

# His Manifest Presence - Part 4

by Walter Beuttler

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*The sermon discusses the critical ways one can lose God's presence, emphasizing the importance of consecration and obedience in ministry.*

**Duration:** 37:59

**Scripture:** Judges 16:2

**Topics:** "Presence of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses four ways in which one can lose God's presence. The first way is through a loss of consecration, where one becomes disconnected from God due to a lack of devotion and dedication. The second way is through disobedience, where one chooses to go against God's commands and loses His presence as a result. The third way is through substitution, where one replaces God with other idols or priorities in their life. Lastly, the fourth way is through neglect, where one fails to prioritize their relationship with God and gradually loses His presence. The speaker supports these points with references to the Book of Judges and 1 Samuel, highlighting the consequences of losing God's presence in various scenarios.

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## Transcript

I felt that I would like to point out to you and comment a bit on four ways of losing God's presence. I'll enumerate them for you first so you know which way we're going, and then I'll go back to each one. One, loss of our consecration.

Two, disobedience. Three, substitution. And four, neglect.

I am not suggesting there are not any others, but these are four that we're going to use based on the Word of God. Turning first of all to the book of Judges, chapter 16, I'm going to take verses 2-4, 16-20. Judges 16.

I said 2-4, I'm in error. 4-5 it is. And it came to pass afterward that he, he refers to Samson, loved a woman in the valley of Zorak, whose name was Delilah.

And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her and said unto her, Emprise him and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may find him to afflict him, and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver. Now these Philistines obviously

valued Samson, otherwise they would never have paid such a mention in order to get at his strength. Then in 16-20, And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and earthened him so that his soul was vexed unto death, that he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon my head, for I have been a nurse right unto God from my mother's womb.

If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up, these ones, for he hath told me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand, and she made him sleep upon her knees, and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head, and he began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wished not that the Lord was departed from him.

Now all of us, I think, know the story of Samson. Notice there this word, entice. She enticed him and got him into a place where the man told her all his heart.

Now what we have here basically is this. Samson lost the secret of the anointing. Samson lost the secret of his consecration.

He was a Nazirite. As a Nazirite he had to meet certain conditions. He could not drink wine, he could not eat grapes, he could not eat raisins, not even raisin pie.

He had to let the locks as he said. It was the sign of reproach, and the Nazirite had to bear reproach for the Lord's sin. Now this villainess so pressed upon this man that finally he gave away the secret of his power.

Now there are things I do not understand. Why did this man trifle with the secret of his power? She said, Samson, to fill his eyes be upon thee. Then she did it a second time.

She did it a third time. Why that man did not come to his senses? I don't know. Perhaps the man was so overwrought emotionally and so infatuated with her presumed beauty and her influences that the man, in spite of the fact that he saw he was gravitating toward trouble, could not muster sufficient strength to get out of that place and run for his life.

He played along and playing along he gravitated toward disaster. About a year or two ago I watched a movie on television, and the movie was Samson and Delilah. I had often seen it advertised over the years, but I don't go to the movies.

But then they showed it on TV and I thought, I'm just going to see what this is all about. I was amazed at the reproduction of the times in those days it was an education for the times in which this story took place. Well, they showed how of course Samson was finally robbed of his power, and eventually he was pulling there at this mill, and the lords of the Philistines were laughing and drinking, making fun over Samson.

Delilah stood by a pillar, and you could tell she was very remorseful after what she had done. And here was the king of the Philistines. Some other kings had come and laughed about this king, and Delilah stood not far away, said to this king, Well, your army has finally conquered Samson.

And the king said very gravely, No, my army didn't. She did. That thing was so impressive, I'll never forget it.

An army of warriors could not defeat Samson. See, you know as well as I do that many a ministry has been wrecked, many a home broken up by similar enticements. And they are all over and all over the world.

It seems that Satan is especially anxious to get at a ministry if he possibly can. Because if he can't wreck down a ministry, he's going to wreck down many other people who have put their confidence in him. And these Delilahs are all over.

I sat in Rio de Janeiro at a call down there at Guavana, a soft drink, I like it very much, made from berries. I've been sitting there. A lady walked along and she spotted me because, you know, an American stands out like a shotgun.

An American is recognized everywhere. And she walked up and said, How do you do, Mr. American? Fine. I knew right away what was up.

Don't you kid yourself, I'm no fool. I knew right away what she was after, but I played along. Fine.

How do you like Rio de Janeiro? Fine. Been here before? Oh, yes, many times. Are you alone? Are you married? Are you staying in a hotel? Which one? Oh, I said, Now, wait a minute, lady.

Here is where we stop. How about it? Oh, I thought maybe you were lonesome and I could keep you company for the night. I said, No, I'm not lonesome and I don't need company.

That was it. Those things happen all the time. And many, many ministers have stories to tell along these lines.

But students, we need to walk our consecration. Now, our consecration may not be lost. Let's look at Samson.

Here was Samson. And they took a secret of his power from him. And I noticed.

He said, I will go out. Now, he shook himself and his shirt was an empty shirt. He went through the same formula.

I shook myself. And he wished that the Lord was departed from him. I would say we have here the suggestion at least that it's possible to lose the presence without knowing it until it is needed.

And in Pentecost, we can get into the format, hanging on to mere formulas without actually having the power to effect any result. When I was seeking the baptism, I was under the power lying on the floor. You know, we used to have that in Pentecost.

I haven't seen that in many years. But I know there were days when the power of God shook people, knocked them off their feet, down on the floor. I've had it many times.

We've had it in school in the earlier days, not recent years. And these two ladies worked on me. They wanted to give me the baptism.

Well, they had a lot of soup, but nothing in their soup. One pound of my chest. Bring it up, brother.

Bring it up. Bring it up. Bring it up.

I wish I had. One of them took hold of my Adam's apple. I don't know.

You know, God might have used us in the laying on of hands with the power of God flowing through our hands, healing people, baptizing people. And I have seen ministers go through what they used to have. Hallelujah.

And it's an empty. Once there was the power, now there is the shape, the form, the format. We can lose the presence without being aware of it.

We will soon lose it by losing our consecration, the secret of His presence. I'll turn to 1 Samuel 16, 14 here. I need a little bit more time, perhaps.

There is something tragic. The other is tragic, too. Maybe I should have added something.

It came to my mind, but I thought I'll bypass it. I had a very, very godly pastor. And he said to me, Brother Buechler, the devil tries to get a ministry whenever he can.

He said, I was sitting in my study with the door open toward the street. It was a hot day. A woman came in to get some counseling.

You know, there's a great place for counseling, but counseling sessions can be extremely dangerous. And she came for counseling and lo and behold, she jumped up, sat on his lap, put her arm around his neck and said, Preacher, I've come to make you fall. How about it? He said, I shook her off like a snake and chased her.

And he said, Brother Buechler, just think, if somebody had walked past the house with the door open and had seen this at the right moment. Might have reached the door in the ministry. I'm back at the other.

It's an unpleasant subject. I wanted to shun it, but I'm not getting away with it. I was walking along a street in Rouen, France.

I like to go to Rouen. Meandering up toward the Central Railroad Station. All of a sudden, a woman came along and hooked me.

You know, my right arm gave me a hook. A brother's feet would hook. I turned, of course, and knew right away.

I tried to pull my arm out and couldn't. She had me like in a vice. And I tried to keep walking and she walked right with me as though we belonged.

Well, that will never do, you know. And I used on her what I have used ever so often on men as well as on women. You get it both ways.

And I said to her, I used a German equivalent to our Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Moe. And here she was, and I said, and she looked. I have used that.

It has never failed to work except once with an Arab boy in Oran, Algeria. A little suicide fellow that pissed at me, and they're racist. Don't you get your suicide.

You take your own suicide business with you if you want to know what's good for you. Oh, what's wrong with that? What's wrong? You'll find out. An American got a suicide in Cairo with a fellow charged him five dollars.

Oh, you say, I just wouldn't pay. You'd pay all right, and you'd be glad to. They have a way of making you pay gladly.

That little fellow had liquid shoe polish. He stood back with the cap off and said, Mr. American, would you rather pay me five dollars or have me throw this liquid shoe polish at your nice suit? He paid five dollars. Go ahead, go do it.

Don't you get yourself. So with one of those boys was the only time this didn't work. But having friends, I was concerned.

I was known there. I thought, what if somebody went by in a car or a streetcar and saw us two? Just the right moment, me having one of those street women on my arm, walked in several steps. So in church that afternoon, I said to the people, I want to tell you what happened to me in your nice city.

And I told the whole story just in case some, let's say, ladies didn't go by in a car and, oh, did you see it? We saw him with our very own eyes. Would you believe it? What is this world coming to? So I told the whole thing, of all the things you're up against, the devil is after the ministry and you better run. I'll go back to Samuel.

I should have told you that before, but I didn't want to. 1 Samuel 16.14, But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. Now I have to try and satisfy, first of all, you theologians, I mean you students.

Now, Brother Buehler, what does that mean? I'm not bothering with that, but I'm going to give you what I think so at least your curiosity is appeased for the present. I think we have here two possible explanations. I'll give you both and I'll give you the one toward which I lean.

You can take that to mean that God deliberately sent an evil spirit to Saul to trouble him. My personal feeling is that this spirit was trying to get at Saul right along. He was the anointed of the Lord, but couldn't because of the anointing.

But when God removed his spirit, the man was open and God did not intervene. He allowed the spirit of freedom and in this sense I think we have these words, an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. Now, we'd be fools to argue over that, but this latter view I personally prefer to the other.

But now the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul. It's a terrible thing to lose the presence of God. Now, he lost the presence because of disobedience.

Take for instance the same book, chapter 13, and verse 13, And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly. Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee. For now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever.

But now thy kingdom shall not continue. The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and so forth. Now what happened was the disobedience of Saul.

One year the Lord gave me two definitions. One of pride, the other of disobedience. What the Lord gave me for pride was this.

Pride is the deification of self. Self-deification. And you know that pride is a terrible thing in the sight of God Not because when we are proud we are becoming our own deity, and that infringes on the deity of God.

You have read or heard of Madame Gayen, that French mystic, she is called at least to know God so well. She was rated as the most beautiful woman in Paris. The men loved to give her a second look.

The ladies envied her beauty and she admired it. But she was a very spiritual woman and kept seeking the Lord and realized that her pride of faith was hindering her in her spiritual development. She asked the Lord to take away her pride, but her pride would not go.

One day she challenged God and said, God, do you mean to tell me that you are not strong enough to take this pride out of my heart? And the Lord heard it. And Madame Gayen came down with smallpox. Her face was full of pox.

Her friends told her what salve to use to save her face. She says, I am not using any salve, I am not saving my face. God is answering my prayer.

She recovered, but her face was full of marks. Her beauty was gone, but so was her pride. She had no more reason to admire herself in the mirror.

Pride is a terrible thing. In school we had a revival. And we were coming and going because the revival kept going all the time.

And I came back to chapel and sat on one end of the girl's side. I came in and just sat over there. One of the girls was sitting at the other end of the row of seats, nobody between us.

And she was singing in other tongues, beautiful. She was, I think, the greatest singer we ever had. Did that girl have a voice? She could sing way up to, I don't know how high you go, let's say way up to K, or someplace.

I'm not a musician, I love music, know nothing about it. And did she sing? Chapel was quiet, everybody was listening, so was I. Oh, the little girl, oh did she sing. And the Lord spoke to me, I'll call her Susie, and I try not to make a mistake by giving her the real name.

I want you to go over to Susie and tell her that her singing is an abomination in my sight. I said, Lord, I can't. I have a good relationship with the students.

She has never done anything to me. That's a terrible thing to do. I want you to go over and tell her that her singing is an abomination in my sight.

A second time, I said, God, I can't do that to that girl. She was one of those nice kids, you know. She'd take cookies from home from her mom, knock at my door, come in.

Brother Buehler got some cookies, likes them. Sure, I'll take the whole box, how about it? You know, that kind of a kid. And I should tell her that? The Lord dealt with me.

I finally acquiesced, and when I wanted to go over, she was gone. Oh, I felt bad. I said, Father, forgive me.

I'm going to go up to the office, and if you will bring her my way, I will obey. I walked up, and down the hall comes Susie, and we passed outside my office door. I said, Susie, would you mind stepping in my office a moment? I have something to tell you.

And she said so nicely, certainly, Brother Buehler, in such a nice way. Now I felt all the worse if she only had the word, but so accommodating. We went in, shut the door.

She stood here, I stood here. I looked her in the eyes, said nothing. I guess she wondered.

Oh, Brother, that's awfully hard, isn't it? I said, Susie, whatever her name was, you know, the Lord wants me to tell you that you singing in chapel is an abomination in His sight. I said no more. And that girl, I just looked at her, said no more.

She looked at me as though lightning had struck her. I could feel her think, Brother Buehler, you of all people, what have I ever done to you? Her head came down, and that girl began to weep. She broke out into terrible sobs that I hear for the rest of my life.

Oh, Brother, her nose started to run, so I gave her my handkerchief. I told her, always have a clean handkerchief. She too got wrapped in her, oh, Brother.

I could have put my arm around her. I'm so sorry, but what could I do? But you can't do that, you know. There she was.

And then all the way down the hall to the girl's father. And to her credit, oh, I almost let her name slip. Susie, will you sing a solo? No.

Why not? I'm not singing anymore. Well, what happened? Don't ask me. That girl refused to sing for about three months.

I had chapel service, and the Lord laid upon my heart to ask her to sing a solo. So I looked her up. I said, Susie, I have chapel tomorrow.

I'd like you to sing a solo for us. She said, me? As though saying, after what you said, you're asking me? She didn't say that. That's how I felt.

She only said, me? Her head dropped, paused a bit. She said, I'll sing. Very shortly, school was out.

During the summer, I received a letter from her. Dear Brother Buehler, I want to thank you for your faithfulness to God and to me. For when I was singing in chapel, I was not singing for the glory of the Lord.

I was singing to have folk admire my voice. She said, I knew everybody was listening in admiration. She said, for some time, pride had begun to build up in my heart.

And what you said made me realize this. God humbled me and broke me and took the pride out of my heart. And then she said, I asked them to cut for you a 12-inch record on which I sang your favorite hymns.

Dear, grateful student, Susie. She came back next year, and she was used again in singing, but her pride was good. But what a price for obedience.

Now, Saul lost the presence because of disobedience, and I almost disobeyed the Lord. Who wants to free the student that way? And yet, what are you going to do? I want to go to the fourth one, found in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2, verses 42 to 46. Now, you understand we are dealing here with the principle.

And when he, that is Jesus, was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus carried behind him, and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, and so forth. Now, here you have a strange situation.

The most unlikely parents, the parents of Jesus, lost the most unlikely son, the Son of God, in the most unlikely place, the temple, on the most unlikely day, their greatest day, their greatest religious holiday, the day of atonement. The most unlikely people lost the most unlikely son in the most unlikely place on the most unlikely day. How come? Sure, they did not want to lose their son.

They loved their son, but there is only one answer, neglect. They were so preoccupied with meeting friends, with the holiday season, they noticed his absence, but weren't worried. They supposed him to be in the company, but he wasn't.

It was a religious holiday, and you'd think on a religious holiday they wouldn't lose their son, but they did. That's what happened to me in Bible school. I was in Bible school in 1927, and we had four weeks of special meetings with Brother McAllister.

Four weeks of special meetings. The school was connected with the church. And we students were asked to attend classes, do our assignments, be in every service every night, and be in the order dealing with people.

I had wished many a time if I could have told that fact.

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