Let thankfulness be the habit of your life.*
 - we should develop an attitude of gratitude. To be thankful for everything — both the good and the bad. For both blessings and trials, believing that in everything God is in control. And that in everything works for our good and for His purpose for us.
5. *Learn to be quiet in God's presence.*
 - *being still, being quiet in God's presence allows us to enjoy His presence in our lives, allows us to bask in His love. When we spend time to meditate not only on His word, or on His miracle . . . But just to meditate on who He is and how He loves us. . . Is an opportunity to see and appreciate His presence in our lives.*
6. *At the close of the day, rest in God's presence.*
 - starting our day right is a great practice and so is ending our day with the Lord. To spend time to look at the events of our day and to see God's provision and protection. To find rest, comfort and peace in the knowledge that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

We are encouraged to continue to pursue intimacy with God through reading the bible, through worship, through solitude and through prayer. To make time to converse with the Lord, to allow Him to speak to us. It is in this situation that we begin to truly practice being in the presence of God.

When we learn to practice the presence of God on a day to day basis, we will begin to understand how God relishes and enjoys having a relationship with us. Although He already knows our needs beforehand, He still wants us to come to Him, to spend time with Him and let Him know of our requests. We should develop a passion and an appetite to have an intimacy with the Lord. To understand and relish the privilege given to us through Christ Jesus.

The race to the finish is not an easy task. There will be road blocks and disappointments along the way. But the apostle Paul encourages us to *press on*. To continually push ourselves to the goal. He says that our past can paralyze us from the race. If we allow our failures to become hindrances, if we continue to see ourselves as unworthy and underserving. Or we can also allow our achievements to make us complacent developing a feeling that "we have arrived". Paul tells us that we should follow his example and *forget what lies behind* but instead *reach forward to what lies ahead*. To *press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*.

As we continue to run the race of life, we must continue to see God's presence and grace in everything that is happening in our lives. When we do this we understand what God's grace truly means and with this understanding we can continue to dwell in the presence of God and finish well.

Works: Journaling task

In Revelation 3:20, Jesus says **Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.**

This is His personal invitation to us to spend time with Him, to interact with Him, to enjoy a time in His presence. God wants to be intricately involved in our lives, but often times we are reluctant to open the door and allow Him to come in. Or maybe we have opened the door, but we have chosen not to dine with Him. Every day He renews this invitation. Every day He renews His promise that He will always be with us.

How have we responded?

How do we commit to put into practice the 6 key points that Brother Lawrence has suggested? Be specific

1. How do I commit to:
 - A. begin each day with the Lord?
 - B. read God's word daily?
 - C. spend time in prayer?
 - D. develop an attitude of gratitude?
 - E. be still in God's presence?
 - F. end our day resting in the presence of the Lord?

2. After understanding how important God's presence in my life, how do I intend to apply this in my life.



How has this message made me grow in the process of Discipleship in terms of:

SUPREME LOVE OF GOD

STUDY & DEVOTION TO GOD'S WORD

SELF DENIAL

CHRIST-LIKE LOVE
