

# The Contemplative Tradition<sup>1</sup>

*Notable Figures*

*Significant Movements*

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**Jesus of Nazareth**

**(c. 4 B.C. - c. B.C. 29)**

John the Apostle (1st century)	
Antony of Egypt (c. 251-356)	Desert Fathers and Mothers (4th century)
Pachomius (290-346)	
Macrina the Younger (c. 330-379)	
Gregory of Nyssa (330-c. 395)	
Euthymius the Great (c. 378-473)	
Benedict of Nursia (c. 480-c. 547)	Benedictines (6th century to the present)
John Climacus (579-649)	
Maximus the Confessor (c. 580-662)	
Cuthbert (634-687)	
Vulmar (?-c. 700)	
Benedict of Aniane (c. 750-821)	
Simeon the New Theologian (949-1022)	
Antony of Kiev (?-c. 1073)	

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Aelred of Rievaulx (c. 1110-1167)	
Clare of Assisi (c. 1193-1253)	Poor Clares (13th century to the present)
Gregory Palamas (c. 1296-1359)	
Sergius of Radonezh (1314-1392)	Brothers & Sister of the Common Life (14th - 15th centuries)
Julian of Norwich (c. 1342-1413)	
Catherine of Siena (c. 1347-1380)	
Nil Sorsky (1433-1508)	Moravian Movement (16th century to the present)
John of the Cross (1542-1591)	
Brother Lawrence (1611-1691)	
Madame Guyon (1648-1717)	Pietist Movement (17th century to the present)
François Fénelon (1651-1715)	
Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760)	
Nicodemus the Hagiorite (1748-1809)	
Friedrich von Hügel (1852-1925)	
John Hyde (1865-1912)	
Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897)	
Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941)	
Frank Laubach (1884-1970)	
John Baillie (1886-1960)	
Thomas Kelly (1893-1941)	
Catherine de Hueck Doherty (1900-)	
Thomas Merton (1915-1968)	
Henri Nouwen (1932-1996)	

## Practicing the Prayer-Filled Life: The Contemplative Tradition<sup>2</sup>

1. Pray for ten minutes each morning or evening.
2. Pray without words (in silence) for five minutes each day.
3. Offer a short prayer throughout the day (for example, the hesychastic prayer “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner” or the verse “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me” [Psalms 51:10])
4. Set aside an hour that will be free of distraction. Use the time for solitude, prayer, and meditation on the Bible.
5. Read a section from a devotional classic such as Augustine’s *Confessions*, Brother Lawrence’s *The Practice of the Presence of God*, or Madame Guyon’s *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*. (See *Devotional Classics*, a volume in the RENEVARE Resources for Spiritual Renewal, for other suggestions.)
6. Write out a prayer in your journal. You may wish to keep it private, or you may wish to share it with your group. Write the letter as if it were addressed to God, telling him how you feel.
7. Learn to appreciate God through his creation. Take a walk in a park or simply sit and watch a sunset. Consider the majesty of the world, giving thanks and praise for all of God’s creation.
8. Set aside fifteen minutes for a time of thanksgiving. Thank God for everything you can think of. Do not worry about intercession or confession; this is a time simply to give thanks.
9. Practice the art of listening to God. Meditate on a verse of Scripture, being attentive to what God wants to tell you. Note the words in the verse. Does anything stand out? Turn the verse into a prayer. Ask God to teach you during this time of silence.
10. Hold people and situations before God in prayer. Take ten minutes a day to bring your friends and loved ones before God. Do not worry about words; simply imagine Jesus standing beside them before the throne of Grace. Let God minister to all of their cares and hurts.
11. Pray for the leaders in your church. Find a time this week to pray specifically for your pastors and other leaders. Ask God to give them strength and wisdom and compassion. Pray for their protection.
12. Try “flash prayers.” When you see someone—anyone—silently pray for that person. Riding on a bus, standing in a line, sitting in a room—wherever you are, inwardly ask the Lord to give those around you joy, to touch their lives with his presence.
13. See if you can wake up praying. Give your day to God in that prayer, asking him to guide you through each meeting, each conversation, each appointment.

<sup>1</sup>*Streams of Living Water* by Richard J. Foster, Page 24

<sup>2</sup>*A Spiritual Formation Workbook*, Page 87