

Exerpts from “The Practice of the Presence of God”

Brother Lawrence

Brother Lawrence lived His life as a monk amongst the Carmelites in a Monastery in Paris in 1666.

“Lord of all pots and pans and things,” he prayed, “make me a saint by getting meals and washing up the plates!”

Biography:

One cold winter day, while carefully observing a desolate tree deprived of its leaves and fruit, Herman imagined it waiting soundlessly and patiently for the hopeful return of summer’s bounty. In that seemingly lifeless tree, Herman saw himself. All at once, he glimpsed for the first time the magnitude of God’s grace, the faithfulness of his love, the perfection of his sovereignty, and the dependability of his providence.

On the face of it, like the tree, Herman felt like he was dead. But suddenly, he understood that the Lord had seasons of life awaiting him in the future. At that moment, Herman’s soul experienced "the fact of God," and a love for God that would burn bright for the rest of his days.

Eventually, Herman retired from the army after suffering an injury. He spent some time working as a footman, waiting on tables, and assisting travelers. But Herman’s spiritual journey led him to the Discalced (meaning "barefoot") Carmelite monastery in Paris, where, upon entering, he adopted the name Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection.

Lawrence lived out the remainder of his days in the monastery. Rather than seek advancement or a higher calling, Lawrence chose to retain his humble status as a lay brother, serving for 30 years in the monastery kitchen as a cook. During his later years, he also repaired broken sandals, even though he himself chose to walk the ground unshod. When Lawrence’s eyesight faltered, he was freed from his duties just a few years before his death in 1691. He was 80 years old.

“Of Means for Attaining to the Presence of God:

- 1) “We must study ever to regard God and His Glory in all that we do, and say, and undertake”.
- 2) “When we enter upon the spiritual life, we ought to consider thoroughly what we are, probing to the very depth. We shall find that we are altogether deserving of contempt, unworthy of the name of Christ, prone to all manner of maladies, in fact, unstable in our humors and dispositions, whom it is God’s will to chasten and make humble.
- 3) We must believe steadfastly, never once doubting, that such discipline is for our good, since without this submission of heart and spirit to the will of God, devotion and perfection cannot subsist.
- 4) The soul is the more dependent on grace, the higher the perfection to which it aspires; and the grace of God is the more needful for each moment, as without it, the soul can do nothing.
- 5) The world, the flesh, and the devil, join forces and assault the soul so straitly and so untiringly, that without humble reliance on the ever-present aid of God, they drag the soul down, in spite of all resistance. Thus to rely seems hard to nature, but grace makes it become easy, and brings with it joy.

Famous Quotes:

- 1) "The time of business does not differ with me from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were on my knees."
- 2) "The most holy and necessary practice in our spiritual life is the presence of God. That means finding constant pleasure in His divine company, speaking humbly and lovingly with him in all seasons, at every moment, without limiting the conversation in any way."
- 3) "I have abandoned all particular forms of devotion, all prayer techniques. My only prayer practice is attention. I carry on a habitual, silent, and secret conversation with God that fills me with overwhelming joy."
- 4) "And it is not necessary to have great things to do. I turn my little omelette in the pan for the love of God."
- 5) "There's no greater lifestyle and no greater happiness than that of having a continual conversation with God."
- 6) "He does not ask much of us, merely a thought of Him from time to time, a little act of adoration, sometimes to ask for His grace, sometimes to offer Him your sufferings, at other times to thank Him for the graces, past and present, He has bestowed on you, in the midst of your troubles to take solace in Him as often as you can. Lift up your heart to Him during your meals and in company; the least little remembrance will always be the most pleasing to Him. One need not cry out very loudly; He is nearer to us than we think."
- 7) "Many things are possible for the person who has hope. Even more is possible for the person who has faith. And still more is possible for the person who knows how to love. But everything is possible for the person who practices all three virtues."
- 8) "We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed."
- 9) "To worship God in truth is to recognize Him for being who He is, and to recognize ourselves for what we are."
- 10) "My God, since you are with me and since, by Your will, I must occupy myself with external things, please grant me the grace to remain with You, in Your presence. Work with me, so that my work might be the very best. Receive as an offering of love both my work and all my affections."
- 11) "Prayer is nothing else than a sense of God's presence."
- 12) "It is possible for us to live in the very sense of the Lord's presence, under even the most difficult circumstances. If you and I are going to enjoy the peace of paradise during this life we must become accustomed to a familiar, humble, and very affectionate conversation with the Lord Jesus."
- 13) "I did not pray for any relief, but I prayed for strength to suffer with courage, humility and love."
- 14) "I drove away from my mind everything capable of spoiling the sense of the presence of God.... I just make it my business to persevere in His holy presence... My soul has had an habitual, silent, secret conversation with God."
- 15) "What can God have that gives him greater satisfaction than that a thousand times a day all his creatures should thus pause to withdraw and worship him in the heart."