

+ Desires of the Heart: Themes of Ignatian Spirituality +

EXAMEN

Prayer through reflection; what our feelings tell us

BACKGROUND

St Ignatius of Loyola said that the Examen is the most important prayer we can pray even if it's all we do. Jesuits are asked to pray the Examen twice daily. This prayer comes right from the Spiritual Exercises and can be adapted to individual need and preference. The purpose of the Examen is to help us become more aware of *God's active participation and invitation in our daily lives* and be an exploration of how we respond. It's turns reflection into prayer.

Ignatius' Version:

1. **Thanksgiving** - Give thanks to God for all the gifts and graces received.
2. **Grace** - Ask the Holy Spirit for the grace to see God's movement in my day.
3. **Review** - Let the Lord lead me as I review the events and interactions of the day and notice where God has been present and where I have kept God out. These things can be big or subtle.
4. **Forgiveness** - Express sorrow for any sin or failing and ask for forgiveness and healing.
5. **Looking Forward** - Ask for God's grace to help strengthen you in the areas you need and look forward to opportunities to serve and love better tomorrow.

We are then asked to close with an Our Father or similar prayer.

- Trust your feelings: they can tell you a lot about God's movement in your heart and how the evil spirit may be moving
- Emotions can prompt us to make decisions and make changes in our lives
- What might God be showing me through my experiences and feelings?
- Pray the Examen before lunch, before bed, or walking somewhere

RESOURCES

examen.me - Guided online examens using reflection, scripture, and journaling
ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/
godinallthings.com/prayer/evening-examen/ - Audio examen
youtu.be/io1w1AWs_Gc - Video guided examination of conscience

*“Mary treasured all these things,
pondering them in her heart.”
- Luke 2:19*