

# The Path of Totality

session 3

## The House of Love

part 2

treasure



**support resource**



## Treasure

*Where you stumble, there lies your treasure.*

Joseph Campbell

*If we do not fill our minds with guilt and self-recriminations, we will recognize our incompleteness as a kind of spaciousness into which we can welcome the flow of grace.*

Gerald May

*God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.*

1 John 4:16

The author Jim Finley asked God in sadness and exasperation, “God, do you think I’m ever going to get my act together?” God replied, “I don’t see it coming, Jim. I don’t see it, to be honest with you.”

Ha! There is great freedom in that response. Unlike us, God doesn’t live in the tension of waiting for us to get our act together before he loves us. He just does. He can’t help it; God’s just wired that way.

### Activity

*What’s attractive to me in the thoughts above? What stirs a sense of life, relief, a feeling of home and welcome? What’s my invitation here?*

*Is there anything in the thoughts above that creates tension in me? Anxiety? Resistance? What’s my invitation here?*

*What would I like to say to God about all this?*



## A New Way of Seeing

The author Richard Rohr makes the distinction between what he calls *critical consciousness* and *appreciative consciousness*.

In *critical consciousness* I am always critiquing, analyzing, noticing what's missing or lacking. I'm liking or not liking something—in me, others, or the world around me.

In *appreciative consciousness* I am noticing first what's present, alive, beautiful, being born. I'm noticing hints of God's presence and activity in me, others, or the world around me.

### Activity

Do I hear any personal invitations in my default toward *critical* or *appreciative* consciousness? What does the contrast of these two ways of seeing and being stir inside me?

Do I feel ready to release my default toward *critical consciousness* and begin to grow my default toward living appreciatively? What would I like to say to God about this?

### Practice

A simple way to grow my capacity to see and delight in God's presence in my world is the practice of intentionally noticing one thing each day that contains beauty and aliveness. (Something in me, in others, in the world around me.) Over the next few days, I'll jot below what I am noticing.

*Tip: Among the beautiful, life-giving things I notice, it's super helpful to regularly notice the presence of God's image inside me. This begins to slowly dissolve the self-judgment, even self-hatred, that too often marks our relationship with ourselves, and creates a solid place within to become aware of God in all of life.*



## Behold the One Beholding You

### the story is told

*of a French cleric who heard that a congregation member, a peasant farmer, had an unusually deep prayer life. At first the cleric was miffed that someone in his congregation, no less a simple peasant, should be considered to pray more deeply than he! But he swallowed his pride and went to see the peasant. "Tell me," asked the cleric, "what is the method of your prayer life?" The peasant looked at the cleric with some bewilderment and responded, "There is no method. I look at Jesus, and Jesus looks at me."*

### Gazing into God

Take 5-20 minutes a few times a week to simply lean your deepest self quietly and attentively into God. There is a deep part within you that yearns to relax under God's care. Give that part of yourself room to let go of the rest of the world for a few minutes and just be with God with interest, openness, and ready attention. Let the Holy Spirit teach you this way of prayer.

**NOTE:** It can be helpful to recall the physical posture of Mary in Luke 10 as she listens at the feet of Jesus—gazing, attentive, interested, loving, quiet, surrendered, listening. Her interest is more in Jesus himself than in the things he says. Lean your inner self into God in this way. When stray thoughts come, don't worry. Each stray thought is an opportunity to lovingly return to God!

### Gazing with God into my Life

At times a question, problem, or stuck spot arises in life. Instead of reflexively attacking the problem, strategizing, praying hard (and often worrying and freaking out) it can be really helpful to simply sit with God and be together calmly, patiently, and gently with your issue.

**Take 5-20 minutes** a few times a week to sit in company with God with your question or problem. Leave your assumptions, timetables and demands behind. While holding your issue loosely and lovingly, place your gentle attention in God. As the days pass notice changes in your perception of the situation, including a growing sense of new possibilities. Let the Holy Spirit teach you this way of prayer.



## Prayers of Gazing

*You have said, "Seek my Face." My heart says to you,  
"Your face Lord, do I seek!" Psalm 27:8*

### Praying Scripture

Select a piece of Scripture, maybe starting with the psalms. (Move on to other passages later.) Notice which portions of the passage connect with your own longings, joys or fears. Join your inner intention with the Scripture and pray it as your own prayer. From time to time pause to let your spirit lean toward God in wordless, worshipful union.

### Stepping into Scripture

Through God's gift of imagination step inside Scripture passages. Experience the story through the eyes of each participant. Be aware of the moments of the story that most touch you. Pause occasionally to let your deepest self gaze in union, fellowship and worshipful inquiry into God. Gospel passages are a good place to start.

### Creation

God's face is shown in nature in beautiful and healing ways. He is uniquely present in his creation. While walking in nature, occasionally let your spirit lean wordlessly and worshipfully into God.

### Your word

Think of one or two words that both express and request union with God at this time in your life (e.g. "I love you," "you're my home," or your own special words). Quietly speak these words aloud as you go about your daily routine.

### Your art or hobby

Your art or hobby are creative gifts that intimately connect you with your Creator. They are lenses into God who shares in the joy you take in your art. Pause occasionally with your art or hobby to receive God's happy gaze.

### Your pen

Many people find that when they put pen to paper their roaming thoughts get focused and God's words become more clear. As you journal from the heart, pause sometimes to let your spirit lean into and take comfort in God.



## **What longing, clarity or invitation**

are stirred in me through the words below?

*Enjoy a gentle, open, lingering conversation with God and yourself about this.*

## ***I Have Enough***

from Bach's Cantata, NO 82  
echoing the prayer of Simeon

*I have enough.*

*I have taken the Savior, the hope of the Gentiles, into my yearning arms.*

*I have enough.*