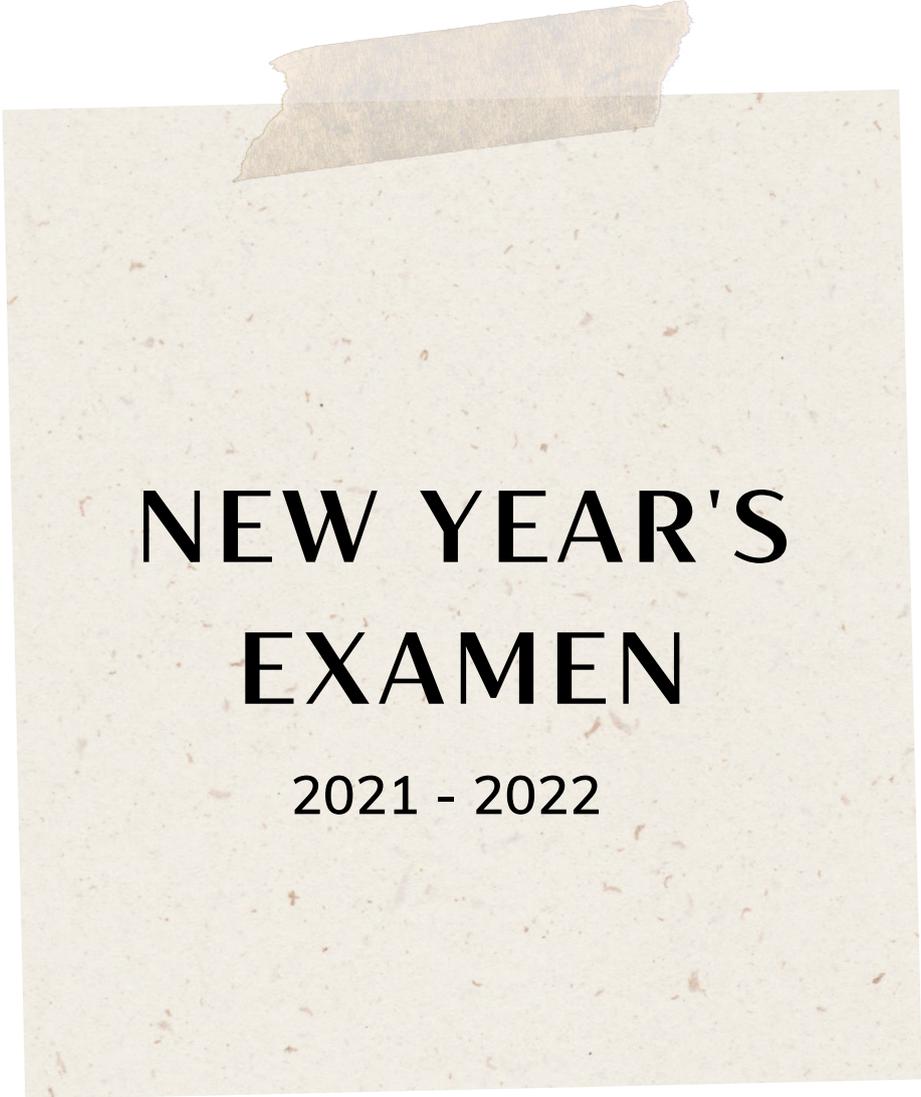


NEW YEAR'S EXAMEN

2021 - 2022



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INTRODUCTION

As this New Year's Eve marks the completion of another chapter in our lives, we pause to recognize that each year is ultimately a chapter within the much-larger story of God's restoration and reconciliation of all things: His love never fails, He never stops chasing after us, and He is always working toward creation being healed and made whole. To remember our place in this narrative is difficult but worthwhile work.

Accordingly, this **four-day exercise** of *prayerful* remembrance is designed to help us discern His presence and power - both in and around us - as we momentarily reflect on the experiences of the past year, those that brought pain or confusion, others that gave us joy, and those that reminded us our deepest hopes and desires. Generations of Christians have used some form of the following to help them experience God's presence, provide them with guidance for their daily lives, and form them into the image of Christ. This ancient practice called the Prayer of Examen is structured through four specific movements, which will be introduced on each day: ***Gratitude, Illumination, Review, and Renewal.***

HELPFUL TIPS

- Go slowly and don't rush. Linger, reflect deeply, and allow yourself the necessary time to do so.
- Consider grabbing a tool that will help recall significant events and experiences from the last year. It might be your calendar, the photo album on your phone, or a journal.
- Make this space and time unique to you and your life with God. If the space provided isn't enough, use a journal or notebook. For each section, free to skip, add, or reword questions.
- Share your responses with your life group or a trusted friend or family member; this is an exercise that becomes all the more meaningful when shared in relationship and community.

Day 2

ILLUMINATION:

Read Psalm 103. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you remember what He wants you to recall from the last twelve months: events, experiences, relationships, desires, losses, hopes, challenges, moments of grace, moments of struggle, etc. *"Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!"* (Ps. 139:7-8)

- What are the most important events that have happened this past year?

- What are the greatest breakthroughs in any category of my life this past year (e.g., physical, emotionally, relationally, vocationally, spiritually, with other people, etc.)?

RENEWAL (CONT.):

End this time with God by lingering in His presence. Spend some time meditating on 1 Corinthians 2. Lift up any gratitude and petitions for the coming year that are brought to mind for yourself and others.

Finally, enter the new year with the hope that our living God brings us in 1 Corinthians 2:9/Isaiah 64:4:

*“No eye has seen, no ear has heard,
and no mind has imagined
what God has prepared
for those who love him.”*