

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

INTERIOR DYNAMICS OF THE HEART

From The Institute for Priestly Formation



LEVEL I SURFACE NON-SPIRITUAL

Thoughts, feelings, and desires

LEVEL II DEEPER NON-SPIRITUAL

Thoughts, feelings and desires

Non-Spiritual Consolations
Non-Spiritual Desolations

Primary Psychological
Influenced by
Family Relationships
DNA
Ethnic temperaments
Sexual desires
Deep moods
Cultural assumptions

LEVEL III SPIRITUAL

Thoughts, feelings, and desires

Spiritual Consolations
Spiritual Desolations

Interior movements of the heart
caused by different spirits
Three spirits:
Holy Spirit
Evil Spirit
Human Spirit

These interior movements
call for a response:
to receive what is from God or
to reject what is not from God

Week 3: Discussion Questions

1. Prayer happens in the heart and the movements of the heart are affective movements. In your prayer last week, how did you see God working affectively in your thoughts, feelings, or desires?
2. Bishop Cozzens spoke about distinguishing movement of the heart at three levels – surface psychological, deeper psychological and spiritual. Give an example of a thought, feeling, or desire for each of these various levels.
3. Practically, the struggle for purity of heart happens at the second level of the heart. Through conversation with God in prayer, I receive the truth of God's love at the third level of the heart. What is one struggle that you could relate to God in prayer and receive the truth that he has to offer you?
4. St. Ignatius calls the movements of the heart at the third level spiritual consolation or spiritual desolation. Describe a time when you experienced either one of these.
5. What are the four practical steps to surrender our hearts to God? (Hint: pray like a pirate ... A-R-R-R). Briefly describe each step in your own words. Which of these steps are difficult for you and why?
6. When we converse with God in prayer about the details of our lives, he can show us his goodness in every situation. Share a time where you experienced God showing you his goodness.
7. As related in the story of Jesus in the garden and the thorn in St. Paul's side, prayer is the place where I surrender to God's will and receive his grace and peace. What is one thing stirring in your heart that you would like to surrender to God's will?