

The background of the entire page is a textured, watercolor-style wash in various shades of purple, ranging from light lavender to deep, dark violet. The texture is organic and painterly, with visible brushstrokes and blending of colors.

GUIDED CONVERSATIONS
THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN
WITH GOD

EXAMINING
LENT

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXAMEN

The Daily Examen is a prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and discern his direction for us. The Examen is an ancient practice in the Church that can help us see God's hand at work in our whole day. Many Christians use this practice in the middle, or end of the day, or even both! If this is a new practice to you, consider starting with blocking out 10 minutes at the end of your day to engage with God using the Examen.

HOW TO PRAY THE EXAMEN

Each day, you will walk through the following steps, using the prompts and Scripture passages included.

- **Become aware of God's presence**
- **Review the day with gratitude**
- **Pay attention to your emotions and actions**
- **Offering confession**
- **Look toward tomorrow**

The texts and prompts will be new every week, including Ash Wednesday, following the texts that Highrock preachers will use throughout Lent.

You may want to use a notebook or a sketch pad to capture your thoughts and prayers. You can also share your prayers and discoveries with a small group or prayer partner.

Ash Wednesday

Read

John 7:53-8:11

Then they all went home, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

"No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Reflect

Just like the woman in this story, I am created in the image of a God who is One. I am unique. The Father knows me and loves me personally and does not condemn me. I thank God for who I am.

Reflect

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- **Pray for Light:** I ask the Father to let me see my day as the Holy Spirit sees it, and to show me what I need to see.
- **Give Thanks:** I thank God for this day, for my life, for all I am and have, and for His Word.
- **Find God:** I look at my day in the light of the Spirit
 - What have I done?
 - Did I do what I had planned?
 - What happened that wasn't planned? How did I respond?
 - What did my heart tell me?
- **Anything Wrong? :** I confess the places that I am lacking and need God's restoration
 - Have I been anxious? Sad? Focused on myself?
 - Does something in a relationship need to be addressed?
 - Have I condemned someone else? Do I feel condemned?
 - Have I been ungrateful?
- **What Now?**
 - What do I need from God today?
 - What do I need to do tomorrow?

Closing Prayer

When I go to my inner room, that place where no one else sees or hears me,
God my Father, Creator of my inmost self, you are there.

I go with ashes on my forehead and in my soul
for what I have done
and for the little love I return to You.

May I embrace as my own and offer to you
the fears that overwhelm me, the condemnation I feel and pass on others.

May I embrace as my own and offer to you
the sufferings of the world that invade my day
That I cannot control, and You ask me not to ignore.

Week 1

Read

John 9:1-34

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" Some claimed that he was.

Others said, "No, he only looks like him."

But he himself insisted, "I am the man."

"How then were your eyes opened?" they asked.

He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

"Where is this man?" they asked him.

"I don't know," he said.

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."

Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided.

Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened."

They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

"We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."

He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?"

Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from."

The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

The man replied, "He is a prophet."

Reflect

Jesus changed this man's life, and he immediately responded. He moved from spiritual ignorance into grateful dependence on Jesus, even though it came at the cost of his place in the community. Do our lives reflect this sort of dependence on Jesus?

- **Pray for Light:** I ask the Father to let me see my day as the Holy Spirit sees it, and to show me what I need to see.
- **Give Thanks:** I thank God for this day, for my life, for all I am and have, and for His Word.
- **Find God:** I look back over my morning, afternoon and evening.
 - Who talked with me or worked with me?
 - Did I get done what I meant to? What did I leave out?
 - Did anything unexpected happen? How did I respond
- **Anything Wrong? :** I confess the places that I am lacking and need God's restoration
 - Did I trust myself or something else more than God today?
 - Did my busyness or distractedness cause me to ignore God's invitations today?
 - Where I was ungrateful, I repent and offer thanks.
- **What Now?**
 - I look forward in hope.
 - What do I need to do now? What do I need to avoid?

Closing Prayer

I seem to give you so little attention, Jesus.
It's easier to make excuses for how I spend my time
My money.
My energy.
I ignore you, and then cannot share you with those around me.
Remind me of your trustworthiness, that you promise to help me.
Show me others to help.
I will thank You for it—and ask for the courage
to tackle what You lead me to.
Amen.

Week 2

Read

John 10:1-21

“Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

The Jews who heard these words were again divided. Many of them said, “He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?”

But others said, “These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

Reflect

Who do I listen to? What occupies my time and influences my mind and heart? Can I recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd, or do I follow my own ego, or another false shepherd?

- **Pray for Light:** I ask the Father to let me see my day as the Holy Spirit sees it, and to show me what I need to see.
- **Give Thanks:** I thank God for this day, for my life, for all I am and have, and for His Word.
- **Find God:** I look back over my morning, afternoon and evening.
- Who or what did I give my attention to today?
- Did I notice God in anyone or anything today?
- Did anything unexpected happen? How did I respond?
- **Anything Wrong? :** I confess the places that I am lacking and need God's restoration
 - Did something make me fearful today? How did I react?
 - Did I try to save my life, instead of offer it back to God in service today?
 - Where followed something other than the Good Shepherd, I repent.
- **What Now?**
 - I look forward in hope.
 - Where or how do I need to follow God tomorrow?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, I know you are the Good Shepherd
because you have proven faithful in your sacrificial love for me.
Yet time and again, I live as though that is not true.
Jesus, defend me from my own lies.
I know with all my heart that you are Christ.
I know that you suffered for my sins.
I wish I could break my heart with sorrow over this.
If I do not know how, visit me and show me.
Let me hear your voice over the din and distractions of my life.
Lord of Compassion, share your passion with me
that I might act in courage with you.
I am afraid to ask, but still I say it.
Amen.

Week 3

Read

John 14:1-14

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Reflect

Do I live like I truly trust that Jesus is the only way to know God? Does my life reflect the way of Jesus? Do others know the goodness of God because of my life?

- **Pray for Light:** I ask the Father to let me see my day as the Holy Spirit sees it, and to show me what I need to see.
- **Give Thanks:** I thank God for this day, for my life, for all I am and have, and for His Word.
- **Find God:** I look back over my morning, afternoon and evening.
 - Where did I see the miraculous works of God in my life today? (Maybe the Fruit of the Spirit- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control)
 - Did anything unexpected happen? How did I respond?
- **Anything Wrong? :** I confess the places that I am lacking and need God's restoration
 - Did I doubt God in my day? What happened?
 - Did I believe in Jesus with my head, but not follow with living it out in my relationships and actions today?
 - Where I placed my confidence in something other than Jesus, I repent.
- **What Now?**
 - I look forward in hope.
 - Where do I need to live in trust and belief tomorrow?

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord,
Help me to expect miracles.
Help me to get past the borders of my eyes,
the roadblocks of my mind,
the narrow door of my heart.
May my soul embrace
the mystery of Your magnificent love!
May my heart rejoice
over the unexpected and undefined!
May I respond by living with the expectation of your inbreaking every day.
Amen.

Week 4

Read

John 15:1-17

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.”

Reflect

Am I taking time to connect to the Source of Life? Do I allow God to prune me?

- **Pray for Light:** I ask the Father to let me see my day as the Holy Spirit sees it, and to show me what I need to see.
- **Give Thanks:** I thank God for this day, for my life, for all I am and have, and for His Word.
- **Find God:** I look back over my morning, afternoon and evening.
 - Where was I blessed by the Fruit of God's Spirit in my life today? (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control)
 - Where did I offer the Fruit of the Spirit to others?
 - Did anything unexpected happen? How did I respond?
- **Anything Wrong? :** I confess the places that I am lacking and need God's restoration
 - Where did I ignore God's invitation to be pruned?
 - Where was I selfish, instead of reliant on God and mindful of the other branches?
 - Where I chose myself over connection to the Vine, I repent.
- **What Now?**
 - I look forward in hope.
 - Where do I need to be reminded of God's sufficiency tomorrow?

Closing Prayer

Lord of the one true Vine,
in you I
live and move
and have my being.

I am your branch,
spindly and slight and fragile.

I ask the Father to prune me
(though gently).

I want to bear more
of your fruit.

Amen

Week 5

Read

John 17:1-26

"After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

Reflect

Unity in Christ feels impractical at best- impossible at worst- when we look at the diversity among Christians. It requires that we choose to see and honor each other as co-image bearers of God. Jesus' prayer encourages us that this work of belonging to each other will be our witness to the world about what is possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. Do we commit to this work daily?

- **Pray for Light:** I ask the Father to let me see my day as the Holy Spirit sees it, and to show me what I need to see.
- **Give Thanks:** I thank God for this day, for my life, for all I am and have, and for His Word.
- **Find God:** I look back over my morning, afternoon and evening.
 - Where did I experience a sense of belonging with someone else today? What did that feel like?
 - Where did I see God through someone else today?
 - Did anything unexpected happen? How did I respond?
- **Anything Wrong? :** I confess the places that I am lacking and need God's restoration
 - Where did I dehumanize someone today?
 - Did I choose my own comfort over trying to understand the pain another person in Christ's Body was feeling?
 - Where I chose myself over Unity with other Christians, and with Christ, I repent
- **What Now?**
 - I look forward in hope.
 - Where do I need to be encouraged towards unity in love tomorrow?

Closing Prayer

O God, we are one with you.
You have made us one with you.
You have taught us that if we are open to one another,
you dwell in us.
Help us to preserve this openness
and to fight for it with all our hearts.

Help us to realize that there can be no understanding
where there is mutual rejection.
O God, in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully, completely,
we accept you, and we thank you, and we adore you,
and we love you with our whole being,
because our being is in your being,
our spirit is rooted in your spirit.

Fill us then with love,
and let us be bound together with love as we go our diverse ways,
united in this one spirit which makes you present in the world,
and makes you witness to the ultimate reality that is love.
Love has overcome.
Love is victorious.

- Thomas Merton