

The Examen [A Practice of Prayer]

STEP ONE: PRESENCE

Take some time and focus on the nearness of God. Open yourself to His presence.

"The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth." [Psalm 145:18]

STEP TWO: GRATITUDE

Looking back over the past 24 hours, for what are you most grateful? What makes you feel thankful? Using simple words, express your gratitude to God.

"Praise be to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens." [Ephesians 1:3]

STEP THREE: REVIEW

When or where in the past 24 hours were you cooperating most fully with God's action in your life? When were you resisting? What habits and life patterns do you notice from the past day?

"Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul...Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground." [Psalm 143:8b,10]

STEP FOUR: RESPONSE

Beginning today, how do you want to live your life differently? What patterns do you want to keep living tomorrow?

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." [Hebrews 12:2]

Many voices ask for our attention.

There is a voice that says, 'Prove that you are a good person.' Another voice says, 'You'd better be ashamed of yourself.' There also is a voice that says, 'Nobody really cares about you,' and one that says, 'Be sure to become successful, popular, and powerful.'

But underneath all these often very noisy voices is a still, small voice that says, '**You are my Beloved, my favor rests on you.**' That's the voice we need most of all to hear.

To hear that voice, however, requires special effort; it requires solitude, silence, and a strong determination to listen. That's what prayer is. It is listening to the voice that calls us '**my Beloved.**'

— Henri Nouwen

