

First Letter

by Brother Lawrence

Brother Lawrence shares his journey and methods for cultivating a constant awareness of God's Presence in daily life.

Scripture: Psalm 16:8, Psalm 139:7, Philippians 4:6, Hebrews 13:5, James 4:8

Topics: "Gods Presence", "Spiritual Discipline"

Description

Brother Lawrence shares his method of attaining a habitual sense of God's presence, emphasizing the importance of giving oneself wholly to God, renouncing all else for His love, and living as if there is none but God and oneself in the world. He describes the practice of constantly keeping the mind in God's holy presence, worshiping Him, and driving away any distractions that may interrupt thoughts of God, leading to a holy freedom and familiarity with God. Through faithful practice, the presence of God becomes natural and habitual, resulting in a closer relationship with Him and the ability to ask for and receive His graces.

Transcript

How the habitual sense of God's Presence was found.

SINCE you desire so earnestly that I should communicate to you the method by which I arrived at that habitual sense of GOD's Presence, which our LORD, of His mercy, has been pleased to vouchsafe to me; I must tell you, that it is with great difficulty that I am prevailed on by your importunities; and now I do it only upon the terms, that you show my letter to nobody. If I knew that you would let it be seen, all the desire that I have for your advancement would not be able to determine me to it. The account I can give you is:

Having found in many books different methods of going to GOD, and divers practices of the spiritual life, I thought this would serve rather to puzzle me, than facilitate what I sought after, which was nothing but how to become wholly GOD's.

This made me resolve to give the all for the All: so after having given myself wholly to GOD, to make all the satisfaction I could for my sins, I renounced, for the love of Him, everything that was not He; and I began to live as if there was none but He and I in the world. Sometimes I considered myself before Him as a poor criminal at the feet of his judge; at other times I beheld Him in my heart as my FATHER, as my GOD: I worshipped Him the oftenest that I could, keeping my mind in His holy Presence, and recalling it as often as I found it wandered from Him. I found no small pain in this exercise, and yet I continued it,

notwithstanding all the difficulties that occurred, without troubling or disquieting myself when my mind had wandered involuntarily. I made this my business, as much all the day long as at the appointed times of prayer; for at all times, every hour, every minute, even in the height of my business, I drove away from my mind everything that was capable of interrupting my thought of GOD.

Such has been my common practice ever since I entered into religion; and though I have done it very imperfectly, yet I have found great advantages by it. These, I well know, are to be imputed to the mere mercy and goodness of GOD, because we can do nothing without Him; and I still less than any. But when we are faithful to keep ourselves in His holy Presence, and set Him always before us, this not only hinders our offending Him, and doing anything that may displease Him, at least wilfully, but it also begets in us a holy freedom, and if I may so speak, a familiarity with GOD, wherewith we ask, and that successfully, the graces we stand in need of. In fine, by often repeating these acts, they become habitual, and the presence of GOD is rendered as it were natural to us. Give Him thanks, if you please, with me, for His great goodness towards me, which I can never sufficiently admire, for the many favours He has done to so miserable a sinner as I am. May all things praise Him. Amen.

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