

PRACTICING THE ABSENCE OF GOD

Pastor Alan Dionson

March 21, 2021

INTRO:

1. "Practicing the Presence of God" a book by Brother Lawrence
2. "Practicing the Absence of God" in the book of Esther

A. WHEN YOU CANNOT EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF GOD, BELIEVE IN THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

1. In times of devastation (Esther 2:5-7)
2. In times of disruption (Esther 2:8,10)

B. WHEN YOU CANNOT SEE THE NAME OF GOD, TRUST THE HAND OF GOD

1. During a period of transition (Esther 2:9-17)
2. During times of troubles (Esther 3:1-2; 5-6; 8-10; 13)
3. During the turning points of our lives (Esther 4:1; 10-17)

C. WHEN YOU CANNOT FIND THE WAYS OF GOD, RELY ON THE WORKS OF GOD

1. The work of God in the life of Israel (Leviticus 23:4-8; 10; 16; 24; 26-32; 34)
2. The work of God in the life of Esther (Esther 9:20-26)
3. The work of God in our lives today (Philippians 2:13-16)

CONCLUSION

Tabletalk

Our last session about Daniel's prayer and time in the lions' den was set during the first year after the Medo-Persian Empire had defeated the Babylonians. Today's session skips ahead a few kings to one named Xerxes. His reign is the backdrop for the Book of Esther. Esther is a young Jewish woman who had been orphaned in childhood. As such, her older cousin Mordecai took her in and raised her as his own child (Esther 2:7). Esther found herself in an unlikely situation—married to King Xerxes and crowned as queen of Persia.

1. What is the most courageous thing you have seen someone choose to do?
2. How can knowing that God's timing is perfect encourage peace and trust even when you don't like or understand what you are facing in life?
3. Read Esther 2:7
 - * Describe a time that you were caught off guard by devastating news. How did you work through issues and emotions?
4. Read Esther 2:8
 - * What are your typical coping choices when unexpected change comes? Where do you turn and what do you do to manage the confusion?
 - * What advice would you give to someone who overcomes one thing only to be faced with another crisis?
5. Read Esther 2:9-17
 - * When you look back over your life, how has God taken you through seasons of preparation that you later discovered were important and necessary?
 - * What would you change or not change about how you handled yourself during those times in your life?

6. Read Esther 3:1–2, 5–6, 8–10, 13.

* What is one difficulty you faced that you could later see was part of God’s plan for your life?

7. Read Esther 4:1, 10–17.

* Share about a time when you rushed into something, but should have waited. What was the result?

8. Read Esther 5:1–7; 7:1–10.

* Where and when can you acknowledge God led you to a “perfect timing” situation? What do you think would have happened if you had not followed the Lord’s path?