

Our Dependency = Success in Being Present To God

When we lack the ability to accomplish a certain task we A) study and learn how to do the task if possible; B) recruit someone capable of doing what needs to be done; C) give up; D) change the job description to fit our ability; E) buy a car with OnStar so we don't have to stop and engage another while asking for directions. Okay, the fourth option happens but doesn't necessarily fit into this puzzle, even though it tells the truth concerning our stubbornness to choose 'A' or 'B'.

Brother Lawrence tells us that, in our seeking the presence of God, in seeking a greater union and greater faith with and in God, we need to choose 'A' or 'B'. Without the ability to choose one of these options as we journey to God, and ask for help from God, we have virtually exited from God's plan, separated ourselves from the presence of God. We basically have stopped existing. Giving up is removing ourselves from the activity of God. And changing the plan to suit our ability is removing ourselves from the will of God, thereby, effectively removing ourselves from God.

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"Look daddy, I made a cake," proclaims the young child as daddy enters the home following work. The father knows well that the child could not make the cake without the help of the child's mother, his wife. She provided all the ingredients, probably cracked the eggs, measured the water and oil, and opened the pouch that came from within the box. Mom walked the child through the whole process. That's okay. The child is also aware of this, but the little work done has produced this wonderful (chocolate) cake. And the learning process has begun. 'A' and 'B' have been chosen and engaged.

This fourth maxim of Brother Lawrence speaks the same message. We're given everything we need to move into a greater awareness of God's presence by the one who seeks our presence — God. The one sought, becomes the giver, enabling the seeking — us.

Without the grace of God (think life of God given to us at baptism) we have no desire to seek a greater awareness of God's presence in our lives. Grace is that life, given freely, calling us to the source of grace — God.



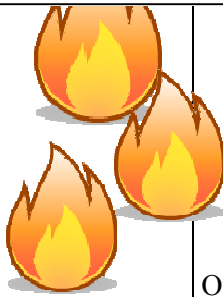
God doing. God fulfilling. God encouraging. God enabling. God leading. God providing. God as companion and guide. God as nourishment and refreshment. God as peace and rest. We seek all that is of God. Our desire becomes all that is of God.

Without us encountering God as 'All in all', we face the world without hope to make 'A' or 'B' our choice, and are forever bound to justify ourselves in giving up or rewriting the instructions of life to suit our particular plan. Brother Lawrence would tell us that this is the allurement of the world and the cause for the loss of faith in so many.

## GOD FIRST

Year Two, Part 8

*The Prayer of Awareness*



Ultimately, we find ourselves living our human experience more and more directed by the divine, until at last we are consumed in the desire to live and share the divine life given us to be lived in our human experience, in complete oneness with God. Our awareness of God's presence, heightened dramatically, makes us aware of our sharing in everything that is of God, just as God has had it planned.

The child knows that she entered into mom's realm and the two became as one making that cake. We need to know that we too become one as we work with the creator and giver of life, first renewing our own life, and then the lives of others, in concert with God's plan.

There are no instructions written on a box for our coming to accept the grace, the life of God, in a personal encounter. **It all takes place in a loving desire to love the Lover.** Employing our intellectual understanding of God

then enables us to see all that we learned about God, now happening in and through, for and with us.

Instructions for understanding this life of grace are the bible, the Word of God, us celebrating the

## The Spiritual Maxims of Brother Lawrence (Fourth of Four)

**Fourth:** *A soul is all the more dependent on grace as it aspires to higher perfection, and the help and assistance of God are all the more necessary to us every moment because without Him the soul can do nothing. The world, the flesh and the devil all combine to make such a strong and continual war against the soul that without the very present help of God and our humble and necessary dependence upon Him, they would carry it away in spite of itself. To our nature this seem harsh, but grace takes pleasure in being dependent upon God and finds rest in Him.*

sacramental life of the Church, and then the field experience of joining with God in sharing this life.

It begins in the heart where nothing else matters but the love of God. In this love of God we find the understanding of the intellectual knowledge previously gained through teaching and questioning.

This becomes our sacrificing — leaving everything else as insignificant in light of what God desires for us to share and celebrate, live and become.

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Getting the cake together wasn't too difficult for the little girl. Getting that icing to work right and look right without tearing the cake apart, takes experience, a gentle hand, and the right hold on the spatula. You can bet there was a bigger hand on the little girl's the whole time.

Just as she became more dependent on Mom with the icing, so too must we grow more dependent on God's presence, the gentle touch of the Spirit of God that leads our heart and hands in the work of God. The final step of seeing anything and everything else as meaningless to our salvation is difficult to do, and impossible for some. The Spirit may well move us in ways we're not ready to accept as part of life.

This is why we need the constant support of those who also carry within themselves a strong faith and desire for God, such as a parish community. Without it, we stand alone like a child against a cake and its icing.

The Church and its teaching is meant to strengthen us in our commitment, walk with us in living the commitment, and lift us up because of our commitment. It provides another avenue for the Spirit to be realized in us.

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The joy of the little girl showing off the finished cake to her father is one of accomplishment. She is proud of what she did. "Mommy helped me," will probably be admitted somewhere along the way. It doesn't diminish the



## Practical Review for Practicing Awareness of the Presence of God

1. Read the Gospel of St. John and dwell on the teaching concerning the joy Jesus wishes us to have. It is his prayer for us before his passion.
2. Think about how often thanks and praise are given to God simply because a life experience caused a stirring within the heart.  
  
*"Thank you Lord. Bless your name."  
"Praise you for your goodness, O God."  
"You are mighty indeed and your works are shown to me so often."  
"Thank you for the insights and the patience and peace, Lord."*
3. Be sure to spend time in prayer that allows for meditation and/or quiet reflection on my experiences with God.

joy she has. Nor does it diminish the joy expressed by a loving father who knows the need for encouragement and support.

Our own joy in finding the reality of God, of having the support of a loving community of faith, and of making the choice to let God into our lives — and even help with our lives, cannot be underscored. This is joy that the world cannot remove from us. This is celebration that speaks of the whole of the person. This is the whole person being found, and it diminishes — without our awareness — the struggles which may be found when we move through the second and third maxims.



### **The first three of four maxims of Brother Lawrence**

*"All things are possible to one who believes, even more to one who hopes, and still more to one who loves; but all things are even more possible to one who practices these three virtues (faith, hope, and love) and perseveres in them. All who are baptized believers have made the first step on the road that leads to perfection, and will be perfect providing they persevere in the practice of the following guides to their conduct."*

**First.** *We must always keep our eyes on God and his glory in all we do, say or undertake. May the goal toward which we strive be to become perfect worshippers of God in this life, just as we hope to be throughout all eternity. Resolve firmly to overcome, by the grace of God, all the difficulties found in the spiritual life.*

**Second:** *When we undertake the spiritual life we must consider*

*in depth who we are, and we will find ourselves worthy of all scorn, unworthy of the name of Christian, and subject to all sorts of afflictions and countless misfortunes. We will find that these woes not only trouble us but also in our inner and outward dispositions. In short, we will find ourselves among those who God chooses to make humble through an abundance of sufferings and travails, both within and without.*

**Third:** *We must believe beyond any doubt that it is to our advantage to sacrifice ourselves to God and that He is pleased by our sacrifice. It is normal in His divine Providence that we should be abandoned to all sorts of conditions, suffering, afflictions and temptations for the love of God, as much and as long as it is His will. Without this submission of heart and spirit to the will of God, there can be no devotion or going on to perfection.*