

A Stop by Quiet Waters

By

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God Remains Close to You

It has been a few weeks since my last “Quiet Waters” encouragement to you. There is a reason for this, which I now want to share with you. My mother has Alzheimer's disease, which is becoming an increasing challenge to my brothers and me. She has been living with my older brother and his wife, and they needed some relief, so my wife and I drove to Michigan three weeks ago to bring her to live with us for a few weeks. She is at that stage where she dreads being alone for any period of time, not just alone in the house but alone in a room. This has meant a radical restructuring of our day and how each of us spends our time. If Jay is busy with something, or is out of the house, then I bring my mom into my office with me. She will sit in the rocking chair for an hour or more just watching me, then will tire of that and wander off into another part of the house. This means I must leave my office to be with her. Sometimes her mind is clear and we are able to converse with each other, and sometimes she is very confused.

My Schedule Disrupted

Needless to say, this has significantly affected how I spend my time day by day. I have had to significantly abbreviate my cherished early-morning quiet time with the Lord, grab bits and pieces of time when I could for study or preparation for meetings, etc., and reduce the number of meetings with individual pastors and others. When I am away the burden falls on my wife.

This has been a real test of my pursuit of intimacy with our Father in Heaven. He has used several things to both sustain me and nourish my soul during these last three weeks. The primary ones, which I have meditated on over and over, have been: the 23rd Psalm, the 63rd Psalm, the Apostles Creed, and the Eighth Letter in the little book, The Practice of the Presence of God, by Brother Lawrence. I want to share his eighth letter with you for the encouragement I know it will bring you as it has done me.

Brother Lawrence wrote,

"You aren't the only one to be distracted from the presence of God; I understand completely. Our minds are so flighty. But remember that our God-given will governs all of our strength. It must recall the mind to God. Otherwise, our spirit may wander, dragging us down to the things of this earth.

I think the remedy for the problem is to confess our faults to God and humble ourselves before Him. It isn't necessary to be too verbose in prayer, because lengthy prayers encourage wandering thoughts. Simply present yourself to God as if you were a poor man knocking on the door of a rich man, and to fix your attention on His presence. If your mind wanders at times, don't be upset, because being upset will only

distract you more. Allow your will to recall your attention gently to God. Such perseverance will please him.

Another way to prevent the mind from wandering away from God during prayer is to train yourself to dwell in his presence all day long. This will provide a sort of "practice" for you, as you remind yourself to concentrate on Him. Remaining in His presence during prayer time will thus become easier.

You know from my other letters how advantageous I think it is to practice the presence of God. Let us take this act of loving God seriously, and pray for one another.

I remain your brother in Christ."

Every time I read this my heart was lifted, and I was able to go on that day, knowing in both my mind and my heart that God was with me, and living in a fragmented fashion in no way affected my relationship with Him or His with me.

I am sure that you, too, have fragmented days when you feel as though you cannot get your hand in the hand of God and you are walking alone. When you are in that situation I encourage you to meditate on the 23rd Psalm, and on the eighth letter of Brother Lawrence.

Peace and joy in Christ,
Dick Germaine

Scripture Resources

23rd Psalm

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not
be in want.
He makes me lie down in green
pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of
righteousness
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of
death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff
they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.*

*Surely goodness and love will follow
me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the
LORD
forever.*

63rd Psalm

*O God, you are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
My soul thirsts for you,
my body longs for you,
In a dry and weary land
where there is no water.*

*I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your
glory.
Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my
hands.
My soul will be satisfied as with the
richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will
praise you.*

*On my bed I remember you;
I think of you through the watches
of the night.
Because you are my help,
I sing in the shadow of your
wings.
My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.
They who seek my life will be
destroyed;
They will go down to the depths of
the earth.
They will be given over to the
sword
and become food for jackals.
But the king will rejoice in God;
all who swear by God's name will
praise him,
While the mouths of liars will be
silenced.*

The Practice of the Presence of God
Brother Lawrence /Whitaker House