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FOUR KEYS TO A CLOSER WALK WITH GOD

Excerpts from
Practicing His Presence

INTRODUCTION

Do you desire a more intimate relationship with the Lord? In his short booklet “Practicing His Presence,” Charlie Riggs—one of Billy Graham’s Crusade directors—offered practical, Bible-based insights on how to cultivate a closer walk with Jesus Christ. As you follow these key spiritual practices, you’ll experience and enjoy His presence, power, peace, and provisions like never before.

These four guiding principles are taken from Riggs’ classic booklet.

UNDERSTAND THE GOAL OF QUIET TIME

Quiet time is not an end in itself. It is meant to develop the habit of starting the day with the Lord and then consciously walking with Him throughout the day. The amount of time isn't as important as the quality of time because its purpose is simply to initiate the daily walk. I have found that five to 10 minutes locked in with God is worth more than an hour of drifting in my reading and prayer time.

Personally, I like to spend from 30 to 60 minutes at the start of the day. I like to walk and pray after I have spent time in reading and meditation in the Word. When finished, I don't say, "Goodbye, Lord. I'll see you tomorrow." Rather, I say, "Lord, let's go. What exciting things are going to happen in my life today?"

I find myself
communing with
God many times
during the day. The
goal of quiet time

is to get acquainted with our Heavenly Father—to enjoy His

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**PRESENCE, PEACE, JOY, WISDOM,
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presence every waking moment of the rest of our lives. This is the abiding relationship. God said, *“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you”* (Hebrews 13:5, NIV).

Jesus said *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing”* (John 15:5, NIV).

It is very important to know that our lives will be empty and fruitless without the Lord. Remember, we get to know a person by spending time together.

UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF SCRIPTURE

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, *“From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:15-17, NIV).

Let these words sink in. The Scriptures are useful to teach, rebuke, correct, and train believers in righteousness. Scriptures have been given to us not only to increase our knowledge but to change our lives. This is accomplished through the application of truth that God reveals to us day by day.

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The digestive process provides a good illustration of spiritual intake. I eat the food—bread, meat, and vegetables. My digestive system turns the food into physical energy that keeps me alive and well. It creates new cells in my body and

moves life-giving power through the bloodstream. We can digest the Bible and assimilate its truths into our lives the same way.

Educators teach that you retain only 10% of what you hear, more of what you read and study, but 100% of what you memorize. However, until you give serious thought (meditation) to what you are attempting to learn, much will be lost. In my mind, Scripture memory, leading to meditation and then application, becomes the key to a useful, productive life.

Using one Scripture each day, do a verse study. Make the verse a part of your prayer, asking God to help you apply the verse to your life. Write the verse on a 3" x 5" card and carry it with you. Review it often during the day until you have memorized it "word perfectly." Remember, your time alone with God each day is meant to initiate your daily walk with God. Learn more each day about consciously practicing His presence.

Set aside a time and place so you can be consistent in schedule and undisturbed for fellowship with Jesus Christ. Read through the New Testament. Begin in the gospel of Mark. Read carefully, thinking about the truth conveyed in

the words. Read just one section each day—one thought unit. Keep a notebook ... record brief summaries of ideas you find in Scripture such as helps, promises, actions suggested, dangers to avoid, God's gifts to us, etc.

UNDERSTAND THE POWER OF PRAYER

Prayer is more of an attitude than a posture or form of expression. It is an attitude of total dependence on God; I can't do it, but God can help me do it. Our whole life, when it is lived to the glory of God, can be a form of prayer. We learn to lean on Jesus throughout the waking moments of every day for help to live a supernatural life in a tough, worldly environment. It is like "praying without ceasing."

When I don't pray, it is like saying, "I don't need you, God.

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I am totally sufficient by myself." This is why we fail so miserably to demonstrate the power of God in our lives and ministry. The first director of the FBI said, "The spectacle of a nation praying is more awe-inspiring than the explosion of an atomic bomb. The force of prayer is greater than any possible combination of man-controlled powers, because prayer is man's greatest means of tapping the infinite resources of God."

Doesn't that encourage you to pray? Through prayer, you invite God to be a part of everything you do daily—to have a hand in your family life, school, work, recreation, and ministry. He breathes fresh life and dynamic into your everyday activities.

Pray [briefly] about everything! Prayer is more than “give me’s” ... it includes praise, thanksgiving, confession, and telling Him every detail of our needs.

Through prayer you can tap the infinite resources of God and learn to enjoy the presence and power of God throughout the day.

UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit lives in every believer and will teach us, help us live victoriously, and give us a dynamic for witnessing and a quality of life that will demonstrate to the world that we belong to Jesus Christ. But too often the Holy Spirit lies dormant in our lives and the result is very evident. In Ephesians 5:18, we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit: *“Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit”* (ESV).

In other words, do not be controlled by or be under the influence of wine but

BEING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF
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BUT A COMMAND.

be controlled by or be under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is not an option but a command. It is not once for all but moment by moment, day by day. For me to be controlled by the Holy Spirit takes a constant surrender on my part.

For the first several years of my life I did not realize this fact. In 1958, Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ,

challenged me with the need to be daily filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit. Since then, I have started every day surrendering to the Holy Spirit and praying that God will help me walk in the Spirit. Memorize Galatians 5:16, which says, “*Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*” (NKJV). Ask God to help you walk in the Spirit throughout the day and enjoy more of His presence, joy, peace, and power in your daily life.

CONCLUSION

Can you think of anything more important to the believer than “practicing His presence”? We can walk with God, through His Spirit, through every waking hour of the day the rest of our lives.

The psalmist said, “*I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil*” (Psalm 119:162, ESV). The Bible is a gold mine to be explored and claimed. Put on your miner’s cap, take up your pick and shovel, and begin to dig.

As you find a nugget, file a claim—claim the promise. You will soon realize how rich you are in Jesus Christ.

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