

The Bonding Process

Jean-Pierre de Caussade

“No doubt it is mortifying for souls to lose sight of the divine will which vanishes from view only in order to get behind them, so to speak, and to push them along, becoming no longer an aim but a motive... The heart sighs deeply for it cannot be comforted.”

“Thus those experienced in the skill and practice of sanctity with understanding and method in addition to grace, unconsciously form the habit which becomes second nature, of acting on intuition and faith in all things. It turns out then, that they can do no better than to act on impulse, without spending hours of thought on what they are going to do beforehand as they used to... Nevertheless, souls find themselves at a loss in this state, without the help of the insight or discrimination which used to guide and direct all they did, or of grace which no longer manifests itself. But it is in this very loss that they rediscover everything, since that same grace, taking upon itself a new form, repays them a hundredfold for what it has taken from them by the perfection of its hidden influence... Wonderful mystery of love! To deprive a heart of God that longs only for him! For by this means alone can perfect faith be established in souls... What perfection comes from this mysterious influence whose subject and instrument we are, and of whose existence we are not even conscious so much does it seem to be a part of what we do on our own accord!”

Relational Changes

1. Growing deeper may actually feel like you are growing more shallow. Things that once fed your spiritual life seem to be missing.

2. The unitive life calls for increasing trust, decreasing control, and greater surrender.

3. The torturous mistake we make at this point is to try to go back to our previous way.

4. Use these tests to examine yourself: your surrender quotient and your conviction quotient.

5. You cannot skip any stages of growth; each stage must be established, then transcended and included in the next stage.

6. We must come to a mature hope in Christ. Mature hope waits but keeps on walking; we must enter deeply into God and there find "rest for our souls."

Rules for the Second Half of Life

1. The middle third of life brings us into a major confrontation with the cross. The cross in the first part of life is the cross of Christ; now it becomes our cross

2. At this point we need humility and honesty

3. Rules for the second half of life:

- In the first half of life, you fight the devil; in the second half you fight God
- In the first half of life, you are supposed to win; in the second half you are supposed to lose
- In the first half you look at and depend on your own goodness; in the second half you look at and depend on the goodness of God
- The first half of life is about making and keeping promises; the second half is about coming to rest in God's promises
- The first half of life is about sacrifice; the second half is about mercy

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