

Q: Why is it that when I practice the presence, a great pressure or ache appears on the back of my neck? How can it be overcome? (9-2-23)¹

A: Well, I'm going to tell you something. It's making the old metaphysical mistake of knowing the truth with your human mind. You are using the human mind and thinking that you are practicing the presence. You aren't practicing the presence at all. You think you are, and your intentions are good, but you're failing. That is like the days of old when practitioners used to get severe headaches by the end of the day—also at the back of the neck. The reason? They were giving mental treatments. They were pounding out mental statements. They were working as hard as a person trying to figure out a foundation for a skyscraper. No wonder they got headaches from it!

Now, to practice the presence of God is not a mental process. It is a spiritual process, and it does not involve thinking thoughts, or making statements, affirmations, or denials. If you are indulging in the making of affirmations or denials, or reciting a lot of statements of truth, you are not only going to get a headache, but before you get through, you're going to have a lot more aches too. To practice the presence of God is not a mental process. It is a mode of realization, and let us see how that's accomplished.

If we awaken in the morning and our first thought before we get out of bed is, "Thank you Father, this is your day," that's practicing the presence of God, and it can't give you a headache. It's nothing more or less than an acknowledgement or a recognition of God's presence. When you go to the breakfast table, if you just happen to look up and say, "Thank you Father," that's practicing the presence of God. It's acknowledging God as the source of your food, of your supply. If, when you pay out money or receive money, you silently declare to yourself, "Thank you Father," you're acknowledging the presence of God and the power of God as the source and substance of your supply.

During the day, you remember that "the Presence goes before you to make the crooked places straight." Now you don't recite that ten times; you merely remember that the Presence goes before you. Probably going out of a door is a good time to remind yourself that the Presence goes before me to make the crooked places straight. Or if you get into your automobile, or a bus, or a streetcar, it is a good thing to remember, "Thank you Father, there's only one mind, not only driving this, but the only driver on the road.

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." Now you see, there's nothing mental about that, no pressure about that, nor do you have to sit down in a corner of the room and practice the presence. As a matter of fact, I don't think you can do it that way. I honestly don't. The only way to practice the presence is the way Saint Francis did it. If you're on your knees scrubbing the kitchen floor, say, "Thank you Father, that you've given me this job to do. I'm going to do it to the best of my ability." If somebody says it's time to go down to the Truth Center for a lesson, and you've got to be there scrubbing the floor or preparing the meal, say, "I

don't have to go to a Truth Center to be spiritual. I'll be spiritual while I'm preparing dinner, because God is just as well here as at that Truth Center."

And so, if you acknowledge that the place whereon you stand is holy ground; if you will acknowledge that whatever work you have been given to do this moment represents the activity of God on your level of consciousness, you're practicing the presence of God. If, when you see sin, disease, lack, limitation around on the streets, in the newspaper, on the radio, you merely correct that within yourself with the realization, "No, that can't exist in God's world," you've practiced the presence of God. That's all there is to practicing the presence of God. This thing of sitting down in a chair for ten, twenty, thirty minutes, or an hour and making believe that God is there, or trying to get God to be there, that's not practicing the presence. God was there before you sat down. You didn't have to do any practicing to get God there. Oh, no!

And Jesus said, "No more shall you worship in this holy mountain, nor in that temple in Jerusalem." In other words, not that you shouldn't go there if you like, but stop believing that you're going to practice the presence of God in a temple, in a synagogue, in a truth center, in a church. You're not. You're going to practice the presence of God where you are. Where? The temple of God is your own consciousness. You've got to worship God in spirit and in truth right where you are, and that's practicing the presence of God. Anything else is a mental mumbo-jumbo, trying to bring about something that you believe doesn't already exist.

Now don't try to make God present, because you can't do it. God was present awaiting your recognition long before you ever thought about it. So all you could do in practicing the presence is give recognition to the truth that right here and now, God is. But you know, God was here even before Abraham was. God was here before Jesus Christ was born. That surprises a lot of people and shocks them, shocks them terribly.

One of my former friends, a good Christian Science teacher, was shocked when I dared make the assertion that God was on earth before Jesus Christ. No such thing! No such thing! Only Jesus Christ brought God. Yet he said, "Before Abraham was, I am." How could it have been otherwise, if he hadn't said it? No, he didn't say it because he made it so. He said it because it was actually true. God is omnipresent, and you can't practice the presence and make it happen. God is omnipresence and you can *recognize* it. You can *acknowledge* it. You can acknowledge Him in all thy ways.

You know something? "If I make my bed in hell, thou art there." You see, nobody can make that happen. It is already true. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, thou art with me." That's practicing the presence of God. That isn't bringing God into the presence of death. That's acknowledging that even in the presence of death, Thou art already there, even before I got there.

So stop this nonsense of sitting down somewhere and closing the eyes and thinking

you're practicing the presence of God. You're only practicing the presence of God when you're going about your daily business and acknowledging that God is walking around with you.

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