

Contemplative Outreach Spiritual Journey with Thomas Keating Part 4 Tape 19(b)



When spiritual consolation diminishes the pain of our separate identity increases

Those who are spiritually gifted as leaders, teachers, prophets etc are in danger of identification with their role. The Night of the Spirit however is an experience of oneself as capable of every evil and of being abandoned by God.

The real hallmark of someone who is sent is always that of service and Jesus was aware of this in respect of himself.. "I have come because I was sent."

Five Fruits of the Night of the Spirit

1. "...Freedom from the attraction of assuming a role because of one's special gift or charisms that one has been freely given by God."
2. ".....Freedom from the domination of any emotion." Such domination, with moods and swings, is what is characteristic of the false self system
3. Purification and growth in our idea and image of God. This may be accompanied by the collapse of other supports that have characterized our spiritual identity and we may feel totally abandoned by God.
4. Now we can allow God be himself..... "it's a total act of self surrender and abandonment that is being developed and made available to us in the Night of Spirit, where the divine light is so pure that it is imperceptible to any of our faculties; hence it's experienced as a ray of darkness, according to John of the Cross."
5. Trust also grows..... "simply trust in the infinite mercy of God because he is infinite, and mercy reaches out to weakness and to need of its very nature."

The big "I" of the ego diminishes and is replaced by the "I AM" of scripture, of the risen life of Christ, of the Spirit. Transformed, we live our ordinary lives with "extraordinary motivation." We experience *apatheia* which is not indifference but concern for everything without the emotional baggage of the false self system. We are free and available to others without emotional drama, anxiety, or desire to change them. Our consciousness has been restructured. We can use the good things of life without any desire to possess.

Service of others is at the heart of reality and is a deep human need.