

# **L**ETTING GO INTO GOD



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It is said that Francis' great prayer, which he would spend whole nights praying, is "Who are you, God? And who am I?"  
Contemplative prayer helps us to live into these questions.

Who am I? As we observe our minds in contemplation, first we recognize how many of our thoughts are defensive, oppositional, paranoid, self-referential, or in some way violent. Until we recognize how constant that dualistic mind is, we have no motivation to let go of it. We learn to say, "That feeling is not me. I don't need that opinion to define me. I don't need to justify myself or blame someone else."

*Gradually, we learn to trust the wounds and the failures of life, which are much better teachers than our supposed successes. It's all a matter of letting go and getting out of the way. Thérèse of Lisieux would call it surrender and gratitude. She said, "It is enough to recognize one's nothingness and to abandon oneself, like a child, into God's arms." Until we discover this "little way," we almost all try to gain moral high ground by obeying laws and thinking we are spiritually advanced.*

The non-dual mind can accept and surrender to the mystery that I am to myself; it doesn't need to quickly categorize this mystery as sinful, wrong, and evil or as good, meritorious, and wonderful. It just is. When I can no longer hold myself up, I fall into the Mystery of God and let God hold me. When I no longer name myself right or wrong, I let Someone Else name me. This is the beginning of true spirituality, of the true mutuality of the God/human love affair.

Who is God? When I allow God to keep revealing the deeper Mystery of Mercy and Grace and Love to me, I don't categorize or hold God too easily, too quickly, as if I understand God, as if I've got God in my pocket. Those who allow God to reveal God's Self are the very ones who know that God is Love. They know that God is not a harsh judge or conditional lover.

Those who experience the depths within contemplation know that God's love is an endless sea of mercy and unconditional acceptance. The deeper you go, the more you fall into the Mystery. As you fall into the Mystery of an ever-loving God, you are able to accept the mystery of yourself. And as you accept the mystery of yourself, you fall into the Mystery of God. You don't know--and it doesn't matter--which comes first. People who love God love themselves and everybody else. People who love themselves and everyone else also love God.

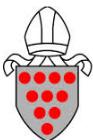
You see, love is one. Love is the whole. Love is an endless sea that you fall into. And once you fall into it, you can't fall out. It's not something you do. It's something that is done to you, and all you can do is let go.

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# C ontemplative Prayer

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