



Tune My Heart

Introduction: 8pm Dimnent

Welcome to the Awakening 2023!

This is your prayer and meditation guide for your spiritual formation this week. Make sure you 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 2023 "Tune My Heart." Our intention this week is for you to find ways to give and receive God's love more easily and readily.

The Awakening is a prayer and worship retreat. We are retreating from our regular rhythms of busyness to quiet our hearts in worship, prayer, and spiritual conversation so we can more easily tune into God's love.

Throughout the day, especially in the mornings we will be slowing our hearts and minds down to pay attention to ourselves, to learn from each other, and to give our hearts and minds to God. We hope to tune our hearts to give and receive the love with God more easily and readily.

You and I so easily get out of tune with the things that matter. We easily get lost in things that don't matter. We can easily get lost in things that even hurt more than they help.

Our focus this week is simply: *what matters?*

Said differently: *What is beautiful? What is true? What is admirable?*

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL FORMATION?

When we consider spiritual formation, we are considering how every part of our lives—how we eat, sleep, play, and work is somehow forming the way we think and love. We are always being formed by the things in our lives. Every detail, big or small, has spiritual implications: how you dress, speak, the people you spend time with, the places you play, study, work and rest—all of these decisions make an impression on you. They shape the way you think, feel, desire, and behave.

Lectio divina - Ephesians 4

v8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

10 I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Pslam 131

*1My heart is not proud, Lord,
my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters
or things too wonderful for me.
2But I have calmed and quieted myself,
I am like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child I am content.
3Israel, put your hope in the Lord
both now and forevermore.*

You've arrived here at the Awakening, finally. Welcome. We are so glad you came. This is a special week for you to learn more about yourself and God.

My name is Josh. I'm especially focused on your growth in discipleship, specifically what is called your spiritual formation. See the definition on the first page, "What is Spiritual Formation." Each year I put together this prayer guide as a way for us to focus each day on prayer.

First, let's check in. How are you doing? Really, how is it going so far? When you think of what has brought you here, when you consider the last few weeks or even the last few days before you arrived, what is going well with you? What is not going so well?

You will be meeting new people, worshipping, and praying in new ways. Most of what you engage this week will be somewhat familiar but also new and different. It may sometimes seem strange and even weird. It is okay if you are still settling in. It takes time to develop trust.

Each year we begin the Awakening by considering how to be here. The newness, even parts that seem strange and weird—these are signs of how big God is and how vast the church is. You have learned how to be a Christian by the examples and teachings of a few people your parents, siblings, a pastor, maybe a teacher or a coach. As you grow deeper in your faith, some of what you have learned will remain inside of you. But as you grow, you will always be learning new things about God. Spiritual growth is always stretching. This is exciting but at times it is also unsettling.

As you arrive here tonight and throughout this whole week, you have permission to *not* be okay. Your experience at the Awakening will be better if you ask questions and find ways to be honest about what you are learning. We hope this is a safe, shame-free space where you are allowed to be you. If anything arises at any time that seems to especially make it hard for you to be you, we need to know about it. This week is especially for *you*. The interns, Jim, and I are here to help you. No question is off limits. **Please let us know how we can help you.**

Prayer and worship, spiritual formation is a very personal journey. Opening our hearts to God can't be forced or faked. In fact, much of what we learn is possible only when we are honest about our failures, doubts, and questions. Since this is vulnerable, we need to agree on some guidelines on how we share in our small groups.

PERMISSIONS

So that you understand that this week is for you and that you have permission to be you. Let's review all these permissions.

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

'Ordo Amoris'

For St Augustine following Jesus was a question of ordering our loves. It's not that we can't love the things in the world. It's that we can't love any single thing more than we love God. Even more importantly, it's that all the things of this world are signs that can direct us to love God more easily and readily, that we learn to love through everything in our lives.

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 made those choices?" "I wonder what my reaction to his story teaches me about myself?" "I wonder how she is feeling right now?"

SUNDAY NIGHT

Summary: Tuning my heart to give and receive love from God more easily and readily is a practice of quieting my heart to listen more carefully to my desires. As I pay attention to what I really want, I can learn to live a day better. If I can live a day better, then I might be able to think about how well I can live a week, a month, a year, a life. I often get distracted from God's love, so I need to checkin with myself and listen closely.

Have you been asked recently what you really want? That is sometimes a very difficult question to answer. When we worship and pray, we are engaging those parts of our hearts and minds where we consider what matters most to us. Have you ever taken time to consider what matters most to you? Do you have a sense of how you want to live?

So much of who you will be in your twenties, thirties...really for the rest of your life—so much of who you will be is determined by decisions you make at this point of your life. Considering the entirety of your life? Wow. This is an enormous task. So let's dial it down a bit to something more simple. How about a single day? How would you define a good day? From the moment you wake and lift your head to the moment when you lay back down to sleep, what are you aiming for? What does a day *mean* to you? What is a day for?

Often you and I live our lives without knowing what we really want. We get stuck in someone else's expectations, someone else's way of living and loving, someone else's way of defining what matters in a day. We get busy. We rush. Each day can seem like a blur. We live such hectic lives that make it very difficult to pay attention to what matters.

Our theme for this week is "tuning our hearts to more readily give and receive God's love." When we ask ourselves, *how am I really doing right now*—this is a way of tuning our hearts, a way of seeing how we are living and loving.

When we ask ourselves: *what kind of day do I want to live?*—when we ask this question earnestly, all the bigger questions about ourselves, about the world, and about God come into focus. Have you tuned a guitar or trumpet? Have you had to work hard to sing on pitch? Singing on pitch, tuning an instrument, and tuning your heart, all these require us to slow down, listen, and to pay attention.

Imagine that you are the instrument. The Spirit of God created you to be just who you are because he wants to flow through you in love. God wants to play you, to sound through your rhythms, your inner chord structures, to breathe and sing through you.

This week we are slowing down to pray, worship, meditate, journal, and to have spiritual conversation so that we can more readily cooperate with the Holy Spirit, so we can allow the Spirit to help us tune our hearts to give and receive love.

We will be pausing throughout the week to check in with ourselves so we can pay attention to what is really going on inside our hearts and minds. The challenge is that there is a lot of confusion and noise that make it difficult to pay attention. There is a lot of noise inside of ourselves also noise outside of ourselves.

Let's check in right now. Take a moment to quiet your heart and mind. Close your eyes for a minute. Slow your breath. Release any stress and Notice what is happening inside of you. How do you experience yourself? Are you nervous, tired, excited, glad? How would you describe your experience of yourself right now?

Let's also notice your experience of God. Are you tuned into God's love and presence? Are you aware of God? How would you describe this experience? Does that question make sense to you? Have you ever experienced God's love and presence?

If you were to say one thing to God right now, what would you say? Write down a word, a phrase, or even a sentence prayer speaking honestly to God about what you want for tonight, for tomorrow, or for this week.

“The glory of God is a human being fully alive.”

-St. Irenaeus of Lyon



St. Irenaeus was a Greek bishop in the 1st and 2nd centuries. His writings are very important to the church today in the way they help us understand the incarnation, that Jesus was in nature both fully human and fully God.

Tune My Heart

8am Dimnent

We will begin each of our sessions praying through Ephesians 4 and Psalm 131 using the practice of *lectio divina*, “divine reading.” See appendix A to learn more. After we complete *lectio*, you will have a time of solitude to work through the meditations and to answer the reflection questions. Then you will return to your small groups to discuss what you are learning.

Each meditation in this prayer guide begins with a summary statement of how we can posture our hearts toward God. You don’t have to agree with the statement or anything within this guide. These are simply “call to worship” prayers that might help you begin.

Summary: I know what it means to be weak. I know what it means to be strong. My attention is on Jesus. Instead of paying attention to the externals of up and down, what is or is not going well, I am in tune.

Last night we considered what we hope from our lives by first considering what we hope from a day. Considering what we desire in a day allows us to slow down to consider, *what do I truly want right now?* Our discipline is to check in with ourselves, to be honest what is or is *not* going well. As we check in with ourselves, we are able to tune into God’s love.

One challenge of this checking in with ourselves is the heaviness of a bad day or a bad week. Or how about a bad month or a tough semester? Sometimes we go through difficult seasons that don’t seem like they will ever end.

Have you had difficult days? Days you remember like a bad dream? Do you recall the last time you thought to yourself, *this is the worst day of my life?*

Was it trouble at school or fear of disappointing your parents? Was it a matter of being understood by your friends? Have you felt like the people you thought were your nearest and dearest friends—they just turned out to not be safe people after all? Or was it some kind of real failure, where someone noticed that you just couldn’t do what you said you could do? Have you ever felt like you were found out to be a faker, a loser, a mistake?

Describe some of the tough things you have experienced.

The other challenge of checking in with ourselves is when things are turning out well. This is a question of tuning our expectations. It may seem strange to consider that good things could make it difficult to stay tuned into God. Let me explain. Have you done really well at something recently or ever? Have you been able to accomplish something so well with precious discipline and care that someone or a group or maybe even an audience showered you with adulation and gratitude? When was that last time you felt like you were winning? Describe your experience.

Much of the goodness of life is about climbing up steep mountains that seemed insurmountable. When we work hard you discover that you are smarter, tougher, more talented, and capable than you had previously thought possible. It's thrilling to climb to these mountain tops. But can we live there? Can every day of our lives be a thrilling victory?

In our Philippians passage, the Apostle Paul tells us that he has found the secret of how to be content despite the ups and downs, the good and the bad. He's saying, *My life is not a rollercoaster. My days are not controlled by what seems to be good and bad. I am paying attention to the things in my life that are beyond the ups and down, the goodness that is deeper. I am tuned into the love of God that never changes.*

Have you ever noticed that on those days that seem incredibly hellbent, those days when the world seems to be falling apart—have you noticed that those days just pass away? Remember, we are considering what matters in life by first considering what matters in a single day. So recall how time and patience help us see that those days that seem so insanely and impossibly horrible are not so bad after all. What we thought was the end of the world? It's just a bad day.

On the other hand, for all the times we have experienced some kind of victory, the good grade, the approval of parents, the invitation to hang out with friends, the applause from a performance, the win in a game—have you noticed that no matter how amazing the experience of success, the euphoria of winning fades almost as rapidly as the

troubles of a bad day?

As you sit prayerfully to think about what truly matters, as you tune your heart what is substantial, you will find things beneath things beneath the things that matter! If you pay attention closely, you may stumble into gratitude for the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

I've been frustrated, angry, confused, impatient, anxious, selfish, tempted, trapped, stuck, lost.

I've also been happy, delighted, surrounded by love and approval. I've succeeded at several things.

But all those things shift and change. One day is good. Another is bad. There is only one part of my life that stays the same. I am finding that the best use of my time and energy is to tune my heart into giving and receiving God's love.

Checking in...Tuning our hearts...

Let's check in with ourselves again this morning. Take a moment to sit quietly. Close your eyes. Open your heart. Slow your breath. Listen to what is stirring inside of you. How are you doing? Describe how you are experiencing yourself this morning. Is your heart open or closed? Are you excited about today or nervous?

If you were to say one thing to God right now, what would you say? Write down a word, a phrase, or even a sentence prayer speaking honestly to God about what you want for tonight, for tomorrow, or for this week.

When you have completed the reading and reflection above, return to your group to discuss what you are learning.

St. Augustine defines sin as

Incurvatus in se,

The “self curved in on itself.”

In keeping with our theme of tuning our hearts to give and receive love more readily and easily with God, Augustine might say that sin is being out of tune with God’s love.

The only way of us to tune our hearts, to order our affections toward God is by being honest about the things that are distracting us from God’s love.

MONDAY NIGHT

Summary: There is a lot of confusion and noise inside my heart. I am also surrounded by confusion and noise. I want to belong to God, so I want to pay attention the things that keep me distracted from God’s love. And I want to ask God for help to put Jesus at the center of my attention. As the Apostle Paul has told us, he has learned the secret of contentment. He has learned how to tune his heart into God’s love.

As we attempt to tune our hearts to give and receive love more easily and readily, we are wading through the confusion that is inside of us and the confusion in the world around us. Let’s first consider the confusion and noise of the world, confusion that happens to us.

You and I are bombarded by layers of information and misinformation every hour of every day. Billion dollar industries work very, very hard to get our attention, to tell us what matters.



St. Augustine of Hippo, a 4th Century African who is arguably the most important theologian of both the East and West.

They want to tell us how our bodies should be shaped and clothed and what kinds of celebrity-like status we should enjoy. This week away from our screens is a relief from how advertising, movies, popular music, and social media shape our desires.

This confusion and noise makes their way into our relationships. We want to belong. We want friends, to know and be known by each other. Yet it is getting harder and harder for us to know how to sincerely develop friendships when social media is the primary way we engage with each other. Social media can be an incredible gift if it helps us stay connected to each other. Yet as with all of our most powerful tools, the greater the possible good there is also greater possible misuse and danger.

Cognitive science has mapped out the levels of danger inherent with social media: distractions, sleep disruption, increased exposure to bullying and peer pressure, rumor spreading, the potential to develop unrealistic views of other people’s lives. You may cringe at these

details. You may not want to take these concerns seriously. Please hear me say, there is nothing explicitly wrong with movies, music, or social media. The question we are considering this week is how to approach these things in ways that do not keep us from tuning our hearts to give and receive God's love.

"Sin" is the old heavy word that is largely misunderstood today because we handle sin mostly in terms of shame. For this week we are considering sin only as

those things in our lives that make it hard to stay tuned to give and receive love. God is not so concerned that you and I sin or that we are bad people. God is concerned about those things that keep us from giving and receiving love freely with each other and with him. He knows we are spiritually sick. He wants to be our healer. He knows that our hearts are out of tune with his love.

The question for tonight: *how are we letting the things outside of us spiritually form what we believe about ourselves, each other, and God?*

"The real work of prayer is to become silent and listen that says good things about me. To gently push aside and silence the many voices that question my goodness and to trust that I will hear the voice of blessing—that demands real effort."

- Henri Nouwen



Henri Nouwen (1932–1996) was a Dutch Catholic priest, professor, writer and theologian who left the prestige of Notre Dame, Yale, and Harvard to live and serve in a community of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Tune My Heart

8am Dimnent

Summary: As I learn to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to tune my heart to give and receive God’s love more easily and readily, I want to focus on what is true, pure, lovely, and admirable. Tuning my heart is about setting my mind on these things.

This morning we are moving more intentionally to “think on such things” that are admirable, excellent, worthy of praise. This is an instruction to meditate on what matters. Meditation is essential to our Christian practice of prayer and worship. There are many ways to meditate. The idea here is to ruminate, to savor, to focus on, to rehearse the good things of our lives that help us tune our hearts.

Last night we considered how we are letting things outside of ourselves form us spiritually. These external influences can be negative. They can cause us to be out of tune with God’s love. However, most of what we experience in the world are gifts from God that he gives us to help us tune our hearts into God’s love. To consider our theme of tuning our hearts, we could use the metaphor of tuning a radio. We slow down each morning this week to dial into the frequency waves of God. However, the trouble with that metaphor is that God is broadcasting on all the channels. His love can be heard on every frequency. God is everywhere and in everything. The question is if I am paying attention to hear and see him.

Tonight we will have a delightful time at the beach to eat, play, and sing together in nature. We have that to look forward to. But God has already been present in the Awakening in surprising ways from the moment you arrived. He has revealed himself through the people you are meeting, in the teaching, and worship. But what about the most ordinary parts of your day, how you wake, eat, walk across the college campus, and eat? How can we tune our hearts to love in and through even the smallest, most ordinary things?

Let’s reflect on what goodness you’ve experienced thus far since you arrived at the Awakening. Where have you found love, hope, care, goodness? What or who do you find yourself admiring? Is there a song we’ve sung, an event or a person that has especially opened your heart? What are you grateful for thus far?

Now, let's compare what you are drawn at the Awakening to what you pay attention to back at home. This past year at home, who or what do you admire the most? What things or activities do think about to the most? What do you find yourself meditating on throughout each day?

The Apostle Paul is inviting us to pay attention to goodness and beauty. Much of the noise and confusion in our lives is due to a misunderstand of beauty for what is sexy or cool. There is nothing wrong with physical beauty. The question is if what we believe is beautiful, if it has depth or substance, if the beauty is full of love, if it will last. And regarding what's cool? Recall what we considered yesterday morning about how bad days and even good days pass and fade. The 'cool' is even more fleeting and unstable. The features of the cool, the fashion, the music, the attitudes always change. Once everyone catches on to what is cool, it's no longer cool.

Let's meditate further on what you pay attention to here at the Awakening and back home. Let's try and be more specific about what is admirable, pure, excellent, worthy of praise. Look back over what you have named above. Look closely. How do these things help you tune your heart into God's love?

When you have completed the reading and reflection above, return to your group to discuss what you are learning.

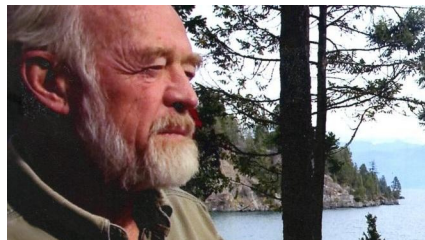
To Think on Such Things...To Meditate...Hagah

In this section below, the late pastor Eugene Peterson helps us think about how we can respond to the Apostle Paul's instruction to "think about such things." Peterson uses the way his dog chews on a bone to *hagah*, the Hebrew word for 'meditate.'

"...he would drag the bone off twenty yards or so to a more private place, usually the shade of a large moss-covered boulder, and go to work on the bone. The social aspects of the bone were behind him; now the pleasure became solitary. He gnawed the bone, turned it over and

around, licked it, worried it. Sometimes we could hear a low rumble or growl, what in a cat would be a purr. He was obviously enjoying himself and in no hurry. After a leisurely couple of hours he would bury it and return the next day to take it up again. An average bone lasted about a week.

I always took delight in my dog's delight, his playful seriousness, his childlike spontaneities now totally absorbed in "the one thing needful." But imagine my further delight in coming upon a phrase one day while reading Isaiah in which I found the poet-prophet observing something similar to what I enjoyed so much in my dog, except that his animal was a lion instead of a dog: "As a lion or a young lion growls over his prey ... " (Isa. 31:4). "Growls" is the word that caught my attention and brought me that little "pop" of delight. What my dog did over his precious bone, making those low throaty rumbles of pleasure as he gnawed, enjoyed, and savored his prize, Isaiah's lion did to his prey. The nugget of my delight was noticing the Hebrew word here translated as "growl" (hagah) but usually translated as "meditate," as in the Psalm 1 phrase describing the blessed man or woman whose "delight is in the law of the LORD," on which "he meditates day and night" (v. 2). Or in Psalm 63: "When I think of thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the watches of the night" (v 6). But Isaiah uses this word to refer to a lion growling over his prey the way my dog worried a bone.



Eugene Peterson (1932-2018) was one of the most important pastor, theologian, poets of the twentieth century. He translated the entire bible by himself, a translation called *The Message* that is a remarkably delightful, creative way to read the Bible. Western Theological Seminary adjacent to Hope College is home to the Eugene Peterson Center that hosts all of Peterson's letters and original manuscripts.

Peterson often taught the poetry of Hopkins below. Both authors help us see God in everything, everywhere.

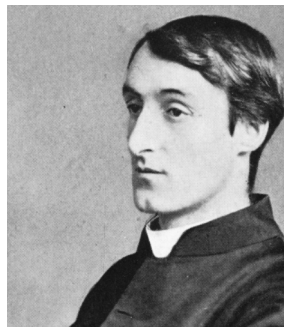
Pied Beauty

by Gerard Maley Hopkins

Glory be to God for dappled things –
 For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
 For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
 Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
 Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
 And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
 Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
 With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
 He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:

Praise him



Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ (1844-1889) was a Jesuit priest whose private poetry became famous after his death. His attention to visual detail in nature is expressed through the "sprung rhythm" sound of his word choices.

Tune My Heart

At the Beach

As we consider what is pure and lovely, we have the gift of nature this evening. Read over the description of the Visio Divina practice in the Appendix B section. Ask any necessary questions in your group. Make sure each of you is calm and willing to look for God in nature. An intern will guide your group through each step. When you finish, return to your small group and have each person briefly share what they have noticed about God.

Summary: To become like Jesus, to tune my heart into God's love, this is the discipline of following Jesus. Discipline is practiced by disciples, by those who are Jesus's students. I can't learn to follow Jesus by myself. I learn so much about God in and through others. I want to renew my love and concern for others who are following Jesus.

When we consider our spiritual formation, we are considering what we are tuned into. I hope by now you are coming to a better understanding that everything and everything in and around you is shaping the way you give and receive love. This week of the Awakening can serve as a significant turning point in your entire life if you want it to, if you let God into your heart and mind this week.

I am confident about the potential for this week to be a life changing experience for you because I know how

helpful a week of prayer and worship is for any human being, but I am especially aware of how a week tuning your heart to God's love is significant for anyone between the ages of 13-18.

During adolescence your mind and heart are going through a massive vortex of growth and change. Have you had a chance to sincerely consider this? Your ability to think critically and handle all the emotions that are surging inside of you is immense.

You are creating and recreating your understanding of yourself, others, the world, and God.

You are developing a new awareness of your deeper desires to be heard and seen by others.

You have a greater capacity for relationships, and a greater capacity to want to be your own true self. In grade school you were simply part of your family, but now you are trying to figure out how to be autonomous from your parents and siblings.

You are developing new interests in

certain friendships and activities.

But as you notice your desire for these things, you are becoming more vulnerable. Now with greater self-awareness the stakes seem higher. The greater your desire, the greater the potential anguish of failure. If you aim yourself toward particular friendships, what if they don't reciprocate and enjoy you too. If you choose an activity, a sport, an instrument, what if you don't have the discipline or talent to become impressively good?

Now you are comparing yourself to others in whole new ways. It's so much easier to become embarrassed by something, anything. You want to be unique and independent, a real creatively genuine person, yet you also

don't want to be too strangely different. You don't want to stand out and be too weird.

This journey into adolescence is exciting and also exhausting. You are making specific decisions about who you are and who you want to be. You especially need safe people you can trust during this time. We hope this week with the Awakening is especially a safe place for you to slow down and to listen to yourself and to God.

Much of today, tonight, and tomorrow will be spent putting together your group's worship set. You will have a special role to play, and you will also have many opportunities to trust others in your group.

As this week has progressed, as you move toward putting this worship set together, what are you noticing about yourself? What are you excited about in terms of who you are as a person? What do you celebrate and give thanks for?

As this week has progressed, as you move toward putting this worship set together, what are you noticing about yourself? What are you excited about in terms of your own gifts and strengths?

When you consider your weaknesses and fears, what are you concerned about?

What about the others in your group? What do you admire in them? How is your group helping you learn to trust God more? How are you experiencing God's love in and through them?

Let's review again: in our passage for this week, the Apostle Paul speaks about the secret he has learned of contentment. We are choosing the metaphor of tuning an instrument because this secret is about our attention, our alignment, our clarity, and resonance. God is not "out there" somewhere in the beyond. The resonances of God's love are all around us and inside of us. He can reveal his love to us in and through anything.

There will be lots of rush and maybe even panic as you plan practice your worship set. Remember, all music is created in and through stillness. Music begins and ends with stillness and silence. As a piece of music develops its meaning, it meanders through moments of rests, various pauses. Yet to even get our instruments and voices ready to play a piece of music, musicians need to slow down and listen as they tune their instruments. Vocalists need to warm up, to sing some scales. They need to be attentive to the other vocalists and instruments to sing in tune.

Let's return to our practice of tuning our hearts. If you were to say one thing to God right now, what would you say? Write down a word, a phrase, or even a sentence prayer speaking honestly to God about what you want for tonight, for tomorrow, or for this rest of this week.

Tune My Heart

Summary: I have been tuning my heart to give and receive God's love more easily and readily all week. Now, as I consider the end of my Awakening retreat, I want to think about how I can bring the Awakening home. But before I go home, I have the chance to cooperating with the Spirit as I help lead worship today. How will I put the things I have learned into practice today? How will today help me see my desires more clearly? As I take steps of faith today, how can I keep my heart tuned to God's love?

It's a big day. You will be on a big stage in Dimnent chapel in front of parents and friends. The stage is a strange thing in our society. We tend to think only really important, special people can get behind a microphone. Today you are one of those people. But what does this mean? Why are you here at the Awakening? Why are you helping to lead this worship service?

What have you learned about tuning your heart to give and receive God's love this week? How can what you have learned keep you in tune with God's love throughout the day?

Please understand, we do not pray and worship to earn God's favor. God already love us more than we can ask or imagine. We pray and worship, we set our minds of admirable, pure, excellent things so that we respond to God's love, to tune our hearts more easily into his love, to enjoy his love.

Another way of saying this: prayer is not about getting God's attention. He is more intimately attentive to you and me. Prayer is about how God is able to capture my attention. It's about how I am tuned into him.

Of all the words the Apostle listed, perhaps “whatever is pure” is the most piercing word when it comes to the ways we resist God. Today as you rehearse more and as you lead worship, this is especially a chance to trust God more sincerely than you have all week. You are preparing some music, some prayers, and even some teaching. Let’s also prepare our hearts.

As you prepare to serve God, you are considering how you will collaborate with the Holy Spirit to help others experience and know God’s presence, his love, and truth. The old word for ministry preparation is “consecration.” To consecrate myself is to choose a kind of purity, a more whole-hearted, active willingness to surrender to God. We’ve been doing this consecration all week. Now, with this service, your faith has the opportunity to be activated and stretched.

Again, this is all about being in tune with God’s love, wisdom, his presence, his voice and movements. To consecrate, is to set ourselves apart, to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to make ourselves more available to the sacred work of God. Tomorrow, in our morning worship service, we will practice a communal consecration as we send you home to your friends and families, schools and churches, so that you can more easily and readily share God’s love with others.

We can consecrate ourselves this morning as we check in with ourselves and with God. How are you doing this morning? How do you experience yourself? What is good? What is difficult?

If you were to say one thing to God right now, what would you say? Write down a word, a phrase, or even a sentence prayer speaking honestly to God about what you want for tonight, for tomorrow, or for the close of this week.

Have you learned anything more about the distractions that are keeping you from giving and receiving God’s love? As you prepare to lead worship, how can you especially give these things to God?

REGARDING CONSECRATION

Eugene Peterson

The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways that Jesus is the Way

CHAPTER 6: Isaiah of Jerusalem: "The Holy"

If Elijah the Tishbite of Gilead is our archetype prophet, Isaiah of Jerusalem is our most comprehensive prophet—our renaissance prophet, if you will, fluent in the language of revelation and bold in the action of salvation that delineates an embodied life of obedient faithfulness to the word of God. When the ways and means by which God works interpenetrate the ways and means by which we work, we have a name for it: Holy. The characteristic name for God in Isaiah is "The Holy."

"Holy" is the best word we have for the all-encompassing, all-embracing life of God that transforms us into a uniquely formed and set-apart people. Holy is never a pious abstraction. It is never a quality that can be understood apart from the bodies that we inhabit or the neighborhoods in which we live or apart from the God who made, saves, and blesses us. It is something *lived*. It is the life of God breathed into and invigorating our lives. Leviticus—"be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2)—insists on a continuity between who God is and the men and women that we become.

When Jesus prays with and for his disciples in his last conversation with them before his crucifixion, he prays just this: "*Holy [hagie] Father [s]anctify [hagiason] them ... that they also may be consecrated [hegiasmeno]*..." (John 17:11, 17, 19 RSV). The triple repetition of "holy" is obscured in our English translation, but it is there:

first as an adjective of God ("Holy Father"); then as a verb, the action of God that makes us holy ("sanctify"); and then as a participle describing us as the ones who are made holy ("consecrated") by God's work. "Holy" is among our most precious words. It names the Trinitarian God-vitality, Spirit-vitality, and Jesus-vitality that gradually but surely forms from within the lives of the men and women who pray "Hallowed be [Holy be, *hagiastheto*] thy Name."

But in our culture it is the fate of holiness to be banalized. Holiness is reduced to blandness, the specialty of sectarian groups who reduce life to behaviors and clichés that can be certified as safe: goodness in a straitjacket, truth drained of mystery, beauty emasculated into ceramic knickknacks. Whenever I run up against this, I remember Ellen Glasgow's wonderful line in her autobiography. Of her father, a Presbyterian elder full of rectitude and rigid with duty, she wrote, "He was entirely unselfish, and in his long life never committed a pleasure."

But holiness is in wild and furious opposition to all such banality and blandness. The God-life cannot be domesticated or used - it can only be entered into on its own terms. Holiness does not make God smaller so that he can be used in convenient and manageable projects; it makes us larger so that God can give out life through us, extravagantly, spontaneously. The holy is an interior fire, a passion for living in and for God, a capacity for exuberance in the presence of God. There are springs deep within and around us from which we can drink and sing God.

Tune My Heart

Introduction: 8am Dimment

We will meet together to introduce this morning's prayer practices. You will have some time to be alone followed by time to share with your small group.

Lectio Divina: Our 'text' this morning for prayer is you, your journey this week of the Awakening. You'll need your journal to prayerfully look through this morning so make sure you have it. I invite you to return to this time of prayer with the same expectation we've nurtured all week: that God wants to speak to you about who you are becoming with the same amount of hope and trust we have when we pray with Scripture.

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

PRAY – 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 disciplina might look like this:

Begin with silence – rest!

Sunday: where did I notice God on my first day at the Awakening? Circle and underline where you notice God.

Silence – rest!

Monday: where did I notice God during my first day at the Awakening? Circle or underline.

Silence – rest!

Tuesday: where was God?

Silence – rest!

Wednesday: where was God?

Silence – rest!

Thursday: where was God?

Consider the people you've been with, the activities you've been involved in, the places you've been, the songs you've sung. Look through your journal entries. Read through Colossians 3 and Psalm 51.

What stands out as the most important ways Jesus has revealed himself to you? Make a list of words or phrases that describe the movements of God this week.

Now sit back 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? Journal your reflections.

NOTES:

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

Lectio Divina

“Divine Reading”

Lectio

Meditatio

Oratio

Contemplatio

Actio

The main purpose of lectio divina is to allow the text to read us. Through lectio we offer ourselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1) to God by submitting to him, by giving ourselves to him as we read the Scriptures. 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 us our mental scalpel begin to take the book apart. In Literature class this is required, to separate plot, setting, major and minor characters, and theme in order 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.

But the Bible doesn't always make sense to my minds. 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 aware of my desperate need of 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 to the person of God revealed to me through the Scriptures, the Word revealed through the Word.

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 casn 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 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, and full of 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 v 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 me to allow this Scripture to come to life in and through me today and tomorrow?* 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 both share briefly. Or if you have even less time, you can just share a word or phrase that can represent what is stirring inside of you.

Silence & Rest! Give thanks!

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 to 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. But do you really see what is there? Do you truly enjoy what is in your line of sight? The question in visio divina is whether we can see God around us?

A classic hymn offers us some 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 him, 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*:

Prepare: Close your eyes, breathe, clear your mind, and ask God to reveal himself in this time of prayer with you. Ask God to speak to you through this image.

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.

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. Close your eyes, seeing that piece of the image in your mind.

Oratio (pray): Open your eyes and look again at the piece of the image that caught your eye. Allow it to bring forth a word, image, or emotion. Close and rest your eyes.

Contemplatio (contemplation): Open your eyes and gaze at the whole image. What is God speaking to you today through this image? How will you respond to Him? Spend time processing that with God. Pray or journal about it.

God's Grandeur

by Gerard Maley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

*And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.*

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Teach the children. We don't matter so much, but the children do. Show them daisies and the pale hepatica. Teach them the taste of sassafras and wintergreen. The lives of the blue sailors, mallow, sunbursts, the moccasin flowers. And the frisky ones—inkberry, lamb's-quarters, blueberries. And the aromatic ones—rosemary, oregano. Give them peppermint to put in their pockets as they go to school. Give them the fields and the woods and the possibility of the world salvaged from the lords of profit. Stand them in the stream, head them upstream, rejoice as they learn to love this green space they live in, its sticks and leaves and then the silent, beautiful blossoms.

Attention is the beginning of devotion.

– Mary Oliver, *Upstream*



Poet Mary Oliver (1935–2019) is one of America's most celebrated poets. Her work is inspired by nature, rather than the human world, stemming from her lifelong passion for solitary walks in the wild.

The Prayer of Examen

The Prayer of Examen comes to us from St Ignatius of Loyola, the Father of the Jesuits, the “Society of Jesus.” We have been practicing the Examen throughout the week of the Awakening. The detail offered here

shouldn’t seem intimidating because the Examen is just a formal way of coming to understand the possibilities of talking freely with Jesus. Step four of the Examen is the heart of the prayer practice, to have a conversation with God! We might often say that Christianity is about having a relationship with Jesus, but not many of us truly engage God in a substantial interactive, dynamic, conversational way. This is all Ignatius was *in*, to be the “society” or the friends of Jesus.

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.

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.

Steps of the Prayer of Examen

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

2. **Illumination.** 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 specifics of your day where you sensed either consolation or desolation. Identify at least three specific instances.

4. **Meditate. Converse with God. Reflect** on what you did, said, or thought in those instances. Were you drawing closer to God, or further away?

5. **Commit. Look toward 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, and conclude with a prayer of thanks.

Let's Stay Connected!

This prayer guide was written by Josh Banner who serves as the director of discipleship for the Awakening. Josh was previously the Minister of Music & Art 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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