



Contemplative Outreach

Heart Intention Practice: Live Practice Session 1
with David Frenette

**May 2022
Transcript**

Hello everybody, and welcome from across the continent, across the world to this first live session of the e-course, hosted by Contemplative Outreach Ltd., on Heart Intention for Centering Prayer practitioners, grounding the Prayer of the Cloud in the Prayer of the Heart. And so for the next hour and a quarter or an hour and thirty minutes -- we're going to be a little flexible at this point with the end time, just to see how things work out in terms of the questions -- for the next period of your day, we're going to build on the content, on the information that has been coming in your inbox since last Tuesday and experience a little bit more through practice, what Heart Intention and Centering Prayer are together or in complement for each other, and that will also involve some questions and answers. I can say right off that, I feel so happy to be actually looking into the Zoom world with the sense that you're actually there, because I've been recording these videos with this intention, just with my sole intention, that it'd be of benefit to some viewer at some point in the world somewhere. So to have some faces come to life is very invigorating for me, which I need. I want to thank you all for joining, for coming in on this day. In the United States, and perhaps in some other parts of the world, today is Mother's Day, the secular holiday of Mother's Day, and so we want to honor that all the mothers, the biological mothers and the spiritual mothers, honor our spiritual mothers. The ones who have been life givers to us, sometimes in hidden and obscure ways. In honor of Mother's Day, we want to explore contemplative meditation and contemplative prayer some more. What's going to happen today here, I'm going to talk for a little bit longer. I know there's some people who have perhaps just joined this e-course in the last few days, and perhaps you haven't had a chance to look at the first two videos that were sent your way last Tuesday.

I hope you do get the chance because that's where all the content is going to be. I'm just going to touch on a little bit of review about those two videos, just to set the stage for our dialogue together, and we'll take questions and answers. If there's time and it seems meaningful, we

might break into small Zoom groups, of three or four, in order for you to have the opportunity in community to share your experience with someone else in a small group. We'll have about eight-minute period of a Centering Prayer here in a few minutes, just to ground us in Presence and being, and then we'll have a fuller practice period of Heart Intention leading into Centering Prayer a little bit later.

While I'm thinking about it, so just to reinforce the process of the course, which has been described in the emails you've received from Pamela Begeman, our host from Contemplative Outreach. Every Tuesday, you'll get an email (and you've gotten one already), which gives the informational links for that week for the class, and there's three weeks. You'll be getting three Tuesday emails in your inbox, and there'll be two videos links on each Tuesday email and some other background materials in the text of the email or link to somewhere else. I really encourage you to do as much as you can to look at some of the videos in advance of Sunday, because as I mentioned before Sunday, today, our session hour and fifteen minutes or so, is really about practice and dialogue together. We won't be going into a lot of content directly, that will be in the videos and you'll have access to the videos throughout the course, so you can go back. You'll also have access to this recorded session on Sunday, today's session. You'll get information about how you could review that too. I want to say, assuming we do have the opportunity to go into Zoom groups today, that will not be recorded. Okay. It's just this large group and the questions that you might ask, and you'll be asking questions, if you have one via chat and Pamela will curate the questions and read them to me, so that's our process.

We start with just an appreciation and renewal of the gift of the Christian contemplative heritage, the practice heritage that's embodied and expressed in the method of Centering Prayer. So many different types and forms and expressions of practice have been articulated throughout the centuries in the Christian contemplative heritage and in other great wisdom traditions around the world. There's a wonderfully, an evolving dynamic that meets the new needs of society, about how to express contemplative prayer and Centering Prayer is in that tradition, that Trappist monks, especially Father Thomas Keating, articulated Centering Prayer about 40 or 50 years ago to meet the needs of modern people, and that's been the shared practice that we, or most of us on this call, have been following. It's a wonderfully gifted practice and also so attuned to the ultimate reality of God's pure being that it doesn't oftentimes feel like we have a lot to hang onto. It doesn't say, think this way or feel this way or do this or do that. Centering Prayer just says, just be and we have a sacred symbol – ever-so-gently return to it when we're engaged in another thought -- and be in the life and the vastness and the cloud of pure love that is God's being in us and in everyone and in the world right now. We don't look for any specific experiences, we don't hold on to any specific experiences because we're looking to rest in *the source* of every experience, the source of all life, which we call God.

The Cloud of Unknowing is the text from the 14th-century written by an anonymous English writer, perhaps a monk, or perhaps a contemplative nun, that articulates the inspiration for Centering Prayer. Centering Prayer finds its inspiration in many different sources, teachings, writers, living communities of prayer, monastic, and non-monastic. But particularly this one

text, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, because it details and gives suggestions in a very simple way about how to relate to thoughts and how to be present to the God of pure being. In the email last Tuesday, we sent a few little nuggets from *The Cloud of Unknowing* that my friend, Father Carl Arico, assembled for a recent course, just to renew that sense of appreciation for that source of Centering Prayer, and the companion text is called *The Book of Privy Council*. That's the second book that's associated with this anonymous author, *The Cloud of Unknowing* and *The Book of Privy Council* gives advice to the long-term practitioner of contemplation, someone who's been on the journey for a little while.

Here is just one line from *The Book of Privy Council*, just so short and so simple. "Let go and divest yourself completely of any kind of self-awareness, in order to be clothed with the grace and awareness of God's very self." Let go of any kind self-awareness -- any thought, any tendency to think about thoughts to reinforce the dualistic sense of self, that there is a thinker of thoughts that is us -- in order to be closed with the grace and awareness of God's very self, which is a practice of unknowing and forgetting, and just being present to the God of love, that is the unifying principle of all life. And how important that is, not only perennially, but particularly for us in our time, our current time, when there are so many issues and problems and deep challenges in our world, war, famine, political unrest, climate change, climate degradation, the loss of species diversity. It seems as if things are unraveling very quickly, so how important it is to have a practice to come back to, day after day and on retreat, such as Centering Prayer, that will root us in the eternal timeless dimension of pure oneness, pure love that Jesus revealed in a particularly unique way 2000 years ago. That's what Centering Prayer is, and so it's very simple.

Why don't we do a little bit of practice so that we're all joined throughout the community, the international community of this Contemplative Outreach call. I invite you to pay attention to your posture and just let yourself settle in a comfortable position. You might want to turn off any apps or close particularly your mail, email inbox, so you're not disturbed, and just bring attention to your body, as a way of honoring and cherishing the gift of this body. You might want to breathe consciously, let go on the out breath, to be still and know that God is, and this stilling is not necessarily not having thoughts, but being present to the moment and letting go of thinking about the thoughts, so that the source of everything that is God, is more available to us, not looking to change our experience, but just to be with all that is. And in Centering Prayer, we gently return to our sacred symbol, which can be a one or two syllable word, religious or spiritual or inter-spiritual, whenever you're thinking another thought. We'll be silent for about seven or eight minutes. I'll ring the bell, a time just to be.

[pauses for Centering Prayer ... then rings bell]

As a simple transition from the period of silent prayer meditation into dialogue and active sense, perhaps just call to mind someone or some situation in the world where there is suffering and with your intentionality, offer a prayer in the silence of your heart, or just visualize God's healing light on this person, or issue or concern. Amen.

So the silent ground of being births itself into our world -- silence speaks, stillness acts and love comes forth -- and that's the natural movement of Centering Prayer, that the effects of Centering Prayer spill over into our life in order that we be less concerned about ourselves or our surface level of identity and more concerned with the true needs of every human being, including ourselves, and we can act more in selflessness in a world that needs a lot of care always, and right now, especially.

Heart Intention is one practice to help that movement. A movement from the stillness of silent sitting practice into activity, because Heart Intention deals with an active intention and the body, mind, heart, and pure being in activity, and this is the inspiration of the tradition called the Prayer of the Heart. It's a parallel tradition of contemplative prayer in Christianity to sacred reading, Lectio Divina, and *The Cloud of Unknowing*. The Prayer of the Heart says to pray unceasingly or continuously in activity and gives simple advice on how to do that through a particular prayer, that's called the Jesus Prayer.

Heart Intention takes that inspiration and says, "Well, if your relationship with Jesus is not predominant in your life right now, and that you're in a more spiritual and less religious phase of your life, or that's your life and your spiritual journey anyways, well then you can have a different form of intention in words, that's less of a prayer and more of an affirmation of unity." If your life and practice would benefit from more of a Christian mantra, you'll have that as your practice focus for activity in unceasing prayer. I'm just going to share a screen that describes this. [Shares document on screen.]

This is what one of the talks was on the video was about. Father Thomas Keating says that intention, the power of intention is immense. My intention is why I am doing what I am doing. So Heart Intention begins with intention, and if a powerful intention for you is the Jesus Prayer, then that's described in that first line, "Lord, Jesus Christ have mercy on us, Son of God. Amen." If you've been following the videos, perhaps you've been practicing this. If you've been practicing the Jesus Prayer, perhaps you've been doing this for many years. Coming back again, and again, to that intention, that prayer during the day, there are different versions of the Jesus prayer. Some include the phrase at the end, "Have mercy on me, a sinner," but there's a little flexibility in the tradition that one can use a slightly different version. But the important thing is to have the name of God, the name of Jesus, Jesus Christ in the Jesus Prayer, that's what makes it the Jesus prayer.

Heart Intention again, says that, there could be a spiritual affirmation that's more meaningfully for you, like's described in the second line, intention as a spiritual affirmation. "Life radiating love in being. Life is radiating love in being." This is a statement or an affirmation of the unity of life, that love is the hidden source of oneness and our created life, our activity in the world, my work, my relationships, my service, my activity, is a radiation and an expression, an effulgence-out-breath of the love, that's centered in the pure being of God. This is one type of spiritual affirmation that some people who practice Heart Intention use.

The third option there, which is all described more fully in the videos, which we've been studying. There's going to be a test someday. No, no test. Intention as a Christian Mantra: "Yeshua, Maranatha, Hesed, Amen." Yeshua, of course is the Aramaic term for Jesus' name, what he would actually have been called 2000 years ago, in the language of the time, Yeshua. Maranatha, is the Aramaic term for come spirit, come God. Hesed, is the Hebrew term with roots in Aramaic for loving kindness, and Amen of course means, so be it, let it be. There's different possibilities with Heart Intention, and this is how it I've been practicing it for many decades because our world has been changing so quickly, so quickly, so quickly. What started as a religious or semi-religious world in the 20th century, is now much more spiritual and less traditionally religious and genuine seekers are connecting less and less, some of them, with traditional religious structures, and salvation redemption theology, and the gift of scripture, and the tradition as it's been handed on for centuries in the Christian religious sense -- and these are sincere seekers, perhaps you're one of them. What about your spiritual life? Can you enter into the heart of this particular tradition with an intention that's meaningful for you -- that added source is similar or the same as the Jesus prayer or a Christian Mantra like "Yeshua, Maranatha, Hesed, Amen," and you can open up the body, mind, and heart, which is the key to the prayer of the heart practice and integrate Centering Prayer into your life, so you can live and pray more and more unceasingly and be free in the events of your life, freer, freer, freer to serve.

In Centering Prayer, of course, when we begin, we choose a sacred symbol that could be religious. It could be the name of Jesus, or it could be the name of God or spirit or father, a traditional religious term. It could be spiritual and less religious, just peace, or open, or be, or life, or it could be more of a mantra. A mantra meaning, a term from a sacred language like Aramaic that has a resonance to it. It could be a mantra like Yeshua. Centering Prayer has the same flexibility woven into its instructions, there's no prescription to have the name of God or a spiritual and less religious sacred word. We have a lot of flexibility. Heart Intention approaches the same mystery of generating intentionality and living by more intentional, clearly motivated purpose in our life a little differently. So there's a little flexibility in what you choose in order to get into the practice, and I want to share the second screen here.

In order to get into the practice itself ... not that one, let me find the other one. Oh, here it is. So the heart of the Jesus Prayer is that, once you have your intention, the Heart Intention practice, and if you're using the Jesus Prayer, intention is the Jesus Prayer that's described or replicated in the first line and join that phrase with inner movements of consciousness that you can be anchored in throughout the day. So you can join that phrase with your body, with your breath, with the engaging and focusing of your mind, the surrender into the heart and resting in pure being. This transformation of body, mind, heart, and being, in activity, is the inspiration of the Prayer of the Heart and the real point of the Heart Intention to bring the fullness of our being, which is not just about a transcendent oneness in God. We live in this world. We have a body. We use our body in order to engage with this world, to serve and act and be of benefit to other people. We have the gift of an intellectual mind, that's unfortunately extremely scattered and blown all over the place by technology and stress. What we need to do is to have a way to focus and simplify and engage our mind, through the Heart Intention practice. We have a way

to surrender into the depths of our own heart and the heart of God in us, the seed of identity, where forgiveness and love and tenderness and connection with others arise, and we also need to be able to return to rest into being.

This is why Heart Intention is a nice complement for Centering Prayer, similar to contemplative Lectio Divina, or some of the practices that were developed to integrate Centering Prayer into daily life, like the Welcoming Prayer, like the active prayer, like the forgiveness prayer, because we need to live and move in our world.

I think now's the time to maybe take some questions because that's the brief review. Pamela, could you curate any good questions? I'm going to stop this share.

Pamela: If everybody would use the Chat, if you do have any questions or even if you have a comment that you want David to respond to? Kimberly says she practiced all week and it felt great. Go Kimberly. Thanks for living it.

David Frenette: Yeah. That's great, Kimberly. Thanks for sharing too. That's encouraging. I've been very excited about Heart Intention for decades, as you might tell, and I've shared it of late in various online and a few live situations in Portland [Oregon] before the lockdown for the pandemic, and I've been encouraged that for some people, it's a very meaningful way of practice.

Pamela: Okay. A couple of questions, David, that are wanting you to tease out the difference between active prayer and Prayer of the Heart, and Inge also brings in active prayer and the prayer of Christine Vaultner Painter's breath prayer. So let's just start with those two distinctions.

David Frenette: Yes. Okay. Well, thank you for the questions. I know the active prayer practice very intimately. It is one of the foundational practices that were first developed at Chrysalis house, which is the contemplative retreat center where I lived for 10 years actually. One of my friends there, who lived there, Mary Mrozowski was a deeply charismatic and inspired woman, and she was a real spiritual mother to me and to many people and a deep friend and collaborator with Father Thomas Keating. So Mary practiced something called the active prayer and Father Thomas Keating helped her shape it so that we could offer it at Chrysalis house.

It's just a traditional way of practicing, if you're not familiar with it, by choosing either a line from scripture or a prayer for activity, a prayer in words that you repeat during ordinary activities like washing the dishes or waiting for the bus or something. Simple times of activity, when your mind would be engaged, otherwise just rambling, rambling, rambling, and repeating the agendas of the separate self, the false self. So how is Heart Intention similar and how is it different to the active prayer? Well, the Heart Intention practice, like the Jesus Prayer of the heart can be done in a simple way, of a repetitious focusing of the mind during activity. I'll just bring that share back here.

To engage the mind with either the full Jesus Prayer, “Lord, Jesus Christ have mercy on me, have mercy on us, son of God. Amen,” or just with the phrase of calling on God's mercy, “have mercy on us, have mercy on us.” Well, for those who practice the active prayer, that's an active prayer.

Now, the difference that Heart Intention includes is that, that active prayer or that prayer phrase can be joined with the body and the breath or surrendered into the heart. So the way to practice it in this regard, and we'll touch into this over the weeks of practice on Sundays, because it takes a little bit of development for it to expand in your mind and heart, is that you could join the phrase where you're calling upon the name of God, “Lord Jesus Christ.” Join that with your breath. Join that with your breath, Lord Jesus Christ, and breathe that name of God into your body. [pausing, breathing]

The topic of this coming week, in the videos and in the email teachings has a lot to do with the breath, Heart Intention and the breath, and so there's flexibility about how you do that. You could join it with the in breath and the out breath, with the out breath, drop it into the bottom of your breath cycle, which has a particular technical name in the Jesus Prayer tradition. Yes, Christian contemplation does work with the breath [laughs]. It's a universal type of meditation approach, so that grounding in the breath with the name of the divine and again, that could be just “Life,” letting my affirmation of intentionality to be present to life, to the sacred quality of life, let that resonate in my body now, “life.”

The importance of this is that sometimes, and I think Inge's question is maybe getting towards this. Sometimes what we need in activity is not so much the focus concentrated mind, but we need more mindful presence in the body. Think of your experience with that. If you're being emotionally stimulated, it's not as valuable to go to the active prayer for people who have practiced the active prayer for a long time, because there might be a slight tendency to repress the emotion. What's most valuable is something like the Welcoming Prayer or Heart Intention, which goes to the breath and calls upon the divine name and roots you in the moment. The mind of God is one thing and the body of God is present in our pure awareness, that's another thing and attention and engaged concentration can go together.

So Heart Intention, as it unfolds is a little flexible. It takes a little bit of sense of how to do this divine dance for a little while. That's why we have a three-week course, and the materials will be available for you afterwards, if you feel a connection with this practice. For traditional people in the Contemplative Outreach communities, those practices, which came out of Chrysalis house 40 years ago and were wonderfully exported and refined in the [Contemplative Life Program resources](#), which are available through Contemplative Outreach. Teachings on discernment and Welcoming Prayer, and the active prayer, are all wonderful and a great gift, and if you practice them fruitfully, I encourage you to continue because you're doing a great job. The reason to articulate and express this approach of heartfulness is just because the needs are changing, there might be a value...

Heart Intention provides three things. I'm going off into another question or another answer here. One is, it provides for the spiritual and less religious practitioner, as I've described. Secondly, it provides a practice for engaged and flexible activity, an active practice for engaged contemplation. The active prayer helps with that, the Welcoming Prayer helps with that, Heart Intention does it in a particular way that once you get the blessing or the grace of God affirming you in the practice, then it can really be a wonderful benefit for you in terms of the tasks and the challenges and the difficulties of life. Some of which are intellectual and require a focused mind, some of which are emotional and require presence, a heartful presence in the body, and some of which are interpersonal, which are benefited by the surrender of my heart, into the heart of God. Okay.

If you're practicing the Welcoming Prayer, the Heart Intention can be a wonderful complement for you too, because it focuses on the breath and the presence to the breath is a wonderful entry into the surrender and the embracing of the Welcoming Prayer. One of the challenges for Welcoming Prayer practitioners that I found over 40 years is that, the Welcoming Prayer is a wonderful gift, but it's sometimes hard to find when you're in the middle of activity and you're already emotionally triggered. But if you're present to the Heart Intention practice with your breath, calling upon the name of the divine and more mindfully and heartfully present, then you can more easily (because you're more aware and present with the breath), move into the body. You know that this emotion is being triggered, anxiety you can feel it because you're centered with your breath and you can move into the Welcoming Prayer. Okay. What's another question?

Pamela: Well, there's a lot of questions about asking the difference between different kinds of prayers, like for example, Heart Intention and guard of the heart, Heart Intention and mantra, and so maybe rather than getting into all of distinctions, you might guide people through making choices for when and how, which you've started to do, for example, with the Welcoming Prayer and active prayer. But people are getting really into different prayers and how they compare and contrast. Do you have a general comment about that?

David Frenette: My general comment is, learning anything new ... Think of one of the first time that you learned Centering Prayer, of course the mind wants to understand it and compare it or contrast it to other things that one's done and that's important and valuable. So here on this course, we're going to be doing some exploration of content and information and maybe a little comparison, but the most important thing to do is to get into the experience of it and we'll have a longer practice period today. So to Pamela's point, the most important thing when exploring this particular practice is to start with a connection with one of those phrases. If I can find them. [screen sharing document]

Pamela: We can see it.

David Frenette: Oh, you can see it?

Pamela: Yeah.

David Frenette: Can you see the three phrases?

Pamela: Yes.

David Frenette: Oh, you see that? How come I don't see that?

Pamela: You probably have too many things open.

David Frenette: Just for a moment, settle your mind and your breath, in your body, and let your gaze fall gently on those three phrases. The first one reading across "Lord Jesus Christ, Have mercy on us, Son of God, Amen." A traditional intention of the Jesus Prayer that opens to Jesus, one's Lord and savior, the source of mercy, the loving heart of the world, the manifestation of God into life, 2000 years ago in the person of Jesus and now for any follower drawn to him, Have mercy on us, our human family. If this intention helps to express the meaning of your life, affirming your relationship with Christ, let that be an entry into the Heart Intention practice.

The second line, "Life, radiating love, in being." Life, all of life, this beauty that I can see out my window, the tragedy of war, the tragedy of separation and political unrest, the suffering that we encounter, the joy that we encounter when we see children and grandchildren, and beauty and nature, all of life is an expression of the being and the oneness that's hidden. A hidden field of love is radiating all of existence, even among the different religious traditions of the world, there's a hidden oneness, and it arises out of pure being, birthing into this world from the timeless sense of God's presence. Now, if that affirmation of spiritual unity is meaningful for you, let that be an entry into Heart Intention.

And a mantra. A mantra is, again, a repetitious phrase in a sacred language that has a particular euphonious or vibratory effect on one's consciousness. Hinduism, Buddhism, they have mantras in Sanskrit or Tibetan or sacred language, and they can have this sense that there can be Christian mantras - the teaching of John Main and Laurence Freeman on the mantra of Maranatha. Maranatha is a euphonious vibratory word. Now, I invite you to just let this mantra "Yeshua, Maranatha, Hesed, Amen." Let it course through your being, now. [Pausing]

Calling on the name of Jesus in a sacred mystery, mysterious language, affirming the beauty and the quality of life again.

And whatever you have chosen for this little exercise, just for a moment, grounded in your breath, ground that phrase in the bottom of your breath cycle. The area behind and below your naval, call upon the name Jesus, "Lord Jesus Christ." [pause] "Life." [pause] "Yeshua, Yeshua." Anchoring the center of your body, the center of your being through the breath, the Ruah, the Spirit, anchoring in the presence and the divine name, and if you have a sense of being anchored and even more present now, just think what this could be like in activity, to call upon the divine name, through your chosen intention, an anchor in that place of presencing.

In terms of comparison and contrasting, of course Centering Prayer doesn't work with attention. It works with intention and pure presence consent in a sitting practice. Some of the other things that were mentioned, other mantras. There are different mantras that have different sacred meaning and different sacred resonance.

The thing about Heart Intention is that each of these phrases is structured the same. If you're a linguist, you could see that each has a noun, a verb, a subject, and an ending, exclamation point. The name or quality of God is the object of the prayer. The noun, Lord Jesus Christ, Have mercy on us, is the verb and action of receiving mercy, petitioning and receiving mercy. The Son of God is the actual subject of the prayer, the hidden source and the Amen, is the ending exclamation or period. There's actually in a prayer, in a prayer, in words like the Jesus Prayer, there's actually a structure there that's very Trinitarian. We're praying to the Lord Jesus, we're opening to life, or we're affirming Yeshua as the source of life, as the hidden presence of life. We're praying to Lord Jesus Christ, but we're actually in the Trinity because we're awakening to the logos, the presence of God. We're calling on mercy, but we're actually opening up to the Spirit. We're resting in the Son of God, the Father, the source of everything in our prayer, and we're ending in Amen, pure being in oneness.

This is something that expands later. If you connect with this practice, there is a place to go to it because another advantage of Heart Intention is that if you continue with it, there are subtleties to its practice, so you can learn how to root in your body, according to the stage of your spiritual journey. If you're going through a dark night, how to root this prayer in your body and in the Trinity, in order to assist you even more. If you connect with it and let it become a way of life for you in activity, when you meet death. I do this practice oftentimes, a few times a week because sometimes I feel that death or transition in life or illness is near to me and I keep clicking along, but I'm learning more and more upon how to call on God's presence, through this practice orientation, in pain and in death, or as I approach death and learn how to surrender my heart into God. Well, that could take us a whole another direction. Is there another simple question we can do?

Pamela: Let's see. There's a lot of comments about experience with this practice already in a sense of unceasing prayer, in a sense of peace, which is wonderful.

David Frenette: Thank you. That is the point of the practice, unceasing prayer in the ... Heart Intention is not the same as the Prayer of the Heart tradition. Just the way Centering Prayer is not the same as the Prayer of the Cloud, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, but Heart Intention finds its inspiration in the prayer of the heart, which is to pray continuously. *The Way of the Pilgrim* is one of the sacred texts in the prayer of the heart tradition, and if you've ever read that wonderful little book, it's about a Pilgrim who wanders around looking for a way, an approach to practice, especially how to pray unceasingly. And unceasingly in terms of Heart Intention means the willingness to pray in words sometimes, and the willingness to pray in presence through the breath and the body, and the willingness to pray into deep surrender in love and the willingness to pray unceasingly because there's an intellectual task or a busy task and what one needs, is a little bit of focused mind. You're carrying your newborn child and you can't get

to the cushion and do a period of Centering Prayer, and you just need the refuge of a mantra or a sacred active prayer. *That's* what's unceasing. We're human beings with body, mind, heart, and spirit, and in order to pray unceasingly, we need an integrative grounded and flexible approach so that we can call it to mind and have it come alive to us in different circumstances in life, like this Pilgrim did a few hundred or 150 years ago, and he discovers that the Jesus Prayer, especially as it's interiorized into his being, becomes his way of unceasing prayer. What else?

Pamela: Jodi asked, how do we move through the movements of consciousness using Heart Intention? Is that a conscious thing itself or does it just happen? Is it always in that order?

David Frenette: That's a great question. Over the course of these three weeks, we're going to do some more repeated, guided meditations about how it can move through those four movements of consciousness and there is a natural development. It's like tapping into something that does have this organic fullness where attention can move into concentration of the mind, which can move into the heart, but it needs a little bit of guidance sometimes too, and that's the benefit of having the words of the prayer, or the affirmation or the mantra to guide you, and to have this sense of the way that they unfold over time. I think I'll leave it as that.

I think maybe we should do another practice period. Let's do this practice period. This will be our third. We did a little Centering Prayer, we did a little guided meditation with the phrases. So perhaps you feel an affinity with one of the Heart Intention phrases, at least for this practice period. Just remember, call to mind. Are those phrases up there, Pamela?

Pamela: Yes, they are.

David Frenette: Oh, good. Okay. And just call to mind your connection with that prayer or that affirmation or that mantra. Consider it the way that love and compassion is expressed to you through it. Hesed, which means loving kindness, Mercy, from a loving God expressed in Jesus Christ. Love, the hidden oneness of all existence, that's our connection with everything. The apparent separation we see in the world, is actually rooted in loving oneness.

I'm going to practice with this spiritual affirmation, "Life, radiating love, in being." I'll be saying that out loud, if it's meaningful, follow that, or you could follow your own Heart Intention phrase, what you're being drawn to. So Life, aware of your breath. Breathe in life, breathe out life to the world. As you inhale and exhale into the heart space, the area around your heart, "Life." Life is radiating, radiating. Just expand your attention in your body and notice any sensation or feeling, and let it flow through you. On this phrase, radiating, radiating, radiating, radiating, radiating, radiating.

All your effort to try to learn this practice, to try to get through life, even this simple day. Remember love, as you drop your mind into your heart. Love, love, love and kindness. Life is radiating love. Life is radiating love. Life is radiating love. See that phrase, feel it and hear it sink

in from your mind. Feel it go from your mind into your body, towards your heart. Life is radiating love. Life is radiating love. Lord Jesus Christ, Have mercy on us, Son of God. Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us, Son of God. Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us, Son of God.

Yeshua. Maranatha, Hesed. Yeshua. Maranatha. Hesed. Yeshua, Maranatha. Hesed. Let your phrase resonate in your heart space. Amen. Let go of the phrase and just rest. Rest your mind with all that is and with a sense of openness, you could go back to your breath or if your mind is very full and distracted, you can go back to repeating the phrase with focus, or you can just rest in your heart space, or a simple or a simple Amen. Let go. In a moment, we'll just take a little break and do some small groups. As we prepare for that, just let go, and you can have a sense of letting your eyes open.

Now, of course, you're getting a little more familiar with Heart Intention, getting a little more familiar with the phrase -- religious or spiritual or mantra -- that's meaningful for you. A little bit more familiar with how to let it come alive in your body and in your focused mind and in your heart.

In this small group that we'll be going to, just simply introduce yourself. There'll be about 10 or 12 minutes in the group, so everyone would have three or four minutes to share something about the experience of this practice, what your experience was in the guided meditation, trusting that some of your questions will be answered throughout the course for the videos or through the repeated experiences of guided meditation and your own practice and just be able to listen with appreciation to each other's experience. I'll keep or Pamela, maybe you can keep time for 11 minutes?

Pamela: Yeah.

David Frenette: Okay. Let's go into the small groups then we'll have a chance to talk just a little bit more at the end.

Pamela: Okay. Here we go. You're muted, David.

[everyone breaks into small discussion groups]

David Frenette: [after the groups] Okay. I ended up in a group, so I just stayed there.

Pamela: Good. Okay, 60 seconds and people will come back.

David Frenette: Okay. So we'll just have some concluding information. I see the countdown. Are we back now?

Pamela: Yes, I think everybody's back. Yes.

David Frenette: Okay. Well, welcome back everybody and I hope that little breakout group was meaningful. I wasn't expecting to go to a breakout group, there I was with Jim and Peter and had a nice little conversation. Just for some concluding words. Again, Thomas Keating says the power of intention is immense. The power of intention is immense. My intention is, why I am doing what I am doing. So this is the beginning of Heart Intention to settle into one of those phrases that helps to express your why. Why you're doing what you're doing, affirming the unity of life, engaging in the Jesus Prayer and opening up to mercy and the relationship with Jesus, affirming a mantra and opening up to the dimensions of the practice of Christian spirituality for the future, perhaps.

Gradually, we're going to be learning and reinforcing how to interiorize that chosen phrase, that intention. So that intention that's so powerful can become more pervasive in our body, mind, heart, and being, throughout the day to bring Centering Prayer alive into life and help us meet the challenges of our world. As we transition, I look forward to seeing you next week and you'll be getting another email on Tuesday. Pamela, when will this recording be available?

Pamela: Sometime next week. It may be available in time for Tuesday's email, we'll see. I also just want to say that if there are questions we didn't get to, and for example, there was one that was just submitted. I'll send those to you, David, and we can perhaps address them next week during the practice session.

David Frenette: Oh, that's a good idea. Yeah. That's a great idea. Okay. Well, thank you everybody for your attention and thank you Pamela for hosting and all the volunteers that are involved in this group effort and wish you a good week and we'll see you soon. Bye-bye.

Pamela: Bye everyone.

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For more information about David's teachings and offerings, visit www.davidfrenette.com