

# Week 1

November 8, 2020



## Examen

*Our daily work will look and feel a little different than normal... And that's because it IS different than normal. Throughout our Grateful sermon series, we're going to be practicing The Examen. This is a prayer practice for discerning the voice of God and the activity of God throughout the day. It fosters gratitude and creates deeper awareness of God-given desires in our lives. The Examen is not about completing a task, but about building a relationship with God. Whether you begin or end your day with it, you're invited to use this prayer practice every day this month. You'll receive a different version of the examen each week of our Grateful series.*

Ignatius of Loyola, a Jesuit priest in the early 1500s, believed that *ingratitude* was the root of all sin (or a misuse of the gifts God has given us). If we are truly grateful for the gifts, then we are less likely to misuse them.

In this week's Examen, we'll spend time naming the blessings in your life and thanking God for each of them.

## BE STILL

Find a quiet place where you can be alone with God. Get into a comfortable position and allow yourself to relax. Quiet your mind, body, and heart before God. Pay attention to your breathing for a moment. Breathe in deeply the love of God and exhale the stress and distractions of the day. Try to turn down the volume on your random thoughts and preoccupations.

There's nothing magical about praying. Prayer is a conversation with God. So, invite God to be with you in this time. Ask God to help you to be grateful and honest as you reflect on the day. Let yourself see the day as God sees it.

## PRAY GRATITUDE THROUGH YOUR DAY

Read **Psalm 107:1**.

"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever."

Ask God to reveal all the blessings in your life—the really big ones and the small ones, too. List them.

Ask yourself, "What am I most grateful for today? What fills me with joy and gratitude?"

One person, place, event, or thing might pop up immediately. Name this specific gift before God: "Lord, I am so grateful for your gift to me of \_\_\_\_." Repeat this a few times, letting the gratitude sink deep.

Relish this one gift for a while. If you are most grateful for your sister, for example, picture her in your mind. See her smile, watch one of her gestures that always warms your heart. Allow yourself to sit in this moment of gratitude, being filled with love. As you are thinking of your one gift, thank God for it.

You may be grateful for a thing or an organization, for your cozy house and the comfort it offers. Perhaps you are most grateful for something that happened recently. Whatever gift is your focus, stay with it in prayer, allowing yourself to feel gratitude, all while saying, "Thank you, Lord."

Allow yourself to sit in gratitude as one by one, in chaotic and random order, the big and small gifts of your life float through your thoughts.

- My health—"Thank you, Lord."
- My relatives (even the difficult ones!)—"Thank you, Lord."
- My talent for making people laugh—"Thank you, Lord."
- The great meal I successfully cooked last night—"Thank you, Lord."

And on and on...a Thanksgiving parade to rival Macy's!

Take time to share anything else you'd like to say to God today.

As you close out your time today, pray through the Lord's Prayer.

*Our Father, in heaven,*

*Hallowed be your name.*

*Your kingdom come.*

*Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

*And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

*For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.*