

NUTS & BOLTS
of Daily
Spirituality

PRACTICAL STEPS TO
draw closer TO GOD

DAVID M. KNIGHT

Sample--Do Not Duplicate

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FOREWORD

This book is about the “nuts and bolts” of daily spirituality. You won’t find a book that presents more simply and concretely what you have to do to grow to that *fullness of life* that is the *perfection of love*. This is a ground-level book.

At the same time, you will not find many books (in readable English, at least) that will take you as deeply into the *mystery* of living the Christian life as this one does.

Christian life is a mystery: the mystery of sharing in the divine life of God. You can’t really experience Christianity until you have some awareness of *living on the level of God*. And this is an experience you keep growing into all of your life.

Mystery is the name of the game. A *mystery* is “a truth that invites endless exploration.” God is a mystery; you don’t know God until you get some idea of the mystery of what and who he is.

So, yes, this book will take you into mystery. But it will do it so easily, so simply, that it won’t hurt at all.

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INTRODUCTION

Growing Closer to God

To grow into deeper levels of intimacy with God, we need to know different ways of praying. Praying is all about loving. And loving depends on knowing. Prayer is endless exploration into the mystery of God.

The levels of intimacy with God correspond to the levels of intimacy we have with people. It's very simple. There are five levels and ways of praying that parallel five different ways we choose to communicate with people. Let's take a look at them.

Just Words

The first degree of intimacy is the level of relationship we have with people we only talk to in clichés, “pat phrases.” We pass someone in the mall or on the street and say, “Hi! How you doin’?”

When we say this, we aren't really asking how the person is doing. Nor do we care. If he or she started to tell us, we would get impatient. We aren't paying attention to what the words mean. We are just using them to say that we notice the other person is there.

The Ngama tribe in Chad, Africa, is more honest. Their greeting is just “Mo doi”—“I see your head.” And the answer is “Nel dom,” “It pleases my head.” The word “head” stands for “person.” The

greeter is just saying, “I notice you.” And the one greeted answers, “I’m glad you do.” They say what they mean.

This first level—relationship restricted to communication in pat phrases—is not much. But it is better than ignoring people. This is the level of intimacy we have with God when we say vocal prayers—memorized prayers or prayers we read out of a book—without really paying attention or meaning what we say. For example, we make the Sign of the Cross as if we were brushing flies off our face, or we rattle off “Our father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name...” without thinking of what we are saying. All we are really doing when we “say our prayers” like this is acknowledging that God exists. If this is our only level of communication with God, it isn’t much. Still, it is better than nothing.

So yes, *say your prayers*. But make them more than pat phrases. Try to pay attention to the words and grow into meaning personally what they say.

Just Information

The second level of intimacy is the relationship we have with people with whom we share *information*. We ask a co-worker which team won the ball game, or an older person to tell us about World War II, or we ask directions from a stranger on the street. Even this establishes a kind of relationship, expresses a certain trust.

We get on this level with God when we want to know more *about* him. We enjoy learning interesting facts about the life and times of Jesus. Or, going deeper, we study theology for “academic knowledge”—or even to teach or preach to others in an educational

way, without necessarily revealing any personal relationship with God on our part or calling for it from others.

There are certain prayers we say, or can say, that mainly just remind us of what the church teaches. We can, for example, recite the *Profession of Faith* at Mass without any sense at all of declaring our personal choice to believe. We can even listen to the words of the Eucharistic Prayer with attention, trying to grasp their meaning, but without realizing that they are our own words that we are saying, that the presider is just pronouncing out loud in our name. This is a level of participation at Mass that may be higher than average. But we are still just taking in information.

All the above is good. It shows a certain amount of faith in Jesus, a real interest in him and a trust that there is something about him worth knowing.

Don't knock this. If we knew more about Jesus, we would love him more. If we knew more about what the church teaches, we would appreciate our religion more. Many people have left the church and are leaving it today for lack of accurate information.

That is why it is important to seek information. Does the church really teach those things you find objectionable? Does the interpretation of God's law that you got from your pastor, bishop, or the last priest you went to confession to really reflect the true mind and heart of the church? The mind and heart of God? How are you to know, if they are your only source of information?

So talk to other priests, or to laypersons, who seem to be holy and happy living the Christian life. Read books. Read the lives of saints and the writings of involved Christians. Do what we used to call "spiritual reading." Look up what the church herself says, what

she has said in worldwide councils and some of the encyclicals—worldwide letters—of the popes. Begin by reading the sixteen short documents of Vatican II (the second council of the church to be held in Vatican City; it met from 1962-1965). And above all, *go to the source*. Read Scripture.

You can be sure of one thing: if something is contrary to the word of God, it is not the real teaching of the Catholic Church, even if it is the teaching of many *in* the church. But how will you know what Jesus said if all you get is other people's predigested interpretations of it? Let Jesus himself speak to you. Read the Bible. If something is confusing, use the explanations of respected Scripture scholars that are available in serious books that are not just echoing current positions. Read what the experts say.¹

Dealing with Opinions

On the third level of intimacy, we share *opinions* with others. This is to reveal something of a more personal nature. Our opinions are not just abstract facts. They are judgments we have made that reveal a lot about us, our level of intelligence and education, even our prejudices and values. We don't share our opinions with just anybody. We "watch what we say" around strangers. We only speak freely with people we think we can trust.

To ask someone's opinion, or to share our own, is a significant step into deeper personal relationship. It is not to be taken for granted.

Once, while trying to explain the Christian understanding of love to a group of Ngama men in Chad (where women and men did not, at that time, discuss things together), I asked: "Do you ever ask your wife's opinion about anything?"

There was a long silence. Then one man spoke: "I paid more for my oxen than I did for my wife, and I never ask my oxen's opinion about anything." Another summed it up: "I don't ask my wife's opinion about anything because, in my opinion, my wife doesn't know anything."

We laugh. But when I told this story during a retreat in the United States, one woman remarked: "So what's the difference between men over there and men over here?" Again, we can laugh. But it is not a laughing matter when husbands and wives do not probe each other's minds—and reveal their own—in deep discussion about all sorts of matters. What does it say about the respect they have or do not have for each other? About how well they want to know each other?

Nor is it a laughing matter when pastors do not ask their parishioners' opinions about doctrine, liturgy, and the effect that ministry in the parish is having on people. Or when the pope does not consult the bishops, or the bishops their priests and (very emphatically "and") the laypeople about the way things are going in the church. What does non-consultation say about the pope's attitude toward the bishops, the bishops' attitude toward priests and laity alike, and the pastor's attitude toward the other members of the parish community of which he is also a member?

Being pastor does not put one above or outside of the community. It is just one ministry among others. As St. Paul says:

There are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:5–7)

We are all one team. We need to play as one. This is a matter of relationship. If we don't want to know others' opinions, then we do not want to have any real relationship with them as persons. We either do not respect them as having any opinions worth hearing, or we just don't care about being in union of mind and will and heart with them, even concerning things we are involved in doing together. We want a "master and slave" relationship. Not *koinonia*. Not "community." Not "communion in the Holy Spirit."

Grow

Many, many Catholics are comfortable being "slaves," and many in the clergy and hierarchy are very willing to oblige them. The laity say, "Just give us the rules." And the clergy say, "Here they are; obey them." No opinions change sides.

Relationships are determined by *interaction*. The kind and level of our interaction with one another determines the kind and level of relationship we have with each other. Is it purely professional? Just social? Rigidly hierarchical? The relationship of masters and slaves?²

Apply this to our relationship with Jesus. What kind of relationship—that is, what kind of *interaction*—do we want to have with him? Do we want to explore what he thinks about things? Do we want to enter into more personal relationship with him by reading and thinking about the words he spoke (and is still speaking to us) in the Gospels? Or do we just want to learn his rules and leave it at that?

Jesus was explicit in saying he does not want slaves, or even servants. He said, "I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you *friends*, because I have *made known to you* everything that I have

heard from my Father” (John 15:15).

When we accept to share our opinions with others, and invite others to share their opinions with us, we have made a great step forward in personal relationship and intimacy. We make this same great step forward in our relationship with God when we begin looking into his opinions.

An “opinion” is defined as “the view somebody takes about a certain issue, especially when it is based solely on personal judgment.”³ The fact that, in God’s case, his opinions are always true does not mean they are any less his opinions. To be interested in “the view Jesus takes about a certain issue”—or about all issues—is to enter into a higher and deeper level of personal relationship with him, especially when we are aware that his opinions are based “on his personal judgment.” Jesus’ opinions reveal to us the personal mind and heart of God. They help us to know Jesus and God as a person.

In the Second Vatican Council the bishops declared that the church:

earnestly and especially urges all the Christian faithful...to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the “excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ” (see Philippians 3:8). “For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (St. Jerome). Therefore, they should gladly put themselves in touch with the sacred text itself, whether it be through the liturgy...or through devotional reading, or through instructions suitable for the purpose and other aids which, in our time...are commendably available everywhere [for example, Scripture study groups].

Nuts and Bolts of Daily Spirituality

And let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and humans may talk together; for “we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine saying” (St. Ambrose). (On Divine Revelation, no. 25)

To take Jesus’ opinions seriously, we should *argue* with him. We are not coming to grips with his mind if we read something he says that we find hard to accept and just say, “Well, he is God, so it has to be true,” and leave it at that. To do him justice, we have to challenge what he says, make clear to ourselves and to him what it is that rubs us the wrong way. If we put into words our objections to what he says, we give him a chance to answer. For example, Jesus said:

Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you. (Matthew 5:39–42)

We are not about to take this seriously! It is too farfetched. But we don’t want to argue with God, so we just say, “Yeah, yeah,” and ignore it, which means we ignore Jesus. We treat him like the people we don’t consider worth arguing with. When we argue with God, we need to say at the beginning that we know he is right. But if we don’t understand *why* he is right, we aren’t really going to live by what he says. Not fully. Not wholeheartedly. At most we will obey like servants or slaves, not act in union of mind and will and heart

with Jesus like partners. Like friends.

So argue. Ask all the questions. And try to answer them. The disciples didn't understand everything Jesus said either. So he promised them before he died:

I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. (John 14:25–27)

We let God share his opinions with us when we read and reflect on Scripture with an inquiring mind. When we *meditate*. Whenever anything Jesus says disturbs our peace, we should ask the Holy Spirit to help us figure it out. Then *pray*. Learning the mind and heart of God is a gradual process. We grow into it. How? We enter into prayer. We meditate.

Expressing Emotions

The fourth level of intimacy—and of prayer—is to express our emotions.

We are not talking here about the emotions we can't hide, as when we blow up at someone and show impatience or anger. We are talking about the act of *choosing* to reveal to another—or others—not just what we think but what we feel.

We like to believe that what we think is just objective truth, that when we express an opinion, no one should take it personally, as if we were saying something about ourselves or them as persons.

We like to think of ourselves as detached observers who are simply “calling a spade a spade.”

This isn’t true, of course, but there is enough truth in it to let us think we are not making ourselves naked to the world in expressing what we think. Not so when we express our feelings.

What we call “spontaneity”—just being ourselves with our reserve, without “monitoring” everything we say and how we say it—is really a choice to *give up control*.

Not completely, of course. We should never do that. But when we spontaneously express what we are feeling (laughing and crying with others, giving impulsive hugs and kisses, jumping up yelling when our team makes a touchdown, or even making excited gestures as we talk)—when we do any of this—we are giving up some measure of conscious control. We reveal ourselves in an “unedited” way. We just “do what comes naturally” and so let “the real us” appear.

To do this—to relinquish control and express physically and visibly what we are feeling—is to enter into another level of intimacy with others. It is to lower our guard, let down some barriers; it is, to some extent, to become “naked” to those we are with.

Naked is the way humans were with each other before sin entered the world. Scripture says Adam and Eve “were both naked, and were not ashamed.” They had nothing to be ashamed of, nothing they were afraid to let others see. But after their sin, “then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves” (Genesis 2:25—3:7).

Every person born into the world lives through this experience. When we are toddlers, we run around naked, acting out whatever we

feel. No one has ever hurt us. But the first day we go to school, this begins to change. If we feel lonely on the playground and begin to cry, others may stand around and call us “sissy.” We learn it is not always safe to express our emotions. We are “putting on clothes.”

Later, as teenagers, without thinking about it, we express our opinion about something in a group. Everyone makes fun of us, ridicules us; says we are “stupid.” We learn not to say what we think. We are putting on more clothes.

By the time we are adults, we walk around in a full suit of armor, hiding our true selves behind all sorts of defenses and reserves. We are careful about “opening up.” We know that if we reveal ourselves in the slightest, open up the smallest chink in our armor, someone might stab us through it.

When Jesus came to heal and reverse the sin of Adam and Eve, he did not restore the primitive nakedness of Eden. Until all reach the “perfection of love” in the total mutual forgiveness and acceptance of the “wedding banquet of the Lamb,” sin is still a fact of our environment. It would be naïve to “wear our heart on our sleeve.” If we reveal ourselves to everyone, we can and will be hurt. Jesus knew that. But he let himself be stripped naked on the cross. His heart was revealed to the whole world. We stabbed him through it. And since then his heart has been open to everyone who lives.

Instead of returning us to the primitive nakedness of Eden, Jesus told us to clothe ourselves in the white robe of the wedding feast. A wedding dress is something one puts on as a promise to take it off. It is a pledge of nakedness. The physical nakedness of marriage is a pledge to be naked to each other in mind and heart and soul.

Implicit in this is the promise of spontaneity. Married couples

will never know themselves completely, never come to total union of mind and will and—especially—of heart, if they do not release all reserves and abandon themselves without restraint to passionate self-expression. This reaches a height in sexual surrender.

Are those who marry so naïve that they think they will never hurt each other? No, their nakedness is not the nakedness of Adam and Eve, free of all fears in the Garden of Eden. It is the nakedness of Jesus on the cross, as they deliver themselves up in love, knowing their vulnerability will open them to wounds that will be inflicted, but determined to persevere through every hurt, never to close their hearts to each other in any degree, until, as Jesus proved it could, *amor vincit omnia*. Love—not human love alone, but their love made divine—“conquers all.”

This is sublime, but true. And it is no less true if we seem to go from the sublime to the ridiculous by coming down to the nuts and bolts of something as simple (and challenging) as—singing at Mass!

In ninety-nine percent of the cases, all the reasons people give for not singing at Mass are rationalizations. Just excuses.

“I can’t sing.” (You don’t sing “Happy Birthday” at parties?)

“I don’t know the words.” (You can’t remember “*Al-le-lu-ia*”?)

The real reason is just plain fear. Fear of joining in. Fear of “losing” themselves in communal celebration. Fear of looking like they are involved (teenagers). Fear of expressing emotion. Some who do sing don’t really “enter into” the hymn; they sing it as if the words mean nothing to them.

People stop going to Mass because they say it is “dead.” But when they did go, what did they do to liven it up? If they just stood there like statues while the church was celebrating the redemption of the world,

no wonder they “got nothing out of it.” They put nothing into it.

The reason we sometimes don’t “get anything” out of prayer is because we don’t understand the level of communication God wants to have with us. Or we are afraid to enter into it.

To communicate with God about emotional issues requires emotional self-expression. We said above that married couples will never know themselves completely, never come to total union of mind and will and—especially—of heart, if they do not release all reserves and abandon themselves to spontaneous, passionate self-expression. The same is true of union with God. What are we talking about? What are the nuts and bolts here?

In El Paso, Texas, after six years of seminary training in prayer and the spiritual life, I saw a young Mexican American praying before a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe with his arms stretched out in the form of a cross. I said to myself, “I wish I could pray like that.”

He was praying with his whole body. That showed he was praying with his heart. He was not only *expressing* what he felt; he was *experiencing* it. This is a law of nature: *what you do not express you will not experience*. At least, not fully.

If you do not *express* any emotional response to God, you will not *experience* any. You will have a very “formal” and “proper” relationship with God as Creator and Lord, but you won’t experience passionate love, or ever sense that you care about him.

Try these nuts and bolts. When you get out of bed in the morning, if you are alone, kneel down and put your forehead on the floor. Adore God with your body and see what effect it has on your soul. Say the Our Father like this.

Then say the following prayer kneeling with your arms

stretched out in the form of a cross. With your arms extended in “self-oblation,” express the passionate offering of yourself to him: “*Lord, I give you my body. Live this day with me, live this day in me, live this day through me.*” (You’ll hear this prayer a lot as we journey through this book—I call it the WIT Prayer: W-ith, I-n, T-hrough.)

Scripture tells us that when King David brought the ark of God up to Jerusalem “with rejoicing,” he stripped off his clothes and “danced before the LORD with all his might” dressed only in a linen apron.

When his wife Michal saw him “leaping and dancing before the LORD,” she “despised him in her heart,” and said to him sarcastically, “How the king of Israel has honored himself today! Uncovering himself before the eyes of his servants’ maids, as any worthless person might shamelessly uncover himself!”

David answered her, “I was before the LORD, who chose me as prince over the people of the LORD, that I have danced. I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in my own eyes. But by the maids of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor.”

The story ends, “And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to this day of her death” (2 Samuel 6:12–23).

So let’s be real. How would you feel about someone who joined the procession at Mass, dancing wildly to the Entrance Hymn as the presiding priest enters? Wouldn’t you say that was stupid? What if everybody in church started dancing? Would you join in? Or would you join Michal in “despising” them? Maybe this is one of the reasons why so many of our parishes have trouble reproducing themselves.

If you do nothing else, *get in touch with your feelings as you pray.*

There is a form, or level, of prayer we call “affective prayer.” It is not “meditation,” understood as going from question to question, thought to thought, until we can respond with a decision to something we have chosen to focus on. In “affective prayer” we are not going anywhere; we are already there. We have seen what we need to see; now we are just “resting” in it. Contemplating it. Feeling it. Absorbing it and absorbed in it. Adoring. Wishing. Longing. Loving. The “body language” of “affective prayer” is mostly just silliness. That too can be an expression of emotion.

Sharing “Peak Experiences”

We reach the highest level of intimacy in sharing our “peak experiences” with another. “Sharing” here could mean either just revealing or participating together in the same experience. This is to share with others the deepest level of our self-knowledge.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow describes peak experiences as especially joyous and exciting moments in life, involving sudden feelings of intense happiness and well-being, wonder and awe, and possibly also involving an awareness of transcendental unity or knowledge of higher truth (as though perceiving the world from an altered, and often vastly profound and awe-inspiring, perspective). They usually come on suddenly and are often inspired by deep meditation, intense feelings of love, exposure to great art or music, or the overwhelming beauty of nature.⁴

What would we call peak experiences in the spiritual life? And how do they affect our prayer life, our conscious interaction with God?

The answer is: “our *key mystical experiences*.” We need to know: 1. that we have had them; 2. what they are; 3. how we should let them help us on the nuts-and-bolts level of our daily dealings with God.

Maslow claimed that “virtually everyone has a number of peak experiences in the course of their life. But often such experiences either go unrecognized, misunderstood or are simply taken for granted. In so-called ‘non-peakers’, peak experiences are somehow resisted and suppressed” (Wikipedia, “Peak Experience”).

Jesuit John English says the same about our deepest religious experiences, which we should not hesitate to call mystical experiences. These need not be particular moments of intellectual enlightenment or emotional realization. Each may be spread out over the course of years. But there is a definite “before and after” during which we recognize that we have experienced something that has profoundly affected our awareness. But often such experiences go unrecognized. As with Maslow’s “non-peakers,” in those who claim they have had no mystical experiences, recognition of them “is somehow resisted and suppressed.”

Why? Probably because we were trained to think that only special people like the saints have mystical experiences. We grew up thinking it would be something extraordinary to actually experience in any way the mystery of our divine life and of God’s divine interaction with us—as if God, who created us in his own image as Trinity, and whose life is a constant ongoing interaction between Father, Son, and Spirit, would not interact with us who are sharing his life!

We need to be *aware* of his interaction with us: to think back, to remember and identify the moments when some realization about God, or experience of his action on us or in the world, had a sig-

nificant or life-changing good effect on us.

This could be something that happened over a period of time: something we saw in our parents' relationship with God that we knew was true. It could be a teacher or period during our education that made religion real to us. Perhaps a friendship brought us closer to God.

We could find it by just identifying certain attitudes, certain responses of faith, hope, or love that were so strong and clear in us that they had to come from God, something we knew was a gift, and that was a determining element in our personal relationship with God. Or it could be a special moment of interaction and response—a decision or choice that we know now, and probably knew then, was specifically influenced by God.

These are not moments we share lightly with others. But when we do, it brings our relationship to a new and deeper level.

When I was in Africa with the French Jesuits, they asked me to be an “ecumenical bridge” to the American missionaries there. So I called on the Protestant pastor.

When he told me he was Baptist, I asked, “Southern Baptist?”

“No,” he said, “the Southern Baptists are modernists!”

“You are a Northern Baptist?”

“Of course not. The Northern Baptists are agnostics.”

“Then what kind of Baptist are you?”

He answered, “I am a *Regular* Baptist.”

Then I knew. Lester was about as fundamentalist as you could get.

In our discussions, that was a stone wall. Once I stayed at his house until midnight trying to convince Lester that we were not worshiping idols when we prayed in front of statues and cruci-

fixes. “We don’t adore the images or the wood of the cross.”

“You kneel down before them. That is to adore them.”

I got nowhere by insisting that we knelt to pray to God and that the images were just to help us focus on him.

Then one day I asked, “Lester, how did you get to Africa?”

He answered by telling me about his experience of being called by God. Then I told him about my experience of being called by God. When I finished, he looked at me and said, “David, but you’re *saved*! You’re the first Catholic priest I’ve ever met who’s *saved*!”

“Lester,” I said, “I’m the only Catholic priest you ever talked to.” (Certainly the only one who ever shared a “peak experience” with him!)

Then we each described when and how Jesus first became real to us. Lester was “saved” in a moment of conversion, during a Baptist revival. He turned away from sin and gave his life to God. I told him there was no such dramatic moment of conversion in my life, but that I grew up in a home where God was unostentatiously taken for granted, and Jesus had always been real to me.

Lester’s wife said that was her experience. “I can’t tell you at what moment I was saved. Like you, I just always knew he was there.”

From that moment on, we could talk about anything. Doctrines were no longer a problem. We were brothers and sister in Christ, and the same Spirit was working in all three of us. Our differences were a matter of words. We could get past them.

Until we know how another has interacted personally with God, we do not know who we are dealing with. And until we get in touch with our own experience of interacting with God—deeply and personally—we do not know how to deal with ourselves.

We learn who we are only when we realize how God sees us. For that we need to remember, to identify, to “own” the history of his communication with us, and our response.

On the nuts-and-bolts level of practical use, Father John English teaches that the art (and gift) of “discerning,” of recognizing the inspirations and movements of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, is easier if we have put ourselves in touch with our own “unique experience of receiving consolation from God.”⁵

To know whether God is speaking to us now, we compare what we are experiencing now to the way God communicated with us in those special, key moments when we clearly recognized his voice.

God deals with each of us in an individual way. With Peter, Jesus could be rough, as when he told him: “Get out of my sight, you devil. You are an obstacle in my path!” (Matthew 16:23). If Jesus ever spoke to me like that, I would crumble! So he speaks to me gently. That is one way I “recognize his voice.” So it will help if we each go back over our history of hearing God’s voice, getting in touch with the particular style and “tone of voice” that he uses when speaking to us. This helps us identify him.

We were made for communication with God. That is the purpose and joy of our existence. We can communicate with him in different ways and on different levels. Each level brings us into deeper intimacy with him: into deeper knowledge and love of God, which are inseparable from deeper knowledge and—yes—love of ourselves.

To “know God,” and ourselves as shaped by our relationship with him—this is the purpose, the goal, and the fulfillment of human life. To simply rest in *awareness* of who God is and who we are is the deepest level of prayer.