

Centering Prayer Week 2

Consent to God's Presence and Action in You (Audiobook Chapter 5, Book Chapter 9)

*“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
6 who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
7 but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
8 he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.”* Philippians 2:5-8, NRSV

Consent: Trust, Surrender, Opening

Contemplative practice is not something we do to find God. Contemplation involves being found by God. On our own there is no way to obtain a contemplative state. Centering prayer is an opening and consent that allows God to discover Himself in us. This opening is like a gift unfolding; like a flower that opens as it is drawn by a light it does nothing to produce or control. We do not need to do something in centering prayer. This *doing* is more like *being* and allowing.

You cannot do anything to produce an experience of God in you. And, you can consent to opening to divine love and awakening to God's light and life already at work within you.

Consent is necessary.

- Consent involves being still and becoming aware of our thoughts and busy mind.
- Consent involves *ever so gently* returning to the sacred symbol when engaged with a thought.
- Consent involves letting go.
- Consent involves opening to an unseen mystery enfolding our life within every breath and moment: Our God in whom we live and move and have our being.

The consent that we practice becomes God's consent in us. Consent creates a disposition in us for the full flowering/blossoming of the divine light, life, and love in our hearts.

*“The only initiative we take during the period of centering prayer is to maintain our **consenting to the presence and action of God** within. This we do by gently returning to the sacred symbol when we notice we are engaged with thinking some thought, feeling,*

or bodily sensation. Letting go of attachment to the thoughts, feelings, and sensations. Letting them happen without you being concerned about them being there.” Thomas Keating

We are not trying to achieve some particular kind of interior state of stillness, even though that may come. But, gradually through the consent of God’s light, life, and love within, we receive a *freer transformed relationship to everything that can happen in our mind*. We can be with experiences of felt distraction, we can be experiences of emotional turmoil, we can be still and present to God at a deeper level of our being because *God is the source of the prayer*.

Humility and Consent:

“He (Christ) humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death.”

The modern definitions of humility have evolved through cultural overlays on the Latin roots. The word humility comes from Latin *humilitas* which means “grounded” and ‘from the earth’ and is related to *humilis* meaning ‘on the ground.’ Working from the Latin, humility can mean ‘equal to the soil on which we walk’ and from which we are all created.” The *soil already has tremendous value* and has no need to elevate itself. From this sense of humility, the word can mean “having a clear perspective, a respect for one’s place within each context, a sense of worth without self-asserting.”

“*Humility is simply being without self-reflecting.*” Russ Hudson

The ground cannot be lowered because it is already as low as possible. The soil is the foundation upon which everything is built. Everything is from the earth and returns to the earth. The earth is a part of everything, never separate. From this unity there is nothing to defend and nothing to maintain.

*"The highest form of goodness is like gentle water.
Water knows how to benefit all things without striving with them.
It is content with the low places that people disdain."* Lao Tzu

You cannot do anything to produce an experience of God in you. God is already closer than the very breath you breathe in this moment. Humility knows there is nothing to defend and nothing to maintain. Practicing humility allows you to let go of striving and open (consent) to God’s presence already at work in the present moment.

This 10 week series is based on David Frenette’s book and audio workshop on Centering Prayer.

- The Path to Centering Prayer: Deepening Your Experience of God, David Frenette, 2017.
- Centering Prayer Meditations: Effortless Contemplation to Deepen Your Experience of God, David Frenette (2014, Audiobook)



In Silence

A guide has entered this life
in silence.
His message is only heard
in silence.

Take a sip of his precious wine
And lose yourself.
Don't insult the greatness of his love,
For he helps all those who suffer,
in silence.

Polish the mirror between the
breaths.
Go with him, beyond words.
He knows your every deed.
He is the one
who moves the wheel of heaven,
in silence.

Every thought is buried in your heart;
He will reveal them one by one,
in silence.

Turn each of your thoughts into a
bird
And let them fly to the other world.
One is an owl, one is a falcon, one is a
crow.

Each one is different from the others
But they are all the same
in silence.

To see the Moon that cannot be seen
Turn your eyes inward
and look at yourself,
in silence.

In this world and the next,
Don't talk about this and that;
Let him show you everything,
shining as one . . . in silence.

~ Rumi