The Practice of the Presence of God

Brother Lawrence · c. 1614 – 1691 · Text: anonymous early English translation

Who wrote it

Nicolas Herman, a former soldier and footman, joined the Discalced Carmelites in Paris as a lay brother, taking the name Lawrence of the Resurrection. He worked for years in the monastery kitchen and later repairing sandals. After his death, Abbé Joseph de Beaufort gathered his conversations and letters into this short book.

What to look for

- How a simple kitchen worker became a guide sought out by others.
- His practice of turning to God in ordinary work, not only at set prayer times.
- What he says about failures: acknowledging them to God and continuing without anxiety.
- The letters' advice to people in different situations, including the sick.
- The plain, friendly tone of the whole book.

Reading plan

Session 1	The conversations	Four conversations
Session 2	Letters I–VIII	Letters 1–8
Session 3	Letters IX–XV	Letters 9–15

Discussion questions

1. What does "practising the presence of God" mean in your own words?
2. Why did Brother Lawrence find no great difference between work time and prayer time?
3. How does he respond to his own faults, and what can we learn from it?
4. Which piece of advice in the letters seems most practical to you?
5. What makes this kind of prayer hard in modern life?
6. What one small habit could you try this week after reading him?

Tips for a group

Read each session's pages before meeting. Bring one sentence that struck you and one question. Keep discussion to 45–60 minutes and end by sharing one thing to carry into the week.

Read it free

The full text is free to read online, with EPUB and plain-text downloads:
ancienttalks.com/books/brother-lawrence-practice.html