

A Living, Present Being

One of the first things we're taught as children in Sunday School is that God is everywhere, He is always with us. I remember that thought being impressed on me by the song, "O be careful, little eyes, what you see..." But the feeling I got was, "Big Brother is watching you!" It made me afraid of God and uneasy, even when I wasn't doing something sneaky.

Then as we get a little older, we're hit with the unwieldy term *omnipresent*. But that's what my son would call a "back-of-the-dictionary word." I don't remember it ever making God seem near or dear.

And as adults, most of us profess that God is everywhere, but we generally think and live as if He is not. Our attitudes clearly state what our mouths will not admit—that God is either not really here, or if He is, it is in some vague, impersonal sense. Rarely do our hearts perceive Him, and just as rarely do we personally interact with Him, or react to Him. When we react, it is usually to "the rules" rather than to Him.

Sometimes we try to recreate His image in our minds, piecing together memorized words and vague memories. But the result is unreal and fades quickly.

But over the years, God has begun to patiently impress on me that He is a real being, who is immediately and personally and constantly with me. The very breath I breathe is His life-force. His Spirit lives and speaks and works within me. Incredibly, I spend every moment of my existence enfolded in His presence and His care.

This growing awareness has brought with it some intriguing and exciting questions:

How would my thoughts, feelings, and actions change if my heart were always fully aware of His presence?

How would that affect my attitude toward sin? How would I react to Him when I do sin if I realized He is present, still loving me, longing to immediately restore our relationship?

How would I be affected in times of trouble, fatigue, or confusion if I realized I don't have to find God or even reach out to Him—that He is already with me, and I only have to look to Him?

As a matter of fact, how would it affect my prayer life? Can I imagine the simplicity of opening my heart to One who is as close as my breath, who takes pleasure in hearing from me?

How much more flavor and spice would it add to this life, and how much would it sharpen my anticipation of the next life?

You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. (Psalm 16:11, NIV)

How would our hearts and our lives change if we simply realized what is already true—that our loving God is personally, presently, unfailingly with us?

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