

Practicing the Presence of God

What does it mean to you to *practice the presence of God*?

As I've thought about this these past months, something that has helped me understand what it means is the word "aware." When we think about the presence of God in our lives, it is already a fact. He *is* with us always. There is nothing we need to do to have his presence with us. So it seems that what we need is to be aware of his presence. That's what we will be seeking: conscious awareness.

Definitions:

Conscious: "focusing one's attention on something, or is even preoccupied by it"

Aware: "vigilance in observing, or alertness in drawing inferences from what one experiences"

It often seems that a good starting point for something we want to work on is to take some time and evaluate where we are and what we're currently doing. So take a few minutes to reflect. Look back over the past 36 hours, from the time you got up yesterday, to the time you began your retreat. Maybe look at it in 2 hour increments, and jot down what you were doing with just a few words listing the actual activity. Then, go back and try to picture how you see yourself, your heart and thoughts, in relation to the Lord. How consciously aware of his presence were you during that time? While we know that he is always with us, we aren't always consciously aware of his presence. How consciously aware of his presence were you?

(5 minutes writing)

What are things that keep us from "practicing his presence?"

- Distractions
- Busy-ness
- Worry
- Sin
- The enemy
- Choices (or lack of choices)
- Failure in the past
- Lack of belief that it is even possible
- Compartmentalizing our life (spiritual, devotional, work, recreation, etc.)
- Feelings, or lack of feelings

Awareness of God's presence is not based on a feeling we have, but on fact.

Read Psalm 139

Practicing God's presence is not so much a method, but a mind-set.

"We make it our goal to please Him." **2 Corinthians 9:7**

Whose report will you believe?

Now faith is being certain of what we do not see. **Hebrews 11:1**

Pray without ceasing. **1 Thessalonians 5:17**



Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things. Set your mind and keep them set...

Colossians 3:2-3 “And set your minds *and* keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth. For [as far as this world is concerned] you have died, and your [new, real] life is hidden with Christ in God.”

As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

Psalm 105:4 “Look to the Lord and His strength, seek His face always.”
Glance at the problem, gaze at Jesus.

When you read Scripture, be aware of how many times it implies the presence, the closeness of the Lord.

Take 5 minutes to write a prayer, telling the Lord that your heart’s desire is to be aware of His presence.

“If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” **1 John 5:14**

Romans 8:35-39 Who (*or what*) shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:
“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Psalm 139

Meditate on some of these Scriptures, really looking at them, thinking about what they mean in your life, what the Lord is saying.

Notice the word “always” in **Matthew 28:20**.

Psalm 23- Meditate on, picture what it says. A shepherd is with his sheep, always close, always caring for the sheep. *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, by Philip Keller.

As I’ve been focusing on practicing the presence of the Lord, so many things have come to mind. For me personally, last week I was thinking about how to simply turn my focus to him, something to say inwardly that will acknowledge where I want my heart to be. And what came to me was something that Beth Moore says: “Say to the Lord, ‘I love You too.’” I can’t even describe what this has done for me. So often throughout the day, even in the midst of very routine or even crazy times, I’m just saying that to him, from the depth of my heart. And I’ve been amazed at the change it’s making. It seems that three things happen. It is instantly acknowledging that I’m aware of his presence with me right then. It’s giving me an opportunity to express my love. But then, that word “too”... Without even realizing it at the beginning, it has begun to sink in that he is ALWAYS loving me. Always showing his love for me. There is never a time when he isn’t loving; even if there is correction, it is from a heart of love. It seems like each day, this is becoming more deeply imprinted on my heart and even more important, in my thinking. It seems that as I’ve gone through a day and said this repeatedly, it’s helping to change some of my faulty thought patterns.



Genesis 28:15

Exodus 33:14

Deuteronomy 20:1

Psalm 16:8, 34:18, 145:18

Acts 17:27

Psalm 73:28

How you would like to practice his presence. Picture yourself next week. How would you like it to be different?

