

Green Light to God: Centering Prayer Changes Lives

by Pat Benson / Originally published in *Spirit Journal*, July 2015

God has given us all a great gift – the gift of Centering Prayer, or Christian Meditation. This contemporary prayer of silence, firmly rooted in Christian Tradition, is a response to a call from God to sit silently and listen. To some, this may seem like a passive type of prayer, but I assure you that it is very active – and the action is by the Holy Spirit. For those who continue the practice of centering prayer, the Holy Spirit changes lives in unexpected and surprising ways. We are all unique, and God impacts each of our lives in different ways.

Personally, I have been practicing Centering Prayer for ten years. For me, it was like giving God the green light in my life. One gift of the prayer is that I know without question that the Kingdom of Heaven is not only a place we go to but also a place we may live in today. As Jesus reminds us, “The kingdom of heaven is within.” All my acts of compassion, kindness and giving mirror the image of God.

The Holy Spirit also healed me of a lifetime of emotional baggage and long-held resentments and led to reconciliation with a family member. I am able to love more, forgive more and move on with my life. Through the prayer, God has led me to like myself better and to care more about others and our environment.

Recently, I decided to find out what some others who practice Centering Prayer would say about how it has changed their lives. I would like to share some of their stories with you...

One gentleman, who has been centering for 15 years, writes:

“Over the years, no other practice has been so helpful in moving from selfishness to selflessness, from worry to peace, from fear to courage, from sleep to awareness.”

Another person reflects on three changes the prayer has made in his life:

“One of the effects of Centering Prayer for me was a change in perspective with respect to religious teaching and scripture, especially the concept of Contemplative Prayer in the Gospels and the Hebrew Bible. ‘Be still and know that I am God.’ Christ went away by himself to pray. Christ instructs us to, ‘Go to your inner room’ and pray in private.

A second effect is the absolute knowledge of the existence of God, born not of reasoning or logical argument. I know God exists and truly is Love.

A third effect is realizing we are all part of God and God part of us. Knowing we are all part of God and one another comes with all the motivation needed for doing good and practicing non-violence in the world, because hurting another is hurting our relationship with God.”

Someone new to the experience shares this:

“After 15 months of almost daily practice of Centering Prayer, I am far more consistently aware of God’s presence and love. As a result, I feel that my faith is stronger, I am less frequently anxious or angry, and more frequently generous and kind. I feel I have taken just one step in a very positive spiritual direction, and hope to continue on this peaceful path forever.”

Another writes:

“The practice of centering prayer helped me find a deep well of unshakeable peace within myself.”

Finally, a practitioner of 10 years adds:

“Each of us has different needs and burdens. Centering Prayer is God’s divine therapy which heals us from the inside and prepares us to hear and respond to God’s will for us in this life. And all without a word being read or spoken. How awesome is that?!”

Divine therapy, indeed! Each year Contemplative Outreach Chicago holds a one day Centering Prayer workshop—a Spirit-filled day for over 100 people to come together to share the gift of prayer and listen to some outstanding speakers. This year, October 3rd is the day, and I invite you to attend.