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The Privilege of God's Presence: Humility and Christian Service

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Theologians have said that God is omnipresent, which means that God is everywhere. Christians may be praying to God in China, while other Christians may be praying to God in America, and an omnipresent God is sure to attune His ear to everyone's prayer at the same time. David echoes this point in the book of Psalms when he says: "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there (Psalm 139:8)." David also recognizes that he has free will or the will to disobey God; therefore, David prayed: "Do not cast me away from Your presence. And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me (Psalm 51:1)." In effect, David was saying that God's presence in our lives is an honor and a privilege, not a right or an entitlement. In fact, there are several instances in bible in which God temporarily withdrew His presence from among certain people. In the Old Testament, God temporarily withdrew His presence from humanity because "God

saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Genesis 6:5)." In the New Testament, God's influence among people was temporarily "absent" when He turned a disobedient people "over to a reprobate mind (Romans 1:28)."

We need God's presence in our lives in order to fulfill God's purpose for our lives. As people with free will we may do as we please, but we will only feel God's abiding presence, received God's manifold blessings and benefit from God's power when our human will is in accord with God's perfect will (Romans 12:2). Unfortunately, there are some among us who are intent on taking God's presence or grace (love) for granted. Recently, I saw an entertainer who was in the music industry giving thanks to God for his artistic success. He thanked God, but his lyrics mocked God, his video degraded humans and his attitude was not one of

humility, but one of arrogance and conceit. Clearly, this person did not feel privilege to be in the presence of a Holy God.

Although God is continuously with us, we should never take God's presence for granted (Romans 6:15). Our thoughts and actions should demonstrate a reverence for God and a profound humility toward our neighbors. In the New Living Translation of the bible, Jesus says in the Beatitudes: "God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth (Matthew 5:5)."

As we continue to worship God and serve this present age, let us continue to do so with a spirit of humility and thankfulness for God's abiding presence.