

**Welcome to: -
Bible House of Grace.**



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

The Psychology of the Presence of Christ.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises
But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

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The Psychology of the Presence of Christ.

Topics.

- Joy in the spiritual presence of God and how the human mind functions.
- Images and the human nervous system.
- Human love and God's love.
- The danger of emotion.
- God has blessed us with every blessing in heavenly places.
- Christian salvation and a loving relationship with Christ.
- Jesus as an image in the mind.
- An example of a person being in the heart of another.

The following verses show that David not only entered the presence of God but also experienced joy in the spiritual presence of God.

- You make known to me (David) the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11).
- Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me. (Psalm 51:11).
- Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! (Psalm 95:2).

From these verses we learn that there is joy in the presence of God and that whoever believes in God can enter and experience the presence of God, but before we begin to go any further I would ask the reader to please keep in mind that the focus of this message is not about the supernatural presence of God that flows from God's Spirit and comforts a believer in a crisis or moment of great suffering that is supernatural and beyond human control. As thousands worldwide can testify there is a presence of God that surpasses our own state of mind and our own understanding. Many Christians throughout all generations have suffered great persecutions or been in deep depression, despair and sorrow because of a great hurt or a crisis in life and yet felt God's power upholding, comforting and keeping them.

This message is not focused on this supernatural power of God, but upon the presence of God and of Christ that comes through the power of our belief and our faith. It is the presence of God that faithful brothers and sisters in Christ can experience in their daily life that the focus of this message is upon, but before we begin we need to spend a couple of minutes on a brief overview of how God has designed our imagination and nervous system to work together so that we understand how our imagination affects our emotions.

God has made all humans the same: everyone has the same mind, the same nervous system, the same emotions, and the same feelings all humans are generally wired the same way even though they may function differently. Certainly there are always exceptions, but for the sake of this message we are focusing on the overall view of human nature as a collective whole. Following are four examples of how the human mind and imagination functions: -

1. A person who owns and loves Harley Davidson's motorbikes and know that they are going to go for a ride on a long windy country road at the weekend will feel emotions of excitement and joy as they picture the trip on the imagination of their mind while they wait for the weekend to come because joyful images pictured on the imagination of the mind produces joyful emotions.

2. A person who knows they are going sailing on their favorite boat will feel good emotions and feelings of joy and excitement as they picture themselves in the imagination of their mind sailing on crystal clear waters of the ocean under a perfect blue sky because good images in the mind produces good emotions in the body.
3. Teenagers who have an image of their boyfriend or girlfriend pictured on the imagination of their mind will feel warm emotions of love, especially if they know that they are going to see them very soon this is because good romantic images on the imagination of the mind produces good emotions of love in the heart.
4. Millions of people buy lottery tickets every week, when they strongly believe they will win and imagine what they would do with the prize money those exciting pictures played out on the imagination of their mind will produce emotions and feelings of joyful excitement.

NOTICE: in all these examples joy and excitement is produced throughout the human body by something that only exists in the imagination of the mind.

Images of mind: we all have various images in our minds and these images produce emotions and feelings accordingly, good or bad. God has designed our minds to function this way and since God clearly knows exactly how the human mind works He has chosen to communicate to us through the mind. This is why Christ wants us to have an image of him in our minds, not an image of his face or physical appearance but an image of his character, his compassion, his mercy, his love, his grace and his forgiveness because he is the exact image of God in character and because this good image will influence our emotions, our attitudes, our speech and our behavior.

The human nervous system: God the creator of us all has not created the human nervous system with a brain of its own, because of this our nervous system cannot tell the difference between a very vivid imaginary image and a real image in our mind that is why people who meditate or pray can go to a beautiful place in there mind and produce feelings of calm and peace in difficult situations, but it is also why many people who strongly believe in devils as an entity of evil set upon their destruction feel a reality and presence of them and experience very real emotions and feelings of terror and fear.

The following are two simple examples that show how imaginary images affect the human nervous system: -

1. It is medically proven and scientifically known that people who have a limb cut off from their body can feel its presence a month or so later, yet it does not exist, this is because the imagination of the mind still has a picture of the limb existing. I knew a woman whose husband had his leg amputated, yet at certain time he felt itchiness in his missing leg, his wife would kneel down and scratch the itchy area even though nothing was there and he would feel better for it. This is because for some people it takes a long time for the mind to accept the limb is missing. (This phenomenon is referred to as having a phantom limb).
2. Many people around the world believe in aliens, they are not concerned about the facts because they are overwhelmed by the wonder of the unseen, it is in believing the mystery of it all and the excitement that is important to them. Nevertheless their belief in aliens produces an image in their mind and that image produce emotions and feelings and in extreme cases even visions of what they believe to be real aliens. Many of these people are absolutely convinced that aliens are real, some are so fearful they will search their closets before going to bed to make sure the aliens are not hiding in their houses. People who believe in aliens experience their presence and have very real emotions of fear terror and anxiety, yet these aliens do not even exist except in their minds.

In both examples (there are many more) the person's nervous system is affected by the imaginary illusion in their mind because of their strong belief. The illusion is made real by the power of belief in them, the belief produces an image on the screen of the imagination and the human nervous system responds to the imagination accordingly, so the person feels and experiences real emotions.

This is one of the reasons why Jesus warned the disciples of deception: people can have false images that produce good or bad emotions accordingly. Moslem suicide bombers love their God and would experience emotions accordingly, but because they have a false understanding of who God is and what his will is their minds are surrendered to a wrong truth, yet they would experience good emotions because of the mistaken concept of God they have surrendered their minds to.

The emotions they feel are very real because it does not matter if a thing is true or false people will still experience the emotions of joy, love, excitement or peace because the human nervous system does not have a brain of its own and therefore cannot discern if an image held in the mind is based on real truth or a false image especially if the belief is a very strong belief. The stronger the belief the stronger the emotions will be affected.

The following three common examples shine a spotlight on the truth of this principle: -

1. Before webcam people made friends on the internet with people they had never met or seen so they have an unclear image of them in their mind, but after communicating with them over time a clearer understanding of who they are develops and slowly and unconsciously an image builds in their minds. If the character of the friend is one of kindness an image will appear in the mind of a caring, gentle and loving person this image produces (through the nervous system) good emotions and feelings accordingly. Many people seeking a partner communicate with a man or woman on the internet that they have never met or seen. They have an unclear image of them in their mind, but the longer they communicate with each other that unclear image slowly and unconsciously take on a vivid and colorful picture on the screen of their imagination.

If the person they are communicating with is a kind and caring person the knowledge of their good character produces a good image and this good image produces good feelings accordingly. This principal works in exactly the same way with Christ, we read the Scriptures and begin to get a clear picture of the character of a man we have never met or seen some will have a clearer picture or image of who he is and his character than others. For some the image of Christ character will be very sharp and bright, but with others it may be clouded or confused. The image will depend on knowledge, but whether the image of Christ's character is confused and clouded or vividly sharp and clear all who embrace Christ experience his love to a lesser or greater degree in their emotions.

2. A girl who sees a boy that she is attracted to gets an image of him on the screen of her imagination that image produces romantic feeling and emotions, this is what the world calls love, but it is illusionary love, because later she actually meets the boy and finds that he is arrogant rude and ill-mannered and suddenly the image is shattered and the emotions and feelings change. It should be mentioned here that biblical love, true love is not illusionary love it is self-sacrificing behavior toward another human being it is best described as kindness with work boots on.
3. A boy and girl immediately upon seeing each are attracted to each other and feel emotions of joy warmth and excitement, yet they have never met and know nothing about each other. Added to this it maybe days or weeks before they do actually meet and yet those feeling of excitement and joy remain. This is because of the strong image they have of each other on the imagination of their mind. Now does that mean they can immediately get married because they feel such beautiful emotions and feelings? Of course the emotions and feelings are good, but the couple, have to find out if they are compatible together so they court each other until they know the character of each other. Then and only then can they make an informed decision to commit to each other. Once that decision is made they can safely marry and surrender themselves and their mind to the emotions that they feel.

Likewise it is with Christianity many churches use entertainment and excitement to entice people to hear the Good News of the Gospel people's emotions are aroused and they feel a spiritual presence of God's love and joy produced in the heart, mind

and emotions by the exciting collective worship of believers. In our fallen world of suffering and sorrow this is good, but there is a danger. What you might wonder? Simply this, many who sense this spiritual presence and feel the emotions of excitement and joy automatically believe that the teaching they have heard must be the truth because of the wonderful emotions they are feeling. This is a mistake because beautiful emotions (however nice) are not proof that a teaching is right.

Embracing something based on good emotions is like the boy and girl in example three who upon seeing each are attracted to each other and feel emotions of joy warmth and excitement immediately getting married without examining the character of each other. There is nothing wrong with emotions in the church especially during worship, but it should be always remembered that good emotions are not proof that something is good and right or that what is being taught is actually the truth.

Why, is this some may ask? Simply this it is not the spiritual presence of God or the emotions and feelings that are wrong, but the fact that there are certain religious ministers who use the glory of God for their own selfish gain and their own advantage in the same way that certain men in the Kingdom of God who twist and distort Scriptures for their own selfish gain does not make the Bible wrong. The glorious majestic heavenly and spiritual presence of God will always fall on any group of faithful believers who worship the Lord from an honest humble heart of praise and thanksgiving because God wants to shower those who love His Son with spiritual blessings, but sadly there are hypocritical and prideful religious leaders who use God's glory for their own gain as there are men who use the Bible to their own advantage.

Some churches completely deny any form of worship that arouses the emotions and feelings, but this is a gross mistake since God delights when our hearts, minds and emotions are involved in our worship. Every brother and sister in Christ should embrace the joy they feel in praising and worshipping God, but they should not automatically believe that because they feel good emotions what they are being taught must be right.

The danger of emotion: when a faithful group of brothers and sisters in Christ worship God it is not the beautiful spiritual presence of God's calm and comfort and the joyful emotions and feelings that should be denied, these are not sinful, nor are they wrong. What is at fault is the assumption that because something feels good the teaching must be true it is this assumption that is at fault and not the good emotions and joyful holy worship.

The error lies in people casting their reason and intellect aside and surrendering their mind to the teaching they are sitting under simply because they feel glorious emotions of joy. This is like the couple in example three marrying each other simply because they feel good emotions. The proper response is to enjoy the emotions, but at the same time test every teaching against the Scriptures to see if it is so.

Consider the following: -

- In some religious groups the Bible is extremely abused, but that does not mean that the Bible is wrong or should be thrown away, it simply means some religious leaders have a mistaken idea of what it teaches and are therefore in ignorance or even worse using it for their own selfish gain.
- Marriage has been badly abused by some, yet we still believe in the goodness of marriage, simply because most of us know that just because a thing has been abused does not mean that the thing itself is wrong.

The same principle applies to the spiritual presence of God in worship and with emotions and feelings. Everyone who has seen what happens in some religious groups would agree that in some circles of religion the spiritual presence of God and emotions of joy have been used to take advantage of people and in some cases to entice vast amounts of money from faithful members of the assembly, but this does not mean that the holy spiritual presence of God's peace and comfort and the glorious emotions of joy are at fault or should be denied, it simply means something that is good and holy is being used wickedly by prideful hypocritical

religious leaders who are in the ministry not to serve God, but to serve their own lust for power, fame and worldly riches. It is these sheep in wolves clothing that should be cast aside not the glory of worshipping God with our whole mind, heart and emotions. There is no need to fear emotions, if the image in the mind is based on what is right and what is true. Everyone would consider it a totally foolish statement if anyone said that it is wrong for a husband and wife to surrender their emotional feelings to each other.

Obviously God gave us emotions so we could actually feel the warmth and comfort that comes to us through the emotion of love. God has made the emotion of love and its effect on the screen of our imagination so strong that in a very intimate relationship if one of the partners has to go away (i.e., for their job, their service in the armed forces etc.) they still feel the presence of each other even though they are far apart.

Furthermore many people who lose a loved one still sense the presence of the one they loved for many months and for some even years later even though that person no longer exist.

God has Blessed us with Every Blessing in Heavenly Places.

Ephesians 1:3 ----- ³Paul says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places."

The expression, "Spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" can refer to the following: -

- God's forgiveness, mercy and grace that He daily lavishes on all who are saved in the Lord Jesus Christ and to the gift of righteousness that leads to eternal life. It means that in Christ we have everything needed for salvation to eternal life and to receive all the eternal promises of God.
- To the idea of elevation. It can apply to the state of the mind being lifted up into high places of joy, peace and love by the message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Despite our fleshy corrupted fallen body which we have all inherited from our earthly father Adam which we live in being infected with all kinds of sinful aberrations and dysfunctions (i.e., selfishness, pride, ego, lustful thoughts, jealousies, greed and such like things) those in Christ know that God lavishes His grace upon them and loves and accepts them as His children because of their devoted love and faith toward His Son.

This glorious knowledge elevates the mind of those who belong to Christ into places of joy, peace, comfort and eternal security. It's similar to when the world has a great day or wins a multi-million dollar lottery and makes the comment, "Wow I'm in heavenly places." It is a spiritual way of saying that the mind is in an elevated place of well-being. In reference to the Christian faith this elevated place of the mind produces a spiritual presence of Christ and in the emotions and feelings a sense of joy, excitement and eternal comfort.

The following verses show that Christian salvation is about being in a devoted and loving relationship with God and the Lord Jesus Christ: -

David echoing Christ said: -

- Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me (Psalm 40:7).

Jesus quotes David's words: -

- I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book. (Heb. 10:5-7).

Jesus said to the Jews: -

- You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and it is they that bear witness about me yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life (eternal) (John 5:39).

These verses show that eternal life is not in having a head full of intellectual knowledge, but in abiding in Christ. Nevertheless this does not mean that knowledge serves no purpose in fact quite the opposite. Scriptural knowledge is to expose our sin, bring us to repentance and lead us to Christ, but being lead to Christ and knowing all about him does not save us, it is by accepting Christ by faith and trusting and abiding in him that we are saved to eternal life. Each individual needs to prove to themselves that what they have accepted as true actually is and once they have that assurance, they can then safely surrender their emotions and feelings to the image created on the imagination of the mind and to the spiritual presence of God and His love and comfort that image produces in their emotions and feelings.

NOTE.

The image is not one of how Jesus physically looked in appearance, but of his character of goodness, his compassion, kindness, mercy, grace and forgiveness etc. It is the image of the Son of God who willingly laid his life down to a brutal bloody and cruel death so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)

To emotionally experience Christ in the heart and mind a brother or sister in Christ must surrender their mind to what they believe. The stronger a person's faith, the greater they will know and experience God's love. The more a person surrenders their mind and their life the more they will know and experience Christ's spiritual presence and God's comfort. Jesus said to Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen but believe." Christian faith on a human level works on exactly the same principle as a couple who fall in love if they do not surrender their entire heart, mind and life to each other they will not experience the full glory of love. Christ has given his life for us this means that the only thing that hinders our relationship with him is whether we are prepared to give and surrender our hearts, mind and life to him in faith and love.

Belief and salvation: many people believe in Christ, they believe that Jesus lived; that he was a perfect man who was the Son of God, and that he died on the cross to save sinners, but the true meaning of believe and faith goes beyond just having knowledge of what is true. The full meaning of believe embraces also the act of trusting and relying on another with full confidence and assurance they will do what they have promised, it is putting one's life in the hands of another. God wants us to put our lives in the hands of His Son and trust him to save us to eternal life.

No-one today has ever seen or met Jesus he is an image in the mind: Christ's character is one of love kindness and grace, knowing the loving character of Christ produces an image in the mind of a Saviour who loves us that image is based on biblical truth, it has a solid foundation, therefore a person can surrender their life, heart and mind fully to that biblical image of Christ and experience his spiritual presence of love joy and peace. In our old age we may forget a great deal of Scriptural knowledge we have learned in our younger years, but we will never forget the person of the Lord Jesus Christ or lose his presence of love and comfort.

Consider for a moment: parents love their children, but as they reach old age many of the good memories of years gone by are forgotten, but when their children visit them with their grey hair and wrinkled skin and fading memory and hug them it is enough. The entire volume of the Bible is written to reveal the character, purpose and love of Christ to those who will embrace him. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who saves us and not strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or having a set of doctrines neatly wrapped up in a bow or by keeping religious laws, rules, customs and traditions.

A perfect example of a person being in the heart of another: an eight year old disabled girl whose mother was her best friend was doing her first live stage show for her school concert. Her mother loved her daughter, but was unable to attend the opening show as she was in hospital dying of cancer. A television reporter asked the young girl if she would be sad and miss her mother at the opening of the show. The girl with tears in her eyes said, "Yes I will miss my mother, but she will be in my heart where she belongs." Heartfelt love for a person creates the reality and presence of that person in the human heart.

CONCLUSION: remember the focus of this message is not upon the supernatural and spiritual presence of God that flows from His Spirit and comforts a faithful brother or sister in Christ struggling to cope with a crisis in their lives or suffering a moment of great grief. Thousands worldwide can testify there is a presence of God that surpasses our own state of mind and our own understanding and our own strength. Many throughout all generations have suffered great persecutions as Paul did or have been in deep depression, despair and sorrow as David was because of persecution, a great hurt or a crisis in life and yet felt God's power supernaturally upholding, comforting, strengthening and keeping them. It is interesting to notice throughout the New Testament Jesus healed some because of their faith and others he healed not because of their faith, but because of his compassion.

End