

**Going on with God in Dark Nights:
Maturing the Saints by Spiritual Hunger and Love**

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1. Read thoughtfully and prayerfully Eph. 3:16-19. Take counsel with the Lord and your soul regarding the degree to which the text reflects or does not reflect your present experience of the love of God and being filled with all the fullness of God. Do not try to muster up any experience; be open to the truth with God.

10 minutes

2. Talk with the Lord regarding the degree to which some of your good traits or virtues (kindness, friendliness, patience etc.) were generated more in the power of the self than the Spirit? Explore with the Lord the degree to which they tempt you to depend upon your own strength and hinder deeper dependence upon God. Open to your need for the Lord that lies even behind your strengths.

10 minutes

3. Discuss with the Lord the degree to which you have experienced the love of God in the context of your badness and sin. Ask the Lord whether you find within yourself a temptation to hide your badness from yourself and God in prayer? Briefly open to your sin and neediness with Him.

10 minutes

4. Talk with the Lord regarding the degree to which you have experienced "darkness in the intellect." In this case, the Spirit is less giving consolation to your intellectual knowledge of the faith but more is leading your heart to want the God who is "behind the written page." Open deeply to this desire and open to the indwelling presence of the Spirit.

10 minutes

5. Read prayerfully John 15:1-5. Discuss with the Lord the degree to which you are no longer impressed with or even experience a deep distrust with your character being sufficient to fuel your Christian life. Ask the Lord to show you the degree to which you really believe that apart from Him you can do nothing. Is this evident in your behavior? Come to him in the truth of this and your need of Him.

10 minutes

6. Take counsel with your soul and the Lord on the following: if you have a ministry of some sort, to what degree are you tempted to have what Coe calls a "ministry of consolation" in which you are tempted to minister out of *your* strength. Ask the Lord what it would look like to minister out of weakness so that His strength could be perfected in you.

10 minutes