

## The Movements of Prayer

**Upward:** praise, thanksgiving

**Inward:** confession, repentance

\*British evangelist George Whitefield once wrote, "God give me a deep humility, a well-guided zeal, a burning love and a single eye, and then let men or devils do their worst!"

The following are examinations used by Whitefield to help lead his heart towards confession and repentance.

-Deep humility

*Examination:* Have I looked down on anyone? Have I been too stung by criticism? Have I felt snubbed and ignored?

*Consider the free grace of Jesus* until I sense (a) decreasing disdain, since I am a sinner too, and (b) decreasing pain over criticism, since I should not value human approval over God's love. In light of his grace, I can let go of the need to keep up a good image-it is too great a burden and is now unnecessary. I reflect on free grace until I experience grateful, restful joy.

-A well-guided zeal

*Examination:* Have I avoided people or tasks that I know I should face? Have I been anxious and worried? Have I failed to be circumspect, or have I been rash and impulsive?

*Consider the free grace of Jesus* until there is (a) no cowardly avoidance of hard things, since Jesus faced evil for me, and (b) no anxious or rash behavior, since Jesus' death proves that God cares and will watch over me. It takes pride to be anxious, and I recognize I am not wise enough to know how my life should go. I reflect on free grace until I experience calm thoughtfulness and strategic boldness.

-A burning love

*Examination:* Have I spoken or thought unkindly of anyone? Am I justifying myself by caricaturing someone else in my mind? Have I been impatient and irritable? Have I been self-absorbed, indifferent, and inattentive to people?

*Consider the free grace of Jesus* until there is (a) no coldness or unkindness, as I think of the sacrificial love of Christ for me, (b) no impatience, as I think of his patience with me, and (c) no indifference, as I think of how God is infinitely attentive to me. I reflect on free grace until I sense warmth and affection towards others.

-A "single" eye

*Examination:* Am I doing what I do for God's glory and the good of others, or am I being driven by fears, need for approval, love of comfort and ease, need for control, hunger for acclaim and power, or the fear of other people? (Luke 12:4-5). Am I looking at anyone with envy? Am I giving in to even the first notions of sexual lust or gluttony? Am I spending my time on urgent things rather than important things because of these inordinate desires?

*Consider how the free grace* provides me with what I am looking for in these other things.

**Outward:** supplication, intercession

\*reprinted from Tim Keller's book *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* p. 218-220