



AWAKE MY SOUL

PS. 57:7-11

SUNDAY NIGHT

Introduction & Orientation

8 P.M. Dimnent Chapel



Welcome to the Awakening 2025!

This is your prayer and meditation guide for your spiritual formation this week. Please be sure to keep a journal, a Bible, and this prayer guide available throughout the week, especially for our time together in the morning. Our theme for the Awakening 2025 is “Awake My Soul!”

Psalm 57: 7-11

*My heart, O God, is steadfast,
my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and make music.
Awake, my soul!
Awake, harp and lyre!
I will awaken the dawn.
I will praise you, Lord, among the nations;
I will sing of you among the peoples.
For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
let your glory be over all the earth.*

What is a Psalm?

The Hebrew and Greek words for “psalm” invoke the concept of a sacred poem or song. A psalm is literally something that could be sung to the pluck of a harp. Martin Luther once said that when we sing, we pray twice. To say our prayer with words helps us intend a prayer with our minds. When we join those words with melody, the intention of our prayer can more easily be expressed through our hearts and bodies.

Note that some poets engage the musicality of language without adding instruments, rhythm, or a sung melody. There is a way to write and read that has its own meter and a rise and fall of pitch. Read a line or two of our psalm for this year out loud, and listen for its musicality.

The most important question when engaging psalmistry is how to worship with our whole being—with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. As we consider our whole selves, we begin to glimpse the enormity and depth of our souls. The apostle Paul encourages the church to speak to each other in psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, because this is how we live in the fullness of our being (Eph. 5:19).

Let's Go Deep!

Buckle your seat belt and sink into your seat. Here at the Awakening, we are excited to help you consider your faith more closely—to deepen your ability to give and receive God's love.

We want to be honest with you: there is enormous depth for you to explore throughout this week. This is the depth not only of who God is but of who you are.

There is always more of God to discover.

And there is always more of you to discover.

However, there is no rush or pressure on you during the Awakening. If this is your first year here, you likely haven't had a youth ministry experience quite like this before. We will have fun and get to know each other well. There is much to enjoy this week. But our deepest delight is in finding God. In keeping with our theme, our primary intention is to awaken to God—in ourselves, in each other, and all around us.

In this Sunday night orientation, we want to give you a sense of the depth and breadth of the week ahead. But we also want to give you permission to approach it in the way you are able.

“Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.

The classical Disciplines of the spiritual life call us to move beyond surface living into the depths. They invite us to explore the inner caverns of the spiritual realm. They urge us to be the answer to a hollow world. John Woolman counsels, “It is good for thee to dwell deep, that thou mayest feel and understand the spirits of people.

Richard Foster *Author and Founder of Renovaré*



The Purpose of the Awakening

The Awakening's mission:

Where God's Spirit meets with a group of people in such a profound way that it opens their eyes to God's activity in the world, renews and gives vision to their sense of purpose and calling, and marks their lives forever.

We will be living into and practicing this mission throughout the week. There are two aspects of this mission that come together in one reality:

1. Paying attention to God—through worship and prayer
2. Paying attention to yourself—through your vocation

Here, we fundamentally believe your vocation—your calling in life—is to become the unique worshipper God created you to be. There has never been another like you on this earth, and there never will be. Your vocation, purpose, your calling, is to become you! As you become more truly yourself, you will more freely open to worship and prayer, and become more able to give and receive God's love. Everything else you do in life flows out of this more true, beautiful, and honest version of yourself!

What is vocation?

The word vocation comes from the Latin vocare: “to call, to name, to summon, to invoke.” When we consider vocation, we are asking the big questions: Who am I? What am I made for? What is the meaning of my life? What am I called to do? At the Awakening, we believe this question about our vocation is one we answer with God.

It is helpful to understand the difference between vocation and career. A career is an occupation you hold for seasons of your life. You will likely have several careers, but in Christ, there is one vocation: to stay in relationship with Jesus.

Your fundamental calling—the purpose of your life—is to give and receive love with God. However, the way you give and receive this love is unique to you. We could call this a vocation of worship and prayer, but we must also imagine how to love Jesus in and through everything we do—whether eating, sleeping, working, or playing.

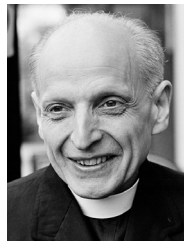
How We Practice the Awakening

This week at the Awakening is a prayer and worship retreat. We are excited to help you retreat from your regular rhythms of busyness and the distractions of life to give God more attention. All people of faith need to change things up and get away in order to more intentionally give and receive love with God.

So, congratulations on making a wise decision to participate in the Awakening this week! You could be anywhere, doing anything else, but somehow, you have made your way here to be among friends who are also considering our theme: how to awaken our souls to God, with ourselves and each other. It's also important to consider how we will be together this week.

“Nothing is more practical than finding God, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in Love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.”

attributed to **Fr. Pedro Arrupe SJ** 1907-1991



How to Use This Prayer Guide

We will meet each morning and most evenings to return to this prayer guide for your personal prayer in solitude. For this week, this guide is intended to be a starting point for your own personal prayer and reflection, and then to share what you are discovering in solitude with your small group. However, if you are hungry for God and pay attention, you will discover our theme of awakening arising throughout the day.

- How can you continue to awaken to God not only in the morning or during a worship service, but as you walk around campus and move between sessions?
- How can you keep God in your heart and mind as you goof around and play?
- As you ride the bus to an event?
- As you practice your instrument?
- As you engage with nature at the beach?
- As you eat meals with others?
- As you fall asleep at night?
- As you wake in the morning?

There is a lot of material in this prayer guide that you may not immediately understand. Much of it you may not even get to during this week. You'll see pull-out quotes on each page that serve as extra material if you are curious. There is also a large appendix at the back of the guide that can expand and deepen your understanding of what we are doing this week together.

The hope is that this prayer guide might be a resource for your continued growth well after this week. Perhaps you will go further into it later this summer—or maybe you'll find your way back to it in a few years?

Reflection

Move into your solitude—your own prayer. Review what has been laid out above.

- What interests you?
 - Does anything excite you?
 - What frustrates or confuses you?
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Permissions

It is very important that you have permission to be yourself this week. There are no parents, teachers, or pastors looking over your shoulder with expectations. There is a level of expectation with your small group—you'll be working together to put a worship service together. You also have some college interns available to guide you, and you will receive some teaching as well. Yet, we hope you find a new sense of freedom in your participation this week, that you will feel free to be your own unique, creative self.

Recall the two aspects of our mission above. The intention here is for you to open to God and to yourself. To better understand what this means, read and pray through the permissions on the next page:

This week you have permission to:

- *ask questions*
- *be confused*
- *be skeptical (but not cynical... there's a difference)*
- *be restless and impatient*
- *be stubborn*
- *say "no"*
- *disagree with each other*
- *make this week your own (we get out of things what we put into them)*
- *risk and fail*
- *be foolish*
- *be weak*
- *be angry*
- *stay the same*
- *be different, to pray, think, feel, love, act in a way that is all your own*
- *speak on behalf of yourself and not your friends, family, church (This is your week. Focus on your story, your journey)*

You *also* have permission to:

- *trust*
- *love*
- *give your leaders honest feedback. Let us know how we can serve and love you better*
- *wait for trust and love, to be patient and not to force or fake love and trust*
- *say "yes"*
- *listen to the Spirit on behalf of yourself, to pray for your own growth.*
- *listen to the Spirit on behalf of others, to pray for other's growth*
- *be gentle with yourself*
- *be gentle with others*
- *be wise*
- *be careful*
- *dream*
- *hope*
- *be transformed, to change, and grow*
- *fall in love*

Reflection

Return to your solitude, your own prayer. Carefully look back over the above permissions, and consider again:

- What excites and enthuses you?
- What seems confusing, strange, or frustrating?

We also need to review how we will help and learn from each other. Below is a covenant for you to consider carefully.

Covenant of Presence

1. FULLY PRESENT: I choose to be fully present to myself and welcoming to others. I will do my best to not leave anyone out.
 2. LISTEN GENEROUSLY: I choose to listen generously and to create space for others to speak before I make an effort to be heard myself.
 3. SHARE MY STORY: I choose to believe that I have valuable, important things to share with others.
 4. WE COME AS EQUALS: I choose to not compare myself with others. I will do my best to not allow envy and jealousy to hinder me from loving freely.
 5. NO "SHARE OR DIE" PRESSURE: I choose to share when I am ready, and I choose to determine the extent to which I want to participate.
 6. NO FIXING: I choose to be a safe listener and to only offer advice when asked for it.
 7. AVOID JUDGMENT: I choose not to judge others with my words, actions or even in my heart.
 8. RETURN TO GRATITUDE & WONDER: I choose to give thanks for the gift of hearing and being heard. If I notice I am becoming judgmental, I choose to wonder: "why did she share that story or make those choices?" "I wonder what my reaction to his story teaches me about myself?" "I wonder how she is feeling right now?"
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Reflection

- Is there any way you would like to edit this covenant? What would you like to add? What would you like to take away? Write out a response to these reflection questions below.

- If you believe you can agree to this covenant with your small group, sign your name here:

MONDAY MORNING

Awake My Soul

Meditation & Devotion

Psalm 57: 7-11

My heart, O God, is steadfast,
my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and make music.
Awake, my soul!
Awake, harp and lyre!
I will awaken the dawn.
I will praise you, Lord, among the nations;
I will sing of you among the peoples.
For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
let your glory be over all the earth.

Is there a word or phrase that especially stands out to you this morning? As we read this psalm, circle or underline whatever helps you awaken to God. Please consider saying this word out loud in our group practices when prompted. Saying a word or phrase from the psalm out loud is a way to join in the fellowship of group prayer, much like when we sing together. In this way, we get to agree with and join in each other's prayer.

Solitude:

We will be returning to this same section of Psalm 57 each day throughout the week—praying it and meditating on it again and again. This is an ancient prayer practice called *lectio divina*, which comes from the earliest Christians.

Lectio—meaning “reading”

Divina—meaning “Divine”

**See Appendix A to read more about lectio divina.*

Your grade school teachers understood that, up to the second or third grade,

you needed to learn to read. From that point on, you began reading to learn. There are many ways to read, because there are many different types of writing. For example, you read a novel differently than you read an instruction manual.

In a similar way, there are many ways to read the Bible, because it contains many different kinds of writing—ancient stories, genealogies, histories, legal documents, prophecy, wisdom, theology, philosophy, letters, and poetry. It's possible to study the Bible academically. We can study each of these different parts to gather wise and insightful ideas.

With *lectio divina*—divine reading—we attempt to read with the Holy Spirit, to worship and pray with our hearts. The 150 psalms are placed directly in the middle of the Bible because they are our primary prayer book. Prayer is at the core of what Christians do as we attempt to become more like Jesus.

Approaching the Bible this way may seem new to most of us. It takes practice to not just read, but to pray with the Bible.

Reflection

- What do you think about the possibility of learning new ways to worship and pray at the Awakening?

What is Liturgy?

LITURGY is a word used by some to name a worship service. *Leitourgia* is defined as “the work of the people.” Some theologians have clarified that liturgy is when we rehearse “the work done on behalf of the people.” Generally, we understand that churches with more ordered worship—those that include various Scripture readings, read prayers and written responses, shorter teachings called homilies, hymn singing, and more traditional styling—are “liturgical” churches. However, it’s fair to say that even a more spontaneous charismatic worship service has a liturgical order. It’s just a simpler, less organized structure.

It’s important to make this clarification because the fundamental question for all worshippers is how we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, allowing the intentions of our hearts to respond to the movements of the Spirit.

In the way we’ve been considering how to be awakened to a relationship with God, liturgy is all about how we give and receive love with God.

There is a kind of work involved in learning how to pray and worship. We can call this a spiritual discipline. In school, music, sports, and even in our homes, we are always learning habits, practices, new disciplines, and returning to old ones. Every day, we are confronted with the disciplines of life. Spiritual disciplines are the habits that help us become freer in giving and receiving love with God. It’s fair to say that any relationship with someone you love requires discipline. Perhaps you’ve gotten frustrated, confused, or even hurt and angry by the work required in relationships. Often, we experience other people only through the unfair expectations they place on us.

- When it comes to your relationship with God, who do you imagine God to be for you? Does God have expectations for you? What does God want from you?

Look back over Psalm 57.

- How does it describe God's character and love?
- What if the primary expectation in your relationship with God was simply to give and receive love? Can you imagine that?

Read through Psalm 57 one more time.

- Conclude your time of solitude by writing out a one-sentence prayer.
- If you could say anything to God right now, what would you like to say?

Community

Return to your small group. Discuss the reflection questions above as you feel comfortable. Remember, there is no “Share or Die” pressure! However, we hope that in time, throughout the week, you will feel more and more safe to share honestly with each other.

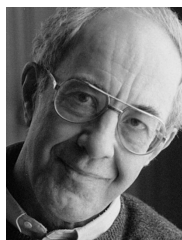
- After you have reviewed the reflection questions—and if time allows—read through Psalm 57 again and see if new insight emerges. Do you, as a group, have a sense that God has been speaking to and through you as you have returned to this psalm?

The word discipleship and the word discipline are the same word—that has always fascinated me. Once you have made the choice to say, “Yes, I want to follow Jesus,” the question is, “What disciplines will help me remain faithful to that choice?” If we want to be disciples of Jesus, we have to live a disciplined life.

By discipline, I do not mean control. If I know the discipline of psychology or of economics, I have a certain control over a body of knowledge. If I discipline my children, I want to have a little control over them.

But in the spiritual life, the word discipline means “the effort to create some space in which God can act.” Discipline means to prevent everything in your life from being filled up. Discipline means that somewhere you’re not occupied—and certainly not pre-occupied. In the spiritual life, discipline means to create that space in which something can happen that you hadn’t planned or counted on.

Henri Nouwen, *Priest and Author, who spent the last part of his life serving at L’Arche, a community of people with severe disabilities*



MONDAY NIGHT

Awake My Soul

Meditation & Devotion

Read through our psalm again. Allow for some silence after listening for God through the words. Then discuss if you have any new insight into the psalm here at the end of the day.

Psalm 57: 7-11

My heart, O God, is steadfast,

my heart is steadfast;

I will sing and make music.

Awake, my soul!

Awake, harp and lyre!

I will awaken the dawn.

I will praise you, Lord, among the nations;

I will sing of you among the peoples.

For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;

your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;

let your glory be over all the earth.

Community

Read and discuss together.

The focus of Psalm 57 is awakening our souls. When talking about God, the Bible, and singing hymns and worship songs, we can easily assume we know what we're talking about. These are weighty, powerful concepts about how we give and receive love with God. During this week, we are trying to better understand God, ourselves, and each other.

Pause for a few minutes to read through the questions on the next page slowly and carefully. Take a moment to consider how you might respond. Write down a few thoughts, then discuss.

- What is a soul?
 - How would you define “soul”?
 - Maybe you can define the idea of a soul, but do you know your own soul?
 - Do you engage your soul? How?
 - Do you know how to awaken your soul?
 - If you have experienced an awakening of your soul, do you know how to keep your soul awakened—or do you end up falling back to sleep?
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Solitude

- Before you close your time together tonight, take a moment to be silent. Look over this first day of the Awakening. What was the one-sentence prayer you wrote this morning? How has that prayer directed your attention to God today? What have you experienced that has awakened your soul to God?
- What has closed your soul today? What has made you frustrated or discouraged—what has closed your heart?
- Write a one-sentence prayer. If you could say anything to God as you close this day, what would you like to say?

TUESDAY MORNING

Awake My Soul

Meditation & Devotion

Psalm 57: 7-11

My heart, O God, is steadfast,

my heart is steadfast;

I will sing and make music.

Awake, my soul!

Awake, harp and lyre!

I will awaken the dawn.

I will praise you, Lord, among the nations;

I will sing of you among the peoples.

For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;

your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;

let your glory be over all the earth.

Solitude

- Look back at the prayer you wrote last night. Consider how you experienced God yesterday. How did you awaken your soul to God? What helped you open your heart to give and receive love with God? Was it a specific part of the day? By yourself? In a group? Did you especially notice God in a person or a place?

This week, we are trying to develop an ongoing conversation with God—to awaken to giving and receiving God's love, and to stay awake.

Prayerfully consider these truths from Scripture:

Jeremiah 31:3

“I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.”

1 Corinthians 6:19

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?”

1 John 4:19

“We love because He first loved us.”

Luke 17:21

“The Kingdom of God is within you.”

“Prayer is such an ordinary, everyday, mundane thing. Certainly, people who pray are no more saints than the rest of us. Rather, they are people who want to share a life with God—to love and be loved, to speak and to listen, to work and to be at rest in the presence of God.”

Roberta Bondi, *theologian and author*



- It is often said in the church, “Christianity is not a religion. It’s a relationship.” Relationship is at the core of what Christianity claims to be. The uniqueness of our faith is that not only do we believe in God, but we believe God is a personal being who we can know intimately. What does it mean to have an intimate relationship with God?

- If we are going to awaken our souls to God and stay awakened to this kind of relationship, what does a relationship with God require? Remember yesterday we considered this question of expectations—even spiritual disciplines.
- Can there be any healthy expectations in a loving relationship with God?
- What does an unhealthy relationship look like? What are the characteristics of unhealthy expectations?

- How is your heart at home and in school? Do you have any unhealthy relationships with anyone else?
- What about your relationship with yourself? We are attempting to awaken our souls. This means we have a kind of comfort with being ourselves. We know ourselves, even enjoy and love ourselves. Do you have a good relationship with yourself?
- If you could say anything to God in a one-sentence prayer, what would you like to say?

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

Awake My Soul

Meditation & Devotion

Psalm 57: 7-11

*My heart, O God, is steadfast,
my heart is steadfast;
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I will awaken the dawn.
I will praise you, Lord, among the nations;
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For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
let your glory be over all the earth.*

Large group discussion: What is a soul? Does anyone know?

In the great commandment, known in the Old Testament as the Shema, we are instructed to love God with our whole selves (heart, soul, and strength) and to love our neighbors as ourselves. This great command names three loves: to love God, neighbor, and ourselves. We are commanded to love ourselves!

It's even more important to consider that these loves are interrelated. How we love God is connected to how we love others. How we love others is related to how we love ourselves. And how we love ourselves is connected to how we love God.

From the Old Testament Hebrew

Nephesh:

Levav:

Your vocation, your calling, is to become you—your most whole and full self.

Solitude

- Return to the last question we considered this morning. What is your relationship with yourself?

This returns us again to the mission of the Awakening: to pay attention to God (worship and prayer) and to pay attention to yourself (vocation). Vocation can seem like a big, lofty word. Here, for our purposes, we understand your vocation as becoming who you are and who you are becoming.

Reflect

- Who are you? How would you describe yourself to someone else?
- What do you like about yourself?
- What don't you like about yourself?
- What do you believe God not only loves about you, but what could God enjoy about you? Be as specific as you can.

There is something in every one of you that waits, listens for the sound of the genuine in yourself, and if you cannot hear it, you will never find whatever it is for which you are searching. And if you hear it and then do not follow it, it was better that you had never been born...



You are the only you that has ever lived; your idiom is the only idiom of its kind in all of existence, and if you cannot hear the sound of the genuine in you, you will all your life spend your days on the ends of strings that somebody else pulls...

There is in you something that waits and listens for the sound of the genuine in yourself, and sometimes there is so much traffic going on in your minds—so many different kinds of signals, so many vast impulses floating through your organism that go back thousands of generations, long before you were even a thought in the mind of creation—and you are buffeted by these, and in the midst of all of this, you have got to find out what your name is. Who are you? How does the sound of the genuine come through to you...

The sound of the genuine is flowing through you. Don't be deceived and thrown off by all the noises that are a part even of your dreams, your ambitions, so that you don't hear the sound of the genuine in you—because that is the only true guide that you will ever have, and if you don't have that, you don't have a thing.

From Howard Thurman's 1980 commencement address at Spelman College

Howard Thurman (1899–1981) was an American author, pastor, philosopher, theologian, educator, and civil rights leader.

WEDNESDAY MORNING

Awake My Soul

Meditation & Devotion

Psalm 57: 7-11

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your faithfulness reaches to the skies.
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Solitude

We have been looking closely at the words we use to understand worship and prayer. What does it mean to awaken? What is a soul? What is a psalm? What is worship, liturgy, spiritual discipline? As we go to church week in and week out, we often assume we know what these words mean. Yet, here you are on an extended retreat this week. You have left behind all your familiar distractions and busyness to more intentionally give and receive love with God. This is a chance to develop a better relationship with God by considering how to more intentionally practice your faith.

Let's look with greater intention at more faith vocabulary. Another word that has appeared in Psalm 57 is "praise." The Hebrew word for praise in this verse is *zamar*, which literally means "to sing, to make music." Many of us at the Awakening do consider ourselves musicians and singers, but not all of us. Whether you consider yourself talented musically or not, God created us to awaken our souls through singing and music.

- What seems to be helpful about singing and music for how you awaken to give and receive God's love? Be as specific as you can. What happens inside of you when you sing, play, or experience music?
- What about silence? Have you been able to open your heart to God in silence this week? How is silence helpful for you, or is it difficult to be silent? If it is difficult, why?

Once possessed, we must steady ourselves habitually in order to see the way we were meant to. For some, stillness will not suffice. The stillness must mature into an inner quiet—the noise of the exterior world ricocheting off your flesh. To cultivate habits of rest, we must discern what noise has found a way to penetrate our soul. And as we detect patterns and modes, we have more of a grounding as we resist restlessness.

In this way, the silence of God, which is so often mistaken for abandonment, may be a gift to those of us who cannot steady our souls in the vibrations of the world's clangor. It's a liberation from a world that demands too much of our minds and bodies and whose noise does not relent.



Cole Arthur Riley - *This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation, and the Stories That Make Us*

The first time the word 'praise' appears in the Bible is Genesis 29:35. The Hebrew word used for 'praise' there is *yādâ*, which means "to throw, cast, shoot out, to laud, confess, to give thanks." Leah has finally been given to Jacob in marriage and she has given birth. Her natural response to this goodness is to allow her gratitude to flow out of her, to pour from her deep gratitude.

- Do you experience deep, spontaneous movements of gratitude? Have you experienced goodness in such a significant way that you erupted with laughter, dance, or song?

Gratitude is a natural response to God's goodness. Psalm 100 invites us to "Enter his gates with thanksgiving. To enter his courts with praise." In this passage, the word for praise is *toda*, which means "thanksgiving in formal worship, in a procession or a hymn, to confess praise." Here, 'praise' may not be in the form of music or song. It could be movement of your body, but the main suggestion is that we design and create some kind of tangible, intentional practice. While *yādâ* is a spontaneous overflow of the heart, *toda* involves planning and preparation.

- Some of us don't have good things bursting forth in our lives. Some of us struggle with difficulties every day. So, when praise doesn't naturally flow out of me, I need to plan. I need to have some kind of habit that helps me become intentional about offering praise. First, it is important to acknowledge that it is okay if there are times when you don't feel like praising God. Do you sometimes feel spiritually stuck? Is it sometimes difficult to open your heart to God?

- In reflection for previous sections of this prayer guide, you have been noticing specific experiences, events, people, and places that especially help you open to God. Let's connect this reflection to being at home and in school. When you get spiritually stuck, when you don't feel like praise, what, where, or who helps you want to try to open your heart to God?
- Are these reflections helping you identify the unique way that God created you to be a worshipper? What new insight do you have about what helps you not only open to God but to stay open?
- If you could say anything to God in a one-sentence prayer, what would you like to say?

Community

Return to your small group. Discuss the reflection questions above as you feel comfortable.

THURSDAY MORNING

Awake My Soul

Devotion & Meditation

Psalm 57: 7-11

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For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;

your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;

let your glory be over all the earth.

Solitude

- As you continue to better consider the unique nature of how you open and stay open to God's love, let's consider some spiritual geography. When you consider opening yourself to a relationship with God, where do you perceive God to be?

"What is saving my life now is the conviction that there is no spiritual treasure to be found apart from the bodily experiences of human life on earth. My life depends on engaging the most ordinary physical activities with the most exquisite attention I can give them. My life depends on ignoring all touted distinctions between the secular and the sacred, the physical and the spiritual, the body and the soul. What is saving my life now is becoming more fully human, trusting that there is no way to God apart from real life in the real world."

Barbara Brown Taylor, *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*



- The language of Psalm 57 locates God high above, to the skies, above the heavens. On Tuesday morning, you considered how your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) and that "The Kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). How is it possible to have an intimate, personal knowledge of a God who is far away?

Two theological terms Christians use to describe their understanding of God are immanent (near) and transcendent (far). God is more near to us than we can imagine. St. Augustine prays, "You are nearer to me than I am to myself." Yet, in Isaiah 55, God explains, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." God is high above, exalted, greater than anything our minds can conceive. So we can see that God's geography is omnipresent. There is no place without God. Prayerfully consider Psalm 139:

7 *Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?*
8 *If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*
9 *If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,*
10 *even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.*

God can be found everywhere and in anything. However, we can close our hearts. We can try to hide and live as if God is not near. Psalm 139 ends with a final prayer:

*23 Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*24 See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

- Throughout this week, you have noticed those things that open your heart to give and receive God's love. If you are willing to be honest, you have likely noticed things that close your heart—those things that keep you distracted and numb to God's love. Without any pressure to share with your group, can you name things in your life that keep you distant from God?

- If you could say anything to God in a one-sentence prayer, what would you like to say?

Community

Return to your small group. Discuss the reflection questions above as you feel comfortable.

WHAT, THEN, is my God? What, I ask, except the Lord God? For who is Lord but the Lord?



Or who is God save our God? O highest and best, most powerful, most all-powerful, most merciful and most just, most deeply hidden and most nearly present, most beautiful and most strong, constant yet incomprehensible, changeless, yet changing all things, never new, never old, making all things new; bringing the proud to decay and they know it not; always acting and always at rest, still gathering yet never wanting; upholding, filling and protecting, creating, nourishing and bringing to perfection; seeking, although in need of nothing. You love, but with no storm of passion; you are jealous, but with no anxious fear; you repent, but do not grieve; in your anger calm; you change your works, but never change your plan; you take back what you find and yet have never lost; never in need, you are yet glad of gain; never greedy, yet still demanding profit on your loans; to be paid in excess, so that you may be the debtor, and yet who has anything which is not yours? You pay back debts which you never owed and cancel debts without losing anything. And in all this what have I said, my God, my Life, my holy sweetness? What does any man succeed in saying when he attempts to speak of you? Yet woe to those who do not speak of you at all, when those who speak most say nothing.

St. Augustine (354 AD), *The Confessions* I.iv.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON

Awake My Soul

Devotion & Meditation

In this session we will work through the Spirituality Wheel in appendix D.

Reflection

- Which spirituality type do you identify with (heart, mind, soul, and strength)?

- Does this self-knowledge surprise or confuse you? Do you have any further questions about this spirituality type?
 - Reflect on how you have been working with your small group to plan and prepare for the worship festival. How does understanding this spirituality type help you understand your strengths in terms of how you have contributed to this teamwork?
 - How does understanding this spirituality type help you understand your weaknesses?
-

Small Group Discussion

- So much of the difficulty of working with a team to plan and lead a worship service comes down to trust. As you develop trust for each other, you can then also be patient. Does the spirituality wheel give you any insight into how to cooperate with each other?

FRIDAY MORNING

Awake My Soul

Devotion & Meditation

- Instead of Psalm 57, our ‘text’ this morning for prayer is **you**—your journey this week of the Awakening. This is a way to practice the prayer of Examen (*see more about this prayer in Appendix C*). Let’s review how you have been able to turn your eyes to Jesus by prayerfully reviewing the week. You can look through your notes in this prayer guide and recall from memory: Where did God especially become real, true, loving—a source of hope and healing?

Consider the people you’ve been with, the activities you’ve been involved in, the places you’ve been, and the songs you’ve sung. Look through your journal entries. Read through favorite sections of the Psalms.

This is a special opportunity for you to practice hearing God’s voice. God has been speaking to you. God wants to continue speaking to you. There is so much for you to talk to God about!

Solitude

Quiet yourself. Return to abiding as deeply in Jesus’ presence as you can. Then walk through your week, identifying words or phrases that help you recognize God’s movements in and around you.

Your prayer might look like this:

- Begin with silence – rest!
- Sunday: Where did I notice God on my first day at the Awakening? Look back over your notes in this prayer guide. Circle and underline where you notice God. Add additional notes.
- Silence – rest!
- Monday: Where did I notice God during my first full day at the Awakening? Review the day in this prayer guide and your memory. Circle, underline, make notes.
- Silence – rest!
- Tuesday: Where was God? Review like you did above.
- Silence – rest!
- Wednesday: Where was God? Review like you did above. Silence – rest!
- Thursday: Where was God? Review like you did above.
- What stands out as the most important ways Jesus has revealed Himself to you? Make a list below of words or phrases that describe the movements of God this week.

Now prayerfully review all you have identified above and look for the way these words and phrases resonate with each other. Can you identify some themes? What have you learned about your story, your song in Jesus? When you look over the week, is God saying something specific to you? What have you learned about yourself, others, and God? How have you turned your eyes to Jesus this week? Journal your reflections.

Discuss

Gather in your small groups and share with each other, offering witness to how the Spirit has moved in your life this week. Close by praying for each other.

These are the fundamental questions of being a Christian who is alive, attentive, and aware of God's presence and love.

Appendices

Appendix A

Lectio Divina

“Divine Reading”

Lectio

Meditatio

Oratio

Contemplatio

Actio

The main purpose of lectio divina is to allow the text to read us. Most often we come to a book, a class, a conversation or idea with a posture of control. It's as if we pin the book on a table like a frog to dissect. We then use our mental scalpel to take the book apart. In Literature class this is required, to separate plot, setting, major and minor characters, and theme to identify the meaning of a book. We do the same thing with Bible study when we read from a posture of power working with our intellects to make sense of the Bible. Through lectio we offer our whole selves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1) to God by submitting to him, by giving ourselves to God as we read the Scriptures.

But the Bible doesn't always make sense to my mind. Often, I don't even make sense to myself. I am messy, out of sorts, and out of control, in no condition to grapple God's Word onto a table. Through lectio I approach God in humility to become more familiar with my desperate need for the help of the Bible. I am not surrendering my attention to just any book. In fact, am not coming to a book at all. I am approaching the person of God revealed to me through the Scriptures, the Living Word revealed through the scriptures. In lectio divina we surrender control and acknowledge our dependence upon Jesus by reading the Bible with the deeper, secret places of our heart. It's not that we don't use our minds. It's that we join our minds to heart and soul. We come to the Bible with our guts open wide. In this posture of surrender, I am laid on an altar, vulnerable to the work of the Holy Spirit trusting the Bible can make sense of me.

Is this confusing? Hard to comprehend? Don't worry. The only way to learn these deeper things is to practice them and let the Holy Spirit teach you. Let's look at the steps of lectio divina more closely. Preparation: Do your best to surrender to God. All of the thoughts that have been spinning around in your mind, those thoughts that you haven't noticed yet—dismiss them gracefully as you are able. Acknowledge any tension in your body. Slow your breathing. By faith acknowledge that God is near in love.

LECTIO - Read slowly with care.

Read the Scripture carefully, slowly listening to each word and phrase. Here you are getting comfortable with the Bible, yourself, and God. You are coming into the house of God to find a good place to sit and rest. There is nothing for you to accomplish other than to be still and quiet.

Return to Silence & Rest

MEDITATIO –Meditate, chew, shift, digest, mull, ruminate

Read the passage a second time. Identify a bit of the passage that “tastes good,” a word or phrase that seems to stand out. This word or phrase does not need to make sense to your mind. You don’t need to have a reason why you are interested in these words. You are listening with your inner, deepest heart for the part of this passage that especially seems inviting, good, nourishing, resonant with life. When you are invited to, share your word or phrase out loud with your group.

Return to Silence & Rest

ORATIO – Pray, talk lovingly with Jesus.

Read the passage a third time looking again for a word or phrase that stands out to you. You might be drawn to the same word or phrase that you chose last time. It doesn’t matter. Again, you are listening with your inner being, deep in the guts of your soul. Surrender any need to be in control and to make sense of the passage. Remember, this is not Bible study. Here in this movement after hearing the passage three times, you will be more settled inside of yourself and familiar with the passage so you can have a loving conversation with Jesus. This may simply be a practice of repeating your word or phrase slowly or carefully inside your heart. You may be led to ask Jesus to help you live into the truth of the passage. Or you may find that the word or phrase leads you to think about something happening in your life, and now you can talk to Jesus about what you are noticing.

Return to Silence & Rest

CONTEMPLATIO – Go deeper, wait, trust, love.

Read the passage a third time looking again for a word or phrase that stands out to you. At this stage you will be more centered in yourself and open to God. Now you may especially want to slowly and lovingly repeat your word or phrase again and again to savor the richness of the presence of God revealed through the Bible. Or you may be able to sit quietly with your heart and mind open to the presence of God. This is especially where we learn to

sit with Jesus like we might sit silently with a dear friend.
Return to Silence & Rest - Give thanks!

ACTIO – Do the Bible...let the passage come to life in and through you.

There are longer and shorter ways of practicing lectio divina. You can try it with two, or six, eight, ten readings of the passage depending on your group and the time you have. One variation of the lectio is to add a final step of actio. Here you conclude your time by talking freely with Jesus about how he may be inviting you to practice the truth of the Scripture. You can simply ask Jesus, how would you like this Scripture to come to life in and through me? Depending on the time available, you might share with the whole group a small bit of the insight you have gained about your actions. If you have less time, it may be best to turn to one person for you to share briefly with each other. Or if you have even less time, you can just share a word or phrase that can represent what is stirring inside of you. If you have the time to linger and journal a response, the act of writing becomes another step of intentional listening through which your encounter with God becomes more practical and tangible. Resolve the temptation to fix yourself or to force anything at this point. God can speak to us in ground breaking, world shaking ways. But most of the time, for most of us, the leading of the Spirit is incremental, subtle, careful and yet deeply robust. Allow your sense of action to emerge gracefully by remaining attentive to God's presence and love.

Silence & Rest! Give thanks!

**One perennial question about this practice is: what do I do in the moments of silence and rest? This question is itself your prayer. Indeed, what do I do in God's presence when there is no specific instruction? It's easier to describe what not to do: avoid judging yourself, avoid expecting too much, resist trying to figure yourself out. We live in a world that is overprogrammed and overcalculated. Whether you actively recognize these thoughts, your nervous system is more or less wired to assume every moment of your attention should be consumptive or should have measurable outcomes. The intent of lectio is to help you intentionally use this time to be relatively boring and unproductive. This rest between each movement of lectio is the space of discerning what contemplation is and what it might become for you. Each step of this approach allows you to increase your intention to notice God in and in through yourself. The Spirit may especially reveal love and wisdom during this pause. And/or the pause may just serve as a palate cleanser to allow you attention to settle down more to be more capable of noticing the Spirit in the scripture. Finally, trust that we all need to practice these disciplines again and again before we can begin to get a sense of God's purposes in the method. It is okay if you don't "get" anything significant from the practice in one, two, or six times. If after a few months of practice, there is little goodness or if the practice especially is disconcerting, you can either try lectio in a different creative way or not at all.*

Appendix B

Visio Divina

“Divine Seeing”

With the visio divina, we come to the visible world around us and surrender to God in a similar way that we come to the Scriptures through the discipline of lectio divina. We should not confuse nature or art with the importance of the Scriptures, yet we do confess that God can speak to us through anything around us. Many of us especially find refreshment by being outside. Others have learned to be nourished by engaging art and music. This discipline of visio divina is a practice of welcoming the Spirit into the way we see anything and everything. One theologian, Walter Burghardt, describes the deepest prayer as a “long, loving look at the real.” We are always turning our eyes to look and see the world. We look at the sidewalk or road in front of us. We look at words on a page. We spend hours looking at screens of phones or computers. We look at the people in front of us. While visio divina we prayerfully consider: do I really see what is there? Do I truly enjoy what is in my line of sight? Can I God around me?

An adjustment to a classic hymn offers us insight here:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus.
Look full in his wonderful face.
And the things of earth
will grow strangely dim...**clear!**
In the light of his glory and grace.

When we avoid God and are distant from love, life can seem heavy and confusing. On the other hand, everything makes so much more sense when we are in God’s presence. And so, we can go about our days with expectation of seeing Jesus in and through all of creation. Visio Divina is a way of training the eyes of our hearts to see God in anything and everything.

Here’s one way to practice visio divina if you have chosen something spend time with a piece of art or a place in nature for example:

Prepare: Close your eyes, breathe, clear your mind, and ask God to help you see in this time of prayer. Ask God to speak to you through your sight.

Lectio (read): Open your eyes and scan the image or a scene of nature. Note what draws your interest but continue to scan the whole image. Close and rest your eyes a minute. Gaze lovingly and patiently with hope to be nearer to God’s presence and love.

Mediatio (meditate): Open your eyes and let your eyes be led. Focus on just the part of the image that caught your eyes and name it. Recognize what feature, shape, line, texture, of color especially seems helpful. Close your eyes, seeing that feature in your mind. Rest. Wait. Trust and linger in God's presence.

Oratio (pray): Open your eyes and look again at the feature that caught your eye. Allow it to bring forth a word, image, an emotion, or desire. Close and rest your eyes, your heart, mind, and body. Then consider further insight into what you are noticing. Is God speaking to you through what you are seeing. Have you found something you want to express to God through what is before you?

Contemplatio (contemplation): Open your eyes and gaze at the whole image. Make an inner intention to open your heart further to God's presence and love. Linger and treasure the moment attempting to remain present to yourself in and through God. Allow the visual feature of what you have been gazing at to return you again and again more gracefully in God's presence. Treasure. Enjoy. Linger in the presence of God.

Actio (action): How will you respond to Him? Spend time considering this question with God. Don't overthink this. There is nothing to strive for here, nothing to force or fake. Usually, the Spirit speaks to us in smaller ways. At least our initial perception of what we notice is smaller and more subtle. There is a good chance that with further, loving, careful time what seemed smaller will grow in significance and substance. If you have occasion to journal or to share with others something about what you are noticing, often this attempt to put words to your noticing will allow you to behold the depth and significance of what you are noticing. It's not that we can ever find the exact words to describe God's wisdom. It's that by attempting to communicate these things leads us to more awe and wonder that surely God is in this place.

Appendix C

The Prayer of Examen

Testing Spirits. A Biblical Basis

1 John 4:1-6

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world. ⁴Little children, you are from God, and have conquered them; for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world; therefore what they say is from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and whoever is not from God does not listen to us. From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

St. Ignatius of Loyola teaches on the Discernment of Spirits - Ignatius began to learn about the discernment of spirits while convalescing in his family home from a battle injury. He did not have access to the romance novellas he preferred and was left with biographies on the lives of saints and of Jesus. While reading, he noticed different interior movements as he imagined his future. When he spent too much time dreaming of going to court, of chivalry, and of winning fame and the attention of ladies, he discovered a heaviness and even a sadness. When he dreamed of becoming a saint like St. Francis, he experienced lightness of heart, hope, and joy.

Good and Evil Spirits - Consolation and Desolation - Ignatius taught that these interior movements were caused by “good spirits” and “evil spirits.” Our hearts are divided between good and evil impulses. To call these “spirits” simply recognizes the spiritual dimension of this inner struggle. Ignatius defined these feelings stirred up by good and evil spirit, “consolation” and “desolation.”

Spiritual consolation is an experience of God’s love that inspires us to praise, love, and serve God and help others as best as we can. Spiritual consolation encourages and facilitates a deep sense of gratitude for God’s faithfulness, mercy, and companionship in our life. In consolation we feel more alive and connected to others. For people who are trying to live a life pleasing to God, the good spirit strengthens, encourages, consoles, removes obstacles, and gives peace.

Spiritual desolation, in contrast, is a heavy experience of the soul in darkness

or turmoil. We experience doubt, temptations, and are mired in self-preoccupations. We are restless and anxious and feel cut off from others. Such feelings, in Ignatius's words, "move one toward lack of faith and leave one without hope and without love." The evil spirit tries to derail them by stirring up anxiety, false sadness, needless confusion, frustration, and other obstacles.

The key question in interpreting consolation and desolation is: where is the movement coming from and where is it leading me? Surprisingly happiness does not always mean you are experiencing spiritual consolation, and sadness does not always mean spiritual desolation.

For people who have closed themselves off from God's grace, the good spirit disturbs and shakes up. It stirs feelings of remorse and discontent. The purpose is to make the person unhappy with a sinful way of life. On the other hand, the evil spirit wants such people to continue in their confusion and darkness. So the evil spirit tries to make them complacent, content, and satisfied with their distractions and pleasures.

Sometimes an experience of sadness is a moment of conversion and intimacy with God. Times of human suffering can be moments of great grace. Similarly, peace or happiness can be illusory if these feelings are helping us avoid changes we need to make.

Discernment of spirits is a challenging task. It requires maturity, inner silence, and an ability to reflect on one's interior life. Discernment takes practice. It is something of an art form. Ignatius' rules for discernment provide a framework, not a program. We must be ready to improvise and adjust because God works in each of us different ways. That is why it is recommended to discern spirits with the assistance of a spiritual director, a trusted pastor, or spiritual friend. Yet with practice, the examen can allow us to become more familiar with hearing and trusting how God can and will speak.

A Very Personal, Yet Cosmic & Practical Discipline

Practicing the Examen will require us to pay close attention to everything and anything. Ignatius had a rich, cosmic understanding of the Holy Spirit's ability to speak to us in and through all created things. The Examen is a working out of the First Rule and Principle at the beginning of the Spiritual Exercises:

All the things in this world are gifts from God, Presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily. As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God Insofar as they help us to develop as loving persons. But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives, They displace God And so hinder our growth toward our goal.

We must develop a facility of inner attention in order to practice this kind of discernment. This inner facility is something like a muscle, a capacity, an inner reflex. The Orthodox tradition refers to this as ‘nepsis,’ what they call the inner eye or a ‘third eye.’

Consider the language of Psalm 130:

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.

In the examen we ‘watch for the Lord’ through all of the happenings of our days. It is also helpful to think of the Examen as a practice of listening as well as seeing. Ignatius encouraged his Jesuits to practice the Examen at least twice a day so as to not miss out on the opportunity to hear the voice of God yes, but also to make sure the Jesuits were practicing and learning to hear God’s voice. Jesus proclaims in Matthew 11:15, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” And indeed, this is the crux of the problem: God is always speaking by the Holy Spirit through our created existence but most of us have not practiced and tuned our ears to hear. We do not know how to pay attention. Regular practice of the Examen is a way for us to spiritually exercise and develop this inner facility.

Steps of the Prayer of Examen

1. Wait. Rest. Center. Draw near in gratitude. Place yourself in God’s presence. Give thanks for God’s great love for you.

2. Illumination. Petition. Ask. Open to help. Pray for the grace to understand how God is acting in your life.

3. Notice. See. Be attentive. Review your day — recall specific moments and your feelings at the time. Use this space to write down specific names and details about your day where you sensed either consolation or desolation. Identify at least three specific instances. One way to approach this is by making a list of anything that seems significant in a brainstorm list. Alternatively, you might want to make two lists, one of consolations and the other of desolations. However, resist getting bogged down in making judgements about any of these items. Right now you are just opening your gaze to see what is going on. You are gathering in details.

4. Meditate. Converse with God. Reflect on what you did, said, or thought in those instances. Look over what you have detailed above slowly with care. As you are able, remain attentive to God’s presence and love while also aware of what is happening inside of yourself. Invite the Spirit to draw your

attention to what is especially important for your prayer. How are the details of your life opening or closing you to love? Your attention may be drawn to one or a few items. Focus your prayer on those items. Or you may notice an overall theme emerge from what you have written out. You may notice your own increasing desire, a deeper and wider openness to love. Or you may notice your heart, mind, even your body close and tense with confusion, exhaustion, fear, or even anger. As you notice these inner movements, do what you can to write down your noticings. What is God saying to you? What do you want to say to God?

5. Commit. Resolve to change. Look toward what is next today or tomorrow — think of how you might collaborate more effectively with God's plan. Write out how you want to respond to God tomorrow. Be specific. Resist the need to fix yourself. Avoid striving and trying to make too much out of this step. Trust the Spirit will help you learn and grow. What seems like a small, insignificant choice may be much more significant in depth and breadth with further, careful consideration. We are attempting to cooperate with transformation here, to become more like Jesus. Each step toward God is relatively enormous. Conclude with a prayer of thanks.

Appendix D

The Spirituality Wheel©

A Spiritual Type Selector

by Corinne D. Ware, D. Min.

The purpose of this exercise is to DRAW A PICTURE of your personal style of spirituality.

Read through the following statements, circling the number corresponding to the statement in each category that best describes your personal belief or preference. You may select as many statements as you wish; you need not only choose one. Match the chosen statement numbers with the quadrant numbers in the circle on the last page. Draw a spoke in the appropriate quadrant for each statement selected. The result is a portrait of your personal spiritual type.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

1. A carefully planned and orderly worship service is a glory to God.
2. A deeply moving and spontaneous service is a glory to God.
3. Simplicity and some silence are important elements needed for worship.
4. It is not a service, but ordering ourselves to God's service that is important.

TIME

1. It is important to stick to announced beginning and ending times of worship services.
2. It is important to extend the service time if one feels led to do so.
3. All time is God's time. A sense of timelessness is important.
4. Gather whenever and as long as you need to in order to accomplish the task.

PRAYER

1. Words express poetic praise; I ask for knowledge and guidance.
2. Let words and feelings evoke God's presence in this moment.
3. Empty the mind of distractions and simply BE in the presence of the Holy.
4. My life and my work are my prayer.

MUSIC

1. Music and lyrics express praise to God and belief about God.
2. Singing warms and unites us and expresses the soul's deepest worship.
3. Music brings the soul to quietness and union with God.

4. Singing can mobilize and inspire to greater effort and dedication.

PREACHING

1. The Word of God, rightly proclaimed, is the centerpiece of worship.
2. The gospel movingly preached is the power of God to change lives.
3. Proclamation is heard when the Spirit of God speaks to the inward heart.
4. What we do is our “preaching” and speaks louder than anything we say.

EMPHASIS

1. It is important that I fulfill my vocation (calling) in the world.
2. It is important that I learn to walk in holiness with the Lord.
3. It is important that I be one with the Creator.
4. It is important that I obey God’s will completely.

SUPPORT OF CAUSES

(If necessary, circle the words that apply and select categories with the most circles.)

1. It is important to support seminaries, publishing houses, scholarship, and preaching.
2. It is important to support evangelism, missions, spreading the word on television and radio.
3. It is important to support places of retreat, spiritual direction, liturgical reform.
4. It is important to support political action to establish justice in society and its institutions.

CRITICISM

1. Sometimes I may be too intellectual, dogmatic, and “dry.”
2. Sometimes I may be too emotional, dogmatic, anti-intellectual.
3. Sometimes I may escape from the world and not be sufficiently realistic.
4. Sometimes I may have tunnel vision and be too moralistic.

DOMINATING THEMES

(If necessary, circle the words that apply and select categories with the most circles.)

1. Discernment, discipline, knowledge, order, grace, justification.
2. Love, conversion, witness, spontaneity, sanctification.
3. Poverty, humility, wisdom, letting go, transcendence.
4. Simplicity, purity of heart, action, temperance, obedience, martyrdom.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

(What I believe should be necessary)

1. Assent to doctrine; baptism; endorsement by group.
2. A personal inward experience of God; baptism; public declaration.
3. All who face Godward.
4. Solidarity with humankind is membership in God's kingdom.

RITUAL AND LITURGY

1. Ritual and liturgy evoke memory and presence, teaching traditional truths.
2. Liturgy and ritual ceremonies are not of great importance.
3. Ritual and liturgy are ways in which God becomes present to us.
4. Ritual and liturgy are one way we make statements about inner conviction.

CONCEPT OF GOD

1. God is revealed in scripture, sacrament, and in Jesus Christ and his cross.
2. I can feel that God is real and that Christ lives in my heart.
3. God is mystery and can be grasped for but not completely known.
4. We participate in the mystery of God when we become co-creators with God in the world.

added questions

When explaining to people about my faith I would use as my primary resource:

1. The Commentary or 27 Fundamental Beliefs
2. My own experience of what Jesus and the Church have meant to me
3. Prayer and the experience of the holy
4. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy

When I pray I mostly seek:

1. Insights, guidance or answers
2. A closer walk with the Lord
3. An inner consciousness of God
4. A deeper commitment to God's reign on earth

Which description of a spiritual pathway best describes your experience

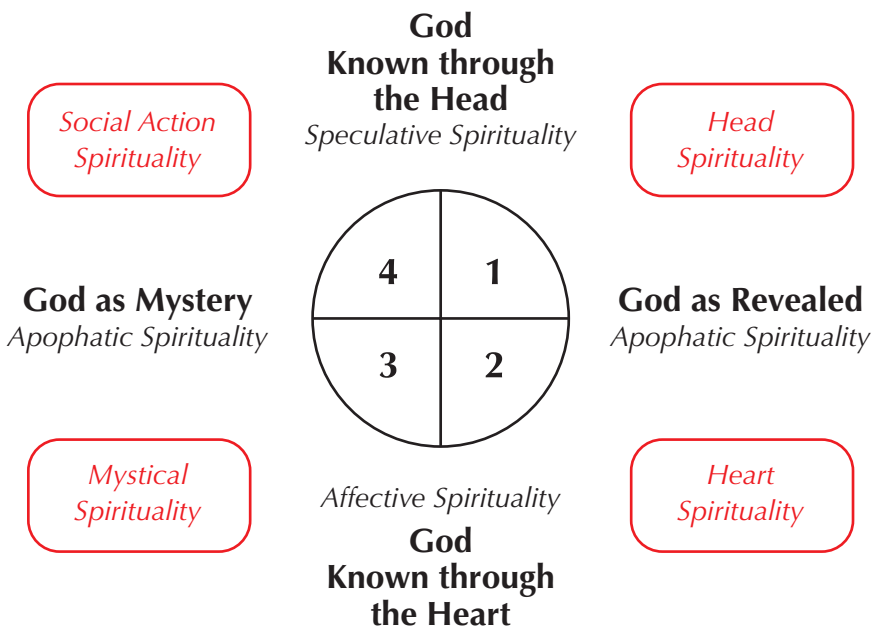
(If necessary, circle the words that apply and select categories with the most circles.)

1. Theological renewal, confidence in being right, knowledge, insights, connections, attention, revelation.
2. Personal renewal, holiness in everyday life, born again, emotion, relationships, devotion, conversion.
3. The inner life, contemplation, stillness, asceticism (spiritual disciplines), union, mystery, awareness.
4. Prophetic witness, the reign of God, social concern, justice, peace, relevance, love in action.

The Spirituality Wheel©

A Spiritual Type Selector

by Corinne D. Ware, D. Min.



* *Apophatic*, or negative spirituality stresses interiority, imagelessness and wordlessness. *Kataphatic*, or positive spirituality is image-driven and uses analogies to speak of God.

Discuss 4 Types

Type 1 (Head Spirituality) - Danger is Rationalism

- This is an intellectual “thinking” spirituality that believes strongly in the knowability of Gods (as based on revelation)
- It favours the concrete (what it can see, touch and imagine)
- It tends to mistrust mystery and minimize emotions
- This style produces theological reflection and precision in thinking and communication
- People attracted to this form of spirituality tend to be rational and logical, valuing precision in their thinking and speech
- Content is of primary importance to these people
- Faith is belief in certain things
- Congruence of thought, and thought and action, are important
- Tend to look to the sermon and scriptures for spiritual guidance
- Tend to be people of the Word and people of words
- Prayer tends to be language or word-based
- Spiritual danger is rationalism – an over intellectualization of one’s spiritual life with a consequent loss of feeling and inner conviction

Good example would be John Calvin

- Father of Reformed and Presbyterian theology
- Initially commenced training for the priesthood but came into contact with Protestants whom he felt had a clearer grasp of the Biblical message
- At age 27 wrote The Institutes of Christian Religion (which remains one of the great theological treatises of the last four centuries)
- Over next 25 years wrote commentaries on all NT books and 23 OT books, all of which were distributed and read throughout Europe, changing the face of the church there, and in the New World
- A man of the Word who encouraged a religion of the head that emphasized theological precision and conviction

Type 2 (Mystical Spirituality) – Danger is Reclusivity

- This is a mystical spirituality that emphasizes the mystery of faith and the ultimate un-knowability of God
- Emphasizes that our thoughts about God are always pale and imperfect reflections of his being as he is “wholly other”, unnameable, beyond our comprehension and containment
- Emphasizes hearing from God over speaking to him
- Goal of spirituality is understood as union with God
- People attracted to this type of spirituality are often contemplative and intuitive, tending to be focused on an inner world that is as real to them as

the external one

- Renewal of the inner life is at the core of their understanding of spirituality
- Emphasize the process of spirituality (favouring metaphor of the journey)
- Spiritual danger is reclusivity – an exaggerated retreat from reality and from interaction with the world, associated with passivity

Good example would be Thomas Merton

- Twentieth century adult convert to Christianity from a non-religious background, quickly entering training for the priesthood and subsequently entering the Cistercian monastic order
- Spend the rest of his life in contemplative prayer and writing books and talking with others about such life of prayer as mystical union with God

Type 3 (Heart Spirituality) – Danger is Emotionalism

- Here God is still understood to be knowable, but more through the heart than the head
- If God is love, assumption is that he must be known through love, not simply known through ideas
- Spirituality is not, therefore, a head trip – it's all heart
- Theology still important and Scriptures seen to be the source of our knowing of God
- But our response to knowing God is expected to involve heart, not just head
- Result is a more charismatic spirituality whose aim is to achieve holiness of life
- Personal holiness is the goal of spirituality
- Prayer is made with words but words may be used less formally and prayer is often extemporaneous, spontaneous and even exuberant
- Of primary importance is experience
- Spiritual danger is excessive emotionalism and the belief that emotion is the test of the validity of a person's spiritual experience
- Another danger is an exclusive spirituality that results in an "us against the world" mentality that fails to recognize the spiritual experience of those in other spiritual traditions

Good example would be John Wesley – the founder of the Methodist Church and what has been called the Holiness tradition

- As a university student at Oxford, he and his brother (Charles) started a club dubbed as the Holy Club – later to be called the Methodists for their emphasis on the methods of bible study and other spiritual disciplines
- Emphasized the spiritual journey as growth in love of God
- Not known as a systematic theologian, but rather as one who inspired others in their love of God and commitment to a life of holiness

Type 4 (Social Justice Spirituality) – Danger is Moralism

- Mystical experience is here coupled with an intellectual mode of gathering data
- Result is an active visionary who is single-minded with a deeply focused, almost crusading, type of spirituality
- People of this type often minimize importance (or value) of denominational affiliation (or even affiliation with organized religion)
- Goal is simply to obey God and in so doing, transform society by contributing to the establishment of God's Kingdom
- These people equate prayer and theology with action
- They have strong vision and ideals, but are not content to live with ideas – ideas always translate into action
- Spiritual danger lies in a moralistic and unrelenting tunnel-vision that excludes or judges others who do not share their passion

Good example is St. Francis of Assisi

- 12th century Italian who left his former life of privilege and went about the countryside caring for the poor and sick
- Soon was followed so many others that even the Pope took notice and named them an order
- Had a profound effect on not only the spirituality, but on disease and poverty, throughout Europe

Appendix E

Notes for writing a Psalm

Review the main themes of the Psalms:

Adoration: 2, 18, 63, 84, 95

Exaltation: 19, 57, 96, 126, 145

Devotion/dedication: 5, 27, 63, 73, 84, 89, 119

Celebration/thanksgiving: 7, 34, 92, 95,

Confession: 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143

Lamentation: 3, 6, 12, 13, 22, 25, 31, 86, 142

Meditation/Remembrance: 1, 39, 86, 90, 135, 139

Supplication: 16, 27, 55, 73, 79, 86, 161

Intercession: 3, 13, 20, 57, 72,

Most Psalms express a few of these themes, yet they tend to emphasize one.

For example:

- To truly celebrate God, we need to remember God's faithfulness.
- To intercede for God's help, we begin in lamentation over the brokenness of our world.
- To emphasize how much I adore God and am devoted to my faith, I first confess my unfaithfulness, doubt, and anger.

Be honest in your psalm

Before you begin writing your Psalm, prayerfully look back over what you've been writing in this prayer guide. Look especially at your responses to the prompt: *if you could say anything to God rightwrite now, what would you say?*

Attempt to communicate honestly and freely with God about what you really are thinking and feeling. Can you write out an honest prayer in one sentence?

Find a psalm to learn from

Identify what theme or themes you are expressing and then consider finding a psalm to learn from. Consider writing your psalm based on a psalm in the Bible.

Common conventions in the Psalms

Consider including some typical features of the Psalms.

- A logic from the heart, not the calculative reasoning of the mind

- Open with an address, an invocation; who are you speaking to? What characteristics of God will you name from the beginning?
- Name the trouble, question, lament, obstacle to faith that you are facing.
- Appeal again to God's character. How do you believe God can help you?
- Be creative. Use of metaphor, similar, and/or analogy.
- Help the reader see a picture of either what is so troublesome and/or what God's help looks like.

Let's stay connected!

This prayer guide was written by Josh Banner who serves as the director of the discipleship for the Awakening. Josh was previously the Minister of Music & Arts at Hope College from 2006-2013. During his tenure at Hope he also taught in the Studies in ministry Minor degree program and shared the oversight of the campus recording studios.

Today, Josh is the director of The Invitation, a spirituality center that creates time and space for God at the vital intersection of contemplation and justice. Josh is a spiritual director, teacher, author, retreat facilitator, podcast host, and guides prayer practices in a prison in Muskegon, Michigan.

Josh is married to Dr. Susanna Childress, a professor of creative writing at Hope College, and he is father to Casper, Shepherd, and Merritt.

If you have any questions about this guide or would just like to say hello, please don't be shy!

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