

DISCERNMENT AT THE MOVIES

*Amazing Grace*¹

Do you intend to use your beautiful voice to praise the Lord... or change the world?

-- William Pitt, from the script of *Amazing Grace*

Discernment Key to Watching the Film

Amazing Grace is a cinematic portrayal of the true story of the struggle of William Wilberforce to abolish slavery in England. The film vibrantly portrays how Wilberforce discerns God's call in two situations: his first discernment concerns whether to dedicate his life to God or to continue in politics; and his second discernment revolves around how to continue to fight for the abolition of slavery when it has cost him almost everything—including his health.

As you watch the film, pay attention to the theme of discernment: how William discerns the mission that God has entrusted to him.

DON'T READ ANY FURTHER UNTIL AFTER you've seen the film.
(Questions contain spoilers.)

After Watching the Film

You may find it helpful to use the following questions to reflect on, talk about with others, and bring to prayer:

1. What is your favorite moment of the film? How do you identify with William's spiritual journey and discernment?
2. Initially, William feels he has to discern between God and politics. Was that the choice he really had to make? What does he finally choose, and why?
3. How does God guide William as he discerns God's call? How have you experienced God's guidance in your life?
4. In his dedication to his mission, William sacrifices a great deal, including having a family and his health. In a moment of darkness, he feels he has failed in his mission and

¹ *Amazing Grace* (2007), directed by Michael Apted, written by Steven Knight, starring Ioan Gruffud.

doubts his ability to continue. How does he discern God's call within these painful circumstances?

Prayerful Follow-up

1. Pray with Matthew 6:31-33

"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."²

2. Reflect/Journal the Following Questions

- * How have you heard God's call in your life? Have you included the perspective of faith, your gifts, the advice of trusted others, the urgent needs of the world, in your discernment?
- * How can you listen more attentively to God's call in your life?
- * What is the next step that you can take to live in a greater spirit of discernment?
- * Is something holding you back from carrying out the mission that God has entrusted to you? How can you respond more fully with joy and freedom to God's call?

Conclude with a prayer to do God's will

Our Father...

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