

# The Prayer of Examen

Adapted from Helen Cepero's workshop by Luann Budd

The challenge of our times is that we lose focus as we shift gears several times during the day, moving from one activity or person to the next, changing roles many times. It's easy to forget what the Lord has shown us just hours before. This Examen is an exercise to help us capture the grace he has shown us today that we might live in his light with joy and peace.

Take some time to look for the movement of God. **Our focus is not on looking for sin but to look for grace.** Our focus is to hear the loving call of God, and allow Jesus to be more attractive to us than any of the other attractions in our lives. Our desire is to find our deepest happiness from living completely surrendered to his Divine Love. This reflection gives us time to consider God's movement and to open ourselves to his loving embrace, surrendering to the kind intention of his will for us, and to allow him to strengthen us.

Paul writes to the Philippians: "...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6 We believe that God is at work in our lives, calling us to draw near to him that we might journey forward, being transformed. We play a part in this process. Daily reflection can help us to see God's movement in our lives that we might more fully participate with the Holy Spirit in completing his work. We don't want to hinder the work of the Spirit, or resist, impede, obstruct His work—we want to be fully surrendered to it, fully opening ourselves. An evening reflection, reviewing our day, helps us to pay attention to the movement of God. If we journal our thoughts, we can go back and re-read our journey which is helpful.

Set aside about twenty minutes. Establish a regular place and time for the Prayer of Examen: evening or morning is fine. Ideally you're alone, where it's quiet and you won't be interrupted. You might consider lighting a candle as you begin to signify that the Lord is with you. Prayerfully move through these four reflections of your past 24 hours, intentionally look for grace. During your prayer, make sure there is plenty of time when you are listening. If you are journaling your Prayer of Examen, capture what bubbles up, the words you hear. This prayer is focused on listening, receiving and opening yourself before God:

## 1. **LIGHT: God's Word is a Holy Light that illumines our lives.**

*"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."*

Reflectively consider the places in Scripture that the Lord led you to today. Reflect on the conversations and the small whispers you heard throughout your day.

Where have you discerned the Lord in your life today? Pray. Ask the Lord to bring to your remembrance the light he gave you.

Pray for Light.

*Dear Lord, I have been in your holy Word today. I ask that you help me to focus my attention on the Divine Light that you want me to see. Please bring to mind the Scripture verse, the phrase, the theme, the Word, that you are speaking. Help me to be attuned to your voice. Help me to lean into the readings of the day and discern your voice, your particular voice that is the Light that you are shining on my path.*

Write for a minute about light the Lord has given to you. What truths has he brought before you?

## 2. **GRATITUDE: Look back over your day with gratitude.**

Walk back hour by hour – or let the Holy Spirit bubble up what he wants to bring to your mind. What are you thankful for?



*“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.” (Philippians 4:4)*

Write about the experiences, the Scriptures, the little theophanies (when God came near), the hugs or smiles, or kind words—whatever you grateful for.

What has brought you joy today?

### **3. PRAY: Pray into the heart of the day.**

Did you sense any emotion today? Were you stirred, sad, joyful, convicted by anything today?

Did you have an *Aha!* What stands out for you from the whole day? Is there a prayer here?

Take some time to offer to the Lord your prayer.

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7*

### **4. HOLD ON TO: What do you want to hold on to?**

Cling to all that is good from your day—whatever is lovely—think on these things.

*“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.” Philippians 4: 8-9*

### **5. LET GO: What do you want to let go of?**

Shortcomings, sadnesses, troubles, anxiety, fears, disappointments, anger, any remembrance of our sinful nature, have any of these things raised themselves up? Intentionally let all of the negative stuff go. It is all hidden in Christ. His blood has sprinkled us completely clean from a guilty conscience. We are to let our minds think on whatever is good—and let go of all the rest.

### **6. Is there a brief prayer that encapsulates your time with the Lord today? Perhaps:**

*Heal me, and set me free.*  
or  
*Thank you that I am chosen.*

Spend several minutes offering *your* prayer to the Lord.

