

Prayer of EXAMEN

LISTENING TO GOD

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all
circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

—1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



Praying

THE EXAMEN GUIDE

The Prayer of Examen is a gift of brief reflective time that Ignatius of Loyola believed was the most important part of your day. It is intended to help cultivate an awareness of God's presence and to recognize His voice as you reflect over your day.

Paul urges us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:16), and walk by the spirit (Gal 5:16). When we use the Examen daily, we build a habit that turns into compound interest. Our mindfulness of prayer and God flows throughout the rest of our daily lives.

The Examen is simply a set of suggestions as you begin to follow God's work throughout your day. The Examen is best used twice a day at noon and in the evening. It should be adapted to your time, character, and spirit.

Choose the time you will do the Examen and a way to begin. This posture sets your heart, mind, and body to embrace this practice.

Begin with a pause and a slow, deep breath or two; become aware that you are in the presence of our Lord. You may light a candle, bow, say the Lord's Prayer, sing a hymn, or whatever you desire.

DAILY EXAMEN OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The Examen follows a 5 step process:

- 1) Become aware of God's presence and review the day with gratitude.
- 2) Recognize where you have fallen short and repent.
- 3) Review how you felt during the day and where it led you.
- 4) Choose one thing and pray about it.
- 5) Look forward to tomorrow.

An easy way to use the cards is to remember them with 5 R's. *Relish, Repent, Review, Request, and Resolve*. This helps use the Examen without always needing to read the card or instructions. It can more easily transfer to memory. Feel free to change the questions so that the Examen stays fresh and relevant to your life.

TIPS FOR USING THE EXAMEN:

- 1) **Keep it short.** Even if you only have 5 minutes. Just slowing down and becoming aware of God, being grateful, or asking God for help cultivates our awareness, and enables us to hear God's voice.
- 2) **Skip to the good parts.** These questions are not meant to be a checklist but a holistic container for the developing awareness of God's voice and your interactions with Him throughout your day. As you pray, feel free to linger on a step that speaks to you or move on.
- 3) **Don't get stuck on step 2 (repent).** The key is to ask GOD to reveal your sins to you. If nothing comes up when you ask this question, just move on. This step involves coming before God and asking God if there is any hurtful way in you (Ps 139:23-24). Oftentimes God will choose not to reveal anything during this step.
- 4) **If you struggle to remember all the steps.** Then the most critical would be step 1 and step 3.
 - Take time to thank God for what you have received this day. (abbreviated step 1)
 - Reviewing what happened and how you felt about it and where you noticed God loving you. (abbreviated step 3)

Though the others are important, doing these two steps help to create an internal spiritual sensitivity to the movements and invitations of God, while fostering a greater awareness of God's love, grace and presence.

GOING FURTHER:

Use *tweet* like journaling to make notes about what you hear from God. These can serve as incredible insights to how God is speaking to you. Keep it prayerful, it is easy to make this a mental exercise. Keep your mind and heart open to the heart of God. Spend time in silence in between each prayer prompt. Making space for God ensures we won't miss his whisper as often.

Prayer of Examen

FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS

PRAYER PROMPTS

Practice daily, noon and evening for 5-15 minutes.

Opening Posture

Light a candle, open your palms, bow.

RELISH

Become aware of God's presence. Review the day with gratitude. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details. What are you grateful for?

REPENT

Ask God to reveal your mistakes or ways you might have hurt yourself or others. He already knows you and loves you deeply. There is nowhere you can go without His presence (Ps. 139). In what ways did you respond in fear or anger today? Ask God to forgive you and agree with Him that you are forgiven and restored.

REVIEW

Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings? Where are these feelings or interactions taking you... God, others, or to self sufficiency? When did you notice the love of God?

REQUEST

Choose something from your day and pray about it. Allow your mind to wander and God to respond. Ask God to show you what is important to pay attention to. It may feel significant or insignificant. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart, whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

RESOLVE

Ask God to show you how to respond and act differently tomorrow. What is one thing you will choose to do differently? Seek God's guidance and ask for help to look for insights throughout your day. Who do you want to be tomorrow? What word encompasses it? Resolve to put it into practice.

Closing Posture

End with the Lord's Prayer, the sign of the cross or in some other meaningful form.