

**the  
practice  
of the  
presence  
OF GOD**

**by brother Lawrence**



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WHITAKER  
HOUSE

*Publisher's note:*

This new edition from Whitaker House has been updated for the modern reader. Words, expressions, and sentence structure have been revised for clarity and readability.

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**THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

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## *Preface*

*The Practice of the Presence of God* is a collection of Brother Lawrence's spiritual insights into the heart of God, as revealed through his letters, conversations, and his life itself. Written over three hundred years ago, this message is relevant for every Christian who is caught up in the rush of today's world.

Each section, whether written by the author's own hand or by his close friend, Joseph de Beaufort, reveals the inner secrets of Brother Lawrence's heart—a heart that had learned the most essential ingredient of the Christian life: how to remain in the presence of God.

In this abridged edition, we have sought to update and clarify the language of this Christian classic, paraphrasing where necessary, while keeping the essence of the message intact.

We trust that Brother Lawrence's lifelong endeavor to dwell completely in the presence of God will become a continual practice for all who read this book.

—*The Publisher*



*Part One*



# *Conversations*



## *First Conversation*

**I** met Brother Lawrence for the first time today. He told me that God had been especially good to him in his conversion. He was eighteen at the time and still in the world. He told me that it had all happened one winter day, as he was looking at a barren tree. Although the tree's leaves were indeed gone, he knew that they would soon reappear, followed by blossoms and then fruit. This gave him a profound impression of God's providence and power, which never left him. Brother Lawrence still maintains that this impression detached him entirely from the world and gave him such a great love for God that it hasn't changed in all of the forty years he has been walking with Him.

Brother Lawrence had formerly been a servant to the treasurer of the monastery and had been very clumsy. He believed that in order to be saved, he would have to be punished for this clumsiness. Thus, he sacrificed all of the pleasures in his life to God. However, rather than punishing him, God gave him nothing but wholehearted satisfaction. He would tell the

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Lord endearingly and often that he felt deceived, because his Christian walk had thus far been so pleasant and not filled with suffering as he had anticipated.

Brother Lawrence insisted that, to be constantly aware of God's presence, it is necessary to form the habit of continually talking with Him throughout each day. To think that we must abandon conversation with Him in order to deal with the world is erroneous. Instead, as we nourish our souls by seeing God in His exaltation, we will derive a great joy at being His.

Another thing he mentioned was that our faith is too weak. Instead of letting faith rule our lives, we are guided by our petty, everyday, mechanical prayers, which are always changing. The church's only road to the perfection of Christ is faith.

The dear brother remarked that we must give ourselves totally to God in both temporal and spiritual affairs. Our only happiness should come from doing God's will, whether it brings us some pain or great pleasure. After all, if we are truly devoted to doing God's will, pain and pleasure won't make any difference to us.

We also need to be faithful, even in dry periods. It is during those dry spells that God tests our love for Him. We should take advantage of those times to practice our determination and

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our surrender to Him. This will often bring us to a maturity further on in our walk with God.

Brother Lawrence wasn't surprised by the amount of sin and unhappiness in the world. Rather, he wondered why there wasn't more, considering the extremes to which the enemy is capable of going. He said he prayed about it, but because he knew God could rectify the situation in a moment if He willed it, he didn't allow himself to become greatly concerned.

To succeed in giving ourselves to God as much as He desires, we must constantly guard our souls. In addition to being involved in spiritual matters, the soul is involved in the things of this world. However, when we turn our backs on Him, exposing our souls to the world, He will not so easily answer our call. When we are willing to accept God's help and guard our souls according to His desires, we may commune with Him whenever we like.