

Section 2, Promises about Presence
Introductory Article
530 words

Promises about God's Presence: Introduction

Many people today could identify with the famous movie star Judy Garland. Near the end of a glamorous career—she was the adored Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*—she asked, “If I’m such a legend, why am I so lonely?” Not even the trappings of success can totally seal the spaces through which the creeping fog of loneliness slips. Unlike the rich and lonely movie star, others are poor and lonely, without the ability to purchase any sort of human or material companionship. There is only one permanent solution to the despair of loneliness.

The presence of God—Immanuel, God with us—is the key to every blessing and benefit of the spiritual life. If God is present, then nothing is impossible. Our greatest need is not for God to come to us; it is to see and know the presence of the God who is already and always here! By his presence is every human need met—beginning with loneliness and ending with eternal intimacy. All that is needed for loneliness to be overcome is to have our eyes opened to the presence of God. This was the experience of two lonely men on a dusty rode in Israel in 30 A.D. They thought Isaiah’s Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14) had come in Jesus of Nazareth. They thought God had been with them; until God was killed on a cross. But their downcast faces became hearts ablaze with joy and faith as “their eyes were opened and they recognized him”! God had been present with them on the road, in the inn, at supper—they simply had not seen him. And when they did, they conquered their own loneliness by returning to Jerusalem and joining others who had seen the Lord as well (Luke 24:13-35).

Remember—Jesus Christ has known the pain of human aloneness. He came “to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him” (John 1:11). It was his total dependence on the presence of God the Father, through the Holy Spirit, that saw him through his life’s mission. And by his example, the believer in Christ learns to depend on the presence of God for everything in life—provision for all things, protection from all things, a plan for living, and preparation for eternity (see the categories of Promises, p. xx). The presence of God is the key to the preservation of life for the believer.

In this section of the Promises Study Bible you will discover all the ways in which God is present to those who know him. No believer in Christ should fail to fill his or her heart and mind with the promises of his presence. If you do, you will find the answers to the questions that another Immanuel asked—Immanuel Kant, the eighteenth-century German philosopher. All of his efforts, he wrote, were focused on finding the answers to three questions: What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope?

The philosopher Immanuel, had he known the personal presence of God, could have received answers from the Bible’s Immanuel. Don’t fail to glean these answers yourself as you read the promises about God’s presence.