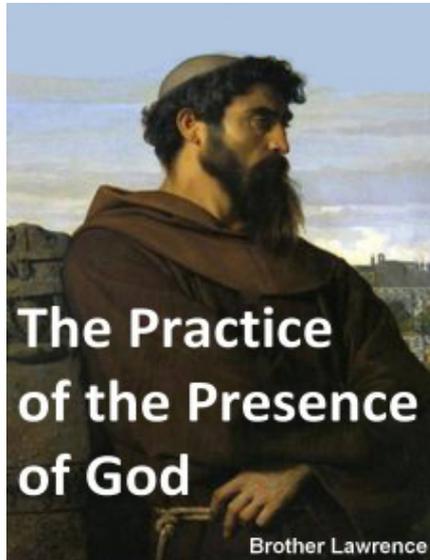


# BROTHER LAWRENCE



**...I drove away from my mind everything  
that was capable of interrupting  
my thought of GOD.**

**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**

# BROTHER LAWRENCE

We need only to realize that God is close to us and to turn to Him at every moment.

We ought to act with God in the greatest simplicity, speak to Him frankly and plainly, and implore His assistance in our affairs.

The more one knows God, the greater one desires to know Him. We should establish ourselves in a sense of God's presence by continually conversing with Him.

How can we pray to Him without being with Him? How can we be with Him without thinking of Him often? How can we think of Him but by a holy habit we should form of it?

God regards not the greatness of the work but the love with which it is performed.

Our only business is to love and delight ourselves in God. God does not ask much of you : a little remembrance from time to time, a little adoration.

We ought to act very simply towards God, speaking frankly to Him, and asking His help in things as they occur.

A little lifting of the heart suffices; a little remembrance of God, one act of inward worship are prayers which, however short, are nevertheless acceptable to God.

We are made for God alone, who can only be pleased when we turn away from ourselves to devote ourselves to Him.

In continuing the practice of conversing with God throughout each day, and quickly seeking His forgiveness when I fell or strayed, His presence has become as easy and natural to me now as it once was difficult to attain.

God alone is capable of making Himself known as He really is. People seek methods of learning to know God. Is it not much shorter and more direct to simply do everything for the love of Him? There is no finesse about it. One only has to do it generously and simply.

One way to re-collect 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.

Do not always scrupulously confine yourself to certain rules, or particular forms of devotion, but act with a general confidence in GOD, with love and humility.

There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God. We should dedicate ourselves to becoming in this life the most perfect worshippers of God we can possibly be, as we hope to be through all eternity.

# BROTHER LAWRENCE

I have quitted all forms of devotion and set prayers but those to which my state obliges me. And I make it my business only to persevere in His holy presence, wherein I keep myself by a simple attention, and a general fond regard to GOD, which I may call an actual presence of GOD; or, to speak better, an habitual, silent, and secret conversation of the soul with GOD, which often causes in me joys and raptures inwardly, and sometimes also outwardly, so great that I am forced to use means to moderate them, and prevent their appearance to others.

I consider myself as the most wretched of men, full of sores and corruption, and who has committed all sorts of crimes against his King; touched with a sensible regret I confess to Him all my wickedness, I ask His forgiveness, I abandon myself in His hands, that He may do what He pleases with me. This King, full of mercy and goodness, very far from chastising me, embraces me with love, makes me eat at His table, serves me with His own hands, gives me the key of His treasures; He converses and delights Himself with me incessantly, in a thousand and a thousand ways, and treats me in all respects as His favourite. It is thus I consider myself from time to time in His holy presence.

My most usual method is this simple attention, and such a general passionate regard to GOD; to whom I find myself often attached with greater sweetness and delight than that of an infant at the mother's breast: so that if I dare use the expression, I should choose to call this state the bosom of GOD, for the inexpressible sweetness which I taste and experience there.

As for my set hours of prayer, they are only a continuation of the same exercise. Sometimes I consider myself there, as a stone before a carver, whereof he is to make a statue: presenting myself thus before GOD, I desire Him to make His perfect image in my soul, and render me entirely like Himself.

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 centre and place of rest.

...nothing is easier than to repeat often in the day these little internal adorations.

...to be always with GOD; and to do nothing, say nothing, and think nothing which may displease Him; and this without any other view than purely for the love of Him, and because He deserves infinitely more.

# BROTHER LAWRENCE

...he answers with exact fidelity to these inward drawings, either by an elevation of his heart towards GOD, or by a meek and fond regard to Him, or by such words as love forms upon these occasions; as for instance, My GOD, here I am all devoted to Thee: LORD, make me according to Thy heart.

But when He finds a soul penetrated with a lively faith, He pours into it His graces and favours plentifully; there they flow like a torrent, which, after being forcibly stopped against its ordinary course, when it has found a passage, spreads itself with impetuosity and abundance.

I say again, let us enter into ourselves.

...not to advance, in the spiritual life, is to go back

I know that for the right practice of it, the heart must be empty of all other things; because GOD will possess the heart alone; and as He cannot possess it alone, without emptying it of all besides, so neither can He act there, and do in it what He pleases, unless it be left vacant to Him.

Believe me; make immediately a holy and firm resolution never more wilfully to forget Him, and to spend the rest of your days in His sacred presence, deprived for the love of Him, if He thinks fit, of all consolations.

For my part I keep myself retired with Him in the depth of centre of my soul as much as I can; and while I am so with Him I fear nothing; but the least turning from Him is insupportable.

...we must do our business faithfully, without trouble or disquiet; recalling our mind to GOD mildly and with tranquillity, as often as we find it wandering from Him.

It is, however, necessary to put our whole trust in GOD,.

...by an act of praise, of adoration, or of desire; by an act of resignation, or thanksgiving; and in all the manner which our spirit can invent.

...resolve to persevere in it to death, notwithstanding all the difficulties that may occur.

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.

# BROTHER LAWRENCE

There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful, than that of a continual conversation with God; those only can comprehend it who practice and experience it.

We should fix ourselves firmly in the presence of God by conversing all the time with Him...we should feed our soul with a lofty conception of God and from that derive great joy in being his. We should put life in our faith. We should give ourselves utterly to God in pure abandonment, in temporal and spiritual matters alike, and find contentment in the doing of His will, whether he takes us through sufferings or consolations.

Do not be discouraged by the resistance you will encounter from your human nature; you must go against your human inclinations. Often, in the beginning, you will think that you are wasting time, but you must go on, be determined and persevere in it until death, despite all the difficulties.

I cannot imagine how religious persons can live satisfied without the practice of the presence of GOD. For my part I keep myself retired with Him in the depth of centre of my soul as much as I can; and while I am so with Him I fear nothing; but the least turning from Him is insupportable.

I regard myself as the most wretched of all men, stinking and covered with sores, and as one who has committed all sorts of crimes against his King. Overcome by remorse, I confess all my wickedness to Him, ask His pardon and abandon myself entirely to Him to do with as He will. But this King, filled with goodness and mercy, far from chastising me, lovingly embraces me, makes me eat at His table, serves me with His own hands, gives me the keys of His treasures and treats me as His favorite. He talks with me and is delighted with me in a thousand and one ways; He forgives me and relieves me of my principle bad habits without talking about them; I beg Him to make me according to His heart and always the more weak and despicable I see myself to be, the more beloved I am of God.

Think often on God, by day, by night, in your business and even in your diversions. He is always near you and with you; leave him not alone.

“Along with this total abandonment must go a complete acceptance of God’s will with equanimity and resignation. No matter what troubles and ills come our way, they are to be willingly and indeed joyously endured since they come from God, and God knows what He is doing.

This trust must be unreserved with no thought of reward, but inevitably God will reward the person who so believes and endures with graces and treasures far beyond any sacrifices or offerings he or she has made since He is infinitely good. Also, God never tests us beyond our ability to endure and, as a matter of fact, bestows on us graces that will enable us to endure as we show our acceptance of whatever He sends our way.”

# BROTHER LAWRENCE

That we should establish ourselves in a sense of GOD's Presence, by continually conversing with Him. That it was a shameful thing to quit His conversation, to think of trifles and fooleries.

A little lifting up of the heart suffices; a little remembrance of God, an interior act of adoration, even though made on the march and with sword in hand, are prayers which, short though they may be, are nevertheless very pleasing to God, and far from making a soldier lose his courage on the most dangerous occasions, bolster it. Let him then think of God as much as possible so that he will gradually become accustomed to this little but holy exercise; no one will notice it and nothing is easier than to repeat often during the day these little acts of interior adoration.

O my God, since thou art with me, and i must now, in obedience to thy commands, apply my mind to these outward things, i beseech thee to grant me the grace to continue in thy presence; and to this end do thou prosper me with thy assistance, receive all my works, and possess all my affections.

That all things are possible to him who believes, that they are less difficult to him who hopes, they are more easy to him who loves, and still more easy to him who perseveres in the practice of these three virtues.

That there needed neither art nor science for going to GOD, but only a heart resolutely determined to apply itself to nothing but Him, or for His sake, and to love Him only.

Good when He gives, supremely good; Nor less when He denies: Afflictions, from His sovereign hand, Are blessings in disguise...

That useless thoughts spoil all: that the mischief began there; but that we ought to reject them, as soon as we perceived their impertinence to the matter in hand, or our salvation; and return to our communion with GOD.

That we ought to give ourselves up to GOD, with regard both to things temporal and spiritual, and seek our satisfaction only in the fulfilling of His will, whether He lead us by suffering or by consolation, for all would be equal to a soul truly resigned

Let us thus think often that our only business in this life is to please GOD, that perhaps all besides is but folly and vanity

That we ought, once for all, heartily to put our whole trust in GOD, and make a total surrender of ourselves to Him, secure that He would not deceive us.

I told you, in my last, that He sometimes permits bodily diseases to cure the distempers of the soul. Have courage then: make a virtue of necessity: ask of GOD, not deliverance from your pains, but strength to bear resolutely, for the love of Him, all that He should please, and as long as He shall please.

# BROTHER LAWRENCE

That we should feed and nourish our souls with high notions of GOD; which would yield us great joy in being devoted to Him.

That we need only to recognize GOD intimately present with us, to address ourselves to Him every moment, that we may beg His assistance for knowing His will in things doubtful, and for rightly performing those which we plainly see He requires of us, offering them to Him before we do them, and giving Him thanks when we have done.

That our sanctification did not depend upon changing our works, but in doing that for GOD's sake, which we commonly do for our own. That it was lamentable to see how many people mistook the means for the end, addicting themselves to certain works, which they performed very imperfectly, by reason of their human or selfish regards.

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.

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.

Do not be discouraged by the resistance you will encounter from your human nature; you must go against your human inclinations. Often, in the beginning, you will think that you are wasting time, but you must go on, be determined and persevere in it until death, despite all the difficulties.

I told you, in my last, that He sometimes permits bodily diseases to cure the distempers of the soul. Have courage then: make a virtue of necessity: ask of GOD, not deliverance from your pains, but strength to bear resolutely, for the love of Him, all that He should please, and as long as He shall please.

I cannot imagine how religious persons can live satisfied without the practice of the presence of GOD. For my part I keep myself retired with Him in the depth of centre of my soul as much as I can; and while I am so with Him I fear nothing; but the least turning from Him is insupportable.

...act with a general confidence in GOD, with love and humility.

Knock, persevere in knocking, ...

...every moment if you can...

Every one is capable of such familiar conversation with GOD, some more, some less:

...confess our faults, and humble ourselves before GOD.

One does not become holy all at once.

# BROTHER LAWRENCE

Let us renounce, let us generously renounce, for the love of Him, all that is not Himself; He deserves infinitely more. Let us think of Him perpetually. Let us put all our trust in Him: I doubt not but we shall soon find the effects of it, in receiving the abundance of His grace, with which we can do all things, and without which we can do nothing but sin.

In order to know GOD, we must often think of Him; and when we come to love Him, we shall then also think of Him often, for our heart will be with our treasure.

Pray remember what I have recommended to you, which is, to think often on GOD, by day, by night, in your business, and even in your diversions. He is always near you and with you; leave Him not alone. You would think it rude to leave a friend alone, who came to visit you: why then must GOD be neglected? Do not then forget Him, but think on Him often, adore Him continually, live and die with Him; this is the glorious employment of a Christian; in a word, this is our profession, if we do not know it we must learn it.

I regard myself as the most wretched of all men, stinking and covered with sores, and as one who has committed all sorts of crimes against his King. Overcome by remorse, I confess all my wickedness to Him, ask His pardon and abandon myself entirely to Him to do with as He will. But this King, filled with goodness and mercy, far from chastising me, lovingly embraces me, makes me eat at His table, serves me with His own hands, gives me the keys of His treasures and treats me as His favorite. He talks with me and is delighted with me in a thousand and one ways; He forgives me and relieves me of my principle bad habits without talking about them; I beg Him to make me according to His heart and always the more weak and despicable I see myself to be, the more beloved I am of God.

Let us live and die with GOD: sufferings will be sweet and pleasant to us, while we are with Him: and the greatest pleasures will be, without Him, a cruel punishment to us.

I do not pray that you may be delivered from your pains; but I pray GOD earnestly that He would give you strength and patience to bear them as long as He pleases. Comfort yourself with Him who holds you fastened to the cross: He will loose you when He thinks fit. Happy those who suffer with Him: accustom yourself to suffer in that manner, and seek from Him the strength to endure as much, and as long, as He shall judge to be necessary for you.

# BROTHER LAWRENCE

But those who consider sickness as coming from the hand of GOD, as the effects of His mercy, and the means which He employs for their salvation, commonly find in it great sweetness and sensible consolation.

Pains and suffering would be a paradise to me, while I should suffer with my GOD; and the greatest pleasure would be hell to me, if I could relish them without Him; all my consolation would be to suffer something for His sake.

GOD often permits that we should suffer a little, to purify our souls, and oblige us to continue with Him.

Take courage, offer Him your pains incessantly, pray to Him for strength to endure them. Above all, get a habit of entertaining yourself often with GOD, and forget Him the least you can. Adore Him in your infirmities, offer yourself to Him from time to time; and, in the height of your sufferings, beseech Him humbly and affectionately (as a child his father) to make you conformable to His holy will.

He never forsakes us, till we have first forsaken Him. Let us fear to leave Him. Let us be always with Him. Let us live and die in His presence.

As your case is, 'tis my opinion that you should leave off human remedies, and resign yourself entirely to the providence of GOD; perhaps He stays only for that resignation and a perfect trust in Him to cure you.

...ask of GOD, not deliverance from your pains, but strength to bear resolutely, for the love of Him, all that He should please, and as long as He shall please.

Love sweetens pains; and when one loves GOD, one suffers for His sake with joy and courage. Do you so, I beseech you; comfort yourself with Him, who is the only Physician of all our maladies. He is the FATHER of the afflicted, always ready to help us. He loves us infinitely more than we imagine: love Him then, and seek not consolation elsewhere:

I did not pray for any relief, but I prayed for strength to suffer with courage, humility, and love. Ah, how sweet is it to suffer with GOD! however great the sufferings may be, receive them with love. 'Tis paradise to suffer and be with Him; so that if in this life we would enjoy the peace of paradise, we must accustom ourselves to a familiar, humble, affectionate conversation with Him: we must hinder our spirits wandering from Him upon any occasion: we must make our heart a spiritual temple, wherein to adore Him incessantly: we must watch continually over ourselves, that we may not do, nor say, nor think anything that may displease Him. When our minds are thus employed about GOD, suffering will become full of unction and consolation.

# BROTHER LAWRENCE

When we see them in the hand of GOD, who dispenses them: when we know that it is our loving FATHER, who abases and distresses us: our sufferings will lose their bitterness, and become even matter of consolation.

...love Him equally in pains and pleasures.

Let us not amuse ourselves to seek or to love GOD for any sensible favours (how elevated soever) which He has or may do us. Such favours, though never so great, cannot bring us so near to GOD as faith does in one simple act. Let us seek Him often by faith: He is within us; seek Him not elsewhere.

## THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Lord of all pots and pans and things,  
since I've no time to be a great saint  
by doing lovely things,  
or watching late with Thee,  
or dreaming in the dawnlight,  
or storming heaven's gates,  
make me a saint by getting meals,  
and washing up the plates.  
Warm all the kitchen with Thy Love,  
and light it with Thy peace;  
forgive me all my worrying,  
and make my grumbling cease.  
Thou who didst love to give men food,  
in room, or by the sea,  
accept the service that I do,  
I do it unto Thee.  
Amen