

**ATTACHMENT
THEORY &
*Life with God***

FEBRUARY 1&2, 2024

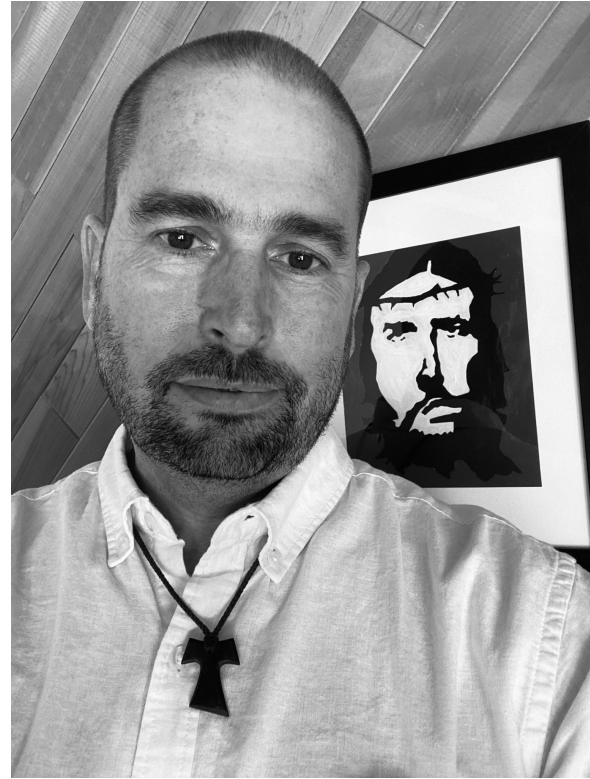




*Return of the Prodigal
Son - Rembrandt*

*Introducing
Attachment in the
Scriptures*

Dr. John DelHousaye



The biblical word for “attachment” is *devequt* or “cleaving,” the cause and effect of God awareness (Deuteronomy 11:22).

Miles Krassen: “an experience mutually shared by God and man who manage to embrace and even unite despite the natural barriers that would seem to preclude such a union.”

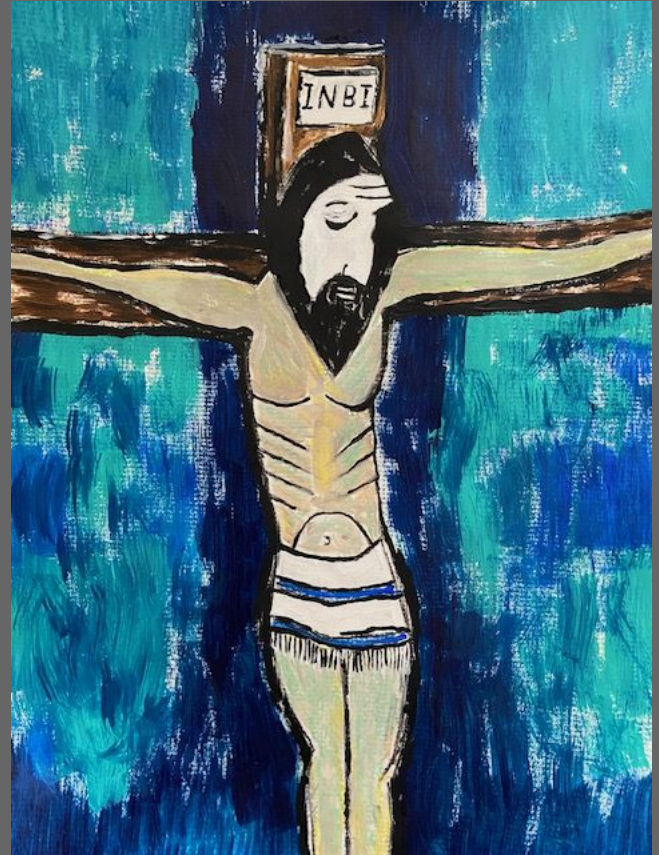
(Uniter of Heaven and Earth)

Circle of Security[®]

Parent Attending to the Child's Needs



Mark's Diptych



And when it became *hour six, darkness came upon the whole land* until hour nine. [Amos 8:9] And at (the) ninth hour, Jesus shouted with a great voice: “*Elöi elöi lema sabachthani,*” which is translated, “My El (God), my El (God), why did you abandon me?” [Psalm 22:1] And some of the bystanders, hearing, were saying: “Look, he is calling for Elijah.” Now one (of them), running and filling a sponge with *vinegar* (then) placing it around a reed, was offering him a drink, saying: “Wait! Let us see if Elijah comes and takes him down.” But Jesus (only) permitted a great voice and *exhaled.* [Genesis 2:7] (Mark 15:33-37)

The timing of the *darkness* is foretold by Amos:

“‘And on that day,’ declares the LORD GOD, ‘I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight. I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist and baldness on every head; I will make it like the mourning for an only [*agapētos*] son and the end of it like a bitter day.’” (8:9–10 ESV)

“In that awesome moment Jesus was *divorced*, separated out, descended into the hellish nonpresence of the Being with whom he had been completely at one from all eternity. This cry of divorced dereliction is the divorcing person’s surest proof of our Savior’s understanding, accepting, and suffering love for each and every separated person. Conversely, Easter morning is an alleluia answer that such a divorce was not going to be God’s final word.”

- William Thompson, *Devotions for The Divorcing*

Concluding Invitation

As our knowledge and trust of God deepens, we can attach ourselves more securely to the attachable one, knowing that Christ, who is securely attached to the Father and Holy Spirit, has cleaved to us.

**ATTACHMENT
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FEBRUARY 1&2, 2024



*Attachment Theory
& Practice*

Dr. Justin Smith





Piglet sidled up to Pooh from behind.
"Pooh," he whispered.

"Yes, Piglet?"

"Nothing," said Piglet, taking Pooh's paw,
"I just wanted to be sure of you."

Attachment

- “the proclivity of people to form and maintain relational attachments throughout life is probably universal.” (Gurman, 2002, p. 183)
- “There is nothing more fundamental, undeniable, and human about intimate relationships than attachment bonding.” (Gurman as cited in Johnson, 2004, p. x)

Attachment

- Attachment is the bond and proximity between a child and primary caregiver. This attachment lays the foundation for future relationships including marital and parental.
- This relational bond contributes to the individual's sense of identity (self), meaning (purpose), and connection (self with others).
- Proximity is important for safety and comfort.

Attachment

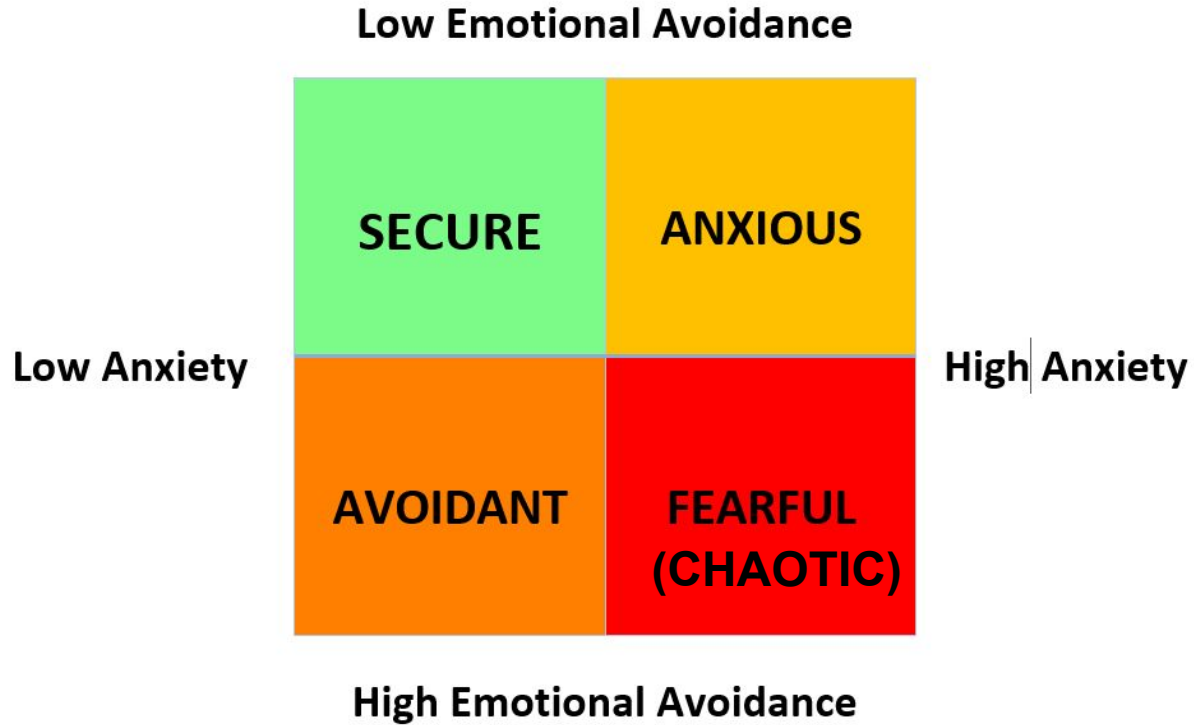
- “Difficulties in early attachments can lead to an inability to trust, to unmet and therefore excessive needs for attachment, to internal representations that distort perceptions of the partner, and to unconscious defenses that preclude vulnerability and intimacy.”

(Gurman, 2002, p. 183)

Attachment Styles

- Development of “stranger anxiety” (onset of attachment)
- Attachment styles:
 - Secure (God’s ideal)
 - Insecure anxious/fearful/dependent (not enough)
 - Insecure avoidant (too much)
 - Insecure chaotic

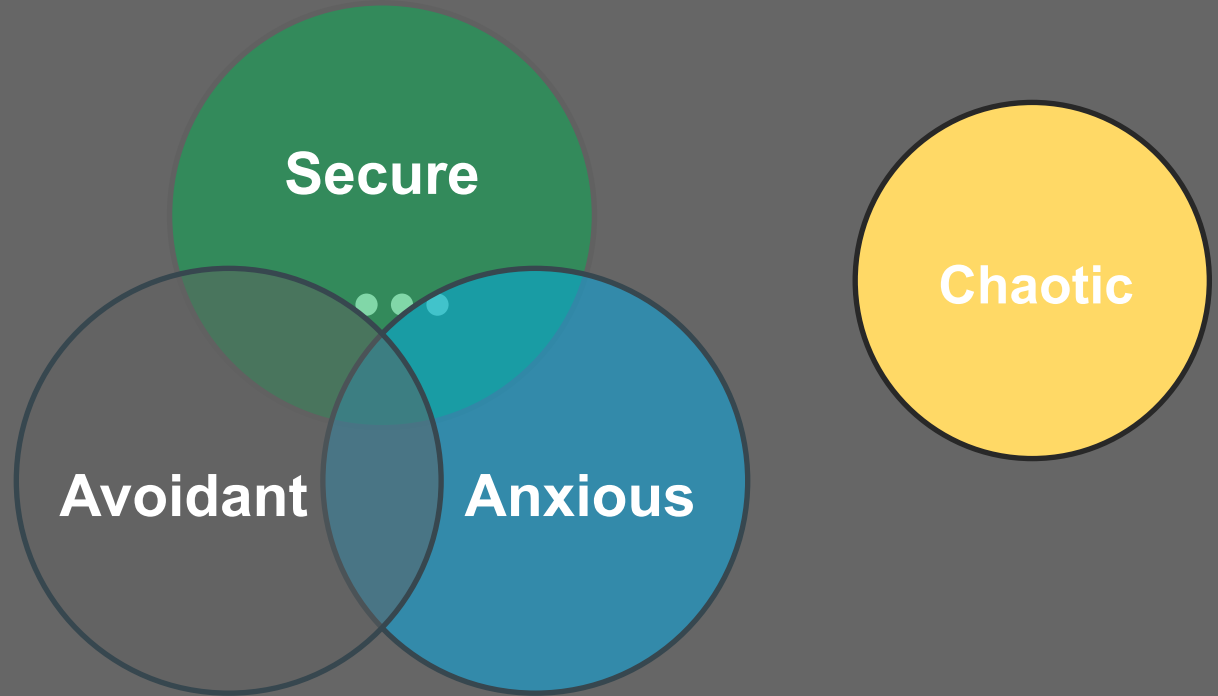
ATTACHMENT TYPES



Assessing Attachment Styles

- Strange Situation (Mary Ainsworth)
 - Parent (primary care giver) enters with the child and the child becomes comfortable with the environment.
 - Parent leaves and child experiences distress, seeks proximity with the parent.
 - Parent returns and the child is comforted.
 - The child returns to exploring.

Attachment Styles



Attachment Styles

- Secure base: someone for whom proximity provides comfort and safety; facilitating exploration, growth, and identity.
 - Parent as secure base (Mt. 7:9).
 - God as secure base (Ps. 62:8; 139:1-16; Jer. 31:3).
 - Spouse as secure base (Ep. 5:25-28).
 - Counselor as secure base (Ec. 4:9-12).

Secure Attachments

1. Working model of self as worthy of love and care, confident and competent.
 2. Belief that others as dependable and trustworthy.
 3. As couples they tend to have long, stable, and satisfying relationships characterized by high investment.
 4. Relationships have less game playing and
 5. Their style of love is relatively selfless.
 6. Able to self-sooth and able to be soothed by others.
- (Johnson & Whiffen, 2003)

Attachment Styles



Anxious/Dependent Attachments

1. Difficulty self-soothing, preoccupied by being soothed by another. They are most likely to experience passionate love but an obsessive, dependent style of love.
2. Vigilant toward and preoccupied with their romantic partner.
3. As couples they report lower relationship satisfaction and a high break up rate.
4. Greater preference for affectionate and intimate aspects of sexuality than sex per se.

(Johnson & Whiffen, 2003)

Anxious/Dependent Attachments

- They have their attachment systems activated frequently and for extended periods, feeling threatened by events that would not normally threaten others, while being highly vigilant about their partner's availability and responsiveness.
- One partner becomes dissatisfied and angry about insufficient support while the other becomes irritated or discouraged by constant calls for support.

Attachment Styles



Avoidant Attachments

1. They are the least interested in romantic relationships, especially long-term commitments, and less likely to “fall in love.”
2. As couples they have low relationship satisfaction and a high break up rate.
3. They report the least intimacy and the highest proclivity for game-playing.
4. They express dislike for sex but are the most accepting of casual sex and “one-night stands.”

Avoidant Attachments

- They downplay threats and ignore or avoid indications of problems.
- They rely on self-soothing, attempt to cope on their own without relying on their partner for support or soothing.
- They disapprove of requests for support by their spouse and view this a “weakness” in their partner.

(Johnson & Whiffen, 2003)

Attachment Styles



Chaotic Attachments

- Alternate between approaching and avoiding others.
- May engage in odd behavior or communicate confusing messages expressing connection and rejection.
- Relationships may be volatile, chaotic, and highly conflicted.
- May be experienced as “unlovable” or unable to reciprocate in a meaningful relationship.
- Often seen in high-risk adoptions and foster placements.

Attachment Styles & Beliefs

- Creating beliefs about ourselves, others, and God
 - Attachments form the basis for the individual's expectations of/from the world,
 - beliefs about their lovability and worth as an individual;
 - beliefs about what causes or justifies good and bad things/behavior
 - beliefs about the importance and contributions of others (what can others offers and should I expect it)

Attachment Styles

Love & Attachment

Secure Attachment

Positive View of Self
Positive View of Others
Interdependent
Comfortable with Emotional Intimacy
Comfortable with Closeness
Healthy Relationship Bonds
Secure & Trusting
"He is there for me when I need him"
"She always calms me"

Anxious Attachment

Negative View of Self
Positive View of Others
Dependent
Fear of Losing Relationship
Emotional Highs & Lows
Can be aggressive
Clingy on Separation
"She'll let me down"
"He'll leave me"

Avoidant Attachment

Positive View of Self
Negative View of Others
Independent/Self-Reliant
Difficult to Get Close with Others
Puts up Walls
Leaves or Avoids During Conflict
"I don't need her"
"I can't take care of myself"

Fearful Attachment

Negative View of Self
Negative View of Others
Seeks Closeness & Avoids Closeness
Disorganized
Fearful of Making Connections
Could be Self-Harming or Abusive
"There's something wrong with me"
"No one can love"

Attachment Difficulties & Object Relations

- “Difficulties in early attachments can lead to an inability to trust, to unmet and therefore excessive needs for attachment, to internal representations that distort perceptions of the partner, and to unconscious defenses that preclude vulnerability and intimacy.” (Gurman, 2002, p. 183)
- Failure to see self or others as “whole” (parent as a person with needs or just someone who meets my needs)
- Split off or rejected parts (all good/bad), transition objects

Attachment and Object-Relations

Transitional Objects



Attachment Relations

Transitional Objects



Attachment and Object-Relations

Transitional Objects



Attachment Styles & God

- Is God a part object, meeting our needs but not having his own desires and agency?
 - Mt. 11:17 “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’
- Is God a means to another, bigger end or is he, our desire?
 - Gen. 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”

Attachment & Transitionary Objects



Attachment Styles & God

- Beliefs and behavior grounded in our attachments - God
 - Attachments form the basis for the individual's expectations of/from the world,
 - Do we believe we are loveable, and that God can love us?
 - Do we seek or even allow God to comfort us?
 - *Is 51:12 "I, even I, am he who comforts you."*
 - Do we seek or allow comfort from the people of God?
 - *Is 40:1 "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God."*

Attachment Styles & God

- 2 Cor 1:3-5 *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.”*

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Trinity - Andrei Rublev

*Moving from
Insecure to Secure
Attachment*

Dr. Ted Wueste



**Movement
from
Insecure to
Secure
Attachment**

**... in the
Song of Songs**

Meister Eckhart, 1260-1328

“God is not found in the soul by adding anything, but by a process of subtraction.”

Song of Songs

In the Song, we are invited to notice how God has already attached to us and to participate in this love as it is unfolding in our lives.

Moving from Insecure to Secure Attachment ...

1:6 ... “do not gaze at me because I am dark ... my mother’s sons were angry with me ... my own vineyard, I have not kept ...”

8:10 ... “... then I was in his eyes as one who finds peace.”

How does this happen?

Moving from Insecure to Secure Attachment ...

1:6 ... “do not gaze at me because I am dark ... my mother’s sons were angry with me ... my own vineyard, I have not kept ...”

8:10 ... “... then I was in his eyes as one who finds peace.”

How does this happen?

Through intimate encounter with God

Encounter with God in the Song

2:6 ... “His left hand is under my head, & his right hand embraces me!”

3:4 ... “I held him and would not let him go ...”

4:16b-5:1a ... “Let my beloved come to his garden, and eat its choicest fruits. I came to my garden, my sister, my bride ...”

Encounter with God in the Song

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Will you let God love you?

“Do not stir up or awaken love until it pleases ...” (2:7; 3:5; 8:4)

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A better translation ...

“Do not disturb this love as it does what love/attachment does”

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A better translation ...

“Do not disturb this love as it does what love/attachment does”

How do we let God love us?

How do we let God love us?

Discernment: asking, how is God loving me?

Detachment: letting go of old attachment styles

Discernment: asking, how is God loving me?

From the Song of Songs ...

Delight

Desire

Detachment: letting go of old attachment styles

Detachment: letting go of old attachment styles

Releasing control as we trust that everything belongs

Releasing shame as we delight in His delight

Releasing anxiety as we rest in His provision

Reflection

Sit quietly for the next few moments and simply ask: God, how are you loving me? Then, notice what comes to your awareness. How is God meeting you?

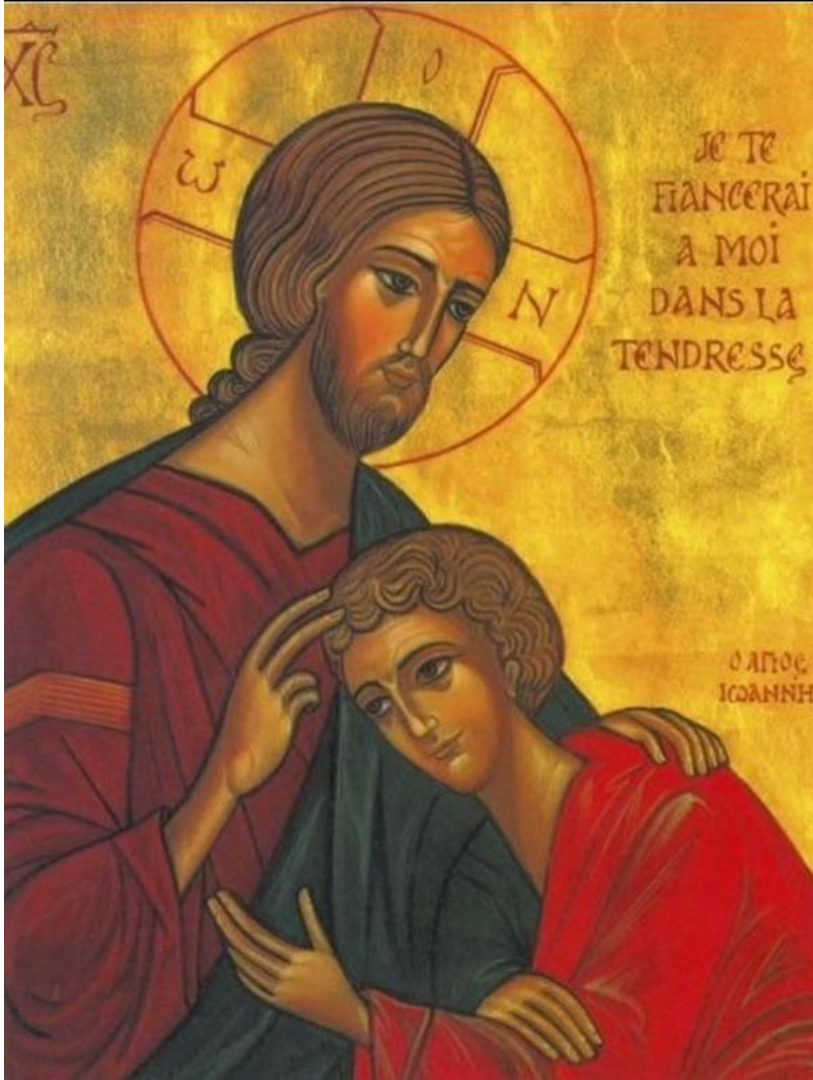
Personal Reflection until lunch at 11:45

Notice what old ways of attachment (insecure attachment) flow into your life with God. What are you being invited to release?
What are you being invited to encounter?

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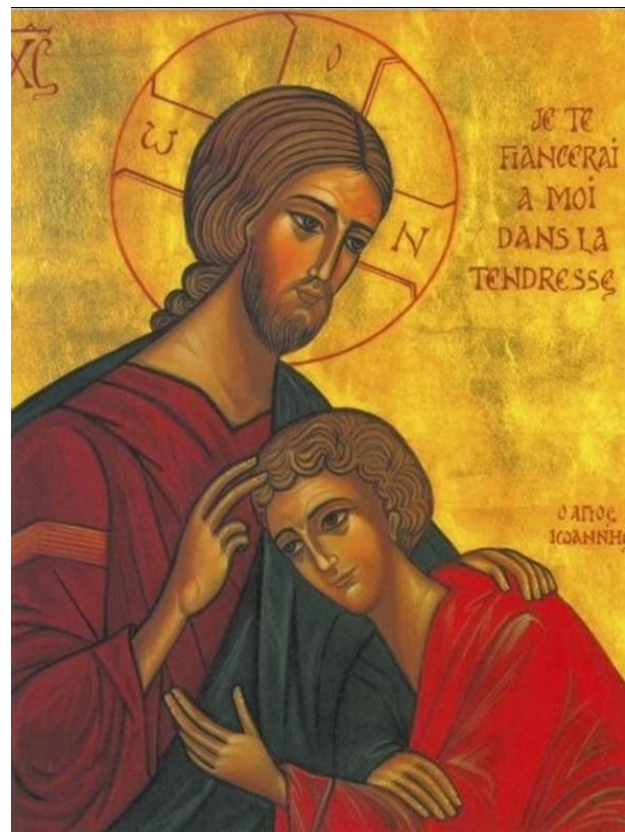


*Christ and St. John -
Benedictines of Monti
Olivet*

*Practices for
Nurturing Secure
Attachment*

Dr. Ted Wueste





**Practices for
Nurturing
Secure
Attachment**

**... from the
Song of Songs**

Thomas Merton

“In prayer we discover what we already have. You start from where you are and you deepen what you already have, and you realize you are already there. We already have everything but we don't know it and don't experience it. Everything has been given to us in Christ. All we need is to experience what we already possess.”

How do we nurture and experience what is already there?

Listen

Look

Linger

Listen to the voice that says ...

You are beautiful

You are perfect and there is no flaw in you

You take My breath away

Listen to the voice that says ...

You are beautiful

You are perfect and there is no flaw in you

You take My breath away

Contemplative Prayer (quiet prayer)

Look at the face of delight and joy which ...

Invites you to "come away" with Him

Desires to see your face

Values intimacy with you ... "your love is better than wine"

Look at the face of delight and joy which ...

Invites you to "come away" with Him

Desires to see your face

Values intimacy with you ... "your love is better than wine"

Lectio Divina (reflecting on Scripture)

Linger (or, wait) as love unfolds ...

“My beloved is mine, and I am his” ... 2:16

“I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine” ... 6:3

“I am my beloved’s, and his desire is for me” ... 7:10

Linger (or, wait) as love unfolds ...

“My beloved is mine, and I am his” ... 2:16

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Prayer of Examen



Trinity - Andrei Rublev

The image features two dark grey silhouettes of hands. One hand is positioned at the top left, with fingers slightly spread and palm facing downwards. The other hand is positioned at the bottom left, with fingers slightly spread and palm facing upwards. The two hands are oriented towards each other, creating a sense of reaching or offering. The background is white, and the silhouettes are set against a dark grey border on the left and bottom.

Confession

Most merciful God, we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves.

We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have been afraid to attach to You with our whole heart in love; we have been cautious about letting your love attach us to our brothers and sisters in Christ;



we've often failed to offer your love to our neighbors who don't yet know you. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us and renew us in your loving embrace, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.

Amen.



Trinity - Andrei Rublev



Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

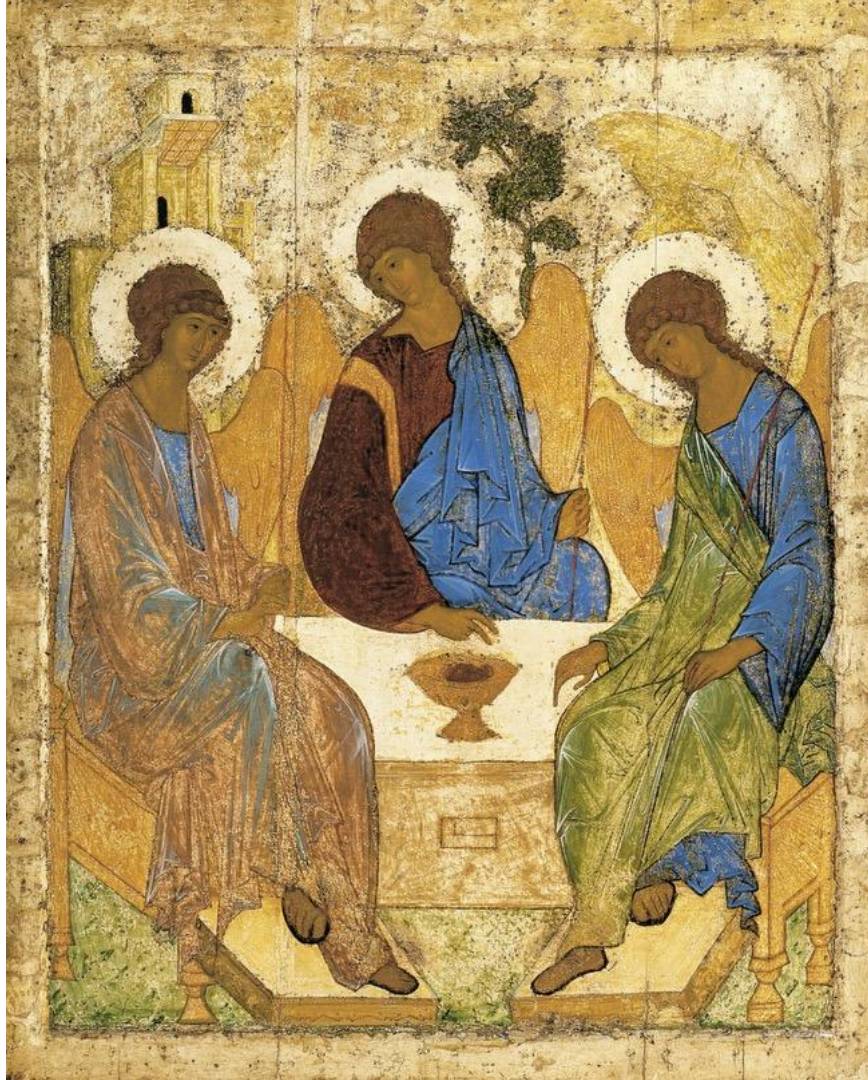
Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory, for ever and ever.

Amen.



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