



⁴Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. ⁵Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. ⁶He will make your vindication shine like the light, and the justice of your cause like the noonday. ⁷Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him...

Psalm 37:4-7

THE AWARENESS EXAMEN

REST • RECOGNIZE • REVIEW • RESPOND • RESOLVE

Introduction

Popularized by St. Ignatius of Loyola in the 16th Century, the Awareness Examen is meant to help us develop a spiritual sensitivity to the special ways in which God works in our lives.

Most often the Awareness Examen is practiced at the end of the day. At its most basic level it is a simple review of the day's events. The purpose of the review is to help one become increasingly aware of God's presence and work in their lives (to become spiritually attuned to God), to offer up this relationship in prayer, and to resolve oneself to change one's ways through the grace of God.

The basic form of the Examen involves five steps which, for the purposes of simplicity and memorization, have been reduced to five simple words:

REST • RECOGNIZE • REVIEW • RESPOND • RESOLVE

Continues on the reverse side

Instructions

REST in God's Presence

To begin, simply rest in God's presence, quieting your heart and mind and focusing on God's desire to be with you. A simple prayer like "Here I am God, remain with me" can be a helpful way to gain focus and quiet. Ask God to help you see your life through God's loving eyes.

RECOGNIZE Causes of Gratefulness

As you begin to think through all of the events and experiences of your day, ask God to show you those times and places where you should be most thankful. Looking back over the day, for what are you most grateful? Ask God to show you the little things and not just the big things. In silent prayer, express your gratitude to God.

REVIEW the Good and the Bad

Again look over the events of your day. This time ask God to show you where you were open to God's presence and living according to God's ways, as well as, where you were blocked to God's presence and failed to live according to God's ways. Where were you most aware of God and where did you most deliberately turn your back on God? (To frame these questions in other ways, you could ask: "Where were you most able to give and receive love today?" and "Where were you least able to give and receive love?". Or you could ask "When did I listen to your voice today?" and "When did I resist listening to your voice today?") Reflect on these moments and ask yourself: "What do these moments indicate about my relationship with God? What do these moments say about my patterns of life? See what insights come to mind.

RESPOND to God

Speak to God about what you discover. Confess those times when you have not cooperated with God or have not been responsive to God's presence. And thank God for those times when you were open to God and God's ways. Consider writing your response in a journal.

RESOLVE to Change

Now that you've had a chance to reflect on your awareness of God throughout the day and the manner in which you lived in God's presence, consider what changes you might want or need to make. Ask God to give you the strength to change those things that need to be changed and the grace to live more and more into Christ's likeness.