

MENTAL FORMATION

"THE FIRST FRUIT OF LOVE IS THE MUSING OF THE MIND UPON GOD. HE WHO IS IN LOVE, HIS THOUGHTS ARE EVER UPON THE OBJECT. HE WHO LOVES GOD IS RAVISHED AND TRANSPORTED WITH THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD...GOD IS THE TREASURE, AND WHERE THE TREASURE IS, THERE IS THE HEART."

Thomas Watson



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Mental formation = renewing our minds by focusing on who God is and his wisdom for us

Definition

The consistent renewing of our minds and thinking so that we are centered on God and his wisdom for our lives. The place of God in our minds. Often called “practicing the presence of God.”

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. 2Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

ISAIAH 26:2-4 (MSG)

People with their minds set on you,
you keep completely whole,
Steady on their feet,
because they keep at it and don't quit.
Depend on God and keep at it
because in the Lord God you have a sure thing.

COLOSSIANS 3:1-2

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth

The Need

Barriers

MENTAL FORMATION

What Might a Joyful Mind Be?

- When your mind does not need to be right.
- When you no longer need to compare yourself with others.
- When you no longer need to compete - not even in your own head.
- When your mind can be creative, but without needing anyone to know.
- When you can live in contentment with whatever the moment offers.
- When you do not need to analyze or judge things in or out, positive or negative.
- When your mind does not need to be in charge but can serve the moment with gracious and affirming information.
- When your mind follows the intelligent lead of your heart.
- When your mind is curious and interested, not suspicious and interrogating.
When your mind does not "brood over injuries."
- When you do not need to humiliate, critique, or defeat those who have hurt you
- not even in your mind.
- When your mind does not need to create self-justifying storylines.
- When your mind does not need the future to be better than today.
- When your mind can let go of obsessive or negative thoughts.
- When your mind can think well of itself, but without needing to.
- When your mind can accept yourself as you are, warts and all.
- When your mind can surrender to what is.
- When your mind does not divide and always condemns one side or group.
- When your mind can find truth on both sides.
- When your mind fills in the gaps with "the benefit of the doubt" for both friend and enemy.
- When your mind can critique and also detach from the critique.
- When your mind can wait, listen, and learn.
- When your mind can live satisfied without resolution or closure.
- When your mind can forgive and actually "forget."
- When your mind can admit it was wrong and change.
- When your mind can stop judging and critiquing itself.
- When you don't need to complain or worry to get motivated.
- When you can observe your mind contracting into self-preservation or self-validation, and then laugh or weep over it.
- When you can actually love with your mind.
- When your mind can find God in all things.

--from The Naked Now by Richard Rohr

EXAMEN



"IF YOU WANT TO IDENTIFY ME, ASK ME NOT
WHERE I LIVE OR WHAT I LIKE TO EAT, OR HOW I
COMB MY HAIR BUT ASK ME WHAT I AM LIVING
FOR, IN DETAIL AND ASK ME, WHAT I THINK IS
KEEPING ME FROM LIVING FULLY FOR THE THING
I WANT TO LIVE FOR?

"

Thomas Merton

PRAYER OF EXAMEN

Jason Phillips

The Examen of Consciousness is an exploration of how God is present within the events, circumstances, feeling of our daily lives. The method reflects the dynamic movement of personal love: what we always want to say to a person whom we truly love. "Thank you...Help me...I love you...I'm sorry...Be with me..."

You can pray through the outline below meditating on each point for a period of time but many also find journaling through this prayer to be a blessing.

Structure

Loving God, I am totally dependent on you. Everything is a gift from you. **All is a gift.** I give you thanks and praise for the gifts of this day...

God, I believe you work through and in time to reveal me to myself. Please give me an **increased awareness** of how you are guiding and shaping my life, as well as a more sensitive awareness of the obstacles I put in your way...

You have been present in my life today. Be near, now, as I reflect on:

Your presence in the events of today...

Your presence in the **feelings** I experienced today...

Your **call** to me...

My **response** to you...

Oh God, I ask **your loving forgiveness and healing.** The particular event of this day that I most want healed is...

Filled with hope and a firm belief in your love and power, **I entrust myself to your care,** and strongly affirm...(Claim the gift you most desire, most need; believe that God desires to give you that gift.)

Or Simply

- Start with gratitude, thanking God for one or two blessings you received today
- Ask God to fill you with His love. Entrust yourself to Him
- Going hour by hour or moment by moment.
 - Where did you experience God's Presence? Why?
 - Where did he seem to be absent? Why?
- Ask God for forgiveness
- Commit your sleep and morning to Him.

App

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/reimagining-the-examen/id1065042173>