

Contemplative Outreach

Spiritual Journey with Thomas Keating

Part 2 Tape 11(a)



Don't Ask it to Drop Dead

The false self system adapts and adjusts. It will not just drop dead on request. Unconscious motivation does not collapse after a decision of the intellect. Impatience with Centering Prayer, for example, is an attempt to manipulate the relationship with God.

It Was a Tough Life

Thomas was determined to make himself into a model monk. He spent hours on his knees in prayer. Monastic training can turn you back into an obedient child and so defeat its purpose of bringing you to a full, free and conscious response to God.

Sat Down During His Prayers

Thomas' seated companion during prayer seemed more blessed than himself. Eventually Thomas admitted his spiritual envy to himself. He was so shocked that he was tempted to give up completely.

You Still have to Deal with the Root

The great challenge he found was not to get discouraged and give up the journey. After befriending his prayer companion, Thomas' envy disappeared. He realized that the problem lay only with himself and that his reaction to his companion was a big gift from God and an invitation to grow.

God is Totally On Your Side

Everything works for good on the spiritual journey as a result of this fact. Emotional damage caused by the programmes for happiness needs healing. The deeper our experience of God's mercy, the greater our compassion.



A Sort of Monastic or Religious Superego

Interiorised, unquestioned religious values form a type of religious super ego. It translates into a Mythical Membership style of functioning. God is an incredible therapist and knows exactly what needs attention in us. We have to learn to trust his love like an eaglet learning to fly.