

CEC Sunday Circle
Lesson October 10, 2021
Stewardship and Gratitude – Presence and Worship

Opening Prayer

Hebrews 13 Service Well-Pleasing to God

13 Let mutual love continue. **2** Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. **3** Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. **4** Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. **5** Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." **6** So we can say with confidence,

"The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.
What can anyone do to me?"

7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. **8** Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. **9** Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings; for it is well for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by regulations about food, which have not benefited those who observe them. **10** We have an altar from which those who officiate in the tent have no right to eat. **11** For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. **12** Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood. **13** Let us then go to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured. **14** For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. **15** Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. **16** Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls and will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with sighing—for that would be harmful to you.

18 Pray for us; we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. **19** I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you very soon.

Icebreaker;
Name?
Service you attended?
How do you feel the presence of God?

The Practice of the Presence of God

<http://www.stjohnsnh.org/sjc-blog/presence-of-god-ser7j>

There is a beautiful little book titled, [The Practice of the Presence of God](#), authored by Brother Lawrence. The title alone reminds me of my life's purpose. ...I invite you to pause for a moment and examine how you practice the presence of God.

The tendency that I hear, see and experience is that people, (myself included), look for God "somewhere out there." Brother Lawrence reminds us that God is nearer than we might think.

There is a saying, "Wherever you go...there, you are." Brother Lawrence's point is that not only are *you* there, but so is God. What do we do with this knowledge? If God indeed resides within each of us, how do we access this wonderful and awesome reality? The answer is simple to verbalize and much more difficult to realize...Practice. The practice of the presence of God requires dedication, discipline, and persistence and like many life-long practices of health such as exercise and nutritional eating it may require *returning* to the practice when our efforts have waned. Recently, I have heard in various arenas of my life a complaint about life being "too hard." Without dismissing the struggle of life and making compassion passé, my response to these voices is to remind them that the meaningful aspects of life require effort and that most of the truly wonderful life discoveries demand hard work. My question to us is, "Why would our relationship with God require anything less than our best effort?"

What does this "work" look like? Tending our relationship with God and tending our soul are one in the same. I am becoming more aware that the tending of relationships has less to do with filling space and more to do with clearing or creating space, no matter whether that relationship is with my spouse, children, friends or God. **How do you create space in your life for simple reflection? Do you spend time regularly writing your thoughts and feelings? Do you spend time in silence at least once a day? (pausing for a breath during conversations doesn't count.) Do you have a friend or counselor that you can share your deepest wonderings with without worrying about being judged?** These practices are the surface of a very deep body of practices that can open to us a "way of being" that is truly a gift.

You may be asking, “Why do all this? It sounds like a lot of work.” The fruit of this practice, the fruit of this effort is...Joy. I remember a conversation with a wise friend about how much of my time, energy and money I could afford to give to my practice of tending my relationship with God. His response has equally encouraged and haunted me ever since. His response was, “Well Rob, how much you can afford to give to God is answered by deciding how much Joy you can stand!” It is so important to remember that the Practice of the Presence of God is for us. It provides joy for our journey and is worth the effort.

What are some ways you can practice being in the Presence of God?

What types of Worship to you practice?

Worship Invites God's Presence

Excerpted from the book [Seven Words of Worship: The Key to a Lifetime of Experiencing God](#).

by [Mike Harland](#)

God deeply desires a personal relationship with each one of us, and He is at work around us at all times. Just as God walked and talked with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, so He desires to fellowship and communicate with each of us. God has promised in Psalm 22:3 to inhabit the praises of His people, and God is always true to His promises. Our worship provides a place of meeting with God — a place for us to encounter His very presence and embrace His invitation to join Him as He works.

As we focus our time and attention on the Lord in worship, proclaim His place of honor in our lives, and thank and praise Him for His eternal promises, we can expect God to intervene in our circumstances. God has promised to inhabit our worship, and He will. And when the King is present, all things are possible!

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him and praise His name. For Yahweh is good, and His love is eternal; His faithfulness endures through all generations" (Ps. 100:4–5).

That's why we must worship through the good times and the bad — when we're waiting for God's merciful touch in our circumstances and when we're standing in awe of His power at work around us. Worship invites God's presence, enabling us to experience God.

The Bible is filled with many examples of those who responded to God's revelation with worship and experienced Him. You'll find their names throughout Scripture — Abraham, David, Daniel and his friends, Mary, Joseph, Peter, and Paul. As you read further, you will soon understand how absolutely vital worship was in their lives.

These great Bible heroes had a clear revelation of God - of who He is and what He has done. They responded to that revelation with worship, and they experienced the presence and power of God in their lives. Their lives are confirmation: you and I can experience God in worship!

Our God does indeed deserve our deep respect, awe, and worship! And He has promised His holy presence as we worship. Simply put, our worship expression creates a place for us to encounter and experience God

-----Seven Words of Worship combines biblical truth, practical application, and inspiring real life stories to clarify the reader's understanding and living out of worship, focusing the spiritual practice on seven key words:

Creation; Grace; Love; Response; Expression; Presence; Experience. Indeed, worship is a leading topic throughout the church today and the central purpose for gathering the body of Christ each week. But worship style and technique are often divisive elements among believers as well. More than a subjective art form or tradition, Seven Words of Worship authors Mike Harland and Stan Moser explain that worship is foremost intended to be a pure and powerful declaration of love to God. When offered with passionate sincerity, worship brings God into our presence and makes all things possible!

9 Bible Verses to Usher You Into the Presence of God

Written by [Katie Bennett](#)

<https://www.embracingasimplerlife.com/9-bible-verses-to-usher-you-into-the-presence-of-god/>

Sometimes the most powerful motivator ... to slow the busyness of life to *BE* with God is a simple invitation, spoken straight from His Word.....It's breathtakingly intimate and personal.

So now, I'm giving you this gift of *invitation into God's presence*. (Let's be honest, this gift is straight from God and so holy.)... **spend time with your *Abba*.**

----- Use verses as Closing Prayer

Isaiah 50:4 "The Sovereign Lord has given me his words of wisdom,
so that I know how to comfort the weary.
Morning by morning he awakens me
and opens my understanding to his will." (NLT)

Jeremiah 33:3 "'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'" (NIV)

Psalms 46:10 "He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.'" (NIV)

Psalm 42:1-2 "As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?" (NIV)

Psalm 84:1-2 "How lovely is your dwelling place,
Lord Almighty!
My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the Lord..." (NIV)

James 4:8 "Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify
your hearts, you double-minded." (NIV)

John 15:5 "'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.'" (NIV)

Psalm 27:8 "My heart says of you, 'Seek his face!'
Your face, Lord, I will seek." NIV)

Hebrews 10:19-22 "Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy
Place by the blood of Jesus... let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that
faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies
washed with pure water." (NIV)

Psalm 100 King James Version

100 Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.

² Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

³ Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and
the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his
name.

⁵ For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.