



CONTEMPLATIVE DIMENSION →

(**Note:** please read chapters 5 & 6 in Jesus Brand Spirituality for background on this class session.)

[REVIEW & SUMMARY]



To be contemplative is to be truly \_\_\_\_\_ with the world inside and outside of us, and to see how \_\_\_\_\_ they really are.

The aim of the contemplative dimension is \_\_\_\_\_. Of God, and of neighbor.

### [PRAYING AS JESUS PRAYED]

*"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." (Mark 1:35)*

*One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1)*

Prayer cannot be force-fed; it's \_\_\_\_\_ driven.

### [INTIMACY]

Prayer is generated by two things which are really the two sides of the same coin:

- 1.) A **sense of need** for someone/something beyond us to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ to us.
- 2.) A **craving** for intimacy and a sense of connection.

[THE MYSTICAL CONTINUUM]

This place is *alive!* In every direction now, creatures far larger than dinosaurs cavort and carry on, blowing voluminous clouds of breath and breaking sea's surface in rings of foam. The scene is ages old. Pleistocene Park. Everything here is giant. The mammals are giant; the fishes, giant; the scale of creatures enlarged to match the oceanic scale itself. The vast sea seems boundless and expansive. From our commanding view the ocean stretches off like a tight azure drum around the rim of the world and here against the center of this drum pounds the rhythm of the living. I feel utterly captivated, connected and rhapsodic; I feel that somehow a sweepingly enlightening, profound realization awaits just beyond consciousness—like a forgotten dream sensed upon waking—if I can take this scene in for a few more moments, just long enough to let myself open fully and encompass it.

- *Song for the Blue Ocean*, page 22<sup>1</sup>

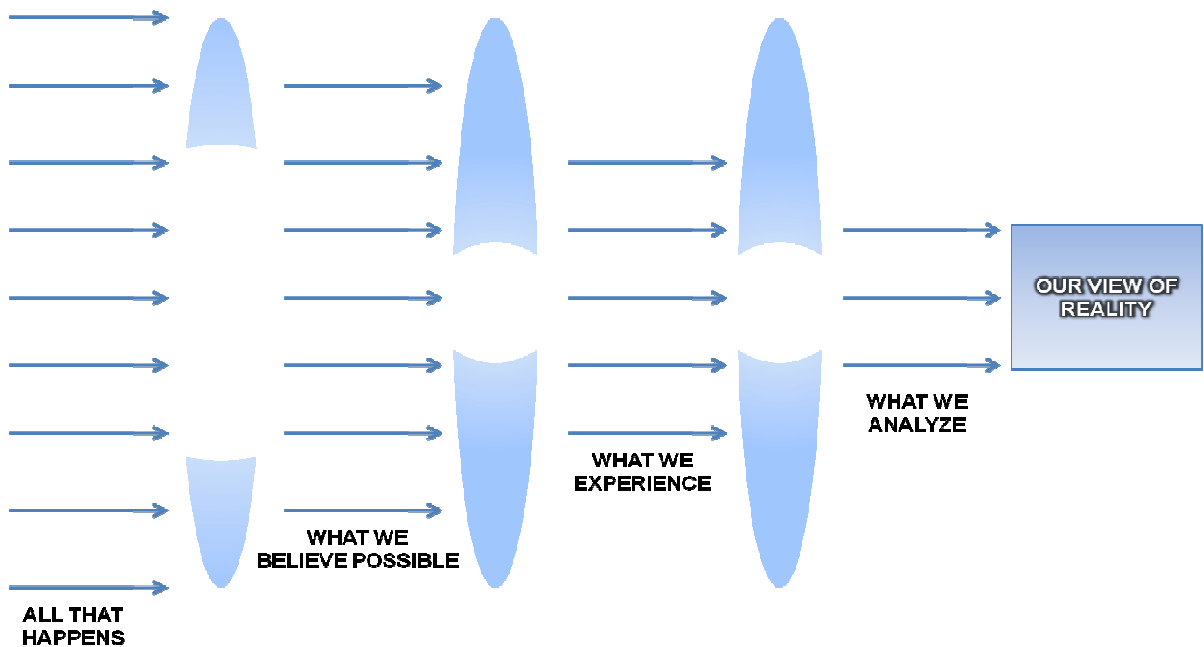
In spite of how common these kinds of fundamentally spiritual experiences are, we can think of them as “weird,” **because they don’t fit neatly into**  
**our** \_\_\_\_\_.

---

<sup>1</sup> Carl Safina, *Song for the Blue Ocean*, pp. 22, published by Henry Holt and Co., 1977

[WORLDVIEW LENSES]

A worldview can be understood as **the lenses through which we**  
\_\_\_\_\_, as experienced through our  
**senses.**



The most powerful of these worldview lenses are our \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_

In a sense, we “\_\_\_\_\_” when we pray.

[BEGINNING TO PRAY]

**Breadth Dimension Prayer:** prayer through the day in smaller amounts, based on need (like eating).



*Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws. (Psalm 119:164)*

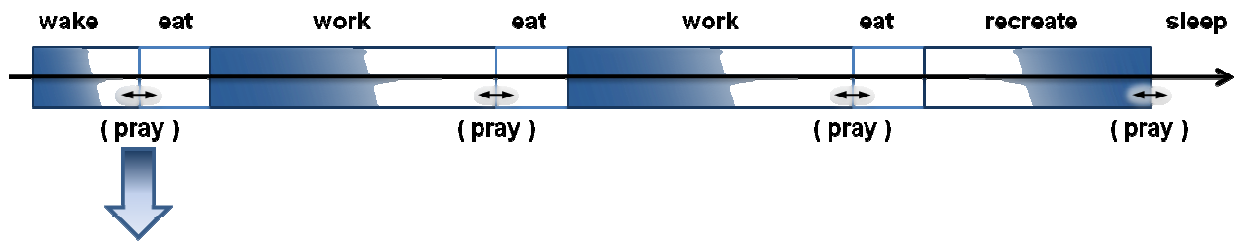
*[Daniel] went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. (Daniel 6:10)*

**How to get started:**

1. Leverage your \_\_\_\_\_ first
2. Start \_\_\_\_\_, anywhere, but at all costs, avoid "the all or none" syndrome.
3. Give it \_\_\_\_\_ (over time).
4. Remember: prayer expresses \_\_\_\_\_, not holiness.

5. Set up a special place for prayer.
6. Try different forms (give 'em time) until you find what fits you best.

**Depth Dimension Prayer:** Once the breadth dimension of prayer is taking hold, be open to the promptings of the Spirit to "go deeper" during one of the intervals.



### Depth Probes:

- **Silence & Solitude:** "Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)
- **The Jesus Prayer:** "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me a sinner."
- **Meditating on Scripture** (lectio divina)
  1. Select a text your heart is drawn to.
  2. Read it slowly three times.
  3. Pay attention to what your heart responds to.
  4. Focus on that portion and place yourself within the text.

Whatever you do, don't focus on getting something out of the experience.

Focus on simply \_\_\_\_\_.

## [DISCUSSION GROUND-RULES]

Just a reminder...

1. **What's shared in the group stays in the group.**
2. **No one is expected to share on any given topic; it's fine to pass.**
3. **No unsolicited advice giving.**
4. **Take your fair share of the time.**
5. **Be respectful of the viewpoints of others.**

## [QUESTIONS TO GUIDE DISCUSSION]

*Note on discussion questions: questions are drawn from both the book and the class, so feel free to develop your own questions if class attendees haven't read the book.*

1. The author describes several factors that make it difficult for modern people to understand, talk about, and perceive "spiritual experience" [see pp. 89-96]. How have these or other factors influenced you?
2. The author describes a variety of experiences that are not ordinarily thought of as "mystical" [see pp. 96-98]. Have you ever experienced or felt something like that? If so, what was it like?
3. The author discusses changes in the way people understand the nature of reality [see pp. 107-115]. Do you think people in our society are more open to spiritual experience than previous generations? What factors do you think account for this?

