

Prayer Practice – Prayer of Examen

The “prayer of examen” is an ancient tradition where you ask God to evaluate your life. *Examen* is a Latin word referring to the weight indicator on a balance scale, conveying the idea of an accurate assessment of the true situation. This is what David was doing when he wrote this Psalm:

Psalm 139:23-24 – “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Take some time to get away from the noise and speed of life. Slow down to recognize the nearness and presence of God. Ask Him to help you examine your life, and to give you His perspective. Try not to depend on your own assessment, but listen for God’s voice. If you are too hard or too easy on yourself, then it probably isn’t God. He doesn’t condemn us, but He also loves us too much to let us stay the same and make excuses for things that need to change in our hearts. God will help us in gracious truth. ***Put your evaluations or goals on paper – if you don’t write it down, it is too easy to forget!***

The prayer can follow these four steps:

1. **Replay** – meditate on the events of the day or season like a movie replaying in your mind. Notice where your attention goes in your memory. Pay attention to your emotions. What made you happy? What made you anxious? What stressed you out or made you angry?
2. **Rejoice** – thank God for His blessing and care. Remember to thank God for the small things that aren’t obvious like random acts of kindness, your physical health, a positive conversation, or an enjoyable meal. Relish and savor the moments of beauty and joy in your story and stay in a posture of gratitude.
3. **Repent** – seek forgiveness from God for those moments in your story that you regret. Did you get involved in gossip? Did you react with a tone or words that were aggressive or unkind? Did you lack compassion in a situation? Did you ignore a need? Receive God’s grace and allow Him to change your heart and life.

4. **Reboot** – make a decision to live and love like Jesus tomorrow, and ask for God’s grace to see His presence more clearly.

Questions to get you started:

- Ask God to help you see areas of recent growth. How have you grown spiritually recently?
- Ask God to help you identify goals for growth or ways to keep God the center in these areas.
- Ask God to help you see where the noise of your life has prevented you from hearing Him.
- Ask God for ways you can simplify your life or grow in the following areas.

Areas of Life to Examine:

Spiritual Health

Physical Health

Relational Health at Home (Family)

Vocational Health (work)

Relational Health with friends/neighbors

Mental Health

Emotional Health