



# A Week of Spiritual Exercises

This is a week of prayer, scripture, reflection and some light journaling laid out in daily form Monday through Sunday. Please take some time today to prepare for the coming week and read through this explanation of what we'll be doing.

This page is designed to demonstrate our exercises for the week. Each day we'll start with a scripture reading and time of prayer in the morning, just 10 minutes or so. Also, try to stop in the midday, maybe on your lunch break, and reflect a little on your day so far. In the evening spend 10 to 15 minutes in a Daily Examen. Here's what that all looks like:

## Morning: Prayer & Reading Scripture (10 minutes)

**Our Weekly Grace:** *"God, accept me. Christ, teach me. Spirit, hold me."*

We'll start each day in prayer. Find a quiet and comfortable place to breath and come fully awake. Begin with our shared prayer, it's our Weekly Grace, the grace and gift we seek in God. Let those words go deep in your spirit and lead you to pray in your own words. The Weekly Grace is our shared hope in the week and a beginning place for our individual prayers.

**Read the daily passage, such as: Romans 12:9-18, Paul in the NRSV**

*"Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."*

Each day we'll have a passage to read and think about during the day. What do you think about this passage from Paul to the church in Rome? As you read it, did a certain word, theme or idea stick with you? As you read your passages during the week, feel free to reread and spend time with ideas or questions that come to you. The main idea is for scripture to inform our day and our day to inform our reading of scripture.

## Evening: Daily Examen (10 to 15 minutes)

The Daily Examen is a time to review the day past and reflect on our feelings in light of our prayer and scripture reading. It's also a time to dream of the next day to come. It is always beneficial to journal at least a few lines about each day during the Examen. The Daily Examen has five movements done in prayer, reflection and maybe written down:

- 1) Express grateful for the day.
- 2) Reflect on the day's high points and low points.
- 3) Review your feelings.
- 4) Ask, "Is there something you would have done differently in the day?"
- 5) Think of the coming day & prayerfully commit it to God.

## Ready to start?

That's it! Monday through next Sunday we have a sheet reminding us of the Weekly Grace, providing a scripture reading for each day, some points of reflection and starter questions for going deeper, and the Daily Examen. Each day's sheet has a little place for journaling thoughts, but feel free to use the back of each sheet or a private journal for more space. This type of exercise is best done with a spiritual friend, and if you'd like to share some of your experiences and reflections with someone, feel free to reach out to me during the week: [todd@toddtthomas.net](mailto:todd@toddtthomas.net).

Monday

Weekly Grace



*“God, accept me.  
Christ, teach me.  
Spirit, hold me.”*

Passage

**Luke 6:43-45, Jesus in the NRSV**

*“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.*

*“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I tell you? I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them.*

- Be fully awake.
- Find that comfortable place and space.
- Breathe for a few moments and quiet your mind.
- Pray the prayer, repeating it if you feel the Spirit prompting you to do so.

- Read the passage, and reread it if you feel the need to spend more time with it.
- Is there a single word or a theme that speaks loudly and clearly to you or raises questions?
- We aren't interested in an academic reading that dissects the passage. We want to hear the passage and to be open to our own spirit and God's Spirit to move us.

This is Jesus speaking to his friends during the famous “Sermon on the Mount.” He will say something similar at other times in his preaching and ministry, asking people to focus on the internal movements of life and not just the external. What is in my heart and mind? Changing what is inside is the best way to change what is outside. How does the passage impact you? Where does it lead your thoughts and reflection?

**Daily Examen, Prayer & Journaling**

At the end of your day, this is a place to help with your Daily Examen. Feel free to capture a note or two here in the space provided on the back of this page, or a separate journal.

Here is a quick review of the five movements in a Daily Examen:

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Tuesday

Weekly Grace



*“God, accept me.  
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Passage

**Galatians 5:16-18, 22-26, Paul in the NRSV**

*“Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want.*

*But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.*

How does the phrase *fruit of the Spirit* direct your thoughts? Are our daily lives so affected by what we choose to plant in our own lives and souls? Does my faith lead me into sharing more things like love, joy and patience with the world around me?

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\* Don't forget that you want to pause at midday to reflect on the morning. Would it help to set an alarm on your computer or phone?

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Wednesday

Weekly Grace



*“God, accept me.  
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Passage

**Matthew 5:1-12, Jesus in the NRSV**

*“When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:*

*‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

*‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

*‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

*‘Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*

*‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

*‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

*‘Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*‘Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.’”*

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What does Jesus seem to value? How does this passage lead us to behave? Does this passage offer a challenge or a comfort to you?

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Thursday

Weekly Grace

*“God, accept me.  
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Passage



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**Matthew 5:1-12, Jesus in the NRSV**

*“When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ‘Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?’*

*He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’”*

Jesus seems to sum up religion in love for God and love for others. Does my spirit want to resist that or embrace it?

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**Thursday Evening...** This is a good time to apply our Daily Examen to broader view of the week as it’s gone. How has it been? Have you felt drawn to resist passage? Has an idea really stuck with you and gone deeper? How do you feel about our *Weekly Grace*, the daily prayer with which we’ve begun each day? Feel free to write a thought or two about the week’s exercise so far in your journal.

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Friday

Weekly Grace



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Passage

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**Matthew 5:1-12, Jesus in the NRSV**

*“When he had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, Where I am going, you cannot come. I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.’”*

What does it mean to you that Jesus gave one *new* command in his years of ministry, and it had to do with loving one another? What does it mean for us today that Jesus intended the identifier of being his follower to be our love for each other?

What was the love of Jesus like? How did he show love and express love with his friends and followers?

If love is that important, how will I grow in love? How can I grow in a love that is sincere, full and lasting? Perhaps I should begin with another question, *“Who do I love least?”* How will I change that?

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Saturday

Weekly Grace

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Passage



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**Matthew 28:16-20, Jesus in the NRSV**

*“Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”*

What stands out for you in this passage? There’s so much: **worship, doubt, authority, baptism, teaching, obedience, presence.**

Have you been baptized? What did that mean to you, then? What does it mean to you, today?

The word disciple simply means **student**. Jesus asked his students to go and teach and make more students of what he taught. What did Jesus teach? How does this passage make you think of evangelism?

Jesus promises his presence for all time, to the end of time. Do we share that promise, today?

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Sunday

Weekly Grace



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Passage

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**James 3:13-18, James in the NRSV**

*“Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.”*

- Read the passage, and reread it if you feel the need to spend more time with it.
- Is there a single word or a theme that speaks loudly and clearly to you or raises questions?
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Take some time to reflect on the week and think about the coming week. What daily practices would be beneficial to keep in the coming week and weeks? Has journaling been meaningful for you? Have the daily prayer times in the morning been rich? Have you enjoyed having a daily passage of scripture to read? Has the Daily Examen helped you hold onto important things from your days? Have you shared any of your reflections and feelings this week with a spiritual friend?

*May you always know God’s deep love and acceptance of you, always hear the heart of Christ and follow his lead, and always feel the Spirit’s embrace, in the best and worst of days. Amen.*

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