

November 5, 2023, Pastor Jason Smotherman

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What are some ways you "practice" or "spend" time in His presence? Note: There may be people in your group who have never spent time alone with the presence of God.
2. What disciplines might need to be put in place to prioritize His presence in our life?
3. What tips would you give someone who has no idea about having a "personal" relationship with God? Where would you advise them to start?

SERMON NOTES:

The Presence of God

Exodus 33:14-15

And He said, "My Presence will go *with you*, and I will give you rest."

Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go *with us*, do not bring us up from here.

The Presence of God - A location where the Lord God is present.

There is this logical fallacy that exists in understanding or learning. Attorneys will speak of this often when determining real or just causes in determining whether a person has a case or not. It's called "a distinction without a difference".

A **distinction without a difference** is a type of logical fallacy where an author or speaker attempts to describe a distinction between two things where no discernible difference exists.

You cannot separate the presence of God from the person of God.

Many will say God the Father, YES. They will say God the Son, ABSOLUTELY. Then they will say God the "What's His Name? They try to take the form of godliness but deny the power. OR in other words they try to take the alimony without the marriage. They give God weekend visitation. Many try to do that. They want His benefits without his relationship. **You can't have his protection without His possession.**

They will say:

Give us the Holy Spirit BUT without the conviction.

Give us the Holy Spirit BUT make it comfortable.

Give us the Holy Spirit BUT withhold the prophecy, tongues, or passion.

Give us the Holy Spirit BUT make sure my Christianity is still convenient.



It is a logical fallacy to think you can have God without His presence.

Why would you want that?

When you have HIM, you have everything you need.

Donnie Moore

Why are you running from God? When He catches you, He is just going to love you. He is not mad at you, He is madly in love with you.

His Presence is a difference maker!

**In His presence you will find rest, joy, peace, liberty, and FREEDOM.
More important than that is, you will find HIM!**

The presence of God is evident in the life of His sons and daughter from the beginning. Adam and Eve had an appointment with Him in the cool of the day. The enemy came in when there was distance or space from God's presence.

The absence of God's presence in our life's gives space for the presence of things to fill the void that only God can fill.

Throughout Scripture:

Presence of God When referring to God, "presence" in the English versions most often represents Heb. *pānîm* ("face"; Ex. 33:14), Gk. *prósōpon* ("face"; e.g., He. 9:24), or *enôpion* ("in the face of"; e.g., 1 Cor. 1:29).

In a Biblical Sense;

presence ⇔ face

noun. the presence or proximity of someone understood in terms of the face; **with the implication of being before or in front of them.**

When in His presence:

- His eyes are upon you.
- His ears are open to you.
- His mouth is ready to speak to you.

You view on God and His availability and desire to be with YOU will shape every relationship, decision, and moment of your life. Your worldview will shape your destiny.

Referencing an article from Focus on the Family.

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/faith/whats-a-christian-worldview/>



David Noebel (Author of Understanding the Times)

A worldview is the framework from which we view reality and make sense of life and the world. "[It's] any ideology, philosophy, theology, movement or religion that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world and man's relations to God and the world.

Atheists and agnostics still have a worldview. Theirs is just void of God.

You have a worldview; you may not have it defined. It may be undefined. **There is a set of rules or guidelines that you are living your life by today.**

Hosea 4:6 (A warning)

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

The destroyer of God's people isn't what they know, it's what they don't know. You must know. I am a Child of God. He has made me to be more than a conqueror. His ways and thoughts towards me are for me to prosper and win. As a son or daughter we have access to the authority and benefits of our FATHER. We are the head and not the tail, above and not beneath.

1 Peter 2:9 (You are apart of God's priesthood, set apart ones)

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Religion (Interesting to note) –

1. a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.

Religion, as we understand the definition, can involve any set of beliefs regardless of where the truth or non-truth is based upon. **Everyone has a "philosophy of religion."** If you don't believe that, just ask your neighbor after church and prepare yourself for what inevitably comes next.

Examples of "Religious" Beliefs:

- 2-year-old believes he's the center of his world.
- a secular humanist believes that the material world is all that exists.
- a Buddhist believes he can be liberated from suffering by self-purification.
- Atheists and agnostics have rules and beliefs outside of God.

Christians should have what is known as a "Biblical Worldview".



Christians don't lean, we stand.
We stand on the principles of God's word.

His precepts, His ways, His principles guide us as our moral truth. They give us direction on how we should live. **The Bible tells us what to do, not the other way around.**

We believe, as Christians, in absolute truth. It is not my truth or your truth, but the truth found in God's word that should direct our lives.

An example of that is the Biblical worldview of a family.
Scripture teaches us (More to come) that:

- The man is the head of the household. Not with a domineering, dictator mindset, but one who lovingly lays his life down his life as Christ did for the church. This is not a "wimpy love" no more than Christ's love was wimpy when he laid His life down.
- The wife in turn is to submit herself to husband and partner with him to pursue God's will for their lives'.
- Ephesians 6:1 gives the role of the Children. Children obey your parents in the Lord. Children have an "in the Lord clause".

It reminds me of the story I heard about Men being the leaders of the home.

Standing at the gates of heaven

At the end of the age when all the believers were standing in line waiting to get into heaven, the angel Gabriel appeared and said, "I want all the men to form two lines. One line will be for the men who were the true heads of their households. The other will be for the men who were dominated by their wives."

Gabriel continued, "And now we need all of the women to report to Mary and Martha on the other side of the gate."

The women left while the men hurriedly formed two lines. The line of men who were dominated by their wives was seemingly unending. The line of men who were the true head of their household had just one man standing in it.

Gabriel said to the first line, "You men ought to be ashamed of yourselves. You were appointed to be the heads of your households and you have not fulfilled your purpose. Of all of you, there is only one man who obeyed."

Then Gabriel turned to the lone man and asked, "How did you come to be in this line?"

The man sheepishly replied, "My wife told me to stand here."

You must know you are living life according to some set of rules, either defined or not defined. Regardless of your "conviction" about the way you lead your life.



In the end, a non-choice is still a choice. There is no fence riding. **Everyone chooses something or someday to follow.**

A personal worldview is a combination of all you believe to be true, and what you believe becomes the driving force behind every emotion, decision and action. Therefore, it affects your response to every area of life: from philosophy to science, theology and anthropology to economics, law, politics, art and social order — everything.

A Biblical Worldview is based on the infallible Word of God. When you believe the Bible is entirely true, then you allow it to be the foundation of everything you say and do.

George Barna of the Barna research group was curious as to how many Christians have a Biblical Worldview.

Do you have a Biblical Worldview?

Answer the following questions, based on claims found in the Bible and which George Barna used in his survey:

- Do absolute moral truths exist?
- Is absolute truth defined by the Bible?
- Did Jesus Christ live a sinless life?
- Is God the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe?
- Is salvation a gift from God that cannot be earned?
- Is Satan real?
- Does a Christian have a responsibility to share his or her faith in Christ with other people?
- Is the Bible accurate in all of its teachings?

Did you answer yes to these?

Only 9 percent of "born- again" believers did.

What's more important than your yes to these questions is whether your life shows it. Granted, we are all sinners and fall short, but most of our gut reactions will reflect what we deep-down, honest-to-goodness believe to be real and true.

According to Colossians 2:8, we must beware of people who will try and "delude" the transforming gospel. Scripture says they do it by plausible arguments, deceptive philosophy, principles found in the world not on God's word.

The truth this morning from this Pastor. You can not just the words of the Bible but the Author of the words. His presence is a difference maker.



His Presence is Special. We should treat it as such.

Exodus 3:2-6

And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned."⁴ When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, **for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.**"

His Presence requires your attention. That's why there is so much competition for your focus.

1 Kings 19:9-13

There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, "**What are you doing here, Elijah?**"¹⁰ He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." ¹¹And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹²And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And **after the fire the sound of a low whisper.**¹³ And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "**What are you doing here, Elijah?**"

The Spirit of God is asking a similar question to His church today.
What are you doing here? What is your intention?

His Presence Brings Joy.

Psalms 16:11

You make known to me the path of life; **in your presence there is fullness of joy;** at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
His Presence should be our priority.

Psalms 63:1-3

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh faints for Your presence. In a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon You in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory



Jeremiah 29:13

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

His Presence Brings Wisdom

Jeremiah 33:3

Call to me and I will answer you, and **will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.**

His Presence is not just in me but surrounds me

John 15:5

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

His Presence is available

Hebrews 10:19-22

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

His Presence purifies

James 4:8

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

His Presence removes Mountains in my Life

Psalms 97:5

The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

His Presence Creates a desire for More of Him and Less of Me

Psalms 27:4

One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the Lord
And to meditate in His temple.

His Presence Goes before us, beside us, above us, and in front of Us



Exodus 33:15

Then he said to Him, "If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here.

One of the greatest tragedies is what Jacob said about the presence of God.

Genesis 28:16

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it."

His response was incredible.

I am going to make this place. The place where God meets with me a gate way to His presence.

So back to the question. What are you doing here? Are you here for HIM?