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PSALM 46:10 DOES NOT TEACH CONTEMPLATIVE/CENTERING PRAYER

By [Ken Silva pastor-teacher](#) on Jan 16, 2012 in [AM Missives](#), [Contemplative Spirituality/Mysticism](#), [Current Issues](#), [Features](#), [Spiritual Formation](#)



God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah ([Psalm 46:1-11](#))

Be Still, Use Your Mind, And You'll Know You're Being Mislead By Contemplative Gurus

The heart of this article here at [Apprising Ministries](#) is to bring to your attention that it's quite common for those [Protholics](#) and [Narcigetes](#) who are teachers of the corrupt [Contemplative/Spirituality/Mysticism](#) (CSM) of so-called [Spiritual Formation](#) (SF) to appeal to verse 10 of the above Psalm 46 in an attempt to justify their unbiblical practice of [Contemplative/Centering Prayer](#) (CCP), which is a type of meditation in an altered state of consciousness—i.e. transcendental meditation for the "Christian."

For example you'll definitely see this in this teaching of [Living Spiritual Teacher](#) and [Quaker](#) mystic "Roshi" [Richard Foster](#) as well as that of his spiritual twin ordained Southern Baptist minister [Dallas Willard](#). Perhaps the best recent example would be the DVD *Be Still And Know*, an actual ode to CCP in which that dubious duo also appear. The "Bible Study Guide" that comes with it informs us:

Be Still is an interactive film that provides a contemplative look at the history, importance and power of prayer from a cross-denominational point of view... demonstrat[ing] contemplative reflection as a vital part of our everyday lives... featur[ing] some of today's most highly respected Christian authors, educators, speakers and ministers including Dr. Henry Cloud, Richard Foster, Max Lucado, Beth Moore, Priscilla Shriver and Dallas Willard.[1]

Sure enough on page 9 under the subheading "Contemplative Prayer" we're told that, "The Bible speaks specifically about being quiet and still before the Lord." And the first verse used to support their contention that Scripture is speaking about being "quiet and still" in preparation for CCP meditation is [Psalm 46:10](#). In [Prayer: Finding The Heart's True Home](#) the aforementioned Richard Foster writes:

So many passages of Scripture provide a touchstone for Meditative Prayer: "Be still and know that I am God"; "Abid in my love"; "I am the Good Shepherd"; "Rejoice in the Lord always." [2]

Then we have [Ruth Haley Barton](#), a spiritual director, teacher, and retreat leader trained through [The Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation](#). Co-Founder & President of [The Transforming Center](#) Barton has also been a featured speaker and teacher at *Zondervan's National Pastors Conference* for the past couple of years heading up their Pastor's Retreats. Her book [Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence](#), and by the way you can purchase her books right from *Lifeway Christian Stores* of the "Protestant" [Southern Baptist Convention](#), [3] has a foreword from [Dallas Willard](#) and an endorsement from [Tilden Edwards](#) who heads the interspiritual *Shalem Institute*.

In her chapter "Beyond Words" where she describes her "journey" (I'm coming to hate that word) into the "silence and solitude" of CCP Barton opens with a quote from apostate Roman Catholic monk and mystic [Richard Rohr](#) and explains that "help came from a spiritual director" whom Barton met when she "sought her out for therapy." Barton then tells us that:

this wise woman said to me, "Ruth, you are like a jar of river water all shaken up. What you need is to sit still long enough that the sentiment can settle and the water can become clear"... well, that image called to me with the hope of peace, clarity and a deeper level of certainty in God than I had ever known. In the desire [which] this image stirred up, I recognized an invitation to *be still and know* beyond my addiction to noise, words, people and performance-oriented activity.[4]

What Is The Lord Telling Us When He Tells Us To Be Still And Know He's God?

All of this sure sounds pleasing and it most certainly is the prevailing postevangelical view of [Psalm 46:10](#)—"*Be still, and know that I am God.*" The huge problem for the growing band of evangelical CSM supporters in the Emerging rebellion against sola Scriptura is that this verse has nothing at all to do with the subject of prayer as the context should make clear. Taken in the context of this Psalm, an exclamation of praise for the glorious absolute sovereignty of the LORD God Almighty, we have a reminder that those who belong to Him should "cease striving"; stop worrying, "be still," rest quietly, in any kind of situation because the LORD is your God.

Yet how odd that evangelical and [Emergent Church](#) contemplatives content to embrace mystery ala [Rob Bell](#) will tell me that I can't know for sure verse 10 really means what I just told you it does. However, in a perfect demonstration of double-mindedness these same wannabe Christian mystics are then certain that they know this verse is, in fact, teaching their spurious spirituality. Even so, the fact remains it's these neo-Gnostics—with their supposedly superior understanding of the "real" meaning of Scripture—who've wrested this verse out of its context. Um, the Scriptures where out of the other side of their mouths they still tell us can't be clearly understood.

As to a proper view of [Psalm 46:10](#) in [The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#) series Dr. Willem A. VanGemeren is right when he points out that:

the psalmist encourages the godly to “know” that the Lord is God. Though it was tempting to ally themselves with foreign powers, to rely on military strength, or to give themselves over to idolatry and pagan ways, the godly must learn to persevere to the end. The exhortation “be still” calls on them to stop doing one thing in favor of something else. What their temptation was may be implied from v.2: “Therefore we will not fear.”

Throughout the history of Israel and Judah, severe national distress brought the temptation to abandon true religion for the ephemeral security of political alliances, military strength, and worldly paganism (*Realpolitik*). Instead of choosing a negative option, the people of God distinguish themselves by the pursuit of godliness: “Know that I am God.” The “knowledge” of God includes a factual knowledge about him, his past acts, and his promises. But in this context the psalmist calls on them to commit themselves to the Lord and to seek his “refuge,” “strength,” and “fortress” (vv.1, 7, 11).[5]

Then in his own classic [The Treasury of David](#) Charles Spurgeon quotes Jonathan Edwards as teaching the following concerning [Psalm 46:10](#):

Verse 10. *Be still*, and know that I am God. The great works of God, wherein his sovereignty appeared, had been described in the foregoing verses. In the awful desolations that he made, and by delivering his people by terrible things, he showed his greatness and dominion. Herein he manifested his power and sovereignty, and so commands all to be still, and know that he is God. For says he, I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. In the words may be observed,

A duty described, to be still before God, and under the dispensations of his providence; which implies that we must be still as to words; not speaking against the sovereign dispensations of Providence, or complaining of them; not darkening counsel by words without knowledge, or justifying ourselves and speaking great swelling words of vanity. We must be still as to actions and outward behaviour, so as not to oppose God in his dispensations; and as to the inward frame of our hearts, cultivating a calm and quiet submission of soul to the sovereign pleasure of God, whatever it may be. ([Online source](#))

Next pastor [Larry DeBruyn](#) will now give us a good working knowledge of the Hebrew which underlies the English “Cease striving”, “Be still”:

the verb “Be still” (Hebrew, *raphah*) is used 46 times in the Old Testament with meanings everywhere from describing laziness to ordering relaxation. Though the majority of versions translate the injunction “Be still”, other meanings are “Cease striving” (NASB), “Be quiet” (NCV), “Desist” (Young’s), or “Calm down” (CEV). In no biblical usage or context does the Hebrew verb enjoin God’s people to meditate or contemplate. Rather, *believers are to rest and trust in God*. ([Online source](#), emphasis his)

And in closing, if you are someone who has found themselves attracted to these *seducing spirits* and their *doctrines of demons* in CSM and CCP I will now leave you to contemplate the following sound advice and stern warning from Christian apologist Bob DeWaay in his article [Contemporary Christian Divination: The False Claims and Practices of Christian Mystics](#):

I have debated people about these techniques many times. They often say, “God can do anything and use anything, you are trying to put God in a box.” You probably have heard that argument. When I was doing my research on divination for the [previous issue](#) of CIC, I thought about the “putting God in a box” accusation. The Biblical record shows that it is God who purposely limits the ways

we can come to Him. If there is a “box” God made it. I think a better analogy than a box, is a sheepfold. It is a Biblical analogy.

Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber” ([John 10:1](#)). The true sheep enter the sheepfold through the door, Jesus Christ ([John 10:7](#)). He as the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep ([John 10:11](#)). He protects His sheep from the wolves, gives them pasture, and abundant life ([John 10:10-15](#)). Being in the sheepfold may seem restrictive compared to the adventures of exploring the bigger world out there unencumbered by the guidance of the Shepherd. However the restrictions are there to save our spiritual lives.

The restrictions God places on how and by what means we may legitimately come to Him and receive spiritual truth are for our own good. The spirit world that Christian mystics like Morton Kelsey want to explore is far more complex than even Jung and Kelsey give it credit for being. The dangers of deception are far more real. In fact, if we journey into the world of the spirits by means other than what God has ordained, we **will** be deceived, not **may be** deceived. The spirits who inhabit that world have been there for many thousands of years practicing the art of deception. They willingly give people whatever experience they would tend to think is from God. Jose Silva, who is Catholic, when he went into his alpha level to gain guides received Jesus and Mary. The spirits will give you what you would expect is from God in your own context. They will provide any experience that serves their deceptive purposes, including sending a spiritual “Jesus” (see [2Corinthians 11:4](#)). The prohibitions on divination are there to protect us from these malicious entities.

So we are not putting God in a box, God is putting us in a sheepfold if we are willing to be there. The practices of “thinking outside the box” that are so popular today are fatal when it comes to spirituality. God has not left access to spiritual truth in the hands of innovative thinkers who like pioneers blaze new trails. God has given access to Himself, once for all, through Jesus Christ who is our heavenly High Priest. The truth is revealed once for all in the Scriptures. ([Online source](#), emphasis his)

End notes:

[1] *Be Still* (DVD © 2006 Twentieth Fox Home Entertainment LLC).

[2] Richard Foster, *Prayer: Finding The Heart's True Home* [New York: Harper Collins, 1997], 149.

[3] <http://www.lifeway.com/Keyword/barton+ruth+haley?Ntk=Author>, accessed 1/16/12.

[4] Ruth Haley Barton, *Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence* [Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2005], 29, 30.

[5] Frank E. Gaebelin, ed., *Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version of the Bible* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976-92], in Zondervan NIV Study Bible Library, limited ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), CD-ROM, *Psalms 46*.

See also:

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