



CENTERING PRAYER

John of the Cross, *The Cloud of the Unknowing*

(Thomas Keating & Basil Pennington)

If you've ever tried throwing **POTTERY** on a potter's wheel, you know lots of things can go wrong. One of the most common problems occurs when the wet lump of clay is placed off-center on the wheel. Things may seem to go well at first, but eventually it will begin to wobble slightly, then more, and then more. Soon the clay is gyrating wildly and may even go flying off the wheel. Isaiah calls us clay in the Potter's hands (also Gen. 2:7). The problem is that we have the ability to decide that we're going to place ourselves off-center on the wheel, or maybe we let a lot of things pull us off center, and the results are predictably disastrous. It is critical that our lives remain centered in Christ. He is "*the way, the truth, and the life.*"

- "*Be still and know that I am God*"
- This is the simplest and yet it may be the most difficult prayer.
- Decide on the duration of your prayer (15-45 minutes)
- Pick a "**holy**" **word** that captures your desire to be with God (perhaps one of the fruits of the Spirit -- love, joy, peace, hope, or Shalom, etc.)
- Sit comfortably in a quiet place with your eyes closed.
- Some have found it helpful to begin by focusing on a candle, cross, icon, or sacred object.
- Begin by saying your word once. Then just sit quietly. Your word is not repeated continuously as in the Jesus Prayer.
- When you notice you have become distracted by your thoughts, silently repeat the word to bring yourself back to the present.
- When your time of prayer has ended, observe how God may have moved in your prayer, and then express our gratitude to God.

