



# Finding God

Our Response to God's Gifts

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Jesus will make us clean.

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## 3-MINUTE RETREAT

### Please, Jesus

**In Luke's Gospel, there is the story of a blind man who called to Jesus as he walked by.** (Luke 18:41-42) Jesus heard him and asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man replied, "Lord, I want to see." Who hasn't prayed just like the blind man?

Rest your mind and place your empty hands, palms up, on your lap. What do you want Jesus to do for you? Open your heart and tell Jesus your needs. Offer thanks for the gift of faith in our loving God. ■



For a daily online 3-Minute Retreat, go to [www.3MinuteRetreat.com](http://www.3MinuteRetreat.com).

## Parenting Tips from Saint Ignatius

There is an unquenchable thirst among parents for wisdom in guiding their children toward independence. Our school is helping parents stop over-parenting and let their sons take more responsibility for their success. We offer parents of new students a program called Orientation to Ownership, which is based on lessons drawn from the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and offers five tips to help parents let the Creator (God) deal directly with the creature (their children):

**1 Act as if everything depended on them.** Allow children to do the thinking by asking rather than telling. So instead of "Don't forget your lunch!" ask, "What are you forgetting?"

**2 Trust as if everything depended on God.** Instead of controlling or scolding, encourage ownership and strengthen skills. See your child's academic and organizational struggles as a function of a skill set that they are responsible for developing rather than a fault of personal character.

**3 Love is shown more in deeds than words.** Saying "Please" and "Thank you" for tasks that are your child's responsibility may create a sense of entitlement. To retain courtesy and positive reinforcement without entitlement, say "You may" and "Great job!"



**4 Avoid attachment to conventional wisdom.** Study skills that work for one child may not work for others. Help your child to develop strategies that are unique to him or her.



**5 Suffering is a sign that God has great plans for us.** Parents who rush in to fix every problem rob young people of the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Parents who encourage critical and creative thinking, resist the temptation to rescue, and foster ownership in their sons and daughters will help their children grow into strong, independent, and self-reliant young adults. †

**Fr. Jeff Johnson, SJ**, is president-elect of [Strake Jesuit College Preparatory](http://Strake Jesuit College Preparatory) in Houston, Texas. **John Barone** is the director of the Strake Jesuit Learning Resource Center.

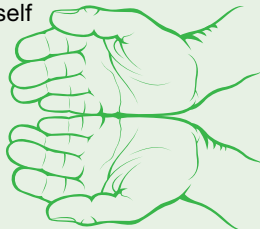


## 15-MINUTE PRAYER

### In the Hands of God

With your eyes closed, think of a problem in your life, something you've been worrying about but over which you have absolutely no control. Maybe you have a toothache and you've called your dentist but she can't see you until tomorrow afternoon because she's lounging on a beach in Mexico. Maybe your husband or wife is having a difficult time at work and the horror of layoffs hangs over your heads like a dark cloud. Maybe a dear friend of yours is sick. Whatever it is, picture the problem in your mind. Okay. Got it?

I want you to take that image, that problem, that thing you've been worrying about, and I want you to place it in open hands. How do you do that? You can imagine the problem as if it were a snapshot, a photograph, or a still life and imagine yourself laying the problem in the palms of these two humongous hands.



Repeat these words: "I place my problems in the hands of God and have faith that everything will work out the way it is supposed to." ■

Excerpt taken from [The 15-Minute Prayer Solution: How One Percent of Your Day Can Transform Your Life](#) by **Gary Jansen** (Loyola Press, 2010).

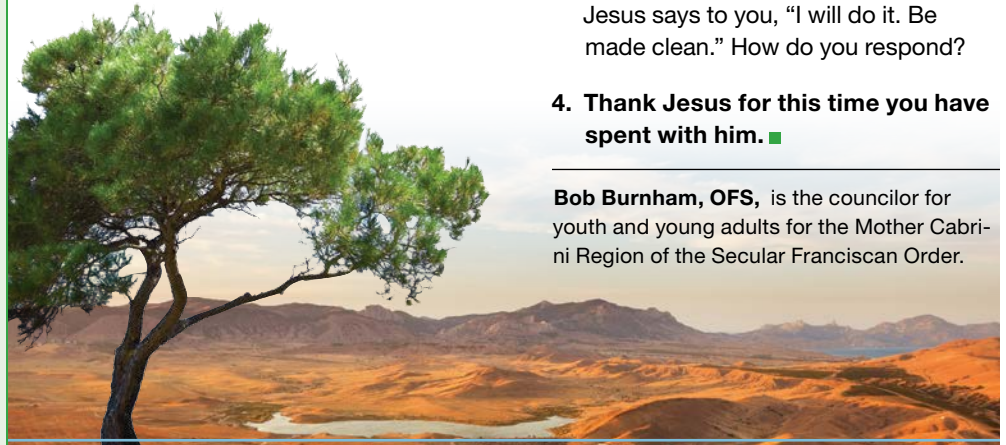
## SACRED READING/REFLECTION

God is present with you in this very moment. Rest in God's loving presence as you prepare to spend time with his Word. Read the following Scripture verse slowly.

*When Jesus came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. And then a leper approached, did him homage, and said, "Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean." He stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, "I will do it. Be made clean." His leprosy was cleansed immediately.*

—MATTHEW 8:1-3

**1. Imagine that you are sitting under a tree at the base of a mountain.** The shade of the tree gives you some relief from the hot sun. You hear a ruckus. You gaze up the mountain slope and see a large crowd coming toward you, their feet kicking up a



large cloud of dust. Does the crowd scare or intimidate you? Or do you feel compelled to join them?

**2. Read the Scripture verse a second time.** As the crowd comes nearer, you make out a lone figure a few paces in front of them. It is Jesus. Do you approach him? Do you get up and run to him, excited to see him? Or do you wait for him to come to you?

**3. Read the Scripture verse a final time.** Jesus sees you; he turns toward you and picks up his pace, leaving the crowd behind. As Jesus approaches, how do you receive him? Imagine yourself saying the words, "Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean." Talk with Jesus about what these words mean to you. After a few moments, Jesus says to you, "I will do it. Be made clean." How do you respond?

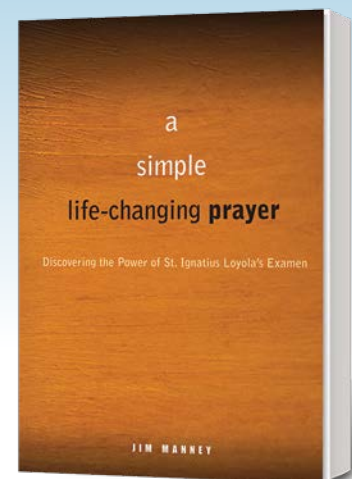
**4. Thank Jesus for this time you have spent with him.** ■

**Bob Burnham, OFS**, is the councilor for youth and young adults for the Mother Cabrini Region of the Secular Franciscan Order.

### The Examen

In *A Simple, Life-Changing Prayer*, Jim Manney introduces the reader to a form of prayer that dramatically altered his perception of prayer and the way he prayed. The prayer is the Examen, which Saint Ignatius of Loyola developed for the purpose of nurturing a reflective habit of mind that is constantly attuned to God's presence. ■

***A Simple, Life-Changing Prayer: Discovering the Power of St. Ignatius Loyola's Examen*** by Jim Manney (Loyola Press, 2011).



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## praying with the **Saints**

### Prayer for Generosity

*Eternal Word, only begotten Son of God,  
Teach me true generosity,  
Teach me to serve you as you deserve,  
To give without counting the cost,  
To fight heedless of wounds,  
To labor without seeking rest,  
To sacrifice without thought of any reward  
Save knowledge that I have done your will.  
Amen.*

—ATTRIBUTED TO SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA



# Simple Prayers for Busy Families

## TAKE WHAT YOU NEED

If you could add the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit to your grocery list, which ones would you include? Do you need a little patience, love, or wisdom?

Just like the food on our grocery list, we need the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit as nourishment to be healthy, to thrive, and to grow stronger. Give your family an opportunity to take exactly what they need each day.

### You will need:

- Sticky notes (different colors are best but not necessary)
- Markers
- Poster board (optional)



1. On a sticky note, write one of the Gifts or Fruits of the Holy Spirit, such as love, peace, joy, goodness, patience, gentleness, self-control, kindness, wisdom, understanding, courage, or knowledge. Repeat with other gifts or fruits. Use a different color sticky note for each word.
2. Make several sticky notes for each gift or fruit you include. On any given day, your family members may need the same one.
3. On a poster board write *Take What You Need*.
4. Stick the notes on the poster board. If poster board is not available, stick them on your refrigerator, your front door, or another high-traffic area in your home. Wherever you place the notes, make sure they are visible.
5. Stack the same words on top of each other so your area is less crowded and easier to read.



6. Ask each family member to take what they need before they leave or when they come home.
7. Spend time reflecting on the chosen words. Discuss these questions as a family: Why did I choose the word I took? How will it help me be a better person? How will I share this gift or fruit with others?

Take What You Need is a simple way for your family to pray for what they need. ■

**Michelle Cook** is a busy mother of three and the director of youth ministry at Resurrection Catholic Church in Wayne, IL.



I heard that all prayer is a response to God. What about prayers of petition? Aren't we asking God to respond to us?

**A:** *Prayers of petition are not like sitting on Santa's lap and asking for things we want because we have been good.*

Prayers of petition are not primarily examples of us trying to get God's attention in the hope that he'll respond favorably. Rather, because we have heard and seen God's saving action in our own



**God who has always heard the prayers of his people will hear our prayers as well.**

lives, in the lives of those around us, and in the stories of Scripture, we respond to him by coming to him with our need. Our prayers are not wishful thinking that he will hear us if we pray loud or long enough; they are an expression of confidence that the God who has always heard the prayers of his people will hear our prayers as well and will respond according to our needs. Our prayers of petition are not to be seen as mere requests for material things but rather as opportunities for us to share our deepest needs with God and to ask to know his will for us. ■

**Joe Paprocki** is National Consultant for Faith Formation for Loyola Press and author of *A Church on the Move* (Loyola Press, 2016).



**Five Things I Learned From . . .**

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## A Christmas Carol

I once thought *A Christmas Carol* was about a bad man who has the good fortune to become like me. Now I know that Scrooge starts off like me but then learns a few things:



- 1. My spiritual journey begins where I am wounded:** "The school is not quite deserted," said the Ghost. "A solitary child is left there still."
- 2. Grief exists because love does:** "My little, little child!" cried Bob.
- 3. An open heart finds God in everything:** "It's a wonderful knocker!"
- 4. Only pride keeps me from the party.** "It's I. Your uncle Scrooge. Will you let me in?"
- 5. It's never too late to write the story of my life:** "Scrooge became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man as the good old city knew." ■

**Tim Bagwell** is a former literature professor and the father of four, including one not-so-tiny Tim.

## { RAISING *prayerful* KIDS }

**H**OW DO YOU GO ABOUT EMBARKING ON PARENTHOOD AS YOUR SPIRITUAL PATH? Two qualities stand out as fundamental: make it real and keep it simple (not necessarily easy, but simple). Here are three ways:

**1. Practice acceptance.** Acceptance is an act of the will. You say, "I will take on the demands and joys of this life with my whole mind,



heart, and soul." Acceptance is acknowledging down deep that you are right where God wants you to be.

**2. Keep showing up.** Kids need our physical presence, and it is what we need for our own spiritual development. You don't have to be with your kids every hour of every day. But show up at regular and important times, like at dinner.

**3. Be open.** I love the line in the Bible that says, "And Mary treasured all these things in her heart." A lot of



surprising things came Mary's way. She found a way to be open to all those joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries without trying to understand or control them. ■

**Tom McGrath** is the author of *Raising Faith-Filled Kids* (Loyola Press, 2000).