

“Near to the Heart of God”

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Have you ever pondered how spiritually attracted God is to each of us? It's a lot like magnetism or the influence of gravity, both found in the elements of Creation that God created for us. If we pay attention, we can feel God pulling us toward him. Have you noticed that we have the same attraction for God. In many ways, it is a symbiotic relationship. When we concentrate on drawing closer to our Creator, he draws closer to us as well. When we choose to broaden our orbit, he moves farther away as well.



“Come near to God and he will come near to you.” James 4:8a (NIV)

God never intrudes on our lives, but he is grateful to be welcomed. He wants to draw closer to us. Still, far too many of us feel that to be somewhat intrusive. We only want God to get close to us when we feel that we could really use his support in times of need. But that isn't the relationship that God is seeking. We are his children, and he is a firm believer in close family ties. He wants us all to be at the dinner table. He wants us to tell him about our day. And

yes, he wants to listen to our problems. Think about it though, don't we often forget to invite him into our day? Don't we often forget about sharing our joy as well as our pain?

During the 17th century, a young monk named Brother Lawrence began a correspondence with his good friend, Monsignor Joseph de Beaufort, a vicar in Paris. In his letters, Brother Lawrence documents his journey as he seeks a greater connection with God. His constant desire is to draw closer to his Creator as he engages in prayer in everything he does, from washing pots and pans, to tending the Garden. He chooses to engage with God at every level of his day and service. No task is too menial, no practice obscure. His only desire is to remain in constant contact with his gracious and loving God. Brother Lawrence died in 1691 and left the collection of letters, thoughts, notes, and maxims, which his good friend the Vicar published two years later. The book is still read today and is a blueprint that shows us how to seek the constant presence of God in our lives. The book is entitled *The Practice of the Presence of God*. It is easy to find, simple to read, and spiritually abundant. Brother Lawrence could find no greater joy than the quest to draw closer to God.

But what about us? Are we content with our orbit around God or are we also seeking to spend each moment of every day seeking his guidance and input into our lives? If we want the joy of living in the moment with our Savior, then we need to seek out ways to decrease that orbit, drawing us closer to our Creator. We can't have the increased joy of our intimacy with the Master if we choose to

remain aloof and separate. Allowing Christ into our lives is only the beginning of a journey meant to bring us home to our Shepherd.

We tend to think about heaven as the place that we go to end our sorrow and our pain, where joy replaces our tears. But do you realize you can experience that joy right now, right here on earth? The moment we begin to realize that our purpose is to seek the presence of God in everything we do, we begin to experience that joy. We don't have to wait until heaven for that relationship. We can have it right now. "Come near to God and he will come near to you."

God bless you all!

AMEN