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All Things Together for Good

An Examen from Romans 8

By James Catford

Followers of Christ have often practiced a daily rhythm of preparation for the day ahead, but far fewer have taken up the habit of reviewing the day just past. Here we revive the ancient practice of 'examen', centered around some familiar verses from Romans chapter 8, which offers a way to receive the life of Christ more deeply into our lived experience seven days a week.

The simple matrix we are offering can easily be memorised as an opportunity to process the day that has passed. Recognising how God participates and penetrates 'ordinary life' is a wonderful way to build faith and draw closer to the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Walk through the six questions based on Romans chapter 8 and see how God comes to us, disguised as our life.

ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR GOOD: An Examen from Romans 8

"He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (27 and 28)

Only if you find it helpful, rate the level of your response between 1 and 10 to the following six questions—1 being the lowest and 10 the highest.

→ CONDEMNATION AND SHAME

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death." (1 and 2)

Q 1: To what extent have you felt condemned or shamed today? When, why, and in what circumstances did this happen?

"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace." (5 and 6)



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→ RESURRECTION POWER

"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you." (11)

Q 2: Where have you seen the resurrection power of Jesus Christ at work today, perhaps in unexpected ways?

"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'" (14 and 15)

→ SUFFERING WITH HIM

"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (16, 17, and 18)

Q 3: Have you suffered in any way today, either physically or emotionally, perhaps with an ongoing condition or at the hands of others?

"For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God." (19 and 20)

→ GROANING INWARDLY

"For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." (22 and 23)

Q 4: At a deep level, do you sense a groaning in your spirit? Where do you feel this most and can you identify why?

"For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise, the Spirit



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helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words." (24, 25, and 26)

→ GOD ACTING FOR US

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (31 and 32)

Q 5: Where and to what extent have you seen God acting positively FOR you today? Thank him for this.

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. (33 and 34)

→ INTIMACY WITH GOD

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (35, 36, and 37)

Q 6: How would you rate your sense of connectedness or separateness from God throughout today? Where were you closest, and most distant?

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (38 and 39)