

# Finding the Spiritual in Everyday Life

As Inspired by the Teachings of Brother Lawrence



## Class Three: Persistence + Practice WILL Lead to Presence

### Welcome back and checking in

"Even if our efforts of attention seem for years to be producing no result, one day a light that is in exact proportion to them will flood the soul." - Simone Weil

### Why practice the presence of God in all things?

"One way to recollect the mind easily in times of prayer, and preserve it more in tranquility, is not to let it wander too far at other times." - Eighth Letter

### Persistence PLUS Practice

"The first requirement is a 'great purity of life,' the second is fidelity to the practice of the Presence."

"We begin by unwearied efforts, by constantly recalling to mind the Presence of God. This effort becomes a habit; then, over time, it unfolds naturally and spontaneously from moment to moment: 'the soul lifts itself up above all earthly matters, without care and forethought and dwells as it were firmly stayed on God, as in its center and place of rest, faith almost always being its companion at such time. Then his soul's joy is full.'"

### What does practice look like?

"He entirely forgot self: he never any longer thought on heaven or hell or on his past sins, not on those he committed daily, after he had asked God's forgiveness of them. Having confessed them, he no more suffered his mind to go back thereon, but, with the confession, entered into perfect peace; after which he commended himself to God, as he used to say, for life and for death, for time and for eternity." - The Character of Brother Lawrence

### Practice can be hard

"This is a practice that is somewhat hard at the outset and urges us to be patient and not become disheartened at our many and inevitable falls."

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“All things are possible to him who believes, they are less difficult to him who hopes, they are easier to him who loves, and still more easy to him who practices and perseveres in these three virtues.”

## Good news!

“That he had no scruples; for, said he, when I fail in my duty, I readily acknowledge it, saying, I am used to do so; I shall never do otherwise if I am left to myself. If I fail not, then I give God thanks, acknowledging that the strength comes from Him.” - Second Conversation

## That which we practice becomes a habit

“That we should not wonder if, in the beginning, we often failed in our endeavors, but that at last we should gain a habit, which will naturally produce its act in us, without our care, and to our exceeding delight.” - Fourth Conversation

## The brilliance of “trivial devotions”

“Changes that seem small and unimportant at first will compound into remarkable results if you’re willing to stick with them for years. ... [T]he quality of our lives depends on the quality of our habits. With the same habits, you’ll end up with the same results. But with better habits, anything is possible.” - James Clear, [Atomic Habits](#)

## Habits are eas(ier) to maintain

Habit: a routine or practice performed regularly; an automatic response to a specific situation. - James Clear

“... At other times, when I apply myself to prayer, I feel all my spirit and all my soul lift itself up without any care or effort of mine, and it continues as it were suspended and firmly fixed in God, as in its center and place of rest.” - Second Letter

## Like any spiritual practice, the Practice of the Presence of God gradually seeps all through your life

“I do not say that therefore we must put any violent constraint upon ourselves. No, we must serve God in holy freedom; *we must do our business* faithfully, without trouble or

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disquiet, recalling our mind to God mildly, and with tranquility, as often as we find it wandering from Him." - Sixth Letter

## Practicing presence in all areas of your life will strengthen your practice

"One way to recollect the mind easily in the time of prayer, and preserve it more in tranquility, *is not to let it wander too far at other times.*" - Eighth Letter

## The benefits of the practice

"Faith grows more alive and active in all events of our life."

"We are strengthened in hope."

"Our love for God becomes a 'consuming fire, burning to ashes all that is contrary to His will."

## Brother Lawrence sums it up

"This practice of the presence of God is somewhat hard at the outset, yet pursued faithfully, it works imperceptibly within the soul most marvelous effects; it draws down God's grace abundantly, and leads the soul insensibly to the ever-present vision of God, loving and beloved, which is the most spiritual and real, the most free and most life-giving manner of prayer." - Spiritual Maxims: Of Means for Attaining unto the Presence of God, 5

"The practice of the presence of God is the shortest and easiest way to attain Christian perfection: it is the form and life of virtue, it is the great preservation from sin. The practice will become easy, if we have but courage and a good will." - Gathered Thoughts

"The presence of God, in my opinion, contains the whole spiritual life." - Fifth Letter