

PASTOR'S BLOG MAY 15, 2020 LOVE ONE ANOTHER

From Peter Scazzero's *Emotionally Healthy Relationships Day by Day*

Scripture Reading:

John 15:4-5, 8-9, 12 *Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. . . . This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. . . . My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.*

Devotional

Loving well is the essence of true spirituality. It requires experiencing connection with God, with others, and with oneself. It begins, however, with our response to God's invitation to practice his presence in our daily lives. He then invites us to "practice the presence of people" within an awareness of his presence. But learning to practice his presence is no small task.

There is perhaps no greater teacher to offer us insight on how to do this than Brother Lawrence, an obscure, sixteenth-century Carmelite monk from Paris. He resolved to live in continual awareness of God's presence, to never forget him from one moment to the next.

In fact, he defined prayer ***as simply cultivating an awareness of the presence of God.***

These words from Brother Lawrence have served me well over the years, helping me to remain in Jesus when I am distracted: *The time of business . . . does not differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of the kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees. . . . I make it my business only to persevere in his holy presence . . . which I may call an actual presence of God; or, to speak better, an habitual, silent and secret conversation of the soul with God.*⁷

Jesus said it simply: *If we remain in him, allowing ourselves to be held in his embrace, his life will flow out of us to others. If we choose not to remain in him, we will have little, if anything, to offer others.*

Question to Consider

When can you set aside uninterrupted time each day to begin cultivating an awareness of the presence of God?

Prayer

Lord, it is so easy for me to go through my days without remembering or thinking about you. And it is even easier for me to overlook your beauty in the people around me. Please change the unhealthy ways of relating that are so deeply rooted in me. Shape me into a person who offers your tenderness and kindness to those I come in contact with today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)