

with a simple breath prayer - as you breathe in, receive the love of God; as you breathe out, let go of your cares.

Ask Jesus (or God the Father or the Holy Spirit) to be with you and to guide you in this time of reflection and prayer.

Allow the events of the day to replay in your mind. As you do, ask yourself the first question,

e.g. *“For what moment or event in my day today am I most grateful?”*

Spend some time with whatever comes to mind. What do you feel now about this moment or event? Let yourself be blessed by it again - this was a gift of grace, even if you weren't especially aware of God at the time. Talk to Jesus about what you feel. Give thanks.

Then move to the second question,

e.g. *“For what moment or event in my day today am I least grateful?”*

There may be some sadness, regret or even pain in what comes to mind. Allow yourself to spend time with it, rather than pushing it away. Again talk to Jesus about it and open yourself to God's healing love and/or forgiveness. Be aware of God's grace surrounding you, filling you, reassuring you.

“I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 8:38-39)

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# The Prayer of 'Examen'



## Looking back on the day, with Jesus

## The Prayer of Examen

*'Examen' is a term that has been used for centuries to describe a time of reflection and prayer at the end of the day.*

It's a simple and helpful way to deepen self-awareness and God-awareness. It can help us to notice God's goodness and grace through the ups and downs of our everyday lives.

In a given day we know that some of our experiences, thoughts, feelings, decisions and actions will have been in line with the Gospel and God's work in us.

It's likely that our day has also involved some things that cause us to feel regret. Perhaps interactions which left us feeling hurt, or situations where we acted contrary to the spirit of Jesus.

How often do you stop to reflect on these contradictory aspects of your daily life? Often days or even weeks can go by without this kind of reflection, and so we miss opportunities to celebrate moments of grace, or to address unhelpful or sinful patterns that are hindering the Spirit's work in us.

The Prayer of Examen, then, is a simple way of trying to live life more *consciously*, with a deeper awareness of and dependence on *grace*.

### Questions to use in the Examen

Imagine sitting down at the end of the day to watch a replay of the edited highlights (and lowlights!) of your day. Imagine you and Jesus doing this together, and taking time to talk together

about what you are seeing - not with a view to feeling condemned, but in order to bring everything in your day under his healing grace. That's the essence of the Examen.

Here are some simple pairs of questions that can be used at the end of the day. The idea is to find one or two simple pairs of questions that work well for you, rather than working through them all:

{ For what moment today am I most grateful?  
For what moment today am I least grateful?

{ *When today did I have the greatest sense of connection with myself, with others, and with God?*  
*When today did I have the least sense of connection - when did I feel self-centred, alienated or alone?*

{ When did I give and receive the most love today?  
When did I give and receive the least love today?

{ *How was I most like you today, Jesus?*  
*How was I least like you today, Jesus?*

### How to use the questions

At the end of the day set aside a short period of time for this reflection and prayer. It might be just 5 minutes as you prepare to go to sleep, or you could take longer if you want to enter into a deeper time of prayer. Relax and be aware that you are in the presence of God. It might be helpful to start

*Continued over ...*