

The Manifest Presence of Christ

"One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple."

Psalms 27:4

"You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13

"Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near." Isaiah 55:6

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened." Matthew 7:7-8

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

The greatest need in the church today is a fresh encounter with the manifest presence of Christ. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of the church today is that we have blurred the distinction between the omnipresence (or everywhere presence) of God and the manifest presence of God.

"The Presence and the manifestation of the Presence are not the same. There can be one without the other. God is here when we are wholly unaware of it. He is manifest only when and as we are aware of His presence." (A.W. Tozer, *Pursuit of God*)

As followers of Jesus in prayer, we are to seek, welcome, and dwell in the manifest presence of Christ. The omnipresence of God will not change anyone or anything; it is the manifest presence of God that brings about change. When God speaks, it is God's manifest presence. When God does miracles, it is His manifest presence. When God brings salvation, healings, and deliverances, it is all His manifest presence.

<u>OMNIPRESENCE</u>	<u>MANIFEST PRESENCE</u>
Real	Real
True to God's Nature	True to God's Nature
God-Everywhere	God- Tangibly Perceived
Normally unknown	Always known
Theoretical	Transformational
Pride	Contrition
Impersonal	Personal
Obedience optional	Obedience required
No prayer required	Prayer Required

As we pray, we are not to seek God's hand; we are to prioritize His presence and then allow God to manifest anyway He chooses. David prayed, *"One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple."* (Psalm 27:4) As we seek God's presence, He will manifest in several ways (fruit of Holy Spirit, salvation, deliverance, healings, prophecy, etc.)

MANIFEST PRESENCE OF GOD WITH FIRE

- » Abraham met God in the fire (Genesis 15:17).
- » Moses met God in the fire (Exodus 3).
- » All Israel met God in the fire (Exodus 13, 19).
- » Elijah met God in the fire (1 Kings 18).
- » David met God in the fire (1 Chronicles 21:26).
- » Solomon met God in the fire (2 Chronicles 7).
- » Isaiah met God in the fire (Isaiah 6).
- » The early church met God in the fire (Acts 2:1-5).

Results of Manifest Presence of God with Elijah (1 Kings 18)

"The God who answers by fire, he is God." (1 Kings 18:24)

- 1) People are put in their place - *"When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces."* (1 Kings 18:39)
- 2) God is put in His place. *"and said, 'The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God.'"* (1 Kings 18:39)
- 3) The devil is put in his place. *"And Elijah said to them, 'Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they seized them.'"* (1 Kings 18:40)

WELCOME CHRIST'S MANIFEST PRESENCE IN YOUR LIFE, YOUR HOME, AND YOUR CHURCH

1. Consistently invite God's manifest presence.

God loves to come where He is invited. *"Seek the Lord while He may be found, call on him while he is near."* (Isaiah 55:6) Remember, we do not seek an experience with God (hand of God); we seek an encounter with God (face of God). We do not seek God's manifestations (hand of God); we seek His manifest presence (face of God).

2. Look for God's manifest presence in your daily life.

The Holy Spirit is constantly making Christ known to you and through you. *"Do not quench the Spirit."* (1 Thessalonians 5:19) *"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me."* (John 15:26) *"He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."* (John 16:14)

3. Be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The most basic anointing we need is the empowerment to lead others to a fresh encounter with God's manifest presence. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you are filled with prayer, with His presence, and with power. *"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."* (Matthew 3:11)

4. Always give preference to God's manifest presence.

Learn to hear His voice. *"If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."* (Galatians 5:25) *"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."* (Romans 8:14)

5. Declare God's manifest presence in prayer.

Learn to minister to the presence of Christ. Embrace your identity as a local church as a flame holder—that you exist for one ultimate purpose, which is to receive, sustain, and hold out the manifest presence of Christ (see Numbers 6:24-26).

ACTION STEPS

Pray together as a group. Ask God to manifest His presence. Repent of neglecting the manifest presence of God. Break into groups of 2-3 people and discuss what you have just learned about the manifest presence of Christ. What is the difference between the omnipresence and the manifest presence? How have you personally encountered the manifest presence of Christ? What difference will it make in your life and family as you learn to attract and sustain the manifest presence of Christ?