

A stone staircase with metal railings leading up through a dense forest. The path is flanked by lush green trees and foliage, creating a sense of a journey through nature. The lighting is soft and dappled, suggesting a shaded forest environment.

The Way of Life

Vital Practices for Your Spiritual Journey

Psalm 86

¹ Hear me, Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.

² Guard my life, for I am faithful to you;
save your servant who trusts in you.

You are my God; ³ have mercy on me, Lord,
for I call to you all day long.

⁴ Bring joy to your servant, Lord,
for I put my trust in you.

Psalm 86

**⁵ You, Lord, are forgiving and good,
abounding in love to all who call to you.**

**⁶ Hear my prayer, Lord;
listen to my cry for mercy.**

**⁷ When I am in distress, I call to you,
because you answer me.**

Psalm 86

**⁸ Among the gods there is none like you, Lord;
no deeds can compare with yours.**

**⁹ All the nations you have made
will come and worship before you, Lord;
they will bring glory to your name.**

**¹⁰ For you are great and do marvelous deeds;
you alone are God.**

Psalm 86

**¹¹ Teach me your way, Lord,
that I may rely on your faithfulness;
give me an undivided heart,
that I may fear your name.**

**¹² I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart;
I will glorify your name forever.**

**¹³ For great is your love toward me;
you have delivered me from the depths,
from the realm of the dead.**

Psalm 86

**¹⁴ Arrogant foes are attacking me, O God;
ruthless people are trying to kill me—
they have no regard for you.**

**¹⁵ But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God,
slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.**

Psalm 86

**¹⁶ Turn to me and have mercy on me;
show your strength in behalf of your servant;
save me, because I serve you
just as my mother did.**

**¹⁷ Give me a sign of your goodness,
that my enemies may see it and be put to shame,
for you, Lord, have helped me and comforted me.**

Outline

- 1. The need: to know God and the self**
- 2. The problem: the obstacles to knowing**
- 3. The solution: the practice of recollection**



1. The need: to know God and the self

Psalm 86



**Nearly all the wisdom we possess,
that is to say, true and sound wisdom,
consists of two parts: the knowledge
of God and of ourselves.**

—John Calvin, Institutes 1.1.1



God, who is always the same, may I
know myself, may I know you. That is
my prayer.

—Augustine, *Soliloquies*

A stone staircase with metal railings leading up through a dense forest. The path is flanked by lush green trees and foliage, creating a sense of a journey or ascent. The lighting is soft and natural, highlighting the texture of the stone steps and the vibrant green of the leaves.

1. The need: to know God and the self

Psalm 86

A photograph of a stone staircase with metal railings, leading up through a dense forest. The stairs are made of large, rectangular stones and are flanked by dark metal railings. The forest is lush with green foliage, and the path leads towards a bright opening in the trees at the top. The overall scene is serene and suggests a journey or a path of discovery.

2. The problem: the obstacles to knowing

Psalm 86

2. The problem: obstacles to this knowing

Four obstacles

- **Disorientation**

2. The problem: obstacles to this knowing

- Disorientation in Psalm 86
 - His life situation: “poor and needy” (v. 1)
 - Need for mercy (vv. 3, 6, 16)
 - In distress (v. 7)
 - Divided, fragmented heart (v. 11)
 - Attacked by enemies (vv. 14, 17)

2. The problem: obstacles to this knowing

Four obstacles

- **Disorientation**
- **Distraction**

UPDATED WITH A NEW AFTERWORD

WHAT THE
INTERNET
IS DOING TO
OUR BRAINS



THE
SHALLOWS

"This is a book to
shake up the world."
—ANN PATCHETT

THE *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER

NICHOLAS CARR

What the [internet] seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. Whether I'm online or not, my mind now expects to take in information the way the [internet] distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles. Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.

—Nicholas Carr



Hurry is the great enemy of the spiritual life in our day. You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.

—Dallas Willard

2. The problem: obstacles to this knowing

Four obstacles

- **Distraction**
- **Disorientation**
- **Dissipation**



WADE
ANNOTATED
EDITION

*Edited and
Introduced
by David C.
Downing*

C S
*The
Pilgrim's
Regress*
LEWIS

**C. S. Lewis's vivid depiction of
Luxuria (lust) in *The Pilgrim's Regress***



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LEWIS

**C. S. Lewis's vivid depiction of
Luxuria (lust) in *The Pilgrim's Regress***

Lewis's explanatory comment:

***"Lechery means not simply forbidden
pleasure, but loss of the man's unity."***



WADE
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EDITION

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Downing*

*The
Pilgrim's
Regress*

CS

LEWIS

*The witch's wine,
Though promising nothing, seems
In that land of no streams,
To promise best
—the unrelished anodyne.*

2. The problem: obstacles to this knowing

Four obstacles

- **Disorientation**
- **Distraction**
- **Dissipation**
- **Defensiveness**

A photograph of a stone staircase with metal railings, leading up through a dense forest. The stairs are made of large, rectangular stone blocks and are flanked by dark metal railings. The forest is lush with green foliage, and the path leads towards a bright opening in the trees at the top of the stairs. The overall scene is serene and suggests a journey or a path of reflection.

3. The solution: the practice of recollection

Psalm 86:11

3. The solution: the practice of recollection

What is recollection?

1. **Stage in the interior life when the soul collects itself in prayer by not allowing worldly concerns to distract it.**
2. **In the life of Christian mystics, a spiritual exercise by which the soul regains its focus by turning its attention to God.**

—Nelson's New Christian Dictionary

3. The solution: the practice of recollection

What is recollection?

“Recollection...involves pulling away from the secondary ‘distractions’ of life and ‘gathering together the fragments of one’s soul’ in order to direct one’s attention exclusively on God.”

**—Eric L. Johnson, *God and Soul Care*,
(quoting Dietrich von Hildebrand)**

3. The solution: the practice of recollection

What is recollection?

“The prayer of recollection represents a specifically “restful attitude” of connecting with the reality that God is in me. As we let go of distractions, this prayer recalls the soul to its true center and identity in Christ.”

—Adele Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*

3. The solution: the practice of recollection

Where is this taught in Scripture?

**Teach me your way, O Lord,
that I may walk in your truth;
unite my heart to fear your name.**

—Psalm 86:11 (ESV)

3. The solution: the practice of recollection

Where is this taught in Scripture?

**Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.**

—Psalm 139:23-24

3. The solution: the practice of recollection

Where is this taught in Scripture?

**Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.**

—Proverbs 4:23

3. The solution: the practice of recollection

Where is this taught in Scripture?

“You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”

—Revelation 3:17

3. The solution: the practice of recollection

Where is this taught in Scripture?

But when he came to himself, he said, “How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger!”

—Luke 15:17

3. The solution: the practice of recollection

How do you practice it?

a) Pay attention to the symptoms of unease in your life.



HEALING

Coming Home to Yourself—and to God—

WHAT'S

When You're Wounded, Weary & Wandering

WITHIN

Foreword by Dr. Alison Cook

CHUCK DEGROAT

Sometimes we drive inattentive to the dashboard warning lights flashing before our eyes. Our lives are busy... We ignore what's happening within. The kinds of symptoms that emerge when we ignore our warning lights may seem subtle at first... Most of us can manage a few yellow warning lights, or so we think... But sprinkle in a few red warning lights and things get messier...

—Chuck DeGroat, *Healing What's Within*, pp. 54-55



Symptoms

Thoughts: all-or-nothing thinking, confusion, delusions, inattentiveness, indecision, judgment of self or others, memory problems, obsessiveness, self-contempt, self-doubt, suicidal ideation, trouble concentrating or orienting in time

Emotions: anger, desperation, distrust, emptiness, fear, guilt, hopelessness, irritation, listlessness, loneliness, numbness, overwhelm, panic, rage, resentment, shame, sadness

Relational energy: angry outbursts, avoiding particular places, avoiding people to preserve energy, constant checking up on others, constant scanning, relying on others to meet your needs

Body: aches, blurred vision, chronic pain, disconnection, exhaustion, headaches, heartburn, hypervigilance, irritable bowel syndrome, nausea, out-of-body feelings, racing heart, sleeplessness

Behavior: addictive behaviors, busyness without boundaries, job losses, lack of self-care, not getting out of bed, overeating or overdrinking, self-harm

Adapted from Chuck DeGroat,
Healing What's Within, p. 57

3. The solution: the practice of recollection

How do you practice it?

- b) Pause long enough to “be with” whatever you find inside.
Don’t deny or dissociate. Engage with honesty and curiosity.**



HEALING

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An exercise for paying attention:

”Right now I am choosing not to numb or distract, but simply to be with _____ [my sadness, my headache, my anger, etc.]. In the past, I would _____ [describe how you’d disconnect], but now with God’s Spirit in me, I will stay connected and present to whatever comes. I’ll receive God’s compassion and offer myself compassion.”

—Chuck DeGroat, *Healing What’s Within*, p. 76

3. The solution: the practice of recollection

How do you practice it?

- c) Bring all the fragmented parts of your self before God.
Remember that he is a “compassionate and gracious God,
slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness” (Ps. 86:15).**



What, then, is recollection? It is primarily an antithesis to distraction...It also embodies an antithesis to all superficial diversion as such...it means an integration of the entire person; a realization of its true self out of the depths of its being...In recollection, we recover our deepest orientation toward God...Through finding our way to God, we find our way home to ourselves.

—Dietrich von Hildebrand,

***Transformation in Christ*, chapter 6**

Summary

- 1. The need: to know God and the self**
- 2. The problem: the obstacles to knowing**
- 3. The solution: the practice of recollection**



Give me the grace to recollect myself in the little heaven of my soul where You have established Your dwelling. There You let me find You, there I feel that You are closer to me than anywhere else, and there You prepare my soul quickly to enter into intimacy with You.

—Teresa of Avila