

Dr. Ron Jensen, Practicing the PRESENCE of God - Introduction by Keet Lewis.

Well, it is good to be in the house of the Lord. The key message this morning that Dr. Jensen will bring is called Practicing the Presence of God. I was on the bus on Thursday going to Gold Circle with a friend of mine and he made a comment to me. He said, "I'm searching and I'm looking for peace in this area of my life." And I said, "Tom, my experience is that if you go look for peace, you don't find it. But if you come into the presence of the prince of peace, you will have all the peace you could ever imagine. We can't go and look for peace. Peace is in his presence." So, King David would say, "I long to be in the presence of the Lord." This is the truth that now, 40 plus years ago, Dr. Jensen taught me. It riveted my life. I didn't really realize at the time what influence it would have on my life. I routinely re-listen to this message several times a year and try to review the acrostic regularly, often daily. It has become a part of my life.

(01:01): Background - why this is important to Keet

I was on an airplane from Warsaw to Bulgaria when the Lord gave me an answer to a question that my daughter had asked me, "Dad, how did you walk with Jesus all these years?" She had seen some of her friends drift away and some friends' parents drift away as well. And I said, "I don't know." And the Lord gave me the answer at 30 something thousand feet on Lot Polish Airline and I started writing. And when I looked up, upon landing there were 36 names of 35 men and one woman who built into my life God's word and God's truth. Ron Jensen was on that list and I thought, "It's not the people. It's the message the people brought to me." And then I said, "Lord, show me the message of those 36." And by Ron's name I wrote, Practicing the Presence of God.

Ron Jensen is no stranger to CNP. He has been at CNP many, many times. He lives in Southern California, travels the world teaching leadership, countries, governments, personal leadership, personal development, a friend of many that are a part of CNP and he will bring a wonderful message on practicing the presence of God. He's with us today with his wife, Mary, and they have a blessed family, and we just enjoy every moment that we can get with them. Thank you, Ron.

(02:43): Ron Jensen begins his introduction of the message.

I want to give you the Action Steps before I even start and say that you have this yellow sheet which contains my outline and your Action Steps, because some of you are going to have to leave early and I'm not going to take that personally, because you have flights and you've got to be places. But the Action Steps are for you to get to know these eight skills that I'll be unpacking. I'm going to give you the Cliff Note version. I believe that Keet is recording this so he can make it available for you. I've also taken these principles and turned them into smaller videos. So, I've unpacked each one about five to eight minutes on each one of these principles on a blog, our ministry faith-based blog, which is just unleashthemasterpiece.org. So, you can go there and get that information if you want to reach Dr. Ron Jensen, go to www.ronjensen.com or email, RonJensen@me.com.

(03:43):

Or you can just contact me at my email, which is on the sheet here and ask how you can get information. I hope you'll be able to put this to work. And the objective is for you to understand these principles and at least for the next 30 days, at least four times a day, work through the process that I'm going to unpack for you today.

(04:11):

I love CNP and Mary and I am honored to be here. We came here many, many times in the early years and have watched the growth over the years and have been thrilled by it. And it's great to see old friends that we haven't seen for many years and to see what's going on here. So, I'm so thankful for that and for what God's doing in and through you to have an impact on our culture. It's kind of hard to speak after Keet keeps building up this message. It's kind of like there's only one direction to go from here, that is down. One of my friends leaned over and said, "He must really like you." I really do, and I love Keet like we all do and I appreciate him so much. And that's such a better introduction by the way than one I got.

Some years ago, I was on a book tour, and I was doing one of these talk shows. And as I was being interviewed, before I was interviewed on the talk show, a 15 minute segment, the host said, she was reading through my bio and she goes, "Ron, how do I introduce you?" And I just said, "just say I'm another pretty face." And she laughed. And then she got diverted and all of a sudden the director went, "Five, four, three, two, one." And like a deer in a headlight, she goes, "Well, good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm so glad to be here with the Dr. Ron Jensen who we're interviewing today." And then blank, she just had no recollection of who I was whatsoever or anything about me. So, she said, "He's just another pretty face." Yeah, and that's the problem. She started to laugh. And then every time she looked at me, she started laughing uncontrollably. So, this was a little better.

(06:06):

Thanks, Keet, so much.

(06:10): **Ron Jensen begins his message, Practicing the Presence of God**

Practicing the Presence of God, I want you to think about a time in your life that you can go back to that was the most joyous, spiritually powerful time in your life. Can you get some event or some time when that was true? It may be right now, but when you felt the closest to the Lord, when there was love and joy and peace that flooded your soul, can you get something in your mind? Well, I can. And it was about 50 years ago. It was in Malibu, British Columbia, Canada, which was a Young Life camp (Malibu Club) and conference center, perhaps the most beautiful retreat center I'd ever been to. I'd been there a couple of times, but this particular time, I was there on work crew. My nickname was "Pappy", while I was there, and I was there for five weeks. I was washing pots and

pans. We were working 14 to 16 hours a day shifts, and we had kids coming in and out all summer.

(07:20):

There were a couple of thousand kids that would keep coming through the camp and we just worked and our job was to serve them. And it was part of our young life work and it was a delightful time. So just being there was great and it was really hard work and it was menial work, but very rewarding. And one of the things that was so powerful about it was while I was there, I came across a book by Brother Lawrence called Practicing the Presence of God. Mary and I have thousands of books in our library. We've read lots of books over the years, but if you were to ask me my favorite books, I would say my number one favorite book of all time is the Bible. My number two is Practicing the Presence of God. It is a little tiny book (available in PDF form online). Brother Lawrence was, he really wasn't a monk.

He was a lay person. He grew up in poverty in the 1600s in France. He joined the army so he could get a small stipend and food. He served many years in the 30 Year War. And in this experience, he had a conversion experience. He had a deep moment when he met God. And it was a cold wintery night. Everything was frozen. He was looking at this barren tree and it looked dead and that's how he was feeling, dead on the inside. And then he started to think, "But wait a second, the spring is going to come and then the summer's going to come and this is going to be a beautiful tree with fruit and leaves and it'll be fully abundant." And somehow God used that to get his head around the fact that God was a gracious, powerful, wonderful, empowering God who wanted to turn his life into a beautiful, full, blossoming, fruitful, powerful, joyful, delightful, abundant life.

(09:30):

And so, he had a conversion. He left the army due to injury and then went to a Carmelite monastery where he didn't have the education to be a monk, but he could be a lay servant. And so, he spent many, many years there doing pots and pans like I was doing in Malibu, and then ultimately fixing sandals when he couldn't do pots and pans anymore. That was his life. [But he wrote what I think is one of the very best books of all time on intimacy with God, on abiding in the vine, on being filled with the spirit, on practicing the presence of God.](#) And he would say, whether I'm spending three hours in prayer with the brothers in the morning or I'm doing pots and pans during day, I have the same joy. I have the same presence of being with the Lord. He said, "When I lean over to pick up a piece of paper on the courtyard, I do it for the glory of God in the presence of God." [And the book just exudes joy. He was just filled with joy. He had a full rich capacity of joy in his life.](#)

And the big idea is that when we practice God's presence, not just have a good quiet time, which I think is good, and I love to do that, not just go to church or go to sessions, not just hear information, but [when we live in the presence of God moment by moment, every day, constantly bringing everything back to God](#), it's not that we change so much

what we do because he was doing pots and pans like I was 12 to 14 hours a day, but he was doing it for the glory of God, not just for himself. And that's what scripture says to do, right? *Whatever you do, do it for the glory of God, do it with all your might. And the power of that so grabbed me and I started to experience that during those five weeks that I experienced a level of joy that to this day is the benchmark of spirituality in my life 60 years ago.*

So, I'm always trying to be back there and above. But my challenge was practical, how could I do this? I know I can constantly bring things back to God, but how can I help really practice the presence of God in tangible way all the time? And because I'm ADHD and I'm dyslexic, I need tools to help me do this kind of thing. And so, I created this acrostic "PRESENCE" so I can memorize it and so I could go into it, turn it into a habit, turn it into muscle memory and begin to live these principles out day in and day out, which I've been doing for many, many years now. The beauty of this, by the way, is, this is, in my view, it's a practical theology of practicing the presence of God.

(12:49):

But if you apply these principles daily, and when I say daily, I mean throughout the day, you will find that they'll work. The big challenge I think we have today, even in CNP and what we're concerned about in our country, is we all know the reality. Alexis de Tocqueville had it right. We quote this often, but when he came and looked at America, remember what he said, he said, "America is great because she's good and if she ceases to be good, she'll cease to be great." And our problem today, of course, is we're ceasing to be good. And it's not just the principles we've moved away from, the Judeo-Christian ethic, it's our intimacy with God. And frankly, as concerned as I am with those people out there, I'm more concerned with all of us, particularly starting in the body of Christ, because I think there's been a move away from this deep intimacy with God, and that's where the power is. As said in *Zechariah 4:6*, *Then he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.*

So, the only way we become good is, of course, we live according to God's principles, but we experience the power of God in our lives, and that's why practicing the presence becomes so absolutely critical. Okay. How do we do it? I'm going to give you the Cliff Notes version.

PRESENCE:

P. Praise God Continually

First thing is praise God continually. And you notice for each one of these, I put some key scripture, *Psalms 34*, which was quoted beautifully a few moments ago. I love that. *I'll*

bless the Lord at all times. His praise will continually be in my mouth. And it goes on. And as you noticed in that context, it says, it was in the context of difficulties. "*The Lord heard me and delivered me from all my fears and then later on said, Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good*".

"God's interest for all of us is that we live this rich, full, abundant, winsome, dynamic, joyous life. I love Mother Teresa's comments. He who is filled with joy preaches without words. What ought to be compelling about us, the message, the positive that we have from our conservative perspective is that we have a life that is just so full. People ought to see our individual lives and say, "Whatever that person has, I want. "Moreover, they ought to see us when we come together and say," The way these people love one another, whatever they have, I want. "I mean, that is the most powerful apologetic. In fact, Frances Schaefer said, "Love or unity in the body of Christ is the great apologetic. It's the greatest proof of the power of the word of God. "So, praise God continually. So there are a lot of ways to do that.

The way I do it is I get up in the morning, and I begin saying, *Bless The Lord Oh My Soul and All that is Within Me, Bless His Holy Name...Bless the Lord...(repeat)...* I kind of talk through it and say, "Okay, come on soul. Come on soul, Bless The Lord, Oh My Soul, ... So that's a good start then throughout the day, I continue... this morning I was out walking outside and I was listening to the birds and I was just praising God for creation. I was praising God for the beauty. I was walking around or looking at some of you just praising God for the wonder of people.

I love music, by the way. I do think music is really powerful and scripture says in *Psalms 22:30 God inhabits the praise of his people.* God gets actively engaged when people praise. And the reason he does is when we praise, and I think often when we do it musically, the beauty of that is we're using our mind, our emotion, and our will when we sing. And there's something about touching our spirit and our soul when we sing. So, I love the power of music. It gets us going. And what it does is it expands our view of God. Our problem, so we think, is that our problems are so big. That's not the challenge. The challenge is our God is too small. So, praise allows us to explode our view of God and not just intellectually, but emotionally and volitionally, because we serve a great, wonderful God. So, I just make a habit of praising God continually all the time. (Tip: Build a worship play list on YouTube or Spotify and play it in the am.....and at night...travel with this list or have an MP3 Player (Amazon: SanDisk Clip Jam MP3) with you various playlists and I have 100's of sermons (like this one) and 30+ playlists for travel and listen via headphones or Bluetooth in rental car or a small speaker in the hotel room.)

Lord, I just praise you for your love and your grace and your forgiveness. Father, I just praise you for these people. I just praise you for what you're doing. And Father, I praise you for the beauty of this today. Praise God continually.

Praise God Continually - - Additional Verses from AMP Translation:

- *Psalm 34:1 — “I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”*
- *Psalm 71:14 — “But as for me, I will wait and hope continually And will praise You more and more.”*
- *Hebrews 13:15 — “Through Him, therefore, let us at all times offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of lips that thankfully acknowledge and confess and glorify His name.”*
- *Psalm 104:33 — “I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.”*

Praise Song or Hymn:

R. Rejoice in Negative Circumstances -

James 1:2-4 is a classic passage. Now, I want you to hear this in the Phillips translation. It says, *when various trials and tribulations crowd into your lives, don't treat them as intruders, but welcome them as friends.* Now, let me ask you a question. Isn't that the most stupid thing you've ever heard? Think of the worst day you've had last month. Terrible. It could be sickness, illness, death, could be any kind of financial other problems. And what James says is when these various trials and tribulations crowd into your lives are piled upon one another, don't treat them as intruders, but embrace them, welcome them as guests. So when I saw Keet earlier or Bob McEwen or some of my other friends, the first thing I did was just give him a big hug. Intruders, we kick out, they shoot them in Texas, but we get rid of them, but with guests, we embrace them.

Now, but it goes on and says this, here's why, *because the trying of your faith produces patience and let patience have its perfecting work in you in order that you become complete and whole wanting nothing.* See, I believe where we all want to be is complete and whole wanting nothing. We want ultimate joy.

We want to be where Paul was, where he said *Philippians 4:11-12, "I've learned to be content in whatever circumstance I'm in, .. I know how to get along with little, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.* Whether I'm healthy or sick, I want the same joy." *In fact, I believe God allows challenges to come into our lives so we can rejoice, embrace them. And over time and through repetition, he weans us from circumstances as a source of our joy and weans us to him alone as the source of our joy.* That is a huge issue. God wants us to be filled with joy, but the way he does it is he weans us away from circumstantial happiness and joy and weans us to him as the sole source of our joy.

So, if I have to go more than 18 inches to find joy, something's wrong. It's not out there. It's right here and it's right here. [Here's the equation, by the way. Problems plus rejoicing or embracing equals patience. Patience plus time and repetition equals completeness. You want to be complete and whole wanting nothing, then learn to rejoice, learn to embrace in difficult circumstances.](#) So, throughout the day, you run into an irritating person, you run into a financial challenge, you run into one of those crazy makers. So, rejoice in negative circumstances.

Rejoice in negative circumstances (trials, suffering, problems) - - Additional Verses from AMP Translation:

- *James 1:2-3 — “Consider it nothing but joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you fall into various trials. Be assured that the testing of your faith [through experience] produces endurance [leading to spiritual maturity, and inner peace].”*
- *Romans 5:3-5 — “And not only this, but [with joy] let us exult in our sufferings and rejoice in our hardships, knowing that hardship (distress, pressure, trouble) produces patient endurance; and endurance, proven character (spiritual maturity); and proven character, hope and confident assurance [of eternal salvation]. Such hope [in God’s promises] never disappoints us, because God’s love has been abundantly poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”*
- *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 — “Rejoice always and delight in your faith; be unceasing and persistent in prayer; in every situation [no matter what the circumstances] be thankful and continually give thanks to God; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”*

Praise Song or Hymn:

E. Experience The Lord in Your Low Points.

Psalm 38 is the key passage there and that's worth reading. But I just want you to just hear a little of this. *Psalm 38. "Oh Lord, do not rebuke me in my anger or discipline me in your wrath for your arrows have pierced me and your hand has come down upon me because your wrath, there is no health in my body. My bones have no soundness because of my sin. My guilt is overwhelming. "He goes on and on and on. And then he says, "But Lord, I bring this all to you. "Now here's the problem. We tend to use life's distractions, when things get tough. [When we're at the low points, instead of turning to God, we tend to turn away from God to distractions.](#) Blaze Pascal said something that was quite profound. He said," We use distractions to basically help cover up our miseries.*

"But then he goes on to say," [Distractions are in fact our greatest misery.](#) "And his point was, " If we don't learn in the times that we're down, that's when God wants to teach us. ["That's why C.S. Lewis said, " God whispers in our pleasure. "He shouts in our pain. He says that our difficulties is God's megaphone to wake up a soulless world. God's trying to get our attention, and if we don't learn and turn to God when things are down, we're going to stay in trouble.](#) And the easy thing to do when we're really miserable is to take

some pills or to drink or to divert ourselves something or get busy, but that is the most fertile time for God to be teaching us. And so, God wants us to lean into him when things are down. So, experience the Lord in your low points.

(22:40):

Years ago, I was working with Art and Nancy DeMoss in Philadelphia. My first job was pastoring there and I was a young guy in my young 20s, mid 20s. I was one of two pastors, a pastor leader, a teaching pastor. They were going to move me into a formal job. And I was with the elders, I remember that day. And we were in this elder meeting and they were going to elevate me for a new role, which was pretty heavy for a young guy. And in the elder meeting, I remember it went sideways. A couple of people made some negative comments about me and they didn't elevate me. And it was so shaming and so embarrassing to me and it hurt so much. It was kind of a death of a vision for me. And I remember going home that night, I just wept.

And I'm not a weeper, just sat outside in our driveway out there in Wayne, Pennsylvania, and I couldn't do anything. I just started singing, "Jesus loves me. This I know. " I was crying and "for the Bible tells me so". It was pathetic and I was pathetic.

(23:53):

But yes, Jesus loves me. I mean, that's all I had in me. I really had nothing else. But, then God started to work in my heart and just tried to understand this, but I had some bitterness. I had to deal with that. I had to forgive these men, and God started to deal with my spirit. And God said, "Ron, just be faithful. Just do what God wants you to do." So, I did, and I started back to work. I kept working at what I was doing and I was being content and joyous and trying to learn what they were saying and how I needed to make changes in my life. And then about six months later, I was on a consulting assignment and I got a call from Bill Bright (Founder of Campus Crusade for Christ) and he said, "Ron, I want to ask you if you had heard that Dr. Harold Ockenga (Princeton to Westminster Theological Seminary – Pastor and Scholar) was going to come be the president of our seminary (The International Christian Graduate University) .

"He was just one of the great Christian leaders of the day. And he said he became quite ill and he said he couldn't do it the last minute. And he said, "I would like you to consider it. "Now I was only 29, by the way. The average student was two years older than I was. So, this was a little crazy. **But bottom line is I ended up doing this, but that would have never happened. Bill may have called me, but I would have been in a different place and not in a place to be ready because God hadn't done the work in my life and hadn't created circumstances in a way that he needed to.** But a lot of that came out of turning to him and experiencing him in my low points. That's when capacity is built in the desert. So let God do that work in your life.

Experience the Lord in your low points (brokenness, valleys, crushed spirit) - Additional Verses from AMP Translation:

• *Psalm 34:18 — “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit.”*

• *Psalm 23:4 — “Even though I walk through the [sunless] valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod [to protect] and Your staff [to guide], they comfort and console me.”*

• *Isaiah 57:15 — “For the high and exalted One He who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy says this, ‘I dwell on the high and holy place, As well as with the contrite and humble in spirit In order to revive the spirit of the humble And to revive the heart of the contrite [subdued by their shortcomings and sins].’”*

Praise Song or Hymn:

S. Seek the Lord,

Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” We seek the Lord all the time. We are to hunger and thirst after righteousness, right? *We're to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.*

We need to seek. "Socrates was walking by the water one day and a young man started to follow him and he said," Socrates, can I be your disciple? "And Socrates didn't say anything but started to walk into the water further and the young man followed further. And he said," Socrates, please let me be your disciple. "He didn't say anything further. Walked a little bit deeper and started to ask him again, Socrates, Socrates. And Socrates reeled around and grabbed the man by the top of the head and pushed him under the water and held him and held him and held him until he knew he could take them more and the man came up gasping for air. Socrates said," Young man, when you desire truth as much as you desire air, then you can be my disciple.

"Well, that's a good principle. Now, God wants us to just want him so deeply, and that means we seek him, we knock, we ask, we're constantly seeking him. There was a place in Philadelphia near my home called the Donuttery. I'm one of these guys who never met a carb but he didn't like. And this Donuttery had these hot cinnamon rolls. And whenever I'd get on Route 30 on the main line, I would just visualize just like Pavlov's dog. I'd start to visualize these hot cinnamon rolls with the butter cascading off the side. I could smell it. I could touch it. I could feel it. I would salivate and start to froth just thinking about the cinnamon roll.

But that's a good principle. That's really scripture, right? *Oh, taste and see, as was quoted earlier, that the Lord is good. I mean, God wants us to seek him and to experience that. He wants it to be emotional, not just intellectual, not just volitional. He wants us to be filled with joy. And so, seek the Lord. By the way, you can seek the Lord in creation. You can seek the Lord in people. You can seek the Lord in the word. You certainly can seek the Lord meditating. That's why I love memorizing memorization and meditation because you can just instantly go into it. You can seek the Lord by using tools like this*

just to constantly create the techniques that transform in your life that allow you to follow him and grow in love with him and practice his presence. So you can seek the Lord all day long.

Seek the Lord - - Additional Verses from AMP Translation:

- *Jeremiah 29:13 — “Then [with a deep longing] you will seek Me and require Me [as a vital necessity] and [you will] find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.”*
- *Matthew 6:33 — “But first and most importantly seek (aim at, strive after) His kingdom and His righteousness [His way of doing and being right—the attitude and character of God], and all these things will be given to you also.”*
- *Psalm 105:4 — “Seek the Lord [search diligently for Him and regard Him as the foremost necessity of your life], And His strength [His power, His excellence, His transcendent glory]; Seek His face continually [longing to be in His presence].”*
- *1 Chronicles 16:11 — “Seek the Lord and His strength; Seek His face continually [longing to be in His presence].”*

Praise Song or Hymn: Seek ye First;

E. Expect the Miraculous.

I believe God wants us to live by faith. *Hebrews 11* talks about that at great length. *Hebrews 11: 1 says that faith is the assurance of things hope for the evidence of things not seen.* And *Hebrews 11:6 says,* "Without faith, it's impossible to please God. "I remember Art DeMoss had a sign/plaque on his table at National Liberty years ago on his desk. He said," Attempt things so great that unless God's in it, it's doomed to failure. "I had the joy of being mentored by Art and by Bill Bright, two guys who did not lack faith. I mean, these guys were unbelievable. Now, by the way, when I say expect the miraculous, the miraculous ranges from God doing things that are just mind blowing. And I think often we have not because we ask not. God is eager to give to us his children.

He wants to do great things for us, in us and through us...all for His Greater Glory. And we've seen just miraculous stories of millions of dollars come in and hours, literally, unbelievable things. And we've seen people's lives transformed and certainly God does healings physically and emotionally and spiritually in lives, but the miraculous and living in faith can be just moment by moment. Lord, I need you right now. It could be, Lord. I can't find my iPhone. Help me find it now. I can't tell you how many times Mary and I have said, okay, okay, we've been looking. I can't find the keys. And literally we'll stop and pray and say, Lord, show us right now. And just inevitably it happens. Now, that's not manipulating God. That's saying God, like we would with our, as parents, if our kids asked for something, we'd try to help them. And God wants to do the same thing.

We live in faith, so we should expect the miraculous. We want to live believing that God will do things in and through us and believe that we are who God says we are. *Ephesians 5:18* says, "Don't be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit." And *Mark 9:23* ... "All things are possible for one who believes."

Expect the miraculous (believe for the impossible/miracles) -- Additional Verses from AMP Translation:

- *Matthew 19:26* — "But Jesus looked at them and said, 'With people [as far as it depends on them] it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'"
- *Mark 9:23* — "Jesus said to him, '[You say to Me,] 'If You can?' All things are possible for the one who believes and trusts [in Me]!'"
- *Luke 1:37* — "For with God nothing [is or ever] shall be impossible."

Praise Song or Hymn: How Great is Our God;

N. Need the Lord.

The key question there is, if I need the Lord, and that means, and I have to think through this daily, "Lord, do I really need you? " This morning, even as I was thinking about speaking, I say, "Lord, let me need you. " See, my biggest challenge is my gifts... like yours. It's easy to lean into our gifts and do things based on our gifts. Now, it's a little easier for me to be dependent upon the Lord TODAY, because I've got little voice trouble today, but I speak all the time, I mean, that's what I do. So it's easy to do that and kind of go on autopilot, but I don't ever want to do that because I want God to use me.

So, I say, "Lord, I need you. I need you to love people through me. I need you to have your wisdom. I need you to work in and through me. " So need the Lord. By the way, *Philippians 4:13* says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. " And the implication is I can do all things, but it's through Christ who strengthens me. I desperately need his strength. And the two implications of that are, number one, I have to realize, as special as I am, I'm not all that much. And so, I have to have some humility. I've got a humility test for you. I want you to think of the last time you were criticized. How did you react? Some of you are looking around at someone right now like, "Yeah, this just happened." Well, think about it.

(31:37):

I remember years ago when I was the new president of the seminary, a student came up to me one day and said, "Can we go out to a lunch?" And I said, "Sure. And over lunch," he said, "You're a great leader and a communicator and a president." So, I picked up the tab and then he said, "There are two more things. They're kind of personal. Can I tell you?" And I said, "Sure," because I knew what he was going to say of all the great leaders have ever lived. Billy Graham and Bill Bright, you're one of them. But he didn't say that. He said, "There's two things in your life I don't think you're aware of that I believe impede

your walk with God and your leadership." And I thought, "Who do you think you are you punk?" I didn't say that.

(32:25):

I said, "Well, tell me what they are. " And he told me one had to do with the way we were raising our kids. I love that. He had been in our home for 30 minutes and had come to some conclusions and another one was some other area of leadership. And I was so incensed as I was leaning forward to give him the benefit of my wisdom. It was as though the Holy Spirit grabbed me by the neck, yanked me back and shook me a couple of times, said, "Hey, hey, hey, Jensen, why are you so upset that someone should see something in your life with which you need to deal? Imagine if he saw everything I see." Yeah. And I said, "Whoa, good point." And so, I thanked him for what he shared with me. And from that point on, I realized the way to deal with criticism, and I do this often today when people criticize me, my response is, "That's nothing. You ought to know me the way I know me. I'm a lot worse than that. "

(33:23):

I mean, do we any of us have any doubt that we're a lot worse than what anybody sees? Man, alive. Bible says our righteousness are like filthy rags. I mean, goodnight folks, we're a mess. So, we need God. God says in *Philippians 2:13* *"God works in us to will, gives us the desire and the power to do his good pleasure"*. We need to lean into him and be filled with his spirit. We need to abide in him. We need to practice his presence. We need to let him live his life through us, the exchange life. And then our job is to discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness. That's our job. God's job is to give us that desire and that power. So need the Lord.

Need the Lord (dependence, apart from Him we can do nothing) -- Additional Verses from AMP Translation:

- *John 15:5 — "I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him bears much fruit, for [otherwise] apart from Me [that is, cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing."*
- *Proverbs 3:5-6 — "Trust in and rely confidently on the Lord with all your heart And do not rely on your own insight or understanding. In all your ways know and acknowledge and recognize Him, And He will make your paths straight and smooth [removing obstacles that block your way]."*
- *Philippians 4:19 — "And my God will liberally supply (fill until full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."*

Praise Song or Hymn: I Need Thee – Matt Mayher

C. Confess Your Sins and Experience God's Forgiveness.

I don't know about you, but I have to confess my sins rather routinely. Now, I believe once we come to know Jesus in a personal way, we are forgiven, past, present, and future. Because the Bible says, *Isaiah 1:18 "Though you are red as Scarlet, now your white is snow, your sins and your lawless deeds, I remember no more."* God, totally, I believe, forgives us, but we don't experience that forgiveness when we get out of fellowship with him. So, *1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, God's faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* So, God wants us to be experiencing his forgiveness routinely. If we're not asking forgiveness of the Lord routinely, it probably says we're not sensitive to how many ways we fall short of what God's best is for in our life. God wants us to experience him by experiencing his forgiveness day in and day out. This is called Spiritual Breathing, confessing our sin (exhale) and breathing in (inhale) a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit.

And the way we do it is I use another acrostic COB. I Confess, I Obey and I Believe. So, I say, *"Lord, I'm so sorry I did this. I agree with you that it was wrong. I yield myself. I obey. I'll do whatever you say now. And Lord, I'm going to believe that you're going to live your life through me today."* And that becomes a way of life, but we confess our sins and experience God's forgiveness.

By the way, part of this too is we've got to learn to confess to others. Sometimes we confess to the Lord, but we've hurt and injured others and we got to make it right with them too. I was speaking to a group of, oh, they're pretty much secular Muslim business people, several thousand in Kuala Lumpur a couple years ago. And I was with their 600 leaders before the big convention and I was teaching them on 12 steps to resolve conflict. Now this is a very secular environment, but these were all biblical principles. Matthew 18, Galatians six: one, one Corinthians 13, biblical stuff, but just didn't use that language, but it works. It always works everywhere.

And after I got done, one of the principles was to seek and grant forgiveness, which was radical in that environment. And when we got done, I asked one of the leaders to come up on stage, his name was Kamal. And he was a key guy there. And I said, "Well, Kamal, do these 12 steps to conflict resolution apply to you guys." He goes, "Oh man, do they apply?" He goes, "We're a mess. We're not good at resolving conflict. We need this. I need this." I said, "Well, good. Well, what stood out to you of what we talked about?" He said, "This idea of asking for forgiveness." He said, "I've never done that. I need to do that right now." I said, "Right now." So here we are in front of 600 leaders. I have a mic, he has a mic and he goes, yes.

And I said, "Well, go for it." So, he calls out the number two guy in this organization. He said his name. And he said, "When I started..." And I gave him four things to say and they were, "I was wrong for doing this. I'm sorry I did this and caused you to feel this way and explain that. I'm going to work hard not to do it again. And then will you forgive me?" And then I asked him to shut up.

So, he was reading through his notes and he said to this guy, "When we started the business, I stole people from you. I undercut you. I stole money from you. I was wrong to do that. I am so sorry." And he said, "Number two, I'm so sorry I did it and caused you shame and lack of money and disrespect and dishonor. I'm ashamed of that now. And thirdly, I'm going to work hard not to do that ever again. And I want you all to hold me accountable."

I mean, this was an incredibly humble model of leadership in front of everybody. And then he said, "Ron, I can't read my fourth thing. What do I say?" And you say, "Will you forgive me and shut up?" So, he said, "Will you forgive me and shut up?" And I said, "No, you don't say shut up." I said, "You just say, will you forgive me? And then you shut up." He said, "Okay." So, he did that. And so, I said to this guy, I said, "Okay, it's on the table. What are you saying?" They were actually around tables. He jumped on the table and he said, "Absolutely." And you could tell just like that, the spirit of the group change because someone had the humility.

This is a secular Muslim marketing guy, had the humility to stand up in front of his leaders and admit in humility that he had screwed up. It's impressive. [Well, that's part of experiencing God's forgiveness. Sometimes we have to extend it to other people.](#)

Confess your sin and receive forgiveness -- Additional Verses from AMP Translation:

• *1 John 1:9 — "If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just [true to His own nature and promises], and will forgive our sins [our lawlessness, our wrongdoings] and cleanse us continually from all unrighteousness [our sins, everything not in conformity with His will and purpose]."*

• *Psalms 32:5 — "I acknowledged my sin to You, And I did not hide my wickedness; I said, 'I will confess [all] my transgressions to the Lord'; And You forgave the guilt of my sin."*

• *Proverbs 28:13 — "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But whoever confesses and turns away from his sins will find compassion and mercy."*

Praise Song or Hymn:

E. Enjoy the Lord –

The final step is to enjoy the Lord, [John 10:10](#), be, just that one portion, that's where Jesus said, ["I've come that you might have life and have it more abundantly."](#) And folks, that's where we want to taste and see that the Lord is good.

(39:18):

[And I believe God's desire for all of us day in and day out. This is something, again, I've practiced for years. He obviously has too, many have around the world, but when I can](#)

practice the presence of God throughout the day, and I'd start four times a day, first thing in the morning, last thing at night, maybe lunch, around dinner, or when you're driving and just come before the Lord and work through this process. *Lord, I just praise you right now for this. Lord, I just rejoice in this negative circumstance that's going on in my life now. Lord, I want to experience you in these low points and turn to the Lord and let him minister to you. I want to seek you. Lord, I'm going to expect the miraculous. I want to believe that you're going to live your life in and through me.*

Enjoy the Lord (delight in God, find joy in Him) -- Additional Verses from AMP Translation:

- Psalm 37:4 — “Delight yourself in the Lord, And He will give you the desires and petitions of your heart.”
- Psalm 16:11 — “You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.”
- Psalm 34:8 — “O taste and see that the Lord [our God] is good; How blessed [fortunate, prosperous, and favored by God] is the man who takes refuge in Him.”

Praise Song or Hymn:

(40:05): **A Model Prayer to us to pray concerning this material by Ron Jenson.**

Lord, I want to really depend upon you. I want to need you. And then Father, I just confess right now whatever I need to confess and I experience your forgiveness. I'm not going to live in guilt and shame. I'm going to live in liberty and freedom and then I'm going to enjoy you. So, the joy of the Lord is my strength, so I become a testimony.

When we do that, then we can live out what I think God wants for us. And one of my favorite verses these days is Ephesians 2:10 that says in one translation, we are God's workmanship created beforehand for good works that would walk in him. Another translation is we're God's masterpiece.

And I really believe that what God wants to do in our lives is turn our lives into masterpieces in every area where we're living the most vibrant, rich, dynamic, full, deep, joyous, hopeful, loving, peaceful, exciting, dynamic, winsome life on the face of the earth because we're God's kids.

That's what God wants to do in our lives. And I think the shortest route between here and there is to learn to practice this presence day in and day out. Thanks guys.