

May 11, 2021

**Reflections on Bro. Lawrence's book Practice the Presence of God, third and fourth Conversations and the 15 Letters**

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**Third Conversation**

God will always give the strength to bear whatever befalls me—so fear nothing and confidently continue without complaining during times of suffering. Love God always.

**Fourth Conversation**

God never fails in offering us grace at each action. Don't forget to ask for His assistance. Do for God's sake which we commonly do for our own sake. Don't mistake the means for the end—like performing certain works very imperfectly by reason of human or selfish regards. Don't just do enough to meet an obligation or to be able to say you did it. Do all our common business without regard or view to pleasing men. We must put our whole trust in God, a total surrender. The greatness of the work is not the important thing, but the love with which we do it. *It sounds like St. Therese and the Little Way.* Be thankful for crosses.

Letters

1<sup>st</sup> Letter: Often repeated acts of turning our thoughts to God develop a habit of doing so. This is difficult at the beginning.

2<sup>nd</sup> Letter: Formulas for deepening spirituality, advancing in stages, often leaves us discouraged. All the day is prayer, not just that time set aside for prayer. Do nothing which displeases God. (Bro. Lawrence quit all forms of devotion and set prayers but those which his state obliged him.)

3<sup>rd</sup> Letter: Practice always turning thoughts to God. Work at it. It will become a natural habit.

4<sup>th</sup> Letter: We are blind and hinder God's graces when we content ourselves with so little when God has infinite treasures to bestow on us. We stop the current of His graces. Not to advance in the spiritual life is to lose ground.

5<sup>th</sup> Letter: There is not in the world a life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God. Do all from a principle of love.

6<sup>th</sup> Letter: Bro. Lawrence again emphasizes the practicing the presence of God. Put complete trust in God—sometimes lay aside certain devotions to practice the presence of God.

7<sup>th</sup> Letter: So not always scrupulously confine yourself to certain rules, or particular devotions, but act with great confidence in God and with love and humility.

8<sup>th</sup> Letter: Think of God often. It helps to avoid wandering thoughts during prayer.

9<sup>th</sup> Letter: Becoming holy is gradual. Give good example. Grace is the only thing that keeps us from

10<sup>th</sup> Letter: Don't be too dependent on friends; lean on God.

11<sup>th</sup> Letter: Appreciate suffering as God's mercy to unite us in His suffering on the cross. It is an opportunity to grow in virtue.

12<sup>th</sup> Letter: Suffering can purify our souls.

13<sup>th</sup> Letter: God is with us in suffering. Accept it from His hand.

14<sup>th</sup> Letter: Pray for strength to endure suffering.

15<sup>th</sup> Letter: The more we know God the more we love Him. In this letter Bro. Lawrence knew he would soon die.

*This collection of correspondence was first published in French in 1895. It contains timeless principles. Human nature doesn't really change. What I am going through now, people in past times went through. What strategies Bro. Lawrence writes about are relevant today as well as in his time.*