

# THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

## (CONVERSATION WITH GOD CAN BECOME A HABIT)

(Adapted from Brother Lawrence, "The Practice Of The Presence Of God")

I want make it my life pursuit to keep myself in God's presence. I do this with just giving the presence of God a simple attention, a general awareness and fondness of being in His presence, which I may call an actual presence of God; or, to put it better, a habitual, silent, and secret conversation of the soul with God.

God requires no great matters of us; a little remembrance of Him from time to time; a little adoration; sometimes to pray for His grace, sometimes to bring to Him your sufferings, and sometimes to return Him thanks for the favours He has given you, and still gives you, in the midst of your troubles, and to comfort yourself with Him as often as you can. Lift up your heart to Him, sometimes at your meals, and when you are with others; even the smallest remembrance will always be acceptable to Him. You need not cry very loud; He is nearer to us than we are aware of.

Being with God does not mean that we have to be always at church. We can make a chapel in our heart wherein to go from time to time to converse with Him in meekness, humility, and love. Everyone is capable of such personal conversations with God, some more, some less. He knows what we can do.

Accustom yourself, then, as much as you can, thus to worship Him, to ask for His grace, to offer Him your heart from time to time in the midst of your daily schedule, if possible, even every moment. You do not always have to keep certain rules, or particular forms of devotion, but act with a general confidence in God, with love and humility.

I do not advise you to use a lot of words in prayer. Hold yourself in prayer before God like a dumb or paralytic beggar at a rich man's gate. Let it be your business simply to keep your mind in the presence of the Lord.

### ***MAKE IT A HABIT***

We know that we cannot escape the many dangers in life without the actual and continual help of God. Let us, then, pray to Him for assistance continually. How can we pray to Him without being with Him? How can we be with Him without thinking of Him often? And how can we often think of Him without purposefully building a habit in our lives?

Think often of God, by day, by night, in your daily business, and even in your leisure time. He is always near you and with you; do not leave Him alone. You would think it would be rude to leave a friend alone who came to visit you; why, then, must God be neglected? Do not, then, forget Him, but think of Him often, adore Him continually, live and die with Him; this is the glorious employment of a Christian.

If we were to build a habit to keep the exercise of keeping in the presence of God, even our physical sicknesses would be greatly reduced. God often allows us to suffer a little in order to purify our souls and compels us to keep connected with Him.

Be of good courage; constantly come to Him with your pains; pray to Him for strength to endure them. Above all, build a habit of entertaining yourself with God, and so your best not to forget Him. Worship Him even in your weaknesses, offer yourself to Him from time to time, and in the height of your sufferings beseech Him humbly and affectionately (as a child his father) to make you conformable to His holy will.

### ***HIS PRESENCE IS SWEET***

There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God. Only when you practice and experience it that you can fully comprehend it; although I do not advise you to do it from that motive. It is not pleasure which we should seek in this practice; but let us do it from a principle of love, and because God would have us do it.

When we are faithful to keep ourselves in His presence, and set Him always before us, this will not only deters us from offending Him and doing anything that may displease Him (at least wilfully), but it also produce in us a freedom and – if I may say so – a familiarity with God, wherein we can comfortably ask for the graces that we need constantly to live our lives and find God eager to grant them to us. In summary, by often repeating these acts, they become habitual, and the presence of God becomes something that is natural to us.

Were I a preacher, I would, above all things, preach the practice of the presence of God; and were I a counsellor, I should advise all the world to do it. This is how necessary I do think it is, and so easy too.

In truth, if we truly know that we need the grace of God and help we need from him, we would never lose sight of Him – not even for a moment! Believe me! Right now immediately make a firm resolution nevermore wilfully to forget Him, and to spend the rest of your days in His presence.

Let all our energy be to know God; the more one knows Him, the more one desires to know Him. And as knowledge is commonly the measure of love, the deeper and more extensive our knowledge shall be, the greater will be our love.