

DAILY EXAMEN STEPS¹ (SPIRITUAL PRACTICE FOR SESSION 3)

1. Become aware of God's presence. Look back on the events, yesterday, or today in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

2. Review the day with gratitude. Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures.

3. Pay attention to your emotions. One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out in some way.

God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out to her or him in some way.

4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

5. Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance, ask for help and understanding.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the *Daily Examen* with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God.

You may close the *Daily Examen* with the Lord's Prayer.

1. "How Can I Pray?" IgnatianSpirituality.com, <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/how-can-i-pray/>