

# EXAMEN

## HOW WE GROW: INVITATION FOR THE WEEK

The practice of Examen was developed by theologian Ignatius of Loyola. It is all about noticing. It's the daily practice of noticing the work and presence of God in your life and noticing the spaces in your life that desperately need the presence of the Lord. It is most helpful when practiced habitually. I write each moment in my a journal or notebook. The goal is to simply notice and not dwell. Here are the three steps of the practice:

1. Through the practice of Examen, at either the beginning or end of the day, we take time to notice the moments where we experienced the work of the enemy. When did we feel far from God? When were we agitated or bored, fearful or anxious? We simply notice each of those moments. We name them (not writing a novel about them), and invite God into those moments.
2. Then we move on to moments when we experienced the presence of God. When did we experience faith, hope, and love? When did we feel close to God? When did we experience peace or tranquility? We notice each of those moments. We name them, and thank God for them.
3. Finally, look toward tomorrow. What are you excited about? Anxious for? Fearful of? Do you have a test or a conversation or a ballgame or a meeting that you're worried about? Is God inviting you to love a friend or neighbor or family member? List those items, asking God to join you in them.

# ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER

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1. If you would like to have an accountability partner, begin by asking God to bring someone to mind. An accountability partner does not have to be older and wiser than you but simply should be someone you love and trust deeply. He or she simply needs to share the desire to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the transformation process.
2. When a name comes to mind, approach the person with your desire. Decide how often you will meet together. Have an intentional chat about how you want your relationship to become a place where you can 'bare your souls' to one another. The central ingredients for this time of relationship and ongoing conversation are accountability, wisdom and encouragement.
3. This type of practice takes an obvious healthy dose of vulnerability for it to work. As you have now established the boundaries for your relationship, then become comfortable opening up your heart to your trusted friend. Step out of your shell of invulnerability, connect with the common human brokenness of your brother or sister, share with them and pray together. You can begin by sharing your stories, temptations and desired area of growth. Pray for each other.
4. While vulnerability and openness are wonderful and endearing gifts, it is important to use wise discernment when practicing the discipline of confession. In any act of vulnerability like this, it is important to be sure that you are ready to share and trust the person you are sharing with.