

# Real Men who Practice Presence



*...For I'm trained in the secret of overcoming all things, whether in fullness or in hunger. And I find that the strength of Christ's explosive power infuses me to conquer every difficulty. —Paul. Philippians 4:12-13 [The Passion Translation].*

**D**rawing from classic authors of Christian devotion is becoming a devotional practice in my journey with the Lord so I want to share a story with you tonight that I believe will cultivate a growing closeness in your walk with God as we prepare our hearts for this Challenge.

## *The Story of a man called Brother Lawrence*

**N**icholas Herman (Brother Lawrence) was born in Eastern France in 1611. He grew up so poor that he joined the army as a young adult so he could eat. After getting injured, he worked the simple job of a footman to provide for himself. Usually the footmen performed a range of duties which included serving meals, opening and closing doors, carrying heavy items, or moving furniture for the housemaid to clean behind. The footmen might also double as valets, especially for visiting guests.

Jesus met Nicholas in his mundane life of opening carriage doors and waiting on tables. He described having a vision that "set me completely loose from the world and kindled in me such a love for God..." (Practicing His Presence, pp. 41-42).

At age forty, Nicholas became a lay brother with the Discalced (Barefoot) Carmelites. He served in the monastery kitchen for the rest of his life until his last years when he repaired sandals.

So here is the question I want to challenge you with at our Fireside Challenge. How did this soldier, footman, and kitchen monk become known as Brother Lawrence? How did this poor, humble man inspire millions of Christians to a deeper devotion to Christ?

**B**rother Lawrence developed a simple way of continuously praying from his heart. He was in perpetual conversation with the Lord. He **practiced** communing with God in the loud and fast-paced kitchen as well as during times of private contemplation.

His story shows us how real, available, and accessible the sweet, inward presence of Jesus is during the busy, outward activity of daily life.

This ordinary man's simple union with Jesus drew many people to him to seek his counsel and prayers. After his death, this lowly monk's letters of spiritual direction and conversation were turned into a book called Practicing the Presence of God.

### *Inspiration From Practicing the Presence of God*

**H**ere are a few excerpts from Lawrence's book (Practicing His Presence). Allow them to wake you up to Jesus' presence within you...

*"My set times of prayer are not different from other times of the day. Although I do retire to pray (because it is the direction of my superior) I do not need such retirement nor do I ask for it because my greatest business does not divert me from God..."*

*"The time of business does not differ with me from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great a tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament."*

*"If sometimes I have not thought of God for a good while, I do not become disquieted because of it. But, after having acknowledged my failure to God, I return to Him with even greater trust since I was so miserable in having forgotten Him." (Lawrence saw lack of constant communication with Christ as a failure!)*

*[This is] the most excellent method I have found of going to God... doing common business without any view to pleasing [people], and as far as I am capable, doing it purely for the love of God.*

## *A Prayer to Practice God's Presence*

**J**esus, it is possible to live with you in every circumstance. Help us cultivate a growing closeness to you. Give us eyes to always see you and ears to always hear you. May our desire to be with you be as passionate as your desire to be with us! Transform our lives of conversation with You to be intimate, natural, and like breathing. Let us experience the same outflows of your son Jesus as He spent time with you.

LORD... I want to receive everything you have for me. Come and be the Lord of my journey here. Fill this experience. I long for the nourishment that You provide as I abide in You the vine.

I am your branch and I long for strength and to be bearing the good fruit you provide.

We don't pray as disconnected from the powerful demonstrations of your promises.... But we pray as connected to Jesus, the work of His Spirit in us, and for the power of His presence to transform us through the power of the Cross. The Presence that resurrects us from our graves of complacency, splits open the hardness of us, and tears the veils that we put up right down the middle. The presence that breaks our chains, and that lives in us to manifest your glory through us.

We don't pray for a revival. We pray for a revelation of who you are that is so weighty; that we experience the power of your presence that truly confirms we are known by You.

We want to experience your presence Lord because in Matt 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of your Father who is in heaven. We may know of you, we may identify with your works but, Many will say to you on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then you will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

LORD I will no longer continue living by observation, No more living in just knowledge of You. I pray for the glory of your presence to impact me in the ways that make you proud to call me your own! And that you will Manifest your glory in and through me as I simply step into the room where you are!

I am choosing to enjoy the experience and the power of living in the name of Jesus! The Power that breaks every chain and bondage.

I am consecrating my self to a life of communion with you, union with you so I will practice the rhythm of.....

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. Let joy be your continual feast. Make your life a prayer. And in the midst of everything be always giving thanks, for this is God's perfect plan for you in Christ Jesus.

Help me walk in these three virtues. The virtues that combine to form the wonderful expression of Christ's life within us as everything is channeled through Him first!

Amen!

**Discussion:** What Resonates with you as we just prayed that prayer?

For further consideration of developing deeper intimacy with God through Jesus, download our e-book called the Rhythms of Pause along with other books at: <https://www.johnfairrington.com/books.html> Small Donations Appreciated!