



# By Candlelight

Personal Spiritual Practices

Written by Lyle Griner  
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# By Candlelight

What people are saying...

"Young adults, really anyone, searching for purpose will find this useful."

"This resource helps me remember that God is always with me in the room."

"There is so much here that has brought me peace...mainly because it reminds me of who God is and that I'm allowed to actually talk to God...like a friend!"

"These activities will benefit you and help to reframe life around God, others, and love."

"I think people will find this extremely helpful. I love the variety in each of your activities...something for everyone!"

"It changed the meaning of confession to be positive. It is freeing, and releasing, which is great!"

"I think this would be great for any young, middle-aged, or old adult wanting to be more aware of God's presence with us."

"I love *By Candlelight*; what an awesome, reflective devotional. I can totally see this being good for people in transition into college. Even my mom is going to love this!"

Designed to be given to others

Buy a candle

add

By Candlelight

**Personal Spiritual Practices**

By Lyle Griner ©2018

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# By Candlelight

## Personal Spiritual Practices

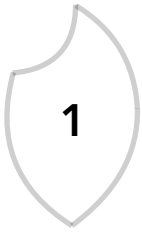
By Lyle Griner ©2018

*16 ways to sit by candlelight and to "Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God." – Psalm 46:10 MSG*

Find one that fits, combine several, or modify one to find your personal rhythm to continue a growing faith and life aware of God's grace, love, peace and hope.

There is nothing we do or say that makes God closer to us or look on us with more favor. God's presence is constant. God's love is constant. What we get to do is simply be more aware of God's all-the-time presence. Being aware happens best when we step out of the traffic and direct our attention back towards God. Light a candle and give yourself some time and space to be aware of God.

1. **By Candlelight Say, "I Lit This Candle For You"**
2. **By Candlelight Say, "I'm Stressed Out"**
3. **By Candlelight Say, "I Welcome What Comes"**
4. **By Candlelight Say, "My Pray-Fors"**
5. **By Candlelight Say, "Come Out Of The Traffic"**
6. **By Candlelight Say, "Time To Drift With The Music"**
7. **By Candlelight Say, "Prayers With God's Words"**
8. **By Candlelight Say, "I'll Write It All Down"**
9. **By Candlelight Say, "I Love To Doodle"**
10. **By Candlelight Say, "I Am Grateful"**
11. **By Candlelight Say, "I'm Looking Back On My Day"**
12. **By Candlelight Say, "I know I'm Loved."**
13. **By Candlelight Say, "I Remember the Journey"**
14. **By Candlelight Say, "Yay!"**
15. **By Candlelight Say, "I Confess"**
16. **By Candlelight Say, "I'm Angry"**



1

By Candlelight say,

## « I Lit A Candle For You »

Bad news? Sad story? Pain? Disappointment? Loss? Stress? Hurting heart?

You hear the experiences of darkness for others that you can't solve or fix. You wish you had magic words to make everything bright and shiny. Instead, you just listen. You say, "I'm sorry," "I hurt for you," maybe even, "I'll pray for you."

Try saying, "I'll light a candle for you." And then actually light a candle! Let it glow through the day, through the night, as long as you want.

### **Light a Candle**

Pause when you pass it. Know that God's love, grace, hope and peace never quit even in dark times. Be mindful. Lift and hold your friend's hurt. Stop and pray.

Reassure the person that you are thinking and praying for him or her. Text a picture. Text the words. "Candle is still lit." Consider gifting them their own candle.

Consider a nightly prayer list of people for whom you will pray, for whom you will light a candle.

*Suddenly, God, your light floods my path, God drives out the darkness. I smash the bands of marauders, I vault the high fences. What a God! His road stretches straight and smooth. Every God-direction is road-tested. Everyone who runs toward him makes it. – 2 Samuel 22: 29-31 MSG*

## “I’m Stressed Out”

People, work, school, romance, family... and this is just a beginning list of the things that stress us out. What about time, deadlines, self-doubt and disappointments? And, *stress*, that is too simple a word. It really needs lots of words, like tension, tightness, pressure, fatigue, anxiousness, strain and probably many more descriptors.

- Shut off the lights. Sit in the dark.
- Time to physically tighten and tense your whole body. Maybe it already is!
- Clench your fists. Tighten them even more! Tighten your face, shoulders, toes, stomach... tighten everything, squeeze it all into a ball. Find every muscle and compress every single one.
- NOW! One by one, start relaxing those muscles. Relax the forehead muscles first. Slowly, no rushing! Keep it slow as you work at releasing, one by one each and every muscle, from the top of your head, all the way to your toes. Intentionally and mindfully name each body part as you unwind, release, and relax each muscle.

Rest! Relax. Now...

### Light a Candle

Slow your breath. Internally start repeating these words as you breathe.

On the out breath “Let Go”

On the in breath “Let God”

Do this over and over. Let the words take over. Avoid all other thoughts.

*“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.” – Matthew 11, 28-30 MSG*



3

By Candlelight say,

## « I Welcome What Comes »

Caution! If you use this, it may change your whole approach to and view of life. Good luck, if you move ahead. You've been warned!

Welcome is normally a word reserved for the good things. This prayer will challenge you to acknowledge the unwanted things in your life and welcome those in also.

### Light a Candle

Welcome the day, the good and the bad, the whatever. Seriously!

This is a prayer practice that believes in welcoming, in trusting God, with everything, everything, everything. The odd part will be welcoming the things you don't feel like welcoming. Welcome the ordinary things, the things you like and the things you avoid. It is a way of acknowledging what you need to let go of and will help you get through or just learn to live with them.

Read it and live it! Consider starting your day with this one.

Welcome, welcome, welcome.  
I welcome everything that comes to me today  
because I know it's for my healing.  
I welcome all thoughts, feelings, emotions,  
persons, situations, and conditions.  
I let go of my desire for power and control.  
I let go of my desire for affection, esteem, approval and pleasure.  
I let go of my desire for survival and security.  
I let go of my desire to change any situation,  
condition, person or myself.  
I open to the love and presence of God and  
God's action within. Amen.

– Mary Mrozowski,  
creator of welcoming prayer practices

*“Everything around me includes and hides the sacred.” – Mary Mrozowski*

*Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.  
– Romans. 15:7 NRSV*





4

By Candlelight say,

## 「 My Pray-Fors 」

Children and youth often start prayer sentences with “I pray for...” I pray for Mommy, I pray for Daddy, I pray for Aunt Heidi, I pray for Happy, our dog...

Simplistic? Beginner? Maybe trite? – But maybe not!

How about intervening shout outs to God! The religious, bigger word is *intercessory prayer*. *I-Pray-Fors* are pleas, hopes, and sometimes just invitations to God on behalf of other people and our life circumstances.

*I-Pray-Fors* align our heart’s hopes with God’s constant flow of grace, love, peace and hope. God may not do the miracle we imagine, but God never shorts us on grace, love, peace and hope.

### Light a Candle

Sit with God. Offer your *I-Pray-For* prayers. List them out. Imagine laying each on a table, maybe even an altar right before God. You and God get to ponder each, knowing that God’s loving and graceful gaze is directed towards the people and situations named.

Pray for health, help, heartaches, happiness, confusions, celebrations and everything else. Pray for it all.

Dear God *I-Pray-for*...

*The first thing I want you to do is pray. Pray every way you know how, for everyone you know. Pray especially for rulers and their governments to rule well so we can be quietly about our business of living simply, in humble contemplation. This is the way our Savior God wants us to live. - 1 Timothy 2:1-3 MSG*



5

By Candlelight say,

## “Come Out Of The Traffic”

Do and think nothing. Just be. Be a *human being* rather than that overly busy *human doing*.

Eugene Peterson inspirationally translates the first part of Psalm 46:10 “*Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God.*”

### Light a Candle

Find the silence. Find the dim or the dark. Listen for the silence, both the external and the internal silence. Step out of the traffic.

The NRSV arranges the beginning of Psalm 46:10 this way, “Be still and know that I am God.”

Meditate with the Psalm, then subtract some words. After each line name words and images that come forth. Go slowly, very slowly. Each line will bring a different awareness.

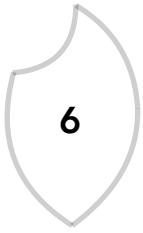
Be still and know that I am God.	Dwell on that line! Be in God’s presence.
Be still and know that I am.	Existence! God is. Let God be God.
Be still and know.	God’s attributes! Know who God is.
Be still.	Quiet your whole self. Sit in the moment.
Be.	Linger here as long as you need. Just be!

Continue by breathing in and breathing out. Call it a breath prayer.

Breathe in the words “Be still.” Breathe out the words “And know.”  
Breathe in the words “Be still.” Breathe out the words “And know.”

Do this over and over. Over and over. Over and over. Over enough to know you have come out of the traffic.

Attention, all! See the marvels of God! He plants flowers and trees all over the earth  
Bans war from pole to pole, breaks all the weapons across his knee.  
“Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God, above politics, above everything.”  
– Psalm 46: 8-10 MSG



6

By Candlelight say,

## “ Time to Drift With The Music ”

Music is often in the background. Even when the music is wonderfully loud, minds are busy with a never ending narrative of stuff.

What are your God songs? The ones that take you into your heart? The ones that find a place of spiritual wonder? The ones that calm you in a way that makes you aware of your own inner soul?

Prepare one of yours. It does not have to be “church” music to speak of God.

### **Light a Candle**

Turn off the lights. Quiet, then clear your mind. Turn up the music.

Let the music stir your soul. Let it translate into an awareness of God inside of you. Find it! Claim it as a spiritual connection. If it reaches into your soul, it counts as prayer.

Consider pulling up the lyrics, reading as you listen. Listen again with eyes closed.

It's not easy! Your mind wants to interrupt with its own interferences. In the light of the candle, let the music live. Breathe it. Savor words, notes, and melodies. Drift into it.

A personal favorite.

*Song: Holy Now*

*Artist: Peter Mayer*

*Album: Million Year Mind*

Folky, yes, but the words alone may open, or at least deepen, your experience and understanding of spirituality.

*Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!  
Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!  
Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!  
Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!  
Praise the Lord! – Psalm 150: 3-6 NRSV*

## Prayers With God's Words

*Lectio Divina*, Latin words! Don't fear them; they mean divine reading. It is a way of reading scripture in a prayerful way. This was originally a favorite of Benedictine monks, but you can do it, too!

Pick a short piece of scripture. A few starter passages are below.

### Light a Candle

Follow these four steps.

Step #1 Read it. (*lectio*) Read slowly and reflectively so that it sinks in. Imagine it is a long awaited letter from a best friend.

Step #2 Reflect on a word or phrase. (*meditatio*) Read it a second time. Watch for a word or phrase that catches your attention. Imagine it vibrating or jumping off the page to you. Ruminant on it, ponder it, wonder about it, chew on it for a while. Highlight it with a marker.

Step #3 Read it as a prayer. (*oratio*) Have a little dialogue with God but let your heart do the talking and listening. Imagine sitting face to face with God. Listen for what God may tell you. Tell God what you think and feel about it.

Step #4 Let go and let God. (*contemplatio*) Just sit. Be quiet. Imagine being held and hugged by a loving parent with the special words or phrase being stirred around in your heart. Reflect on that word or phrase. Write about it or just tell it to God.

### Some starting idea...

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Psalm 23 The Divine Shepherd                     | 12. John 13: 1-17 Jesus washes feet               |
| 2. Psalm 139 We are wonderfully made.               | 13. John 13: 34-35 A new commandment              |
| 3. 1 Samuel 3: 1-21 "Here I am Lord."               | 14. Romans 12:9-12 Marks of a Christian           |
| 4. Micah 6:8 Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly | 15. Galatians 5: 22-26 The fruit of the Spirit    |
| 5. Matthew 5:1-10 The Beatitudes                    | 16. Ephesians 2:4-10 By grace...                  |
| 6. Matthew 5:13-16 Salt and Light                   | 17. Ephesians 4:29-32 Be kind                     |
| 7. Matthew 14: 22-33 Jesus walks on water           | 18. Philippians 4: 4-9 Rejoice in the Lord always |
| 8. Mark 4:35-41 Jesus Stills a Storm                | 19. Colossians 3: 12-17 Clothe yourselves with... |
| 9. Luke 2:41-52 The Boy Jesus in the Temple         | 20. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Rejoice               |
| 10. Luke 10: 25-37 Good Samaritan Story             | 21. 1 John 4:7-11 God Is Love                     |
| 11. John 1: 1-15 In the beginning was the Word      |   |

*My child, keep my words and store up my commandments with you; keep my commandments as the apple of your eye; bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call insight your intimate friend. – Proverbs 7: 1-4 NRSV*

## “I’ll Write It All Down”

Keep a spiritual journal. What’s that you ask? There is no right or wrong. It’s a journal. Like any journal, date your entries, let your writing flow freely. Use a real paper one or keep it digital. Find what fits your style.

The difference is that a spiritual journal is also a prayer. It is what you get to do in the midst of God awareness times.

### **Light a Candle**

#### **Pick a topic.**

Maybe it is a concern or something you wonder about religion, politics, justice, family or relationship; you choose what you need!

Consider writing it as a letter.

Dear God... continue with whatever comes.

#### **Pick a word or words that stir you.**

Write down the word, quote, thought, song lyric, Bible verse, or sermon thought. How and why is it significant? Tell God about it in your journal.

### **Question prayers**

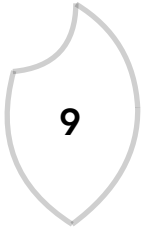
Wrestle with the tough questions — the stuff you don’t get, that doesn’t fit, that you wonder about. These could be things about religion or things about life, or people, or those inner self-reflections. Write your question to God. It is a bit scary to ask God questions. Then, learn to listen to God, something each person seeks in different ways.

### **Observations**

These are today’s concerns that I saw, heard or sensed. Maybe it was an injustice, mistreatment, rudeness. Or maybe it was a smile, compliment or unexpected kindness. All ministry begins with seeing the needs. What did you do? Wish you could have done? Work through a section of Scripture. Something like Mathew 5-7, known as the Sermon on the Mount. Lots of great stuff to ponder! Read and write your words.

Google ideas about spiritual journaling. Others have shared far more than you find here.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. – Philippians 4:8 NRSV



9

By Candlelight say,

## “ I Love To Doodle ”

Praying in Color! What do you need?

- Colored pencils, pens, even crayons.
- Consider using journal pages, but paper of any kind will do.

### **Light a Candle**

Breathe long and deeply. Listen for the silence.

Let a word or name rise from within.

Write that name, word or phrase in the middle of your page.

Doodle, scribble, scrawl, and scratch around it.

Fill the page. Use colors. Artistic ability is not required nor expected.

Do not be concerned about what your hands are doing.

Be mindful, be prayerful. Drift as you doodle.

Just draw and be steeped with the presence of God!

Focus on the name or word. Let your scribbles be your prayer.

*“I used to pray for someone, usually just a line, thirty seconds tops. My prayer was done. Now I put a friend’s name on the center of the page and I doodle and draw, sometimes for thirty minutes or more, just being mindful and prayerful for my friend.”*

### PRAYING IN COLOR

Visit the web site <http://prayingincolor.com/>

Check out the books, journals and ideas

by Sybil MacBeth

*I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord; I will remember your wonders of old.*

*I will meditate on all your work, and muse on your mighty deeds. – Psalm 77. 11-12 NRSV*

*The fewer the words, the better the prayer. – Martin Luther*

10

By Candlelight say,

## “ I Am Grateful ”

It is easy to criticize, easy to grumble and gripe. It is easy to declare incompetence.

Focusing on crap makes for crappy days.

Taking on an intentional surveillance mission to find what is positive, to discover hope, to see beauty; now that is a worthy undertaking! Walking through a day to purposefully find good is a calling that is likely to reshape life.

### Light a Candle

It is time for a grateful list.

What did you see, hear, and sense to be grateful for today?

Keep a daily list. Or, maybe write them on slips and fill a jar. Imagine seeing a jar sitting in your room, filled with gratefulness? It is likely to permeate outside of the jar and may even fill your life!

Share with God. Tell others. Tell yourself! Let gratefulness become you.

*“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” – Philippians 4:4-7 NRSV*

## “I’m Looking Back On My Day”

Examine the day, possibly the whole last week.

Maybe you shared highs and lows from your week in a small group experience? It really is more than an ice-breaker. It stems back to St. Ignatius and the spiritual practice of the *Examen*, a method of reflecting on contrasting moments of the day or week in order to be aware of God's presence. The goal of this discipline, this rhythm of examining and reflecting with an open spirit helps settle yourself into a state of rest and gratitude. The order of Jesuits practice the Examen twice daily—at noon and at the end of the day.

Rest and gratitude? Not always easy to come by in our society but well worth taking time to move in that direction. Right?

### Light a Candle

Take some time to listen for the quiet.

Find a place to write. Maybe a journal page.

- For what are you most grateful?
- For what are you least grateful?

Pay attention to the emotions. Pray about one of the day's features. Look forward with gratitude for tomorrow.

If you do this! You may start to notice some rhythms of spiritual presence. You will only find them if you take the time to be observant.

*Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? – 2 Corinthians 13:5a NRSV*

*“Act as if everything depended on you; trust as if everything depended on God.”  
– Saint Ignatius of Loyola*

*“I wish not merely to be called Christian, but also to be Christian.” – Saint Ignatius of Loyola*

*“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift of God, which is why we call it the present.”  
– Bil Keane*



## “ I Know I’m Loved ”

Love of family  
 Romantic love  
 Love of good friends  
 Unconditional, grace-filled, God’s love  
 Love of life  
 Love of beauty, nature, taste and the arts

### Light a Candle

Let love surround you. Let love surpass all of your feelings of unworthiness, imperfection, or mistakenness. Be wrapped in real love, the kind that flows from a constant stream of grace. Write or just sit and consider. Sit and love. Sit and be loved.

Contemplating love is to breathe in the essence of God.

What is your spiritual love medicine?

Who loves you? Whom do you love? What do you love?

Love is...  
 Love as a color...  
 Love in a voice...  
 Love sounds...  
 Love in a moment of your history...  
 Love when being held...  
 God as love...  
 Love found in a place...  
 Love all around, breathed in...

The Bible has much to say about love. Two stand out chapters are I Corinthians 13 and I John 4. Read them in their entirety. Below are some starter nuggets.

*From I John 4 NRSV*

*<sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.*

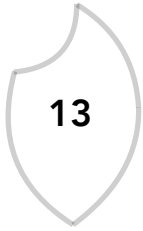
*<sup>16b</sup>God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.*

*<sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us.*

*<sup>21</sup>The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.*

*Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

*– I Corinthians 13 4-7 NRSV*



13

By Candlelight say,

## “I Remember the Journey”

*“The only time you learn anything is when you reflect back on it.”*

Take a spiritual journey backwards. Remembering weaves together our past with our present and gives glimpses of what is to come. We have been shaped by the people, family, experiences and places that hold great meaning for us. We are who we are today because we have a history, a journey, that includes a constant flow of God’s loving and grace filled gaze.

### **Light a Candle**

Remember. Sit in front of your candle and replay a narrative in your mind. Write, if you like.

Tell yourself your own story in your mind.

Remember the wheres, whats, hows, and whos.

Remember the feelings, aromas, sounds, maybe even the colors.

Remember an awareness of God, the spiritual feelings, wonderings and ponderings.

How has this memory journey shaped who you are now?

Name it, claim it. Pray it. Tell God your thoughts.

Consider the option of journaling or using the doodling prayer method in number 9.

A few ideas...

- the person or group that gave you this candle
- a person you look up to
- an experience of doing something for others
- a journey or travel
- friendship
- religious gathering
- church memories
- experience of God
- family
- those who have loved you
- earliest memories

*“They may forget what you said — but they will never forget how you made them feel.” – Carl W. Buehner*

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us.

We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation

the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. – Psalm 78: 1-4 NRSV

## Yay!

Ready to change the world? Here is a spiritual practice that could make it happen, be it one person at a time.

Ponder this statement for a while. *“What gets attention gets repeated.”*

Be conscious of what you give your attention! When it is name calling, criticizing, degrading, bragging about misconducts, or negative behaviors which get attention, perpetrators become embolden. When ignored, such behaviors dwindle.

If talents, compassion, acts of kindness, gentleness, and other gifts from God are highlighted, these behaviors are reinforced. These attributes are likely to be repeated. The world needs more gift-namers, accentuating the positive in others. People like you saying, “Yay!” for others.

### Light a Candle

Reflect. Write down names of people you have recently encountered. Think deeply about each one. What are the positives you have observed? Write down the following words. They are gift naming words. Fill in what you would say for various people.

- I feel...
- When you...
- Because...
- I hope...

### Here is why!

**I feel:** names that actions have a positive effect on you. “I make you feel good!”

**When you:** names your observation by describing the behavior. “Wow! You noticed!”

**Because:** describes why that behavior matters so that it can be repeated. “I can do more of that!”

**I hope:** encourages future possibilities.

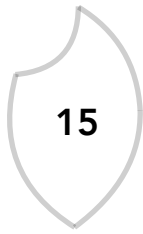
When you have one or more written down, plan your delivery. Face-to-face is best. Calling or texting could also work.

### Examples

- I feel encouraged
- When I hear the songs you write
- Because your lyrics help people find the good in life.
- I hope you keep writing songs that highlight living.
- When you came to sit with me when I was so depressed,
- It really did give me some hope.
- Because you didn’t give up on me, even though I wasn’t very fun to be with.
- I hope your patience and love are something others learn from you.
- I saw you talking to the two girls who didn’t want to join in at the party.
- I was impressed.
- You took the time to be welcoming and get to know them.
- I hope we all learn from you.

*“Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.”*

– 1 Thessalonians 5:11 NRSV



15

By Candlelight say,

## I Confess

Typically Christian confession is about confession of belief or confession of sin.

Let's also think of it as conversations with God about anything that is within.

To understand, imagine yourself as an iceberg. A small amount of you lies above the surface. Everyone sees and knows that part of you. Much more of you lies below the surface. You have to choose to share these things, admit them or no one knows. They stay hidden. Some of these are things you know well, some you seldom think about, others are so deep that you don't even know they exist.

Confession is raising what is below to the surface in order to share it with God, maybe share with another person or possibly even admit to yourself. Confession is not always about bad stuff. Confession is expressing what is deep within.

*But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. – Mt. 6:6 NRSV*

### Light a Candle

Confess what is within to God.

Return to this prayer often. Your below the surface self is always changing. Consider journaling or maybe sharing this with a close friend.

Confessions are the ultimate in being vulnerable and honest.

Results? Knowing and being known. Often cleansing, releasing, empowering and allowing growth.

Here are some triggers to begin your deeper exploration.

"Dear God, I confess..."

I'm feeling...

I admit...

I find my very core to be...

I wish for...

I feel most alive when...

I need...

I rely on...

I find meaning in...

I'm addicted to...

I find hope in...

I'm hoping for...

I'm sorry...

I'm powerless...

I'm feeling alone...

I have come to believe...

I regret...

I believe most in...

I should...

I fear...

I just can't...

I have a history of...

I'm on a path leading...

I'm mad at...

I find purpose by...

I doubt...

I don't get along with...

I love...

I don't feel love for...

I often wonder...

*But truly God has listened; He has given heed to the words of my prayer.*

*Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me.*

– Ps. 66: 19-20 NRSV

## “I’m Angry”

Cheated on? Lied to? Embarrassed? Hurt? Maybe getting too caught up in politics? The anger is winning?

Anger is okay to feel. You just don’t want it to own you or control you. You may need to take action, but don’t react.

### Light a Candle

1. Find a quiet space. Sit in the dimness or darkness.
2. Clench a fist. Tighter! Squeeze your fist with your second hand, as tense as you can and hold it there.
3. Stare into the candle. Start counting. One number for each breath. Count as long as you want or need. Tell it to God. Tell it all. Complain, rant, spout, yell, protest, whine, swear if you need to, but you don’t need to go it alone. Let God hold it with you.
 

Thomas Jefferson’s advice, *“When angry, count to 10 before you speak. If very angry, a hundred.”*
4. Eventually, start to count. Put the anger on a shelf for a bit, breathe in — breathe out. Calm your heart. Count as long as you want.
5. Slowly start to release the tension in your fist. Let it go. Relax it. Open your palm. Hold it upwards. Give it to God. Give as much as you can to God. You may need to sit for a while in the quiet, palm up, staring at that candle.
6. Listen and sense God filling your open upward palm with God’s constant love, grace, peace and hope.

Remember! Anger is a secondary feeling, meaning it follows the experience of other feelings. Anger is the result of feelings like being hurt, scared, rejected, humiliated, frustrated, grieved, worried, confused, lost, embarrassed or any other of the “ick” kinds of feelings.

*Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger. – Ephesians 4:26-27 NRSV*

*Complain if you must, but don’t lash out. Keep your mouth shut, and let your heart do the talking. Build your case before God and wait for his verdict. – Psalm 4:4-5 MSG*

*You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger. – James 1:19 NRSV*

"Prayer is nothing else than a sense of God's presence."  
– Brother Lawrence

"The best prayers often have more groans than words."  
– John Bunyan

*"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."*  
– Martin Luther

"We may pray most when we say least,  
and we may pray least when we say most."  
– St. Augustine of Hippo

"The people who know God well—mystics, hermits, prayerful people, those who risk everything to find God—always meet a lover, not a dictator."  
– Father Richard Rohr

"Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?"  
– Corrie Ten Boom

"You pay God a compliment  
by asking great things of Him."  
– St. Teresa of Avila

"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience."  
– Pierre Teilhard de Chardin