

One of my favorite Contemplative exercises is called the Compass. Rather than being profound itself, it directs you to thought paths where depth and profound insights can occur. This tool can be used regularly or just once, and can be modified to your particular situation. It is graphic rather than narrative, so grab a piece of paper (or print off this one), a pen or pencil, and a quiet place to pray and ponder, and let's get started.



The Compass Prayer simply walks you through the four directions of the compass, allowing each to lead your prayers.

We begin with the West. West is where the sun sets, so we begin with the places in our lives that are endings. What paths of your life, what areas, what relationships, are ending right now? This can bring pain, sorrow, or even new hope. Which might need to end? Are there habits or behaviors that need to sundown? Write down briefly 5 or 6 things that come to mind and let them lead this section of your prayers.

Now we move on to the East. East is where the sun rises, so we continue with the places in our lives that are just beginning. What new opportunities are presenting themselves right now? What paths are in front of you, calling you on to new things? Write down briefly 5 or 6 things that come to mind and let them lead this section of your prayers.

The North takes us to the North Star, that fixed point in the sky. Sailors and explorers throughout time have used the North Star to guide them and point their way. What are your North Stars, those people or things in your life that are constant? Who are the people that you go to when you feel lost? What has been their counsel in the past when you were looking for help? Write down briefly 5 or 6 things that come to mind and let them lead this section of your prayers.

Finally, we move South. At the risk of being northern-hemisphere-centric, South is usually where we go for vacations, for rest, for warmth, and for peace. What are the things you do that bring you rest and peace? What places in your life are most tranquil, fun, or entertaining? We all need fun in our lives – where do you find yours? Write down briefly 5 or 6 things that come to mind and let them lead this section of your prayers.

End the time by thinking about what you've heard from God and what you may need to do in response, and then giving thanks for His presence in the whole of your life.