

WEEK 4: ARE YOU MORE SENSITIVE TO GOD'S PRESENCE?

A.W. Pink: *"If the soul of the believer is in a healthy condition, he will take occasion to frequently come into God's presence on purpose to have communion with Him."*

I. GOD'S PRESENCE EXPLAINED

- A. When was the last time you actually thought, "God is here?"
- B. Was it: Some super emotional event, A Spirit-anointed sermon, in church when the congregational singing sounded angelic that one day?
- C. By yourself, alone staring up at the vastness of the star-lite sky? Seeing some majestic creation of God. Mountains? Grand Canyon.
- D. Or a life threatening event? "God just saved me from death! God was with me!"
- E. "how **often** are aware of the presence of God?"
 - 1. Bible states that perception of the presence of God should not be only now and then.
 - 2. **Knowing that God is close enough that you can talk to Him**, and even though you do not hear an audible voice, you are comforted that your are not alone.
- F. **Whitney: "As we grow close to Him, generally speaking, we should discern His immanence more readily and more often."**

II. LORD IS IN THIS PLACE

- A. **Ge 28:16 ¶ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it."**
- B. **Mt 28:20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**
- C. Dullness to God's presence means:
 - 1. Less thinking about God; Less of His Word; Less thinking about Christ
 - 2. Less of His Will
 - 3. Identified more with the lost world than the family of God.
- D. Less Awareness that God is Everywhere!
 - 1. **Pr 15:3 ¶ The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.**
 - 2. **Ps 139:7 ¶ Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?**
 - 3. Less awareness of God being present will eventually result in less restraint of sin
 - 4. When you think no one is watching– God is present!
- E. Living without a consciousness of the Lord's presence, will result in living like God REALLY IS NOT THERE!
 - 1. Relationship only at church, some religious ceremony.
 - 2. Biblical rule becomes just legalism acted out. Public worship becomes duty

- F. Commanded to Seek His presence→Ps 105:4 **Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!**
1. God makes it clear He is present . . .but we must continuously seek Him

III. HOW CAN WE DISCERN GOD'S PRESENCE?

A. What does "God's presence means".

1. Universal Presence: omnipresent; there is no place where God isn't
 - a. Ps 139:5-12 → earth, heavens. But God is not every created thing
 - b. He is there as a Person!
2. Christological Presence: God was and is present in Jesus Christ
 - a. Jn 1:1, 14; Col 2:9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,
 - b. Emmanuel – God with us
3. Indwelling Presence: Holy Spirit in the believer
 - a. John 14:16 **And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. Holy Spirit lives in us!**
4. Perceptible Presence: in His work or influence
 - a. Lu 1:66 and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For **the hand of the Lord was with him.**
 - b. Ac 11:21 **And the hand of the Lord was with them,** and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.
5. Heavenly Presence: God is in heaven. His presence and Jesus' presence makes heaven to be heaven. His glory is there, angels sing to His glory there.
6. Eternal Presence: either forever enjoyed in heaven or forfeited in hell
 - a. Re 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.
 - b. 2Th 1:9 **They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,**
 - c. Actually God will even be in hell– manifesting divine wrath

B. Can only come into the presence of God through Jesus Christ

1. 1 Tim 2:5 – One God, one Mediator
2. No Christ in you, No God with you!
3. Christ is the Hope of glory! Col 1:27 **To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

4. **For Christ to be in you**– first must come into His presence through “repentance and belief in the gospel”. Mark 1:15

IV. **God’s Presence**

- A. God’s Universal Presence is all around us, everywhere
 1. Acts 17:28– in Him we live and have our being!
 2. Never discern His presence until He, Himself, reveals it to us

- B. In Creation –**Ro 1:20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.**

- C. His Word –primary revelation of Himself to His people
 1. Incarnate Word – Jesus Christ
 2. Written Word – our perception of God, our experience with God will be mainly mediated here.

- D. God’s Presence is NOT an Experience
 1. We should NOT attempt to experience God in any way we please.

 2. Christian Mysticism– trying to call down His presence on an event or situation
 - a. Attempting to have audience with God outside of the context of Scripture
 - b. Looking deep into my soul–imagining God is sitting before you
 - c. Sounds spiritual but no where in Scripture does such activity occur or is described

- E. Scripture states God is Accessible
 1. In Word
 2. Worship
 3. Life that is directed, “as unto the Lord”
 - a. **Eph 6:6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:**

 4. All these are mediated through God’s Word; Therefore . . .
 - a. As I hear Word Preached, I can hear God speaking to Me; As I sing to Him spiritual songs, if my heart is towards Him then I can expect to be in Christ’s spiritual presence

 - b. If I take Lord’s Supper in a correct manner, I can sense His presence

 - c. When sit and admire His creation, I can at times sense God’s presence contemplating what He tells me in His Word.

 5. This is how I can be assured that regardless of where I am, the Lord is with me, because this is truth that God spoke in His Word!

6. This is NOT Mystical – Not demanding God to come to you
 - a. It is meeting God – way the Bible reveals Him to us

F. God of Scripture

1. Seeking God the way He intended, will meet God as He reveals Himself in His Word
2. **Many seek a God of their imagination**→ they find that god, but he has no power, only in your mind.
 - a. Seeking an experience with God that pleases their flesh
3. Believers are assured God is here as they dwell on how He describes Himself in His Word and only as He promises in His Word!

G. How do I know He is present with me as I gaze up into the beautiful sky at night?

1. Not because I have this feeling, But because the Bible tells me so
2. My experience with God is based on Word of God
3. John Piper: “. . .*the seeking [of God] is conscious effort to get through the natural means God Himself—to constantly set our mind towards God in all our experience, to direct our mind and heart toward Him “through” the means of his revelation.*”
 - a. Ie, His Word!

H. Bible Informs me of the Character of God that is Present with me→All His attributes are the God that is with me!

1. Not an unknown God→Seeking an experience instead of a Person
2. Only as we seek the God of the Bible can we be confident we are not encountering a false god of our imagination or some demonic spirit.
3. A.W. Tozer: “*the practice of the presence of God. . . . is to recognize the real presence of the One whom all sound theology declares to be already there; . . . existing apart from any apprehension of Him on the part of His creatures. The resultant experience is not visionary but real.*”

I. Whitney: “*Question of if you are more sensitive to God’s presence that before is NOT about you having mystical experience with an atmospheric sense of Lord’s nearness. Rather . . . whether you have increasingly paused to recognize the Lord’s presence where you are . . . based on His self-revelation.*”

V. GROWING THROUGH GOD’S DESERTION

A. God never deserts His children – we have fellowship continuously through and because of Christ

1. Heb 13:5 *Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"*

B. **But you can be growing when you “least sense” He is close**

- C. Common to have seasons when God gives you a sense that He has withdrawn for your own good.
 - 1. Puritans called this “God’s desertion” →Times when seems God has forgotten or forsaken us
 - 2. Though His presence is NOT perceived, He is no less near.
- D. Trials bring a feeling of being alone but pressing on in Faith reveals that He is with you
 - 1. Grow spiritually in these times→To long for God’s presence in such times is completely opposite of living routinely with no awareness of His absence!
 - 2. Jesus cried out, “why have you forsaken Me”; Samson did “not know that the Lord had left him.” (Judges 16:20)
 - 3. Whitney said that “One is known by its agony, the other by its apathy.”

VI. STEPS TO OPENING OUR EYES TO HIS PRESENCE

- A. Jonathan Edwards: *“[You] can’t expect to have the presence of God any other way than in a way of talking with Him.”*
- B. Go often to the Bible
 - 1. Place where God reveals Himself clearly
 - 2. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: *“the more we know it and read it, the more it will take us into the presence of God. So if you want to set the Lord always before you, spend much of your time with regular daily reading of the Bible.”*
 - 3. Scripture is gift God gave us specifically for the purpose of making Himself known
 - 4. NOT just reading→ MEDITATE ON IT!– note how this word continuously surfaces in our study? Could be something to it!
- C. Talk with Him in Prayer
 - 1. If prayer life is failing, awareness of God will be diminished also
 - 2. God is a real person– ignore Him and He will seem distant
 - 3. Talk with Him often and you will feel Him closer
- D. Seek Him in Congregational Worship
 - 1. Temples of God coming together in the Temple of God
 - 2. [1Co 3:9 For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building.](#)
 - 3. In worship: God’s Word is preached, Lord’s Supper is served, praise is offered up from the hearts of His people.
 - 4. Being alone is advantageous at times but one does not have all the above outside public worship.
- E. Reaffirm His Omnipresence
 - 1. That He is everywhere–all the time!
 - 2. Immanuel: “I am with you always”
 - 3. Even when we don’t sense Him
 - 4. Affirm what we know from God’s Word, helps us to live on faith vs our feelings

5. May not sense Him, we may think “doesn’t He hear my prayers?”
6. But His Word promises, “I am with you always”. He is here!
7. Reaffirming his omnipresence is continually reaffirming, “I will live in truth”.

F. Evidence of His Presence

1. Living in truth causes us to look for and see evidence of His presence
2. Holy Spirit enlightens us to see and believe the revelation of God in creation.
3. Natural man cannot see these things (1 cor 2:9-16)
4. Develop “God eyes” – look for Him everywhere
5. God is with you at work, school, in your home, backyard, mowing the yard!
6. God is with you even in your sin!

7. As you develop the sense of “God with you” – you will be more like Jesus who always recognized and considered the presence of the Father.

G. Reaffirm Faith – “God is with me!”

1. Go with what you know!—> God has promised, and He cannot lie —> “I am with you always”
2. “Lord I believe you are here and I am thankful for it”

3. Spurgeon: *“Make it your prayer, ‘Lord, open my eyes, that I may see my Savior present with me.’”*

4. Pray“Help me Father to live in truth. Help me to enjoy the solace of knowing you are near. I know that in your presence is fullness of joy. I will live in this joy!”