

RT Kendall: What to Do When You Don't Feel God

As much as you love God, you may not always feel His conscious presence.

Prolific author and Bible scholar RT Kendall says he knows this well. But it isn't necessarily a bad thing, or a sinful thing, to not feel the Lord around you.

"When you feel nothing, when He doesn't answer your prayer, and you feel betrayed. When He doesn't seem to keep His word and you say, 'Well thanks a lot. Lord, I don't think I care about You much anymore.' When there are those times when you feel nothing—nothing—and when He lets you down and all hell breaks loose, you see things like that aren't going to happen in heaven but they happen here, and this is your opportunity to do what—I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I might be right—what few people do, and that is to show the Lord right then, you please Him," Kendall says.

The wisdom comes from Psalm 16 and Kendall's new book, *The Presence of God*, out now.

Even the former Westminster Chapel pastor says sometimes he does not experience the conscious presence of the Lord, but that does not mean God has abandoned him.

But in this revelation, there was such profound wisdom.

Instead of bemoaning the lack of feeling, Kendall uses this opportunity to remember the psalmist.

In Psalm 16, David talks about setting the Lord before him. Kendall says he uses this Scripture—even when he doesn't necessarily feel the Lord's presence—to picture God at his own right hand.

“What that means, I think, is that [David] pictures the Lord before him,” Kendall explains. “He says, ‘Because He is at my right hand, I can do that.’ The truth is, Jesus is always at your right hand, but you may forget that this is true. So because you forget this, you, by faith, picture Him there, and it’s something I’ve done for years.”

Kendall says he had a vision one day while driving in Tennessee. He was maneuvering his car down the road when suddenly the heavens opened, and he saw Christ Himself at the right hand of God. Kendall says Jesus was interceding for him, and he observed the Savior’s face for 30 seconds. The event changed his entire theology in 24 hours—as well as his understanding of the Lord’s presence.

Seeking the presence of the Lord boils down to this question: Which gives you more satisfaction, God pleasing you or you pleasing God?

God does please us here on earth. But that’s not what faith is about.

“You see, when He manifests His presence, He’s pleasing you,” Kendall says. “On that day driving in my car, my word, there He is, the same Jesus who died on the cross, raised from the dead, He’s real ... It was so real; it was so wonderful, the Bible came alive to me. Things I had never seen in my life, I saw that day. So wonderful.

“But then there are times when I don’t feel Him at all. What I wanted to show in the book is, even when you don’t feel it, He’s there just as well, just as real, objectively nothing has changed.”

Not feeling Him isn’t a bad or sinful thing. Rather, it’s a chance for us to show God how much we love Him.

It’s up to us to continue in faith and please God—even when He seems far away. {eo}