



# reflecting Jesus

BETA

I live continually  
in the presence of Jesus

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did you know...

Photo: SXC wwskies

## Footprints in the Sand

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.

In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, other times there was one only.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life, when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat, I could see only one set of footprints, so I said to the Lord,

"You promised me Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life there has only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you most, have you not been there for me?"

The Lord replied, "The years when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child, is when I carried you."

Author Unknown.



## *the facts of his story*

God is always with us. Just because we don't see him, or because we don't feel that he is there, doesn't mean that he isn't. Even when we get hurt, or difficulties things happen to us, God is still present. Look at what the Bible says:

1. In Joshua 1:5-9, what does God promise Joshua as he is about to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land?

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2. What is the promise God gives to us in Isaiah 43:1-4 when we are going through difficult situations?

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3. What does the angel tell Mary that people will call Jesus, and why? (Matthew 1:23)

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4. What is the very last thing that Jesus says to his disciples in the book of Matthew? (Matthew 28:20)

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5. In Hebrews 13:5, what is the principle we should live by if we want to experience God's continual presence?

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## *thinking it through*

1. What is the most important idea you have just read about God's presence with us, and why?

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2. Why do you think that many people believe that God has abandoned them? Have you ever thought that, and why?

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## habits for reflecting the heart of Jesus ~ practising the presence of God

### brother lawrence

The term "Practising the presence of God" comes from a book written by Brother Lawrence. He lived in the 1600's, and having read many books about how to have a relationship with God, he found them a little puzzling. As a result, and because of his desire to live completely for God, he decided he would try and live as if only he and God were together in the world. In a letter, he describes how:

at all times, every hour, every minute, even at the height of my business, I drove away from my mind everything that was capable of interrupting my thought of God." (The Practice of The Presence of God, 32)

He tried to make this the habit of his life. This enabled him to remember consciously and continually that he was always walking in God's presence.

Of course, Brother Lawrence wasn't trying to avoid people or living real life. Rather, his intention was to let God's presence be so real and strong in his mind, that God's way of thinking and living would shape how he lived with people.

When in prayer, Brother Lawrence would often think of himself in different ways:

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.... Sometimes

I considered myself there as a stone before a carver, whereof he is to make a statue; presenting myself thus before God, I desire Him to form his perfect image in my soul, and may me entirely like himself." (Ibid., 31-37)

That was Brother Lawrence's focus—to reflect the image of God within. Is that your desire? Do you ever think about the reality that you are constantly living in God's presence? God wants us to remember this, because when we do, we will always be able to call for his help and guidance.

### we all struggle with remembering

Because we all get busy and tend to forget God, Jesus was given a special name. The angel said to Joseph, "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us." (Matthew 1:23) "God with us"—God doesn't want you to forget that he will never leave

you. And as Jesus reminded his disciples as he went to Heaven, "surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20) This promise of his presence is for you too.

### using your habit

Our aim is to live continually conscious of God's presence. You could begin trying this for 5 minutes, and another time trying it for a whole day or more. The purpose is to always have a connection with God that allows

us to be open to the Holy Spirit's guidance, power and encouragement. In your journal, describe how practising the presence of God affected your thoughts,

### how can God always be with us?

How can God always be with us, even though we are 6 billion people on the earth, all in different places? Here's one attempt to explain the possibility:

Where are you right now? Are you sitting down? If so, if I was to hit you on the leg, would you feel it? If I pinched your arm, would you feel that too? So are you "in" your arm and leg? Exactly where are "you" in your body? The reality is that "you" are everywhere inside your body. (See Dallas Willard's *The Divine Conspiracy*)

Now consider this: God is in the universe, as you are inside your body. As you are in your body—ever where at the same time, so is God everywhere in the universe.

That's a start at trying to understand this. When we get to Heaven, hopefully we can talk to God and understand this a little better!



choices, and actions during the day. Did practising the presence of God change the way you talked to people? Did it change how you spent your time or what you thought about? Did it affect the way you experienced God? Was it hard to do? If so, why was that? This may not be easy to do at first, but the more you practice, the easier and more rewarding it will be!

**Did you know that in the book of Esther, the word “God” is never mentioned?**

**Yet the story is one in which God is tirelessly at work to rescue his people!**

Enoch walked with God three hundred years previous to his translation to heaven, and the state of the world was not then more favorable for the perfection of Christian character than it is today. And how did Enoch walk with God? He educated his mind and heart to ever feel that he was in the presence of God, and when in perplexity his prayers would ascend to God to keep him. (Last Day Events, 71)



## *putting the pieces together*

In “the facts of his story” we saw many examples of God's assurance to us that he is always with us, even when he doesn't appear to be. Even when we might be tempted to be very afraid, God is still with us.

In “thinking it through” you were challenged to begin thinking about your own awareness of God's presence, and to try and live consciously in God's presence.

In “habits for reflecting the heart of Jesus”, we looked at how to “practice the presence of Jesus” as Brother Lawrence did. The more we learn to do this, the more connected we will stay to God's power and direction for our lives. This means that even when life is difficult, we will become increasingly confident in the goodness and love of God.



## *my time with God*

During this next week, try to remind yourself as often as you can during the day that you are living—at that very moment—in the presence of Jesus. At the end of each day, use your Journal to record your thoughts and observations about the difference this made to you during the day.



## *pass it on!*

Can you teach someone how to practice the presence of God?



## *extra help*

1. Practising the Presence of God, by Brother Lawrence.