



# presence



**Pastor Mason Phillips | February 8, 2026**

**[WATCH THE SERMON HERE](#)**

## **Day 1: The Presence That Makes Us Distinct**

**Devotional:** Moses understood a profound truth: without God's presence, we are indistinguishable from the world. His bold prayer wasn't for success, resources, or even miracles—it was for God Himself. "If Your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here." What separates God's people isn't our programs, preferences, or religious practices, but His abiding presence with us. Today, examine your life honestly. Are you pursuing God's presence or simply maintaining religious routines? God's presence transforms ordinary gatherings into sacred encounters and common people into His chosen ones. Don't settle for the form of godliness without its power. Seek Him with desperation, knowing that His presence is what validates, empowers, and distinguishes you.

## **Reading:**

*Exodus 33:12-16*

*Then Moses said to the Lord, “See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people.’ But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.’ “Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people.”*

*And He said, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” Then he said to Him, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. “For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth.”*

**Reflection Question:** What would change in your life if you truly prioritized God's presence over your comfort and control?

## **Day 2: Loving God With Your Whole Heart**

**Devotional:** Loving God with all your heart means pursuing Him with your deepest affections and desires. When you truly love someone, serving them isn't burdensome—it's a joy. Yet many Christians approach obedience as duty rather than delight. The heart is where decisions are made and reactions originate. Brother Lawrence practiced God's presence by turning his heart toward the Lord constantly —while washing dishes, walking to the store, or sitting in chapel. He found God everywhere because he intentionally sought Him everywhere. Today, practice redirecting your thoughts and affections toward God throughout your daily tasks. As you feed what you want to grow, your spiritual hunger will lead you deeper into His presence. His commandments become light when carried by love.

## **Reading:**

*Deuteronomy 6:4-9 NKJV*

*“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*

*You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”*

*1 John 5:1-5 NKJV*

*Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world— our faith.*

*Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

**Reflection Question:** What practical step can you take today to cultivate heartfelt devotion rather than mere religious duty?

## **Day 3: Setting Your Mind on Things Above**

**Devotional:** What captures your thoughts shapes your character. Paul commands believers to "set your mind on things above," because transformation happens in the renewal of our minds. We become like what we focus on—whether that's Christ or the endless scroll of social media, political division, or worldly anxieties. The new you is being renewed in knowledge according to Christ's image, but this requires intentional mental discipline. Putting to death earthly patterns means stopping the thought patterns that feed them. Just as dwelling on food makes your mouth water, dwelling on temptation leads to sin. Conversely, meditating on Christ's character, promises, and presence cultivates spiritual hunger and

Christlikeness. Today, audit your mental diet. What are you feeding? What needs to be starved?

### **Reading:**

*Colossians 3:1-11 NKJV*

*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

*Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.*

*But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.*

**Reflection Question:** What specific thoughts or media consumption should you eliminate to create space for heavenly mindedness?

## **Day 4: Faith Embodied in Action**

**Devotional:** Faith that remains theoretical is dead faith. James confronts the dangerous gap between belief and behavior, between what we know and what we do. Presenting your body as a living sacrifice means worship becomes embodied—not just sung but lived. Temple worship required physical effort: bringing animals, cutting, separating, burning. Today's convenience can breed complacency. True faith proves itself through changed behaviors. Generosity isn't claimed but demonstrated. Kindness isn't professed but enacted. Love isn't theoretical but

practiced in messy relationships with imperfect people. As you mature in Christ, your time, resources, and preferences must yield to His purposes. What you do with your hands, where you go with your feet, and how you use your resources reveals whether Christ truly lives in you or you've merely adopted a religious label.

### **Reading:**

*James 2:14-26 NKJV*

*What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

*But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe— and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?*

*Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body within the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

**Romans 12:1-2 NKJV**

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

**Reflection Question:** What concrete action will you take this week to embody your faith rather than just profess it?

## **Day 5: Maturing Beyond Control**

**Devotional:** Spiritual maturity means releasing control and trusting God completely. We naturally gravitate toward what we can control—predictable programs, comfortable practices, personal preferences. Like the Israelites who fashioned a golden calf when Moses delayed, we create manageable gods that fit our image rather than surrendering to the true God. But idols we control are powerless. God's presence demands we relinquish our grip, abandon our agendas, and yield to His leadership—even when uncomfortable. Maturity isn't measured by knowledge accumulated but by faith demonstrated. God graciously tolerates immaturity, but He calls us to grow up. The gap between theory and practice closes when we value His presence over our power. Today, identify what you're clinging to for security. Surrender it. Trust that God's presence is sufficient, His ways are higher, and His control is perfect.

### **Reading:**

*1 Corinthians 14:20, 40 NKJV*

*Brethren, do not children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understand be mature. In the law it is written:*

*“With men of other tongues and other lips*

*I will speak to this people;*

*And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me,”*

*Says the Lord.*

*2 Timothy 3:1-7 NKJV*

*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good; traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather*

*than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

*For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

**Reflection Question:** What area of control do you need to surrender to fully experience God's presence and power?

**Closing Prayer:** *Father, awaken in us a desperate hunger for Your presence. Forgive us for settling for religious routines while missing the reality of relationship with You. Transform our hearts, renew our minds, and empower our bodies to love You completely—with all our heart, soul, and strength. Make us distinct as Your people, not by our programs but by Your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.*