

Ms. Renee Valenzuela, OP

30 Day Devotional & Study Guide

The Practice of the Presence of God and Spiritual Maxims

Brother Lawrence

Day 1: Foreword and Introduction

1. Having read the Foreword and Introduction, what are goals you can pursue in reading the book?
  - I will give this book my full attention so I can evaluate what I am doing now, what I already know and what I can do to improve my spiritual life and relationship with God.

Day 2: First Half of 1<sup>st</sup> Conversation

1. What are ways God's grandeur and sovereignty may have set Brother Lawrence loose from the ties of the world and created a great love for God?
  - The tree in winter, being a simple, visual representation of the power of God, demonstrates to the young man the exceeding greatness of God's will. That yielding to His will in all things, is the greatest manner in which a man can return this greatness to God, who lacks nothing. This recognition of one's need to yield one's own will to God's will in all things is the foundation of the humility necessary to foster a life of faith and complete trust in God.
2. What are ways to establish habits of conversing constantly or frequently with God?
  - If we recognize that "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" means that we must accept God's will in all things and that He has the good of our own souls in mind at all times, we can more easily accept the events in our lives, begin to trust God more and more, and will ultimately begin to thank Him continuously throughout every day of our lives and pray without ceasing.

Day 3: Second Half of 1<sup>st</sup> Conversation

1. What are important aspects of faith?
  - Trust God in every situation, He has the good of your soul in mind
  - Become familiar with His ways (learn about the faith), because He is the same today, as He was yesterday, and will always be
  - Yield to God's will, accept it in all circumstances. Maybe you're the holy one (the good) to rise up in a bad situation.
2. How can you resign yourself to God's will?
  - You must trust God completely, there is no other way.
  - Recognize that God is present, always, no matter what you're doing, He is there with you.
  - Acknowledge His presence, talk with Him, ask Him to increase the gifts of the Holy Spirit in you, particularly fortitude, knowledge and understanding regarding His will in your life

Day 4: First Third of 2<sup>nd</sup> Conversation

1. How can one make the love of God one's constant motive?
2. How can you overcome fear and anxiety and live in freedom and joy?

Day 5: Middle Third of 2<sup>nd</sup> Conversation

1. How can you make a habit of confessing to God in your day?
2. What are ways you can live simply with God in your daily life?

Day 6: Last Third of 2<sup>nd</sup> Conversation

1. What are specific ways in which you can trust in God, and take all your cares to Him?
2. How can you cultivate the practice of praying constantly?

Day 7: First Half of 3<sup>rd</sup> Conversation

1. How can you develop fear and awe of God?
2. What are unusual activities during which you could practice God's presence?

Day 8: Second Half of 3<sup>rd</sup> Conversation

1. What are benefits of resignation to God's will?
2. Why does Brother Lawrence say there is little virtue in people?

Day 9: First Third of 4<sup>th</sup> Conversation

1. How can you converse with God with freedom and simplicity?
2. How can you praise, adore and love God constantly?

Day 10: Middle Third of 4<sup>th</sup> Conversation

1. How can you pursue holiness and sanctification daily?
2. How can you practice faith, hope and charity in your life?

Day 11: Last Third of 4<sup>th</sup> Conversation

1. How can you pursue God's presence in your job?
2. What was the effect of Brother Lawrence's practices on his disposition and countenance?

Day 12: 1<sup>st</sup> Letter

1. What are methods by which Brother Lawrence cultivates God's presence?
2. What are results of cultivating God's presence?

Day 13: First Third of 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter

1. What are differences in the perspectives Brother Lawrence describes?
2. What are aspects of the faith described, both by Brother Lawrence and the notation? (There may not be a 'notation' in your version.)

Day 14: Second Third of 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter

1. What were some of the reasons for Brother Lawrence's difficulty for ten years?
2. What are characteristics of his state of being?

Day 15: Last Third of 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter

1. How does God treat this 'most wretched' of men?
2. How does Lawrence see himself in God's presence?

Day 16: 3<sup>rd</sup> Letter

1. How can you find reassurance and fortitude during times of danger?

Day 17: First Half of 4<sup>th</sup> Letter

1. How can you open your heart to God?
2. How can you find repose and rest, contentment and satisfaction?

Day 18: Second Half of 4<sup>th</sup> Letter

1. What are barriers we put up to God?
2. Are you delaying renewal and fervor?

Day 19: 5<sup>th</sup> Letter

1. Who do you pray for and how do you pray for them?
2. Have you had continual conversations with God for extended periods of time?

Day 20: 6<sup>th</sup> Letter

1. Is it possible to take pleasures which are innocent and lawful and also with and in God?
2. How can you obtain greater freedom even as you serve God faithfully?

Day 21: 7<sup>th</sup> Letter

1. How have the years affected your experience of your time with God?
2. Are you approaching God with confidence and humility?

Day 22: 8<sup>th</sup> Letter

1. What are patterns and weaknesses you have noticed in your own thinking and times of devotion?
2. Are you confessing and addressing your shortcomings in thinking?

Day 23: 9<sup>th</sup> Letter

1. How does this letter say we can obtain God's help?
2. How can you think more about God?

Day 24: 10<sup>th</sup> Letter

1. What has been your experience with loss of family or friends?
2. What has brought you closer to God in that context?

Day 25: 11<sup>th</sup> Letter

1. What has your experience been with God when you have been ill and in pain?
2. There are truths to what Lawrence says in this letter – how difficult is it to listen and integrate some of his comments?

Day 26: 12<sup>th</sup> Letter

1. What are different ways in which you can entertain yourself and God?
2. How is it that faith is our support and foundation?
3. Could there be scientific and spiritual truth in Lawrence's assertion that disease may be alleviated by practice of the presence of God?

Day 27: 13<sup>th</sup> Letter

1. Is it wise to obtain counsel for health matters from physicians and clergy, family and friends?
2. How can one trust in God for solace and help in illness and pain?

Day 28: 14<sup>th</sup> Letter

1. How can you obtain the peace of paradise on earth?
2. How can you persevere to obtain the right mindset?

Day 29: 15<sup>th</sup> Letter

1. How should we view our burdens and suffering?
2. How can we seek and love God by faith, and not for reward?

Day 30: Please read the Afterword (there may not be an 'Afterword' in your version, but you can still do the following); and then identify two favorite truths or lessons learned from this book.