

## Faithfully Uncomfortable: A 21-Day Journey Toward Racial Equity

### *A Daily Examen Method: Five Steps*

- 1. Pray for light.**
- 2. Review the day in thanksgiving.**
- 3. Review the feelings that surface in the replay of your day.**
- 4. Choose one of those feelings (positive or negative) and pray from it.**
- 5. Look toward tomorrow.**

**What is the purpose of each of these steps?**

*“1. Pray for light.*

Since we are not simply daydreaming or reminiscing but rather looking for some sense of how the Spirit of God is leading us, it only makes sense to pray for some illumination. *“Lord, help me understand this blooming, buzzing confusion.”*

*2. Review the day in thanksgiving.*

Everybody likes beautiful gifts, and that is precisely what the past 24 hours contain—gifts of existence, work, relationships, food, challenges. Gratitude is the foundation of our whole relationship with God. Walk through the past 24 hours, from hour to hour, from place to place, task to task, person to person, *thanking the Lord for every gift you encounter.*

*3. Review the feelings that surface in the replay of the day.*

Our feelings, positive and negative, the painful and the pleasing, are clear signals of where the action was during the day. Simply pay attention to any and all of those feelings as they surface, the whole range. Feelings are the liveliest index to what is happening in our lives. *When did I experience anger, sorrow, helplessness, joy, forgiveness, hopefulness today?* This leads us to the fourth moment:

*4. Choose one of those feelings (positive or negative) and pray from it.*

That is, choose the remembered feeling that most caught your attention. The feeling is a sign that something important was going on. *Now simply express spontaneously the prayer that surfaces as you attend to the source of the feeling—praise, petition, contrition, cry for help or healing.*

*5. Look toward tomorrow.*

Using your calendar or cell phone reminders, face your immediate future. What feelings surface as you look at the tasks, meetings, conversations and appointments that face you? Fear? Delighted anticipation? Self-doubt? Temptation to procrastinate? Zestful planning? Regret? Weakness? *Whatever it is, turn it into prayer—for help, for healing, for enlightenment -- whatever comes spontaneously.*

### **“Consequences”**

Here are some of the consequences flowing from this kind of prayer:

*1. There is always something to pray about.*

For a person who does this kind of prayer at least once a day, there is never the question: What should I talk to God about? Until you die, you always have a past 24 hours, and you always have some feelings about what’s next.

*2. The gratitude moment is worthwhile in itself.*

“Dedicate yourselves to gratitude,” Paul tells the Colossians. Even if we drift off into slumber after reviewing the gifts of the day, we have praised the Lord.

*3. We learn to face the Lord where we are, as we are.*

There is no other way to be present to God, of course, but we often fool ourselves into thinking that we have to “put on our best face” before we address our God.

*4. We learn to respect our feelings.*

Feelings count. They are morally neutral until we make some choice about acting upon or dealing with them. But if we don’t attend to them, we miss what they have to tell us about the quality of our lives.

*5. Praying from feelings, we are liberated from them.*

An unattended emotion can dominate and manipulate us. Attending to and praying from and about the persons and situations that give rise to the emotions helps us to cease being unwitting slaves of our emotions.

*6. We can experience an inner healing.*

People have found that praying about feelings (as opposed to fretting about or denying) leads to a healing of mental life.

*8. This kind of prayer helps us get over our Deism.*

Deism is belief in a sort of “clock-maker” God, a God who does indeed exist but does not have much, if anything, to do with his people’s ongoing life. The God we have come to know through our Jewish and Christian experience is more present than we usually think.

*Fr. Dennis Hamm, SJ, a scripture professor at Creighton University, calls the Daily Examen “rummaging for God.” He likens it to “going through a drawer full of stuff, feeling around, looking for something that you are sure must be there.” That’s an accurate description of what it’s like to pray the Daily Examen. We look back on the previous day, rummaging through the “stuff,” and finding God in it. We know he is there.*

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