
THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN



The Prayer of Examen is a Christian soul-training practice designed to help you become more attentive and responsive to God's work in and around you. Through the Examen, you are invited to reflect prayerfully on the events of your day, seeking to detect God's presence and to discern his direction in them. Many people set aside the last 10-15 minutes of their day for this purpose. Here's how to engage with this meaningful practice.

QUIET

Sit in prayerful silence for a brief time. Open yourself to what the Lord might want to do during this time of prayer. Allow your soul to quiet and become attentive to God's presence with you.

REMEMBER

Ask God to help you look back over all that transpired during your day. Reflect on the day with gratitude. Pay attention to the emotions you experienced throughout the day. Reflect upon your decisions you made and the interactions you had with people and situations.

THANKSGIVING

Give thanks for all those moments where you saw God at work and especially for those times when you sensed yourself cooperating with what the Lord was doing.

CONFESSION

Offer a prayer of confession for those times you resisted and turned away from opportunities to join God in what he was doing. Ask God to reveal to you what was at the root of your resistance.

HOPE

Sit quietly and soak in the promises of God's love, grace, mercy and forgiveness for the day that is past.

Ask the Lord to open your heart to the 'possibilities' tomorrow brings and for the desire to keep joining Him in the building of the Kingdom of God. Look to the day ahead in preparation for God's presence to be in what you may do, who you will meet, and the decisions you make. Invite God into those spaces anticipating him to guide and lead you.

QUIET

Rest again in God's presence for a few minutes at the close of your Examen.

*Note: On the reverse side, you will find a resource called **The Humility Code**. This set of principles may help you engage more creatively the inner conflicts that arise in the course of the day and help you align yourself to God's design for your life.*



THE HUMILITY CODE

PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGING THE CONFLICT WITHIN

Much of the inner and external conflict we experience over the course of the day flow out of a “Big Me” mentality that God seeks to transform into a spirit of deep humility. Embracing the following principles may be helpful in making this change.

- 1. We don't live for happiness—we live for holiness.** The best life is oriented around the increasing excellence of the soul. It is nourished by moral joy, the quiet gratitude and tranquility that is a byproduct of successful moral struggle.
- 2. Holiness requires growing self-awareness.** The long road to character begins with an accurate understanding of our nature, and the core of that understanding is that we are flawed creatures.
- 3. Though flawed, we are also splendidly endowed.** We are both weak and strong, bound and free, blind and far-seeing. We have the capacity to struggle with ourselves and this struggle is heroic.
- 4. In the struggle against your weakness, humility is the greatest virtue.** Humility is awareness that your talents alone are inadequate to life's big tasks. You are not the center of the universe, but you serve a larger order.
- 5. Pride is the central vice of life.** Pride deludes us into thinking that we are the authors of our own lives. We believe the lie that we can be “as God” (Genesis 3).
- 6. Beyond mere survival, the struggle against sin and for virtue is the central drama of life.** No external conflict is as consequential as the inner campaign against our own deficiencies. Are we willing to engage in this struggle?
- 7. Character is built in the course of your inner confrontation.** Character is a set of dispositions, desires, and habits that are slowly engraved during the struggle against your own weakness.
- 8. We are wise to live for the Long Term.** The things that lead us astray are short term—lust, fear, vanity, gluttony. The things we call “character” endure over the long term—courage, honesty, humility.
- 9. No person can achieve self-mastery on his or her own.** Individual will, reason, compassion, and character are not strong enough to consistently defeat selfishness, pride, greed, and self-deception.
- 10. We are all ultimately saved by grace.** *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ to do good works (Ephesians 2:8-10).*
- 11. Defeating weakness often means quieting the self.** Only by muting the sound of your own ego, can you see the world clearly. The struggle against weakness thus requires the habits of self-effacement—reticence, modesty, obedience to some larger thing—and a capacity for reverence and admiration.
- 12. If you successfully struggle against sin, you may or may not become rich and famous, but you will become mature.** You will have moved from fragmentation to centeredness. You will have achieved a state in which the restlessness is over, the confusion about the meaning and purpose of life is calmed. Seek that.

THE HUMILITY CODE provided here is adapted from chapter 10 of David Brooks' excellent book, *The Road to Character* (New York: Random House, 2015), pp. 261ff.