



The Daily Examen Prayer Exercise

The *examen*, or examination of conscience, is a quick prayer to help you see where God was active in your day. Usually done for 15 to 20 minutes at the end of a day, the prayer was popularized by St. Ignatius Loyola in his classic text *The Spiritual Exercises*. Use these five easy steps to pray the *examen* every day, and soon you'll begin to notice God's presence more easily.

1. **Presence:** Remember that you're in the presence of God in a special way when you pray. Ask God for help in prayer. This is often called "Thanksgiving"
 - a. What am I grateful for in this past day
 - b. An event that took place today that I want to remember
2. **Gratitude:** Recall two or three things that happened today for which you are especially grateful. Savor them. Then thank God for these gifts.
3. **Review:** Review your day from start to finish, noticing where you experienced God's presence. Notice everything from large to small: from an enjoyable interaction with a friend to the feel of the sun on your face. When did you love? When were you loved?
 - a. Where did I feel true joy today?
 - b. What troubled me today?
 - c. Where and when did I pause today?
4. **Response:** You may have sinned today or done something you regret. Express your sorrow to God and ask for forgiveness. Ask, what is my response to the God of my life?
5. **Look ahead with grace:** You may want to return to a meaningful part of your prayer and speak to God about how you felt. At the close of the prayer, ask for God's grace for the following day.
 - a. As I look ahead, what comes to mind?
 - b. With what spirit do I want to enter tomorrow?

Over time, as you pray the *examen*, you'll notice God's presence in the moment, rather than just at the end of the day. You'll see that your whole day can be a kind of prayer. Soon you'll discover that you've become, as Jesuits like to say, a "contemplative in action."

