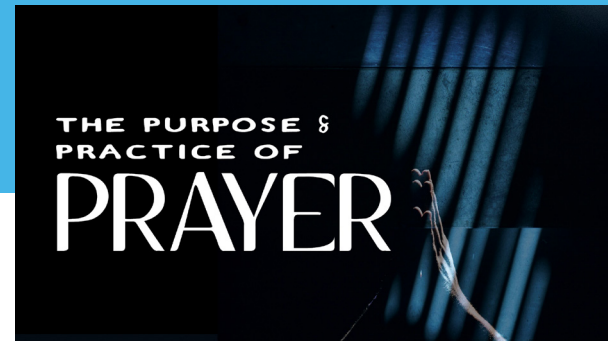


# Discussion Questions

November 5, 2023

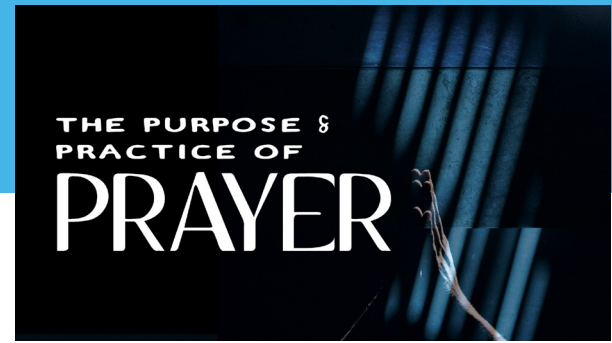
## Practicing Prayer: The Daily Examen



1. The purpose of the prayer of Examen is to increase our awareness of God's presence in and around our lives. Why this is important?
2. As a follow up from last week, have you ever wrestled with asking God to "search your heart" to show you areas of weakness, sin, or missed opportunities? What has made that difficult?
3. If you practiced the examen prayer this week, even only during the church service together, discuss your experience with praying this prayer.
4. In step 1, we pray out our gratitude. Go around and have each person share some things they are grateful to the Lord for in the last few days.
5. In step 3 of the prayer, we review our day looking for where we were aware or moved towards God (consolation) and where we were moving away or missed Him (desolation). Share some examples, as appropriate, from the last couple days of consolation or desolation in your own lives.
6. In step 4, we identify any areas we can grow in and if necessary, repent as we pray for forgiveness. Discuss how repentance can be a beautiful thing, and not just a painful experience of raking ourselves over the coals.
7. What are the areas of your life, or parts of your day, that you are least prone to be aware of God's presence with you? How can you grow in walking in closer step with Him?

# Prayer Practice

November 5, 2023



## The Daily Examen

Pray the Examen at least 3 times this week. You can adapt it, but use the steps below at least a couple times. This should take between 10-15 minutes.

### Step One: Gratitude (appx 1-2 minutes)

- Begin by giving thanks with a posture of gratitude for all God has done today.

### Step Two: Guidance (appx 1 minute)

- Pray for the light and love of God's Spirit to guide you as you pray.
- Take a minute to ask for the Holy Spirit to direct your thoughts as you pray.

### Step Three: Review the day (appx 5-10 minutes)

- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in going back through your day from morning to evening and see the day from His perspective.
- Do this first focusing on where you were aware of His presence and where your actions and heart were in step with Jesus.
- Then go back through again and look for where you missed Him during the day and the opportunities to partner with Him in loving others.

### Step Four: Forgiveness (appx 2 minutes)

- If not already clear by this point, ask the gentle and compassionate Lord to show you any areas where you need to repent.
- Receive His forgiveness and love.

### Step Five: Look Forward (appx 2 minutes)

- Look to the following day and, with God, make specific plans in how you will walk in step with God's loving desire for your life.

**Psalm 63:1–6 (NLT)**

*O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water. Your unfailing love is better than life itself; how I praise you! I will praise you as long as I live, lifting up my hands to you in prayer. You satisfy me more than the richest feast...I lie awake thinking of you, meditating on you through the night.*

**Prayer of Examen**

Step One: Gratitude

Step Two: Guidance

Step Three: Review the day

Step Four: Forgiveness

Step Five: Look Forward

**Step One: Gratitude**

- Begin by giving thanks with a posture of gratitude for all God has done today.

**Step Two: Guidance**

- Pray for the light & love of God's Spirit to guide us as we pray.

**Step Three: Review the day.**

- I ask the Holy Spirit to Guide me in going back through my day from morning to evening and see the day from His perspective.
- I am looking for where I was aware of His presence and my actions and heart were in step with Jesus today and also where I missed opportunities to do so.
- I like to ask: "Lord where was I aware of your presence and partnering with you"

**Consolation**

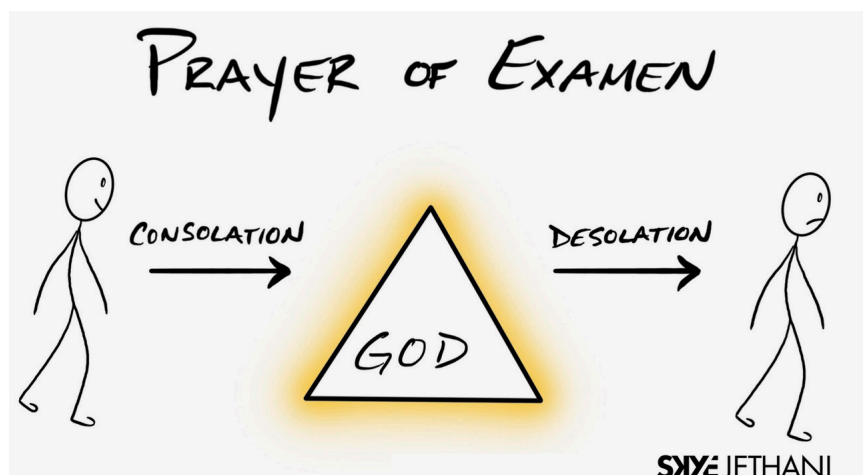
- Feelings that move us toward God and others.
- Looking for where there is an increase in faith, hope, and love.
- Feelings of peace, security, and joy.

**Desolation**

- The opposite of consolation
- Anything that takes us away from the love of God and others.
- This would be awareness of a troubled spirit: anxiety, restlessness, doubts, self-loathing, and dejection.
- One of the surest signs of desolation is spiritual lethargy, thinking that God is nowhere to be found.

**Consolation** is reflecting on where we are moving towards awareness of God & partnering with Him

**Desolation** is where we are moving away or missing Him.



My greatest longing is to walk in greater intimacy with Jesus and by His empowering presence, increasingly live and love like Him.

#### **Step Four: Forgiveness**

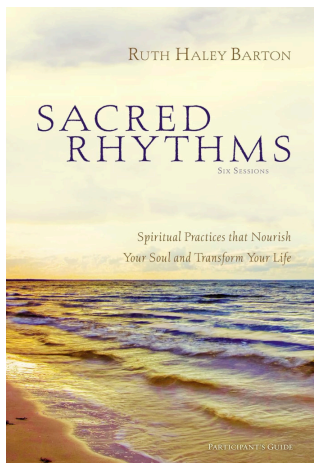
- If not already clear by this point, I ask my gentle and compassionate Lord to show me any areas where I need to repent and ask for forgiveness.
- Receive His forgiveness and love.

#### **Psalm 139:23-24**

*Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

#### **Step Five: Look Forward**

- I look to the following day and, with God, make specific plans in how I will walk in step with God's loving desire for my life.



Through the examen, we become aware of God's presence with us even in moments that are tinged with regret, and we begin to believe, little by little, that nothing can take us out of God's presence. Through faithful practice of this discipline we begin to discover, as the psalmist did, that even those places within us that feel very dark and uninhabitable are places where God's presence is real.

Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? Even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you. (Psalm 139:7,12)...Perhaps we were moving too fast to really notice, or we were stubborn or lazy or felt it would require too much of us. Observing such a missed opportunity might fill us with regret, but this honing of our awareness opens up the opportunity for us to make a different choice next time.

#### **James Martin**

..finding God in your examen makes you more likely to look for him during the day. You become more aware of where God was and where God is. Gradually you realize that God is active every moment of the day. Finding God by looking behind you makes it easier to see god right on front of you.

#### **Gary Jansen: The 15-Minute Prayer Solution**

The Examen is a bit like a spiritual chiropractor, helping bring your desires into alignment with God's will - and conversely, it helps bring your will into alignment with God's desire.

#### **Ignatius of Loyola**

I ask for the grace to know Jesus intimately, to love him more intensely, and so to follow him more closely.