



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

BIBLE FOUNDATIONS

God's Presence

The God Who Is With His People

The Short Answer

God is present everywhere, and no part of creation lies beyond His knowledge or rule. Yet Scripture also describes God making His presence known in particular covenant and redemptive ways - with His people, supremely in Jesus Christ, and now through the Holy Spirit. The Bible's story begins with humanity in God's presence and ends with God dwelling with His redeemed people forever.

Psalms 139:7-10 · Matthew 1:23 · John 1:14 · Revelation 21:3

Opening Memory Anchor

The story of the Bible is the story of God bringing His people back into His presence.



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WELCOME

This guide is meant to send you back to Scripture

Few Christian phrases are used more often than:

"God is with you."

"Come into God's presence."

"I felt God's presence."

"God seemed far away."

But what does Scripture actually mean by God's presence?

If God is everywhere, how can anyone enter His presence?

Was God more present in the tabernacle or temple?

Did Jesus change the way humanity experiences God's presence?

What happens when the Holy Spirit comes to live within believers?

Can Christians lose God's presence?

Why does God sometimes feel distant?

And what does the Bible mean when it promises that God will eventually dwell with His people forever?

These questions become clearer when God's presence is traced through the whole biblical story.



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PART ONE

BEGINNER GUIDE

The God Who Is With His People

Memory Anchor

The story of the Bible is the story of God bringing His people back into His presence.



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1. WHAT DOES "GOD'S PRESENCE" MEAN?

At its simplest, God's presence means God is truly present.

He is not merely an idea.

He is not a distant force.

He is not part of creation.

He is the living Creator who knows, sustains, governs, speaks, acts, loves, judges, saves, and relates personally to His creatures.

Scripture also uses presence language in different ways, so context matters.

2. IS GOD EVERYWHERE?

Yes.

The theological word for this is omnipresence.

Psalm 139 asks:

Where could someone go from God's Spirit?

Where could someone flee from His presence?

The answer is nowhere.

Heaven cannot contain God.

The deepest places cannot escape Him.

Distance does not remove anyone from His knowledge or rule.

Read Psalm 139:7-12; Jeremiah 23:23-24; Acts 17:24-28.

3. DOES OMNIPRESENCE MEAN GOD IS EVERYTHING?

No.

Christianity does not teach that God and creation are the same thing.

God created the universe.

He is present throughout creation, but He is distinct from what He created.

A tree is not God.

A mountain is not God.

A person is not God.

Creation displays God's glory and depends upon Him, but the Creator is not identical with His creation.

Read Genesis 1:1; Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:20.

4. IS GOD EQUALLY PRESENT EVERYWHERE?

This question requires an important distinction.

In one sense, yes: God is not divided into pieces, with more of Him in one geographic location than another.

But Scripture also describes God making His presence known or manifested in particular ways.

God appeared to Moses at the burning bush.

His glory filled the tabernacle.

His glory filled the temple.

Jesus physically walked among people.

The Holy Spirit came upon the Church at Pentecost.

These events do not mean God had previously been absent from the universe.

They describe special manifestations of His presence and activity.

Memory Anchor

God is everywhere, but He does not reveal His presence everywhere in exactly the same way.

5. WHERE DOES THE BIBLE'S STORY OF GOD'S PRESENCE BEGIN?

In Eden.



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Genesis presents humanity living in fellowship with God.

Adam and Eve were created in God's image and given responsibility within His good creation.

Genesis 3 describes God walking in the garden.

The opening chapters therefore picture something humanity later desperately needs restored: people living openly and peacefully with God.

Read Genesis 1-3.

6. WHAT DID SIN DO TO HUMANITY'S EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PRESENCE?

Sin brought alienation.

After Adam and Eve sinned, they hid from God.

They were expelled from Eden.

This did not mean they had discovered a location where the omnipresent God could not reach them.

Their relationship with God had been broken by sin.

Humanity's problem is therefore not simply geographic distance from God.

It is spiritual alienation from the holy God.

Read Genesis 3:6-24; Isaiah 59:1-2.

7. WHY IS GOD'S HOLINESS IMPORTANT WHEN TALKING ABOUT HIS PRESENCE?

Because sinful humanity cannot treat the presence of the holy God casually.

God's presence is wonderful.

It is also holy.

Throughout Scripture, encounters with God often produce awe, reverence, and awareness of sin.

Moses removed his sandals.

Isaiah cried out over his uncleanness.

Peter became deeply aware of his sinfulness before Jesus.

God's presence is not merely a pleasant spiritual feeling.

It is the presence of the holy God.

Read Exodus 3:1-6; Isaiah 6:1-7; Luke 5:1-11.

8. HOW DID GOD MAKE HIS PRESENCE KNOWN TO ISRAEL?

After delivering Israel from Egypt, God made His presence known in remarkable ways.

He led Israel with the pillar of cloud and fire.

He met Moses at Sinai.

He instructed Israel to build the tabernacle.

God declared:

"Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God."

Read Exodus 13:21-22; 19; 25:8; 29:42-46.

9. WHAT WAS THE TABERNACLE?

The tabernacle was the portable sanctuary God commanded Israel to build.

It stood at the center of Israel's camp.

Its location communicated something important:

God desired to dwell among His covenant people.

But access was carefully regulated.

Courtyards, holy spaces, priests, sacrifices, and the Most Holy Place all taught Israel that sinful people cannot casually approach a holy God.

10. WHAT WAS THE MOST HOLY PLACE?

The Most Holy Place was the innermost part of the tabernacle and later the temple.

The ark of the covenant was placed there.

Only the high priest entered this sacred space, and normally only once each year on the Day of Atonement.



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The arrangement communicated both:
God is dwelling among His people.
and
Sin prevents unrestricted access to Him.

Read Leviticus 16; Hebrews 9:1-10.

11. WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE TABERNACLE WAS COMPLETED?

The glory of the LORD filled it.

Moses could not enter because the cloud rested upon the tabernacle and God's glory filled it.

This visible manifestation confirmed that God had come to dwell among His covenant people in the way He had promised.

Read Exodus 40:34-38.

12. WHAT DOES "THE GLORY OF GOD" HAVE TO DO WITH HIS PRESENCE?

God's glory refers to the majesty, weight, beauty, holiness, and splendor of who He is.

Sometimes Scripture describes God's glory becoming visibly manifest.

The cloud over the tabernacle and the glory filling the temple are examples.

God's glory should not be reduced to a physical glow or emotional sensation.

It describes the magnificent reality of God Himself being revealed.

13. WHAT DID MOSES MEAN WHEN HE SAID GOD'S PRESENCE MUST GO WITH ISRAEL?

After Israel's sin with the golden calf, Moses pleaded with God.

God told Moses:

"My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Moses responded that if God's presence did not go with them, they should not leave.

Moses understood that Israel's greatest distinction was not land, military strength, wealth, or national identity.

It was God dwelling among them.

Read Exodus 32-34, especially Exodus 33:12-17.

Memory Anchor

God's greatest gift to His people is ultimately God Himself.

14. DID GOD LIVE INSIDE THE TABERNACLE AS THOUGH HE WERE CONFINED THERE?

No.

God cannot be contained by a building.

Even when Solomon later dedicated the temple, he acknowledged:

"The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!"

The tabernacle and temple were places where God chose to make His covenant presence known.

They did not contain the infinite God.

Read 1 Kings 8:22-30.

15. WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT?

When Solomon dedicated the temple, the glory of the LORD filled it.

The priests could not perform their service because of the cloud.

The temple became the central place associated with worship, sacrifice, priesthood, and God's covenant presence among Israel.

Read 1 Kings 8:1-13; 2 Chronicles 5:13-14.



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16. COULD ISRAEL TAKE GOD'S PRESENCE FOR GRANTED?

No.

One of Israel's recurring mistakes was assuming that possessing sacred institutions guaranteed God's approval. Jeremiah later confronted people who trusted in the temple while continuing in serious sin.

The building was not a magical guarantee of protection.

God wanted faithful covenant relationship, not merely religious activity.

Read Jeremiah 7:1-15.

17. DID GOD'S GLORY EVER DEPART FROM THE TEMPLE?

Yes.

In Ezekiel's vision, persistent idolatry and rebellion are followed by a devastating picture of God's glory departing from the temple.

The message is severe:

Israel could not continually reject God while presuming upon the symbol of His presence.

Yet Ezekiel later receives visions of restoration and renewed divine presence.

Read Ezekiel 8-11; 43:1-5.

18. DID GOD ABANDON HIS PEOPLE DURING EXILE?

No.

The temple was destroyed and many Israelites were carried into exile.

But God was not geographically trapped in Jerusalem.

He continued speaking through prophets and working among His people in foreign lands.

Ezekiel encountered God in Babylon.

Daniel served God in Babylon.

The exile demonstrated that God's sovereignty and presence extended far beyond Israel's borders.

19. WHAT DID THE PROPHETS PROMISE ABOUT GOD'S FUTURE PRESENCE?

The prophets looked toward restoration.

They anticipated:

- God dwelling with His people,
- renewed hearts,
- cleansing from sin,
- the gift of God's Spirit,
- restored worship,
- and a future in which God's presence would be known in extraordinary ways.

Read Isaiah 7:14; Ezekiel 36:24-28; 37:26-28; Joel 2:28-32.

These promises prepare the reader for Jesus.

20. WHAT DOES "IMMANUEL" MEAN?

Immanuel means "God with us."

Matthew connects Jesus' birth with Isaiah's Immanuel prophecy.

This is one of the Bible's clearest statements about the identity and mission of Jesus.

God's answer to humanity's separation from Him is not merely to send information.

God comes to us in the Son.

Read Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23.

21. HOW IS JESUS DIFFERENT FROM THE TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE?

John 1:14 says the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

The language deliberately echoes the idea of God dwelling or "tabernacling" among His people.

In Jesus, God's presence is no longer centered upon a tent or stone building.



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The eternal Son has taken on human flesh.
Jesus is not merely someone who enters God's presence.
He is God the Son present among us.

Read John 1:1-18.

22. IS JESUS REALLY GOD PRESENT WITH HUMANITY?

Yes.

The New Testament presents Jesus as fully divine and fully human.

Jesus can say:

"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

Paul says that in Christ all the fullness of Deity lives bodily.

Jesus reveals God personally because He shares the divine identity.

Read John 14:8-11; Colossians 1:15-20; 2:9.

23. DID JESUS REPLACE THE TEMPLE?

Jesus fulfills what the temple anticipated in a profound way.

When Jesus spoke about destroying "this temple" and raising it in three days, John explains that He was speaking about His body.

Jesus is where God and humanity meet.

He is the true mediator.

His death provides access to God that the old sacrificial system anticipated but could not finally accomplish.

Read John 2:13-22; Hebrews 9-10.

24. WHY DID THE TEMPLE CURTAIN TEAR WHEN JESUS DIED?

At Jesus' death, the temple curtain was torn from top to bottom.

That curtain had marked the restricted access associated with the Most Holy Place.

Hebrews explains that through Jesus' sacrifice believers now have confidence to enter God's presence.

The message is extraordinary:

Through Christ, the barrier created by sin has been dealt with.

Read Matthew 27:50-51; Hebrews 10:19-22.

Memory Anchor

Jesus does not merely show the way into God's presence. Through Him, the way has been opened.

25. WHAT DID JESUS PROMISE BEFORE RETURNING TO THE FATHER?

Jesus promised that His followers would not be abandoned.

He promised the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit would teach them, remind them of Jesus' words, testify about Christ, guide them, and remain with them.

Jesus said:

"I will not leave you as orphans."

Read John 14-16.

26. WHAT HAPPENED AT PENTECOST?

The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' followers in a powerful and visible way.

Acts describes wind-like sound, tongues as of fire, and believers speaking in other languages.

Pentecost marks a major moment in God's redemptive plan.

The promised Spirit has been poured out.

God now dwells within His people in a new-covenant way.

Read Acts 2:1-41.



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27. DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVE IN EVERY CHRISTIAN?

Yes.

The New Testament teaches that those who belong to Christ have the Spirit of Christ.

Paul tells believers that God's Spirit dwells in them.

The Spirit's indwelling is not reserved for unusually spiritual Christians.

It belongs to Christian identity.

Read Romans 8:9-17; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 1:13-14.

28. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT A CHRISTIAN IS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Paul tells believers that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.

This means Christian life is lived in the reality of God's indwelling Spirit.

The statement carries moral significance.

Because believers belong to God, what they do with their bodies matters.

God's presence should shape holiness, worship, relationships, sexuality, service, and everyday obedience.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.

29. IS THE CHURCH ALSO GOD'S TEMPLE?

Yes.

The New Testament uses temple imagery both individually and corporately.

Believers together are described as God's temple and a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Christianity is therefore not merely:

"God lives in me."

It is also:

"God is forming a people in whom He dwells."

Read 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5.

30. IS GOD MORE PRESENT INSIDE A CHURCH BUILDING?

Not in the way God's covenant presence was associated with Israel's temple.

A church building can be dedicated to worship and used for holy purposes, but the New Testament identifies God's people, not the building, as His temple.

The Church is not primarily a place Christians go.

It is the people Christ has redeemed.

A sanctuary can help believers worship together.

But God is not confined to the sanctuary.

31. THEN WHY DOES GATHERED WORSHIP MATTER?

Because God designed Christians to follow Jesus together.

The gathered Church hears Scripture, prays, sings, receives teaching, participates in baptism and the Lord's Supper, encourages one another, uses spiritual gifts, and worships as Christ's body.

God's presence within individual believers does not make Christian community unnecessary.

The same Spirit who indwells believers also joins them into one body.

Read Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 12; Hebrews 10:24-25.

32. WHAT DOES "WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED" MEAN?

Matthew 18:20 is frequently quoted as a general promise about small worship gatherings:

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Jesus certainly is with His people.

But the immediate context concerns confronting sin, church discipline, witnesses, agreement, and the authority Jesus gives His gathered disciples.

The verse should not be treated as though Jesus becomes present only after a second Christian enters the room.

Read Matthew 18:15-20.



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33. CAN A CHRISTIAN BE ALONE AND STILL BE IN GOD'S PRESENCE?

Absolutely.

God's presence is not dependent upon another Christian being physically nearby.

Jesus often withdrew to pray.

Paul worshiped while imprisoned.

John received Revelation while exiled on Patmos.

The indwelling Spirit does not leave because a believer is physically alone.

34. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "ENTER GOD'S PRESENCE"?

Christians sometimes use this phrase during worship or prayer.

It can be helpful if understood correctly.

Believers do not travel from a place where God is absent into a geographic zone where God exists.

Through Christ, believers already have access to God.

To "enter His presence" can therefore describe consciously turning attention toward God in worship, prayer, reverence, and fellowship.

But God was already present before the feeling began.

35. DOES WORSHIP "BRING DOWN" GOD'S PRESENCE?

Christians should use this language carefully.

Scripture certainly records occasions when God manifests His presence powerfully during worship.

But human music does not summon God or manipulate Him into appearing.

Worship responds to God.

The Holy Spirit is already present with and within believers.

Music may help people focus their attention on God, but emotional intensity should not automatically be identified with divine presence.

36. IS FEELING GOD'S PRESENCE THE SAME AS GOD BEING PRESENT?

No.

A person may feel deeply aware of God's presence.

That experience can be genuine and precious.

But feelings are not the measure of whether God is actually present.

A believer may feel:

peaceful,

overwhelmed,

joyful,

dry,

distracted,

afraid,

numb,

or emotionally exhausted.

God's faithfulness does not fluctuate with emotional awareness.

Memory Anchor

God's presence is a reality before it becomes a feeling.

37. CAN MUSIC CREATE A FALSE SENSE OF GOD'S PRESENCE?

Music strongly affects human emotion.

That is not bad. God created human beings with emotional capacities, and Scripture repeatedly joins music and worship.



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But goosebumps, tears, excitement, silence, or emotional intensity do not prove that God is manifesting His presence in a special way.

Christian discernment asks:

Is Christ being honored?

Is Scripture being handled faithfully?

Is truth being proclaimed?

Is the Spirit producing godly fruit?

Emotion can accompany worship without becoming the test of truth.

38. WHY DOES GOD SOMETIMES FEEL FAR AWAY?

There can be many reasons.

A person may be:

grieving,

exhausted,

depressed,

distracted,

suffering,

spiritually dry,

struggling with doubt,

living with consequences of sin,

or simply passing through a season where God does not feel emotionally near.

Scripture contains faithful believers asking why God seems distant.

The feeling should be taken seriously without automatically treating it as proof that God has left.

Read Psalm 13; Psalm 42-43; Psalm 88.

39. CAN SIN AFFECT FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD?

Yes.

Sin matters.

Christians should never use God's omnipresence or the Spirit's indwelling to make rebellion seem harmless.

Sin can grieve the Holy Spirit, damage fellowship, harden hearts, disrupt relationships, and bring loving discipline.

But believers should distinguish damaged fellowship from the idea that God physically disappears every time someone sins.

Read Ephesians 4:25-32; Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 John 1:5-2:2.

40. WHAT SHOULD A CHRISTIAN DO WHEN GOD FEELS DISTANT?

Begin with what Scripture makes clear.

Pray honestly.

Confess known sin.

Read Scripture.

Remember the Gospel.

Stay connected to mature Christians.

Continue ordinary obedience.

Ask for prayer.

Rest when exhaustion is contributing.

Seek appropriate professional help when emotional or psychological struggles require it.

Do not manufacture an experience.

And do not assume silence means abandonment.

41. DID JESUS EVER EXPERIENCE GOD-FORSAKENNESS?

On the cross Jesus cried:

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"



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He was quoting Psalm 22.

Christians have described the mystery of this moment in different ways, but Scripture clearly connects Jesus' death with bearing sin and judgment on behalf of sinners.

The Father and Son did not cease to share the divine being.

The Trinity did not break apart.

Jesus truly entered the horror and judgment associated with human sin while accomplishing redemption.

Read Psalm 22; Matthew 27:45-50; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24.

42. DID THE FATHER STOP LOVING JESUS ON THE CROSS?

No.

Jesus' sacrifice occurred within the loving purpose of Father, Son, and Spirit.

The Father sent the Son.

The Son willingly laid down His life.

Hebrews describes Christ offering Himself through the eternal Spirit.

The cross should not be pictured as an angry Father forcing an unwilling Son to suffer.

Jesus willingly gives Himself for sinners.

Read John 3:16; 10:17-18; Hebrews 9:14.

43. WHAT IS THE GREATEST ASSURANCE OF GOD'S PRESENCE FOR CHRISTIANS?

Jesus Himself.

Before ascending, Jesus told His disciples:

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The risen Christ commissions His people and promises His continuing presence.

Christians carry out His mission knowing they have not been abandoned.

Read Matthew 28:18-20.

44. WHAT SHOULD A CHRISTIAN REMEMBER ON A DAY WHEN GOD FEELS ABSENT?

Remember:

God is not limited by geography.

Jesus has reconciled believers to God.

The Holy Spirit dwells in those who belong to Christ.

Feelings are real but not infallible.

God hears prayer.

Scripture remains true.

The Church provides companionship.

Christ promised to remain with His people.

And the day is coming when faith will become sight.

Beginner Memory Anchor

God may sometimes feel far away, but His faithfulness is greater than the feeling.

BEGINNER SUMMARY

God is present everywhere.

But throughout Scripture, He also makes His presence known in particular covenant and redemptive ways.

Humanity begins in fellowship with God in Eden.

Sin brings alienation.

God dwells among Israel through the tabernacle and temple.

The prophets promise something greater.

Jesus comes as Immanuel - God with us.



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Through His death, the barrier of sin is dealt with.
The Holy Spirit comes to dwell within God's people.
The Church becomes God's dwelling place by the Spirit.
And Scripture ends with the great promise toward which the entire story has been moving:
God will dwell with His redeemed people forever.



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PART TWO

WANT TO GO DEEPER?

INTERMEDIATE

Omnipresence, Divine Manifestation, the Holy Spirit, Union With Christ, and New Creation

Reader Safeguard

Part Two introduces several theological distinctions that help explain difficult passages.

You do not need to master these categories to know that God is truly with His people.

The purpose is to make important distinctions clearer - not to turn God's presence into an abstract theological puzzle.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

45. WHAT DOES "OMNIPRESENCE" ACTUALLY MEAN?

Omnipresence means God is fully present everywhere according to His divine nature.

God does not occupy space like a physical object.

He is not stretched across the universe.

He is not partly present in one location and partly present somewhere else.

God transcends created space while remaining actively present throughout creation.

Solomon captures the mystery:

Even the highest heaven cannot contain Him.

Read 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:7-12; Jeremiah 23:23-24.

46. WHAT BIBLICAL WORDS HELP EXPLAIN GOD'S PRESENCE?

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *panim* literally refers to the "face" and can be used in expressions describing someone's presence.

This helps explain why Scripture can speak about being before God's "face" or presence.

The Hebrew verb *shakan* means to dwell or settle and is important in passages describing God dwelling among His people.

The related later Jewish term *Shekinah* is often used in Christian teaching for God's manifested glorious presence. However, "Shekinah" itself is not a biblical word.

In the New Testament, the Greek verb *skenoo* means to dwell or tabernacle. John 1:14 uses this language when describing the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among humanity.

These word connections illuminate the biblical storyline, but theology should be built from the passages themselves rather than from dictionary definitions alone.

Read Exodus 25:8; 33:14-15; John 1:14; Revelation 21:3.

47. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OMNIPRESENCE AND MANIFEST PRESENCE?

This distinction can be useful.

Omnipresence describes the reality that God is everywhere.

Manifest presence is a theological phrase Christians sometimes use for occasions when God makes His presence particularly evident through revelation, glory, power, judgment, blessing, or other activity.

The burning bush is one example.

Sinai is another.

The glory filling the tabernacle and temple are others.

Pentecost is another dramatic divine manifestation.

The phrase can be useful as long as it does not imply God was literally absent beforehand.

48. WHAT IS GOD'S COVENANT PRESENCE?

God's covenant presence describes His special relational commitment to dwell with His people according to His promises.

This theme runs throughout Scripture:

"I will be their God, and they will be my people."

God is omnipresent among everyone.

But Scripture also speaks of Him being "with" His covenant people in a special relational and redemptive sense.

Read Leviticus 26:11-12; Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Revelation 21:3.

49. WHY DO THESE DISTINCTIONS MATTER?

Without them, Bible passages can appear contradictory.

How can David ask God not to cast him from His presence if God is everywhere?

How can God's glory depart from the temple if God is omnipresent?

How can Christians enter God's presence if He is already present?

How can Jesus promise to be with His disciples if He is divine and therefore already omnipresent?



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The answer is that presence language does not always describe the same aspect of God's presence. Context determines the meaning.

50. WHAT DID DAVID MEAN BY "DO NOT CAST ME FROM YOUR PRESENCE"?

Psalm 51 records David's repentance after his sin involving Bathsheba and Uriah.

He pleads:

"Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me."

David was not afraid God would cease being omnipresent.

His prayer must be understood against the Old Testament covenant setting and especially what happened to Saul, from whom the Spirit's empowering presence departed in connection with his kingship.

David is pleading for mercy, restoration, and continued covenant relationship.

Read 1 Samuel 16:13-14; Psalm 51.

51. CAN CHRISTIANS PRAY "DO NOT TAKE YOUR HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME"?

Christians can certainly pray Psalm 51 and learn from David's repentance.

But the new-covenant situation must also be recognized.

The New Testament describes believers as:

indwelt by the Spirit,

sealed with the Spirit,

and given the Spirit as a guarantee of their inheritance.

Therefore, Christians should not automatically assume David's experience as an Old Testament king maps directly onto new-covenant indwelling.

Read Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30.

52. CAN A TRUE CHRISTIAN LOSE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

This question connects with the larger Christian debate about perseverance and apostasy.

Christians agree that the Holy Spirit genuinely indwells those who belong to Christ and that believers are warned not to grieve or resist His work.

Reformed traditions generally understand the Spirit's sealing and God's preserving grace as ensuring the final perseverance of genuine believers.

Arminian and Wesleyan traditions generally affirm genuine Spirit-indwelling while allowing that a believer may later abandon faith.

The traditions therefore differ over whether final apostasy of a genuine believer is possible.

This study does not need to repeat the entire perseverance debate in order to make its central point:

The Holy Spirit is not a temporary spiritual mood. He is God's gift to those who belong to Christ.

For a fuller discussion of perseverance, preservation, and apostasy, see Study #106 - God's Faithfulness.

53. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "SEALED" WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Paul says believers were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when they believed.

A seal could indicate ownership, authenticity, or security.

Paul also describes the Spirit as a deposit or guarantee of the inheritance to come.

The Spirit's presence therefore points both backward and forward:

God has claimed His people in Christ.

And God has begun what He intends to bring to completion.

Read Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22.

54. WHAT IS UNION WITH CHRIST?

Union with Christ is a major New Testament way of describing the believer's relationship with Jesus.

Christians are repeatedly described as being:

"in Christ."

Jesus also speaks of believers abiding in Him.

Union with Christ means salvation is more than receiving benefits from Jesus at a distance.



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Believers are joined to Christ through faith by the Holy Spirit and share in the saving benefits of His death and resurrection.

Read John 15:1-11; Romans 6:1-11; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 1.

55. HOW DOES UNION WITH CHRIST RELATE TO GOD'S PRESENCE?

It deepens the idea considerably.

Christianity is not simply:

"God is somewhere nearby helping me."

Through the Holy Spirit, believers belong to Christ and Christ dwells in them.

Paul can speak of:

Christ in believers,

believers in Christ,

and the Spirit dwelling within believers.

These descriptions reveal extraordinary relational intimacy without erasing the distinction between Creator and creature.

This also shows why Christian teaching about God's presence must be Trinitarian.

The Father sends the Son.

The Son reveals the Father and accomplishes redemption.

The Father and Son send the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit unites believers to Christ and brings them into fellowship with the Father through the Son.

Jesus can therefore promise His disciples His continuing presence while also promising that the Holy Spirit will dwell within them.

These are not competing presences.

They describe the saving work of the one triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Read John 14:15-23; Romans 8:9-17; Ephesians 2:18.

Memory Anchor

God's presence is personal and Trinitarian: from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit.

56. DO CHRISTIANS BECOME DIVINE BECAUSE GOD DWELLS IN THEM?

No.

God's indwelling does not turn human beings into gods.

Believers remain creatures.

They are adopted, redeemed, sanctified, and brought into communion with God by grace.

Second Peter speaks about believers participating in the divine nature, but the context concerns escaping corruption and sharing in the life God gives - not becoming equal with God or possessing His divine essence.

Read 2 Peter 1:3-4.

57. WHAT DOES JESUS MEAN BY "ABIDE IN ME"?

In John 15, Jesus uses the image of a vine and branches.

Branches cannot bear fruit independently of the vine.

Likewise, disciples depend completely upon Christ for spiritual life and fruitfulness.

To abide involves continuing in relationship with Christ, His Word, His love, and obedient discipleship.

It is not primarily a technique for generating a mystical feeling.

Read John 15:1-17.

58. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "PRACTICE THE PRESENCE OF GOD"?

The phrase is associated especially with Brother Lawrence, a seventeenth-century Catholic Carmelite lay brother, whose conversations and letters were later collected in *The Practice of the Presence of God*.

The phrase generally describes cultivating ongoing awareness of God during ordinary life.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

The phrase itself is not a biblical command, but the underlying practice can reflect biblical truths:

pray continually,
set the mind on things above,
give thanks,
walk by the Spirit,
remember God,
and do everything for His glory.

The practice becomes unhealthy if it turns into constant emotional self-monitoring:

"Do I feel God right now?"

The goal is faithful awareness, not spiritual anxiety.

59. SHOULD CHRISTIANS SEEK GOD'S PRESENCE?

Yes - if the phrase is understood biblically.

Scripture repeatedly tells people to seek God, draw near to Him, pray, worship, and pursue fellowship with Him. But Christians are not searching for a God who has disappeared.

Through Christ they have access to the Father by the Spirit.

Seeking God therefore means intentionally turning toward the God who has already graciously drawn near.

Read Psalm 27:8; James 4:8; Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-22.

60. WHAT DOES JAMES MEAN BY "DRAW NEAR TO GOD"?

James 4:8 promises:

"Come near to God and he will come near to you."

The surrounding passage concerns repentance, humility, resisting the devil, cleansing sinful behavior, and submitting to God.

It is not a formula for generating a supernatural sensation.

Drawing near means turning toward God in humble repentance and submission.

Read James 4:1-10.

61. DOES PRAYER CHANGE GOD'S DISTANCE FROM US?

Not geographically.

Prayer changes the relationship and interaction of the person praying with God.

In prayer believers consciously address the Father through the Son in the Spirit.

They bring praise, confession, thanksgiving, lament, questions, needs, and intercession.

Prayer is communion with the God who is already present.

62. WHY DOES SILENCE MATTER IN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY?

Silence can help remove distractions and focus attention upon God.

Jesus Himself withdrew to quiet places to pray.

But silence is not automatically more spiritual than spoken prayer, singing, Scripture reading, service, or Christian fellowship.

God is not discovered through a particular volume level.

Silence is a tool.

It is not the presence of God itself.

63. SHOULD CHRISTIANS EXPECT TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE IN HIS PRESENCE?

Christians agree that God speaks authoritatively through Scripture.

They differ regarding whether and how God may provide individual impressions, promptings, prophetic words, or other forms of guidance today.

Whatever position is held, subjective impressions should never outrank or contradict Scripture.

A strong feeling during prayer is not automatically a message from God.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

Discernment Safeguard

God's presence should never be used to give personal impressions unquestionable divine authority.

"God told me" can become spiritually manipulative when used to control another person.

Test claims carefully.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22; 1 John 4:1.

64. CAN GOD'S PRESENCE BE USED MANIPULATIVELY?

Unfortunately, yes.

A leader might imply:

"If you do not feel God here, something is wrong with you."

A worship environment might intentionally use emotional pressure while claiming every response is supernatural.

Someone might claim special access to God's presence in order to gain authority over others.

Biblical leadership points people toward Christ and Scripture rather than creating dependence upon a personality, atmosphere, or spiritual elite.

65. WHAT IS A "THIN PLACE"?

The expression "thin place" is especially associated with Celtic Christian spirituality and later devotional language.

It describes a place where the boundary between heaven and earth is poetically said to feel "thin," or where someone experiences an unusual awareness of God.

The language can poetically describe meaningful experiences.

But Scripture does not teach that certain geographic locations contain a greater concentration of God's divine being.

A place may carry sacred memories or become associated with extraordinary acts of God.

But God remains omnipresent.

66. ARE SOME PLACES HOLY?

Scripture sometimes designates places as holy because God has set them apart for His purposes or manifested His presence there.

The ground around the burning bush was holy because God was revealing Himself there.

The tabernacle and temple contained holy spaces.

Under the new covenant, however, holiness is increasingly centered upon Christ and His Spirit-indwelt people rather than sacred geography.

67. WHAT ABOUT PILGRIMAGE TO BIBLICAL SITES?

Visiting biblical locations can deepen historical understanding and make Scripture's geography more vivid.

Christians may find such travel spiritually meaningful.

But being physically closer to Jerusalem does not make someone spiritually closer to God.

Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman points beyond competing sacred locations toward worship in Spirit and truth.

Read John 4:19-24.

68. WHAT DOES GOD'S PRESENCE HAVE TO DO WITH MISSION?

Everything.

The Great Commission ends with Jesus' promise:

"I am with you always."

Mission does not depend merely upon human courage.

The risen Christ sends His disciples with His authority and presence.

Acts then shows the Holy Spirit empowering the Church to bear witness from Jerusalem outward to the nations.

Read Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

69. WHAT DOES GOD'S PRESENCE HAVE TO DO WITH SUFFERING?

Scripture does not promise that God's presence prevents suffering.

It promises something deeper:

God can be with His people within suffering.

Joseph experienced God's presence in slavery and prison.

David knew God in danger.

Daniel encountered God in exile.

Paul worshiped in prison.

Jesus entered suffering Himself.

God's presence does not make pain unreal.

It means suffering does not have to be faced alone.

70. WHAT DOES PSALM 23 TEACH ABOUT GOD'S PRESENCE?

Psalm 23 does not say the faithful person avoids the darkest valley.

It says:

"You are with me."

That may be the theological center of the psalm.

The Shepherd's presence - not the absence of danger - is the source of confidence.

Memory Anchor

Biblical security is not always "nothing bad will happen." Sometimes it is "You are with me."

71. WHAT DOES ISAIAH 43 MEAN BY "WHEN YOU PASS THROUGH THE WATERS"?

God promised covenant Israel that He would be with them through waters, rivers, and fire.

The passage recalls God's saving relationship with Israel and should first be understood in that covenant context.

It should not be turned into a promise that every Christian will survive every physical danger.

But it reveals something consistently true about God's character:

He does not abandon His redemptive purposes or forget those who belong to Him.

Read Isaiah 43:1-7.

72. WHAT IF SOMEONE PRAYED FOR GOD'S PRESENCE AND STILL FELT ALONE?

The prayer was not necessarily unanswered.

Emotional awareness of God and the reality of God are not identical.

Sometimes the most faithful prayer is:

"God, I cannot feel You, but help me trust what You have revealed."

Christians should also resist turning every experience of loneliness into a purely spiritual problem.

Human beings need sleep, friendship, community, touch, conversation, medical care, counseling, and other forms of support.

God often cares for people through ordinary means.

73. WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA?

Trauma can profoundly affect a person's sense of safety, trust, closeness, and emotional awareness.

Someone may intellectually believe God is present while finding closeness frightening or difficult to experience.

That should not be treated as spiritual failure.

Patient Christian community, wise pastoral care, appropriate counseling, and time may all be part of healing.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

Pastoral Safeguard

Never tell a traumatized person:

"If you really trusted God, you would feel His presence."

God's reality is not measured by someone's nervous system response.

74. CAN GOD'S PRESENCE FEEL FRIGHTENING?

Yes.

Biblical encounters with God are not always emotionally soothing.

Isaiah was overwhelmed.

Ezekiel fell facedown.

Daniel lost strength.

John fell at Jesus' feet.

The holiness and majesty of God can produce reverent fear.

The biblical presence of God should therefore not be reduced to peaceful background music and comforting feelings.

Read Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 1; Daniel 10; Revelation 1:9-18.

75. IS FEAR OF GOD INCOMPATIBLE WITH HIS LOVING PRESENCE?

No.

Biblical fear of God includes reverence, awe, submission, and recognition of His holiness.

For those reconciled to God through Christ, reverent fear is not the same as terror of arbitrary condemnation.

Christians approach God confidently because of Jesus while still recognizing the majesty of the One they approach.

Read Hebrews 4:14-16; 12:28-29.

76. WHAT DOES HEBREWS MEAN BY ENTERING THE MOST HOLY PLACE?

Hebrews uses tabernacle imagery to explain what Jesus has accomplished.

Under the old covenant, access to the Most Holy Place was severely restricted.

Through Jesus' blood, believers now have confidence to draw near to God.

The imagery is astonishing.

What was once represented by restricted access has been transformed through Christ's completed sacrifice.

Read Hebrews 9-10.

77. IS A PRIEST STILL NEEDED TO ENTER GOD'S PRESENCE?

Yes - but not an earthly priest standing between ordinary Christians and God in the way Israel's Levitical priesthood functioned.

Jesus is the great High Priest.

Through Him believers approach the Father.

The New Testament also describes God's people collectively as a holy and royal priesthood.

Read Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:23-28; 1 Peter 2:4-10.

78. HOW DO BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER RELATE TO GOD'S PRESENCE?

Jesus gave His Church visible practices that continually point believers back to Him and the Gospel.

Baptism

Baptism belongs naturally near the beginning of visible Christian discipleship.

Jesus commanded His followers to baptize:

"in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Christian baptism is therefore profoundly Trinitarian.

It publicly identifies the believer with:



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

the Father who loved,
the Son who came, died, and rose,
and
the Holy Spirit who gives life and dwells within God's people.

Read Matthew 28:18-20.

Baptism also powerfully portrays the believer's union with Christ.

Romans 6 connects baptism with:

Christ's death,
Christ's burial,
Christ's resurrection,
and
new life in Him.

The believer goes beneath the water and rises again.

The picture is unmistakable:

buried with Christ,
raised to new life.

But the water itself does not create the saving reality it portrays.

Jesus saves.

Baptism should therefore not be reduced to either extreme:

"Baptism replaces faith."

or

"Baptism is practically meaningless."

The New Testament treats baptism seriously because it visibly declares something extraordinary:

"I belong to Jesus Christ."

Read Romans 6:1-11; Galatians 3:26-29.

Baptism and the Holy Spirit

Water baptism should also be distinguished from the Holy Spirit's indwelling work.

Acts 10 describes Cornelius and his household receiving the Holy Spirit while Peter was still preaching the Gospel - and then being baptized in water.

That order matters.

Water baptism does not cause the Holy Spirit to begin living within someone who already belongs to Christ.

The New Testament also speaks of believers being baptized by or in one Spirit into one body.

That language describes the Spirit's work of uniting believers with Christ and His people.

Read Acts 10:34-48; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13-14.

Important Presence Distinction

Baptism does not bring an absent God near.

The Holy Spirit already dwells in those who belong to Christ.

Baptism does not move a Christian from:

"God is absent"

to

"God is now present."

Instead, baptism becomes a visible, embodied confession of the spiritual reality God has already established:

"I belong to Jesus."

And because Christian faith is never merely private, baptism also says:

"I am joining His people in following Him."

This is why baptism and participation in the life of Christ's Church naturally belong together.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

Read Acts 2:37-47; Ephesians 2:19-22.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper continues throughout the Christian life.

Jesus gave the bread and cup to His gathered people as a continuing remembrance and proclamation of His death.

Christians disagree about the precise manner of Christ's presence in the meal.

Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Baptist, and other traditions articulate this differently.

The study does not need to resolve every sacramental disagreement to affirm the shared center:

both baptism and the Lord's Supper direct God's people away from self-reliance and back toward Jesus.

Baptism visibly declares:

"I belong to Christ."

The Lord's Supper repeatedly reminds the gathered Church:

"Our life comes from Christ."

Neither practice is a technique for manufacturing a spiritual atmosphere or summoning God's presence.

Both are Christ-given practices rooted in the objective reality of the Gospel.

Memory Anchor

Baptism does not bring God near. It visibly declares that, through Christ and by the Spirit, God has already brought the believer near to Himself.

79. HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKE CHRIST PRESENT TO THE CHURCH?

The Spirit glorifies Christ.

He reminds disciples of Christ's teaching.

He unites believers to Christ.

He forms Christlike character.

He distributes gifts for the building of Christ's body.

He empowers witness.

The Spirit does not draw attention away from Jesus toward Himself as a competing center.

His ministry magnifies Christ.

Read John 14-16; 1 Corinthians 12; Galatians 5:16-26.

80. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "WALK BY THE SPIRIT"?

Walking by the Spirit describes a life increasingly directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit rather than controlled by sinful desires.

Galatians contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit.

God's presence within believers therefore produces ethical transformation.

The evidence of the Spirit is not merely dramatic experiences.

It includes:

love,

joy,

peace,

patience,

kindness,

goodness,

faithfulness,

gentleness,

and self-control.

Read Galatians 5:13-26.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

81. CAN SOMEONE CLAIM GOD'S PRESENCE WHILE LIVING IN SERIOUS UNREPENTANT SIN?

Claims of spiritual experience do not override Scripture.

Israel sometimes maintained religious practices while practicing injustice and idolatry.

Jesus warned against outward religious claims without genuine obedience.

The New Testament repeatedly joins the Spirit's presence with transformed life.

Christians still sin and require ongoing grace.

But persistent rebellion should never be baptized as evidence of spiritual maturity simply because someone reports powerful experiences.

82. WHAT DOES GOD'S PRESENCE HAVE TO DO WITH HOLINESS?

God's presence is both comforting and transforming.

Paul's argument is straightforward:

The Spirit dwells in believers.

Therefore, their lives belong to God.

The Church is God's temple.

Therefore, division and corruption matter.

Christian holiness is not an attempt to earn God's presence.

It is a response to the astonishing reality that God has made His people His dwelling place.

83. WHAT DOES "QUENCHING THE SPIRIT" MEAN?

First Thessalonians 5 warns believers not to quench the Spirit.

The immediate context includes prophecy, discernment, testing everything, holding to what is good, and rejecting evil.

The metaphor suggests resisting or suppressing the Spirit's work.

It should not automatically be interpreted as causing the Holy Spirit to depart from a believer.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24.

84. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT"?

Ephesians 4 tells Christians not to grieve the Holy Spirit, by whom they were sealed for redemption.

The surrounding context addresses lying, destructive anger, stealing, corrupt speech, bitterness, rage, slander, and malice.

The command reveals something deeply personal:

The Spirit is not an impersonal power.

Sin matters within the believer's relationship with the personal God who dwells within.

Read Ephesians 4:17-32.

85. IS THE HOLY SPIRIT JUST GOD'S "PRESENCE" OR "POWER"?

No.

The Holy Spirit is a divine Person.

He teaches.

Speaks.

Guides.

Wills.

Can be grieved.

Intercedes.

Distributes gifts.

The Spirit is not spiritual electricity or merely an atmosphere people feel during worship.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is the presence of God Himself, personally active among and within His people.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

86. WHY MUST GOD'S PRESENCE REMAIN TRINITARIAN?

Because the God who draws near is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The earlier discussion of union with Christ showed how the Father, Son, and Spirit work inseparably in salvation. This matters practically.

God's presence is not:

an impersonal energy,

a worship atmosphere,

a vague sense of transcendence,

or a spiritual force waiting to be activated.

It is communion with the living triune God.

Memory Anchor

God's presence is not an atmosphere. It is the presence of the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit.

87. WHAT ABOUT HELL AND "SEPARATION FROM GOD"?

Christians commonly describe hell as separation from God, and that language can communicate something important: final exclusion from the joyful fellowship, favor, and blessing of God.

But if God is omnipresent, hell cannot mean reaching a geographic location where God literally does not exist.

Scripture also describes final judgment as occurring before God and under His righteous judgment.

Therefore, "separation from God" should be understood carefully as exclusion from His favorable, life-giving fellowship - not escape from His existence, knowledge, or authority.

Read Matthew 25:41; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Revelation 14:9-11; 20:11-15.

88. WHAT DOES "AWAY FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD" MEAN?

Second Thessalonians 1:9 is often central to this question.

Translations differ somewhat in how the relationship between destruction and the Lord's presence is expressed.

At minimum, the passage describes devastating exclusion from the Lord's favorable glory at His judgment.

It should not be used to overturn the broader biblical teaching that no created place lies beyond God's sovereign presence.

89. WHAT DOES JESUS MEAN BY "DEPART FROM ME"?

Jesus warns that some people who claim relationship with Him will hear:

"I never knew you. Away from me..."

The issue is relational rejection and judgment.

These people used Jesus' name but did not truly belong to Him.

This is not a contradiction of omnipresence.

It is exclusion from fellowship with Christ and His kingdom.

Read Matthew 7:21-23.

90. WHAT IS THE FINAL DESTINATION OF GOD'S PRESENCE STORY?

Revelation 21.

John sees a new heaven and new earth.

Then comes the announcement:

God's dwelling place is now among the people.

He will dwell with them.

They will be His people.

God Himself will be with them.

The Bible's story has come full circle - but greater than Eden.

What sin shattered has been redeemed through Christ.

Read Revelation 21:1-7.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

Memory Anchor

The Bible begins with people in God's presence and ends with redeemed people dwelling with Him forever.

91. WHY IS THERE NO TEMPLE IN THE NEW JERUSALEM?

John says he sees no temple because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Throughout much of the biblical story, the temple symbolized God dwelling among His people.

In the new creation, the symbol is no longer necessary.

God's presence fills the reality toward which the temple pointed.

Read Revelation 21:22-27.

92. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE CURSE?

Revelation 22 says there will no longer be any curse.

God's throne will be there.

His servants will serve Him.

And astonishingly:

"They will see his face."

The Bible began with humanity hiding from God after sin.

It ends with redeemed humanity seeing His face.

That is restoration beyond anything Adam and Eve could accomplish for themselves.

Read Revelation 22:1-5.

93. WHAT DOES THE ENTIRE STORY TEACH?

The storyline can be summarized:

Eden

Humanity lives in fellowship with God.



Fall

Sin brings alienation.



Patriarchs

God appears, speaks, promises, and guides.



Exodus

God delivers His people and dwells among them.



Tabernacle

God's glory rests among Israel.



Temple

God establishes a place associated with His covenant presence.



Exile

Sin brings judgment, but God does not abandon His purposes.



Prophets

God promises renewed dwelling and the Spirit.





Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

Jesus

Immanuel - God with us.



Cross

Sin's barrier is dealt with through Christ.



Resurrection

Jesus defeats death.



Pentecost

The Spirit comes to dwell within God's people.



Church

God's people become His temple by the Spirit.



Christ's Return

Jesus comes again.



New Creation

God dwells openly with His redeemed people forever.

94. WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CORRECTION TO POPULAR IDEAS ABOUT GOD'S PRESENCE?

Do not make feeling God more important than knowing God through Christ.

Experiences can be beautiful.

Emotions can accompany genuine encounters with God.

Worship can produce profound awareness of His nearness.

But Christianity does not rest on the ability to produce a spiritual sensation.

The Gospel announces something far more objective:

God came to us in Jesus Christ.

Christ died.

Christ rose.

The Spirit has been given.

Believers have access to the Father.

Christ is with His people.

And God will one day dwell with them forever.

95. WHAT SHOULD SOMEONE DO WHO WANTS TO KNOW GOD'S PRESENCE?

Begin with Jesus.

Do not chase an atmosphere.

Do not chase goosebumps.

Do not chase unusual experiences.

Come to Christ.

Read His Word.

Pray.

Repent.

Worship.

Participate in Christian community.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

Walk by the Spirit.
Obey what God has revealed.
Receive ordinary gifts of grace with gratitude.
And trust God even when His presence is not emotionally obvious.

Final Memory Anchor

The goal is not merely to feel that God is near. The goal is to know the God who has drawn near in Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION / DISCUSSION

1. How does distinguishing God's omnipresence from His manifested or covenant presence clarify passages that once seemed confusing?
2. What does the movement from Eden to tabernacle to temple to Jesus reveal about God's desire to dwell with His people?
3. Why is Jesus more than simply another example of God "showing up"?
4. How does the Trinitarian pattern - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - help explain the different ways Scripture describes God being with His people?
5. How does knowing that the Holy Spirit dwells within believers change the way Christians should think about holiness and everyday life?
6. Have you ever mistaken the feeling of God's presence for the reality of God's presence? What is the difference?
7. What does Psalm 23 teach about God's presence during suffering rather than escape from suffering?
8. Why can "God told me" language become dangerous when subjective impressions are given unquestionable authority?
9. How do baptism and the Lord's Supper point believers toward Christ rather than manufacture God's presence?
10. How does Revelation 21-22 complete the presence storyline that begins in Genesis?

FINAL REVIEW

Is God everywhere?

Yes. God is omnipresent.

Is God part of creation?

No. God is the Creator and remains distinct from creation.

Why does Scripture sometimes describe God's presence appearing or departing?

Because Scripture uses "presence" in more than one sense, including manifested and covenant presence.

Where was God's presence especially associated in Old Testament Israel?

The tabernacle and later the temple.

Who is Immanuel?

Jesus Christ - God with us.

What happened to access to God through Jesus?

Through Christ's saving work, believers have direct access to the Father.

Who dwells within believers?

The Holy Spirit.

Does water baptism cause the Holy Spirit to begin indwelling a Christian?

No. The New Testament distinguishes water baptism from the Spirit's indwelling work.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

Is God's presence Trinitarian?

Yes. Christians come to the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit.

What is God's temple under the new covenant?

Scripture describes both individual believers and the gathered Church as temples of the Holy Spirit.

Does feeling spiritually dry mean God has left?

No. Emotional awareness and divine reality are not identical.

What is the final hope of God's people?

God will dwell openly with His redeemed people forever in the new creation.

SCRIPTURE READING PATH

For further study, read:

Genesis 1-3 - Creation, fellowship, and exile from Eden
Exodus 3:1-6 - God's holy presence at the burning bush
Exodus 25:1-9 - God desires to dwell among Israel
Exodus 33:12-23 - Moses asks for God's presence
Exodus 40:34-38 - God's glory fills the tabernacle
1 Kings 8:22-30 - Heaven cannot contain God
Psalm 23 - God with His people in the valley
Psalm 51 - David pleads for restored fellowship
Psalm 139:1-12 - God's omnipresence
Ezekiel 10-11 - God's glory departs
Ezekiel 37:24-28 - God promises to dwell with His people
Matthew 1:18-23 - Immanuel
Matthew 18:15-20 - Two or three gathered in Jesus' name
Matthew 28:18-20 - Jesus is with His disciples always; baptism in the Triune name
John 1:1-18 - The Word dwells among us
John 14-16 - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with God's people
Acts 2 - Pentecost and the gathered Church
Acts 10:34-48 - The Spirit received before water baptism
Romans 6:1-11 - Baptism and union with Christ
Romans 8:1-17 - The indwelling Spirit
1 Corinthians 3:16-17 - The Church as God's temple
1 Corinthians 6:12-20 - The believer's body as the Spirit's temple
1 Corinthians 12:13 - The Spirit and Christ's body
Ephesians 1:13-14 - Sealed with the Holy Spirit
Ephesians 2:18-22 - Access to the Father and God's dwelling by the Spirit
Hebrews 9-10 - Access to God through Christ
Revelation 21-22 - God dwells with His people forever

SCRIPTURE WORDING NOTE

This study primarily uses Scripture references, brief quotations, and careful paraphrase rather than reproducing long Bible passages.

Because wording varies among Bible translations, readers are encouraged to open and read each cited passage directly in their preferred translation and consider its surrounding context.

FINAL MEMORY ANCHORS



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

The story of the Bible is the story of God bringing His people back into His presence.
God is everywhere, but He does not reveal His presence everywhere in exactly the same way.
God's greatest gift to His people is ultimately God Himself.
Jesus does not merely show the way into God's presence. Through Him, the way has been opened.
God's presence is a reality before it becomes a feeling.
God may sometimes feel far away, but His faithfulness is greater than the feeling.
God's presence is personal and Trinitarian: from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit.
Biblical security is not always "nothing bad will happen." Sometimes it is "You are with me."
Baptism does not bring God near. It visibly declares that, through Christ and by the Spirit, God has already brought the believer near to Himself.
God's presence is not an atmosphere. It is the presence of the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit.
The Bible begins with people in God's presence and ends with redeemed people dwelling with Him forever.
The goal is not merely to feel that God is near. The goal is to know the God who has drawn near in Jesus Christ.

FINAL TAKEAWAY

God's presence is one of the great threads running from Genesis to Revelation.
Humanity was created for fellowship with God.
Sin brought alienation.
God came to dwell among Israel.
Then God came nearer still:
The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.
Through Jesus' death and resurrection, sinners are reconciled to God.
Through the Holy Spirit, God now dwells within His people.
And one day, the promise will reach its glorious completion:
"Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them."

- Revelation 21:3