

Prayer of EXAMEN

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.
See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*
-Psalm 139:23-24

Week 1 (March 1-5):

The Prayer Examen begins by inviting us to center our scattered senses on the presence of God. We then to immerse ourselves in gratitude, and converse with God about important parts of our day. As we reflect on the questions offered below, we can become increasingly aware of the ways the Holy Spirit is already at work in our lives and in our world.

Reflection Questions:

*Draw near to God, being still in mind and heart, if not also in body.
Draw near to God, and God will draw near to you. -James 4:8

*For what moment today am I most grateful?

*When did I give and receive the most love today?

*What was the most life-giving part of my day?

*When today did I have the deepest sense of connection with God, others, and myself?



Family Activity: Practice finding God in daily life by playing “I spy God.” At the dinner table invite each person to share where they have spied God in their day. Kids go first!

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*See how much love the Father has given us,
that we should be called children of God;
and that is what we are."*

-1 John 3:1

Week 2 (March 6-12):

The Prayer of Examen is one way of nurturing relationship with God and can be developed as a daily family habit or personal practice. But the frequency isn't as important as the intentionality. Like a date night with your significant other, the answer to "how often?" really is: As often as you want. As frequently as you'd like to check in with the Lover of your soul! All healthy relationships require intentionality. Why wouldn't you want to spend time with God daily?

Reflection Questions:

*Draw near to God; allow God to draw near to you.

*Immerse yourself in gratitude:

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! God's faithful love endures forever. -Psalm 136:1

*When did I give and receive the most love today?

*What was the most life-giving part of my day?

*When today did I have the deepest sense of connection with God, others, and myself?



Family Activity: Light a candle as you say bedtime prayers. Ask: When you were able to give love today? And when were you able to receive love from another person?

Read 1 John 3:1 (if you read it multiple days in a row, some family members will have it memorized!): *See how much love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are."*

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*O Lord, You have searched me and known me!
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.”
-Psalm 139:1, 6*

Week 3 (March 13-19):

In the above Scripture verses, the Psalmist prays praise to the all-knowing, all-seeing Maker and Sustainer of all creation. No corner exists without God's intimate knowledge! What a comfort to know that God knows us perfectly! This profound knowledge also means that we do not examine ourselves on our own, but in the presence and though the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

More than introspection, the Prayer of Examen leans into the reality that we are already fully known, and deeply loved. Begin today's Examen by saying:

Almighty God, you know when I sit and when I rise, You perceive my thoughts from afar. You know me far better than I know myself. Holy Spirit, open my eyes to see what's going on in my heart and mind. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, but not for You. Search me and know me, Amen.

Reflection Questions:

- *For what moment today am I most grateful?

- *Do a mental scan of your day (week). What was the most life-giving part?

- *When today did I have the deepest sense of connection with God, others, and myself?

- *Where was I aware of living out of the fruit of the Spirit?



Family Activity: Gather a variety of fruit (cut-out construction paper shapes, plastic fruit, or even real fruit!). Look up Galatians 5:22-23 and read it together. Have each member of the family write a Fruit of the Spirit on a “piece” of fruit. At dinner time, talk about when each fruit was on display in your life this day.

*For younger children: 2-3 fruits are enough! Try love and kindness!

*For older children: discuss when there was an absence of one or more of the fruits: Was there a time today when the Fruit of the Spirit's Peace was not present in my life?

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*Wonderful are you works, of God, my soul knows it well.
How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!
If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.*
-Psalm 138:17–18

Week 4 (March 20-26):

The Prayer of Examen isn't listening to ourselves, it's listening to God's truth about Himself and about us, and then speaking that same truth to our hopes, our fears, our dreams, and our prayers.

Pastor theologian Martin Lloyd-Jones wrote: "The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself. . . . And then you must go on to remind yourself of God—who God is, and what God has done, and what God has pledged himself to do."

Begin this way: *Jesus, you are the way, the truth, the life. Shine light through the darkness of any lie I might believe. Holy Spirit, shatter the darkness of shame, and speak truth to me about me and strengthen me to believe the truth about You!*

Reflection Questions

*For what moment today am I most grateful?

*Share the important moments of your day (week) with God.

What was the most life-giving part? What were the life-draining moments?

*Where was I aware of living out of the fruit of the Spirit?

*Celebrate the wins. Confess the fails. Rest in God's peace and forgiveness, savoring 1 John 1:9: *If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*



Family Activity: Make a family thesaurus. Brainstorm words that we might use to describe moments that are "life-giving" (accepted, full, purposeful, etc) and moments that are "life-draining" (weepy, paranoid, defeated, etc.).

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*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

-1 Thessalonians 5:6-18

Week 5 (March 27-April 1):

This is countdown week to Holy Week. Glance back over the last several weeks of your Prayers of Examen. What do you notice? Bring this before God as the matter of reflection this week:

Reflection Questions:

- *Draw near to God. Rest your mind and heart.
- *With an attitude of humility and gratitude, reflect on this season of Lent so far.
What are you grateful for? What have you learned about God, others, yourself?
- *From Ash Wednesday until now, when have you been most aware of God's presence?
- *Write an honest prayer to God. It can be as lengthy as you need it to be; or it might be one word.
Use the space below to write at least one word of gratitude or desire. You could emphasize it or color it.
If you are even a wanna-be amateur artist, utilize font to express the emotion behind this prayer!
- *Reset for Holy Week to come.
Speak aloud the following: "Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ is coming again."



Family Activity: Build anticipation for Holy Week by making a family Holy Week calendar. Talk through the events the week, discussing how your family schedule (or budget) might make space (at church or at home) for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Silent Saturday, and Resurrection Sunday.

*If in Houston, consider being part of The Spoken Word, The Silent Word, and utilizing MDPC's Holy Week Devotional.