

The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence

The Practice of the Presence of God is a spiritual classic that gathers the teachings of Brother Lawrence (born Nicolas Herman), a 17th-century Carmelite friar. Compiled by Father Joseph de Beaufort, the book includes Brother Lawrence's letters and notes from conversations recorded by those who knew him. At its heart, the book explores the simple yet profound discipline of cultivating continual awareness of God's presence in everyday life.

Gathering and Prayer:

Greeting everyone warmly.

- Briefly introduce the purpose of the group: growing in faith, deepening relationships, discovering how we are united in faith.

Opening prayer:

Lord, you are here. You are always with us. Help us to become more aware of your presence in the ordinary moments of our day. Teach us to find you not only in churches or silence, but in our work, our relationships, and our daily routine. We ask this in your holy name. Amen.

Introduction:

- If this is the first session for this group, be sure to engage in a get to know you activity.
 - State your name.
 - What is your favorite time of day?
 - Coffee, tea, or something else?
 - What you do during the week, and one way you're currently involved in volunteering or giving back. This helps us get to know not just what we do, but how we serve—both of which are places where we can practice God's presence.

Discussion Questions:

Brother Lawrence said, "The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen... I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees."

1. How does your work life and prayer life intersect?

2. *In Conversation 1, the narrator discusses beginning the spiritual journey and learning to trust God. What helped you take your first real step in faith?*
3. *In Conversation 2, the narrator shares about distractions in prayer and gently returning to God. What do you do when your mind wanders during prayer?*
4. *In Conversation 3, the narrator emphasizes loving God in simple, quiet ways. What is a quiet act of love you can offer God today?*
5. *In Conversation 4, the narrator explains that practicing God's presence brings deep inner peace. Can you describe a moment when you felt deeply at peace with God?*
6. *In Letter 1, Brother Lawrence speaks of a great conversion moment while looking at a tree in winter. When have you experienced God speaking to you through something simple in nature?*
7. *In Letter 2, Brother Lawrence emphasizes the importance of forming the habit of God's presence through frequent turning to Him. What small practice could help you turn your thoughts to God more often during your day?*
8. *In Letter 3, Brother Lawrence encourages doing everything for the love of God—even little tasks. What is one small daily task you could intentionally do with love for God this week?*
9. *In Letter 4, Brother Lawrence talks about inner peace coming from surrender to God's will. Is there something you're holding onto that God might be inviting you to surrender?*
10. *In Letter 5, Brother Lawrence discusses his struggles and need for grace when he falls short. How do you respond when you feel you've failed in your spiritual life?*
11. *In Letter 6, Brother Lawrence writes about remaining calm and trusting even in suffering. How might your response to suffering change if you saw God's presence in it?*
12. *In Letter 7, Brother Lawrence describes joy in being with God even in the kitchen. Where in your daily routine could you invite God's joy to enter?*
13. *In Letter 8, Brother Lawrence speaks of being content with God alone and not seeking spiritual rewards. Do you ever catch yourself seeking spiritual feelings instead of simply being with God?*
14. *In Letter 9, Brother Lawrence encourages someone discouraged by their spiritual dryness. How do you stay faithful when you don't feel God's presence?*
15. *In Letter 10, Brother Lawrence describes talking to God naturally throughout the day. If God were walking beside you today/tonight, what would you talk with Him about?*
16. *In Letter 11, Brother Lawrence warns against discouragement and urges simplicity. How could simplifying your spiritual practices help you grow closer to God?*
17. *In Letter 12, Brother Lawrence talks about quiet trust and patience in trials. Where in your life is God asking you to wait and trust?*

18. *In Letter 13, Brother Lawrence encourages unity with God through love, not anxiety or striving.* Are there areas in your spiritual life where striving has replaced loving?
19. *In Letter 14, Brother Lawrence talks about loving God for God's sake alone.* What does it mean to you to love God without expecting anything in return?
20. *In Letter 15, Brother Lawrence reminds his friend to stay humble and faithful in prayer.* What helps you remain grounded and humble in your relationship with God?

Closing Reflection & Prayer (10 min)

- Invite each person to share one takeaway or a word that summarizes what they received today.
- Close with a short prayer of petition and gratitude for the week ahead.

Let us take a moment to offer our own intentions, who or what would you like us to lift in prayer? (Allow people to state their petitions.)

Lord, you are closer to us than we are to ourselves. Help us not to seek you only in the extraordinary, but in the ordinary and simple. Let every moment be an opportunity to love you and be loved by you. Amen.