

# Sharpen Your Faith



## Practicing God's Presence

*Paul T. Quelet*

*October 8, 2006*

# How Do *We Feel?*

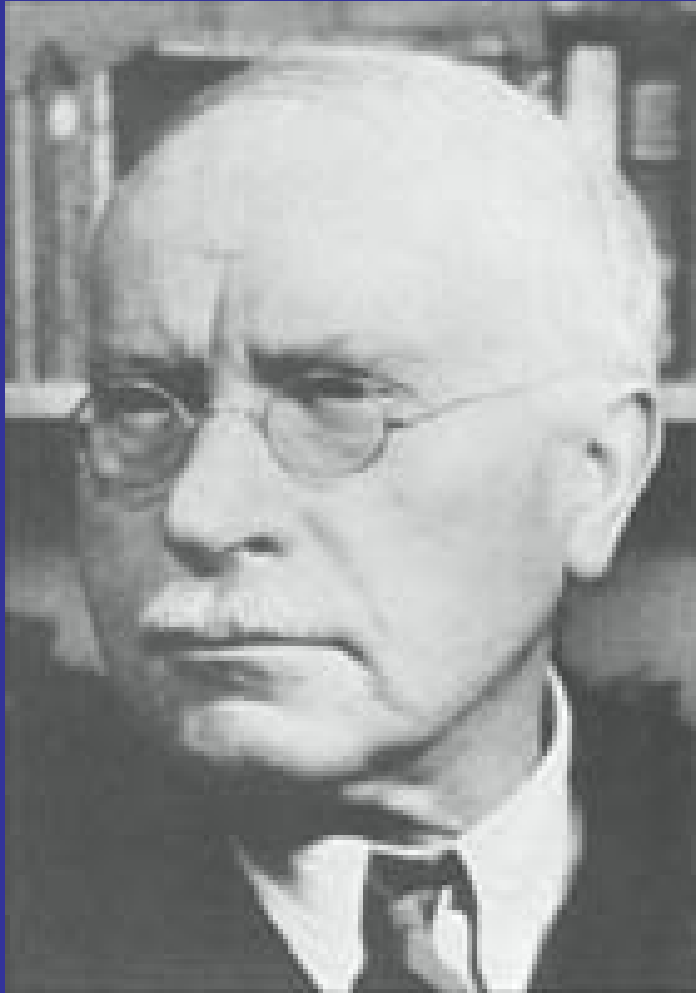
There are three great problems in our society:

- Noise
- Hurry
- Crowds

Often, we feel like we are:

- Missing out on life
- Only seeing the highlights of life
- Uncertain about our life direction
- Wanting to beat everyone else in life





“Hurry is not  
*of* the Devil;  
it *is* the  
Devil.”

—Carl Jung

→ The issue is that many of us do not understand the interior spiritual life.

# THREE SKILLS TO MASTER

1. Cultivate Our  
Intimate Relationship  
with God

# Busyness



- Read Luke 10:38-42. Better translated as “Mary has chosen the better portion”
- Doing things for God should never replace our relationship with Him.
- Acknowledge that you have limitations.
- God is our big refuge. This is why we try to take things into our own hands.
- Read Hosea 6:1-3.



“The key is not whether leaders spend some time with God but whether the time they spend is unhurried and adequate for all God wants to say to them. It might be that God would say more to leaders if they would give him more time to say it!”—Henry Blackaby

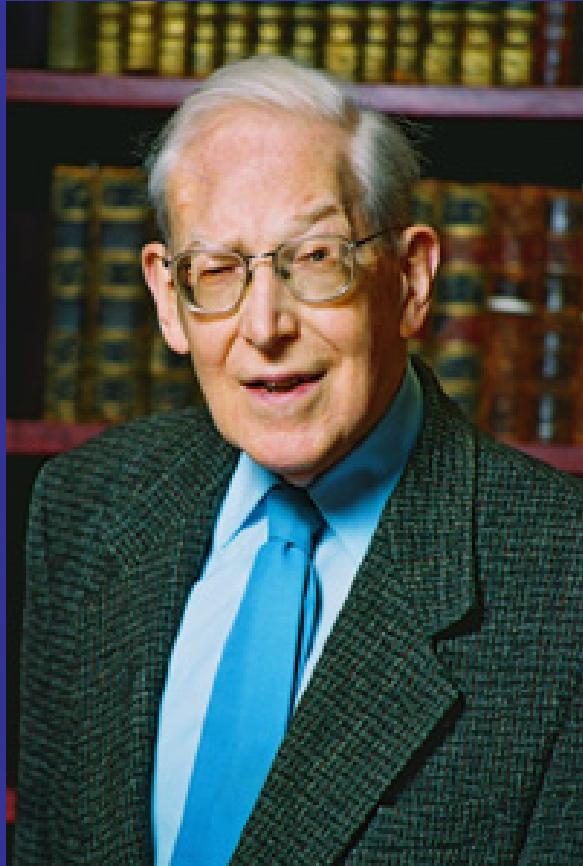
# Cooling Off Our Passion

- Read Revelation 2:1-7.
- There is only one reason we cool off: we begin to follow something else.
- When our lampstand goes out, that means we lose our impact and our testimony.
- Read Psalm 89:14-18. Those who are in God's presence are happy all day long!!

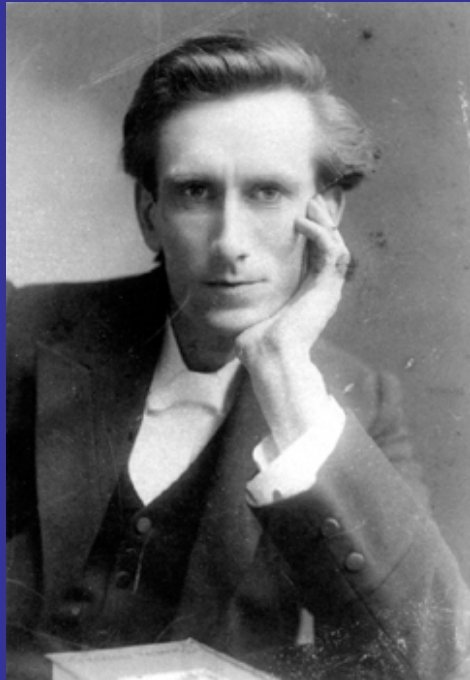
# Knowing God Intimately

- Read John 17:3. Eternal life is knowing God.
- We should expect knowing God to be more complex, because God is very complex.
  - His character
  - How He operates
  - What is on His heart
- Read Philippians 3:7-11.





“Once you become aware that the main business that you are here for is to know God, most of life’s problems fall into place on their own accord.”—J.I. Packer



“I have called you friends.’  
(John 15:15) Friendship is rare on earth. It means identity in thought and heart and spirit. The whole discipline of life is to enable us to enter into this closest relationship with Jesus Christ. We receive His blessings and know His word, but do we know Him?”

—Oswald Chambers

# THREE SKILLS TO MASTER

1. Cultivate Our  
Intimate Relationship  
with God

2. Meditate on God

# Misconceptions about Meditation

1. It is the same as Eastern Meditation.

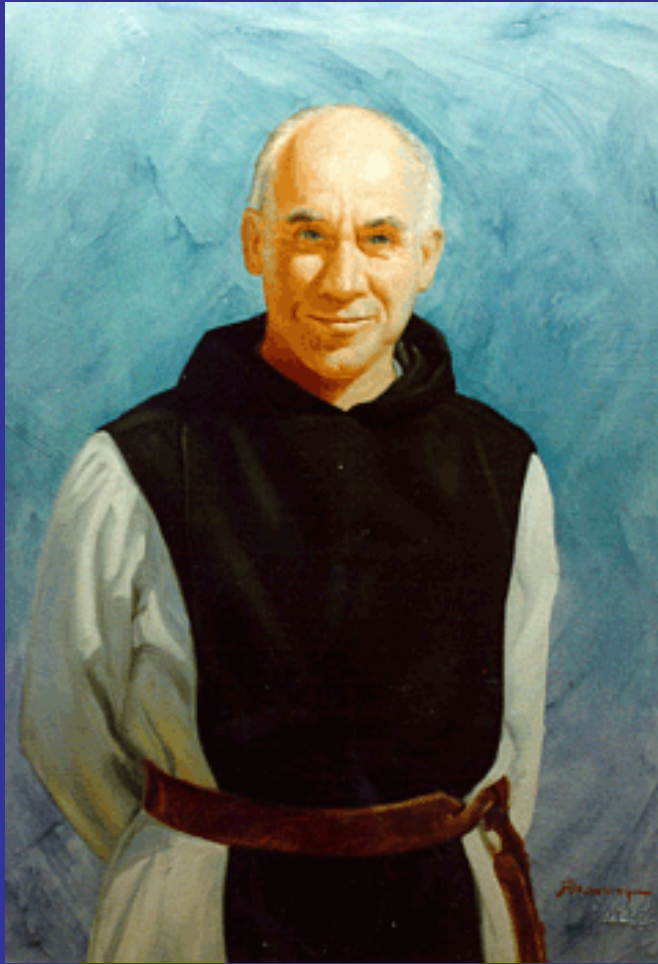
→ Empty mind vs. filled mind

2. It is just as well for someone else to talk to God as we do.

→ A mediator keeps us from God.

3. Meditation is too difficult or complicated.

→ It is to contemplate/think deeply about God.



“True  
contemplation is  
not a  
psychological  
trick but a  
theological grace.”  
—Thomas Merton

# Imagination in Meditation

- Many of us need something rooted in the senses when we meditate upon God, so we must use our imagination.
- We are seeking to think God's thoughts after Him—and thoughts are often rooted in tangible things.



# Meditating on Scripture

- Read Psalm 119:97-99. Meditating on God gives us supernatural insight.
- Let the Scripture continually be an autobiography of you. Not "God what were you saying to the disciples?" but "God what are you saying to me??"





“The words of  
Scripture are not  
merely to be read  
but to be heard.  
They are meant to  
go into the heart!”  
—R. Kent Hughes



“...just as you do not analyze the words of someone you love, but accept them as they are said to you, accept the Word of Scripture and ponder it in your heart, as Mary did. That is all. That is meditation.”

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

# THREE SKILLS TO MASTER

1. Cultivate Our  
Intimate Relationship  
with God

2. Meditate on God

3. Seek Solitude to be  
with God

# Why we don't seek Solitude

- Our fear of being alone drives us to noise and crowds.
- It is spending time with God. It is being very much connected with God.
- Read Psalm 4:1-4.  
Mediate and be still.





“Where shall the world be found, where will the word resound? Not here, there is not enough silence.”

—T.S. Elliot

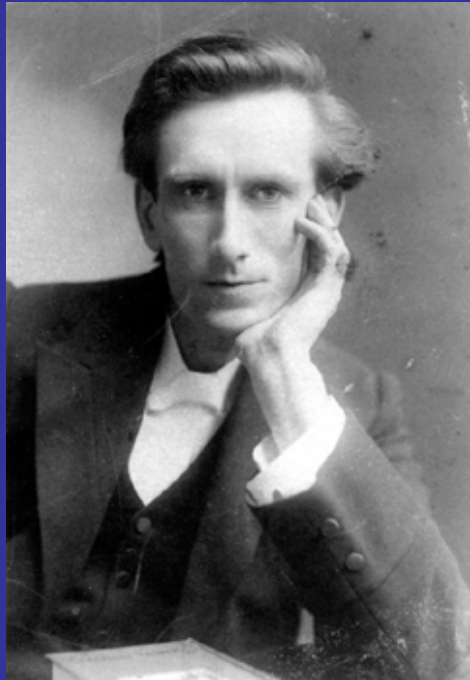
# Solitude vs. Loneliness



- Loneliness is separation anxiety. It comes from feelings of isolation and separated.
- Solitude is the time we can be alone with God. It is not shut out everyone, but to be very close and near to God.
- Solitude we escape to, but loneliness is what we escape from.

# What does solitude do for us? (Psalm 46:10)

1. Makes our busy days far more productive.
2. Solitude repairs the damage of the noise and cares of the world.
3. Solitude allows us to face tough days.
4. Solitude gives us supernatural insight when we don't expect it.
5. Solitude has a positive effect on the physical body.



“Has God trusted you with a silence—a silence that is big with meaning? God's silences are His answers...Can God trust you like that, or are you still asking for a visible answer? God will give you the blessings you ask if you will not go any further without them; but His silence is the sign that He is bringing you into a marvelous understanding of Himself...You will find that God has trusted you in the most intimate way possible, with an absolute silence, not of despair, but of pleasure, because He saw that you could stand a bigger revelation.”

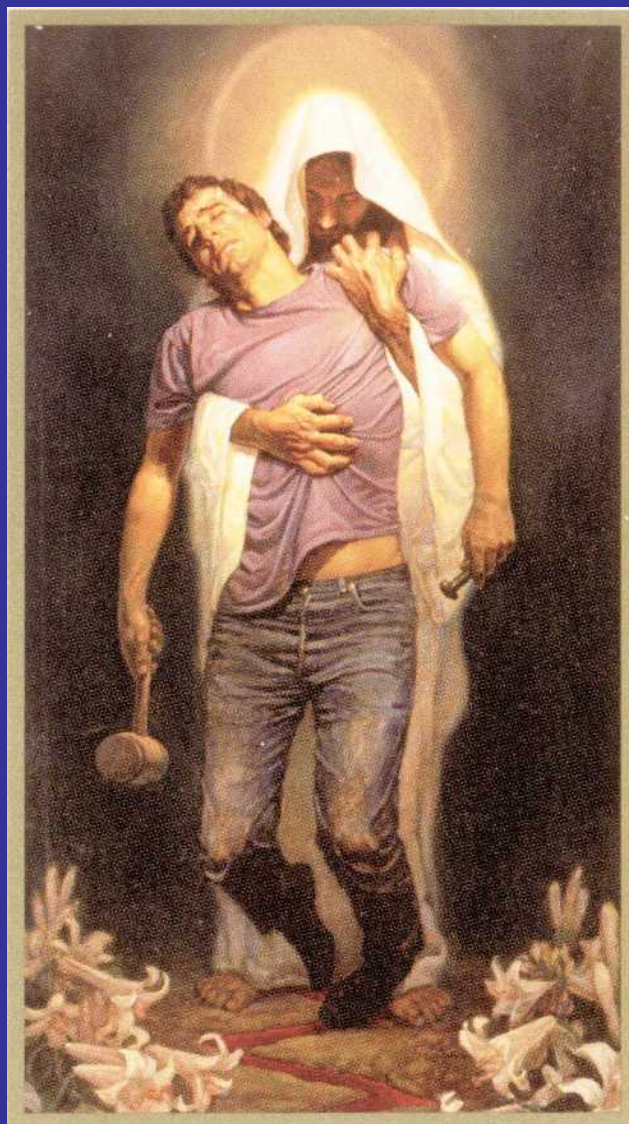
—Oswald Chambers

# Steps into solitude

- Take advantage of the little solitudes. These happen early in the morning, late at night, or while riding in the car.
- Redeem the little times. Take a walk. Slip out onto the porch. Notice nature.
- Find a quiet place only assigned for solitude.
- Try to live an entire day without any words. Discover how you speak.
- Withdraw alone at a time or times throughout the year.



# KEEP A SABBATH REST!!



# Weekly Sharpening Session

Take a specific time this week to be alone with God in silence. Do what feels most natural to experience His presence. We will discuss next week how you connected with God.

