



THE MARK

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Basics of Self-Knowledge

by Tim Cook

The Green Bay Packers NFL football team of the late 1960s was one of the best teams ever to play the game. I know that there are some who might disagree with me; but I'll stick with my opinion and use it to make a point. What made this standout team great was the vision, inspiration and leadership of their legendary coach, Vince Lombardi. During the time I worked in the corporate world, three different companies that I worked for used the same motivational film that featured coach Lombardi and Jerry Kramer, the All-Pro guard. In the film Jerry Kramer is asked how it was possible that in the last moments of the 1967 championship game, which was played in agonizing -15 degree weather, he was able, in one heroic moment, to completely dominate the Dallas Cowboys massive defensive tackle, Jethro Pugh who was considerably larger than Kramer. With one seemingly superhuman effort, Kramer blasted Pugh out of his position opening a path for a one yard touchdown run by quarterback Bart Starr to win the championship.

Jerry Kramer's response to the question has continued to serve me

and inspire me just about every day since I first heard it. He told the interviewer that coach Lombardi challenged his team in practicing the fundamentals of football, the basics of blocking, tackling, running and passing, every single day, in every single practice. There was nothing fancy, special or tricky. Day after day, week after week, Lombardi drilled his team in the most basic of football skills. So that when a big moment that required everything of the team came to meet him, Kramer could reach down into his exhausted soul and give what Lombardi called, "second effort." In all those repetitive daily practice sessions, Lombardi taught his men that they could give their very best effort in everything they do, every single day. Then came the part that has really stuck with me; the part I really needed to hear. Coach Lombardi believed that every time we give less than our best effort, even in practice and even on the smallest of the basics, we make it easier for ourselves to make even less effort the next time and so on and on.

It is the same with everything in our lives. Every time we give life

less than our best, we are making it easier and easier to become mediocre people. That is why, when we are learning the basics of the Work of Inner Christianity, it is essential that we practice the basic inner core of consciousness skills every day, day after day, with our very best efforts and our best intentions. That is what makes it possible for us to meet the enormous challenges of living a happy, balanced life in our rapidly changing increasingly, unpredictable world.

What are the basics of the Work of Inner Christianity? What are its fundamentals, the blocking, running and tackling? In my view; there are three: self-observation, non-identifying and Self-Remembering. These are simple, basic skills; nothing fancy, nothing tricky and nothing complicated. But wishing to master them and making genuine, sincere efforts to work with them every day will bring their undreamed-of benefits to our capacity to play at a very high level in the "game of life."

In the basic skill of self-observation, we turn our attention away from the people, events and circumstances of the world that are revealed to us by our senses

and notice instead our (usually unnoticed) interior reactions to our outer world. We learn to study our thoughts; observing them the way an anthropologist would study the living patterns of a people he wants to understand. We learn to listen to the many interior voices that clamor for our attention and we gradually become aware of our many contradictory patterns of reactions and desires and the circumstances that trigger them. We take the position of witness to our entire interior environment – including not only our thoughts, but also our emotional states and bodily sensations. We never judge what we observe; but if judgment of an observation should arise, we just include the judgment in our observation. We are simply gathering information of interest, not building cases for conviction. We just wish to know, to see first-hand what goes on in our inner world; the scene that only God and ourselves have access to. We have opportunities to deepen our skills of self-observation, every moment of every day. It is one of the basics. Practiced daily, sincerely and with unflinching self-honesty it

transforms us.

The basic practice of non-identifying follows self-observation. What is observed is discovered to be superficial to and distinct from the observer. It is so utterly simple that we are amazed that we never caught on to it before. The object we observe – whether it is a chair, a thought, a feeling or a sensation – is not the same as the observer. That which is seeing, cannot see itself. If something is witnessed, it is not identical to the witness. If you would like to do a fun experiment with this basic skill, take a pen and draw an eye on your index finger. Now let that “eye” look around at your hand, the other hand, the wrist, the room; but then let that index finger “eye” try to look at itself. Twist and turn though it may, it will never see itself. The thing doing the seeing can never see itself. Anything it can see is clearly not itself. Now let’s learn to use that principal to assist our inner exploration. I am noticing my thoughts; therefore I am not my thoughts. I am aware of my feelings; therefore I am not my feelings. I experience sensations; therefore I am not sensations. Our true identity is the Witness;



The Church of Conscious Harmony
A Contemplative Christian Community

7406 Newhall Lane
Austin, Texas 78746
512.347.9673
512.347.9675 fax
www.consciousharmony.org

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Sun 9-10 am & 11:30 am-12:30 pm
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Virginia Maxwell, Manager
bookmgr@consciousharmony.org

NEWSLETTER

Sandra Ely, Editor
garzaely@swbell.net
Carol Hagar, Design
lifesart@austin.rr.com

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therefore, we are never identified by anything we witness, within or without. Practice, practice, practice builds the basic skill of inner separation.

The third basic is Self-Remembering. Notice the capital S in self. That means that it is referring to the True Self, the inner being or Christ Self of each of us. There are many ways to practice Self-Remembering; but a simple way to begin to understand it is that it is what remains when we have let go of our identification with all the thoughts, feelings and sensations. But letting go is not as simple as it might seem. We first have to self-observe the moods, attitudes, habits and projections that we carry through the circumstances of our lives; these are the things we are identified with. Then we have to practice the art of non-identifying with them. As our practice deepens, we will be given graceful gifts of Self-Remembering, touches of Spiritual Reality that empower us and remind us of the greatness and glory of God and the nearness of His Presence. Like Brother Lawrence*, we practice the presence of God in all the circumstances and conditions of our lives; letting go of identifying with thoughts, letting go of identifying with sensations, and letting go of identifying with emotions. Practice, practice,

practice in letting go builds the basic grace of Self-Remembering.

Our annual aim for 2015 focuses us on self-knowledge. Self-knowledge has absolutely nothing to do with what we see when we look into a mirror. Self-knowledge is what we gain when we study our inner reactions to the reflections we see in the mirror; how we react in relationships; how we respond to the news; and how we meet adversity or grace. What are the usual, ordinary interior conditions of this creature that I so casually call, “myself”?

Coach Lombardi is famous for one particular quote that reveals just how focused and intentional he was. He said, “Winning isn’t everything; it’s the only thing.” All his focus on the basics of football was in service to winning football games. We, however, are serving infinitely greater possibilities than winning games of any kind. For us the issue is Life itself. We might modify the idea to say, “My True Self is everything to me. It is Christ, the only real me; my hope of glory.”

Practice, practice, practice. ☉

*Brother Lawrence was a 17th century French contemplative monk who is known for his constant devotion and ability to bring God into every aspect of his life. His classic Christian work, *Practice of the Presence of God*, compiled after his death, details how to gain that constant and comforting connection to God.

CCH Bookstore

Lenten Readings



Keep a True Lent

by Charles Fillmore

Unity Classic Library Series



A Living Lent

A Contemplative Daily Companion
for Lent and Holy Week

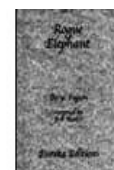
by Peter Traben Haas

Self-Observation Readings



The Reality of Being

by Jeanne De Salzmänn



Rogue Elephant

by Beryl Pogson

Transforming Negative Emotions

Bookstore and Library Hours

Monday-Friday 9 am-3:30 pm

Sunday 9-10 am & 11:30 am-12:30 pm

To Know God Is to Know Yourself

by Barbara Cook

I was well along on my spiritual journey when I came across this statement, “To know God is to know yourself.” I immediately recognize the truth it communicated because I was beginning to know God and I was learning a great deal more about myself than I had ever suspected was there. I was discovering my previously unknown shadow side, which was becoming increasingly obvious. My daily practice of receptive meditation was gradually allowing long-repressed emotions to come to the fore. Memories of incidents from my past were released from the mechanism of denial and began to bubble up into my awareness. I also became aware of things I had done that clearly did not fit the self-image that had been carefully crafted by what I now think of as the Barbara PR [public relations] department. I saw unhealthy family dynamics and how they were related to current behaviors and how many of my attitudes and negativities were rooted in my childhood. It was very painful.

Then came Centering Prayer and Fr. Thomas Keating’s contemplative wisdom. It flowed into me through the *Spiritual Journey* videos and his early books, *Open Mind Open Heart*, *Intimacy with God* and *Invitation to Love*. Through them I learned about the

human condition; how we got like this. And I learned that the healing cure for my afflictions was the love of God; administered in silence. All at once my life and my journey seemed explicable. This difficult journey I was on was healing me of the feeling that I was a separate self; a self that felt alienated from God and the rest of the human race. This false-self had created its own imaginary world with its own interests at the very center. By saying yes to God, my home-made self was coming to the light of consciousness, being released and replaced by Christ, growing at the center of my being and becoming increasingly obvious as the center of everyone.

That’s when I heard, “To know God is to know yourself” and

understood that letting God into our lives is actually to open to the Life, Light and Love that God is. As His presence enters the light of our awareness His love heals the wounds of our lifetime and truly gives us life, a new life that has always been waiting for the right conditions to bloom. When we have opened our own human creature to His light, we are really seeing the condition of all the humans with whom we share the human condition. And we become a bit more detached from the likes and dislikes of our own small personal self. Then we are gradually restored to the self-giving likeness of God, our Father, and free to be increasingly available to our original design specifications; fully human and fully divine. ☺

SEEDS

The way to find the real “world” is not merely to measure and observe what is outside us, but to discover our own inner ground.

For that is where the world is, first of all: in my deepest self.

This “ground,” this “world” where I am mysteriously present at once to my own self and to the freedoms of all other men, is not a visible, objective and determined structure with fixed laws

and demands. It is a living and self-creating mystery

of which I am myself a part,

to which I am myself my own unique door.

Thomas Merton, *Seeds*, page 10.



All of us ... are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory. 2 Corinthians 3:18

Annual Aim: The Self

Know Thyself

Self Observation and the Work of Inner Christianity

by Stephen Williams

This work, this system of teaching,
these ideas we are studying,
are the most beautiful
things you can possibly imagine –
and they are new to us.
... They accuse you only
of being asleep.
They hold no conviction
of sin in them.
They ask you quite gently
to observe yourself.
It is you yourself
who must accuse yourself.

Maurice Nicoll, *Commentaries*

*He and his companions
had been overcome by sleep,
but becoming fully awake,
they saw ...*

Luke 9:32

It is a beautiful sunny day in winter. The temperature is about sixty degrees and there is a slight breeze. Today is a perfect day for a walk in the nearby park with my dog, Osa. Over the past six years we have walked in this park hundreds of times. On this day, the freshly mowed rolling fields and earthen mounds are vibrantly green from the recent rain. As we walk along the gravel path that loops around the park, I am filled with enthusiasm at the sure knowledge that an overflowing abundance and variety of wildflowers will bloom from their deep beds in a few weeks. The trail dips down and crosses this familiar creek, which thankfully has some water now and is glistening and still. Throughout the seasons, there will be many inhabitants and visitors. The fish and the frogs, the birds and dragonflies and many other creatures will all return. Continuing our walk, we enter the grove of trees. I wonder to myself, “how many branches will

fall this year?” As we exit the woods, we stop by the pond surrounded by tangled branches of bare bushes and scraggly trees. The turtles are ever-present, sunning on mossy logs. A large white egret wades in the mud looking for a meal. We are so blessed to have such a place in which to walk and pray and to take in impressions.

It is a place where I move and breath, recharge and decompress. The park is always itself and offers itself in all its beauty, abundance and variety. When I walk in the park not only do I take in impressions, but I also bring impressions with me. I bring with me a state of mind, thoughts, emotions, feelings, sensations and attitudes. When I am distracted and preoccupied with concerns and worries about life, I may not have the same experience of the park as when I am relaxed, aware and grateful for my life in God’s wondrous creation.

The Work of Inner Christianity and the practice of self-observation

have helped me to look at my inner state and become aware of what I bring with me psychologically and spiritually everywhere I go. My external observations are always seen through the lens of my inner state. Self-observation provides a way to shine light on the parts of my personality which may be darkening my view of the world I am blessed to experience.

I reflect now on a different day, a few years ago, when I was first asked to practice self-observation. In the Simple Explanation of Work Ideas class based on Maurice Nicoll's book by the same title, we were given the assignment (aim) to observe ourselves in three different ways: in our thoughts, in our feelings, and in our bodies. I learned that in the language of the Work this is called a three-centered self-observation; the centers being intellectual, emotional and moving. I have a clear memory of one of my first attempts to complete this exercise. I was surprised at my personal difficulty in completing the aim. I was walking in the park with my dog and I remember coming around the same curve on the path. There was a moment of realization that every time I started to observe my inner state in one area, I became distracted and did not get to the other two areas. Despite making genuine effort, it seemed that if I thought about the thoughts and associations going through my head I just kept following them. I might jump from association to association. Usually, I would forget

that there were two other parts to the assignment I had been asked to do. If I was not too preoccupied with my thoughts, I was able to observe, to some degree, walking, legs, feet, movement, and breathing. If I tried to get in touch with my feelings, I found that I did not get very far. I usually just experienced a vague sense of discontentment, self-pity and mild sorrow. The shock of this experience came in the realization of the degree to which my attention wandered, and that I had only a vague sense of what was going on with me. I really found the work of self-observation challenging. It was valuable though because I realized that if I wanted to change I had to start somewhere. It was the beginning of a different kind of self-knowledge and it started with the realization that I did not know myself very well at all. It also showed me that self-observation would take effort in attention.

After completing the Simple Explanation of Work Ideas class, I knew that I wanted to continue my study and practice of the Work of Inner Christianity and self-observation. The ideas landed deep within me and I knew that they offered a path to inner transformation. I was seeking spiritual truth that I could connect with in a real and relevant way. I was profoundly affected by the ideas in one particular reading.

“This work, this system of teaching, these ideas we are studying, are the most beautiful things you can possibly imagine – and they are

new to us. No, they are far more lovely and beautiful than anything you can imagine. They accuse you only of being asleep. They hold no conviction of sin in them. They ask you quite gently to observe yourself. It is you who must accuse yourself. Let us take the ideas of this teaching – an idea about *essence*. This teaching tells us that the essence of each of us comes down from the stars.”¹

The idea of *essence* resonated deeply within. It was a profoundly emotional experience. It was the feeling of coming home and belonging. I felt the truth of my own Being and somehow remembered a glimpse of my true identity and purpose in life. These ideas gave me a reason for being here in this body and experiencing my own physical presence on the Earth. I knew that everything that has happened in my life was material for my spiritual growth and useful to increasing my consciousness with Truth, with Reality, with God.

Today I have a daily practice that includes self-observation as part of the Work. Self-observation is a useful spiritual tool that for me has provided self-knowledge. The components of the practice all work together. I recognize in reviewing my participation in the Work that what preceded it was the foundation of a Centering Prayer practice. Previous to learning about and beginning this practice, I really had not been able to be quiet internally. Thoughts ran through my head constantly. It was quite a noisy place. Also, many of the

thoughts were negative, pessimistic, self-critical and filled with worry much of the time. By going into the Silence and consenting to the healing action of God's Presence within twice a day for twenty minutes, I experienced peace and serenity for the first time in many years. Whenever thoughts, sensations and feelings persisted, and they usually did, I ever-so-gently returned to my sacred word as I had been shown in the Fr. Thomas Keating videos from the Introduction to Centering Prayer class. This time of prayer and meditation helped to develop a safe interior space for me to grow into a more trusting relationship with my Creator. I have learned and trust that everything that comes up during my practice is part of the process of my healing. From Fr. Keating's book *Open Mind, Open Heart* in the Guidelines for Christian Life, Growth and Transformation and my own experience, the knowledge of my inner core of goodness in Christ has been indispensable to the spiritual journey. As with Centering Prayer, self-observation can be difficult and can be painful; therefore, it's been important to have confidence in God's love and mercy as I observe and let go of the parts of my personality and experience that are not serving or bringing me into closer relationship with God and transformation.

One part of my daily practice each day is to set an aim. As part

of my aim, I make an intention to observe myself in three-centers in conjunction with that aim. Many times I ask the Work to help me observe myself from Observing 'I', from a more interior place in myself as an objective witness. I notice the thoughts that are running through my head. I remind myself that they are just thoughts. They are not mine. I notice if they are negative, pessimistic or worrisome. I remind myself of the Work idea: *I have a right not to be negative.* I non-identify by saying, "this is not I" or "this is just a thought, it is not who I am;" and I Self-Remember by saying to myself, "I am Essence, I am a child of God, I am Light." I notice my emotions. I try to feel them. I don't try to change them. Can I get in touch with them before they slip away? I remind myself that whatever the feeling is, pleasant or unpleasant, it is useful for my transformation if I can observe it from an objective place, from Observing 'I'. I remember the Work idea: *As long as self-observation is happening nothing is lost.* I notice my body and bring my attention to specific sensations that it is experiencing. I notice the areas that are tense. I observe my posture. I observe my breath. I take a deep breath. I straighten up my posture. I let go of the tension. These actions have become self-observation, non-identification and Self-Remembering in this body.

Within this practice of three-

centered observation, I recognize that I am not one but many. I am a multiplicity. I observe myself with the help of the Work from the point of view of Observing 'I'. Also, all of my individual observations of each center, each time, with each association represent an aspect of the personality that has been observed. In some ways when I first discovered this I was quite relieved, because it explained why people's personalities are so inconsistent, including my own. Another aspect of this multiplicity, however, has proved to be pervasively difficult. When I practice three-centered self-observation, one of the things that happens is that I experience another 'I' that is sometimes called the critic. It says that I'm not observing myself well enough or that what I'm seeing needs to be changed right away. It doesn't go away easily and can be quite vicious in its attacks. The recognition and observation of this self-criticism is part of a complete observation. I ask for inner-separation and to be placed in a position of neutrality from which to Work. It is important for me to non-identify and to Self-Remember at this point. This is the precise point where I need to remember the beauty and delight of this Work. It is also where I rely so much on the rest of my practice. I return to the certainty of God's presence, mercy and love. I know and remind myself that all of this

Guidelines for Christian Life, Growth and Transformation

Fr. Thomas Keating, in his seminal work *Open Mind, Open Heart*, lists 42 principles underlying the Christian spiritual journey.

Fr. Keating asks that these principles be read according to the method of Lectio Divina.

One principle will appear in these pages each month

7th Guideline



This constellation of prerational reactions is the foundation of the false self.

The false self develops in opposition to the true Self. Its center of gravity is itself.

Multi-Day Centering Prayer Retreats at Cedarbrake

Feb 27-Mar 8	10-day Lenten	\$825
July 19-28	10-day	\$825
July 19-23	5-day	\$425
July 23-28	6-day	\$495

Call the office to register.

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process is for my healing, growth and transformation.

“Now the work can only be done in the spirit of its own beauty and light, in the spirit of its true message and significance. Life on earth is nothing but a field for working on oneself, so that one can return from whence one came. To take life as an *end* in itself is not to understand the work, and it may cause a wrong attitude which may

be the source of many negative emotions and of useless efforts made in negative states. For to work in a negative way is useless. It is only through some kind of delight, some feeling of joy or pleasure or some genuine affection or desire that a person can work and bring about any change of being in himself.”²

¹ Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, p. 9.

² Ibid, p. 10.

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Visit consciousharmony.org for a complete listing of events

SPECIAL EVENTS

Feb 14
One-Day Centering Prayer Retreat
8:30 am-4:30 pm
\$15 Bring a pot luck dish to share.

Feb 15-16
Commuter Retreat
Sun 8 am-5:30 pm Mon 7 am-4:30 pm
\$100 Fr. Keating "The Gift of Life: Death and Dying, Life and Living" videos series will be shown during this retreat. Preregister.

Ash Wednesday Service
12-12:30 pm

MONTHLY

1st Sundays
Bring non-perishables for Caritas

Feb 17
Gurdjieff Music 7:30-8:30 pm

WEEKLY

Sundays
Lectio Divina 8-9 am
Worship Service 10-11:30 am
Youth Program 10-11:30 am
Fellowship 11:30 am

Wednesdays
Prayer Circle 9:15-10 am
Contemplative Lunch 12-1 pm
Communion Service 6-7 pm

Thursdays
Work of Inner Christianity Class 7:30-9 pm

Fridays
Devotional Service 7:30-8:45 pm

DAILY

Mondays-Fridays 7-7:35 am
Centering Prayer Service in Theosis Chapel

Recordings of services are available through the Bookstore and online at www.consciousharmony.org

Who Are You? continued...

In last month's issue of *The Mark*, we began our annual aim of "The Self: Know Thyself" and focused on Self-Awareness. In Pamela Begeman's article, "Who Are You? A Series of Meditations," she shares her exploration of this existential, center-of-gravity question. As each of us in the CCH community continues to explore for ourselves the question, we offer another excerpt for this series of meditations. This one is from the book *Into the Silent Land* by Martin Laird, O.S.A., Ph.D. (New York, Oxford University Press, 2006). Fr. Laird is a member of the Order of Saint Augustine who teaches in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University. He teaches the ancient Christian spiritual practice of contemplation.

"EPILOGUE: 'Who Am I?': A Tale of Monastic Failure"

Abba Poeman said to Abba Joseph, "Tell me how to become a monk." He said, "If you want to find rest here below, and hereafter, in all circumstances say, Who am I? and do not judge anyone." —Sayings of the Desert Fathers

... "I think I've glimpsed something of this, but normally I'm just lost in my thoughts," confessed the young man.

"Are you? I thought you were a ray of God's own light, a branch on the vine. Now you say you are something different. You say you are someone lost in thoughts. But isn't this thought, 'I am lost in thoughts,' just another thought, just another label that is being believed? We assume we are our thoughts, but look and see. Are you lost in your thoughts?"

"Not right now. But if I went back and tried to sit in silence, there would just be this inner chatter. I know my mind should be quiet. I should be having no thoughts." Fr. Alypius continued his instruction. "These new thoughts: 'my mind should be quiet'; 'I shouldn't be having thoughts,' are noisier than the previous thoughts. But these particular thoughts are believed to be the truth. Believing them to be the truth distracts you from the deeper reality. Silence is naturally present. Silence cannot not be there. When you think, 'I am lost in my thoughts;

my mind should be silent,' just stop for a second and ask, 'Who is lost? Who is not quiet?' Do it right now."

There was a pause. The young man looked hard.

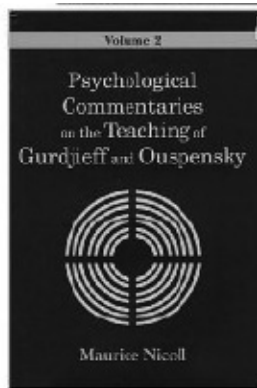
Fr. Alypius asked him, "When you look directly into the thought do you see someone who is lost?"

"No, there is no one there. There is no one who is lost. In that moment there is not a chatterer, but then that moment is gone and all the chatter comes back."

"That's right," cheered Fr. Alypius. "Thoughts keep coming back because that's just what thoughts do. But if you look directly at the thought or feeling and ask who is the chatterer, who is suffering, you won't find anybody, you won't find a sufferer. There will be chattering, for sure. Suffering, for sure. The thoughts coming and going. Don't look at the suffering, the anguish the fear. These are objects of awareness. I'm asking you to look into the awareness itself. Not the objects of awareness. These have dominated your attention for decades. Let your attention rest in the awareness, not the objects of

awareness. Who is experiencing the chaos? Who is chattering? Who is the commentator? You won't find anyone there checking to see if you are caught in your thoughts. When you turn your attention from the objects of your awareness to the awareness itself, there is just silent, vast, openness that has never been wounded, harmed, angry, frightened, incomplete. This is who you are."

... On many evenings the young man would make his way down to the bottom of the garden for conversations with Fr. Alypius. They were all about the question, 'Who am I?' The young man grew in wisdom and in this paradox of identity, and there was a great calm about him. On their final meeting Fr. Alypius said, "You have mastered the question, 'Who am I?' I would like to put to you another question: 'Who is Jesus Christ?'" The man, now no longer young, was fixed in a silent, inner gaze. As he looked at the man, Fr. Alypius' face brightened; he could see that the man knew. He sat back and returned to repairing a shoe and said to the man, "Well done. Now off with you. I understand the abbot wants to have a word with you." ☸



The Work of Inner Christianity

My Father is still working, and I also am working. John 5:17


Definite, Topical and Concrete Self-Observation

“Do you, even after long, uncritical self-observation, truly begin to realize that you are not properly conscious?” Perhaps one has not thought of oneself in this way.

Now ... in the Work people do not practice self-observation in relation to something as definite as noticing the same thing in themselves as they are critical of in others. There is no doubt that there is such a thing as abstract, retrospective or remote self-observation. It can take more than one useful and necessary form provided it does not pass into useless unnecessary retrospective regret and negative brooding. One form is connected with taking time-photographs of oneself. But what I am speaking of here is *definite, topical and concrete self-observation*. It consists in observing in yourself what definitely irritates you in another person. It is definite, because it is about what you definitely notice in another. It is topical because it has to do with what is going on more or less at the time and it is concrete because it demands that you get down to the concrete job of finding in yourself

what you find so irritating in the other person. ... the Work ranks self-observation as a prime necessity. Why? First, how can a man change himself unless he gets to know what lies in him? And second, by letting light into inner darkness—that is, the light of consciousness—certain changes take place through its influence. ... Unfortunately this light is very painful in the way it operates. They find the letting of light into themselves not at all pleasant. They have to see what fools they are. ... An increase of consciousness of oneself is always at the expense of one’s imagination of oneself, of one’s vanity, at the expense of Imaginary ‘I’, at the expense of all the pictures treasured by the False Personality. For this light of consciousness, which illuminates things in us, seeks eventually to bring about the collapse of everything fictitious and unreal so that a new person can develop. ... This brings us back to the finding in oneself of the very thing that irritates us in another, of which we had been unconscious. When this is done, when we turn things the other way round, our irritation is

dissipated. It vanishes. Now through being roused and irritated by things in others, by how they behave, what they say and so on, we lose energy by being made rather negative and are in danger of plunging into a fit of negative emotion. All negative states cause energy-loss. The Work says that we should act as mirrors to one another instead of disliking one another. That is, we can come to see ourselves in others and others in ourselves. ... The Gospels speak of seeing the beam in one’s own eye as well as the mote in one’s brother’s eye. ... Obviously something far more difficult is meant than merely seeing another’s faults. To turn round is not easy. But the Work expects it.

If you study what Christ said, you discover that nearly everything referred to what is within you. The Work also is about what is within. That is why it begins with self-observation and self-noticing. 

Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, pages 1380-1382. For more information and experience with these teachings, you are invited to attend the *Work of Inner Christianity* class held Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. at The Church of Conscious Harmony.



The Church of Conscious Harmony
A Contemplative Christian Community
7406 Newhall Lane Austin, Texas 78746

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*What eye has not seen,
and ear has not heard,
and what has not entered
the human heart,
what God has prepared
for those who love him.*

1 Corinthians 2:9

LENT

It is essential to remind ourselves again and again
that God and we cannot be separated.
He sees the world out of our eyes; God works through our hands;
God speaks through our voice; God walks on our feet.

He is even present in our sins.

This is why we should not subject God
to the indignities that our sins involve.

We are temples of the Holy Spirit . . .

The first stage of our spiritual journey
is bound to be experienced as the destruction
of our worldview and self-image, the uprooting and tearing down,
the boring from within and battering from without.

God tearing down the false self to make way
for the experience of the Divine Indwelling.

Paul says it has not entered the mind of anybody
what God has prepared for those who love Him.

The return to innocence is where we are heading,
all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding . . .

This is the project that is being celebrated during Lent.
Hence, Lent can be painful and filled with temptation.

Thomas Keating, *Reawakenings*

