

PRACTICING GOD'S PRESENCE IN OUR LIFE

- As Christians we are able to continually enjoy God's presence in our life as a result of what Jesus Christ did on the cross at Calvary in dying for our sins.
- Prior to becoming a believer a person's sins separated them from God's presence. However the moment a person repents and believes in Christ all of their sins are forgiven and they have immediate and permanent access to God's presence

The Apostle Peter made this clear when he said,

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” (Acts 3:19)

- When we first come to Jesus Christ we have a great sense of God's presence in our life after we have opened up our heart to Him. But the moment we come to Christ we also enter into a spiritual contest in which the enemy of our soul (the Devil) will continually try and prevent us from becoming all that God has planned for our life and from enjoying our fellowship with God
- In this teaching I will be sharing on the importance of continually enjoying God's tangible presence in our life, just as we did when we first received Christ, as well as sharing some keys that can help us to walk in intimate fellowship with God
- We are now living in times in which there are many distractions and temptations that can draw us away from developing and maintaining an intimate walk with the Lord
- Life is also now more busy for many people as they work long hours to fund increasingly more expensive lifestyles

- Social media and the many options for pleasure and entertainment can also prevent us from spending quality time in God's presence
- With the Christian faith more than ever before under increasing persecution and opposition from sceptics and atheists and other humanistic and religious groups, **SPENDING QUALITY TIME IN GOD'S PRESENCE ON A CONSISTENT BASIS IS ABSOLUTELY CRUCIAL FOR ALL BELIEVERS**

- Spending time in God's presence and meditating on His word helps us to know Jesus Christ in a real and personal way

The Apostle Paul wrote, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Ephesians 3:17-19)

- It is so important that our faith is not just an intellectual one but that we get to know Christ in a real and personal way as our best friend. Drawing aside and spending time in God's presence on a regular basis helps us to grow in our love for and knowledge of Him as we communicate with Him in prayer
- The real battle ground is the mind. The Devil will continually try and bombard our mind with thoughts of doubt and confusion to try and weaken our faith. Spending quality time alone in God's presence and meditating on His word helps to keep our faith built up as we allow the word of God to go from our head into our heart
- There are now many sceptics and atheists that the enemy will try and use to undermine and if possible to destroy in particular the faith of new believers

The Apostle Paul warned of this when he wrote,

“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”

For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all the principality and power.” (Colossians 2:8-10)

- **For this reason our faith needs to be more than just an intellectual knowledge of who Christ is but that we know the love of Christ in a real and personal way. This is why it is so crucial that we consistently make time to hear from God so that we can continually grow in our Christian walk**

The Psalmist wrote,

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” (Psalm 46:10)

Jesus Himself said,

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” (John 10:27)

- **In order to carry God’s tangible presence in our lives wherever we go we must learn to practice God’s presence in our own lives**
- **The more time that we spend soaking in God’s presence the more we carry His tangible presence in our lives**
- **A good practical analogy of how soaking in God’s presence affects our life can be seen when we consider what happens when we put a tea bag into a glass of milk. The longer the tea bag is in the milk the more it affects the colour and taste of the milk**
- **So too the more we soak in God’s presence the more we are changed in our nature and the more Christlike that we become**

I will now look at some of the many reasons why practicing God's presence in our life is so important

1) In His presence is fullness of joy

- The joy of the LORD is our strength and will help to sustain us through life's trials and challenges

King David wrote, "You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (**Psalm 16:11**)

In the book of Nehemiah we read, "...Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." (**Nehemiah 8:10**)

- Joy is one virtue of the fruit of the Spirit
- Consistently soaking in God's presence is a great key to maintaining our joy in life.
- This is why the enemy will continually try and get us too busy in life so that we do not spend enough time enjoying God's presence in our life
- We must never allow the Devil to steal our joy. Consistently abiding in God's presence will give us the joy that we need to sustain us during life's trials and challenges

2) We get to know God in a real and personal way as our friend

- When Christ becomes our best friend we need never feel alone

Jesus Himself said to His disciples,

"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you." (**John 15:15**)

- **Those who know God intimately will do great exploits for Him**

In the book of Daniel we read,
“Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.” **(Daniel 11:32)**
- **Those who have a great desire to live for Jesus and to share their faith with others, will at times experience great rejection and persecution for their Christian values**
Jesus Himself said,
“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” **(John 15:18-19)**
- **Especially for those who desire to do great things for God sometimes the walk can be a very lonely one. Not everyone will share our passion and enthusiasm to live wholeheartedly for Christ**
- **However it is during the times when we are rejected for our faith and when we are not appreciated for our Christian beliefs that we will find that we will get to know Christ as our BEST friend**
- Far too many people that are single are afraid of being alone and will enter into wrong relationships because of a fear of being left on the shelf rather than waiting for the right choice of partner for their lives
- However when we get to know Christ intimately as our best friend we are in a far better position to objectively choose the friendships that we want to form

- **When we do not have an abiding and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ we will invariably place unrealistic expectations on others to meet our needs in life**
- Only Jesus can fill our deepest needs in life at all times which are to feel loved and secure and to have a purpose in life. Only the LORD can be guaranteed to love us at ALL times
- **WHEN WE GET TO KNOW CHRIST AS OUR BEST FRIEND WE HAVE GREAT STABILITY IN OUR LIVES AND ARE NOT MOVED BY THE MOOD SWINGS OF OTHERS IN OUR LIFE**

In the book of Hebrews we read,

“...For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: “The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” **(Hebrew 13:5-6)**

3) Those who wait upon the LORD will renew their strength

- Being still in God’s presence helps us to be spiritually invigorated
- God’s strength is made perfect in our weakness
- Sitting in God’s presence and learning to walk in the Spirit are great keys to remaining spiritually and physically refreshed

In the book of Isaiah we read,

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. **(Isaiah 40:28-31)**

4) We gain God's heart of compassion and love for others and especially for the lost and hurting

King David wrote,

“Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4)

- **We see the compassion of Jesus for the lost and hurting in the gospel of Matthew**

In the gospel of Matthew we read,

“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” **(Matthew 9:35-36)**

5) We gain a greater boldness in our faith the more time that we spend with the Lord

In the book of Acts we read, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” **(Acts 4:13)**

6) It is a great key to hearing clearly from the LORD

- Life is full of choices
- The choices that we make in life will greatly determine the degree to which we fulfil our God given destiny
- Spending quality time with the Lord on a regular basis helps us to get the wisdom that we need from God to make less poor choices in life and to live a fruitful and blessed life

In the book of Jeremiah we read,

“For who has stood in the counsel of the LORD, And has perceived and heard His word? Who has marked His word and heard it?” (**Jeremiah 23:18**)

Jesus Himself said,

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” (**John 16:13**)

7) It is a great key to continually knowing and following God’s will for our life

- We are most blessed and fulfilled in life flowing in God’s will and plan for our life
- We are also the greatest blessing to others when we connect with and flow in God’s will for our life
- It is in the centre of God’s will for our life that we experience His provision, favour and protection and that we see doors opening for us that no man can close

This is why the Apostle Paul wrote,

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (**Ephesians 5:15-17**)

- Spending time in God’s presence helps us to remain in God’s will for our life in each season of our life

In the book of Proverbs we read,

“Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.” (**Proverbs 16:3**)

- God has a unique unfolding plan for every believer's life

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” **(Ephesians 2:10)**

8) It is a great key to maintaining our peace in life

- Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace
- Spending time in the presence of the LORD helps us to consistently maintain our peace
- If we become too busy to spend quality with the Lord we will be more prone to becoming anxious and troubled about many things

We see this clearly in the gospel of Luke where Jesus emphasised the importance of spending quality time in His presence

“Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.” And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.” **(Luke 10:38-42)**

Jesus also said, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” **(John 14:27)**

- Spending quality time in God's presence will help us to remain at peace during the trials of life that we all go through in this life

Jesus Himself said,

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (**John 16:33**)

9) It is a key to bearing fruit in our life (To growing in Christlike character)

Jesus Himself said, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” (**John 15:4-5**)

- **The more quality time that we spend in the LORD's presence the more Christ-like that we will become in our character**

AND

10) It is the key to maintaining TRUE freedom in Christ

- The more that we press into the LORD in our Christian walk the more we begin to walk in TRUE freedom

In the book of James we read, “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” (**James 4:7**)

Jesus Himself said, “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” (**John 8:36**)

❖ So given the many reasons why it is so important to spend quality time in God's presence it is important that we make spending time in God's presence a **LIFESTYLE**

❖ Jesus Himself during His time here on earth often withdrew from others to spend time in prayer to His Father in heaven

In the gospel of Luke we read,

“So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”
(**Luke 5:16**)

❖ Revelation from God always comes in isolation.

❖ Dreams of greatness are birthed in our hearts when we draw aside to seek God for His ways and plans for our life

The word of the **LORD** came to the Prophet Jeremiah in prison, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” (**Jeremiah 33:3**)

❖ No matter what we may be going through in life today God has a good plan for our future

❖ The Prophet Jeremiah was languishing in a prison cell when the **LORD** spoke to him to seek Him for what He had planned for his future. God is able to resurrect broken dreams

❖ God has so much planned for our future

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“But as it is written:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,

Nor have entered into the heart of man

The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.””

(**1 Corinthians 2:9**)

- ❖ **When we still our minds and spend time alone in the presence of God we hear clearly from Him**
- ❖ **God has so much that He wants to reveal to us about our future**
- ❖ **It is in His presence that God is able to reveal the new things that He has planned for our life**
- ❖ **God's plan for our life unfolds over time. There are different seasons in our life. Being continually intimate in our walk with the Lord helps to see God's plan for our life unfolding over time**

This is why Jesus Himself said,

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Matthew 6:6)

- ❖ **It is far easier to pray in line with God's will for our life when we draw aside to spend time alone with Him in His presence**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” **(Romans 8:26-27)**

- ❖ **Being still before the LORD helps us to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit so that we know who and what to pray for**

So how quickly can we cultivate a LIFESTYLE of practicing God's presence in our life!

1) We need to make our desire to know Christ INTIMATELY our greatest pursuit in life

- This will help to ensure that we are not distracted by the things of this world from spending quality time with God
- Both King David and the great Apostle Paul had a great desire to know God intimately. Both of them achieved great things for God

King David wrote, “O GOD, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for you; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.” **(Psalm 63:1-3)**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” **(Philippians 3:7-8)**

- We need to learn to cherish God's presence in our life.
Truly in His presence is fullness of joy

2) We need to purposely MAKE time to spend with the LORD on a regular basis.

- This is particularly important for those who lead busy lifestyles
- The busier we are in life the more important it is that we draw aside to spend quality time with the Lord to keep our faith vibrant and alive

- Having healthy boundaries in our life helps us to spend quality time with the Lord on a regular basis so that we are continually built up in our faith
- Although Jesus was busy in His ministry here on earth He regularly made time to spend in prayer to His Father in heaven

In the gospel of Mark we read,

“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” (**Mark 1:35**)

In the gospel of Matthew we read,

“And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.” (**Matthew 14:23**)

- Having a set time each day to meet with the Lord is one way of ensuring that we spend time with Him on a consistent basis

3) It is good to have a favourite place where we can meet with God. A place where we can be free from distractions and outside noises

- For myself I have two favourite places where I meet with the Lord without distractions. Early in the morning I often spend time with the Lord at our church or otherwise during the day in my van.
- In both of these places I am not distracted by other things and other people
- Having a secret place where we can meet with God helps us to also have an expectation of hearing from Him when we spend time alone with Him and in His word

Jesus Himself said, “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you ^[a]openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

“Therefore do not be like them. *For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.*” (**Matthew 6:6-8**)

4) The importance of not allowing our smart phone to distract us. It is preferable to turn off our phones when we draw aside to spend time in God’s presence

- Having our smart phone near us when we are spending time with the Lord has the potential to be a distraction and even barrier to us focusing on what God has to speak to us
- So often the phone can ring when we are enjoying a great time of fellowship with the Lord, or we can be tempted to see who has messaged us
- For many people it has almost become an addiction using the many features on their smart phone. For some, so much so, that they feel lost without their smart phone
- For this reason not having our phone with us during our quiet times is one great key to having an uninterrupted time of fellowship with the Lord when we spend time with Him

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” (**Colossians 3:1-2**)

5) We need to be creative in making time to spend in the LORD's presence

- At times life can become very busy.
- God will always give us creative ways of making time to spend with Him throughout the day IF we are Kingdom minded
- For those that do a lot of driving there is a great opportunity to spend quality time with the Lord whilst driving by being still before Him, or by listening to anointed worship songs. To enjoy this way of spending time in God's presence it is important that we leave early for our appointments or work engagements so that we are not in rush to get to our destination
- Spending time with the Lord early in the morning or late at night when others are still asleep is also another way of enjoying our quiet time with the Lord
- There are also many parks that we can pull into for lunch or on the way to or from work, or when we just want to get away from our everyday routine of life and from all the things that need to be attended to on the home front. Going for walks alone also enable us to spend quality time with the Lord whilst also getting fit at the same time

6) We need to learn to still our mind and to keep our focus on things above

- We must learn to discipline our mind and not allow it to wander during our quiet times. It is so easy during our quiet times to begin to focus on what needs to be done today and to not be still enough to hear from God

- When alone with God we need to keep our focus on what He wants to say to us regarding our life and circumstances

In the book of Isaiah we read, “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.” **(Isaiah 26:3-4)**

- We need to ALWAYS have an expectation that God has something to say to us. God has so much revelation and wisdom that He wants to reveal to us to help us to do life well

In the book of James we read, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” **(James 1:5)**

- We must simply refuse to entertain worries and concerns in our life but ALWAYS be quick to give our cares to the Lord. This is a great key to continually enjoying the presence of God in our life as a believer

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” **(Philippians 4:6-7)**

- Continually focusing on our problems will rob us of our peace and joy and from enjoying His sweet presence in our life

This is why the Apostle Peter wrote, “casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” **(1 Peter 5:7)**

- If we learn to discipline our minds during our quiet times with the Lord, we will find that our time with Him will be the highlight of our days as we receive encouragement from Him and His wisdom and guidance for our life

7) The importance of having an open bible when we spend time alone with the Lord.

- God is able to speak clearly to us through His word, especially when we are still before Him
- Whatever the Holy Spirit speaks to us will always line up with the word of God
- The Holy Spirit will also highlight passages of Scripture that are relevant to our current circumstances and which will give us the wisdom that we need for our life
- This is why it is so important that during our quiet times that we always have an open bible. Having an expectation that God will speak to us through His word makes our devotional times with Him far more meaningful and vibrant
- God always wants to communicate to us. It is through meditating on the word of God that we see Him continually speaking to us a word in season from heaven to help us to do life well

In the book of Psalms we read,

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

(Psalm 119:105)

“Your testimonies are wonderful; Therefore my soul keeps them. The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.” (Psalm 119:129-130)

“Direct my steps by Your word, And let no iniquity have dominion over me.” (Psalm 119:133)

- **May I also encourage you to write down and journal those things that God speaks to you about, so that you do not forget what He has revealed to you during your quiet times with Him**

8) Learning to have a lifestyle of praise and worship.

- God inhabits the praises of His people

In the book of Psalms we read,

“But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel.”
(Psalm 22:3)

- Worship helps us to connect to the heart of God and to get His heart of compassion for others
- Praise and worship helps us to focus on the bigness of God and to take our focus off our problems and challenges
- Praise and worship helps to bring God into our circumstances and situations as we seek His face

In the book of Psalms we read,

“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.”
(Psalm 100:4)

- Praise and worship helps us to keep our focus on things above and on living for the Kingdom Cause

Jesus Himself said,

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ Or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” **(Matthew 6:31-33)**

- Having a lifestyle of worship helps us to live a life where we enjoy God’s tangible presence on a continual basis, EVEN during the storms of life

This is why Jesus Himself said, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” **(John 4:23-24)**

9) Having an obedient and repentant heart

- Unconfessed sin and disobedience in our walk with the Lord will always affect our fellowship with God

The Psalmist wrote, “I cried to Him with my mouth, And He was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear. But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer.” **(Psalm 66:17-19)**

- This is why it is so important that we deal quickly with any known sin in our heart and life. That we have a repentant heart
- Being quick to confess and repent of things in our life that are not right helps to keep the pipeline of communication open with God

The Apostle John wrote, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” **(1 John 1:9)**

10) Walking in forgiveness towards others

- We must always be quick to forgive those who have hurt us, or who have let us down in life
- We must always keep a soft heart towards others if we are to also have a soft heart towards God

- We cannot have our heart shut towards others and open to God at the same time
- Harbours unforgiving attitudes towards others will steal our joy and peace and negatively affect our relationships both with others and with God.
- It is just not worth it to lose your peace and intimacy with the Lord by refusing to forgive others

This is why Jesus said, “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”
(Mark 11:25-26)

11) Being continually filled with the Holy Spirit AND learning to walk in the Spirit.

- *This is a great key to enjoying God’s peace and presence in our lives on an ongoing basis*
- Being continually filled with the Holy Spirit will keep our faith alive and vibrant
- As we give out to others we ourselves also need to be filled afresh by the Holy Spirit
- Being continually filled with all the fullness of God helps us to enjoy God’s tangible peace and presence in our lives on an ongoing basis.
- The Holy Spirit is the Gift of Peace whom Jesus promised that His Father would send to those who believe in Him

Jesus Himself said,

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”
(John 14:26)

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” **(John 14:27)**

- Because of the Holy Spirit living in our lives as believers we have the ability to have peace even during the storms of life
- Being continually filled with all the fullness of the Holy Spirit is a great key to practicing God’s presence in our life on a consistent basis

This is why the Apostle Paul wrote,

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,” **(Ephesians 5:18)**

- Learning to walk in the Spirit and in saying no to reacting in the flesh (our old carnal nature) is also a great key to maintaining God’s tangible peace and presence in our life on a continual basis

This is why the Apostle Paul wrote,

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” **(Galatians 5:16)**

- The Apostle Paul then went on to contrast the difference between our fleshly nature and the fruit of the Spirit which can be evident in our life as we learn to walk in the Spirit

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.” **(Galatians 5:19-21)**

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”
(Galatians 5:22-23) AND

12) The importance of fellowshiping with other believers

- Whilst having a close and personal relationship with Christ is absolutely crucial, we must never neglect meeting together with other believers on a regular basis
- We were never meant to live out our Christian walk separated from other believers. We are not meant to be lone rangers in our walk with the Lord. We all need one another
- There is a corporate presence of God when we meet together with other believers

Jesus Himself said, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”
(Matthew 18:20)

- In this world we will at times of necessity be in environments that can be spiritually heavy such as our workplaces at times and when shopping in malls and market places where we now so often see psychic stalls, Buddha statues and other worldly things everywhere

- However having said this there are many places that we should try and avoid as Christians if we are to remain spiritually strong in our faith. The environments that we spend our leisure time in will affect our spiritual walk. Ungodly and worldly entertainment venues for example have principalities and powers of darkness that negatively influence the lives of those who attend these places
- When we have corporate fellowship with other believers we are cleansed spiritually from those things of the world that would try to come upon us. Being continually cleansed spiritually helps us to enjoy the sweet presence of the Lord in our lives in a greater way
- The Apostle John emphasised the cleansing affect of fellowshiping with other Christians when he wrote, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” **(1 John 1:7)**

So in conclusion:

- May I encourage you to learn to practice God’s presence in your life on a consistent basis, so that you can enjoy His presence in all that you do in life, even during those times when you are going through trials in life
- I would also like to encourage you to spend quality time in God’s presence so that you can get to know Him in a real and tangible way as your best friend. In doing this you will find that your quiet times with the Lord will become the best part of your day in the days to come as you make your relationship with Him your greatest priority in life.
- Truly in His presence is fullness of joy

- It is only in practicing God's presence in our life that we can fully experience the richness of life that can only be found in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Himself said, I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (**John 10:10**)

- **Jesus Christ gave us two simple commandments to help us to have a fulfilled life here on earth which emphasise having intimacy with Him and loving relationships with others**
- **It is only however in applying the first commandment to our life that we can unconditionally love others and fulfil the second commandment**

I will finish with the words of Jesus

““And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.” (**Mark 12:30**)

“And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (**Mark 12:31**)