

# A Gentle Guide to the Examen

A simple way to review your day with God

The Examen is not a test or an exercise in guilt. It's not a way of replaying your failures. It is a gentle practice of *noticing*:

- where grace met you
- what felt heavy
- what you want to release
- what grace you need for tomorrow

Think of it as a daily conversation with God about your real life.

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## **Before You Begin:**

Find a place and posture that helps you feel present.

You might sit in a chair, rest at your bedside, or pause in the car before going inside.

Take one or two slow breaths and begin simply:

*“God, help me see this day with honesty and mercy.”*

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## **A Flexible Pattern for the Examen**

You do not need to do every step every time. Use what helps. Keep it simple.

### **Gather**

Pause. Breathe. Let yourself settle.

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Southern Shores, North Carolina  
February 25, 2026

You may want to place a hand on your heart or simply sit still for a moment.

**Offer a simple prayer:**

*“Here I am, Lord.”*

*or*

*“Be with me in this reflection.”*

**Give Thanks**

Begin with gratitude, even if the day was hard.

Name one or two gifts from the day. Keep it concrete.

Examples:

- a kind word
- a meal
- a moment of laughter
- sunlight
- rest
- a task completed
- a friend’s text
- strength for something difficult

If gratitude feels hard, start small.

*“Thank you for getting me through the day.”*

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**Review the Day Gently**

Walk back through the day as if you are walking through the rooms of a house.

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Morning... afternoon... evening...

You are not looking for a perfect record; you are simply noticing.

You might ask:

- *Where did I feel most alive today?*
  - *Where did I feel drained, tense, or shut down?*
  - *Where did I feel connected?*
  - *Where did I feel distant from God, others, or myself?*
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## **Notice Grace**

Now ask:

- *Where did grace meet me today?*
- *What did I receive that I did not earn?*
- *Where was I helped, steadied, or comforted?*
- *Where did I offer patience, kindness, courage, or restraint?*

Grace is often quiet. Don't rush past the small things.

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## **Release What You're Carrying**

This is not about punishing yourself. It is about honesty and surrender.

Ask:

- *What feels heavy tonight?*

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- *What do I need to release?*
- *Is there a word, moment, fear, resentment, or worry I need to place in God's hands?*

You can pray simply:

*"God, I release this to you."*

or

*"Hold what I cannot carry tonight."*

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### **Ask for Grace for Tomorrow**

End by asking for one grace for the next day.

Choose one:

- patience
- courage
- clarity
- gentleness
- wisdom
- rest
- hope

A simple prayer:

*"Give me the grace I need for tomorrow."*

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Choose the version that best fits your life

The 3-Minute Examen (for busy days)

- One breath
- One thing I'm grateful for
- One thing I need to release
- One grace I need tomorrow

The 5-Minute Examen (a steady daily practice)

- Arrive
- Gratitude
- Gentle review
- Release
- Ask for tomorrow's grace

The 10-Minute Examen (when you have more space)

Move slowly through each step and linger where you need to.

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**If You Get Stuck**

**If your mind wanders** - That is normal. Just return gently.

**If regrets take over** - Pause and ask:

- Where was grace?
- What am I being invited to release?
- What mercy do I need tonight?

**If the day was painful or overwhelming** - Keep it very simple:

- *“God, thank you for staying with me.”*
- *“This is what hurts.”*
- *“Please hold me tonight.”*

That is enough.

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### **Optional Journal Prompts**

If writing helps, use one or two of these:

- *Today I noticed...*
  - *Today I give thanks for...*
  - *Tonight I release...*
  - *Tomorrow I ask for...*
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### **Closing Prayer**

Use your own words, or try this:

*God of mercy, thank you for meeting me in this day.  
Receive my gratitude, receive what I release to you,  
and give me grace for tomorrow. Amen.*