

# SANCTUARY OF THE SOUL

Stepping into Meditative Prayer – Part 2



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Based on the book:

*Sanctuary of the Soul: Journey into  
Meditative Prayer by Richard Foster,  
InterVarsity Press, 2011.*



# Opening Prayer

## Dag Hammarskjöld's Prayer

Give me a pure heart—that I may see Thee,  
A humble heart—that I may hear Thee,  
A heart of love—that I may serve Thee,  
A heart of faith—that I may abide in Thee.



# Second Step of Meditative Prayer

- ❖ Foster calls this step “beholding the Lord”
- ❖ *Beholding the Lord speaks of an inward steady gaze of the heart upon God, the divine Center. We bask in the warmth of God’s presence. We soak in God’s love and care. The soul, ushered into the Holy Place, is transfixed by what she sees. (p. 69)*
- ❖ Richard Rolle (1290-1349), the hermit of Hampole experienced this warming of the heart
  - ❖ *I felt within me a merry and unknown heat...I was expert it was not from a creature but from my Maker, as it grew hotter and more glad.* Richard Rolle

# Madame Jeanne Guyon

- ❖ French widow who became a mystic
- ❖ Spent some years following her spiritual director Father Lacombe, and in trying to spread her concept of dwelling continuously in the presence of God
- ❖ Francois Fenelon became her student after they were introduced by the Duchess de Bethune-Charrost
- ❖ Her quietist ideas led to her arrest
  - ❖ Spent 7 years in the Bastille

# Guyon's Method of Meditation

- ❖ Read a portion of scripture and pause
- ❖ During the pause, turn your mind to the Spirit of Christ
  - ❖ Main focus should be turning ourselves toward the things of God
  - ❖ Acquiring knowledge is not the primary goal for reading scripture in this way
- ❖ As you become aware of God's presence, lift up your heart
- ❖ Spend time waiting on God while turning your attention to your spirit where the Lord has promised to dwell
  - ❖ Here you will meet God
- ❖ There in God's presence we will be fed with the scripture we've read
- ❖ Then we are to "swallow what we have tasted"

# Some Simple Suggestions

- ❖ Foster suggests 3 simple ways to step into the experience of “beholding the Lord”
  - ❖ While in nature, take in the reflected glory of God that remains even in a fallen world (Romans 1:20)
  - ❖ Find music that gently leads you into the presence of God
  - ❖ Consider simple silence
    - ❖ Allow the Spirit of God to intercede “with sighs too deep for words” (Romans 8:26)
  - ❖ Rest in God’s embrace

# Inward Attentiveness

- ❖ *Be silent, and listen to God. Let your heart be in such a state of preparation that his Spirit may impress upon you such virtues as will please him. Let all within you listen to him. This silence of all outward and earthly affection and of human thoughts within us is essential if we are to hear his voice.* Francois Fenelon
- ❖ Listening is the third step of meditative prayer
- ❖ A time when our physical activity, plans and emotions stand still while “our spirit is on tiptoe, alert and listening”
- ❖ God’s command during the Transfiguration was to listen to Jesus (Matthew 17:5)

# Recognizing God's Voice

- ❖ How do we distinguish between the voice of God & our own thoughts
  - ❖ Most frequent advice is to consider scripture, circumstances, and inner promptings in combination
  - ❖ This is helpful, but seems incomplete
- ❖ Dallas Willard in Hearing God
  - ❖ The quality of the voice of God
    - ❖ Has a certain weight, persistence, and authority
  - ❖ The Spirit of the voice of God (James 3:17)
    - ❖ Full of peacefulness, joy, and treats others with loving-kindness
    - ❖ Has continuity with the Spirit of Jesus
  - ❖ The content of the voice of God
    - ❖ Will be coherent with the God we know from Bible and tradition

# Effects of Listening to/for the Voice of God

- ❖ We will not always be able to comprehend and interpret God's voice correctly
- ❖ We will become more willing to be taught by the Spirit of God
- ❖ With this willing and obedient heart, God will lead us into a life of abundance (Is 1:19)
- ❖ Voice of God is quiet
- ❖ God will speak in a way that is particularly suited for each individual
- ❖ God's voice will often lead us act in service for our neighbor (to meet the specific need of someone)

# A Life of Prayer

- ❖ Brother Lawrence experienced this prayer life as his entire life
- ❖ *The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in a great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament.* Brother Lawrence