



REIMAGINING  
the  
IGNATIAN  
EXAMEN

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# Spiritual Freedom

Fresh Ways to Pray from Your Day

Examen 2

## Spiritual Freedom

We are spiritually free when our spiritual and emotional state of being is healthy. We are spiritually free when we are emotionally well-balanced and desirous of being a faithful, hopeful, and loving person. We are spiritually unfree<sup>4</sup> when our negative emotions and temptations have gotten the better of us, when we are too angry, sad, tempted, or scared to think straight. We are unfree when we are lethargic and not inspired to be more faithful, hopeful, and loving. We are unfree

when we don't feel God's presence at this moment, and we either don't care or are too panicky to handle the situation well.

In this Examen you may explore the question, "What was my most unfree moment this morning?" By that we mean: When was I in a bad mood? When did the unfaithful, unhopeful, unloving side of me take over? When did I let my strong negative emotions control my thoughts and actions?

You may then explore the question, "What was my most free moment?" By that we mean: When was I in a really good mood? When did the most faithful, hopeful, and loving side of me run the show? When was I thinking

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clearly and objectively, thinking good and loving thoughts and making good and loving decisions?

1. I begin in my usual way.
2. I spend a few moments in gratitude, thanking God for one or two of the blessings, big and small, that I've received today: the good mood in which I woke up, a kind word from a friend, my undeserved good health, an easy commute to work, another day with my wonderful spouse.
3. Looking back, I ask God, "What was my most unfree moment today?" That is: At what moment was I being carried away by

my own fears, resentments, cravings, addictions, anxieties, or despairing thoughts? In my imagination, I return to that specific moment in my day. I imagine God and myself watching this moment together, side by side. I imagine that we can look not only at the externals, as though watching a video from a hidden camera, but also that we can look at the internal movements. In other words, God and I watch as my heart fills to the brim with the negative emotion that swept me away.

4. I speak to God about what I see. I ask God for forgiveness or

maybe for healing. I allow God to show me his perspective of the situation. Is there anything that I sense God is trying to tell me about this? I talk with him about this, especially acknowledging my deepest emotions about it.

5. Looking back again, I ask, “What was my most spiritually free moment today?” In which moment did I feel and act free from negativity, low and earthly thoughts and emotions? At what point did I feel most *alive* and most in sync with God, even if I didn’t notice it at the time?
6. Just as before, I imagine God and myself watching this grace-filled

moment. We replay the moment here in my prayer time. We observe not only what happened, but also what was going on deep in my heart. I speak to God about this. I allow God to show me his perspective. We talk about it for a while. We celebrate that moment.

7. Now God and I look to tomorrow. How can I live my day tomorrow out of that freedom that I felt in today’s grace-filled moment? What attitudes and behaviors will I adopt in order to avoid the pit of that unfree moment? What is God calling me to do to live in spiritual freedom?

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8. I make whatever commitments I feel called to make. I ask God for help to keep that commitment.
9. I end in my usual way.