

Step 5 Looking Toward the Next 24 Hours

As I look forward to the next 24 hours, I ask the Lord to be present to me and through me with His love and support. I also ask for the openness and courage that disposes me to recognize and accept the Lord's surprises: unanticipated joys, unexpected meetings, new ways of approaching others or in something that is difficult for me. I ask that I not be so set on my plans that I cannot be open to God in the way or in the person who comes to me in unexpected ways.

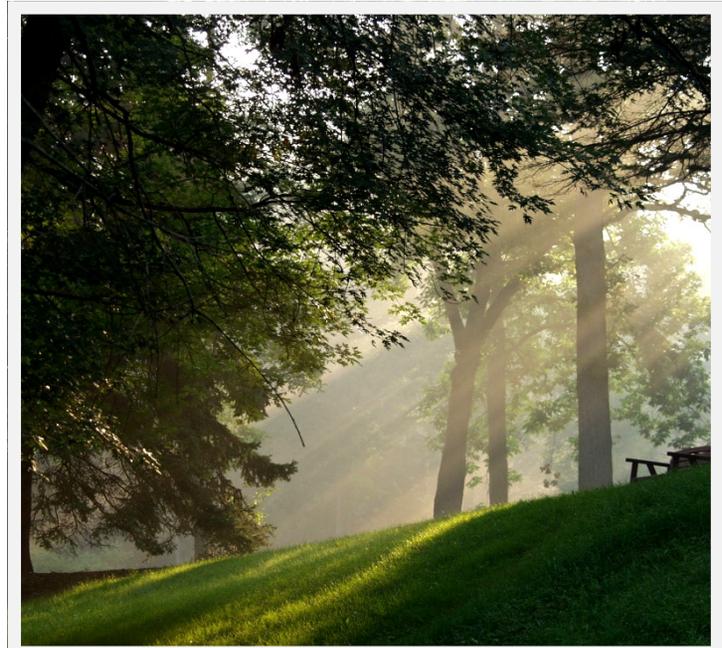
I may need to ask the Lord for strength to overcome something I fear or dread, maybe to persevere in something, to be more sensitive to God's activity in my life, maybe to let go of something or someone, to love more, to be converted in some relationship, to accept the "thorn in my flesh." Perhaps I will ask for help and guidance, for deeper love and care, or for greater trust and courage.

I will conclude with an "Our Father" or a "Glory be..."

In the beginning, you may frequently refer to the outlined steps. As you become more comfortable you will find less need to refer to the guide, if at all.

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Examen of Consciousness



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What is the Examen?

This 5 step exercise comes from St. Ignatius of Loyola. It is a prayerful review with God of one's past 24 hours. It can be done for 10-15 minutes in the middle of the day or at its end. It helps one recognize the influence of God's Holy Spirit as opposed to all other spirits (pride, greed, selfishness, materialism).

Step 1 Act of Presence

I quiet myself. After I am settled, I direct my attention to God. I recall that this wonderful God is ever present and attentive to me. In my own words, I welcome God. Then I briefly offer myself back to God. my life.

Step 2 Act of Thanksgiving and Gratitude

I take a moment to thank God for my life, for my own person, and particularly for this day of my life. I want to become more grateful for the gifts and blessings of my day.

Step 3 Asking for Understanding and Self-Acceptance

I ask the Holy Spirit for:

- A. The light to see clearly what God wants me to notice from my day, what in me is in harmony with God and what undermines my relationship with God.
- B. The gift of accepting myself as I am, trusting that the Holy Spirit is active in both the graced parts and sinful parts of myself, that God loves me and works in me in and through both parts.

Step 4 Reviewing the Past 24 Hours

- A. I review my day.
I walk through the past 24 hours from task to task, person to person, and thank God for the life I have experienced. I let the Lord Jesus show me where He was present and active in me and in others, where God's Spirit was obviously blessing me with gifts: work, relationships, challenges or in some event that made me happy, and where God's Spirit was less obvious: the experience of failure, or being discouraged and tempted.
- B. I take note of my feelings.
I recall how I've felt as I reviewed my day: angry, sad, happy or afraid. These feelings reveal where God's Spirit is moving in me and where those influences contrary to God are active.
- C. I focus on the strongest feeling.
I focus on the feeling, whatever it is — whether "good" or "bad," that most caught my attention. This feeling reveals that something important is happening in my relationship with God. Is it leading toward God or away from God? I talk with God about this and ask for insight. If my attention to this feeling is leading me toward God, I give thanks or praise for it. If it is leading me away from God, I ask for the grace of conversion, to see the attitude or value underneath the feeling and the ability to re-orient myself.