VOLUME 1

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

THE PATH TO POWER, IDENTITY, AND VICTORY

COMPANION WORKBOOK

FOR INDIVIDUALS - SMALL GROUPS - LEADERSHIP TEAMS



SCRIPTURE STUDY

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

KINGDOM PRINCIPLES

LEADERSHIP INSIGHT

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

BISHOP DR. ANTHONY COLLINS

FOUNDER, COLLINS DISCIPLESHIP INSTITUTE

AD GLORIAM CHRISTI

FOR THE GLORY OF CHRIST ALONE

All of our discipleship resources are available to the public at no charge through HOWICP.org. Our mission is to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ by equipping believers to obey the Great Commission through biblical discipleship, spiritual formation, and leadership development.

If these resources have encouraged your walk with Christ or strengthened your ministry, we invite you to partner with us. Your tax-deductible donation enables us to continue developing and distributing these materials free of charge to individuals, churches, and ministries worldwide.

Thank you for helping us make disciples who make disciples - for the glory of God.



PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Volume 1

COMPANION WORKBOOK

Copyright © 2026 Anthony Collins
All rights reserved worldwide.

Published by:
Tony Collins Ministries
811 Loblolly Court
Palm Coast, FL 32137

www.TonyCollinsMinistries.com
www.HOWICP.org
https://www.youtube.com/@BishopCollins1
https://www.facebook.com/TonyCollinsMinistries



Any part of this book **may be** reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means without the written permission of the author.

The contents of this document **may not be altered** in any way for any reason.

"To help people know Christ deeply, walk with Him daily, and represent Him faithfully through lives transformed by the presence of God."

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

The Path to Power, Identity, and Victory

Companion Workbook

This Companion Workbook aims not only at helping you to understand biblical truth but also at enabling you to go through a spiritual transformation as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit, because of the authority of God's Word, and through deliberate application. Each session has been thought out so that you will progress from a stage of learning to one of living, from belief to obedience, and from personal growth to aiding others in their growth in Christ.

Our purpose is not to produce better church members but to produce mature disciples who in turn make mature disciples, and every graduate is expected to become a disciple maker.

Designed to be used with the book Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

The CDI Learning Cycle

Learn

↓

Live

↓

Lead

↓

Launch

↓

Repeat

Opening Prayer - A Prayer Before Beginning This Journey

I come before You Heavenly Father with a feeling of gratitude and humility, since it is You who are the source of every good and perfect gift. I thank You for calling me into a relationship with Yourself through Your Son, Jesus Christ; and for having provided a means by which I can enter into Your presence, not because of my own righteousness but because of the work that was completed on the Cross.

When I start this companion workbook I ask that You will prepare my heart so that I may receive all that You wish to teach me. Bestow upon me the ability to hear Your voice, the capacity to see Your truth, and a heart that is ready to obey. Take away all distractions, all false beliefs, all fear, and every obstacle which might prevent my fellowship with You.

Let the Holy Spirit be my teacher, let Him make the Scriptures clear, let Him show me the nature of Christ, let Him convict me in those areas where correction is required, give me encouragement when I am weary and grant me strength in my weaknesses. Perhaps these lessons may have an effect that goes beyond simply giving me information; maybe they can result in true transformation. I pray that Your Word may go from my mind to my heart and be evident in my life.

Do not teach me only how to visit Your presence but how I may dwell in it. Give me a way of living which consists of being in constant communion with You. Then my worship may become more profound, my faith more firm, my obedience more prompt, and my love for Jesus more intense than it has ever been before.

While I am going through these sessions, help me to find out who I really am in Christ. Teach me how to live with the authority which You have given me. Help me to overcome all difficulties by means of Your grace, and also help me to become a faithful reflection of Your glory to those who are around me.

Above all, Lord, I pray that this journey will bring me nearer to You. I must never be content with just knowing about You when it is possible to know You personally. Let each page lead me into a deeper intimacy with Christ. Let each lesson bring increasing more glory to Your Name.

May my life more and more declare: Ad Gloriam Christi - For the Glory of Christ Alone. So it is, in the precious and mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dedication

This workbook is sincerely dedicated to all believers who long for something beyond religious activities; in particular, those who wish to enjoy true fellowship with the living God.

This book is for the worshipper who does not content himself with merely having occasional meetings but rather seeks to live continuously in the presence of Jesus Christ.

This book is for pastors, missionaries, teachers, leaders in ministry, intercessors, and faithful servants. It is addressed to people who are working to make Christ known. It is intended for those who realize that effective ministry always arises out of an intimate communion with Him.

This book is for each disciple who realizes that the highest vocation is not merely to carry out God's work but to walk each day with the God of that work.

I pray that this workbook will not only enhance your knowledge of the Bible, but will also deepen your love for Christ, strengthen your obedience, transform your character, and cause you to continually seek out His presence.

May you find that there is nothing that can equal living each day in fellowship with the King of kings.

Let glory belong to God alone.

A Bishop's Note

It is a real pleasure for me to welcome you to the Practicing *His Presence - Volume 1 - Companion Workbook*.

This workbook has not been meant to be just yet another Bible study or devotional guide; rather, it has been created with the aim of serving as a spiritual companion as you go through one of the great invitations contained in all of the Scripture - the invitation to live continuously in the presence of God.

All great moves on God's part have always started with people who placed His presence above all other things. If we are to expect miracles, then fellowship is a necessary precondition; and if effective ministry is to take place, worship is required, while prior to there being power there must be surrender. This pattern has always been the case and always will be.

I pray that you will deal with each session slowly and with prayer. Do not give in to the urge to go through the material quickly just to finish off another lesson. Let the Holy Spirit take the time to speak to your heart. Stop from time to time and pray often, reflecting honestly as well. Most important of all, obey immediately anything that God reveals to you.

Don't forget that spiritual maturity isn't judged by the amount of truth that we know; it is based on how faithfully we put into practice the truth that we have received. When you have finished each chapter, ask yourself one simple question: 'How shall I practice His presence today?'

If the only result of this workbook is to inspire in you a fiercer than ever desire to get to know Jesus Christ more closely, then I pray that this will happen. Let your life become a testimony that nothing is impossible for anyone who continually remains in His presence.

I'm thankful that we are going on this journey together. May the Lord bless you abundantly.

Behind The Veil,
Bishop Anthony Collins

Table of Contents

Introduction ……13

Chapter 1 - Practicing His Presence 15

Chapter 2 - What Keeps Us Out ……..22

Chapter 3 - The Awakening of Faith 29

Chapter 4 - When God Makes an Appearance 36

Chapter 5 - Demonstrations of Power……..43

Chapter 6 - The Battle for His Presence ……...50

Chapter 7 - The Enemy's Strategy 57

Chapter 8 - The Inner Battle ……..64

Chapter 9 - The Heart Battle ……72

Chapter 10 - Under Pressure ……81

Chapter 11 - His Presence Activated ……88

Chapter 12 - The Great Exchange.....96

Chapter 13 - The Evidence of His Presence 103

Chapter 14 - A Case for His Presence ……111

Chapter 15 - The Passion and the Proof 119

Appendix A: Collins Kingdom Principles for Daily Living ……..127

A Bishop's Blessing ……132

Author's Note ……133

CDI ……134

Introduction - Practicing His Presence Companion Workbook

"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." - James 4:8

The Christian way of life was never meant to be lived without the presence of God; from the time in the Garden of Eden until the coming of the New Jerusalem, the narrative of the Scriptures is one of a God who wishes to dwell among His people. By means of Jesus Christ that invitation is given to all believers, not merely to know about God but to know Him personally and to walk with Him every day.

This companion workbook has been produced to help you start that journey.

This workbook, accompanying the book **Practicing His Presence: The Path to Power, Identity, and Victory**, is intended to take you from merely reading biblical truth to actually experiencing the transformative power of that truth. It goes beyond being just a set of questions and exercises since it serves as a practical guide for developing a way of life based on God's presence.

You will be led into God's Word in each session, and the sessions will encourage you to carry out individual reflection while urging you to put biblical principles into practice in your daily life. By studying the Scripture, gaining religious insight, praying, and engaging in practical activities, you will realize that God's presence is not limited to special occasions; it is accessible to every believer who seeks Him with a heart that has been surrendered.

As you go on with these lessons you will investigate some basic truths regarding worship, faith, identity, obedience, spiritual disciplines, and the work of the Holy Spirit. More than that, you will be encouraged to put those truths into practice. Spiritual growth never results simply from gaining information; it takes place through continuous obedience which is empowered by God's grace.

When going through each lesson, take your time. Read the Scriptures carefully and pray sincerely, giving careful thought to everything and writing in a thoughtful manner. Most important of all, however, is to respond obediently to anything that God through the Holy Spirit may reveal. The aim is not merely to

complete the workbook; it is to allow God to shape your heart so that your life may be transformed to reflect the image of Christ.

I pray that this workbook will enable you to become more conscious of God's presence, increase your love for His Word, strengthen your faith journey, and develop habits which will keep your fellowship with Him alive throughout a lifetime.

As you learn to seek His face above all else, you will discover a timeless truth: *The greater amount you practice being in His presence, the greater extent His presence will transform you.*

Welcome to the journey.

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 1 - Practicing the Presence
The Gateway to Everything Supernatural
Companion to Chapter 1 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

Before you start this session, go and find a quiet spot where you can give God your full attention. Switch off any distractions. Open your Bible. Take a deep breath and remember that this is not just a study session; it is a chance to meet the living God. Spend a few moments in silence before Him and then pray.
Lord, calm my heart, open my mind to your truth and my spirit to your presence, and may this session bring me nearer to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Before You Begin

The Christian life was never meant to be lived without the presence of God, since in the Scriptures every important act of God starts with His presence; creation, the call, transformation, leadership, worship, and revival all come about as a result of having an intimate fellowship with Him. The purpose of this session is to present the main truth of the whole book, namely that a supernatural Christian life cannot exist unless there is a continuous *practice of God's presence.* As you go through this lesson, ask God not only to teach you about His presence but also to enable you to become more aware of His nearness.

Opening Scripture

Exodus 33:15 -*"If Your presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here."*

The Main Point: *The main idea is that all of the things which God wants to achieve in and through your life start and continue in His presence.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- State the reason why the presence of God forms the foundation of the Christian life.
- Provide examples from the Bible of lives that have been changed as a result of encounters with the presence of God.
- Learn the ways in which the Bible offers for developing a sense of God's presence.
- Start to establish daily routines which will promote a continuous fellowship with God.

Chapter Overview

In this first chapter we learn that God's presence is not just one of the many blessings; it is the origin from which all spiritual blessings come. From Genesis through to Revelation, God shows Himself to be a God who wishes to dwell among His people; creation took place in His presence, leaders were called while in His presence, and Jesus carried out his ministry through constant communion with the Father. Today the Holy Spirit lives in every believer and thus makes God's presence accessible and personal. Since Christ died, we do not any longer look for God's presence as something far away, but rather learn to live with a continual awareness of the One who is already within us.

Theology Corner: The Presence of God

The idea of God involves His active and personal appearance among His people. Even though God is present everywhere at all times, the Bible also shows there are instances of His evident presence when people become clearly aware of His nearness, holiness, power, and glory. From Eden through to the time of the

Tabernacle, and from Pentecost until the coming of the Holy Spirit who now dwells in people, God's redemptive purpose has always been directed towards restoring fellowship with mankind. The greatest blessing of the New Covenant is not merely forgiveness. It is the restored communion with God via Jesus Christ.

Digging Inside the Scriptures: Read the passages listed below.

Genesis 1:2
What does the presence of God show before creation starts?
_____

Exodus 3:2–6
What effect did God's presence have on Moses' future?
_____

John 15:4–5
What makes it essential to remain in Christ?
_____

2 Corinthians 6:16
What has God promised about His presence in believers?
_____

Word Study:

"Presence" - Hebrew: Panim - This word literally translates as "face". In the Old Testament, when people spoke of seeking the presence of God they usually meant seeking to see His face. To seek God's face is equivalent to pursuing a close fellowship with Him rather than merely asking for His blessings. Instead of merely giving us things, God invites us to know Him on a personal level.

Leadership Insight

Those who neglect the presence of God eventually start to lead based on experience rather than on relying upon God. Moses would not move unless the presence of God was with him. Jesus frequently went to solitary places to pray before attending to the crowds. The greatest resource for leadership is not ability

or gift but rather intimacy with God. Before leading others, true shepherds learn to stay in the presence of God.

Principle of the Kingdom: *The presence of God is where every supernatural deed which He desires to achieve through His people begins.*

Walking It Out

This week, intentionally cultivate awareness of God's presence by:

1. Each morning, I start off with five minutes of silent worship.
2. Read the Scripture before looking at your phone.
3. Stop three times a day to recognize the presence of God.
4. Each evening is ended with a thanksgiving.

Individual Reflection

Which part of this chapter was the one that bothered you the most?

_____

At what time are you most conscious of the presence of God?

_____

What are the kinds of distractions that most often reduce your awareness of Him?

_____

What difference would there be in the way you lived if you really did believe that God was with you at every moment?

_____

Spiritual Formation Exercise: Practicing Awareness

Pause and pray several times a day, saying: *"Lord Jesus, I'm thankful that You are here. Help me to become more conscious of Your presence." Keep up this practice throughout the week until it turns into a habit and is no longer just* an exercise.

Living the Principle

This week select one normal activity - such as driving, walking, eating lunch, or working—and deliberately bring Christ into that moment. Rather than going through the activity quickly, practice noticing His presence and then responding with worship, thankfulness, or prayer.

The Collins Principle: *The greatest miracle is not merely experiencing the presence of God; it is learning to live with continuous awareness of it.*

Weekly Declaration

Since the Holy Spirit is in me, I decide every day to remain constantly aware of God's presence. This awareness guides me, gives me strength, brings about my transformation, and enables me to glorify Christ in all aspects of my life.

Guided Prayer

Lord Jesus, I thank You for making Your presence known through Jesus Christ. I ask You to forgive me for all the times I have behaved as if You were far away. Teach me to see Your closeness, to place my trust in Your direction, and to enjoy spending time with You. May every choice I make and each step I take come as a result of my communion with You. Help me to make it a daily practice of experiencing Your presence until it becomes the natural way of my life. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

For the following seven days start each morning with this prayer before carrying out any other action: *"Lord, I refuse to spend this day without Your presence. Guide me, teach me, and help me to stay conscious that You are with me in each and every moment."* Each day, make a record of everything that you notice in your journal.

From the Shepherd's Heart

A major temptation in the Christian life is to get so involved in God's work that we end up failing to spend time with God Himself. Things such as ministry, family duties, one's career, and even participation in church activities can gradually take the place of simple communion with Christ. Never lose sight of this truth: *God wants you to have fellowship with Him more than He wants your work.* The most productive servants of God have not been those who were simply the busiest; rather, they were the ones who stayed closest to the Shepherd. If you make it a point of cultivating His presence, you will find that all the other aspects of life then begin to take their proper place.

Worship Response

Worship the Lord for a few minutes and give Him thanks for being always with you. Read Psalm 27:4 slowly and prayerfully. Finally, thank God for the opportunity to know Him personally through Jesus Christ.

Gazing Forward

At the following session we shall look into the way that God's presence is not merely something experienced in remarkable instances; it can rather be the everyday atmosphere in which each believer lives. We will start to acquire practical habits which foster a continuous fellowship with the Lord.

Journal Pages

What God Showed Me Today

What I Will Do Differently This Week

Prayer Requests

Scriptures God Highlighted

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 2 - What Keeps Us Out
Breaking the Barriers to God's Presence
Companion to Chapter 2 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

Look for a peaceful spot in which you can have a meeting with God without being disturbed. When you have calmed your heart, say this prayer: *"Father, examine me and make known to me anything that is preventing me from having a deeper fellowship with You. Take away all the obstacles which impair my awareness of Your presence. I want to walk closely with You today. In Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen." Then take a few minutes to sit in quietness* before the Lord.

Before You Begin

All who believe look to have a deeper experience of God's presence, but at the same time every believer comes up against opposition. It is taught in the Bible that the Christian life involves opposition. The enemy cannot take God out of our lives, but he always attempts to draw our attention away from God's presence. This session looks at the obstacles which tend to cause a gap between us and the Lord. While you are studying, ask the Holy Spirit to show you not only the challenges surrounding you but also those which are inside you.

Opening Scripture: *James 4:8 -"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."*

Main Point: *The biggest obstacles to experiencing God's presence are usually not external circumstances but our internal reactions.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Find the usual obstacles that prevent people from being aware of God's presence.
- Understand Satan's strategy for creating spiritual distance.
- See how gratitude, surrender, and spiritual practices overcome these barriers.
- Form practical habits so as to maintain a continuous fellowship with God.

Chapter Overview

Even though God's presence is always accessible in Christ, believers generally feel an unnecessary distance due to spiritual distractions, fear, pressure, self-reliance, and wrong priorities. From Eden right down to the present day, the enemy's strategy has been remarkably consistent in that it has sought to draw God's people away from intimate fellowship with Him. Jesus has removed all obstacles to access by means of the Cross, but it is up to believers to deliberately foster a daily awareness of His presence through regular spiritual practice.

Theology Corner: The Ministry of Reconciliation

One of the greatest achievements of Christ was not merely to forgive sins but to restore fellowship between God and humanity. Sin had caused us to be separated from God the Father; it was through the Cross that we were brought back into communion with Him. The fact that the veil remained torn is a sign that God wanted to establish restored fellowship with His people. Salvation enables us to have access; discipleship shows us how to live in that access every day.

Diggin Inside Scripture

Genesis 3:8–10
What was the first thing that Adam and Eve did when they saw God?
What do believers do, sometimes, in a similar way today?

_____

Hebrews 10:19–22
What level of confidence does the believer now have, according to this passage?

_____

James 4:8
What promise is there when one comes near to God?

_____

Romans 8:5–6
What effect does our mindset have on our awareness of God's presence?

_____

Word Study:

"Draw Near" – Greek: Engizō – Definition: to come close, to approach, to move forward intentionally. James tells us that intimacy with God requires an intentional movement of the heart; God has already made Himself available and it is up to us to accept the invitation.

Leadership Insight

All leaders have to deal with periods of pressure; pressure by itself is not the problem. The real danger lies in distance. It is common for many leaders to give up prayer rather than cancel a meeting. They will put off worship rather than overlook their personal duties. The end result is that ministry is carried out without a fresh communion with God. Responsible leaders make sure that God's presence is protected before they protect their own schedules.

Principle of the Kingdom: *The thing that continually draws your attention will eventually determine the course of your spiritual life.*

Walking It Out

This week decide upon the main obstacle lying in the way of your fellowship with God. Tick one:

□ Pressure
□ Fear
□ Busyness
□ Distraction
□ Complaining
□ Success
□ Self-reliance
□ Other: _____

Take one concrete action this week to eliminate that barrier.

Individual Reflection

What barrier proved to be the most difficult for you when you were reading this chapter?

_____

Have you let responsibilities take the place of your relationship with God?

_____

What is your usual way of responding when there is a period of crisis?

_____

What would be different if a response of God's presence were adopted before it was resorted to?

_____

Spiritual Formation Exercise: The Prayer Pause

Each day this week, stop three times and for two minutes each. Close your eyes, take a slow breath and pray: *"Lord, I choose Your presence over my pressure. Help me to become more aware of You than of my circumstances."* Then let silence take part in your prayer.

Living the Principle

Every evening, take a look at your day and ask yourself:

- At what point was I most conscious of God's presence today?
- At what point did I lose that awareness?
- What caused the distraction?
- How will my response be different tomorrow?

The Collins Principle: *The enemy's most effective strategy is not necessarily to lead us into sin, but rather to leave us so distracted that we are unable to appreciate God's presence.*

Weekly Declaration

Since Jesus Christ has opened the way into the Father's presence, I abandon fear, distraction, and self-reliance and instead select gratitude rather than complaint, worship rather than worry, and communion with God rather than all other priorities.

Guided Prayer

Father, I want to thank You for the fact that through Jesus Christ I have free access to Your holy presence. I ask You to forgive me for having let distractions cause an unnecessary gap in my fellowship with You. Forgive me for having allowed fear,

pressure, and the wrong priorities to take away my time with You. Teach me to make You my first concern. Teach me to trust You fully and to stay constantly aware of Your closeness. May Your presence be my refuge, my strength, and my greatest joy. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

This week deliberately substitute one of your daily distractions with fifteen minutes spent in God's presence. Switch off the television, silence your phone, and move away from social media and use that time for Scripture, worship and prayer. At the end of the week, write in your journal about how your awareness of God has changed.

From the Shepherd's Heart

One of the most effective weapons of the enemy is not persecution but preoccupation; for if he can keep us busy, anxious, or distracted to a sufficient extent, he will take away from us the joy and strength which come from remaining in Christ. Year after year I have found that intimacy with God doesn't simply vanish altogether. It wears away bit by bit through little compromises, periods of neglecting prayer, rushing through worship, and putting off time spent in the Bible. The good news is that restoration can start in just the same way. A single deliberate choice to get close to God can start to renew a heart that has wandered away. Never accept the false idea that God has pulled away from you; more frequently than not, He is still waiting for you right where you left off—with outstretched arms and an invitation to come near.

Worship Response

Carefully read Psalm 63:1–8, taking several minutes to give thanks to God for the fact that nothing can divide you from His love and for the fact that His presence remains available in Christ. Finish by singing or by listening to a worship song which emphasizes God's faithfulness and nearness.

Gazing Forward

In Session Three it will become clear that while practicing God's presence involves removing obstacles, it also means developing holy habits which keep our hearts constantly in alignment with Him. We shall then start to look at the daily routines that turn the experience of God's presence from something occasional into a way of living for life.

Journal Pages

What barrier did God make known to me?

_____
_____

What did I do on purpose to get closer to God this week?

_____
_____

In which place did I feel His presence most clearly?

_____
_____

Prayer Requests

_____
_____

Answered Prayers

_____
_____

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 3 - Awakening Faith
Discovering Who You Are in His Presence
Companion to Chapter 3 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

Before you begin, calm your heart and take a few deep breaths, remembering that you are approaching God's presence not in order to win His approval, but because you have already been accepted through Jesus Christ. Pray: *"Father, stir up my faith today, help me to see myself the way You do. Get rid of every false identity and every lie that has shaped my thinking. Teach me to live based on Your presence not on my circumstances. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

Before You Begin

Although many Christians are aware of what God has done for them, they have difficulty in understanding the kind of people they have become as a result of Him. This is because identity is one of Satan's main areas of attack. If he is not able to prevent our being saved, he will try to prevent us from living the life of sons and daughters of God. This session looks at the way in which God's presence kindles faith, affirms our identity and sets us free to live the supernatural life which Christ wants for every believer.

Opening Scripture: *2 Corinthians 5:17 - "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."*

The greater the time we spend in the presence of God, the clearer our understanding of our identity becomes and the stronger our faith grows.

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Describe how God's presence is related to spiritual identity.
- See the way in which the enemy distorts our perception of who we are in Christ.
- Explain how faith develops as a result of communion with God.
- Form habits that are practical and thus enhance your identity while kindling faith.

Chapter Overview

God never meant for believers to live within the bounds of what is natural. Because of Christ we have received a new identity, a new relationship with the Father, and access to a supernatural life which is empowered by the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, many Christians still live below their calling since they define themselves in terms of their past failures, their current situation, or in comparison with other people rather than in accordance with God's truth. The more we experience God's presence, the more secure our identity becomes, the stronger our faith grows, and the greater our confidence in God's purposes becomes.

Theology Corner: Our Identity in Christ

Salvation involves more than just the forgiveness of sins; it is the gift of a completely new identity, and the New Testament refers to believers as:

- Children of God (John 1:12)
- A new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)

- Citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20)
- A chosen race (1 Peter 2:9)
- A royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9)
- Temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)

We do not gain our identity through performing it; rather, it is given to us through grace. The greater the amount of time we spend in the presence of God, the more confident we become in living according to that identity.

Digging Inside Scripture

1 Peter 2:9–10
What titles does Peter assign to every believer? And how should these truths influence your daily life?

Romans 8:14–17
What is it to be adopted as God's child?

Hebrews 11:6
What makes it necessary to have faith when walking with God?

Mark 9:23
What did Jesus have to say regarding belief?

Word Study:

Faith, which is the Greek word *pistis,* means confidence, trust, reliance and faithful dependence on God; biblical faith involves more than just believing facts since it consists in trusting enough in God's character to obey Him; faith develops as we continually experience God's presence.

Leadership Insight

Men who are confident are not the ones who have a high opinion of themselves; rather, they are those who have a clear and accurate understanding of Christ and of their identity in Christ. Leaders who know that they are accepted by God do not feel the need to compare themselves with others, nor are they plagued by insecurity or the desire for approval; their confidence is based on Christ and not on themselves. Secure self-identity is the foundation of true leadership.

Principle of the Kingdom: *Faith thrives in those places where God's presence is constantly sought.*

Walking It Out

This week deliberately substitute each negative thought you have about yourself with a biblical truth. For example, in place of "I am weak" say "His strength is made perfect in my weakness". Prepare three identity statements which you will rehearse every day.

Individual Reflection

How have you permitted circumstances to have a role in determining your identity?

_____

Which aspect of the biblical teaching concerning your identity had the greatest encouragement for you?

_____

What fears would cease if you completely believed in who you are in Christ?

_____

Where is God calling you to place more trust in Him?

_____

Spiritual Formation Exercise: Identity Meditation

This week each morning take the time to read 1 Peter 2:9 aloud and stop after each of the descriptions. Thank God in a specific way that this applies to you because of Christ. Let your identity be determined by Scripture, not by your emotions.

Living the Principle

Whenever this week you have an important conversation, meeting, or decision to make, take a moment to quietly tell yourself: '*I am a child of God, filled with His Spirit, and I am walking in His presence.' Notice the way* this truth affects your attitude and your confidence.

The Collins Principle: *The best way of coming to know who we are is to consider the One who has created us and redeemed us.*

Weekly Declaration

I am of Jesus Christ, and since I am, I decide to reject all false identities. I decide to place God's Word above my feelings, my past, or the views of other people. It is because of His presence that my faith is strengthened. His presence affirms my identity and also gives me the power to live the life to which He has called me.

Guided Prayer

Father, I thank You for considering me Your child in Jesus Christ. I ask You to grant me forgiveness for having believed the lies based on fear, insecurity, comparison, or failure. Give me the ability to see myself in accordance with the truth found in Your Word. I want You to strengthen my faith as I spend time with You and to enable me to walk with assurance in the identity which You have given me. May my life show forth Your grace and bring honor to Your name. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

Every day this week select one person who needs encouragement and speak to them about a biblical truth. Help them to see themselves in light of God's promises not in terms of their circumstances. Notice that as you are strengthening the faith of another believer, your own faith will also increase.

From the Shepherd's Heart

One of the most significant insights in the Christian life is realizing that God loves you even though you have not done anything for Him; many believers spend their entire lives attempting to earn the identity which Christ has already obtained through the Cross. The enemy urges you to base your identity on your failures, while the world makes you see yourself in terms of your achievements. But your Heavenly Father calls upon you to define yourself in light of your relationship with Him. When you start each day in His presence, you cease asking yourself, 'Who am I?' and instead live with the firm assurance that you are His. This assurance then forms the basis for all acts of obedience, each step of faith, and every chance to serve.

Worship Response

Take the time to read Ephesians 1:3 to 14. As you do so, go through and underline each blessing and identity statement that applies to you on the grounds that you are 'in Christ'. Then conclude by giving thanks to the Lord for the fact that your identity is secure in Him.

Gazing Forward

In Session Four it will be found that when we practice the presence of God it does not only change the way in which we see ourselves; it also alters the way in which we respond to the circumstances of life. The deeper our awareness of God's presence, the more fear is replaced by trust, striving by surrender, and ordinary living becomes extraordinary through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Journal Pages

What new truth concerning my identity has God revealed?

_____

_____

How did I see my faith grow this week?

_____

_____

Identity statements I want to remember

_____

_____

Prayer Requests

_____

_____

Answered Prayers

_____

_____

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 4 - When God Shows Up
How His Presence Changes Everything
Companion to Chapter 4 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

Before you start, take a moment to recall that God is not far away; He is already with you through Jesus Christ and by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Calm your heart, get rid of all distractions and pray: *"Father, I thank You for the fact that Your presence makes all the difference. Open my eyes so that I may see where You are already at work and transform my thoughts, my heart and my life as I spend time with You today. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

Before You Begin

All through the Scriptures, each time God made Himself known, people and the situation around them changed. The usual became remarkable. The fearful became brave. The broken were made whole. And the impossible became possible. This session looks into the transforming power of God's presence and calls us to expect His ongoing work in our own lives.

Opening Scripture: *2 Corinthians 3:18 -"And we all...beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another..."*

Main point: *God's presence doesn't just enhance our lives it transforms them completely from within.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Explain the power that God has to transform.
- Identify instances from the Bible in which God's presence has altered people and situations.
- Learn the way in which God's presence rearranges priorities and overcomes limitations.
- Set higher expectations regarding God's transformative actions in your everyday life.

Chapter Overview

God has the ability to take the seemingly unimportant and bestow on it eternal value. All throughout the Scriptures, His presence always manages to transform ordinary people, impossible situations, and hopeless circumstances. It brings about a redefinition of identity, rearranges one's priorities, removes limitations, reverses the consequences of sin, and affirms our status as His redeemed people. The more regularly we make it a practice to experience God's presence, the more obvious His transforming action will be in all aspects of our lives.

Theology Corner: Transformation Through God's Presence

The Bible does not view sanctification as merely self-improving; it is rather the supernatural action of the Holy Spirit in bringing believers into agreement with the image of Jesus Christ. This process of transformation starts at the time of salvation and goes on throughout the believer's life. The more we keep seeing Christ through worship, prayer, Scripture, and obedience, the more the Holy Spirit gradually changes our desires, our attitudes, our character and our actions. People become mature in the Christian life as a result of remaining in the presence of God, not just by putting in more effort.

Digging Inside Scripture

John 2:1–11
What does the miracle at Cana show regarding Jesus' ability to transform?

_____

Luke 5:1–11
What made Peter's obedience so important prior to the miracle occurring?

_____

Revelation 21:5
What commitment does Jesus make with regard to all things?

_____

Ephesians 1:13–14
What is the meaning of being sealed by the Holy Spirit?

_____

Word Study:

Transform: From the Greek word Metamorphoō, which means to change into another form; this refers to an inner transformation. The same term is used in regard to Christ's Transfiguration. Biblical transformation involves not merely a modification of external behavior but rather an inner renewal brought about by the Holy Spirit.

Leadership Insight

Excellent leaders do not merely manage change; they embody transformation. One is inspired when they see real change in the life of their leader. The best evidence of spiritual leadership is a life that is constantly being changed by the presence of God; influence as a leader *always arises from personal transformation.*

Principle of the Kingdom: *When God is present, ordinary people become exceptional servants for His Kingdom.*

Walking It Out

This week deliberately expect God to work in surprising ways. Each day record one moment when you realized His hand was at work and then ask yourself:

- How did God change my path?
- What was the result of me obeying Him?
- In what place did I see His faithfulness?

Individual Reflection

Which of the examples of transformation in this chapter had the greatest effect on you?

_____

What have you been doing to limit what God can do?

_____

Which part of your life most requires the presence of God for it to be transformed?

_____

What has God already started doing to you as a result of this study?

_____

Spiritual Formation Exercise: Practicing Holy Expectancy

Every morning say to yourself: *"Lord, I believe that You are acting today, even though I have not yet been able to see it. Assist me in looking for Your presence,*

in detecting Your activity, and in working with Your Spirit." During the day, take a moment to observe the ways in which God may already be at work around you.

Living the Principle

Select one aspect that seems impossible. Rather than concentrating on the problem, spend the week deliberately giving thanks to God for His presence in the situation. Let worship take the place of worry and let expectation take the place of fear and faith take the place of limitation.

The Collins Principle: *God's presence does not merely alter our circumstances; rather, it transforms us so that we can confidently walk through all circumstances in faithfulness to Him.*

Weekly Declaration

The fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in me leads me to reject any limitations and to accept the power that God has to transform me. I am convinced that He is bringing all things to a new state, shaping my life for His glory, and carrying out things which are beyond what I could request or conceive.

Guided Prayer

Father, I thank You for the power of Your presence which constantly transforms me. I am asking You to forgive me for restricting You through my fears and doubts. Help me to believe that You are always working for my benefit, even though I can't see the result. I ask You to go on changing my heart, renew my mind, and shape my character to be like that of Jesus Christ. May my life become a testimony of Your grace and power. In His name I pray. Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

Name one person who is feeling overlooked, insignificant, or discouraged. This week make an effort to encourage them. Say things that are life-giving. Remind them of their worth in Christ. If you can, pray with them. Let yourself be used as a means by which God's presence brings about transformation.

From the Shepherd's Heart

We often devote so much time to praying that God will alter our circumstances that we fail to notice the greater miracle, which is that He is transforming us. I have found that God's main action is usually not around us but inside us; He refines our character before increasing our influence, strengthens our faith before expanding our responsibilities, and changes our hearts before changing our circumstances. Don't be discouraged if your situation hasn't improved as rapidly as you had hoped; if you are spending time in God's presence, He is already acting, and His most important work is always the formation of Christ within you.

Worship Response

Take your time in reading Psalm 40:1-3 and give thanks to God for all the ways in which He has already changed your life. Spend some time in worshipping Him, not merely because of what He has done, but because of who He is.

Gazing Forward

In Session Five we shall realize that it is not only in extraordinary situations that we can practice the presence of God. On the contrary, we will start to look at the way in which obedience in everyday life leads to a way of life in which the presence of God becomes the constant background to our existence rather than something that occurs only occasionally.

Journal Pages

Ways I have seen God transforming me

_____

_____

Circumstances where I need to trust His transforming power

_____

_____

Today's answered prayers

_____

_____

Prayer Requests

_____

_____

Scriptures to Remember

_____

_____

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 5 - Demonstrations of Power
When His Presence Overrides Everything
Companion to Chapter 5 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

Before you start, calm your heart in the presence of the Lord; remember that God's greatest gift is not merely His power but His presence. As you are looking for Him today, don't ask first for miracles but for a deeper fellowship with Him. Pray: *Father, I'm thankful for the fact that You are powerful and personal. I pray that Your faith may be strengthened as I study Your Word and that You will show me how to seek Your face rather than Your hand. Help me to place my trust in the fact that Your power will be made manifest in accordance with Your perfect will and for Your glory. So it is, in Jesus' name, Amen.*

Before You Begin

In the Bible God's power is never shown in order to make an impression on people; rather it is shown in order to reveal His character, to strengthen faith, to achieve His aims, and to draw people to Himself. This session serves to remind us that the supernatural life is not something extraordinary about Christianity; it is biblical Christianity lived in continuous dependence on the Holy Spirit. While you are studying, ask yourself: Do I simply believe that God can act, or am I living with a joyful expectation that He is still at work today?

Opening Scripture: *Ephesians 3:20–21 - "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us..."*

Main Point: *God's power is most clearly shown in the circumstances of those who always remain in His presence and respond to Him with obedient faith.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Describe the connection between God's presence and His power.
- Spot instances in the Bible of God exercising His authority over nature, over various circumstances, and over spiritual darkness.
- Understand the importance of obedience motivated by faith when it comes to experiencing God's work.
- Keep a higher expectation of God's activity yet stay focused on Christ.

Chapter Overview

God is the Creator of all the natural laws, but He is not in any way restricted by the world He has made. Throughout the Scriptures His presence is frequently seen exercising authority over nature, providing for people, dealing with sickness, overcoming death, and controlling all the effects of sin. These actions are not arbitrary exhibitions of power; rather, they show off God's sovereignty, strengthen the faith of His people, and encourage unbelievers to place their trust in Him. Today believers are not merely to admire these stories, but are to live in constant dependence on the same Lord who still rules over all of creation.

Theology Corner: The Purpose of Miracles

Miracles are never goals in themselves; throughout the Scriptures they serve several purposes.

- They glorify God.
- They confirm His Word.

- They show Jesus to be the Messiah.
- This helps to strengthen the faith of those who believe.
- They call the non-believers to repentance.
- They demonstrate God's compassion.

The greatest wonder is that a sinner can be made into a child of God through one's faith in Jesus Christ.

Digging Inside Scripture

Luke 5:1–11
What made Peter's obedience so important before he had the miraculous catch of fish?

_____
_____

Matthew 14:22–33
What occurred when Peter concentrated on Jesus instead of the storm?

_____
_____

Galatians 3:13
What has Christ set believers free from?

_____
_____

Ephesians 1:13–14
What grounds are there for being sealed with the Holy Spirit?

_____
_____

Word Study:

Power: From the Greek word Dynamis, which means power, might, ability, or miraculous strength, the term stresses God's supernatural ability to achieve what human strength is never capable of. Biblical power always comes from God and is always directed towards His aims.

Leadership Insight

Loyal leaders will never try to produce spiritual results; they just get on with the task of preparing. They pray, they obey, and then they place their trust in God to carry out what only He is able to do. Leadership based on the presence of God is based on His power rather than on personal performance.

Principle of the Kingdom: *Whenever God's presence is accepted and observed, His power is shown out of accordance with His perfect will.*

Walking It Out

This week make a deliberate effort to look for evidence of God's activity among you. Each day please record:

- A prayer God answered.
- A providential circumstance.
- A chance to render service. A sign of God's faithfulness.

Get your heart used to recognizing His hand at work.

Individual Reflection

Do you expect God to act in your everyday life?

_____

Have you allowed disappointment to reduce your expectation?

_____

Where is God asking you to place your trust in His power instead of your own?

_____

Where has God shown Himself to be faithful towards you in recent times?

_____

Spiritual Formation Exercise: Practicing Expectant Faith

This week, in the morning, say: "Lord, aid me in recognizing Your work today. Give me the ability to see, the ability to hear, and a willingness of will to obey everything that *You ask of me."* Throughout the day, pause whenever something unexpected happens and ask: Sir, are you showing me something now?

Living the Principle

Select one area in which you have mainly depended on your own strength. This week intentionally surrender that area to God in prayer every day. Ask Him to demonstrate His wisdom, His provision, and His power as you faithfully obey Him.

The Collins Principle: *The most significant demonstrations of God's power are usually given to people who make it their aim to enable His presence by being faithfully devoted every day.*

Weekly Declaration

Because Jesus Christ is Lord over all, I choose not to live my life limited by fear or unbelief. I choose to walk by faith and obey His word. I choose to trust His promises and expect Him to work according to His perfect will.

This week make a point of praying with somebody who truly has a need; don't try to impress them with your prayers. Just trust God, pray with compassion and leave the result to Him. Let your confidence be based on being in the presence of God rather than on your own ability.

Guided Prayer

Thank you, Father, for showing your power in the Scriptures and in my life. I am sorry for all the times when I placed more trust in my strength than in Your sufficiency. Let my faith be increased, that my dependence on You may be strengthened, and that I may come to see Your activity every day. Let my life serve as a testimony of Your faithfulness. Let my life be a witness to the transforming power of Jesus Christ. I pray in His name. Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

This week, make a deliberate effort to pray with someone who truly needs it; don't try to impress them with your prayers. Have faith in God, pray with compassion and leave the result in His hands. Let your confidence be based on being in God's presence rather than on your own abilities.

From the Shepherd's Heart

Believers tend to become discouraged when they compare their own lives with the dramatic miracles described in the Scriptures. They frequently fail to notice the quiet miracles that take place every day—such as changed hearts, restored relationships, answered prayers, growing faith, and the continuous work of the Holy Spirit in molding them into the likeness of Christ. One should never dismiss the power of simple faithfulness; a life that is consistently given over to God is indeed a great demonstration of His power. Although the world might rejoice at spectacular events, heaven is happy about transformed lives. You should look for God's presence first and then trust Him to decide how His power is made known through you.

Worship Response

Take the time to read Psalm 46 slowly and spend time in worshipping God for His sovereignty over creation, over history, and over your own personal life. Thank

Him for the fact that His power is never separated from His love, wisdom, and perfect purposes.

Gazing Forward

In Session Six it will become clear that the greatest showing of God's power is not simply something that He does around us but something that He brings about within us. As we keep on practicing His presence, we shall see how His Spirit forms our character, strengthens our obedience and prepares us for a lifetime of faithful service.

Journal Pages

Ways I have seen God transforming me

Circumstances where I need to trust His transforming power

Today's answered prayers

Prayer Requests

Scriptures to Remember

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 6 - The Battle for His Presence
Overcoming the Enemy's Weapons
Companion to Chapter 6 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

Before opening God's Word, remember that you do not come before Him alone. Through Jesus Christ, you are welcomed into the Father's presence, and through the Holy Spirit, you have been equipped for every spiritual battle. Quiet your heart and pray: *"Father, thank You that in Christ I stand victorious. Open my eyes to recognize the enemy's schemes and strengthen my steadfastness to remain in Your presence. Teach me to fight with faith, truth, worship, and prayer. May my confidence rest in Christ alone. Amen."*

Before You Begin

Every true believer desires a deeper walk with God, but few realize that intimacy with Him will always encounter opposition. The enemy cannot remove your salvation, but he will continually seek to distract your attention, weaken your faith, and interrupt your fellowship with God. This session reminds us that the Christian life is not lived on a playground; it is lived on a battlefield. Yet, we do not fight for victory. We fight from the victory Christ has already won.

Opening Scripture: *Ephesians 6:10–11 - "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."*

Main Point: *Victory in spiritual warfare belongs to those who remain rooted in God's presence and equipped with His truth.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Recognize the spiritual nature of the Christian life.
- Distinguish between spiritual barriers and spiritual weapons.
- Identify fear and ignorance as two of Satan's primary strategies.
- Learn how God's armor equips believers to hold firmly in Christ.

Chapter Overview

Living the Christian life involves continual spiritual conflict. While barriers may hinder our pursuit of God, the enemy also employs intentional weapons designed to weaken faith, distort truth, and distract believers from God's presence. Fear seeks to paralyze obedience. Ignorance clouds discernment. Yet, God has not left His people defenseless. Through His Word, prayer, worship, faith, and the full armor of God, believers are equipped to stand firm and stay anchored in His presence.

Theology Corner: Spiritual Warfare

We must be constantly aware that spiritual warfare is the continuous conflict between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. This battle is not fought by human strength but by dependence on Christ. Jesus has already secured the decisive victory through His death and resurrection. Believers therefore fight from a position of victory, resisting the enemy while remaining firm in faith. Our confidence rests not in our ability, but in Christ's finished work.

Digging Inside Scripture

Ephesians 6:10–18
List the six pieces of the armor of God. Which piece do you most need to strengthen today?

---

2 Timothy 1:7
What spirit has God given His children?

Hosea 4:6
Why were God's people destroyed?

Matthew 4:1–11
How did Jesus respond to every temptation?

Word Study

Stand: Greek: *Histēmi* - meaning to stand firm; to remain unmoved; to hold one's ground. Paul repeatedly uses this word to remind believers that spiritual victory often entails faithful endurance rather than frantic activity. Standing in Christ is an act of confident faith.

Leadership Insight

Spiritual leaders often lose conflicts long before they lose ministries. *When prayer becomes occasional, when worship becomes routine, when Scripture becomes neglected - the enemy quietly gains ground*. Healthy leaders protect their private walk with God because public ministry always reflects private devotion.

Principles of the Kingdom: *The greatest victory in spiritual warfare is remaining faithful in God's presence when distractions urge you to leave it.*

Walking It Out

This week, identify which of these weapons most frequently challenges you.

□ Fear
□ Discouragement
□ Ignorance
□ Distraction
□ Pride
□ Self-reliance
□ Busyness
□ Other: _____

Write one Scripture that directly confronts that struggle.

Individual Reflection

Which one of Satan's tactics have you experienced the most?

_____

When do you become most vulnerable spiritually?

_____

How has fear affected your obedience?

_____

How can you better remain aware of God's presence during difficult seasons?

_____

Spiritual Formation Exercise: Putting on the Armor

Each morning this week, slowly read Ephesians 6:10–18. As you read each piece of armor, pause and pray specifically. Ask God to reveal that He has already clothed you with His truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the power

of His Word. Finish by praying for opportunities to remain faithful throughout the day.

Living the Principle

Choose one recurring spiritual battle. Rather than reacting emotionally, respond intentionally with Scripture, prayer, and worship every time temptation or discouragement arises. Notice how your response changes as you remain in God's presence.

The Collins Principle: The believer who remains closest to Christ becomes the greatest threat to the kingdom of darkness.

Weekly Declaration

Because I belong to Jesus Christ, I reject fear, deception, and discouragement. I stand clothed in the armor of God, strengthened by His Spirit, grounded in His Word, and confident that Christ has already won the victory.

Guided Prayer

Holy Father, I thank You that through Jesus Christ I don't face spiritual battles alone. I ask You to strengthen me to hold fast in Your truth. Help me to resist every scheme of the enemy. Teach me how to remain continually aware of Your presence. Increase my faith, strengthen my understanding of Your Word, and help me answer with fortitude rather than fear. May every battle drive me closer to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

Identify someone who is struggling spiritually. Encourage them this week. Pray with them. Share a passage of Scripture. Remind them that victory does not lie in striving but in abiding in Christ. Become an instrument through whom God strengthens another believer.

From the Shepherd's Heart

One of the enemy's greatest successes is convincing believers that they are fighting alone. Nothing could be further from the truth. Your heavenly Father sees every battle you face. Your Savior knows every temptation. The Holy Spirit hears every cry for help. The Christian life is not about becoming stronger than the enemy. It is about remaining closer to Christ. As you stay near the Shepherd, He will guide you, protect you, and strengthen you. Victory is not found in your determination. It is found in your dependence upon Him.

Worship Response

Read Psalm 91 aloud. Thank God that He is your refuge, your fortress, and your deliverer. Spend time worshiping Him for His faithfulness, His protection, and His unfailing presence.

Gazing Forward

In Session Seven, we will continue exploring the practical disciplines that strengthen our walk with God and deepen our awareness of His presence. We will discover that spiritual maturity is not achieved through isolated experiences, but through daily habits of faithful communion with Christ.

Journal Pages

Where did I experience spiritual opposition this week?

How did God's Word strengthen me?

Where did I remain faithful?

Prayer Requests

Answered Prayers

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 7 - The Enemy's Strategy
Breaking Isolation and Restoring Identity
Companion to Chapter 7 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

When you start this session, keep in mind that God's presence welcomes you just as you are, and that His love never abandons you. Take a few peaceful moments to recognize His closeness. Pray: *"Father I, thank You for the fact that I never walk alone. Open my eyes so that I may see every lie which is trying to draw me away from You and from the identity You have given me in Christ. Restore my confidence in Your truth and strengthen my bond with You, and with Your people. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

Before You Begin

The enemy understands that a believer who remains connected to Christ and His Church becomes increasingly difficult to defeat. Therefore, one of his most effective strategies is not open attack but subtle separation. When we are isolated, we are weakened. Truth reestablishes identity and strength is gained. This session looks at the ways in which Satan employs isolation and a false identity to obstruct spiritual growth and shows how God's presence brings about both a restoration of connection and of confidence.

Opening Scripture: Hebrews 10:24–25 - *"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together...but encouraging one another."*

Main point: *The enemy carries out deception and causes isolation among believers, but the presence of God reestablishes their connection, identity, and strength.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between healthy solitude and destructive isolation.
- Recognize how false identity develops.
- Understand the relationship between biblical community and spiritual growth.
- Strengthen your identity through God's Word and His presence.

Chapter Overview

Spiritual warfare often targets two foundational areas of the Christian life: our connection with God and our understanding of who we are in Christ. When we are isolated, it means that we are cut off from encouragement, accountability, and truth. False identity substitutes Satan's accusations for God's promises, but God's presence restores fellowship, refreshes our minds, and makes us remember that we are chosen, redeemed, forgiven, and empowered through Jesus Christ.

Theology Corner: The Doctrine of Adoption

A great blessing of salvation is being adopted into God's family. Those who believe are not simply people who have had their sins forgiven; they are beloved sons and daughters of God.

- A new Father.
- A new family.
- A new identity.
- A new inheritance

- A new purpose

Because we belong to God's family, we were never intended to live isolated from Him or from one another.

Digging Inside Scripture

Romans 8:14–17
What privileges belong to those who are adopted as God's children?

Hebrews 10:24–25
Why is gathering with other believers so important?

---

1 Kings 19:9–18
How did God correct Elijah's false perception that he was alone?

James 4:7–8
What two actions are believers instructed to take in spiritual warfare?

Word Study

Fellowship: Greek: *Koinōnia* - meaning participation, communion, shared life, partnership. Biblical fellowship is far more than spending time together. It is sharing life in Christ through mutual encouragement, accountability, worship, prayer, and service.

Leadership Insight

Healthy leaders refuse to lead in isolation. Even Paul had companions travelling with him too. Similarly, Jesus had disciples around Him. Being alone leads to discouragement. The biblical community helps to strengthen perseverance.

Wise leaders deliberately develop relationships which encourage spiritual growth.

Principles of the Kingdom: *The enemy isolates to weaken; God connects to strengthen.*

Walking It Out

This week intentionally strengthen one important spiritual relationship. Call someone, pray with someone, or encourage someone. Make one practical move in order to establish a biblical community by writing down what took place. Record what happened.

Individual Reflection

Have you been practicing healthy solitude or drifting.

What false things about yourself have you believed?

Which of the biblical truths is most difficult for you to believe? Why?

Who has God put into your life in order to encourage and support your spiritual journey?

Spiritual Formation

In the morning face the mirror and read out loud three Scriptures which describe your identity in Christ. Thank God that it is His Word and not your feelings which defines who you are. Carry out this practice every day this week.

Living the Principle

Whenever a discouraging thought enters your mind, immediately ask: "Does this agree with what God says about me? "If the answer is no, replace the thought with a specific Scripture. Allow truth, not emotion, to shape your thinking.

The Collins Principle: *The enemy's greatest lies lose their power when they are exposed to God's truth in the light of His presence.*

Weekly Declaration

I belong to Jesus Christ. And because I do, I choose to reject every lie that contradicts God's Word. I choose to live as His beloved child, connected to His family, strengthened by His presence, and confident in the identity He has given me.

Guided Prayer

Father, thank You for adopting me into Your family through Your Son, Jesus Christ. I ask You to forgive me for believing lies that diminish the identity You have given me. I ask You to restore my confidence in Your truth. I ask You to deepen my fellowship with Your people. Help me remain firmly connected to You. Let my life reflect the freedom, joy, and purpose that belong to every child of God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

This week intentionally encourage someone who appears discouraged or isolated. Invite them to pray with you. Share a Scripture that reminds them of their identity in Christ. Become God's instrument of encouragement and restoration.

From the Shepherd's Heart

One of the enemy's oldest lies is convincing believers that they are alone. He whispered it to Elijah. He whispers it today. But isolation is often more about perception than reality. When life becomes difficult, our first instinct is sometimes to withdraw. Yet that is often the very moment we most need God's presence and the encouragement of His people. Remember this: God has not designed you to carry your burdens alone. He has given you His Spirit, His Word, and His Church. Reach toward them rather than retreating from them. Healing often begins with one honest conversation, one sincere prayer, and one courageous step back into fellowship.

Worship Response

Read Psalm 139:1–18 slowly. As you read, thank God that He knows you completely, loves you perfectly, and never abandons you. Spend time worshiping Him for His constant presence and unfailing faithfulness.

Gazing Forward

In Session Eight, we will continue examining the enemy's strategies. We will also learn how God's truth renews the mind and strengthens believers to live confidently in His presence. As our thinking is transformed, our lives will increasingly reflect the character and power of Jesus Christ.

Journal Pages

Where have I experienced isolation?

What truth about my identity encouraged me most?

Who encouraged me this week?

Who did I encourage?

Prayer Requests

Answered Prayers

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 8 - The Inner Battle
Overcoming Immaturity and Emotional Control
Companion to Chapter 8 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

Become still before God. Do not enter this session defensively. The Holy Spirit reveals areas of immaturity not to condemn you, but to heal, mature, and strengthen you. Pray: *"Father, search my heart with mercy and truth. Show me where old wounds, immature patterns, or uncontrolled emotions are influencing my decisions. Give me courage to face what must change and grace to surrender every part of my life to Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

Before You Begin

Some spiritual battles are fought around us. Others are fought within us. The enemy often takes advantage of unresolved pain, insecurity, impulsiveness, anger, fear, and emotional instability. When these areas remain unhealed, ordinary pressures can trigger reactions that damage relationships, interrupt spiritual growth, and draw us away from God's presence. This session is an invitation to grow more spiritually and emotionally mature.

Opening Scripture: *Galatians 5:22–25 - "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control… Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."*

Main Point: *Spiritual maturity allows us to acknowledge our emotions without allowing them to control our decisions.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Recognize patterns of spiritual and emotional immaturity.
- Distinguish between experiencing an emotion and being ruled by it.
- Understand self-control as a fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- Develop practices that replace impulsive reactions with Spirit-led responses.
- Identify unresolved areas that may require prayer, accountability, pastoral care, or professional support.

Chapter Overview

Our enemy doesn't always have to create a new weakness. He often exploits an unresolved one. Fear, rejection, insecurity, lack of discipline, unhealed wounds, and distorted self-image can produce patterns of defensiveness, anger, withdrawal, comparison, impulsiveness, and instability. Spiritual maturity requires us to identify these patterns honestly and submit them to Christ. The goal is not emotional numbness. The goal is emotional stewardship: learning to feel honestly, think biblically, and respond under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Theology Corner: Sanctification and the Whole Person

Sanctification is the lifelong work of God through which believers are increasingly conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. This transformation includes:

- Our thoughts.
- Our desires.

- Our habits.
- Our relationships.
- Our reactions.
- Our emotional responses.

The Holy Spirit does not merely change what we believe. He changes how we live. Maturity occurs as we cooperate with His work through Scripture, prayer, repentance, obedience, accountability, and renewed patterns of thinking.

Digging Inside Scripture

1 Corinthians 13:11
What childish patterns does Paul say must be put away? Which pattern may God be asking you to outgrow?

Proverbs 16:32
Why is ruling one's spirit described as greater than conquering a city?

Ephesians 4:26–27
What warning does Paul give concerning anger?

Galatians 5:16–25
What contrast do you see between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit?

James 1:19–20
What three practices help prevent emotional reactions from becoming destructive?

Word Study

Self-Control: Greek: *Enkrateia*. The word describes mastery, restraint, and the ability to govern one's desires and impulses. Biblical self-control is not coldness or emotional suppression. It is Spirit-enabled stewardship of the inner life. Through the Holy Spirit, we learn to pause before reacting, to test our feelings against the truth, and to choose responses that honor Christ.

Leadership Insight

A leader's unresolved emotions eventually become a burden carried by those they lead. Insecure leaders may try to control. Angry leaders may intimidate. Wounded leaders may misinterpret correction. Immature leaders may abandon responsibilities when ministry becomes uncomfortable. Healthy leaders do not pretend to be emotionless. They recognize their emotions, process them honestly, seek wise counsel, and refuse to make others pay for wounds they have not addressed.

Principles of the Kingdom: *Spiritual authority increases as emotional reactions come under the government of the Holy Spirit.*

Walking It Out

Identify one reaction that repeatedly creates difficulty in your life.

□ Anger
□ Defensiveness
□ Withdrawal
□ Impulsive decisions
□ Fear
□ Jealousy
□ Offense
□ Avoidance
□ Other: _____

Complete these sentences:

I am most likely to react this way when:

The belief beneath this reaction may be:

The biblical truth I need to remember is:

A more mature response would be:

Personal Reflection

Which immature pattern described in this chapter challenged you most?

What emotion most often influence your decisions?

Do you tend to express, suppress, or responsibly process difficult emotions?

How do you normally respond to correction?

Is there unresolved pain that may still be shaping your reactions?

Who could help you walk through this area with wisdom and accountability?

Spiritual Formation Exercise: The Sacred Pause

For the next seven days, practice pausing before responding whenever you feel emotionally triggered. Use this four-step process:

Pause -Do not immediately speak, send the message, make the decision, or walk away.

Pray - Ask: "Holy Spirit, what is happening inside me right now?"

Examine - Identify the emotion and the thought beneath it.

Respond - Choose the action most consistent with Scripture and the character of Christ.

Record at least one experience each day.

Living the Principle

Use this sentence during moments of emotional pressure: *"My feelings are real, but they are not my master. The Holy Spirit leads me, and God's Word governs my response."* When appropriate, delay significant decisions until the intensity of the emotion has passed and you have prayed, examined Scripture, and sought wise counsel.

The Collins Principle: *Maturity is revealed not by the absence of strong emotions, but by the ability to submit them to the truth and leadership of the Holy Spirit.*

Weekly Declaration

I am not controlled by fear, anger, offense, pain, or impulse. The Holy Spirit is producing maturity and self-control within me. I will feel honestly, think biblically, respond wisely, and remain anchored in the presence of God.

Guided Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving all of me - especially the areas that need healing and maturity. I ask You to forgive me for the times I have allowed feelings to govern my words, decisions, and relationships. Reveal the wounds and beliefs beneath my reactions. Reveal in me the fruit of Your Spirit. Especially patience, gentleness, and self-control. Teach me how to respond rather than react. Teach me how to receive correction with humility. And teach me how to remain in Your presence. Give me the courage to ask for help from wise counsel when I need spiritual help and guidance. Form the character of Jesus Christ within me. In His name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

Before the week ends, have one honest conversation with a mature and trustworthy believer. Share one emotional or immature pattern you are seeking to overcome. Ask that person to:

- Pray for you.
- Speak truth to you.
- Hold you accountable.
- Help you recognize progress and recurring triggers.

Maturity grows in truth-filled relationships, not secrecy.

From the Shepherd's Heart

My friend, spiritual maturity is not pretending that nothing bothers you. It is learning what to do when something does. There will be moments when you feel angry, disappointed, rejected, frightened, or overwhelmed. Those feelings do not make you a failure. But they do reveal places where you must invite the Holy Spirit to lead. Do not excuse destructive behavior by saying, "That is just how I am." Christ did not save us merely to forgive our old patterns. He saved us to transform them. Growth may require repentance. It may require an apology. It may require accountability, pastoral care, or professional Christian counseling. None of those are signs of weakness. They are signs that you are serious about becoming whole. Do not be ashamed of the work still required. Remain in His presence and let the Shepherd mature your soul.

Worship Response

Read Psalm 139:23–24 slowly: *"Search me, O God, and know my heart… and lead me in the way everlasting."* Sit quietly before God. Name any emotion or unresolved wound He brings to your attention. Offer it to Him without denial or self-condemnation. Conclude by thanking Him that His correction is evidence of His love.

Gazing Forward

In Session Nine, we will continue examining the strategies that interrupt our awareness of God's presence. We will learn how to recognize destructive patterns, refuse the lies that sustain them, and build new habits rooted in truth, obedience, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Journal Pages

An emotional trigger I recognized this week

The belief beneath my reaction

The truth of Scripture that corrected me

A mature response I practiced

An apology or conversation I need to have

Evidence of the Spirit's growth in me

Prayer Requests

Answered Prayers

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE
Companion Workbook - Volume 1
The Disciples Journey

Session 9 - The Heart Battle
Overcoming Selfishness and Unforgiveness
Companion to Chapter 9 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

Before beginning this session, sit quietly before the Lord. Open your hands as a physical expression of surrender. Ask God to reveal anything you have been gripping too tightly, your preferences, your rights, your pain, your expectations, or an offense against another person. Pray: *"Father, search my heart and reveal anything that competes with Your rule in my life. Give me the humility to surrender selfish motives and the grace to release those who have hurt me. Create in me a clean heart and renew a steadfast spirit within me. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

Before You Begin

Some barriers to God's presence are easy to recognize. While others hide beneath language that sounds reasonable:

- "I deserve better."
- "They owe me."
- "I have every right to feel this way."
- "I will forgive when they apologize."
- "I must protect what I want."

Selfishness and unforgiveness are dangerous because they often feel justified. Yet, both place self at the center and resist the surrender required for spiritual maturity. This session invites us to examine the heart honestly and allow the grace of Christ to free us from both self-rule and bitterness.

Opening Scripture: *Ephesians 4:31–32 - "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."*

Main Point: *A surrendered and forgiving heart remains open to the presence, freedom, and transforming work of God.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Recognize selfishness as a form of self-rule.
- Identify attitudes and behaviors produced by selfish motives.
- Explain why forgiveness is essential to spiritual freedom.
- Distinguish forgiveness from trust, reconciliation, and forgetting.
- Practice surrender and forgiveness as acts of obedience to Christ.

Chapter Overview

The heart is one of the primary battlefields of spiritual warfare. Selfishness removes God from the center and places personal desires, preferences, comfort, and perceived rights above His will. Unforgiveness treats another person's offense as an unpaid debt, allowing hurt to develop into bitterness, division, and bondage. Both selfishness and unforgiveness close the heart. Christ calls His disciples to another way: self-denial, humility, obedience, mercy, and forgiveness.

As we surrender ourselves and release others, our hearts become increasingly aligned with God's presence.

Theology Corner: Forgiveness and the Gospel

Christian forgiveness is rooted in the forgiveness we have received through Jesus Christ. We do not forgive because the offense was insignificant. We forgive because Christ has shown us immeasurable mercy. Forgiveness means releasing personal vengeance and entrusting justice to God. It does not necessarily mean:

- Pretending the wrong never happened.
- Removing wise boundaries.
- Restoring trust immediately.
- Avoiding accountability.
- Remaining in an unsafe situation.

Forgiveness is first an act of obedience and surrender. Emotional healing may continue over time.

Digging Inside Scripture

Philippians 2:3–8
How did Jesus model humility and selflessness? What attitude are believers commanded to adopt?

Luke 9:23–24
What does Jesus teach about self-denial?

Matthew 6:12–15
What connection does Jesus make between receiving and extending forgiveness?

Colossians 3:12–14
What qualities should replace bitterness, pride, and selfishness?

Romans 12:17–21
How are believers instructed to respond to wrongdoing?

Word Study

Forgive: Greek: *Aphiēmi* - meaning, to release, to send away, to let go, to cancel a debt. Biblical forgiveness does not declare that the offense was acceptable. It releases the offender from personal vengeance and places the matter into God's hands. Forgiveness says: "I will no longer allow this debt to govern my heart."

Leadership Insight

Selfish leadership asks:

- How does this affect me?
- Will I receive recognition?
- Does this fit my preference?
- What will I gain?

Shepherd leadership asks:

- What honors Christ?
- What serves the people?
- What protects unity?
- What advances God's purpose?

Unforgiving leaders also create unhealthy cultures. Offenses become grudges, correction becomes retaliation, and relationships become division. A leader must address bitterness quickly because private resentment eventually becomes public harm.

Principles of the Kingdom: *The Kingdom of God advances through surrendered hearts, not defended egos.*

Walking It Out

Complete the following heart examination.

Selfishness
Where have I placed my preference above God's will?

Where have I resisted sacrifice because it was uncomfortable?

Where have I justified an attitude that does not reflect Christ?

Unforgiveness
Whose name immediately comes to mind when I think about hurt or offense?

What debt do I feel that person still owes me?

What would it mean to entrust justice to God?

Personal Reflection

Do you usually approach obedience as a privilege or an obligation?

Which form of selfishness is most difficult for you to recognize?

Have you confused forgiveness with approval, trust, or reconciliation?

What has unforgiveness cost you emotionally, spiritually, or relationally?

What would freedom look like in this area?

Spiritual Formation Exercise: The Open-Handed Prayer

Sit before God with both hands closed. Name what you are holding:

- A right.
- A preference.
- A grievance.
- A desire for revenge.
- A demand for an apology.
- A need to control the outcome.

Slowly open your hands and pray: *"Father, I release this person and this situation into Your hands. I surrender my right to control the outcome. Teach me to forgive as I have been forgiven and to trust You with justice, healing, and restoration."* Repeat this exercise each day as needed.

Living the Principle

This week, practice replacing self-centered questions with Kingdom questions.
Instead of asking: **"**What do I want?" Ask: "What honors God?"
Instead of: "What do they owe me?" Ask: "What has Christ forgiven in me?"
Instead of: "Why should I have to do this?" Ask: "How is obedience opening my heart to greater freedom?"

The Collins Principle: *A heart ruled by self cannot fully rest in God, and a heart holding offense cannot fully enjoy the freedom Christ provides.*

Weekly Declaration

Because I have been forgiven by Jesus Christ, I choose to forgive others. I surrender selfish ambition, personal vengeance, pride, and bitterness. My heart

belongs to God, my life is governed by His Word, and His Spirit is forming humility, mercy, and freedom within me.

Guided Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the mercy You have shown me through Jesus Christ. Forgive me for the times I have placed myself, my preferences, and my perceived rights above Your will. Reveal every trace of pride, selfishness, bitterness, and unforgiveness within me. Give me grace to release those who have hurt me and wisdom to establish healthy boundaries where necessary. Heal the wounds that remain, guard my heart from resentment, and teach me to walk in the humility and mercy of Christ. May my heart remain open, surrendered, and fully aligned with Your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

Take one concrete step toward freedom this week. This step may include:

- Writing a prayer of release.
- Asking God to bless the person who hurt you.
- Confessing selfishness to someone you trust.
- Offering a sincere apology.
- Seeking pastoral counsel.
- Establishing a wise boundary without bitterness.
- Beginning a safe, appropriate conversation toward reconciliation.

Do not force reconciliation where there is danger, manipulation, or ongoing abuse. Seek wise pastoral and professional counsel when necessary.

From the Shepherd's Heart

My friend, unforgiveness often feels like strength because it keeps the offense in our hands. In reality, it keeps the offense in our hearts. Forgiveness does not excuse what happened. It refuses to let what happened continue governing your inner life. You may need to forgive more than once, not because your first decision was insincere, but because healing often comes in layers. Each time the memory returns, place the debt back into God's hands. The same is true of selfishness. Dying to self is not a single dramatic moment. It is a daily decision to let Christ occupy the center. You will not lose yourself by surrendering to Him. You will finally become the person His grace intended you to be.

Worship Response

Read Psalm 51:10–12 slowly. *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."* Ask God to cleanse your motives and soften every hardened place. Then read Colossians 3:12–15 aloud as a declaration of the character He is forming within you. Spend several minutes thanking Christ for His forgiveness.

Gazing Forward

In Session Ten, we will continue examining the forces that compete for the heart and mind. We will learn how spiritual compromise begins, how divided loyalties weaken our awareness of God's presence, and how wholehearted surrender restores clarity, strength, and obedience.

Journal Pages

Where did selfishness appear in my attitudes this week?

What preference or right did I surrender?

Whom am I choosing to forgive?

What boundary, conversation, or next step may be needed?

What did God reveal about my heart?

Evidence of greater freedom

Prayer Requests

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 10 - Under Pressure
Overcoming Complaint and Despair
Companion to Chapter 10 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

As you begin this session, bring every burden, disappointment, and unanswered question before the Lord. You do not have to pretend that life is easy. God already knows your struggles, and He invites you to meet Him in the middle of them. Pray: *"Father, I choose to meet You before I react to my circumstances. Search my heart and reveal what pressure is producing within me. Teach me to respond with faith instead of complaint and with hope instead of despair. May Your presence become my refuge and strength. In Jesus' name, Amen."*
Remain silent for a few moments, inviting the Holy Spirit to quiet your heart.

Before You Begin

Pressure is one of life's greatest revealing agents. It exposes what we truly believe, where our confidence rests, and whether our hearts are anchored in God's promises or in changing circumstances. The enemy often uses seasons of pressure to tempt believers toward complaining, discouragement, and hopelessness. Yet God uses those same seasons to deepen faith, strengthen character, and draw us more deeply into His presence. This session will help you recognize the difference between reacting to pressure and responding through faith.

Opening Scripture: *Psalm 46:1 -"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

Big Idea: *Pressure reveals what rules the heart, but God's presence transforms pressure into an opportunity for praise, hope, and spiritual growth.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Understand how pressure exposes spiritual condition.
- Recognize complaint as a heart posture rather than merely negative speech.
- Distinguish between despair and biblical hope.
- Learn how praise redirects the heart toward God's presence.
- Develop practical habits for responding faithfully under pressure.

Chapter Overview

Every believer will experience pressure. The question is never whether pressure will come. The question is how we will respond when it does. Complaints magnify problems while minimizing God's faithfulness. Despair whispers that nothing will ever change. Faith chooses another path. Rather than allowing circumstances to define reality, believers anchor themselves in God's character, His promises, and His continual presence. Pressure becomes the place where faith is refined rather than destroyed.

Theology Corner: Hope as a Spiritual Discipline

Biblical hope is not wishful thinking. It is confident expectation rooted in the character and promises of God. Throughout Scripture, God's people experienced intense opposition, disappointment, suffering, and uncertainty. Yet, they continually returned to one unchanging truth: God is faithful. Hope declares:

- God is still working.

- God's promises remain true.
- God's timing is perfect.
- God's presence has not abandoned me.
- God's purposes will prevail.

Hope grows as we remember God's faithfulness and remain in His presence.

Digging Into Scripture

James 1:2–4
What does God produce through trials?

Philippians 2:14–16
Why does Paul command believers to do everything without complaining?

Psalm 42:5
How did the psalmist respond when his soul became discouraged?

Romans 5:3–5
What progression does suffering produce in the life of the believer?

Psalm 30:5
What promise does God give concerning seasons of sorrow?

Word Study

Hope: Greek: *Elpis* - Hope is confident expectation. It is not uncertainty. It is the settled confidence that God will remain faithful to His promises regardless of present circumstances. Biblical hope anchors the soul during seasons of pressure.

Leadership Insight

Pressure does not create leaders. Pressure reveals them. When pressure increases, followers watch carefully. Will their leader complain? Will they panic, or will they continue to trust God? Leaders who remain anchored in God's presence become stabilizing influences for everyone around them.

Principles of the Kingdom: *Praise keeps the heart fixed on God's faithfulness, while pressure attempts to fix it on present problems.*

Walking It Out

This week, whenever you feel pressure, pause before speaking. Ask yourself:

- Am I about to magnify the problem or magnify God?
- Will my words strengthen faith or strengthen fear?
- Does what I am about to say reflect trust or complaint?

Write one pressure-filled situation from this week.

_____

How did you respond?

_____

How could you respond differently next time?

_____

Individual Reflection

What circumstances most often tempt you toward complaint?

_____

How do you usually respond when expectations are not met?

_____

When have you seen God work through a difficult season?

_____

What truth from God's Word gives you hope today?

Spiritual Formation Exercise: Replacing Complaint with Praise

Each evening this week, write down: Three evidences of God's faithfulness. Three reasons to praise Him. One area where you are choosing faith instead of complaint. Spend five minutes thanking God aloud before ending your day. Allow gratitude to reshape your perspective.

Living the Principle

Choose one ongoing source of pressure. Instead of talking about the difficulty first, intentionally begin every conversation about that situation by mentioning one piece of evidence of God's goodness. Train your heart to begin with gratitude before describing the challenge.

The Collins Principle: *Complaint magnifies the problem. Praise magnifies God. Whatever you magnify will shape your perspective.*

Weekly Declaration

Because Jesus Christ is faithful, I refuse to allow pressure to produce complaint or hopelessness. I choose praise over grumbling, hope over despair, and faith over fear. God's presence is my refuge, His promises are my confidence, and His victory is my future.

Guided Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for being my refuge in every season of life. Forgive me for the times I have allowed pressure to produce complaint instead of praise. Strengthen my faith so that my circumstances never become greater than my confidence in You. Fill my heart with hope, remind me of Your faithfulness, and teach me to worship You before I see the answer. May every trial deepen my dependence upon You and draw me into greater awareness of Your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

Choose one difficult situation that has tempted you to complain. For the next seven days:

- Refuse to complain about it.
- Pray about it daily.
- Thank God for His faithfulness.
- Speak words of hope instead of frustration.
- Encourage someone else who is under pressure.

Watch how your perspective begins to change as your heart remains fixed on God's presence.

From the Shepherd's Heart

Pressure has a way of exposing what comfort can hide. Some of the greatest lessons I have learned about God's faithfulness did not come during seasons of ease but during seasons when I had no choice but to trust Him. Looking back, I realize that those difficult days became sacred classrooms where the Lord taught me dependence, perseverance, and hope. Do not waste your pressure. Bring it into God's presence. Allow it to deepen your worship rather than diminish it. Let it produce compassion instead of cynicism. Let it strengthen your confidence that the God who has carried you in the past will remain faithful in the future. Remember, pressure is temporary, but the character God develops through it has eternal value.

Worship Response

Read Psalm 34 slowly. Underline every statement that describes God's faithfulness in times of trouble. Spend several minutes thanking Him for each one. Conclude by singing or listening to a worship song that celebrates God's faithfulness.

Gazing Forward

In Session Eleven, we will continue exploring the practical disciplines that protect our fellowship with God as we learn how steadfast faith, disciplined thinking, and daily obedience keep us abiding in His presence regardless of life's circumstances.

Journal Pages

What pressure revealed about my heart

Ways God proved faithful this week

Three reasons to praise Him today

Where I chose hope instead of complaint

Prayer Requests

Answered Prayers

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 11 - His Presence Activated
Living a Life Empowered by His Presence
Companion to Chapter 11 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

As you begin this session, remember that God's desire is not simply for you to know about His presence but to live daily empowered by it. Quiet your heart. Invite the Holy Spirit to make His presence active in every area of your life. Pray: *"Holy Spirit, awaken within me a greater awareness of Your presence. Move beyond information and into transformation. Empower my thoughts, my words, my decisions, and my leadership so that every part of my life reflects Jesus Christ. I surrender myself completely to You today. Amen."* Remain quiet before the Lord for several moments.

Before You Begin

Many believers possess great spiritual potential, but never fully experience the life God intends because they remain spiritually passive. God's presence is not meant to remain dormant. It is meant to become active. As the Holy Spirit fills, teaches, convicts, empowers, and leads us, ordinary believers become faithful disciples who influence their homes, churches, workplaces, and communities for Christ. This session explores what it means to move from merely knowing about God's presence to living continually empowered by it.

Opening Scripture: *Exodus 33:15 -"If Your presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here."*

Main Point: *God's presence is not merely something we experience; it is the source from which we live, lead, love, and serve.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Explain what it means to live an activated life in God's presence.
- Recognize the relationship between intimacy, obedience, favor, and spiritual maturity.
- Understand why God's presence is essential for leadership.
- Develop practical habits that keep the Holy Spirit central to daily life.

Chapter Overview

Moses understood that God's presence was not an optional blessing but the distinguishing characteristic of God's people. Without His presence, leadership becomes exhausting. Without His presence, ministry becomes mechanical. Without His presence, knowledge becomes information rather than transformation. When God's presence becomes active within us, our influence expands, our obedience deepens, our discernment increases, and our lives become instruments through which Christ accomplishes His purposes.

Theology Corner: The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is not merely an influence or a source of power. He is the third Person of the Trinity, who dwells within every believer. The Holy Spirit:

- Glorifies Christ.
- Convicts of sin.
- Illuminates Scripture.

- Produces spiritual fruit.
- Empowers service.
- Guides believers into truth.
- Conforms us to the image of Christ.

Living an activated life means learning to walk in continual dependence upon the Holy Spirit rather than relying upon personal strength.

Digging Inside Scripture

Exodus 33:12–17
Why did Moses refuse to move forward without God's presence?

John 10:27
What characterizes Christ's sheep?

Galatians 5:25
What does it mean to "keep in step with the Spirit"?

John 15:4–5
Why is abiding in Christ essential for fruitful living?

Acts 1:8
What purpose accompanies the empowering work of the Holy Spirit?

Word Study

Abide: Greek: Menō- meaning to remain, to dwell, to continue, to stay connected. Abiding is not a temporary spiritual experience. It is the continual lifestyle of remaining in close fellowship with Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Leadership Insight

Leadership without God's presence often depends upon personality. Leadership empowered by God's presence depends upon surrender. The most influential Christian leaders are not necessarily the most gifted. They are the most yielded. People may admire giftedness. But they are transformed by leaders whose lives consistently reflect Christ's presence.

Principles of the Kingdom: *God's greatest work is accomplished through believers who continually yield themselves to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.*

Walking It Out

Evaluate the following areas of your life. Am I consciously inviting the Holy Spirit to lead me in...

□ My family
□ My work
□ My ministry
□ My conversations
□ My decisions
□ My finances
□ My private life

Choose one area where you will intentionally seek God's direction this week.

Personal Reflection

Where have you been relying upon your own strength instead of God's presence?

_____

What area of leadership most needs the Holy Spirit's guidance?

_____

How has intimacy with God shaped your decisions recently?

What does spiritual maturity currently look like in your life?

Spiritual Formation Exercise: Practicing Continual Awareness

Set three reminders throughout your day. When each reminder appears, stop for one minute. Quietly pray: *"Holy Spirit, lead me. Help me remain aware of Your presence in this moment."* Notice how this simple practice begins cultivating continual fellowship rather than occasional awareness.

Living the Principle

Before every significant decision this week, ask three questions:

1. Does this honor Christ?
2. Is this consistent with God's Word?
3. Am I sensing the Holy Spirit's peace and guidance?

Allow these questions to become a daily rhythm of spiritual discernment.

The Collins Principle: *God's presence was never intended to be an occasional experience. It is meant to become the continual atmosphere in which every believer lives, serves, and leads.*

Weekly Declaration

Because the Holy Spirit lives within me, I choose to walk in continual fellowship with Him. I will lead with humility, serve with love, obey with joy, and trust His

guidance in every decision. God's presence empowers my life, directs my steps, and equips me to glorify Jesus Christ.

Guided Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit. Forgive me for the times I have depended upon my own understanding rather than seeking Your guidance. Teach me to recognize Your voice, follow Your leading, and remain continually aware of Your presence. May every decision I make, every conversation I have, and every responsibility I carry be surrendered to You. Activate within me a life that consistently reflects the character and power of Jesus Christ. In His name I pray, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

Choose one area where you regularly rely on experience rather than prayer. For the next seven days:

- Pray before acting.
- Seek Scripture before deciding.
- Listen before speaking.
- Worship before worrying.

Record how your perspective changes as you intentionally invite the Holy Spirit into that area.

From the Shepherd's Heart

One of the greatest dangers in ministry is becoming skilled enough to function without consciously depending upon God. Experience can become a substitute for intimacy if we are not careful. Moses understood something every disciple must eventually learn: success without God's presence is not success at all. Every meaningful work of God begins with His presence and continues through our daily

dependence upon Him. The Holy Spirit is not asking you to become more impressive; He is inviting you to become more surrendered. As you yield yourself day by day, you will discover that true spiritual power is found not in striving harder but in abiding more deeply. Never lose your dependence upon the One who called you. His presence is not simply what begins the journey; it is what sustains it until the very end.

Worship Response

Read Exodus 33:12–23 slowly. Notice Moses' desire not merely to receive God's blessings, but to know God's presence. Spend time thanking the Lord that through Christ you have continual access to Him. Conclude by singing or listening to a worship song that celebrates surrender, holiness, and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Gazing Forward

In Session Twelve, we will discover that God's presence is not only meant to transform our private lives but also to shape how we influence others. As His presence becomes increasingly active within us, our lives become channels through which Christ builds His Church and advances His Kingdom.

Journal Pages

Where did I intentionally seek the Holy Spirit's guidance?

How did I experience God's presence today?

One area where I surrendered control

A decision I placed before the Lord

Prayer Requests

Answered Prayers

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 12 - The Great Exchange
From Performance to Presence
Companion to Chapter 12 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

Before beginning this session, lay aside every desire to impress God or others. God is not inviting you to perform for Him. He is inviting you to walk with Him. Pray: *"Father, I surrender every attempt to earn what You have already provided through Jesus Christ. Remove every performance-driven attitude from my heart. Teach me to seek Your presence above success, recognition, or accomplishment. May my greatest desire be to know You and walk with You. In Jesus' name, Amen."* Remain quietly before the Lord for several moments.

Before You Begin

One of Satan's greatest deceptions is not convincing believers to reject God. It is convincing them that activity can replace intimacy. Busy ministry can substitute for abiding. Programs can substitute for prayer. Performance can substitute for presence. Yet, throughout Scripture, God's people were never distinguished primarily by what they accomplished, but by the presence of God among them. This session invites us to examine whether we are pursuing God's approval through performance or enjoying fellowship through His presence.

Opening Scripture: *Exodus 33:15 -"If Your presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here."*

Main Point: *The greatest measure of spiritual success is not what we accomplish for God, but whether we continually walk in His presence.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between performance-driven Christianity and presence-centered discipleship.
- Recognize counterfeit substitutes for God's presence.
- Understand biblical rest as trustful dependence upon God.
- Redefine success according to Scripture.
- Develop habits that prioritize intimacy over activity.

Chapter Overview

The enemy often replaces God's best with convincing substitutes. Performance replaces presence. Popularity replaces obedience. Activity replaces intimacy. These substitutes may appear successful for a season, yet they cannot produce the life, power, peace, and transformation that only God's presence provides. Moses understood that no amount of progress could compensate for the absence of God's presence. The mature disciple learns the same lesson.

Theology Corner: Rest in the Presence of God

Biblical rest is not inactivity. It is confident dependence upon God. Jesus invites His followers to cease striving for acceptance and instead abide in Him. True rest includes:

- Trust instead of anxiety.
- Obedience instead of self-effort.

- Peace instead of pressure.
- Dependence instead of self-sufficiency.
- Fellowship instead of performance.

God's presence becomes the place where weary hearts find renewed strength and clear direction.

Digging Inside Scripture

Exodus 33:12–17
Why was Moses unwilling to continue without God's presence?

Matthew 11:28–30
What kind of rest does Jesus promise?

John 15:1–8
What happens when believers abide in Christ?

Isaiah 6:1–8
How did encountering God's holiness transform Isaiah?

---

2 Timothy 3:5
What warning does Paul give concerning a form of godliness without power?

Word Study

Rest: Greek: *Anapausis* - meaning - refreshing, relief, renewal. A place of quiet confidence. Biblical rest is not passive inactivity. It is the settled confidence that comes from trusting God's leadership and remaining in His presence.

Leadership Insight

Healthy leaders never confuse activity with fruitfulness. They understand that successful ministry flows from abiding in Christ rather than constant striving. Leaders who remain in God's presence lead from overflow rather than exhaustion. Their influence is sustained because it is rooted in communion rather than performance.

Principles of the Kingdom: *God measures faithfulness by obedience and intimacy, not by visible success alone.*

Walking It Out

Evaluate the following statements honestly. I spend more time...

□ Preparing for ministry than preparing my heart.
□ Talking about God than listening to God.
□ Working for God than resting in God.
□ Serving Christ while neglecting fellowship with Christ.

Which statement challenged you most?
What practical adjustment will you make this week?

Individual Reflection

When are you most tempted to become performance-driven?

How do you personally define success?

Have you confused busyness with fruitfulness?

What helps you experience genuine rest in God's presence?

Spiritual Formation Exercise: Practicing Holy Rest

Choose one uninterrupted thirty-minute period this week. Leave your phone aside. Open your Bible. Read slowly. Pray quietly. Sit silently before the Lord. Resist the temptation to accomplish anything. Simply enjoy fellowship with Him. Record what you experienced afterward.

Living the Principle

Throughout this week, whenever you begin feeling hurried or pressured, stop and ask yourself:

- Am I striving or abiding?
- Am I trying to impress God or simply walk with Him?
- Am I trusting His presence or depending upon my performance?

Allow these questions to redirect your heart toward Christ.

The Collins Principle: *God never called us to build impressive lives apart from Him. He calls us to build abiding lives through Him.*

Weekly Declaration

Because Jesus Christ has invited me into continual fellowship with Him, I reject performance-driven living. I choose intimacy over activity, obedience over popularity, rest over striving, and God's presence over every substitute the world offers.

Guided Prayer

Heavenly Father, forgive me for the times I have measured my life by accomplishments rather than intimacy with You. Deliver me from every

counterfeit that competes for my heart. Teach me to seek Your presence before pursuing success and to value obedience above recognition. Help me find true rest in Christ and allow every area of my life to be built according to Your design. May my greatest joy always be walking with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

This week, intentionally remove one unnecessary activity from your schedule. Use that time to pursue God through prayer, worship, Scripture, or quiet reflection. At week's end, journal how slowing down affected your awareness of God's presence.

From the Shepherd's Heart

One of the easiest traps in ministry is believing that doing more for God automatically means walking more closely with God. The two are not always the same. There have been seasons when I found myself busy serving Christ while neglecting to simply enjoy Christ. The Lord patiently reminded me that He first called disciples to be *with Him* before He sent them out to minister (Mark 3:14). Never allow ministry to replace intimacy. Never allow productivity to replace prayer. Never allow applause to replace approval from your Heavenly Father. The greatest legacy you will leave is not the number of things you accomplished, but the depth of your walk with Jesus.

Worship Response

Read Psalm 23 slowly. After each verse, pause and thank the Lord for one way He has shepherded your life. Finish by quietly repeating: *"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. "*Allow His peace to settle your heart.

Gazing Forward

In Session Thirteen, we will discover that the presence of God not only transforms our personal walk but also shapes how we influence others. As we learn to abide more deeply in Christ, our lives become living testimonies that point people to His Kingdom rather than ourselves.

Journal Pages

Areas where I have been striving instead of abiding

Ways I experienced God's presence this week

One activity I released to make room for God

What God revealed to me during quiet rest

Prayer Requests

Answered Prayers

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 13 - The Evidence of His Presence
Marked, Distinguished, and Empowered
Companion to Chapter 13 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

Before beginning this session, quiet your heart before the Lord. Ask Him not merely to reveal His presence to you, but to allow His presence to become evident through you. Pray: *"Father, I desire more than religious activity. I desire a life that bears unmistakable evidence of Your presence. Shape my character, guide my steps, and let my life reflect Your glory so that others may see Christ in me. In Jesus' name, Amen."* Spend a few moments resting quietly before Him.

Before You Begin

Movement is not always progress. Busyness is not always fruitfulness. Activity is not always spiritual maturity. Many believers mistake motion for transformation. But Scripture teaches that God's people are distinguished not merely by what they do, but by Who goes with them. God's presence becomes the defining evidence that our lives belong to Him. This session explores what it means to live as men and women who are unmistakably marked by the presence of God.

Opening Scripture: *Exodus 33:16–17 -"Is it not in Your going with us, so that we are distinct... from every other people on the face of the earth?"*

Main Point: *The unmistakable evidence of God's presence is a transformed life that reflects His character, carries His authority, and advances His Kingdom.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between activity and spiritual alignment.
- Understand how God's presence authenticates the believer's life.
- Recognize the marks of a life distinguished by God's presence.
- Learn practical ways to prepare your heart daily for God's presence.
- Live with confidence rooted in God's approval rather than human recognition.

Chapter Overview

Throughout Scripture, God's people were distinguished by one defining characteristic: God was with them. His presence gave them courage. His presence gave them wisdom. His presence opened doors. His presence transformed ordinary people into extraordinary servants of God. The greatest evidence of His presence is not outward success, but inward transformation that produces lasting Kingdom influence.

Theology Corner: The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit

Every authentic believer has been sealed by the Holy Spirit. His indwelling presence is both a gift and a guarantee of our inheritance in Christ. The Holy Spirit:

- Confirms our identity.
- Produces Christlike character.
- Empowers faithful service.
- Gives spiritual discernment.
- Enables holy living.

- Bears witness that we belong to God.

As we continually yield to His leadership, His presence becomes increasingly evident through our lives.

Digging Inside Scripture

Exodus 33:16–17
According to Moses, what distinguished Israel from every other nation?

Exodus 11:7
Why did God establish a distinction between Egypt and Israel?

Matthew 5:14–16
How should believers allow God's work to become visible?

Galatians 5:22–23
Which fruit of the Spirit most needs to grow in your life?

Ephesians 1:13–14
What does it mean to be sealed with the Holy Spirit?

Word Study

Distinct: The Hebrew idea behind distinction conveys the thought of being separated, set apart, recognized, and made different for God's purposes. God does not separate His people to isolate them from the world. He distinguishes them so they may reveal His character to the world.

Leadership Insight

The strongest evidence of leadership is not position. It is influence born from integrity. People may initially follow talent. But they remain because they trust character. Leaders who consistently abide in God's presence demonstrate:

- Humility.
- Wisdom.
- Peace.
- Compassion.
- Integrity.
- Consistency.

These qualities authenticate their influence far more than titles or accomplishments.

Principles of the Kingdom: *God's presence is the distinguishing mark of every faithful disciple and every effective spiritual leader.*

Walking It Out

Evaluate the following statements. When people observe my life, do they consistently see:

□ Peace under pressure
□ Humility
□ Integrity
□ Joy
□ Compassion
□ Faithfulness
□ Dependence upon God

Which area in your life most reflects Christ?

_____

Which area most needs growth?

_____

Individual Reflection

Do you seek God's approval more than public approval?

How has God's presence changed your character over the past year?

Where have you mistaken activity for spiritual growth?

In what ways has God distinguished your life for His purposes?

Spiritual Formation Exercise: Living as a Witness

Each morning this week pray: *"Lord, let someone see Jesus in me today.* "At the end of each day, journal: Where did I reflect Christ well? Where do I need His grace tomorrow? How did I become more aware of His presence?

Living the Principle

Choose one ordinary activity this week:

- Going to work.
- Grocery shopping.
- Family dinner.
- Church service.
- Serving someone in need.

Approach that activity intentionally as a representative of Christ. Ask yourself: How would someone marked by God's presence handle this moment?

The Collins Principle: *God's presence is not merely something we experience; it is the evidence by which the world recognizes that we belong to Him.*

Weekly Declaration

I have been set apart by Jesus Christ and sealed by His Holy Spirit. His presence distinguishes my life, strengthens my faith, shapes my character, and authenticates my calling. I will seek His approval above all others and live each day as evidence of His transforming grace.

Guided Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for making me Your own through Jesus Christ. Thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit, who lives within me and marks me as Your child. Help me to pursue Your approval above human recognition. Form within me the character of Christ so that my life reflects Your holiness, compassion, humility, and truth. May every conversation, every decision, and every opportunity reveal that You are with me. Let my life become undeniable evidence of Your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

Ask one mature believer this week: "What evidence of God's work do you consistently see in my life?" Receive their answer with humility. Then ask: *"Where do you believe God still desires to transform me?"* Pray over what you hear and invite the Holy Spirit to continue His work within you.

From the Shepherd's Heart

One of the greatest compliments a believer can receive is not, "You are talented," or "You are successful. "It is this: "I can tell you have been with Jesus." That was

the testimony of the early disciples. They were ordinary men whose extraordinary distinction was the presence of Christ working through them. The same can be true for us. You do not have to manufacture influence or prove your worth. As you faithfully walk with the Lord, His presence will become increasingly evident in your words, your decisions, your relationships, and your character. People may forget your accomplishments, but they will remember the Christ they encountered through your life. Remain in His presence, and let Him make the distinction.

Worship Response

Read Psalm 84 slowly. Underline every expression of longing for God's presence. Spend time thanking Him that, through Christ, His presence is no longer distant, but continually available. Close by singing or listening to a worship song that celebrates God's faithfulness and abiding presence.

Gazing Forward

In Session Fourteen, we will discover how God's presence not only marks us personally, but also empowers us to influence others with wisdom, courage, and love. As we continue abiding in Christ, His presence becomes the source of lasting Kingdom impact.

Journal Pages

Evidence of God's presence I noticed this week

One area where God is transforming my character

A conversation where I reflected Christ well

One area where I desire greater spiritual maturity

Prayer Requests

Answered Prayer

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 14 - A Case for His Presence
From Pain to Transformation
Companion to Chapter 14 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

As you begin this session, come honestly before the Lord. There is no need to hide your wounds, disappointments, failures, or questions. God already knows them. Today, invite Him to do more than comfort you. Invite Him to transform you. Pray: *"Father, I refuse to hide behind appearances. I bring every hurt, disappointment, fear, and struggle into Your presence. Shine Your light into every hidden place of my heart. Heal what is broken, strengthen what is weak, and transform me into the person You created me to become. In Jesus' name, Amen."* Remain quietly before Him.

Before You Begin

Pain changes people. The question is: Will pain harden us or transform us? Many people spend years managing pain without ever allowing God to heal its source. Some bury it beneath activity. Others hide it behind success. Still others distract themselves with entertainment, busyness, or religious routine. But God never intended His children merely to manage pain. He invites us into His presence where healing, renewal, and transformation begin.

Opening Scripture: *1 Samuel 10:6 -"Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you... and you shall be turned into another man."*

Main Point: *God's presence does not merely comfort wounded people - it transforms them into the people He created them to become.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Recognize the difference between managing pain and allowing God to heal it.
- Understand how God's presence produces transformation.
- Explain the relationship between spiritual maturity and integrity.
- Embrace God's refining work during seasons of difficulty.
- Commit to living a life of continual transformation.

Chapter Overview

Pain is unavoidable. Remaining wounded is not. Throughout Scripture, God consistently met people at their deepest point of need, not merely to relieve their suffering, but to transform their lives. Saul encountered God's Spirit and became another man. David encountered God's mercy and became a worshiper. Peter encountered God's grace and became a shepherd. The same God continues transforming lives today through His abiding presence.

Theology Corner: Sanctification - God's Transforming Work

The Christian life is more than forgiveness. It is transformation. Through the Holy Spirit, God progressively shapes believers into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This lifelong work includes:

- Renewing the mind.
- Healing the heart.

- Forming Christlike character.
- Producing spiritual maturity.
- Preparing believers for faithful service.

Transformation is not self-improvement. It is God's work within surrendered people.

Digging Inside Scripture

1 Samuel 10:1–9
What changes occurred after the Spirit of God came upon Saul?

Romans 12:1–2
How does God transform the believer?

James 1:2–4
What does perseverance ultimately produce?

Hebrews 6:1
Why are believers encouraged to move toward maturity?

Psalm 41:12
What relationship exists between integrity and God's presence?

Word Study

Transform: Greek: *Metamorphoō* - meaning to change in form. To be completely transformed. To undergo inward change that becomes outwardly visible. Biblical transformation begins within the heart and eventually affects every area of life.

Leadership Insight

People do not follow perfect leaders. They follow authentic leaders. Leaders who have allowed God to transform their wounds often become the most compassionate shepherds. Our greatest ministry frequently grows out of the places where God has healed us. Transformation gives credibility to leadership.

Principles of the Kingdom: *God rarely wastes our pain. He uses surrendered pain to produce Christlike character and Kingdom purpose.*

Walking It Out

Identify one area where you have been managing pain instead of surrendering it to God. How have you attempted to cope with it?

□ Busyness
□ Entertainment
□ Withdrawal
□ Control
□ Anger
□ Religious activity
□ Other

What would surrendering this area to Christ look like?

Individual Reflection

What painful experience has most shaped your life?

How has God demonstrated His faithfulness through that season?

Where do you still need His healing?

How has suffering produced spiritual growth within you?

Spiritual Formation Exercise: Bringing Pain into His Presence

Set aside twenty uninterrupted minutes. Read Psalm 139 slowly. Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal any hidden wound, fear, resentment, or disappointment. Write honestly about what He brings to your attention. End your time by thanking Him that His purpose is restoration rather than condemnation.

Living the Principle

Whenever painful memories surface this week, resist the temptation to suppress them. Instead pray: *"Lord, what do You want to teach me through this? How can this experience become part of my testimony instead of remaining part of my bondage?*" Allow every painful memory to become an invitation into God's presence.

The Collins Principle: *Pain surrendered to God becomes the birthplace of transformation, while pain hidden from God becomes the breeding ground of spiritual stagnation.*

Weekly Declaration

Because Jesus Christ is making all things new, I refuse to allow pain to define my future. I bring every wound into God's presence, trust His transforming work, and receive His grace to become the person He has called me to be. His light is exposing darkness, His truth is renewing my mind, and His Spirit is changing me from the inside out.

Guided Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for meeting me in every season of pain. Forgive me for the times I have tried to manage what only You can heal. Shine the light of Your truth into every hidden place of my heart. Remove every false belief, every lingering wound, and every pattern that keeps me from fully following You. Form within me the character of Jesus Christ. Let my pain become part of my testimony and my weakness become a place where Your strength is revealed. Thank You that You are not merely improving me, but you are transforming me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

This week, choose one trusted believer, a pastor, mentor, small group leader, or mature Christian friend, and share one area where you are asking God to bring deeper healing and transformation. Invite that person to:

- Pray with you.
- Encourage you.
- Walk with you.
- Hold you accountable as God continues His work in your life.

Transformation flourishes in the light.

From the Shepherd's Heart

My friend, one of the enemy's greatest lies is that your pain is the end of your story. God says otherwise. Throughout Scripture, the Lord repeatedly took wounded people and entrusted them with extraordinary purpose, not because they were strong, but because they surrendered themselves to Him. The places where you have suffered may become the very places where God displays His grace most powerfully. Do not hide your wounds from the Great Physician. Bring them into His presence. His healing may not always be instantaneous, but it is always intentional. And remember: God is not simply restoring what was lost.

He is shaping who you are becoming.

Worship Response

Read Psalm 27 slowly. Underline every reference to God's presence, protection, and faithfulness. Spend time thanking Him for the ways He has carried you through difficult seasons. Close your time by quietly singing or listening to a worship song centered on God's healing and faithfulness.

Gazing Forward

In Session Fifteen, we will conclude our journey by exploring the lifelong calling to abide in God's presence. We will discover that practicing His presence is not a temporary spiritual exercise, but the continual lifestyle of every faithful disciple who desires to glorify Christ.

Journal Pages

One area I surrendered to God today

What God revealed about my heart

How He is transforming my life

One testimony of His faithfulness

Prayer Requests

Answered Prayers

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Companion Workbook - Volume 1

The Disciples Journey

Session 15 - The Passion and the Proof
Living Under His Protection, Prosperity, and Purity
Companion to Chapter 15 of Practicing His Presence - Volume 1

Prepare the Sanctuary

It is the beginning of a lifestyle. Take a few quiet moments to remember where God has brought you throughout this journey. Thank Him for every lesson, every conviction, every moment of worship, every answer to prayer, and every step of growth. Pray: *"Father, thank You for revealing Yourself to me throughout this journey. Rekindle my passion for Your presence. Guard my heart from distraction, complacency, and spiritual dullness. Let my life continually reflect Your holiness, Your peace, and Your power. I choose today to practice Your presence for the rest of my life. In Jesus' name, Amen."* Remain quietly before the Lord.

Before You Begin

Every relationship is sustained by intentional pursuit. Our relationship with God is no different. Passion fades when presence is neglected. Purity weakens when passion cools. Protection is forgotten when dependence disappears. The Christian life is not maintained by yesterday's experience. It is renewed through today's surrender. This final session calls us back to wholehearted devotion.

Opening Scripture: *Psalm 31:19–20 -"How great is Your goodness... In the shelter of Your presence, You hide them..."*

Main Point: *A life passionately devoted to God's presence will increasingly reflect His protection, prosperity, purity, and power.*

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

- Understand the relationship between passion and God's presence.
- Explain biblical protection, prosperity, and purity.
- Recognize the importance of continual spiritual renewal.
- Commit to practicing God's presence as a lifelong discipline.
- Develop a personal plan for continuing your spiritual growth.

Chapter Overview

God's presence changes everything. It protects. It prospers. It purifies. It transforms. Yet, these blessings are not isolated experiences. They flow from an ongoing relationship with God. The believer who continually abides in Christ, finds strength during adversity, wisdom in uncertainty, joy in every season, and increasing conformity to the image of Jesus. The goal is not occasional encounters. The goal is a lifetime of abiding.

Theology Corner: Abiding Until Christ Returns

The Christian life is not measured by a single spiritual experience. It is measured by faithful perseverance. Jesus repeatedly called His followers to remain, continue, endure, and abide. The Holy Spirit continually invites believers into:

- Daily repentance.
- Daily dependence.
- Daily obedience.

- Daily worship.
- Daily fellowship.

Practicing God's presence is not an event. It is the lifelong rhythm of discipleship.

Digging Inside Scripture

Psalm 31:19–20
Where does David say God's protection is found?

Joshua 1:6–9
How are obedience and prosperity connected?

Psalm 51:10–11
Why did David connect a pure heart with God's presence?

Jude 24–25
What assurance does God give His people?

---

1 Samuel 10:1–9
What evidence demonstrated that Saul had encountered God's Spirit?

Word Study

Abide: To abide is to remain where life is found. The believer who abides does not visit God's presence occasionally. He builds his life there. Abiding becomes a continual posture of dependence, fellowship, worship, and obedience.

Leadership Insight

The greatest leaders are not remembered simply because they accomplished great things. They are remembered because they consistently walked with God.

Influence rooted in God's presence leaves an eternal legacy. People may forget our sermons. They may forget our achievements. But they will remember whether they encountered Christ through our lives.

Principles of the Kingdom: *God's greatest desire is not merely to bless His people, but to dwell with His people.*

Walking It Out

Develop your own lifelong plan for practicing God's presence. My daily rhythm will include:

□ Scripture
□ Prayer
□ Worship
□ Silence
□ Gratitude
□ Serving others
□ Fellowship
□ Scripture memorization
□ Journaling
□ Evangelism

Choose three habits you are committed to practicing consistently.

Individual Reflection

Looking back over these fifteen sessions, what has God changed most within you?

_____

Which lesson challenged you most deeply?

_____

Where have you experienced the greatest spiritual growth?

_____

How has your understanding of God's presence changed?

_____

What commitment are you making as you complete this workbook?

Spiritual Formation Exercise: A Personal Covenant

Write your own covenant with God. Complete this sentence: "Because Jesus Christ has revealed Himself to me, I commit....."Write one full page expressing your desire to walk faithfully in God's presence for the rest of your life. Sign and date it. Return to it often.

Living the Principle

Over the next thirty days, intentionally continue one spiritual discipline that became meaningful during this workbook. Do not allow this study to become another completed book. Allow it to become the beginning of a new way of living.

The Collins Principle: *The goal is not merely to experience God's presence occasionally, but to build an entire life that continually abides in it.*

Weekly Declaration

I belong to Jesus Christ. His Holy Spirit lives within me. I choose to practice His presence every day of my life. His protection surrounds me. His peace steadies me. His holiness transforms me. His power strengthens me. His presence is my greatest treasure, and I will seek Him above all else until the day I stand before Him.

Guided Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for walking with me throughout this journey. Thank You for revealing Your character, correcting my heart, strengthening my faith, and drawing me into deeper fellowship with You. Today, I recommit myself to a life of

continual surrender. Keep my heart passionate for Your presence. Guard me from compromise, complacency, and distraction. Let my life continually reflect Jesus Christ until the day I see You face to face. May everything I do bring glory to Your Name. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

Over the next month:

- Continue practicing God's presence daily.
- Encourage another believer to begin this journey.
- Share one lesson from this workbook with someone each week.
- Begin praying about whom God is calling you to disciple.

The greatest evidence that God's presence is changing you is your willingness to help others experience Him as well.

From the Shepherd's Heart

My dear friend, **i**f you have completed this journey honestly, you are not the same person who began it. Perhaps the changes seem small. Perhaps they feel almost invisible. Do not underestimate what God has been doing. The greatest transformations are often the quietest ones. Over these chapters, you have discovered that God's presence is not simply a doctrine to believe or an experience to pursue. It is the atmosphere in which every disciple is meant to live. There will be days when His presence feels overwhelming and days when it seems quiet. Do not measure His faithfulness by your emotions. Measure it by His promises. Continue returning to Him. Continue seeking Him. Continue abiding in Him. One day, faith will become sight, and the presence you have practiced here will become the presence you enjoy forever. Until then - Walk with Him.

Worship Response

Read Psalm 84 in its entirety. Notice the psalmist's longing for God's presence. Spend time thanking Him for every way He has revealed Himself during these fifteen sessions. Finish by worshiping without asking Him for anything. Simply adore Him.

Gazing Forward

Congratulations! You have completed the *Practicing His Presence - Volume One Companion Workbook.* But this is not the finish line. It is the foundation. Continue walking with Christ. Continue practicing His presence. Continue making disciples. Continue living for His glory.

Journal Pages

What God has taught me through this workbook

My lifelong commitment

People I will intentionally disciple

My next step with God

Prayer Requests

Answered Prayers

Commissioning Prayer

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, I thank You for every life that has completed this journey. Seal these truths deeply within their hearts. May they never settle for religion without relationship, activity without intimacy, or success without Your presence. Fill them afresh with Your Holy Spirit. Strengthen them to walk faithfully, love sacrificially, serve humbly, and lead courageously. Make them shepherds after Your own heart, disciple-makers who reflect the character of Christ, and ambassadors of Your Kingdom wherever You send them. May their lives continually testify that nothing supernatural happens outside of Your presence, and that everything becomes possible when we abide in You. We ask all of this for the glory of Jesus Christ alone. Amen.

Before You Begin the Next Journey

Congratulations! You have completed this Companion Workbook. But your discipleship journey is not complete. Knowledge must become obedience. Obedience must become ministry. Ministry must become multiplication. Therefore, continue seeking Christ. Continue practicing His presence. Continue serving His Church. Continue making disciples. Continue preparing faithful shepherds. Continue glorifying Jesus Christ.

Appendix A: Collins Kingdom Principles for Daily Living

"*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*."- Matthew 6:33

Introduction

Kingdom living is not something that is limited to Sunday mornings or to particular spiritual occasions. It consists in the everyday way of living when one has given themselves over to the Lordship of Jesus Christ; all decisions, all conversations, all relationships, and all opportunities should be seen as chances to show forth His character and to promote His Kingdom.

The following principles summarize a great many of the biblical truths discussed in Practicing His Presence; read them frequently and go through them in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to transform them from ideas that you respect into convictions which actually guide the way you live.

If you keep on applying these principles, you will find that God's presence develops into something that is greater than simply an experience; it will become your way of life.

1. Above all else, seek the presence of God
The greatest gift of God is not the thing He gives; it is God Himself. It is wrong to seek the blessings of God while ignoring the one who bestows them.
Key Scripture: Matthew 6:33

2. Worship should be a way of life
Worship consists of much more than music or a church service. Any act of obedience, surrender, gratitude, or holiness constitutes an act of worship.
Key Scripture: Romans 12:1

3. Make it a practice to experience His presence every day
God's presence can be developed through deliberate fellowship. Before the day's pressures start, spend some time with Him.
Key Scripture: James 4:8

4. Identity Determines Behavior
You never live in order that you may become Christ's child. You live for Christ since you are already part of Him. You ought to have behavior that matches your identity.
Key Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:17

5. Obedience brings forth God's blessing
Obedience is a sign of faith. You should respond promptly when God speaks. To delay obedience is still to be disobedient.
Key Scripture: John 14:15

6. Faith Demands Action
Faith based in the Bible is never passive. Faith is of the opinion that we can and should take action based on God's promises.
Key Scripture: James 2:17

7. God's Word is your authority
Feelings change. Culture changes. Opinions change. God's Word never changes. Base your life on Scripture.
Key Scripture: Psalm 119:105

8. Prayer Is Fellowship Prior to Petition
Prayer begins with relationship. Take time to listen before you talk. Look for God's presence before you ask for His help.
Key Scripture: Philippians 4:6–7

9. The Holy Spirit brings about transformation
True transformation results from the Spirit of God at work in hearts that have been surrendered. Behavior modification can have an impression on people. Heart transformation pleases God.
Key Scripture: Galatians 5:22–23

10. Joy is found in the presence of God
Happiness depends upon circumstances. Joy depends upon Christ. Remain close to Him.
Key Scripture: Psalm 16:11

11. Humility Precedes Exaltation
He encourages those who voluntarily submit to Him. Choose servanthood over self-promotion.
Key Scripture: James 4:10

12. Holiness consists of daily alignment
Holiness is not perfection. It constantly brings your thoughts, feelings, and actions into agreement with Jesus Christ.
Key Scripture: 1 Peter 1:15–16

13. Trials develop spiritual strength
God never wastes suffering. Each trial provides a chance to place greater trust in Him.
Key Scripture: James 1:2–4

14. Victory starts in the presence of God
The victories in spiritual matters occur well before they are made public. The individuals who learn to stand before God will also be able to stand before people.
Key Scripture: Ephesians 6:10–18

15. Gratitude protects the heart
A heart that is grateful will overcome pride, discouragement, and bitterness. Thank God in all situations and in every circumstance.
Key Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

16. Forgiveness Preserves Freedom
The act of not forgiving keeps the person who refuses to forgive bound. Set other people free just as Christ has set you free.
Key Scripture: Ephesians 4:32

17. Integrity Honors Christ
What matters more is character instead of reputation. Act the same way in private as you do in public.
Key Scripture: Proverbs 10:9

18. Influence arises out of intimacy
The most significant influence of the Kingdom is exerted by those who have first learned to sit in quietness before God. The public ministry must always be based on private devotion.
Key Scripture: John 15:5

19. Faithfulness is more important than fame
The way God sees success is different from the way the world does. He rewards faithfulness, not popularity.
Key Scripture: Matthew 25:21

20. Live for God's Glory
You ought to direct other people to Jesus Christ whatever you do. The main aim of yours should not be personal success but rather the honor of God.
God. Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:31

Collins' Daily Commitments

Today I choose to:

- Look for His presence before I look for His provision.
- Worship before I worry.
- Pray before I continue.
- Trust before I understand.
- Obey before I receive.
- Forgive before bitterness grows.
- Serve before I lead.
- Humble myself when asking for a promotion.
- Live by faith and not by what I see.
- Glorify Christ in all that I do.

A Daily Prayer

Heavenly Father, teach me to look for Your presence more than anything else in this world. Let Your Word direct my thoughts, Your Spirit change my heart, and then my life should show forth the character of Your Son. I ask that you may be worshipped by me wholeheartedly, that I may obey you faithfully, trust you completely, and serve you humbly. Also, give me strength so that I may live out the identity which you have given me through Christ and live out the victory which He has already won. Let all of your conversations, all your decisions, all your opportunities, and all your acts of service be an honor to Your name. Most important of all, keep me close to You, since I am aware that without You I could achieve nothing. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Final Charge

Do not become content with merely knowing that God is present. Practice His presence. Seek Him daily. Walk with Him faithfully. Trust Him completely. Obey Him immediately. Love Him wholeheartedly. Let your life serve as a practical witness that Jesus Christ is worthy of every glory, honor, and praise.
Ad Gloriam Christi - For the glory of Christ alone.

A Bishop's Blessing

May the Lord grant you an ever-increasing awareness of His presence. May your heart always long for His Word and find joy in His fellowship. May your mind be renewed by His truth, your spirit be strengthened by His grace, and your life be transformed by His Holy Spirit. May the Lord enable you to hear His voice with greater clarity, cause you to trust His promises with deeper confidence, and lead you to obey His guidance with unshakable faith.

May His protection be upon your heart against distraction, your mind against deception, and your feet against wandering. May every difficulty take the form of an opportunity to experience His faithfulness. May each trial result in a greater dependence on Him. May each victory bring about greater glory for His Name. May your home be a place in which Christ is honored. May your family come to know His peace.

May your ministry show His love. May the way in which you testify reveal His character. May all who meet you come to know the fragrance of Christ. May you always keep your first love. May you never stop in your pursuit of His presence. May you complete your journey with joy and may you hear the words, *"Well done, good and faithful servant",* and may you stand before the Lord with confidence since you have walked faithfully with Him.

Until that glorious day, may your life always make it clear that *Jesus Christ is Lord.* Let all your thoughts, all the words you speak, all the decisions you make, and all the acts of service you perform be carried out - *Ad Gloriam Christi - For the Glory of Christ Alone.*

Grace and peace be multiplied to you,

Bishop Anthony Collins
Houses of Worship International Christian Partnership
Founder, Collins Discipleship Institute

Author's Note

Thank you for reading "*Practicing His Presence" - Volume 1 - Companion Workbook*. If this book encouraged, challenged, or strengthened your walk with Christ, would you consider leaving a brief review? Your review:

- Helps other believers find this resource
- Extends the ministry of the message
- Supports Christian authors sharing biblical truth

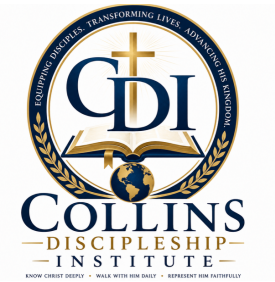
Even a few sentences make a meaningful difference. Visit our website TonyCollinsMinistries.com and go to the "contact" page and leave a review. Thank you for partnering in ministry through your support.

Blessings,
Bishop Anthony Collins

All of our discipleship resources are available to the public at no charge through HOWICP.org. Our mission is to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ by equipping believers to obey the Great Commission through biblical discipleship, spiritual formation, and leadership development.

If these resources have encouraged your walk with Christ or strengthened your ministry, we invite you to partner with us. Your tax-deductible donation enables us to continue developing and distributing these materials free of charge to individuals, churches, and ministries worldwide.

Thank you for helping us make disciples who make disciples - for the glory of God.



In Matthew 28, our Lord Jesus Christ gave His Church its mission, its vision, and its process for reaching the world. We know it as the Great Commission.

Jesus commanded His followers to go *and make disciples of all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching *them to obey everything He had commanded*. This is not one ministry among many; it is the mission of the Church. It is the one assignment that every believer, every local church, and the Church universal has received directly from our risen King.

Sadly, much of the modern Church has neglected this divine responsibility. Many who stand behind the sacred desk have never themselves experienced intentional biblical discipleship. Consequently, they have little vision or passion for discipling others. This stands in direct opposition to both the command and the example of Jesus Christ.

Disciple-making is rarely easy. It is often inconvenient, time-consuming, and personally demanding. It requires patience, commitment, and sacrifice. But the Kingdom of God has never been advanced through convenience. It has always been advanced through faithful men and women who were willing to invest their lives in others.

We cannot fully accomplish biblical discipleship from the pulpit alone. Preaching is essential, but it is only one part of the process. Neither can we effectively disciple someone through occasional meetings or brief conversations. Jesus did not simply teach crowds; He invested deeply in twelve men. He walked with them, answered their questions, corrected their misunderstandings, modeled obedience, and allowed them to observe His life day after day.

That remains the biblical pattern.

Discipleship is life shared together. It is walking alongside another believer, allowing them to see how we respond to life's victories, disappointments, temptations, and trials. It is opening God's Word together, praying together, encouraging one another, and holding each other accountable to grow in Christ.

For us, intentional discipleship means meeting regularly - ideally at least once each week - for meaningful conversation centered on Scripture, spiritual growth, and the practical challenges of living faithfully in a fallen world. It is helping believers develop the spiritual disciplines that deepen their intimacy with Jesus Christ and strengthen their walk with Him.

The goal is not simply to produce knowledgeable Christians. The goal is to develop mature disciples who, in turn, become disciple-makers themselves.
This is the multiplication strategy of the Kingdom.

At **Collins Discipleship Institute (CDI)**, our passion is to equip individuals, churches, and Christian organizations with practical, biblically sound resources that cultivate mature, vibrant, and Spirit-empowered followers of Jesus Christ. Our desire is to strengthen believers in the essential areas of Christian life and ministry, so they can faithfully fulfill the Great Commission. We do not exist to produce better church members. We exist to produce mature disciples who make mature disciples.

We believe that the future strength of the Church will not be determined merely by the size of our congregations, but by the depth of our disciples. When disciples make disciples, churches become healthier, families become stronger, communities are transformed, and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ advances.

The Great Commission has never been rescinded. It remains the calling of every believer. May we not merely admire it, but may we obey it.

Contact us at info@HOWICP.org for more information. All discipleship resources are free.

Beyond The Veil,
Bishop Dr. Anthony Collins
Houses of Worship International Christian Partnership