



A.R.R.R.



“Contemplative prayer in my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends”
- St. Teresa of Avila

ACKNOWLEDGE

This simply means becoming aware of my affective movements—my thoughts, feelings, and desires. I can't give myself in relationship to others, to God, unless I come as I am. I need to pause and become aware what is in my heart. Maybe I look back on my day and see what the biggest movements of my heart were. Maybe I become aware of my thoughts, feelings, or desires as I spend time with a particular scripture passage; or, as I sit in silence, I become aware of the thoughts, feelings, and desires that are on my heart right now. What am I thinking? How do I feel? What do I desire?

RELATE

Now I relate what I find in my heart to God. Relate the thoughts, feelings, and desires that have come to the surface. It is important here that I bring everything to Him—the good, bad, and ugly. Do not withhold things from Him that I may feel ashamed of, nor do I keep from Him things I think are too small. When I relate my heart to Him in honesty I am able to receive from Him what He wants to give me. This is where we move from simply being aware of my thoughts, feelings, and desires to actually relating them to God. He is ever present and draws near to me as I now relate these thoughts, feelings, and desires to Jesus.

RECEIVE

Now I receive what God wants to give me in His generosity. God desires to give me gifts. This is God's work, not my own. It is the Spirit's initiative that allows me to become aware and relate my thoughts, feelings, and desires to God. Receiving from God requires enduring the silence, sometimes the pain of silence. The Lord wants to fill me with His consoling love; He wants to give me peace; He wants to fill me with His strength and power. I sit now and receive from God new thoughts, feelings, and desires that He wants to give my heart.

RESPOND

What we receive from God calls for a response. When someone gives me a gift, I am moved to tell them “thank you”, I am moved to give them a hug. This response comes from a place of encounter that I just experienced. The response may be further conversation; it may be a resolution I make; it may be thanksgiving or asking for continual help. My problems don't disappear, but God gives me a quiet conviction of His goodness and protection. I now respond.