

PRAYER OF EXAMEN

EVIDENCE OF GRACE

 SECOND-PONCE
DE LEON BAPTIST CHURCH

A Year of Passionate Prayer

Offered by the Second-Ponce Discipleship Council

www.spdl.org/prayer

Scriptural Focus & Meaning

"You have searched me, Lord, and You know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways." -Psalm 139:1-3

The word "examen" means to find the true weight or an accurate measurement of things. The Examen helps develop an awareness of God's presence in our lives.

Origin of the Examen

Saint Ignatius of Loyola was a Spanish priest and author of the Prayer of Examen. Ignatius was born into a family culture of aggression. His earnest desire was to advance his military career in the service of the King. While Ignatius feared nothing, he was critically injured on the battlefield in 1521. Doctors told him to confess and prepare to die. God instead used his lengthy and isolated healing journey to prepare him to humbly serve the Kingdom of God. Ignatius believed that to lovingly serve one's neighbor was the highest form of prayer.

Preparation

Consider lighting a candle; Christ is the light of the world and fire represents the Holy Spirit

5 Steps of the Examen



1. BEGIN WITH AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

- Thank God for the day just lived. Remember the blessings in your life and God's generous provisions.
- Focus on being in God's presence.



2. ASK FOR GRACE TO MAKE THIS PRAYER FRUITFUL

- Listen for insights into God's concrete working in your day.
- This step allows for being fully present in these moments and a desire for growth.
- It is a petition of the heart for understanding.



3. REVIEW YOUR DAY WITH GOD

- Did I see God's care evidenced in my life today?
- Did I hurt anyone?
- What was life-giving today?
- Ask the Spirit to show you where God has been at work in your life-inwardly or through others.

Continued on the back

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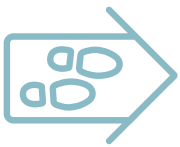
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5 Steps of the Examen Continued



4. ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

- Receive God's grace, but do not linger here. The Examen involves truth-telling and being honest with ourselves before God.
- We must learn to accept God's forgiveness.
- What does God do in response to our requests? "The loving embrace, the welcoming kiss, the joyful celebration and outpouring of new life." (Timothy Gallagher).



5. LOOK AHEAD TO THE COMING DAY

- Philippians 3:13: "Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."
- Leave the past behind. With your hands outstretched, look to what lies ahead.
- Imagine you are sitting next to Jesus. Just let go.

Outcomes of the Examen Prayer

When seventy-five Atlantans used the examen for one month, positive outcomes were identified:

- Three-fourths of participants felt they grew spiritually.
- More than seventy-five percent believed the examen helped them sense something about themselves of which they were unaware.
- Most felt a deepened sense of gratitude.
- Several participants were led to contact someone from their past.
- Most people found the prayer to be life-giving.
- Eighty-five percent shared they expected God to show up in daily life.
- Most people found evidence of grace in their life.

Learn More

Read "Sleeping With Bread: Holding What Gives You Life" by Dennis Lynn, Sheila Fabricant Linn and Matthew Linn.

About the book title: During the bombing raids of WWII, thousands of children were orphaned and left to starve. The fortunate ones were rescued and placed in refugee camps where they received food and good care. But many of these children who had lost so much could not sleep at night. They feared waking up to find themselves once again homeless and without food. Nothing seemed to reassure them. Finally, someone hit upon the idea of giving each child a piece of bread to hold at bedtime. Holding their bread, these children could finally sleep in peace. All through the night the bread reminded them, "Today I ate and I will eat again tomorrow."