



REJOICE ALWAYS;

PRAY

WITHOUT CEASING;
IN EVERYTHING

GIVE THANKS;

FOR THIS IS GOD'S WILL

FOR YOU

IN CHRIST JESUS.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18



THE GOD WHO LOVES

An aerial photograph of a highway bridge crossing a wide river. The water is a deep, textured blue-green. A single car is visible on the bridge. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Remain in me,

AND I WILL
REMAIN IN YOU.

JOHN 15:4



Ignatian Prayer

This beautiful gratitude prayer practice was developed around 400 years ago by Saint Ignatius Loyola and is just as inspiring and relevant today as it was during his time.

It is simple but amazingly powerful.

As we await the new day this style of praying calls us to first look back at where we have come from. We lament the things we must release. We celebrate what we have been released from. And we turn our gaze to the unknown before us. This prayer centres us in gratitude and hope, even during the hardest times.

Most of all we notice where God has been moving in our lives.

We invite you to take a fresh look back through the eyes of Jesus—through the eyes of Love. This prayer joins us to the work of God in our lives and in the world. We can see from this place we are ready for renewal, meaningful resolution and hope for what is to come.

**Gratitude makes sense of our past,
brings peace for today,
and creates a vision for tomorrow.**

DAILY EXAMEN PRAYER

Find a quiet place free of interruptions and get into a calm, relaxed state either sitting or lying down, and complete the five steps.

1. BECOME AWARE OF GOD'S PRESENCE.

Look back on the day and note the times you felt God was with you.

Feel God with you now and ask to become more conscious of God's presence.

It may be helpful to repeat a phrase like, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46 v 10), or any other prayer that helps you to connect.

2. LOOK BACK WITH GRATITUDE.

Review the past 24 hours and notice what you are thankful for. What happened to make you feel blessed?

Take a moment to give thanks to God for providing you with these blessings.

3. TAKE AN HONEST LOOK AT YOUR DAY.

Recall everything that happened over the course of the past 24 hours, your interactions with others, and your emotions. Find 2 positive and 2 negative aspects.

We often rush through each day, not pausing to reflect. Doing a deep, honest reflection of the past day causes us to learn more about ourselves and improve our future actions.

4. CHOOSE ONE PART OF THE DAY, AND PRAY ABOUT IT.

From doing your review, you might find something God is directing you to work on - an emotion, a relationship that needs mending, an unpleasant situation. Pray for it, ask God's guidance to resolve it.

5. PRAY FOR TOMORROW.

Ask God to guide you tomorrow and to be love and light to others. Pray for wisdom and strength.

Feel deep gratitude, knowing God has already answered your prayer and tomorrow is already blessed.

Take some deep breaths and know that all is well.

The God Who Loves You

BY CARL DENNIS

*It must be troubling for the god who loves you
To ponder how much happier you'd be today
Had you been able to glimpse your many futures.
It must be painful for him to watch you on Friday evenings
Driving home from the office, content with your week—
Three fine houses sold to deserving families—
Knowing as he does exactly what would have happened
Had you gone to your second choice for college,
Knowing the roommate you'd have been allotted
Whose ardent opinions on painting and music
Would have kindled in you a lifelong passion.
A life thirty points above the life you're living
On any scale of satisfaction. And every point
A thorn in the side of the god who loves you.
You don't want that, a large-souled man like you
Who tries to withhold from your wife the day's disappointments
So she can save her empathy for the children.
And would you want this god to compare your wife
With the woman you were destined to meet on the other campus?
It hurts you to think of him ranking the conversation
You'd have enjoyed over there higher in insight
Than the conversation you're used to.
And think how this loving god would feel
Knowing that the man next in line for your wife
Would have pleased her more than you ever will
Even on your best days, when you really try.
Can you sleep at night believing a god like that
Is pacing his cloudy bedroom, harassed by alternatives
You're spared by ignorance? The difference between what is
And what could have been will remain alive for him
Even after you cease existing, after you catch a chill
Running out in the snow for the morning paper,
Losing eleven years that the god who loves you
Will feel compelled to imagine scene by scene
Unless you come to the rescue by imagining him
No wiser than you are, no god at all, only a friend
No closer than the actual friend you made at college,
The one you haven't written in months. Sit down tonight
And write him about the life you can talk about
With a claim to authority, the life you've witnessed,
Which for all you know is the life you've chosen.*

*"The God Who Loves You" from Practical Gods.
Copyright © 2001 by Carl Dennis.*