

## THE GIFT OF BEING YOURSELF// Chapter 2

### Knowing God

Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. 1 John 4:8-9

*'What God wants is simply our presence... That's what friends do together – they waste time with each other....simply being together is enough without expecting to 'get something' from the interaction. It should be no different with God.'* David Benner p39



*Tracey Emin Installation St Pancras Station 2018*

### PRAYING WITH MY HEAD

**READ** David Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself* Chapter 2 (pages 33-44)

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER & JOURNAL:

*'God has no more stopped being Revelation than he has stopped being Love.'* Do you agree and if so, how do you think God continues to reveal himself?

*'God's intention is that we know divine love by experiencing it.'* Reflect on the difference between knowing *about* God and knowledge *of* God.

How does knowing God differ from knowing humans? In what ways is it similar? What special demands does knowing God make on humans?

*'We cannot attain the presence of God. We're already totally in the presence of God. What's absent is awareness'* Richard Rohr p41 What practices are helping you to increase your awareness of God?

## PRAYING WITH MY HEART

**Gospel Gazing** Prayerful imagination and meditation on a Gospel encounter

This is an Ignatian form of contemplative prayer. Saint Ignatius believed that God could speak to us just as clearly in our imagination as through our thoughts and our memories. In his Spiritual Exercises he writes of contemplation as a very active way of engaging your feelings, emotions, and senses to place yourself in a Gospel scene. You visualize the event as if you were making a movie. Here are the steps:

Slow down. Sit in a comfortable place. Slow your breathing and centre yourself in the abiding presence of Christ.

Read your chosen story slowly a couple of times inviting the Holy Spirit to bring it alive in your imagination.

Compose the scene. Imagine the landscape or building where it is taking place. Pay attention to the details: sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and feelings of the event.

Run the story like a movie scene. Lose yourself in the story; don't worry if your imagination is running too wild, see what happens (even if it goes beyond what is recorded in the Gospel).

At some point, place yourself in the scene – you could be anyone in the story or a bystander.

The aim of this imaginative contemplation is to meet Jesus.

After the encounter has unfolded, try to imagine sitting down with Jesus to talk with him about what happened.

[Benner gives some simple instructions on p37-38 and p43-44]

## PRAYING WITH MY HANDS

**Glimmers of God** Awareness Walk and Contemplative Photography

Go on an awareness walk... ask God to show you 'glimmers' of his Divine Presence.

Walk slowly, open your eyes and be intentional in your looking. Look up...look down...look for hidden, small things...look for colours, shapes...surprises.

Take **ONLY THREE PHOTOS**

Take time with each photo to have a conversation with God.

What is this image revealing to me?

What is this image reminding me of?

How am I being invited to respond to God through this image?

**FURTHER REOURCES:** *"To be known by someone who loves us is to be known as well as we'll ever need"*

– Jim Harris, Radio Two

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0818h3h> [listen here]



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