

## Prayer of Examen

We often don't look within or examine our lives simply because of the pace of life. As a result, we lead compartmentalized lives where we split our lives apart and only offer part of our lives to God, only surrender part of ourselves to him. We cut off the parts of ourselves or our lives that are difficult, contradictory, or unpleasant. This leads us to live divided and inauthentic lives. We hide the broken pieces of ourselves from God and others, rather than allowing those pieces to be touched by the gospel and receive God's love and care and healing.

Through examination we open ourselves up to the grace and presence of God. We become aware of blind spots, shadow sides, and hidden sins. We live in a world with greater freedom, becoming increasingly free from inner confusion and dysfunction. We maintain a peaceful and calm presence with the world. We are able to make peace with neighbors and would-be enemies.

### Adele Ahlberg Calhoun

Ignatius believed that discernment came out of how God worked in each soul. Examen is a help in discernment. Examen is a practice that helps us attune to what we might otherwise miss due to busyness and helps us recognize God's presence and invitation in the midst of our comings and goings. All our experiences, thoughts, and feelings become avenues by which we can experience God's love more fully, rather than feeling shame.

- For what moment today am I most grateful? For what moment am I least grateful?
- When did I give and receive the most love today? When did I give and receive the least love today?
- What was the most life-giving part of my day? What was the most life-thwarting part of my day?
- When today did I have the deepest sense of connection with God, others, and myself? When today did I have the least sense of connection?
- Where was I living out of the fruit of the Spirit? Where was there an absence of the fruit of the Spirit?

### Ruth Haley Barton

- Preparation - Spend a few moments in silence to center on God's presence and his love. Meditate on a favorite scripture or song.
- Invitation - Invite God, as the Spirit of Truth, to illuminate the day (or week, month, or year) as you examine the day.
- Review the day - Identify the major moments of the day, including your spiritual practices, appointments, interaction with others, significant events at work. Reflect on each of these events, noticing where God seemed to be loving you, speaking to you, guiding you or showing you something new about himself.
- Give thanks - Thank God for each part of the day and his presence in it, for the moments when you sensed a growing freedom from sin and a greater capacity to love God and others. If there are unresolved issues or questions from the day and its events, express these to God and allow yourself to experience gratitude for God's presence with you even in places that feel dark or confusing.

- Confess - Use Psalm 139:23-24 as a model, invite God to bring to mind attitudes, actions or moments when you fell short of exhibiting the character of Christ or the fruit of the Spirit. As God brings different areas to mind, reflect on what contributed to the situation and what might enable you to respond differently in the future.
- Ask forgiveness - Express your willingness to take any concrete steps needed to allow Christ's character to be more fully formed in you. Be assured of God's forgiveness and his power to continue leading you into the transformation you desire. Ask God if there is anything you need to do to make things right relative to the situation you have confessed.
- Seek out spiritual friendship - seek out a spiritual friend and tell them what you are discovering about yourself, your confession and your resolve to pursue transformation in this area.

#### Rich Villodas - Interior Examen

- Family of Origin
  - How have we been formed by patterns, trauma, and scripts?
  - Tool: Gengram
- Anxiety
  - Acute vs chronic anxiety
  - Who and what situations make me anxious?
  - Practice being compassionately curious with self when anxiety surfaces
- Feelings
  - What are you mad about?
  - What are you sad about?
  - What are you anxious about?
  - What are you glad about?
- Reactions
  - What happened?
  - What am I feeling?
  - What is the story I am telling myself?
  - What does the gospel say?
  - What counter-instinctual action is needed?