



# TOGETHER



A Daily Guide To Friendship with God

Carson Weitnauer

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Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

— **Matthew 5:8**

Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is  
God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Don't stifle the Spirit.

— **1 Thessalonians 5:16-19**

*Together* is dedicated to Lakshmi and Alison, faithful friends

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# TOGETHER

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*Brother Lawrence stated that one doesn't need any special knowledge or skills to find God. All that's required is a heart that's fully dedicated to God, to do everything for His sake, and to love only Him.*

**— Third Conversation with Brother Lawrence**  
***The Practice of the Presence of God***



# WHY I WROTE *TOGETHER*

I wrote *Together* to create the daily prayer guide that I needed. Perhaps by God's grace, it will also enable you to experience life with God.

So why did I need a new prayer guide? It comes from my struggle to walk with God.

For instance, when I read the Bible, I often came across verses about our relationship with God that seemed strange, impossible, or even ridiculous. Worse, as a Christian leader, I often stuffed these unpleasant emotions and intellectual doubts. Why? Because these seemed like basic, Christianity 101 questions: how do I have a relationship with God? Surely I already knew the answer to that question? So I often figured, 'The problem is that I must try harder.'

Here's one example. In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19, Paul teaches us, "Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Don't stifle the Spirit."

Always rejoicing, constantly praying, giving thanks in everything?

But it gets more intense. Paul explains that this way of life is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. The implications? To disobey this command would be to stifle the Spirit!

Do you obey this command?

These verses appear to create a dilemma: either we pray all the time or live in opposition to the challenging demands of the Triune God. But no matter how many quiet times I had, Bible verses I read, or prayer books I used, I could never say that I always rejoiced in God! Isn't this requirement an oppressive, legalistic burden?

You might think, "But Carson, apply some common sense!" As Dr. Craig Keener notes in his discussion of the passage in *The IVP New Testament Background Commentary*, "Even the strictest pietists of Judaism did not pray all day; but they prayed regularly, much and faithfully. 'Pray without ceasing' could mean this type of prayer or to carry the attitude of prayer with oneself throughout the day, not just in corporate worship or personal quiet times."

I think Dr. Keener is right. But how much does that help? "Go, carry an attitude of prayer throughout the day." That's still a pretty high bar!

As I look back on it, here's the essence of my problem: I knew what God wanted but I didn't know how to do it. And whenever we know what we should do but we aren't taught how to do it, we either give up in despair, or guilt and shame motivates us to try harder.

Either way, it's a discouraging situation.

Then I read a book that flipped the meaning of 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 for me. Instead of seeing this command as a curse, I saw it as a blessing. It didn't feel sour, but sweet. It no longer repelled me but drew me closer to God. And this book had a very unusual history.

The story of how I learned these revolutionary lessons goes back to 1692. That year, a small book by an unknown author was published in Paris. Surprisingly, since then, this small collection of letters and reflections has never gone out of print. The author, Nicolas Herman, was born in a small village without the advantages of class or money in a culture with a rigid social hierarchy. He lived through the Thirty Years War, the Black Death, and the Little Ice Age. As a former soldier, he endured chronic pain from an unresolved leg injury. For most of his life, he was a monk who lived under a vow of complete poverty, working in a kitchen and repairing sandals. (Dr. Carmen Acevedo Butcher provides these helpful biographical details in her translation, *Practice of the Presence*).

What did this relatively uneducated, poor, suffering man from the 17th century have to teach me?

Except, perhaps, in God's grace, those are precisely the reasons why Brother Lawrence understood God's love so well! Living with chronic pain and difficult circumstances, he testifies that God showed him how to abide in God's loving presence throughout the day. And he practiced this way of life for over thirty years.

Brother Lawrence is a faithful example of what 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 means. He learned to live his life with God and shared that wisdom with his friends. They found his insights so valuable that they collected and published them as *The Practice of the Presence of God*. And for over three hundred years, Christians worldwide have continued to benefit from how God revealed his constant love to Nicolas Herman's heart. What could be more valuable than to personally experience God's love as a way of life? This book is pure gold!

After I read *The Practice of the Presence of God*, I felt enabled to enjoy an ongoing friendship with God. Brother Lawrence showed me that it was possible, and he explained what helped him to do it. His simple, transparent honesty enabled me to feel like I could begin to imitate his example.

That is - at least for a while.

The problem is that I would still get caught up in the busyness of life, various social pressures, the dopamine-inducing notifications of my smartphone, and all the other reasons we drift away from God. Instead of knowing that God is my Friend, I would read the Bible as a duty, say prayers in desperation, and attend church to get a weekly dose of inspiration.

Then, occasionally, I would remember Brother Lawrence's example, and again practice God's presence. I find it so restorative to experience God's love throughout each day. At times, I become overly zealous, challenging myself to dedicate every single moment to God. However, my true aim is to abide in God's presence in a simple, peaceful, and consistent manner. Reminding myself of Brother Lawrence's life and teachings helps me to rest in God's care for me.

So that's why I wrote *Together*. This project gave me the opportunity to update the language of *The Practice of the Presence* into a more contemporary style, pair each reading with Scripture, and write a one-sentence prayer for each day. Instead of beginning the day from scratch, trying to find words to pray when I am at my groggiest and least alert, I now have a runway to awaken my heart to God's love.

I also created some reflection questions for when I have more time, to dig into a more emotionally honest relationship with God.

For all his disadvantages, Brother Lawrence had one tremendous advantage I (and probably you) don't have. He maintained his prayer life in the context of a Carmelite monastery, which structures the daily hours to include frequent times of both personal and communal prayer.

So unless we are called to the monastic life, how might we bring structure and community into our practice of God's presence?

We can be super-spiritual about it, but unless it's simple, easy, and rewarding, it probably won't happen. That's where *Together* comes in. Here's how you set yourself up for success.

First, find a spot to charge your smartphone outside of your bedroom. This makes it difficult to start the day with this distraction device. But don't worry, I promise you'll have plenty of time for your phone the rest of the day! Instead, place *Together* next to your bed so it's easy to start your day with God.

When your alarm goes off, the first thing you do is open *Together*. Read one devotional, meditate on the accompanying Bible verse, and say the one-sentence prayer. I estimate this will take you about five minutes. And five minutes is enough time to start your day with God.

No place in the Bible requires a two-hour quiet time, before the sun comes up, without coffee, as you study in the original languages, in a soundproof prayer closet, while burning incense from Jerusalem. You have my permission to take only five minutes to experience God's care for you. It's more important to consistently spend five minutes with God than to infrequently spend an hour reading the Bible. (And it's rare to find someone who can focus on God for an hour if they don't habitually spend five minutes with him!) So keep it short. After all, the point is to spend the rest of the day contemplating God's love.

Once you connect with God's abiding, loving presence, take a moment to celebrate that your day is off to a great start. You can pump your hand in the air, do a little dance, enjoy some coffee, listen to worship music, or draw a smiley face in the workbook. The point is, celebrate! With all that fights for our attention, it's a big deal to start with worship - thank God for prompting you to be with him!

But then there's the rest of the day. How will you keep enjoying God's presence when your kids or roommates are whining, your boss is yelling at you, other drivers are texting as they swerve into your lane, and you have a headache?

Well, it won't be perfect! Sometimes we see spiritual devotion as another obligation that weighs us down. But I hope that over time, we will experience that God wants to be with us and help us in all of these difficult moments. Starting your day with a *Together* devotional will help you make this switch in your heart and mind. It won't merely be an intellectual commitment but an instinctive, heart-level experience: God loves me and God is with me.

Here's how *Together* works. You have thirty-one devotionals, one for each day of the month — even in January, March, May, July, August, October, and December. But I permit you to start *Together* at any time of the month, even on February 29th.

Here's my promise to you. If you set aside five minutes each day, for one month, to read one devotional and say a one-sentence prayer to God, you will develop a stronger friendship with God. I'm confident this works because James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." And every page of *Together* will help you draw near to God.

After going through *Together* on the starter plan, you can slowly add other reminders to practice God's presence. Don't try these until at least the second month of doing *Together*. If you try to run a marathon before you walk around the neighborhood, you might injure yourself. And if you try to be a spiritual superhero before practicing the basics, you'll likely burn out and give up. Also, God

doesn't need superheroes. He invites us to be his friends. So relax. God loves you. One step at a time. This isn't a competition but life with a loving God.

When you're ready to take another step forward, here are some practical tips:

1. Set micro-reminders on your calendar. "Eat lunch and practice God's presence."
2. Set alarms on your phone. When the alarm goes off, turn it off before it bothers you, then say a one-sentence prayer to reconnect with God.
3. Invite friends to practice God's presence with you.
4. Make a habit of praying *together* with family, roommates, or neighbors. Shared meals are a natural opportunity for this.
5. Listen to worship music that reminds you of God's presence.
6. Share a one-paragraph reflection of what God is doing in your life in the Uncommon Pursuit community, and read someone else's reflection.
7. What can you come up with? Enjoy being creative. Have fun!

I have no desire to burden you with more religious duties. My conviction is that all of life is a gift, and experiencing this life as God's friend is the greatest gift of all. When you miss a day, a week, or a month, that's ok. Don't drown in guilt. Just tell God you're sorry, and gently return to enjoying his loving friendship.

From my heart to yours,

Carson

# GETTING STARTED

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

To develop a habit of constantly talking to God and attributing all we do to Him, we initially need to make a deliberate effort. However, with a little persistence, we will soon find that His love naturally motivates us to do this without any struggle.

We shouldn't be surprised if we frequently fall short in our early attempts. But with time, we'll develop a habit that will naturally manifest in our actions, without needing our constant attention. And this will bring us immense joy.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Don't stifle the Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I receive your invitation to live my life in your presence.

## DAY 1: MY REFLECTIONS

What helps me most to develop a habit of living in God's presence? What gets in the way?

When have I experienced the "immense joy"  
of abiding in God's love?

[illegible]

# RECOGNIZE GOD'S REALITY

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

His "practice" requires no special time, skills, or training. At any moment, regardless of what we're doing or what our circumstances are, if our soul seeks to know God, we can "practice the presence" and gain that knowledge: The Lord is always with us, He is our refuge, no matter what our situation appears to be.

We only need to acknowledge this as an unchanging, ever-present reality, and the incredible joy that Brother Lawrence experienced will become ours as well.

(The original quote is from Hannah Whitall Smith)

## | Biblical Meditation:

Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Don't stifle the Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, thank you.



## DAY 2: MY REFLECTIONS

If the Lord is already with me, how does that change how I pray?

## How can I pray without worrying about technique?

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# NOURISH MY SOUL

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

We should ground ourselves in the awareness of God's presence by continuously engaging with Him. It's disgraceful to leave His conversation to focus on insignificant and foolish things.

We should feed and nourish our souls with profound ideas about God; this will bring us great joy in dedicating ourselves to Him.

We should invigorate - that is, bring life to - our faith. Regrettably, we have so little faith; and instead of making faith the guiding principle of our lives, we distract ourselves with superficial devotions that change from day to day.

## | Biblical Meditation:

I have asked one thing from the LORD;  
it is what I desire:  
to dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,  
gazing on the beauty of the LORD  
and seeking him in his temple.

Psalm 27:4

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, nourish my soul with a high notion of you.

## DAY 3: MY REFLECTIONS

How can I nourish my soul with "high notions" about God?

What superficial or trivial matters distract me from God?

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# DEVOTED TO GOD

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

We should surrender ourselves to God, concerning both worldly and spiritual matters, and find our satisfaction solely in doing His will. Whether He guides us through hardship or comfort, it would all be the same to a truly surrendered soul.

We must stay committed during those moments of dryness, numbness, or discomfort in prayer when God tests our love for Him. These are the times when we should make sincere and effective acts of surrender, and just one of these acts can often significantly advance our spiritual growth.

## | Biblical Meditation:

LORD, I call to you;  
my rock, do not be deaf to me.  
If you remain silent to me,  
I will be like those going down to the Pit.

Listen to the sound of my pleading  
when I cry to you for help,  
when I lift up my hands  
toward your holy sanctuary.

Psalms 28:1-2

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I trust you.

## DAY 4: MY REFLECTIONS

What would it look like to surrender myself more fully to God today?

When do I struggle to find satisfaction in God's will over my own?

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# DEPENDING ON GRACE

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

Whenever an opportunity to practice a virtue arose, he would turn to God and say, "Lord, I cannot do this unless You empower me." And then he would receive more than enough strength. The more a soul strives for perfection, the more it depends on divine grace.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me.

John 15:4-5

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I want to remain in your presence.

## DAY 5: MY REFLECTIONS

Where do I need more of God's grace today?

What fruit or virtue could I cultivate if I remain in God's presence?

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# RESPONDING TO FAILURE

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

Whenever he fell short in his duty, he would simply admit his mistake to God, saying, "I will never do better if You leave me to my own devices; You are the one who must prevent me from failing and fix what's wrong." After this, he wouldn't worry about it any further.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:1-2

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, forgive me and enable me to do your will.



## DAY 6: MY REFLECTIONS

## When have I fallen short recently?

What difference does it make to my relationship with God that no condemnation exists?

[illegible]

# LITTLE THINGS FOR LOVE

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

He was very content with his current position, but he was just as prepared to leave it as he was his previous one, because he found joy in every situation by doing small things for the love of God.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and whoever is unrighteous in very little is also unrighteous in much.

Luke 16:10

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I want to find joy in doing little things for the love of you.

## DAY 7: MY REFLECTIONS

When have I found joy in doing small things for God?

What little acts of service can I offer to God?

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# OUR ONLY TASK

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

Initially, he often spent his designated prayer time struggling with wandering thoughts and repeatedly falling back into them. He could never structure his devotion using specific methods as some people do. He did spend some time in meditation, but that practice gradually faded in a way he couldn't explain...

Our only task is to love and find joy in God.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Turn my eyes  
from looking at what is worthless;  
give me life in your ways.

Psalm 119:37

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, thank you for bringing me back to yourself.

## DAY 8: MY REFLECTIONS

## How do I respond when my mind wanders in prayer?

With frustration or grace?

## How can I simplify my focus on enjoying God?

[illegible]

# DETERMINED TO LOVE GOD

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

Physical sacrifices and rituals are pointless unless they lead us to a relationship with God through love. I've reflected on this deeply and discovered that the most direct route to Him is constantly practicing love and doing everything for His love.

Many individuals don't progress in their spiritual growth because they become overly focused on rituals and specific practices, overlooking the love of God, which is the real aim. This can be seen in their actions, and it's why we see such a lack of authentic virtue.

Reaching God doesn't require intricate knowledge or skills. What's essential is a heart fully dedicated to focusing solely on Him, acting for His sake, and loving Him alone.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.

Matthew 5:8

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, purify my heart to love you.

## DAY 9: MY REFLECTIONS

Where do I still cling to rituals without love?

How can I purify my heart and devote myself fully to God?

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# A SACRED RESOLUTION

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

Our sole duty is to love and take pleasure in God.

If only we recognized how much we need God's grace and help, we would never let Him out of sight - not even for a moment. Trust me, make a committed and sacred resolution right now to never intentionally forget Him, and spend the rest of your days in His holy presence, forsaking, for His love, all comforts if He deems it necessary.

Approach this task with full sincerity, and if you do it properly, be confident that you will soon experience its impact.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Philippians 4:4

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I resolve to be in your holy presence.



## DAY 10: MY REFLECTIONS

Do I wholeheartedly resolve to live in God's presence?

## What gets in the way?

## How can I continually reconnect with God amidst daily tasks?

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# PEACE WITH GOD

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

He didn't have any doubts or guilt. When he fell short in his duty, he readily admitted it, saying, "I am prone to this; I will always fall short if I am left to my own devices." If he didn't fail, he would thank God, acknowledging that the strength came from Him.

## | Biblical Meditation:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I confess my sins to you.

## DAY 11: MY REFLECTIONS

## When have I fallen short recently?

## How does admitting my mistakes to God lighten my spirit?

[illegible]

# FREEDOM AND SIMPLICITY

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

He shared with me that everything boils down to a heartfelt renunciation of all things that we are aware do not lead us to God. We should get accustomed to continuously conversing with Him, freely and simply. All we need to do is acknowledge God's intimate presence with us and reach out to Him every moment. We can ask for His guidance in uncertain matters and help to do what He wants from us. We should offer these tasks to Him before we start, and express our gratitude when we finish them.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, you doubleminded. Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

James 4:7-10

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I want a continual conversation with you.

## DAY 12: MY REFLECTIONS

What do I need to renounce to be more aware of God?

## How close is God to me?

[illegible]

# RESPONDING TO INFINITE GOODNESS

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

In this dialogue with God, we are also constantly praising, adoring, and loving Him for His infinite goodness and perfection. Our ultimate aim should be to become the most perfect worshipers of God in this life, as we hope to be for all eternity.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.

Romans 12:1

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I want to experience your infinite goodness, and worship you.

## DAY 13: MY REFLECTIONS

How can I grow as a worshipper of God's infinite goodness and perfection?

What would hinder me from being a living sacrifice to God today?

[illegible]

# LIFE FOR GOD

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

Our sanctification doesn't depend on changing our actions, but on doing what we usually do for ourselves, for God's sake. It's distressing to see how many people confuse the means with the end, attaching themselves to certain tasks that they carry out very imperfectly because of their self-centered motives.

## | Biblical Meditation:

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision accomplishes anything; what matters is faith working through love.

Galatians 5:6

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, give me faith working through love.



## DAY 14: MY REFLECTIONS

Do I do common things for God's sake and glory?

How can love and faith shape my life, rather than duty?

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# CONTINUING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

When he began his tasks, he would speak to God with a childlike trust in Him: "O my God, since You are with me, and I now have to engage in these external tasks in obedience to Your commands, I beg You to grant me the grace to remain in Your presence. For this purpose, prosper me with Your assistance, accept all my efforts, and possess all my affections."

As he continued his work, he kept his informal conversation with his Creator, asking for His grace and dedicating all his actions to Him. When he finished, he would examine how well he had performed his duties; if well, he would thank God. If not, he would ask for forgiveness and, without becoming disheartened, he would refocus his mind and continue his practice of God's presence as if he had never strayed from it. "Thus," he said, "by picking myself up after my falls, and by frequently renewing my acts of faith and love, I have reached a state where it would be as hard for me not to think of God as it was initially to get used to doing so."

## | Biblical Meditation:

For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven't stopped praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience, joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light.

Colossians 1:9-12

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, enable me to remain in your presence, that I might bear fruit in every good work.

## DAY 15: MY REFLECTIONS

Do I consistently invite God to be with me in each task?

How can I gently renew my attentiveness to God throughout the day?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# LIVING AS BELOVED CHILDREN

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

This inspired me to give everything for God; so after fully surrendering myself to God, for Him to take away my sin, I let go of everything that wasn't Him, out of love for Him. I began to live as if He and I were the only ones in the world. Sometimes I saw myself before Him as a guilty criminal at the feet of his judge; at other times, I saw Him in my heart as my Father and God.

I worshipped Him as often as possible, keeping my mind in His holy presence, and bringing it back whenever I found it had strayed from Him. I experienced significant discomfort in this practice, yet I persisted despite all the challenges, without causing myself distress when my mind involuntarily wandered. I made this my mission as much throughout the day as during the designated prayer times. At every moment, every hour, every minute, even amidst my busiest times, I pushed away everything from my mind that could interrupt my thoughts of God.

## | Biblical Meditation:

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Romans 8:15-17

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I am your beloved child.

## DAY 16: MY REFLECTIONS

How do I respond when I drift from  
God's presence - anxiously or peacefully?

What is interrupting my thoughts of God?  
How can I bring those concerns to God?

[illegible]

# A SIMPLE TRUST

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## | Wisdom from The Practice of the Presence

That was my beginning, yet I must admit that the first ten years were challenging. The fear that I was not as devoted to God as I wanted to be, the constant presence of my past sins in my mind, and the great undeserved favors God gave me were the source of my suffering.

During this time, I often stumbled, but I got back up immediately. It seemed to me that all creation, reason, and even God Himself were against me, and only faith was on my side. I was sometimes troubled by the thought that believing I had received such favors was just a sign of my presumption, presuming to reach a state instantly that others strive hard to achieve. At other times, I thought it was a delusional belief, and that there was no salvation for me.

When I thought I had no choice but to spend the rest of my days in these struggles (which didn't lessen my trust in God at all, but only increased my faith), I suddenly found myself transformed. My soul, which until then had been troubled, felt a deep inner peace as if it had found its center and place of rest.

Since that time, I walk before God, in faith, with humility, and love. I work hard to avoid doing or thinking anything that might displease Him. I hope that once I've done what I can, He will do with me as He wishes.

## | Biblical Meditation:

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness. Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me. So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I bring my struggles to you.

## DAY 17: MY REFLECTIONS

## What is challenging about practicing God's presence?

Do I fear anything except offending God?

How could that perspective shape me?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# REJOICING IN GOD

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## | Wisdom from The Practice of the Presence

I have given up all forms of devotion and set prayers except those required by my role. My only task is to persist in His holy presence, maintaining it through simple mindfulness, and a general affectionate attention to God, which I may call an actual presence of God.

Or, to put it better, it's a habitual, silent, and private communion of the soul with God, which often fills me with inner joys and ecstatic experiences, and sometimes even outward ones, so intense that I have to take measures to temper them and prevent them from being noticeable to others.

In short, I am convinced that my soul has been with God for over thirty years. I skip over many details to not tire you, yet I think it's appropriate to tell you how I see myself before God, whom I view as my King.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Though you have not seen him, you love him; though not seeing him now, you believe in him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy, because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:8-9

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I rejoice in you.



## DAY 18: MY REFLECTIONS

What difference does it make to recognize that  
God is already with me?

## What motivates me to converse with God?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# GOD'S FAVORITE

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## | Wisdom from The Practice of the Presence

I see myself as the most wretched of men, riddled with sores and corruption, having committed all sorts of crimes against his King. Overcome with heartfelt regret, I confess all my wickedness to Him, ask for His forgiveness, and surrender myself into His hands to do as He sees fit.

The King, filled with mercy and goodness, far from punishing me, embraces me with love. He invites me to dine at His table, serves me with His hands, and gives me the keys to His treasures. He communicates with me and delights in me endlessly, in countless ways, and treats me in all ways as His favorite.

This is how I perceive myself from time to time in His holy presence.

## | Biblical Meditation:

See what great love the Father has given us that we should be called God's children—and we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it didn't know him. Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when he appears, we will be like him because we will see him as he is.

1 John 3:1-2

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I am your beloved.

## DAY 19: MY REFLECTIONS

Do I experience God as a King full of mercy and goodness?

In what ways has God treated me as his favorite?

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# CHRISTLIKENESS

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

As for my designated times of prayer, they are merely a continuation of this same practice. Sometimes, I envision myself as a stone before a sculptor, set to be carved into a statue. In presenting myself this way before God, I ask Him to mold His perfect image in my soul and make me completely like Him.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, make me like Christ.

## DAY 20: MY REFLECTIONS

## What would it look like for God to mold me into Christlikeness?

Do I trust God's plans to transform me?

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# GOD IS WITH YOU

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

If he sometimes drifts too far from that divine presence, God quickly makes Himself known in his soul to call him back. This often happens when he is most occupied with his external tasks. He responds faithfully to these inner calls, either by lifting his heart toward God, or by casting a gentle and loving gaze on Him, or by speaking words of love that come naturally in these moments, like "My God, here I am, entirely devoted to You," or "Lord, make me according to Your heart."

Then, it seems to him (as he indeed feels it) that this God of love, content with these few words, finds peace and rests again at the core and center of his soul. The experience of these moments gives him such certainty that God is always at the heart of his soul that it makes him incapable of doubting it for any reason.

## | Biblical Meditation:

The LORD your God is among you,  
a warrior who saves.

He will rejoice over you with gladness.

He will be quiet in his love.

He will delight in you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I am completely devoted to you.

## DAY 21: MY REFLECTIONS

Do I maintain an ongoing remembrance of God amidst daily tasks?

How can I visualize or understand that a God of love  
is at the center of my soul?

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# THE GREATEST JOY

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

He shared that the greatest pains or pleasures of this world could not compare to what he had experienced of both in a spiritual state. As a result, he was untroubled by anything and feared nothing, asking God for only one thing: that he might not offend Him.

## | Biblical Meditation:

You have put more joy in my heart  
than they have when their grain and new wine abound.  
I will both lie down and sleep in peace,  
for you alone, LORD, make me live in safety.

Psalms 4:7-8

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, you put joy in my heart.



## DAY 22: MY REFLECTIONS

## What am I afraid of?

How does thinking of God keep me in His peace?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# CONTINUAL CONVERSATION

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

No life is more sweet and delightful than one filled with continuous conversation with God. Only those who practice and experience it can understand it; however, I don't advise you to do it for that reason. We shouldn't seek pleasure in this practice; rather, we should engage in it out of love because it is what God wants from us.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Let the whole earth shout triumphantly to the LORD!

Serve the LORD with gladness;

come before him with joyful songs.

Acknowledge that the LORD is God.

He made us, and we are his—

his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Psalm 100:1-3

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I desire a continual conversation with you.

## DAY 23: MY REFLECTIONS

Do I trust God as a faithful friend who will never disappoint me?

## How can I grow my confidence in His intimate care?

[illegible]

# HOLY FREEDOM

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

I'm not suggesting that we should forcefully constrain ourselves. No, we should serve God in a holy freedom. We should carry out our duties faithfully, without stress or unrest, gently and calmly bringing our mind back to God whenever we notice it straying from Him.

## | Biblical Meditation:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.

Galatians 5:22-23

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, gently return my affections to you.

## DAY 24: MY REFLECTIONS

Do I gently return to God when I notice my affections stray?

How can I cultivate a holy freedom to be led by the Spirit,  
rather than rigid rules?

[illegible]

# GENERAL TRUST IN GOD

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

So, gradually get used to worshipping Him this way, asking for His grace, offering Him your heart from time to time amidst your tasks, even every moment if you can. Don't rigidly limit yourself to certain rules or specific forms of devotion, but act with a general trust in God, with love and humility.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I trust that you are with me.

## DAY 25: MY REFLECTIONS

How can I cultivate a general trust in God?

If God is always gracious to me, how can that develop my faith in him?

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# HUMILITY WITH GOD

## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

You're not telling me anything new; you're not the only one who struggles with wandering thoughts. Our mind tends to roam, but since our will is the master of all our faculties, it must bring them back and direct them toward God as their ultimate goal.

When the mind, due to not being adequately calmed through reflection at the outset of our devotion, has developed bad habits of wandering and distraction, they're hard to overcome. They often pull us, even against our will, toward earthly matters.

One remedy for this, I believe, is to confess our faults and humble ourselves before God. I don't recommend using many words in prayer, as lengthy discourses often lead to distraction. Instead, present yourself in prayer before God like a mute or paralytic beggar at a rich man's gate.

Make it your task to keep your mind in the presence of the Lord. If it sometimes strays and separates from Him, don't be too upset: unrest and worry tend to distract the mind more than focus it; the will should bring it back calmly.

If you continue in this way, God will have mercy on you.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. When you pray, don't babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they'll be heard for their many words. Don't be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.

Matthew 6:5-8

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, you know what I need.



## DAY 26: MY REFLECTIONS

If struggling to pray is a common human experience,  
how does this reassure my heart?

## How can I calmly return to God's presence today?

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# MEDITATING ON GOD

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DAY  
27

## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

One way to gather your thoughts easily during prayer and keep them more peaceful is to avoid letting them wander too far at other times. Maintain an ongoing awareness of God's presence; getting used to thinking of Him often will make it easier for you to calm your mind during prayer, or at least to bring it back from its wanderings.

## | Biblical Meditation:

Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things. Do what you have learned and received and heard from me, and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I want to meditate on you!

## DAY 27: MY REFLECTIONS

How does an ongoing awareness of God's presence help me have focused prayer times?

## What is beautiful and praiseworthy about God?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# GOD IS OUR TREASURE

DAY  
28

## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

We cannot avoid the dangers that are rampant in life without God's immediate and continuous help. So let's continually pray for His help. How can we pray to Him if we're not with Him? How can we be with Him if not by thinking of Him often? And how can we think of Him often if not by developing a holy habit of doing so?

You might say that I keep repeating the same thing. That's true because this is the best and simplest method I know. As it's the only one I use, I recommend everyone else to do the same.

We must know before we can love. To know God, we must think of Him often; and when we come to love Him, we will naturally think of Him often, for our heart will be where our treasure is.

## | Biblical Meditation:

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:21

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I treasure you.

## DAY 28: MY REFLECTIONS

## What can help me keep my relationship with God simple?

What does my heart desire the most?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# GOD IS OUR BEST FRIEND

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

I'm very pleased with the trust you place in God; I hope that He continues to strengthen it in you. We can never have too much trust in such a good and faithful Friend, who will never let us down in this world or the next.

## | Biblical Meditation:

No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.

John 15:13

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, you are my best friend.

## DAY 29: MY REFLECTIONS

Do I see God as a good and faithful Friend?

What has God done to earn my trust?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# GOD IS ALWAYS GOOD

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

God knows best what we need, and everything He does is for our benefit. If we understood how much He loves us, we would always be ready to accept both the sweet and the bitter from His hand with equal indifference. Everything that comes from Him would please us. The harshest afflictions only seem unbearable when we perceive them wrongly. When we see them as delivered by God's hand, when we understand that it's our loving Father who brings us low and causes us distress, our sufferings lose their sting and even become a source of consolation.

Let our sole task be to know God; the more we know Him, the more we long to know Him. And since love is often proportional to knowledge, the deeper and broader our knowledge, the greater our love will be. If our love for God were immense, we would love Him equally in times of pain and joy.

## | Biblical Meditation:

When I am afraid,  
I will trust in you.  
In God, whose word I praise,  
in God I trust; I will not be afraid.  
What can mere mortals do to me?

Psalms 56:3-4

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I trust you.



## DAY 30: MY REFLECTIONS

How do my sufferings make it hard to trust God?

How would trusting in God's care change how I feel about what I've suffered?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# TRULY DEVOTED

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## | Wisdom from *The Practice of the Presence of God*:

Let's truly start devoting ourselves to Him. Let's clear everything else out of our hearts. He wants to be their sole occupant. Ask Him for this favor. If we do our part, we will soon see the transformation in us that we're striving for.

I can't thank Him enough for the relief He has granted you. I hope, by His mercy, to see Him within a few days. Let's pray for each other. In our Lord, I remain yours.

(He fell ill two days later and passed away within the week.)

## | Biblical Meditation:

I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

## | One Sentence Prayer:

Triune God of love, I devote myself to you.

## DAY 31: MY REFLECTIONS

## What keeps me from being devoted to God?

What kind of faith in God do I want to have  
when I come to the end of my life?

[illegible]

# THANK YOU

Thank you for joining me on this journey into life with God.

I'd be honored to continue this journey with you.

You can learn about our other courses and resources at our website, [uncommonpursuit.net](http://uncommonpursuit.net).

You're also warmly invited to participate in our online community, available at [up.uncommonpursuit.net](http://up.uncommonpursuit.net).

If you'd like to financially participate in our mission, you can contribute at <https://uncommonpursuit.net/donate>.

For the price of a weekend conference, or about ten books, you can also become a Missional Partner. It gives you lifetime access to all of our self-paced courses, regular group meetings with me, and a private community. You can learn more and sign up at [uncommonpursuit.net/missional-partnership](http://uncommonpursuit.net/missional-partnership).

Finally, if you enjoyed *Together*, please share your thoughts at [uncommonpursuit.net/testimonial](http://uncommonpursuit.net/testimonial). It only takes a few minutes. After you send it in, I'll give you a \$25 discount off the price of our Missional Partnership to thank you for your time.

Thanks again.

from my heart to yours,

Carson



**Carson Weitnauer** serves as the Executive Director for Uncommon Pursuit. He earned his M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and is enrolled in the D.Min. program at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He serves as an elder at his church and as Chair of the Board for Creating Jobs. Over twenty years, his ministry initiatives have impacted hundreds of thousands of people around the world. He lives in the Atlanta area with his family.