

Examples of a Daily Examen

John Wesley's 22 Questions

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
4. Can I be trusted?
5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits?
6. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
7. Did the Bible live in me today?
8. Do I give it time to speak to me every day?
9. Am I enjoying prayer?
10. When did I last speak to someone else about my faith?
11. Do I pray about the money I spend?
12. Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
13. Do I disobey God in anything?
14. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
15. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
16. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy, or distrustful?
17. How do I spend my spare time?
18. Am I proud?
19. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican?
20. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticise, hold a resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I doing about it?
21. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
22. Is Christ real to me?

St. Ignatius' Particular Examen

The particular examen is different than the general examen. The general examen is one prayer that happens at the end of the day. The particular examen is a specific routine when you discern that you have a particular struggle with a specific sin. Ignatius advocated adjusting your entire prayer routine to address this habitual or specific sin. He also advocated that a person could use a wide flexibility to make the PARTICULAR EXAMEN accommodate your current situation and season. He understood and intended that it would look different for a mother with young children than a single man who is retired.

Morning (Upon Rising)

Set a tenor for the day by making your resolve explicit. Choose one specific sin, defect, or habit you wish to address. Commit to guarding against it throughout the day and ask for God's grace to help you succeed. A surrender prayer is perfect for this.

Midday Examination

At noontime, pause and reflect on the hours since morning. Identify the situations and circumstances that have disturbed you and lessened your determination. Note how many times you fell into your targeted defect. Renew your morning resolution and prepare yourself for the afternoon ahead. Appreciate the grace that covers you.

Evening Examination

After supper, conduct a more thorough review. Account for yourself hour by hour, tracking how often you committed the specific sin or fault you've been monitoring. A written record assists progress; Ignatius suggests keeping an actual count, traditionally marked on a chart.

Closing Movement: Resolve

The particular examen impels you to greater intimacy with the Lord and greater reliance on his energies. As you assent to grace, your resolve indicates your willingness to cooperate—you can watch, and you can cooperate. Renew your commitment for the next day, asking God's help to make progress against your chosen defect.

[1] Robin M. Van L. Maas and Gabriel Odonnell, *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990).

2. 3. Ganss, George E. *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*. (Chicago, Illinois: Loyola Press, 1992), 33.

Ignatius' General Examen

The general examen is used for a common time of prayer at the end of the day. This prayer can be given while kneeling next to your bed or after you are comfortable in bed and ready to give your last thoughts of the day. There are five parts (or movements) to this prayer for Ignatius.

Step 1: Give Thanks

Begin by offering gratitude to God. Ignatius believed ingratitude was the root of all sin—when we fail to recognize God's gifts, we drift away from him into sinful behavior. By contrast, thanksgiving cultivates wonder at God's creation and helps us encounter him in all things. Seek to feel gratitude with your whole self, knowing that giving thanks generates deeper desire for God.¹

Step 2: Ask for Grace

Request God's grace to recognize your sins and reject them. Ignatius emphasized the importance of asking God for help to be transformed. Seeking God's grace reflects a partnership of love where God lovingly reveals your defects.^{1, 3} This conversation between Lover and beloved doesn't become self-flagellation. Instead, understand God as your loving Parent—not a stern judge. Even when receiving correction, sense his boundless love, and experience the consolation that comes from knowing God helps you understand your failings so you'll love him more, become more truly yourself, and serve others better.^{1, 3}

Step 3: Review Your Day

Give an account of your thoughts, words, and deeds by moving through the day's actions and thoughts. Focus on the movement of your soul—how you reacted in various situations.^{1, 3} Notice when you felt fear, boredom, joy, anger, peace, disgust, or contentment. Reflect on how you moved toward or away from God. The Holy Spirit brings specific thoughts, responses, and reactions to mind to help you gain discernment.^{1, 3}

Step 4: Ask for Pardon

Ask God's pardon for your faults.^{2, 3}

Step 5: Resolve to Amend

Resolve to amend with God's grace, and close with the Lord's Prayer.^{2, 3}

¹Amy Boucher Pye, *7 Ways to Pray: Time-Tested Practices for Encountering God* (Oxford, England: Form, 2021).

²Ryan Skoog et al., *Lead with Prayer: The Spiritual Habits of World-Changing Leaders* (New York, NY: FaithWords, 2024), 114.

³Ganss, George E. *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*. (Chicago, Illinois: Loyola Press, 1992), 35.

John Mark Comer's "Examen" Framework

This should take no longer than 5 minutes and can be done at the end of the day.

1. Look back over the hours since the last examen or prayer time. Ask two tracking questions:

- **Where did I feel close to God?** (Consolation: moments of peace, love, gratitude).
- **Where did I feel distant or resistant?** (Desolation: moments of anxiety, anger, hurry).

2. Yield and Return

- End by relinquishing control. Release the anxieties of the day back to God.
- Rest briefly in silence, and go to bed.

Tyler Staton's "P.R.A.Y." Examen

Tyler Staton (lead pastor of Bridgetown Church and author of *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools*) structures his personal and corporate prayer teaching around a highly memorable adaptation of the classic Examen, compressed into the acronym **P.R.A.Y.**

When guiding people through a daily review, Staton focuses on moving from intellectual evaluation to deep emotional honesty with God:

- **P – Praise (The Gratitude Scan):** Staton suggests looking back through your day like a movie running in reverse. Notice the small gifts—a good cup of coffee, a kind word from a coworker, a moment of beauty. Thank God specifically for them.
- **R – Repent (The Compassionate Look):** Review the moments where things went sideways. Where did you snap at someone? Where did you give in to distraction or pride? Staton emphasizes that this isn't about shame or legalism, but about dragging those moments into the light of God's grace to be healed.
- **A – Ask (The Intercession):** Speak to God about the immediate anxieties or needs surfacing from the day. Pray for the people you interacted with, the problems that remain unsolved, and the strength needed for tomorrow.
- **Y – Yield (The Resting Place):** Close by stopping the words altogether. Staton writes extensively on silent, contemplative prayer—simply sitting in the love of God, letting your soul rest without needing to perform or produce anything.