



THE HIDDEN LIFE AWAKENED

On Retreat

A MONTHLY GUIDE TO CULTIVATE
A HEALTHY BODY,
A SERENE MIND &
A POWERFUL SPIRIT

Our prayer is that On Retreat will help you break from habituated patterns of mind and frantic activity, make more space for God, and step into a new way of seeing, believing, and abiding. Each retreat will focus on a healthy body, a serene mind, and a powerful spirit. Your devoted guide will be modern day Christian mystic, Betty Skinner.

Each devotion will begin with a meditation and writing from Betty. Use the template below as you journey through each devotion:

A Healthy Body

Hydrate: Drink a little water with lemon or green tea to begin.

Move: Do a few simple stretching exercises to energize your body.

Rest: Silently integrate the inner peace of your stretching practice for a few minutes.

A Serene Mind

Centering Prayer: Begin this portion of your time with God by sitting with a warm cup of coffee or tea in a comfortable chair in a quiet place with your Bible close. Light a candle as a symbol of God's presence with you. Let Betty's lovely Centering Prayer help quiet and refocus your mind (you can listen [here](#) or read it on page 53 of our book, *The Hidden Life Awakened*).

Center me down, Lord, to the innermost of my innermost,
until all of me kneels before You.

Then, in this night as I sleep in Your presence,
In the morning as I awake in Your presence,
silently, reverently, waitfully, bring me to Your table
That I might see with your eyes, hear with your ears,
and love with Your heart.

~BWS

A Powerful Spirit

For Reflection: Reflect upon these words and quietly integrate them into your spirit.

Divine Reading: Let the Living Word speak to your heart. Rest quietly with Him.

Reflective Writing: Spend some time journaling every thought that arises without censoring as a child would. This is the indwelling Spirit speaking truth to you. Trust this for now. Use your imagination to visualize Jesus sitting there with you or in any other setting that brings you peace. Process through the provided prompts.

JANUARY

Silence



*Let me seek again
This place of solitude and silence,
This inner poverty,
This space that claims nothing for itself.
Where everything I touch is prayer
For God is there.*



If we are going to hear the inner voice of Love speaking to us in these very soft and gentle ways, it is imperative that we take time to be alone in a quiet place and embrace the silence. Silence teaches us to listen. We have lost patience with solitude and silence, the home of the Word, thus leaving the depths of life untouched. The voice of Love is speaking to us all the time, but the noise of the world, with its loud distractions and false voices, is very, very difficult to turn off. Christ is the Incarnate Word. His words are the language of God. They touch the heart and nourish the soul. It is in the beauty of the incarnate Christ that we behold the perfection of God's boldest plan. Our task on the journey inward is to learn to listen for this Voice, immerse ourselves in its love, wrap ourselves up in the silence, and open our hearts to the Spirit of God. Silence is God's language, and it gently draws us to our depth.

A Healthy Body

Hydrate, move, and rest.

A Serene Mind

Light a candle to symbolize His presence with you. Let Betty's lovely Centering Prayer help quiet and refocus your mind.

A Powerful Spirit

For Reflection

Ponder for a few minutes this word from St. Teresa of Avila in her book, *Interior Castles*:
"In this temple of God, in this divine dwelling place, God alone rejoices with the soul in the deepest silence. There is no reason for the intellect to stir or seek anything, for the Lord Who created it wishes to give it repose there."

Betty says, "Silence is the heart's certainty of the captivating Presence of the Divine. It is a breathless quiet in which the Ineffable within us communes with the Ineffable beyond us. But most exquisitely, it is the love-glow of a lifetime in which Spirit and horizon are silent together.

Divine Reading

Read Psalm 131 (The Passion Translation), letting the Living Word speak to your heart. Rest quietly with God.

Reflective Writing

Journal every thought that arises without censoring as a child would. This is the indwelling Spirit speaking truth to you. Trust this for now. Use your imagination to visualize being led by Jesus from the surface of your life, where your worries are so overwhelming, down deep into the silence of your heart where true Reality dwells, where, the soul feels and the heart knows.

FEBRUARY

Giving & Receiving



Blessed Love, encompass me.
Pour Yourself over me.
Love, lift me up and make me whole.

Then, dear Love,
Break me into a thousand pieces
And scatter me to Your Glory
That others might know Love, too.

And Love,
Never even once let me ask
Why or how or when
Or fail to stand because of pain.
For You, sweet Love,
Must not have died in vain.



It was in my garden that I began to get a sense of the flow of the giving and receiving of love, because every morning it offered me so much beauty in return for my care.

Such giving and receiving, opened my heart more and more to God's voice, reminding me that in Him there is nothing but love, and that I was created out of His first love for me. It is this First Love that I had to keep returning to in prayer. The returning is difficult—it is a great struggle—but if we are faithful, we will taste peace somewhere deeply hidden within our hearts, far beyond feelings and emotions.

Now at ninety, I can still sit, talking, touching another life and feel the love flowing between us. Our spirituality is all about dying to our ego in order to enter into this giving and receiving of love. I see a picture in my heart all the time of the sweet, sweet relationship between the Father and the Son. The Father, so willing to pour Himself out for the Son and the Son so willing to receive it and give it all back—no strings, no conditions, no counting the cost. This is the relationship I was drawn into and long to bring others into.

A Healthy Body

Hydrate, move, and rest.

A Serene Mind

Light a candle to symbolize His presence with you. Let Betty's lovely Centering Prayer help quiet and refocus your mind.

A Powerful Spirit

For Reflection

A young father sat by his daughter's bed most nights to talk with her a little about her day. As he got up to leave, he would always ask if he could bless her. He put his hand gently on her head and repeated the blessing God instructed Moses to teach the priests to say over the Israelites. You may have heard it.

"And now, the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace." - Numbers 6: 22-26

There are other versions that say, "The Lord turn His face towards you", but countenance evokes a far more beautiful image. It implies a facial emotion and expression of approval. Over and over this young father had looked on his child with loving approval as he blessed her.

When she was just seventeen, she found him crumpled on the floor in agony. Instinctively, she knelt by him and asked if she could bless him. She placed her hand gently on his head and spoke the blessing he had prayed over her for so many years. She didn't know why he was in agony, she didn't know he had just heard his brother had suddenly died. The love-blessing she had received into her deepest heart for so many years burst unbidden into her consciousness as she absorbed the grief of her father. This is the giving and receiving of love.

Divine Reading

Read Psalm 116 (The Passion Translation), letting the Living Word speak to your heart. Rest quietly with God.

Reflective Writing

Journal every thought that arises without censoring as a child would. Use your imagination to visualize Jesus sitting there with you or in any other setting that brings you peace. What is He giving you? What will you offer Him?

MARCH

Trusting the Darkness



Oh, Good Jesus,
hear me, hold me, love me
in this, the season of
my spirit's loss and grieving,
in the anguish of my waiting,
in the silence of familiar voices gone,
in the pain of all the change,
in the twilight of my years
before Perfection dawns
and I am gone.

Oh, Good Jesus,
I try the letting go,
to understand my weakness,
to trust You in my darkness,
to make room for Your grace to heal.
Yet there is no return,
only the echo of my own crying.
It seems I, too, with You,
am caught between the nails.

Oh, Good Jesus,
in this holy place of crucifixion,
broaden the boundaries of my heart.
Soften the hard places that
defend, define and deny.
Teach my heart to love.
Make it a refuge for others
who, too, are caught
between the nails.



We need to shift our focus and accept that this season of darkness is truly a time of preparation, a stilling. Acceptance of this 'not-knowing' brings forth a complete transformation of self if we will trust it. Its purpose is purification and purgation and leads ultimately to freedom—freedom to finally be who God created us to be, to love and live in God, and to be filled with God. If we will allow the darkness and the silence, God will allow the seeds of our false self to die enough for Him to send up a little sprout of new life. It takes a long time for a tree to grow to its fullness, but as it emerges from the darkness, it offers shelter and beauty to the world.

A Healthy Body

Hydrate, move, and rest.

A Serene Mind

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A Powerful Spirit

For Reflection

"The way of trust lies through Gethsemane and Holy Saturday. We move from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, omitting Holy Saturday—the tomb. Every phase of our Lord's life and every aspect of His death speaks to us, if we will open to it. Divine obedience was lived out at the Last Supper, accepted at Gethsemane, accomplished on the cross, and perfected alone in the darkness of the tomb. Our assent to time in the darkness of tomb is so often the missing link in our lives. The wilderness of our suffering is not just a place of darkness and temptation. It is the place of our transformation through which the false self must move. It is the place of conversion where the emotional pain of a lifetime, stored in the unconscious, is revealed and then gradually let go of. This is not a time of separateness, although it may feel that way; it is a time that links us to the Eternal. It is in walking through the darkness that we learn to discern the voice of the Beloved and receive the grace of interior resurrection and the capacity for divine union. All things grow in darkness and silence. There are hidden depths that only the Spirit can reach. It is a hidden life." ([The Hidden Life Awakened](#))

Divine Reading

Read Psalm 18 (The Message), letting the Living Word speak to your heart. Rest quietly with God.

Reflective Writing

Journal every thought that arises without censoring as a child would. Use your imagination to visualize Jesus sitting there with you. It is dark and you are in pain. He lights a candle and reaches out His hand. Are you holding on to any resentment about a difficult situation you are living with? Quieting any self judgement, acknowledge that this is where your growth needs to happen.

APRIL

Hope



Beloved, embrace me
in the dark night of my praying,
in the deep silence of my offering,
in the confrontation of my dying.

Beloved, enable me
by faith to know You without seeing You,
by hope to possess You without feeling Your presence,
by love to desire You above all desires.

Beloved, grant
that I might put all faith in love for You,
all hope in love for You,
and to know that all desires fail but one:
my desire to be loved by You.



Resting in the shadows between faith and love is the illusive virtue hope. Hope is not the same thing as optimism. Optimism has a certain tension about it. It is not free because of our illusions and our unwillingness to accept things as they are. Hope, in its purest form, is freedom perfected as we choose to accept in Love whatever God brings as good. Pure hope not only seeks God and the Way of Love to reach Him, but hopes always to experience God's Infinite Love both from within and from without. For those who deliberately choose to act only for the glory of God and the good of others, to eliminate all selfish and self-regarding motives from their lives and their work, hope becomes to gold cord in the landscape of the quest.

A Healthy Body

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A Serene Mind

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A Powerful Spirit

For Reflection

"When I met hope, in my fifty-fifth year, on the southward side of a high mountain in North Carolina, it was unmistakable. 'Now abideth faith, hope and love.' Hope, for many years of my spiritual journey, was overshadowed by faith and love. Love's relentless wooing had won me with its unspeakable beauty, mystery, and grace. Faith became the 'yes' within me on which I slowly began to stake my whole life, while hope remained invisible and elusive. Faith and love built my self-confidence until I broke inside, then faith began to fade and love dimmed. It was in my despair that I met hope. It had been resting in the shadows between faith and love. It was in the suffering, wounded, and broken places of my life that hope began to come out of the shadows and bring me to wholeness. It was in the emptiness and stillness between faith and love, in the hollow of a heart carved out by despair, that hope took hold.

What I realized on that unforgettable day was that hope had always lingered in the shadows of my darkest times. What awakened within me was that precisely when faith crumbles and love dims, hope begins. Hope is a sense of what might yet be. Hope is precisely what I had when I had nothing. It strains ahead, seeking a way behind, through, and beyond every obstacle. Hope does not try to determine how God's way will be shown but remains open to new and astonishing manifestations of God's presence at work in the circumstances of life. The more difficult the circumstances, the deeper the hope." ([The Hidden Life Awakened](#))

Divine Reading

Read Psalm 126 (The Passion Translation), letting the Living Word speak to your heart. Rest quietly with God.

Reflective Writing

Journal every thought that arises without censoring as a child would. Use your imagination to visualize Jesus sitting there with you. You love Him and you have faith in Him. What hope do you have?

MAY

Fear Not



*At times I struggle with what seems to be heavy chains!
They bind me.
For too often I lose sight of love.
I know it is God calling me at these times
to take another step into Love's bondage.
Yet as I follow Him, the best I can,
in full commitment, I find the struggle ends.
The chains are lifted.*



Nothing is as debilitating to our spiritual life as fear. It imprisons us, paralyzing our potential to receive the love God so longs to give us. Everyone has fear, but the good news is that we do not have to stay trapped in it. We have a promise: "Perfect love drives out fear." We have an invitation: "Don't be afraid." Our work is to believe the promise and be faithful to choose the invitation.

We were created with the capacity to move against the negative energy of fear and the need to control or compete. We all have places of fear inside us but we have other places: deeper places of strength, of beauty, of faith and trust and love. As we dare to step out into those places, offering up our fear and opening to receive God's light, trusting that He will meet us, our inborn fear becomes a gift that slowly leads us from its negativity to a new place of freedom and a new kind of fear—a reverent fear that leads to deeper trust in the awesome power of God to heal us.

A Healthy Body

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A Serene Mind

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A Powerful Spirit

For Reflection

What is this perfect love that drives out fear? Of course we all know it is God. This sweet thought sits in our brains as an article of genuine faith but has no reality in our day to day lives. How many times have you heard the phrase, "I'm just a worrier"? How often do you feel fear over a medical diagnosis or not enough money or not being able to sleep or your child's tough situation or your disintegrating marriage?

We have been taught to think that fear is a natural emotion we can't control; but the scriptures and now science tell us that just isn't true. It is simply your brain's conditioned response to what your culture has told you is frightening. Over and over in the scripture, do not fear is a simple command with an assumed power of choice. Isaiah 35:4 "Be strong, do not fear." John 14:27 "Let not your hearts be troubled." Psalm 32:4 "I will fear no evil." Psalm 118:6 "I will not be afraid." Matthew 6:34 "Do not worry about tomorrow." And on and on.

This is your work. To believe God and do what it takes to recognize and control these stressful illusions, so your brain can literally rewire itself to hold more and more of God's love. It takes practice. When you feel the stress of a fearful thought, practice hesitating long enough to look at it, name it as fear, and without any judgement whatsoever, ask yourself where it might be coming from. Then simply let it go and breath in the wonderful little taste of freedom until it comes again. Refuse it again and again, until finally your faith frees up enough space in your heart and mind for the Spirit of Perfect Love to fill.

Divine Reading

Read Psalm 118, letting the Living Word speak to your heart. Rest quietly with God.

Reflective Writing

Journal every thought that arises without censoring as a child would. Use your imagination to visualize Jesus sitting there with you or in any other setting that brings you peace. Will you tell Him about your fear?

JUNE

Waiting



*If you will be obedient, patient, and listen
I will prepare you for the vision
I have poured into your heart,
but in My time, not yours.
You can do nothing. I must do it all.*



Patience must first be seen as a spiritual discipline before it can be transformed into a holy virtue. Patience is Love waiting to begin. It asks for persistent practice and deepening awareness. It is Love waiting for us to do what we can in order to receive from Love the hope and encouragement to do what we cannot. As with all holy virtues, we must embrace the travail of our own inner transformation before we can see others with the eyes of Christ's own patient compassion. Infinite Patience brings us to that sacred place of belonging. Here, we are capable of embracing our own infirmities and brokenness of others. Such Infinite Patience is Christ fully formed and being formed within us.

Beyond all things - personal problems, the multiplicity of temporal desires, even mountains, meadows and skies - there is a sublime expectation, a waiting for. It is a sense that something has already been given, that something within us has awakened, has begun. It is a longing to be set free from the many fears that imprison us and to move into the ultimate freedom of what lies beyond. Waiting is a form of patient, present moment living, a crossing point between God and man.

A Healthy Body

Hydrate, move, and rest.

A Serene Mind

Light a candle to symbolize His presence with you. Let Betty's lovely Centering Prayer help quiet and refocus your mind.

A Powerful Spirit

For Reflection

"Waiting is one of the most difficult pieces of a deep, inner spiritual journey. We want to outrun God, but our growth depends on consciously letting go of our fear and allowing our circumstances the space to teach us what God intends. This is hard because so much of our waiting is filled with anxiety and our own expectations of what should happen. Thus, it subtly becomes a way of trying to control the future as well as a way of setting us up for disappointment, discouragement, and despair. As long as we are still waiting in fear and anxiety, we will not experience growth. We will stay stuck because when we are fearful, we are disconnected from the Source. We are not trusting that whatever God brings will be exactly what we need.

It is important to understand that waiting is not passive and fearful but active and open ended. Active waiting is always a movement from something to something more. The secret of waiting is to be always alert, always waiting with hope, trusting that something new has been awakened within us—a work in us has begun. Open-ended waiting is filled with radical hope, trusting God's perfect love to cast out our fear, knowing that all shall be well. The desires of our hearts will be fulfilled but fulfilled according to God's perfect will and timing for our lives." ([The Hidden Life Awakened](#))

Divine Reading

Read Psalm 130 and Psalm 62, letting the Living Word speak to your heart. Rest quietly with God.

Reflective Writing

Journal every thought that arises without censoring as a child would. Use your imagination to visualize Jesus sitting there with you. Tell Him what you desire so deeply. Will you hand that desire over to Him in love and trust totally releasing the outcome?

JULY

Change & Growth



Change
the alteration of one's present course.
Why is it so difficult
to direct ourselves toward uncertainty?
To let go,
to fly free for a moment,
to trust.
God knows this need.
Fall, Winter, Spring,
These are His changing things.



I had to be open to everything if I wanted to grow in the love and knowledge of God. Fear kept me clinging to old habits and old ways of doing things. I had to continually turn off the head tapes that had programmed me for so long and return to my First Love. That required trust and faith—not knowing where I was going but with Whom I was going. Faith brought me to love. Faith brought me to joy. Faith brought me to wholeness. I had to let go of the old trapeze, float through that never-never land, trust God, and grab for the new one. I had to remind myself that God is a God of love and His timing is perfect, so He would not let me fall. That's growth, and all of this led me to the deep, deep joy that comes from the freedom to love purely.

A Healthy Body

Hydrate, move, and rest.

A Serene Mind

Light a candle to symbolize His presence with you. Let Betty's lovely Centering Prayer help quiet and refocus your mind.

A Powerful Spirit

For Reflection

"There is within us all this strong desire for the freedom to live and be whole, but it takes enormous courage and discipline to make the choice to trust God and do the difficult work this requires. We must be willing to look at our entrenched behavior patterns that we innocently created from our self protective fears and perceptions of life. Once we are aware of them we can name them, so we can begin to tame them. These habitual ways of being are so hard to break because they are deeply rooted in our childhood wounds. Taking those initial steps toward change can be frightening and painful. The old voices in our head tell us it won't work, things will only get worse, and we're wasting our time. But the new Voice in our heart tells us that if we don't change, we won't grow. Change and growth are synonymous. Gradually as we develop new patterns, the work becomes easier, and we will slowly begin to see our life bear fruit. Failure to dare to change will keep us trapped, so dare to let go, trust God, and make the choice to change, regardless of how hard it is." ([The Hidden Life Awakened](#))

Divine Reading

Read Psalm 91 (Good News Translation), letting the Living Word speak to your heart. Rest quietly with God.

Reflective Writing

Journal every thought that arises without censoring as a child would. Use your imagination to visualize Jesus sitting there with you or in any other setting that brings you peace. Will you tell Him about that one behavior or way you are with others that you have been afraid to look at and ask Him to help you change it? You might also watch Betty's short video entitled [Name it, Claim it and Tame it](#) on the website.

AUGUST

Christ in You



Oh God, gentle first Truth,
move in my heart.
Illuminate each dark corner
where webs of self still hide.
Show me Whose I am
That I might know who I am.

Then recreate me,
dress me in Yourself,
whose virtue is love,
whose knowledge is truth,
whose beauty is creation.

Oh God, gentle first Truth,
You who created me in love
and longs to recreate me in mercy.
Bring me to the foot of the cross,
to the nailed feet, the gift of Your Son.

And there, in His shadow,
in unspeakable gratitude,
enable me to live consistently
the endless dynamic of knowledge and love
of gentle first Truth.



At last, the messenger becomes the message. I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. (Galatians 2:20) We finally see that everything in our lives—all of the pain and all of the beauty—has been woven together into the huge tapestry of divine love. The will is disciplined, the old voices are quieted, the heart is surrendered, and we hear only the voice of the Beloved saying, 'I love you, I love you; I have loved you since the beginning of time. I will not abandon you.'

A Healthy Body

Hydrate, move, and rest.

A Serene Mind

Light a candle to symbolize His presence with you. Let Betty's lovely Centering Prayer help quiet and refocus your mind.

A Powerful Spirit

For Reflection

The last thing Jesus did before he was betrayed and arrested in his beloved garden of Gethsemane was pray for his friends. He turned his eyes heavenward and said to his Father, "The very glory You have given me I have given them so that they will be joined together as one and experience the same unity that we enjoy. You live fully in me and now I live fully in them." (John 17:22-23)

This is Truth. The Holy Spirit of Christ actually lives inside our mortal body right now. His heart is our heart and His mind is our mind. This is our hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27) But, this astounding truth has been buried behind a dark wall of illusory self-protection forced on us by trauma and voices of fear. Our calling in this life is to rediscover the Truth of Whose and who we are, resist those voices, and reclaim the power and sanctity of our Christ hearts and minds. As the Apostle Paul exhorts us, to take captive negative thoughts and dwell on whatever is pure and lovely.

"So pay attention and notice your negative or fearful thoughts. This is so important. They are so subtle, but they are so defeating. Your brain is hardwired to protect you from threats, so any negative word or thought will release dozens of stress-producing hormones. Most people spend their life imprisoned in the tiny confine of their thoughts that are nothing more than firings and wirings within their brain. You don't have to do that. Your unhappiness is not coming from other people or your circumstances but from your mind's conditioning." ([The Hidden Life Awakened](#))

Divine Reading

Read Psalm 139, letting the Living Word speak to your heart. Rest quietly with God.

Reflective Writing

Journal every thought that arises without censoring as a child would. Use your imagination to visualize Jesus sitting there with you or in any other setting that brings you peace. Say to Him, "Beloved Jesus, you created me perfectly. You are in my body and Your mind is mine. How do you want me to think about this person or situation I am struggling with?"

SEPTEMBER

True Humility



Emptying of self,
choosing to be stripped,
impoverishment for Christ's sake.
Without identity or claim,
poor in spirit,
a unifying deprivation.



Humility is that lowliness of heart which seeks nothing for itself. It is an unselfconscious way of being. Pride is the false self's illusions which promote an inordinate and blinding self-consciousness or self-hatred. The descending way of humility is a movement toward our true self's realization. By descending, we expose the false in order to perceive the true. When we finally see the truth, we are free.

The path of humility goes through humiliation. Our consent to suffer the pain silently and alone for the sake of Love's way gently, yet painfully, brings us to that low, empty place within our hearts where the Holy One and the human one meet in tenderest love and forgiveness - profound humility.

The self-emptying of the Incarnate God is the ultimate expression of humility and the most compelling invitation to empty ourselves of all that is false in us. The lower, the emptier we are before God, the more complete the inflow of His Divine Glory will be. Humility, the place of entire dependence on God, is, from the very nature of things, the first duty and the highest virtue of man. It is the root of every virtue.

A Healthy Body

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A Serene Mind

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A Powerful Spirit

For Reflection

Humility is simply seeing yourself as you are. Yes, you are weak and sinful, but this awareness, though important, is not perfect humility. Perfect humility comes from remembering and adoring God's goodness and overwhelming love. If constant wallowing in self-hatred for sin and failures were humility, how could Jesus, who was without sin, have made the statement above? Why did He tell the prostitute wiping His feet with her tears that her sins were forgiven? Because with godly, heartfelt sorrow she offered Him "such extravagant love."

"It is difficult for us to grasp the truth that Jesus came not to astonish us with the great power and high visibility of God, but rather to show us the way of hiddenness and humility. In contrast to our culture that applauds upward mobility, the inner life affirms that God's path is the descending way. It leads us to a deeper understanding that, in His eyes, the most significant is often the most hidden.

This contemplative life of humility flows from a pure heart that has persevered through much suffering and found its way to the Source. When we finally come to see that our desire for God is an echo of God's far more encompassing and passionate desire for us, we can offer others a glimpse of light in the midst of their confusion, darkness, and pain. It is the love, hope, and encouragement of the One in Whom all is lost, yet all is found."
[*\(The Hidden Life Awakened\)*](#)

Divine Reading

Read Psalm 103, letting the Living Word speak to your heart. Rest quietly with God.

Reflective Writing

Journal every thought that arises without censoring as a child would. Use your imagination to visualize Jesus sitting there with you or in any other setting that brings you peace. He quietly asks you these questions: What do those closest to you think about you? How much truth is there in what they say? How do you treat them on a daily basis? How do you accept criticism? Will you become an observer of you and try to see where you need to change? With no self judgement, simply thank God for the amazing gift of forgiveness.

OCTOBER

Desire



From the tears of my own confession
That flowed with the touch of His kiss
It was this
His caress, His compassion
That compelled me
To journey deep inside
Where all the beauty of forgiveness hides
Asleep and silent, still
Until aroused and summoned at His will.

Yet, in this darkest midnight,
My only light, that of my heart's desire,
My every substance melted by its fire,
I recognized the Stranger, my Beloved,
My Companion through the years.
For sense and intellect were gone.
In His eternity of forgiveness,
My faith grew strong, my fears grew dim
And there was nothing, nothing, nothing.
Only Him.



Desire is what drew me to conclude that nothing would satisfy my desire except Desire Itself. For Love seeks a love of its kind. Desire called my soul into the depths of its own True Self. Here, in this place of union, Love is perfected. All things are One.

God is our destiny. We are His prayer, His thoughts. He is hopelessly lost in His Love and longing for us. When the spark of our own longing is set aglow by a glimpse of such unspeakable longing, we are drawn toward His Presence. As our longing intensifies, the Light brightens within us, thinning the veil. Our longing becomes our belonging - one with the longing of God.

A Healthy Body

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A Serene Mind

Light a candle to symbolize His presence with you. Let Betty's lovely Centering Prayer help quiet and refocus your mind.

A Powerful Spirit

For Reflection

"Do we not all somewhere hidden in our hearts deeply yearn to experience this intimacy with God? But how do we begin? It is all desire. We must choose to desire it. As we come to prayer again and again asking God to intensify our desire, and as we choose again and again to take the next step as best we discern it, God finally meets us in the holy vacancy in our souls and, like a beam of light, pours through our transparency and connects with our spirit, filling us with this ultimate gift.

This movement toward God takes time and requires that we become partakers of solitude, silence, and prayer. It is not so much the quantity of time as much as the quality of your heart's desire to be with God. Will you dedicate a little space in your life to be still and listen for His voice? Will you seek out and spend time with those who have already attained it? The great thirteenth century poet, Rumi, says, "Receive the light from living saints or candles lit by those who have gone before."

Our loving God is infinitely intimate and accessible. If you will cultivate the desire, God will make a way. Approach with humble trust, intentionally returning again and again. It is the pearl of great price. Scientists approach the laws of nature with humility and perseverance. If a theory doesn't work, they simply intensify their desire and determination to find the answers. May our heart's desire for God be intensified as we respond to the Love waiting within us, continually coming to Him in prayer." ([The Hidden Life Awakened](#))

Divine Reading

Read Psalm 84 (The Passion Translation), letting the Living Word speak to your heart. Rest quietly with God.

Reflective Writing

Journal every thought that arises without censoring as a child would. Use your imagination to visualize standing on the inside of the door of your heart, alert and listening for Jesus' knock. If you are too busy or distracted, you may not hear it. Open the door. As air comes in and quietly does its life giving work, so Jesus will enter and do His blessed work in you. (John 3:16)

NOVEMBER

Gratefulness



The green has turned to golden.
Some branches bare, their leaves have fallen.
And I, His chosen, come again to ponder,
Within the changing pattern of creation
The beauty in the dying,
The forgiving face of God.
Oh, Good Jesus,
In Your redeeming power,
Liberate my broken, crushed self-image,
Worn, tired, abused and torn.
Refine within me Your kiss of peace
That I might extend to others
Your hand, Your word, Your heart of love.
This unity of forgiveness,
The beauty in the dying.



Gratitude is the giving and receiving of Love. Until we surrender and are awakened to the Light in this profound exchange, we are still in bondage. The movement from bondage to freedom is not complete until the Giver of Love becomes the Receiver of Love. The moment we actualize the gift of Love as the ultimate gift and acknowledge our total dependence on the Giver, we are free. We are free to go forth into the fullness of gratitude - the Light that is the seed of Life and fills the circle of Love.

A Healthy Body

Hydrate, move, and rest.

A Serene Mind

Light a candle to symbolize His presence with you. Let Betty's lovely Centering Prayer help quiet and refocus your mind.

A Powerful Spirit

For Reflection

I often wonder... Lord, giver of everything, what can I bring to you my King? I am gently reminded that a grateful heart is my humble offering. Whether joy or pain, gratitude helps me not forget the truth of who He is, His faithful presence that forever remains.

"God wants you to be healthy and happy as much as you want that. So take care of yourself by taking care of your cells. What one good thing will you give your genome today? Will you go outside and walk a little? Will you feed your cells a meal of delicious, mainly plant-based foods? Will you think of things you can be grateful for, trusting that your brain is turbocharged to re-create itself when you are in a state of gratitude? If you will do these things, you will one day wake to find yourself in new and joyful places you never dreamed possible." ([The Hidden Life Awakened](#))

May we surrender today to gratitude, thanking the Lord for the purposeful coming and going of each unique season of our lives as we observe changes in the natural world as well as the deep workings in our own hearts. All the while grounded in the One who remains, who wraps himself up and in and through the beauty of it all with us, whether summer breeze or golden leaves or barren trees.

Divine Reading

Read Psalm 136, letting the Living Word speak to your heart. Rest quietly with God.

Reflective Writing

Journal every thought that arises without censoring as a child would. Use your imagination to visualize Jesus walking with you on a path through the many events of your life, starting as a young child all the way up until the present. Whether they are joyful, painful, or sorrowful memories, simply picture Christ by your side through it all. May this simple practice transform your heart to a place of gratitude as you remember that in all things, He "is with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

DECEMBER

Moments



Oh, Love

Moment by moment my spirit runs to You
Will you embrace and welcome me?
My longing heart waits for Your reply.
Please, Love, look graciously.

I'll bring you rainbows and sunsets
and a gentle mist from mountaintops,
from Julian's rock,
from dancing brooks and quiet nooks,
from steadfast days in fertile lands,
where no other reaper stands but You.

Oh, Love

if such beauty extinguish me,
if I gain Your spirit free,
if death, its agony, its ecstasy,
bloom my eternity, it's then I'll know
I've nothing to bring.
For sun just touched the morning,
and all my life is spring.
Moment by moment, Beloved, I'm Yours.



The persistent yearning that sweeps us all is a yearning to be known as we are and to be loved. When the wave of this yearning swells in our hearts and its crest is infused by wondrous Light, all our barriers are pushed aside. Beauty awakens within us. A momentous reality of God trembles through our veins, opening a glimpse of the Eternal. God answers with Love our trembling awe. Then comes a quiet wondering – how could we have lived in the shimmerings, the whispers, the intimations of such a Great Beauty and missed it?

Awareness is the power that is hidden within the present moment. It is the power of God's Presence now. Once we awaken to such clarity of vision and focused attention, we're no longer distracted or pulled off course. Our ultimate purpose, as believers, is to glorify God by living our lives empowered by His Loving Presence, step by step, moment by moment. God does not want us to postpone to the future the joy of saying by our lives, "Now unto Him... be the glory both now and forevermore."

A Healthy Body

Hydrate, move, and rest.

A Serene Mind

Light a candle to symbolize His presence with you. Let Betty's lovely Centering Prayer help quiet and refocus your mind.

A Powerful Spirit

For Reflection

The expectation of Advent is anchored in the event of God's incarnation; anchored in the gift of God's love to us in the coming of the Christ child. This gift of love in Christ should be awaited in prayer, remembered with beautiful Scripture, liturgy and song, and contemplated with watchful attentiveness for His coming to us in moments of heightened perception.

Moments of heightened perception can happen at any time, moments when time seems temporarily suspended, and we are in harmony with the whole of creation. They are ethereal moments of beauty that convey a different order of knowing. There is a deep sense of communion as though we were being invited in the gentlest, most reticent of ways to respond. To be caught up in such unpredictable moments of love and wonder is an expression, an experience of truth. It is the Incarnation, Immanuel, God with us.

Divine Reading

Read Psalm 19, letting the Living Word speak to your heart. Rest quietly with God.

Reflective Writing

Journal every thought that arises without censoring as a child would. Use your imagination to visualize Jesus with you in those moments of heightened perception you have experienced, even as a young child. Dwell upon His wonder, His mystery, and His unwavering presence.