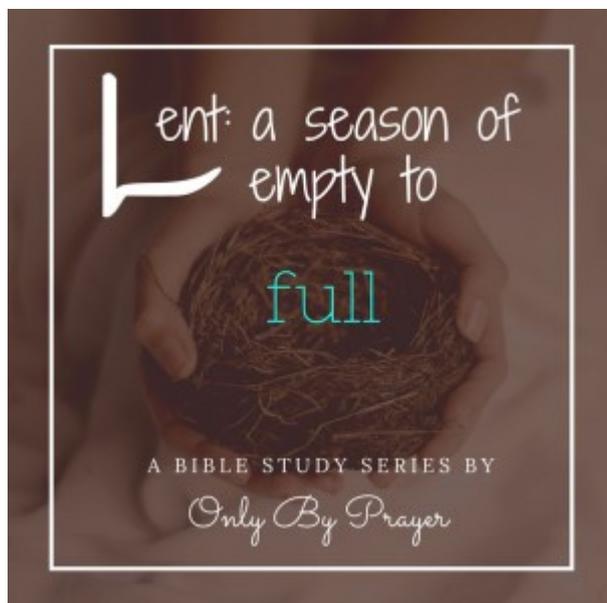


# Lent: a season of empty to full, examen



## Welcome to week 2 of *Lent: a season of empty to full*.

This week our focus is *examen* and *self-denial*—two of our favorite subjects! I know there's nothing we like better than taking a deep look at ourselves (warts and all) and saying no to our flesh. While these spiritual disciplines may be uncomfortable, they will bring a harvest of good if we allow God to do His necessary work.

## Below are the five traditional steps for the discipline of Examen:

- **Gratitude:** Recall the blessings of the day and thank God.
- **Review:** Recall the events of the day and notice where you felt God's presence and where you resisted

opportunities to grow in love.

- **Sorrow:** Recall anything for which you are sorry.
- **Forgiveness:** Ask for God's forgiveness and/or healing if needed.
- **Grace:** Ask God for the grace you need for the next day or for your life in general.

In the Sway, we will provide the information you need to go through the process of examen.

Let's also stretch our definition of *denial* beyond the traditional Lenten ideas of sugar and sweets. Consider denying yourself the right to get angry or to get even. What about denying yourself the right to be bitter or unforgiving?

Get ready for the Spirit to dig in to your life while you dig into the many resources included in this week's Sway. Remember to pray for each other and post your comments on our Facebook page and in the comment section below.

From empty to full.

Have a blessed Lent.

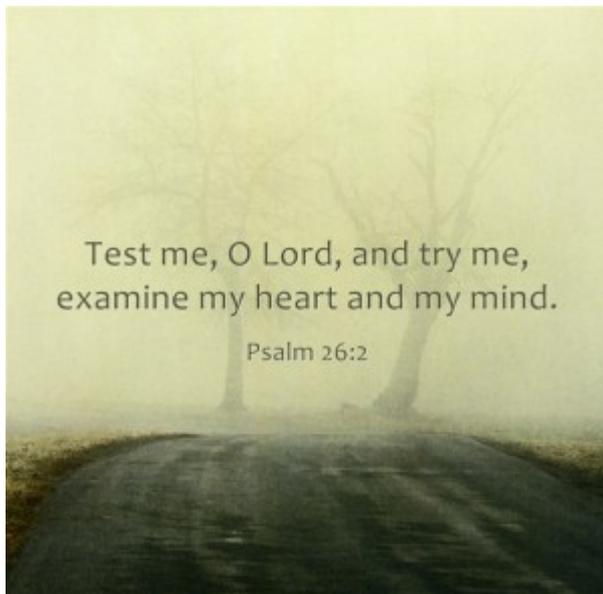
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*Mary Kane*

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# Lent: Repentance and Examen



Lent is a time of self-examination and self-denial to prepare for Easter.

It's natural to want to minimize these difficult days leading up to Resurrection Sunday, but then we would miss the whole purpose of Lent. We need to pause and sit with all the things that happened during Jesus' last 40 days on earth. And we need to pause and sit with ourselves too. We need to see what should be adopted, eradicated, improved upon, and otherwise changed to make us ready for **Easter**.

## Prayer of Examen

For the remainder of this week of **Lent**, we will focus on repentance and an ancient practice introduced by St. Ignatius called Examen. Examen is exactly what it sounds like. It is an in-depth prayer that helps us to examine ourselves. In the process we may be able to better discern God's will, find God in all things, and enhance our understanding of God's creation. This discipline should be done at the end of the day so that you can analyze how your day went. Don't let the words *discipline* and *analyze* scare you. The process can be completed

in as little as 10 minutes if you don't have much time. Try to do it at least two evenings this week, more often if you are able.

Here is a link that will take you to the short Prayer of Examen tutorial. It's a simple, yet effective process. If you want to, you can journal your answers to the questions, or you can complete them without pen and paper. Feel free to share any of your thoughts in the comment section below.

Pray on!

*Jane*

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## Lent Day 37, Examen

Welcome to Day 37 of our Lenten Devotional! We continue our study on spiritual housecleaning with today's post on the Prayer of Examen. This is a perfect time to explore this discipline developed by St. Ignatius. Just click below for today's post.

\*When you click on the Lent Day 37 , Examen link below, you will be taken to a pdf with more information on it. The Examen exercise link on the pdf page no longer works. Please use this link (Examen Exercise) instead after you read the pdf. Thank you!

[Lent Day 37, Examen](#)

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# Prayer of Examen

As 2011 has kicked off, **I've been evaluating my life and what I want to do for this year.** I'd already been thinking about this for a few days when I was in church on January 2. My pastor Dave Rodriguez introduced a type of praying that was perfect for the mindset I was in. It's called the Prayer of Examen. Richard Foster has a chapter on this type of prayer in his book *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*.

Basically, the **Prayer of Examen** is an inward spiritual practice, where we analyze what is going on inside of ourselves. It has two components:

1. **The first is where we examine how God was working in or through us throughout our day and how we responded to Him, and**
2. **We examine our conscience to see where we need to be cleansed, purified and healed. See Psalm 26:2,3.**

An important thing to remember, however, is to do this *with* God. Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to reveal things to you. God can help us to see the truth, but also He will do it in a loving way.



So, as I was in church, Pastor Rod suggested we all go through the Prayer of Examen in the context of looking over the past year of 2010. Here are the questions he suggested we answer.

1. Looking over the past year, for what am I most grateful or thankful?
2. When or where in the past year were you cooperating most fully with God's action in your life?
3. When were you resisting?
4. Beginning today, how do you want to live your life differently?

Take some time to prayerfully answer these questions. What do you want 2011 to look like for you?

While my church did this in the context of one year, many people pray the Prayer of Examen on a daily basis. You can ask yourself these same questions using the last 24 hours as your context. Here are some ways it may help you to do this on a daily basis, or at least semi-regularly.

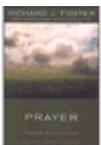
Perhaps you **take a walk** every evening; you could answer these questions as you're walking. Or maybe you like to journal, and you can **journal your answers**. Perhaps you want to **mentally run through the prayer** as you're lying in bed at night.

Whatever way you decide, incorporating the Prayer of Examen into your life may help you to grow spiritually as you invite the Lord to help you analyze your heart.

Pray on!

*Joe*

Resource



[Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home](#)

By Richard Foster / HarperOne