

The Practice of the Presence of God

The various forms of devotional experiences thus far have been intermittent and scattered throughout our lives. We have set times for our prayers, devotional experiences, meditation and contemplation. We go on spiritual retreats. We participate in Lenten spiritual practice sessions.

These are well and good (excellent in fact) but we do not live on the “mountain peak” all the time. We have to go down to wash socks, repair leaky faucets, pay bills, catch the flu and report to the job. One of the most exciting possibilities in devotional growth is the expansion of more vital spiritual experience to occupy all of one’s time.

If one form of meditation is thinking in the frame of reference of God, then could not all our thinking become meditation if God became our continuous frame of reference? If devotional experiencing is alertness to more ultimate meanings in occasional selected experiences, why should this not include all experiences?

It is a fact of the universe that God is continually present everywhere, within us and around us.

All activities can become reminders of our larger relationships and of the quality God would introduce into our acts. We can find the mystical in the mundane. Instead of allowing the miscellaneous activities of life to crowd God out, we let God into all our activities.

We today are much concerned about the totality of personal being and the full range of values, including the secular. Instead of withdrawing from the secular, which classical devotion often tended to do, the practice of the presence clearly affirms the importance of the ordinary or commonplace activities of life.

How may we then learn to practice the presence of God?

The central recommendation is that we practice deliberately until the experience becomes spontaneous. This means that we consciously remember God repeatedly during the day. We can practice the presence at various times and places, and in activities and relationships. In every situation we can learn to remember the purposes of God, as the most significant factor in all that exists.

The next section will include several exploratory practices to lead us to experiencing the presence of God in all places and at all times.