



Week Four: *Listening Prayer*

1. Listening prayer takes time to see God's presence in daily life

Day-to-day experiences, circumstances, and interactions with people

2. God's always communicating to us, but we don't always see it

The King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, and whom no human being has seen or can see.

1 Tim 6

3. An important exercise is to reflect on experiences to see God

Like stained glass windows, our experiences can be illuminated by God's light, to see his presence shining through them

4. We have to be careful about judging experiences as 'good' or 'bad'

My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Luke 16

5. The rich man of the parable failed to notice God's call in daily life

The rich man dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Luke 16

6. Jesus warns us to stop and listen for God's call shining in daily life

Let them listen to them. Luke 16

7. In listening prayer, we ask God to help us see his presence and call shining through our experiences

We practice this through the prayer of Examen, rummaging through our experiences the blessing and call of God

8. This prayer is best practiced in the evening, before bed

Practicing the Prayer of Examen

- Each day this coming week, set aside ten or fifteen minutes at the end of your day (but before you are too sleepy!) to practice the *Examen prayer*.
- The key to this practice is not to fail to practice it each day!
- Follow the steps below

Prepare: Go to your *place* of prayer, take a comfortable and prayerful *posture*, and acknowledge God's *presence*. Become aware of God's love.

1. Pray for light: Ask God to make his presence obvious to you in the experiences, circumstances, and interactions of the day. Ask God to make this time fruitful beyond your own abilities.

2. Replay: With God, review where I was, what I did, whom I was with in the last 24 hours. Look for some moment, no matter how simple or brief, when you felt blessed, surprised by joy, or touched by grace. When you find one, open your memory and feeling toward it, so you really feel blessed by it, enriched by it.

3. Notice: Among all the experiences of the day, notice the one where you had the strongest *affective response*. E.g./ boredom, joy, elation, resentment, compassion, regret, anger, disgust, shame, doubt, confidence, confusion, delight, hopelessness. Reflect on it with God. Look to understand what it means, and what God wants you to see.

- A call to gratitude? Delight in a job well done? An urging to do something good? A warning to avoid something evil? Something I need to repent of? A new attitude to take? Someone to forgive? A person to reach out to? A wrong to make right? An act of mercy or charity to pursue?

4. Jesus: Take the experience to Jesus and ask him if he's ever experienced anything like this before. He may remind you of a text from Scripture. He may show you how he has felt the same way and how he responded.

5. Plan: Thank God for this time, and plan concretely how you will live the next day in accord with God's loving desire for your life. Turn any feelings into prayer. Ask God's help and understanding. Pray for hope.