

Contemplative Outreach

Spiritual Journey with Thomas Keating

Part 4 Tape 21(b)



The Spiritual Senses

Once spiritual attentiveness is awakened by listening with a sacred word, or looking with a sacred glance, or breathing with a sacred breath, this unknowing attentiveness becomes more habitual.

The Prayer of Quiet

The first spiritual experience is the “**perfume of God**” which is the attraction we have to interior silence, stillness, solitude and rest in God (**the Prayer of Quiet**). Jesus invited us to come to him for rest. This rest frees us from the domination of emotional turmoil and from the division of our energies.

First of all, the attraction, which is received, is the experience of the undifferentiated Presence of God. Secondly, it is “a dynamic and marvelous life, friendship, union that unfolds and unfolds and deepens and becomes more intimate, more unifying, more profound, and, hence, more energizing for service and presence to other people and their needs.”

The Prayer of Union

When the attraction is persistent and leads to commitment to prayer regardless of the daily circumstances, it is a sign that we have the grace of Contemplative Prayer. As we let go into this divine union we experience God’s embrace, the “**touch**” of God (**the Prayer of Union**).

The Prayer of Full Union

Then, there is an interpenetration of spirits and God is a decisive presence living within us and living our life. This is the most intimate of experiences, a “**taste**” of God (**the Prayer of Full Union**). All that remains is knowing God through love, total attentiveness and pure consciousness. At the deepest level, our idea of God is changed.

Restructuring of Consciousness

Finally, there is the grace of the **restructuring of consciousness**. We move beyond experiences to a conviction in daily life of always “being in God and God in union with us.” The gift of God’s person is manifest even in our most ordinary activities during the day. This is total freedom and infinite possibility.