

Living Level 4 Happiness - Life of Prayer

“Prayer is an aspiration of the heart, it is a simple glance directed to heaven, it is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as joy; finally, it is something great, supernatural, which expands my soul and unites me to Jesus.” --St. Therese of Lisieux

A Few Keys to Prayer:

Prayer is essential to living a holy life, to becoming a saint. Praying is not about a method - there are many fine ones - prayer is about showing up with the proper interior dispositions. Prayer is a work of grace - it's less about us and more about God. The **interior dispositions** needed are *faith* and *trust* that God is present with me in this time of prayer. Even though it sounds crazy, begin prayer with a prayer: “Lord, I trust that you are present with me in this moment and that you look on me with passionate love.”

Fidelity and perseverance: “Time spent faithfully every day in mental prayer that is poor, arid, distracted, and relatively short is worth more, and will be infinitely more fruitful for our progress, than long, ardent spells of mental prayer from time to time, when circumstances make it easy” (Jacques Philippe, Time for God). Setting aside a specific time of prayer each day and sticking to it will be the means that leads to a better quality of prayer. The key to prayer is faithfully showing up to it, and persevering when it's difficult.

Purity of intention: “Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God.” Purity of intention is desiring to live more for God than for ourselves. It does not mean we are perfect yet, but we have the *desire* to be so. Our intention should be to pray to please God - the gifts received during prayer are a bonus.

Ideas for Daily Prayer Game Plan:

Prayer Game Plan (minimum):

10 min. Mental Prayer
1 min. Act of Spiritual Communion
1 min. Prayer at before Meals
10 min. Theological Study/Spiritual Reading
3 min. Marian Prayer
5 min. Daily Examen
30 minutes a day

Prayer Game Plan (goal):

30 min. Mental Prayer
30 min. Daily Mass
1 min. Prayer before Meals
10 min. Theological Study/Spiritual Reading
14 min. Rosary
5 min. Daily Examen
90 minutes a day

Mental Prayer: pray with your favorite parable/verse from the Bible or a quote from a Saint or a good spiritual book; or talk to God about your day, your life, about your desire to love Him more. Anything that helps you enter into prayer. Set the timer on your phone.

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Daily Mass: If you cannot get to Mass; pray an Act of Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite
myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

Prayer before/after Meals - pray before and after every meal even in public.

Before: Bless us, O Lord! and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty,
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

After: We give Thee thanks for all Thy benefits, O Almighty God, who livest and reignest world
without end. Amen. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in
peace. Amen.

Theological Study/Spiritual Reading - Options: Catechism, a Scriptural Commentary, Fr.
Jacques Philippe's books - *Time for God*, *Interior Freedom*. All of his books are extremely
insightful and practical. Peter Kreeft's books.

Rosary/Divine Mercy Chaplet - pray as a family or individually: pray on the way to work (helps
with road rage, trust me, I know). Listen to both on the Relevant Radio app.

Daily Examen - go over your day (graces and failures); thank God and ask for His merciful
forgiveness and the grace to be better tomorrow. The Daily Examen as practiced by St. Ignatius
Loyola. I will write more on this prayer in the future. It is one of the most powerful prayers you
could begin to pray, but also one of the most difficult (I found) to get implemented. Two ways to
get started: *Reimagining the Examen app* or go here:
<http://www.fatherbrowning.com/daily-examen.html>.

Prayer, which is communion with God, is that for which our heart longs. It has been shown in
many studies that those who pray are healthier and happier. Doesn't it make total sense after
what we have learned about Level 4 happiness. God has made us for Himself, so when we
enter more deeply into a loving relationship with Him, we're going to be happier in a more
pervasive, enduring, and deep way. The reality of God's love and our response (prayer) are
undeniable. Start with the minimum daily prayer plan and grow from there. I promise you will not
regret it.