THE DAILY EXAMEN

The daily examen is best practiced near the end of every day, or early the next morning, in a quiet place of reflection and solitude. This might be alone in a room in your house or perhaps outside on the porch, or even a slow walk through nature. Some choose to spend the time in the examen in mental prayer with God while others prefer to write things down in a journaling fashion. Either of those (or other options) work well. The important elements are quiet solitude, consistency of time and place, and honesty with yourself.

The Examen Rhythm

1. Give Thanks: Consider how the day you just lived was a gift from God

2. Ask God for Light: We need the Holy Spirit to illuminate our day so that we may see it as God sees it, not just as we see it.

3. Review the Day: Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you look back on your day and consider your emotions, thoughts, and actions.

4. Confess Your Sin: With the help of the Holy Spirit, search yourself and confess to God where you have fallen short—in your actions, mind, and heart.

5. Look Forward to the Next Day: Consider where in your life you need God in the day to come.
Give Thanks

I CAN BE THANKFUL FOR...

- The covenant promise of salvation: God’s gift of God’s self to me in Christ Jesus. I am Christ’s and he is mine.

- Myself: God has chosen me—both my qualities and failures, my strengths and weaknesses—in Christ.

- Everything: Even the suffering in life, for it forms me into the image of Jesus through his cross and resurrection.

Reflection:

- What should I be grateful for today?

- What do I take for granted?

- What has made me dissatisfied or frustrated, or, perhaps, even ungrateful, today?

- Have I become more grateful and contented today?
Ask God for Light

Ask the Holy Spirit for the illumination of God on your life. Only with the light of Christ can we truly see our brokenness, observe our lives, and comprehend who we are as a child of God and friend of Jesus.

Pray this: “Spirit of the living God, open the eyes of our hearts with the light of Christ, so that we may know God and know ourselves.”

Reflection:

• What dark corners of my heart do I need God to illuminate?

• What has God shown me about myself today?
O Lord, you have searched me and know me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

- Psalm 139:1-3

Review the Day

When we examine our day, we ask ourselves how we have responded to God’s work in this day through our thoughts, emotions, and even actions.

Reflection:

• How was I drawn to God’s presence today? What or who did God use to draw me to God’s self?

• Even in today’s ordinary moments, have I learned anything about who God is or how God works?

• Today did I encounter God in fears or joys? In work or rest? In conflict, toil, or suffering?

• Did I hear God’s voice speak to me in scripture? In prayer or in worship? In my inner self—my emotions, thoughts, or actions?

• Have I lived as a vehicle for God’s presence and love for the people I encountered today?
Confess your Sin

It is a gift from God to become aware of our sin.

Awareness of our sinfulness leads to:
• Coming to peace with our weakness
• Trusting ourselves less and trusting God more
• Witnessing our ongoing conversion from sinner into a sanctified child of God
• Awe for the love of God, who loved us while we were still enemies
• Thankfulness and joy because, in spite of our sin, we share in the victory of Christ through his death and resurrection

Reflection:
• What do I need to confess to God today?
• How and where today have I fallen short of God’s call on my life?
• How and where did God meet me in my weakness today?

Remember the assurance of the Lord:
“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” -1 John 1:9
Look Forward to the Day to Come

Consider this:

The events of the next 24 hours will be rich in gifts from God and saturated by his presence.

Reflection:

- How will you face tomorrow—with apathy, fear, or hopelessness? Or by relying on God’s goodness and provision?

- Which parts of your life tomorrow especially call for God’s healing or God’s protection?

Ponder this: The more we trust and allow God to lead our lives, the more we taste of the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the goal of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ

- Philippians 3:13-14