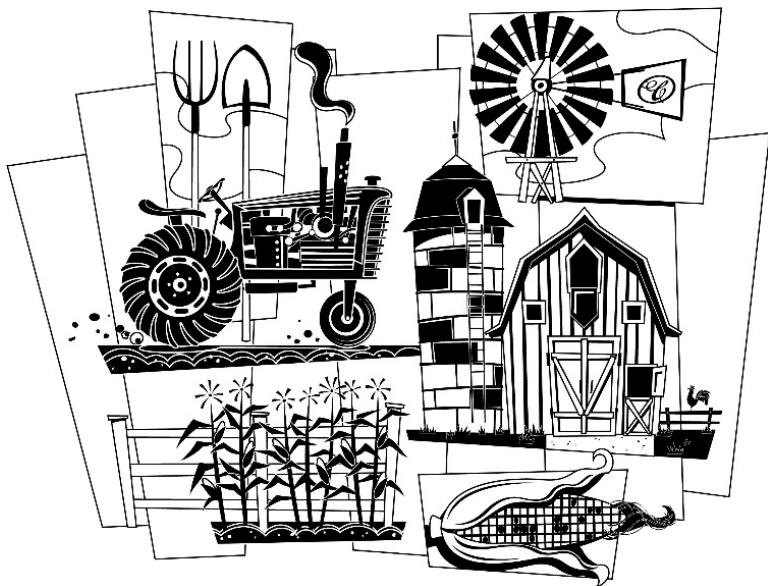


Good Soil Examen



A prayer guide.

Seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.

Luke 8:8

Good Soil Examen

“**Examen**” is a prayerful reflection on the events of the day to detect God’s presence and discern His direction for our lives. It’s an ancient spiritual practice of the church that helps us see God’s hand at work in our ordinary days.

The Good Soil Examen adapts the traditional daily examen by focusing on the **Parable of the Sower**. In this story Jesus talks about seed sown on different kinds of soil and how the condition of the ground affects the growth and fruitfulness of the seed. We have come to consider this parable as a picture of the varied conditions of our heart and our potential for spiritual growth and fruitfulness.

Read Luke 8:4-15.

Envision your heart or soul as a field where seed – the Word of God – is planted. Depending on your attitude or experience with different people, places, or circumstances the way your spirit receives God’s Word will be affected. The presence of hard packed paths, rocky ground, and weeds will determine how the seed grows and if it produces spiritual fruit.

In the **Good Soil Examen** we consider four aspects of cultivating the field of our hearts: Planting the Word, Watering it with Spirit-led prayer, Tilling the soil with obedience, and Weeding out sin through the process of repentance.

Jesus says the good soil represents: “honest, good-hearted people who hear God’s Word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest” (Luke 8:15 NLT). This practice of examen has the potential to help every disciple become a fertile soul.

Set aside fifteen to twenty minutes for this prayer exercise. Establishing a physical routine to prepare your heart and mind for prayer is helpful. Perhaps you can create a space for prayer that includes a place to sit, a Bible, and a candle.

Good Soil Examen Prayer Guide

Begin your time of prayer in your usual way.

If you don't have a "usual way" of prayer, consider creating a space.

Get comfortable.

Light a candle.

Take a few breaths and center your thoughts on God.

Invite God to join you in the conversation.

Imagine God sitting next to you as you talk to Him about your day.

Look back over the last twenty-four hours.

Review what happened in your day.

The places you went.

The people you encountered.

Your energy level.

The tasks you accomplished, and things left undone.

Planting the Word.

- How did you encounter God's Word?
- How did you respond to the Scripture you encountered?
- Did you plant other people's words in your heart and mind?
- How did you receive their words?

Watering with prayer.

- Did you invite Holy Spirit into the field of your heart today?
- What influence did He have?
- If not Holy Spirit, who did you call on for help or guidance?

Tilling with obedience.

- Who did you obey? Whose authority did you come under?
- When were your thoughts self-focused?
- What turned your focus to God? to others?
- When did your ways align with God's?
- Where and when did you choose your own way?

- Did you notice “hard ground”? resistance to God’s way?
- Did you wrestle with something God wanted you to do?
- What caused the wrestling?

Weeding and clearing rocks.

- What trouble did you face? How did you respond?
- Did your response indicate deep healthy roots of trust in God? or a shallow faith?
- What is God calling you to do with this difficulty? the temptation?
- When did you feel rushed? distracted? pressed? Why were you in such a hurry?
- Where did you turn to for comfort? security? worth? If it wasn’t God, why wasn’t it?
- Confess and repent according to what God reveals.

Fruitfulness.

- Looking over your day, ask God to show you the places you were fruitful. Moments you realized growth and fruitfulness in your life.
- Give thanks for what He reveals.
- Rest in the assurance God will never leave you where you are, He promises to make things grow.

Close your time of prayer.

Hear Jesus say:

“Come to Me, you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Matthew 11:28-29

Rest in the knowledge of His love for you and the truth that only He makes things grow.