

Text (adapted) and pictures from *The Cloud of Unknowing for Everyone* (2007)
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Contemplative Prayer The Cloud of Unknowing

This a way not through knowledge and intelligence , but by love and stripped of all thought.

This form of contemplation is not directed by the intellect, but involves resting in God through the heart.



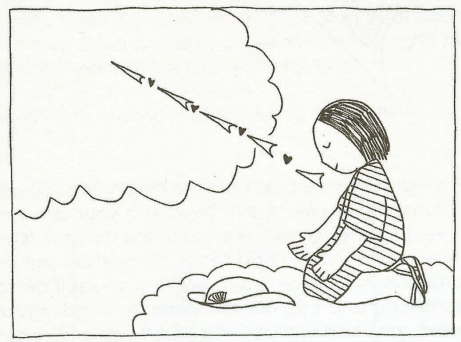
This is brought about by putting all thoughts and desires under a "Cloud of Forgetting", and thereby piercing God's Cloud of Unknowing with a "dart of longing love" from the heart.

Practical advice

If You want to ask “How shall I think about God?” The answer would be “I don’t know”. This is because no one can actually understand God as we understand created things. You have to leave these thoughts aside as God is beyond thought.

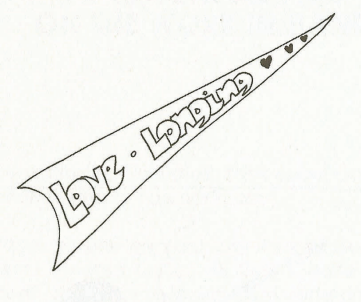
Why is this?

God can only be held close by means of love, not thought.



So do not keep trying to think about God, instead go straight towards the eternal by placing yourself on a Cloud of Forgetting and turn yourself towards that other cloud, a Cloud of Unknowing.

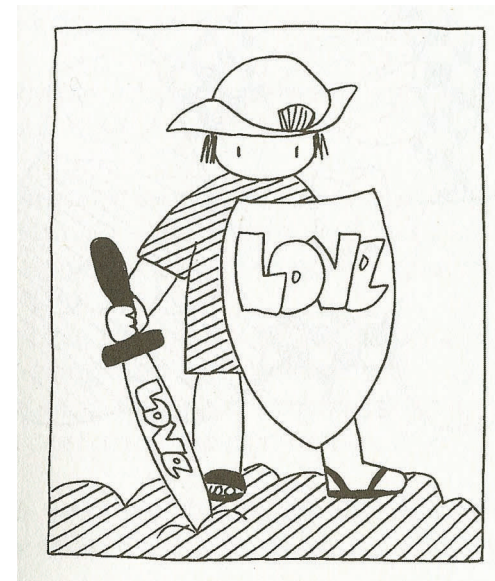
Keep your focus by staring at this cloud with a sharp arrow of love and longing.



If some thought should come to your mind, while you are attempting to pierce the cloud with your arrow of love and longing, you must say to the thought “ get down again”. Even holy thoughts must be put on one side in this way or you will find yourself being scattered and fragmented interiorly.

Simplify your mind , your heart and everything about you as you direct your arrow of love from your heart Godwards.

So if you feel called to the work of contemplation by God’s grace, let that Cloud of Forgetting cover all extraneous thoughts, even good thoughts, in order that you may pierce the Cloud of Unknowing with the sharp arrow of love and longing.



One practical tip is to choose a word, such as “love”. Clasp the word to your heart with a tight band. Make it your shield and spear to strike down all other words and thoughts driving them into the Cloud of Forgetting.

Hang onto your sacred word and don’t let it go!