

Provisions

“until Christ is formed in you”



Internal Review

A soul care resource from LifePoint Resources

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. John 6:44

What satisfies the soul is not knowing more facts or reaching great insights, but savoring the many graces of God and resting in the Divine Presence.

(Kevin O'Brien, *The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in Daily Life*)



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How is it really going? What is it about bright shiny objects? It's unsettling to think about what can distract us and bring on a sudden change of course. And it's even more disconcerting when we realize that, over time, **momentary distractions can become life habits** that literally upend our life direction and our purpose.

This realization is especially disturbing when we remember that our loving Creator is intentionally seeking us so that He can draw us close, toward an abiding and abundant life. But, all the while, fleeting and false pleasures are at work to turn our attention and our affections in the opposite direction. Gradually we can wander off until **we are distant from God's life-giving friendship and care.**

"Prone to wander. Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love." Though written decades ago, the truth lingers.

However, if we cultivate daily Internal Review as a spiritual habit, we can learn to examine and reflect on the ways we are being with God. **We begin to recognize how God is intervening in our days with invitations to come near.** We see how God then prompts us through our feelings and desires when we resist that drawing. Pausing at the end of the day to take stock helps keep us on track, helps us to know if we are veering away from God's purposes or neglecting holy invitations. Then, we can surrender to course corrections before the distance becomes major.

Imagine gathering all of the loose ends of every day and laying them in front of Jesus. As **He helps us sort it all out,** we realize - when we examine our deep, lasting feelings and desires - how He was drawing us near. He celebrates the good and reassures us about what needs cleaning up and what will need attention tomorrow. And then He holds and guards all that we have examined so that we can lay back on soft pillows and rest with grateful hearts.

Pursuing this repeated review process, we learn to recognize God's presence so that we do more of what leads us to harmony and joy and less of what brings anxiety and sadness. **This daily review helps us know our true selves, clarifies our identity in Christ, and develops discernment.** Sorting out the events of the day, as we notice our resistance and feelings, makes us sensitive to His "drawing work" in every part of life.

This precious and continuous process of calling and answering transforms us. This is what the practice of daily Internal Review (Examen) offers. It brings us to rest and intimacy with God. "Prone to wander. Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. **Take my heart. Oh, take and seal it. Seal it for Thy courts above.**"

The Practice of Internal Review

Internal Review (some people refer to it as Examen) is an invitation to ...

- ... end every day by directing our thoughts and memories toward grateful evaluation,
- ... turn our final daily thoughts toward God's faithful presence and interventions in our day,
- ... bring both celebration and lament to God as gifts of worship,
- ... come back into alignment with God's purposes,
- ... turn from our resistance to God's directions,
- ... enjoy forgiveness and restoration as God's gifts at the end of the day,
- ... fall asleep remembering times God showed us steadfast love,
- ... bask in God's presence and movements in people and circumstances,
- ... rest in how God repetitiously initiates love and care toward us, and
- ... see ourselves and all of life as God sees it.

This is what the LORD says: "Stop at the crossroads and look around. Ask for the old, godly way, and walk in it. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

A Prayer of Internal Review

Lord God, I praise You for Your unwavering and loving presence. I'm grateful that You are aware of my deepest need and of everything that impacts me.

Open my eyes to notice
how You have been intertwined in my day,
how You are drawing me to Yourself.

Open my ears to hear
what You want me to hear from You.

Open my heart to accept surprises You bring
and to love what You love.

Show me whether I have responded as You would.
Forgive me when I have not represented You well.

Make me aware of Your abiding nearness.
Thank You for Your work to cause me
to become more and more like You.
Thank You that Your purposes are established.

The Practice of Internal Review

Remember – Will You help me remember the day that I have just lived? What do I know to be true about You, God?

Request – Will You show me Your thoughts? Will You send Your Spirit to help me see myself as You see me? Will You help me to love what You love? Will You forgive me for how I've sinned?

Rejoice – What happened today that am I thankful for? What brings me gratitude and consolation? When did I see the Holy Spirit drawing me towards life?

Reflect - When did I see You at work today, God? Where did I feel like I was missing You today? What felt like desolation? What were You trying to form in me today, Lord? Were my thoughts, feelings, desires and actions in line with Your will? Here are the things that I am lamenting ...

Resolve & Rest – Will You help me to walk closely with You and cooperate with Your Holy Spirit tomorrow? Will You help me experience deep rest as You watch over me tonight?

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES for the JOURNEY

Pray as You Go, a website with prayers to review the day. <https://pray-as-you-go.org/series/3-examen-prayer>

A New Liturgy: The Examen <https://www.anewliturgy.com/no-6->

Lectio 365, an app for smart phones. Provides a short Examen called "Night Prayer" for each evening.

The purpose of spiritual practices is to make space for the Holy Spirit to do transforming work so that Christ may be formed in us.

The point is an ever-increasing union with God—loving God for God's sake—overflowing the banks of our hearts for the sake of the world.

We hope that these quotes, prayers, ideas, and resources will help you practice the way of Jesus.