

INTRO

- Do you enjoy writing? Writing thoughts? Writing prayers?
- Paper & pen? Digital?
- Did you grow up reciting The Lord's Prayer at home, school or church?

READ

Matthew 6:13
James 1:2-4
Romans 5:3-5
I Peter 1:6-7

REFLECT

1. In the "Lord's Prayer", Jesus teaches as to address God as Father when we come to him.

Qu: Why do we need to see God as our Father when we ask, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

2. The final petition of the Lord's prayer could be rephrased:
Let us not fall into temptation.
Deliver us from the evil one.

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, we are reminded conflict comes from every direction, "with battles on the outside and fear on the inside." — 2 Corinthians 7:5 NLT

We face trials and suffering in life. Our prayer is that the trials of life don't trap us, crush us, cause us to fall.

Qu: How do the tests and trials in life change us?

3. We actually need the kind of character and strength in our lives that only come through testing.

Qu: Can you think of a difficult time in life that you can look back on and see the resulting growth and change in your life?

RESPOND

"The Psalms are the requisite toolbox. The Psalms are the best tools available for working the faith — one hundred and fifty carefully crafted prayers that deal with the great variety of operations that God carries on in us and attend to all the parts of our lives that are, at various times and in different ways, rebelling and trusting, hurting and praising."

— Eugene Peterson, Answering God

"We are not simply to read psalms; we are to be immersed in them so that they profoundly shape how we relate to God. The psalms are the divinely ordained way to learn devotion to our God."

— Timothy Keller, The Songs of Jesus: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms

In many of the Psalms, David asks for protection from evil and from his enemies. One such prayer is Psalm 143. Look at this Psalm. Does any line or stanza stand out to you? Put part of this Psalm in your own words and make it your prayer.

PRAY

But he (God) knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold. — Job 23:10

Pray for one another that the difficulties and testing in your life would bring forth strength, endurance and character.

A Daily Examen

1. Become aware of God's presence. Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

2. Review the day with gratitude. Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures.

3. Pay attention to your emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings? God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications.

4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

5. Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

- Ask God for light. Look at the day with God's eyes, not merely your own.
- Renew your awareness of God's love for you as your one true and perfect Father.
- Give thanks. The day you have just lived is a gift from God. Be grateful for it.
- Review the day. Look back on the day just completed, being guided by the Holy Spirit.
- Doing a deep, honest reflection of the past day causes us to learn more about ourselves.
- If you have placed your faith in Christ, you're reviewing your life from a place of love and acceptance. In other words, you're not trying to earn his approval or acceptance — but because Christ has gained acceptance for you, you can respond in gratitude to his grace.
- Ask God to help you as you look forward to a new day tomorrow. Resolve to cooperate and trust in the loving guidance of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.