

Where Is God When You Need Him?

So often our experience in life lacks the strengthening and encouraging presence of God as we face daily trials and pains seemingly alone.

God dwells in His Creation and is everywhere indivisibly present in all His Works.

God doesn't need intermediates to perform His Work for Him.

God is omnipresent.

The word "*present*" means here close to, next to and the prefix "*omni*" gives the word universality.

God is everywhere here, close to everything, next to everyone.

David understood this basic truth.

Psalm 139:7-12 [NIV] *"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you."*

It is the person of the Holy Spirit that makes God omnipresent.

Scriptures show that the Holy Spirit is present in all of God's Creation.

His physical creation.

Genesis 1:1-2 [NIV] *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and **the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.**"*

His spiritual creation.

John 16:7-14 [NIV] *"But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, **the Counsellor** will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. **When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement:** in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgement, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. **But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.**"*

Bring people to repentance and conversion.

John 14:26 [NIV] *"But **the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."*

Disciple us just as if Jesus Christ was present teaching us directly and personally.

There is no distinction between Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ, both are God.

John 14:18 [NIV] *“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

Jesus said, *“I will come to you”*, but it was The Holy Spirit who was going to come after Jesus Christ returned to the Father’s Throne to be our High Priest.

Jeremiah 23:23-24 [Good News Bible] *“I am a God who is everywhere and not in one place only. No-one can hide where I cannot see him. Do you not know that I am everywhere in heaven and on earth?”*

God never has to go anywhere, He is already there.

This is a hard concept for us to imagine because we are finite beings with a body that occupies space has weight and substance, and limited by time.

God is spirit and does not have substance and is not confined to space and time.

It is impossible for us to be in two places at the same time however hard we try because we are created substance having weight, and occupying space and thus limited to time which is the movement of substance through space.

God is spirit and although He is present in His Creation upholding and sustaining it with the power of His Word.

God is not confined to His Creation.

Hebrews 1:3 [NIV] *“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”*

Pantheism is Satan’s subtle lie that says that God is the sum of all created things. Nature and God are one, so that whoever touches a leaf or a stone touches God.

This is degrading to the glory of the incorruptible deity, and a futile effort to make all things divine.

The truth is that while God dwells in His Creation He is separated from it by a gulf for ever impassable.

God is not everything, that is His Creation but He is present everywhere.

Every truth about God refers back to this one thing *“God is, and God is here”*, this is the point where faith begins.

Hebrews 11:6 [King James] *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently sees Him.”*

Acts 17:27-28 [Living Bible] *“His purpose in all of this is that they [all people] should seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him, though He is not far from any one of us. For in Him we live and move and are!...”*

Without God we would not exist.

Scripture does not speculate or offer an opinion but presents with *“thus saith the Lord”* as its authority, concerning the origin and essence of this world.

Scripture declares positively that the origin of this world is spiritual: it's originated in spirit, flows out of spirit, is spiritual in its essence, and is meaningless apart from the Creator Spirit that inhabits it.

The doctrine of the divine omnipresence personalises man's relationship to the universe in which we find ourselves.

The fact is God is always with us, we just need to be aware of His Presence.

Right now the room we are in is filled with radio and television waves of which we are unaware unless we have a radio or T.V. to tune into them and receive them, we can then benefit from these invisible waves.

How do we tune into the spirit world of God that is all around us?

Through the spirit in man, that which gives us intellect and an understanding of "being".

Job 32:8 [NIV] *"But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding."*

God will not force His Presence on us, He will only manifest Himself when we seek His Presence.

Our part is to surrender to the Holy Spirit of God, for it is His work to show us the Father and the Son.

If we co-operate with the Holy Spirit in loving obedience, God will manifest Himself to us.

That indwelling manifestation will be the difference between a nominal Christian life and a life radiant with the Light of His Presence.

How does God's Presence in my life bring me practical benefits?

When I am lonely God is my companion

We all need to remind ourselves of this fact.

Psalms 25:16 [Good News Bible] *"Turn to me, Lord, and be merciful to me, because I am lonely and weak."*

We live in a world that has more people living than ever before, yet there are more lonely people than ever before.

The dispersal or break up of families causes very few older people to be in constant contact with their children and grandchildren, often living lonely lives.

Cities full of people can be very lonely places with no real communities, most living in isolation behind locked doors.

There are many kinds of loneliness.

The loneliness of death, losing a loved one or life-long partner.

The loneliness of divorce.

The loneliness of the business trip.

The loneliness of a new school.

The loneliness of feeling we are not understood.

The loneliness of success, life at the top can be very lonely.

The loneliness of failure.

We will all face loneliness in life at some time.

The only thing that God did not like about His Creation was the loneliness of Adam.

Genesis 2:18 [NIV] *“The LORD God said, It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”*

What do we do when we have these times of loneliness?

We recognise God’s presence

Hebrews 13:5 [NIV] *“... God has said, ‘I will never leave you, never will I forsake you.’”*

This is a direct quotation from the encouragement that Moses gave to Israel and Joshua as he handed over the leadership of Israel to Joshua.

Deuteronomy 31:6 [NIV] *“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for **the LORD** your God goes with you; he **will never leave you nor forsake you.**”*

Joshua at that moment in his life must have felt very lonely being given the burden of leading the rebellious nation of Israel.

We all need someone, a friend with us when we face a challenge.

John 15:15 [NIV] *“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, **I have called you friends**, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”*

Jesus calls us His Friends, He is one who will be there in a time of need or loneliness.

David recognises how the presence of God could change our outlook on life.

Psalms 16:11 [Good News Bible] *“... **your presence fills me with joy and brings me pleasure for ever.**”*

God never asks us to do anything in our lives by ourselves, He wants us to recognise His constant presence.

When I am worried God is my confidence

Isaiah 43:1-3 [NIV] *“But now, this is what the LORD says – he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: **“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.** When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour; ...”*

Whatever trials or pain we may go through God is going through the same with us.

Having been redeemed from death by God He owns us and He takes great care of the pinnacle of His Creation, His Child growing to become His Son.

No physical father could ever protect us like our Heavenly Father, God.

Psalm 16:8-11 [NIV] *“I have set the LORD always before me. **Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.** Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”*

David so valued the presence of God that he made a concerted effort to be aware of God’s Presence.

Unless we have such a determination to constantly be aware of God’s Presence, we can drift through life without all the many benefits that can be ours in the presence of God.

It is through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit we can be aware of the presence of God.

John 14:18 [NIV] *“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

Christ’s promise to never forsake us, how will His Presence always be with us?

John 14:16-17 [NIV] *“**And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.**”*

There are two different relationships mentioned in scripture between ourselves and The Holy Spirit, Christ’s Presence.

a) *“He lives with you”*

I feel this is the relationship we have **after** baptism, when the Holy Spirit will teach and guide us.

John 14:26 [NIV] *“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

b) *“And will be in you”*

Here is a much more intimate relationship which is expanded in the same passage of scripture.

John 14:20-21 [NIV] *“**On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.**”*

Here we see the entering in of Christ into our lives by the entering of the Holy Spirit into our lives.

“On that day” indicates it will be a one time thing.

“You will realise” we will recognise a change has taken place.

This event is linked to obedience and love.

Obedience is expressed only over a period of time after repentance and conversion.

Obedience shown by faithfully living in harmony with the commands of Jesus our Lord and Master.

Love is expressed in a different way, linked always with self sacrifice.

Jesus Christ is the perfect example of this that we are to follow.

1 Peter 2:17-21 [NIV] *“Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king. Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. **To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.**”*

Suffering and sacrifice involved.

John 15:12-13 [NIV] *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he **lay down his life for his friends.**”*

Lay down our lives by sacrificing our time to serve others out of love.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.**”*

We are urged by Paul to make the final proof of our love by offering ourselves as a “*living sacrifice*” to our Creator.

Note it is **not** just our minds that we offer as a sacrifice on God’s Altar but our whole body.

Just as Jesus offered His whole body to the Father along with His Will.

Matthew 26:36-39 [NIV] *“Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, Sit here while I go over there and pray. He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me. Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, **My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.**”*

It is only when we submit totally to God, seeking His Will not our own, that the Holy Spirit can operate from within us and what was mentioned by Christ can then happen.

John 7:37-39 [NIV] *“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, **If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.** Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

We have to come to the point where we “*thirst*” for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Totally believe in what Christ said in the scriptures, and glorify Christ in our lives.

The Holy Spirit will only go where Christ is glorified.

John 16:14 [NIV] *“He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”*

What God is asking of us is to submit to Him and allow the Holy Spirit to enter into our lives and possess our wills, be Lord of our lives.

Such a decision takes living faith in our Creator, such faith only comes as a result of intimate knowledge of the God we serve.

Are we willing to hand over our lives to the Holy Spirit to use how He desires?

To allow the Holy Spirit to decide for me all I do in my life?

This is what is meant by “*a living sacrifice*” and when we do make such a decision and show God we mean what we say, the Holy Spirit will enter in us.

Only then can we live a truly “*spirit-led life*”.

When that happens I can assure you that you will always remember the day and you will know it has happened.

When I am under stress God’s Presence calms me down

Psalm 23:4 [Living Bible] “*Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way.*”

For I know that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me, especially when facing death, for He has been there and experienced a resurrection back to life showing me the way.

Philippians 4:13 [Living Bible] “*For I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me strength and power.*”

When I am tempted God is my Counsellor

God is ready to help me through the period of temptation.

1 Corinthians 10:13-14 [Living Bible] “*But remember this, the wrong desires that come into your life aren’t anything new or different. Many others have faced exactly the same problems before you. **And no temptation is irresistible.** You can trust God to keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can’t stand up against it, for He has promised this and will do what He says. He will show you how to escape temptation’s power so that you can bear up patiently against it, so, dear friends, carefully avoid idol-worship of every kind.*”

That is a very encouraging scripture and promise from God, when we are in His Presence.

Why does Paul link “*idol worship of every kind*” to this promise?

Our protection and guidance will come from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will always glorify Jesus Christ.

John 16:13-14 [NIV] “*But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. **He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.***”

Anything we put between obedience and serving God is an idol, which is not bringing glory to God.

How?

Because anything we are making more important in our life than our Creator will not glorify Him and the Holy Spirit will leave our inner presence.

Exodus 20:3-6 [NIV] *“You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.”*

The Holy Spirit is very sensitive and just like the dove that God uses to symbolise the person of the Holy Spirit and can easily be caused to flutter away by our actions and attitudes.

Ephesians 4:22-32 [NIV] *“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. **And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”***

Any of the things listed here we are told could grieve the Holy Spirit and cause Him to leave us.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-19 [Amplified Bible] *“Now also we beseech you, brethren, get to know those who labour among you. Recognise them for what they are, acknowledge and appreciate and respect them all, your leaders who are over you in the Lord, and who warn and kindly reprove and exhort you. And hold them in very high and most affectionate esteem in appreciation of their work. Be at peace among yourselves and we earnestly beseech you brethren, admonish, warn and seriously advise those who are out of line, the loafers, the disorderly and the unruly. Encourage the timid and fainthearted, help and give support to the weak, be very patient with everybody, always keeping your temper. See that none of you repays another with evil for evil, but always aim to show kindness and seek to be good to one another and to everybody. Be happy [in your faith] and rejoice and be glad-hearted continually, be unceasing in prayer, praying perseveringly. Thank God in everything no matter what the circumstances may be, be thankful and give thanks, for this is the Will of God for you who are in Jesus Christ, the Revealer and Mediator of that will. **Do not quench, suppress or subdue the Holy Spirit.”***

God desires above all things to give gifts to His children, especially the gift of the person of the Holy Spirit to dwell in us.

But, God is also just, and if our response to the gift of the Holy Spirit is to spurn, ignore or even reject him by our conduct, God will withdraw that power from us, the Holy Spirit will cease to be present in us.

The list of attitudes that preceded the statement *“quench not the Holy Spirit”* shows us how easily we can do just that the choice is ours, **our calling from God is not something we can take lightly.**

Realising God’s Presence is a great incentive to resist temptations

Remember when we give in to temptation and sin we are doing it right in front of our Creator!

When we sin it is as if we are doing it right in front of His Throne with all those around His Throne looking on.

Isn't it far easier to control ourselves when we know other people are watching?

When I am discouraged, God is my comforter

Psalm 34:18 [Good News Bible] *“The Lord is near to those who are discouraged, He saves those who have lost all hope.”*

Psalm 34:18 [Living Bible] *“The Lord is close to the broken hearted.”*

God is going through any discouragement or heart breaking experience with us.

He is there to be our Comforter.

2 Corinthians 1:3-6 [NIV] *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and **the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.**”*

God will comfort us when in distress so that by our experiencing this comfort we can be His instrument in comforting others as they go through the same trial.

The Holy Spirit is not some impersonal force.

“May the force be with you” in Star Wars is a false impression of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a person, not some far off power, but right with us always.

John 14:15-16, 18 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever –” ... **“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”***

This is the promise of the Holy Spirit who will never leave us.

God is never too busy to listen to us and desires to share our hopes and fears that we have.

Psalm 116:8-11 [Good News Bible] *“The Lord ... stopped my tears and kept me from defeat. And so I walk in the presence of the Lord ... I keep on believing, even when I said I am completely crushed, even when I was afraid and said no-one can be trusted.”*

Here we have the key to practising the presence of God in our lives.

How do we do this?

Invite Jesus into our lives

Ephesians 3:12 [Good News Bible] *“**In union with Christ and through faith in Him we have the boldness to go into God's Presence with all confidence.**”*

Colossians 1:22 [Living Bible] *“He [Christ] has done this through the death on the cross of His own human body, and now as a result Christ has brought you into the very presence of God, and you are standing there before Him with nothing left against you...”*

When we are under stress it is a natural reaction to fill ourselves with something to balance out the pressures from outside.

People fill themselves with many different things when under stress, food, drink, drugs, to equalise the inside to the pressure from the outside.

Ephesians 5:18 [Living Bible] *“Don’t drink too much wine, for many evils lie along that path; be filled instead with the Holy Spirit, and controlled by Him.”*

When we are filled on the inside with God’s Presence [Christ in us by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit] He will equal any pressure we experience from the outside.

Be Quiet

I feel that the reason so many people fail to experience the presence of God is that they are too busy, their lives are constantly filled with noise that distracts our attention from the inner voice of God.

Psalms 46:10 [Living Bible] *“Stand silent! Know that I am God!”*

Schedule a few moments, several times a day, to spend a quiet time with God.

I have what I call my “Snug”; it is a converted shed at the bottom of our garden, in which I have a desk, comfortable chair, carpeted floor and all my study books.

It is my place for quiet times with my Creator.

I’m far enough away from my home, workplace, and neighbours, not to be disturbed by noise. In fact my nearest neighbours sleep peacefully all the time: they are in the local church graveyard.

This “snug” is where I feel the presence of God more than anywhere else, really it should be called my “power house”, for this is where I drink in of the Power of God into my life.

James 4:8 [Living Bible] *“When you draw close to God, God will draw close to you, ... let your hearts be filled with God alone to make them pure and true to Him.”*

God is always there but we need to be aware of this fact.

Talk to God about everything

God knows everything, so we can pray about anything and ask Him to help.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 [NIV] *“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

Share all your joys with God, thank God for everything you experience, the beautiful view, the glorious sunset, the happy experience as well as our sadness and fears, maintain a continual conversation with God.

Psalms 62:8 [Living Bible] *“... trust Him all the time, pour out your longings before Him ...”*

You may say, *“well, this doesn’t work for me, when I pray I feel my prayers don’t go higher than the ceiling.”*

Well, I have good news for you, God is below the ceiling!

We think it and God knows it, we don’t have to have super prayers that blast their way right up to heaven!

Develop the habit of praise

Thank God for who He is and what He has done.

Psalm 100:4 [Living Bible] *“Go through His open gates with great thanksgiving, enter His courts with praise, give thanks to Him and bless His Name.”*

We move into an awareness of God’s Presence through praise.

Nothing will work faster than praise and thanksgiving to bring us into an awareness of God.

If we develop the presence of God in our lives, a whole new world will open up to us.

A new life filled with joy, contentment, fulfilment and power.

John 10:10 [Living Bible] *“... my purpose is to give life in all its fullness.”*

The choice is ours.