

THE DAILY EXAMEN

Memorize the following, and do your Examen as often as possible during the day. Start by doing it in your mind as you wake up (while still in bed), and as you fall asleep at night.

1. Become aware of the presence of God.

Breathe in deeply and silently pray, "You are here." Then breathe out praying, "And I am with You." Do this until you are focused on God and are aware of His presence.

2. Give thanks. Review the previous few hours of the day or night. Give thanks for each detail you can recall, each gift (ex. the taste of a meal), and even difficulty ("...another opportunity to trust You").

3. Become aware of your emotions. How do you feel, and why? Name the emotion and give it to God. If you did something Jesus' way earlier, rejoice. If you sinned, confess and plan to make amends.

4. Pick one feature of the day and pray.

Choose either a joy or a sorrow and turn your heart toward prayer. Pray with boldness - confidence in the Father to hear and respond as He desires.

5. Look with hope toward the next hours.

Now commit the coming hours of your day or night to the Lord, with trust and hope.

Exercise, The Depths of Our Being

Ponder how it is with your soul, using questions such as these:

☐ What state is your soul in (anguish, longing for God's justice, at rest)?

☐ What does your soul repeatedly do (pant, thirst for God, wait for God, rail against God)?

☐ What question would you like to ask your soul? (Why are you downcast? Why are you distracted?)

☐ What would you like to say to your soul? (Hope in God. Find rest.)

☐ What would you like God to say to your soul? (I am your hope. I hear you. I come alongside you.)

by Dallas Willard & Jan Johnson, Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice

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Remain in Me

A Spiritual Exercises Workbook

"Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."

John 15:4

Lectio Divina (Divine Reading)

1. Ready (3 minutes)

- a) find a place where you can be quiet and undisturbed.
- b) choose a brief passage of Scripture.
- c) Quiet your heart, sit in silence, and ask God to meet you during this time of prayer.
- d) invite the Holy Spirit, who inspired the Word, to illumine its message to your heart.

2. Read (5 minutes)

- a) read the passage slowly, letting your awareness rest on each word.
- b) read the passage again slowly, but this time read it out loud.
- c) make it personal. Insert your name or a personal pronoun into the text to make it your own.
- d) listen for the still small voice of God as you read.
- e) be aware of any word or phrase that catches your attention.

3. Reflect (10 minutes)

- a) meditate and reflect on the word or phrase that attracted you or caught your attention.
- b) as you reflect, listen and allow God to speak to you.
- c) be aware of any emotion or memories that the word or phrase may stir up.

4. Respond (10 minutes)

- a) respond to the word or phrase.
- b) ask God why this word caught your attention. What is he trying to say to you?
- c) dialogue with God about what you are hearing or feeling. Ask God about things you do not understand.
- d) take time to sit and listen for God's response.

5. Rest (5 minutes)

- a) rest in God's presence. Wordless, quiet rest in the presence of God is called "contemplation." Simply be with God, resting in his love for you.

6. Return

- a) as you go through your day, keep returning to the passage and your reflection.
- b) keep returning with the intention of integrating the word into your life.

adapted from Prayer is a Place by Charles Bello, "The Leader's Self Understanding and Spiritual Formation," Vineyard Leadership Institute, 2011

Prayer of Examen

Capturing the essence of Psalm 139:23-24 – *"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*

1. Give thanks to God for what you have received.

This causes you to focus on God and God's goodness and grace, and on the greatness of God.

2. Ask God to reveal your sins to you.

This may seem moralistic and externally driven, but that is not the case. According to Ignatius's rules for discernment, the focus is not on the external sin but on the roots from which that weed sprouted. It also affirms that you cannot do this alone but only as God gives insight and illumination.

3. Examine how you lived this day, looking at your thoughts, words and deeds.

Consider one or more specific questions. This step helps you to discover how you might have missed God today so that tomorrow you will have a better chance of connecting with God and with what God is up to.

4. Ask forgiveness, expressing sorrow for your sins while recalling to mind God's love and grace.

This provides the opportunity to soak in God's grace, forgiveness, mercy and love.

5. Ask God for the grace to amend your ways and more fully live out of a sense of connection with God.

In this step you are once again affirming your need for God and dependence on God. You begin to internalize that it is not up to you and your effort, for "apart from [Jesus] you can do nothing."
(John 15:5)

adapted from Journey with Jesus by Larry Warner D

Imaginative Prayer

“When I refer to imaginative prayer, I am speaking of a spirit-infused, God-directed use of your imagination that gives you the ability to experientially enter into the stories, symbolism and images of the Bible. It empowers you to hold the now with both the past and future, and to see and embrace the seen (physical) and the unseen (eternal). The Spirit-infused imagination moves you from sterile head knowledge to life-transforming, heart-healing, biblically informed ways of being and of doing life. It is as we embrace and employ the use of our God-given, Spirit-infused imagination that we can enter the wonder and mystery of God and God’s Word.”

1. Identify a Bible story with strong images; I suggest something from the Gospels usually as a starting point. Ask the Holy Spirit to sanctify imaginations and minds.
2. Read the passage through out loud—to become familiar with the passage.
3. Read it through a second time out loud—and ask the Holy Spirit to identify which character you are to be. Take some time to imagine the scene—the sights, the smells, the sounds, how you feel, etc. Engage your senses as much as possible.
4. Read it through and imagine that you are part of the story.
5. Think and pray about what it is that Jesus has just shown you—what did He say to you? Perhaps draw a picture or journal about it.
6. Spend time in thanksgiving for what He has shown you.

adapted from Journey with Jesus by Larry Warner

1. Be still and prepare to listen to God.

Acknowledge your desire to listen. As much as you can, let go of the distractions of the day that might interfere with listening. Breathe deeply and welcome the Holy Spirit into your inner being.

2. Listen to the account of Elijah, God’s prophet, who was running from Jezebel and longing to hear God speak to him.

[An angel] said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.”

Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” (1 Kings 19:11-13)

3. Spend some time in quiet reflection on how God communicates with you.

In your own life, what circumstances, relationships or ideas seem like great winds or earthquakes? +++Which parts of your life make the most noise? +++Which parts of your life consume you, as a fire consumes anything in its path? +++Spend a few minutes reflecting on the “sound of sheer silence.” What would that be like for you? +++Other Bible translations say Elijah heard the gentle whisper of God (NIV). What would it be like to hear God’s gentle whisper? +++If God said to you, “What are you doing here?” how would you answer? +++Spend some time listening to the “sheer silence” or the “gentle whisper” of God. If you’d like, try to put whatever you hear in words. Or you may prefer to sit in silence in the presence of God.

by Alice Fryling, Seeking God Together

Imaginative Prayer Scriptures: 1. Mark 6:45-56 2. Luke 8:22-25 3. Mark 10:46-52 4. John 13:1-17

Lectio Devina Scriptures: Ephesians 3:14-21, Psalm 23, Colossians 1:15-20, Romans 8:31-39, Psalm 139:13-18, 2 Peter 1:3-11