

*Kneeling with Giants:
Learning to Pray with History's Best Teachers
By Gary Hansen*
Material for Chapter 5 (St. Ignatius of Loyola)
Andy Smothers

General Examination of Conscience

Reflect on your day hour by hour (or period by period) asking how you have done against God's standards. Helpful standards are included below. Plan to spend a couple minutes on each whether the Ten Commandments or the Sins/Virtues.

- Ten Commandments (*from Exodus 20:1-20*)

you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God,

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy.

Honor your father and your mother,

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

- Seven Capital Sins

Pride

Anger

Avarice (extreme greed for wealth
or material gain)

Gluttony (habitual greed or
overindulging)

Lust

Envy

Sloth (reluctance to work;
laziness; procrastination)

- Seven Virtues

Humility

Patience

Generosity

Temperance (moderation or self-
restraint)

Chastity

Neighborly love

Diligence

Daily Particular Examination of Conscience (original form)

Select one item you would like to work on. Note it here: _____

1. In the morning pray for God's help.
2. Around noon, think about the morning, mark a dot on the top line for every time it happened/came up.
3. Before bed, look back on the day and mark a dot on the bottom line for every time it happened/came up. Think back looking for improvement.

Thursday: _____

Friday: _____

Saturday: _____

Sunday: _____

Monday: _____

Tuesday: _____

Wednesday: _____



Daily Particular Examination of Conscience (more modern form, motions of the soul)
You could do this individually, with your spouse, with your children, or with others. You might journal your answers to items 2-3 separately each day.

Don't answer the questions regarding your emotions — what made you happy or sad — but based on your perception of God's presence and activity.

1. Prayerfully give thanks to God and quiet your heart (perhaps, with the Jesus Prayer from chapter 3)
2. **Consolations** — What moved you closer to God today? These experiences may leave you with more love for God, more faith in God, or more hope in God among other senses. They could be joyful or tearful.
3. **Desolations** — What moved you away from God, or where did God seem distant or absent during your day? These might be things that move you toward a lack of faith or leave you without hope or without love. They could be happy or sad.
4. What is the significance of these observations? Is there anything you would like to change? You might endeavor to add more of those experience that move you toward God and eliminate those that move you away from God (if possible).
5. Prayerfully give thanks to God for being present in your experiences this day, and offer yourself anew to God.

At the end of the week (or, ideally, a longer period), take a look at what you've written across the days. Are there any patterns? Is there anything you might change based on those patterns? Is God transforming you through these experiences? Is God at work in surprising ways (or less surprising ways)? Are you experiencing any underlying grief, healing, anxiety, etc...

Prayer of the Senses

1. Pray for God to help you understand His text. Pray that understanding would lead you to better love and serve Him.
2. Study the text. Read through it at least a few times so that you know the basics of the story. Understand the actions and basic outline. Look at where it's located in the story of scripture. What lessons does the text teach you?
3. Read or think through the story considering everything that you might **see with vivid detail** as if you were in the story — present in the scene. Use your imagination.
4. Read or think through the story considering everything that you might **hear with vivid detail** as if you were in the story — present in the scene. Use your imagination.
5. Read or think through the story considering everything that you might **smell and taste with vivid detail** as if you were in the story — present in the scene. Use your imagination.
6. Read or think through the story considering everything that you might **touch or feel with vivid detail** as if you were in the story — present in the scene. Use your imagination.
7. Get curious about the story and **ask questions** of the characters. How would they answer?

You could do this, perhaps, with any passage of scripture; though, the narrative genre usually works best. I include five examples here you could use from the gospels.

- John 2:1-12 (the Wedding at Cana)
- Matthew 14:13-21 (Feeding of the Five Thousand)
- Matthew 14:22-33 (Jesus Walks on Water)
- Matthew 17:14-20 (Jesus Cures a Boy with a Demon)
- John 11:1-16, 38-44 (The Death and Raising of Lazarus)



This study aid is written to guide study and discussions of *Kneeling with Giants: Learning to Pray with History's Best Teachers* by Gary Neal Hansen. The full set of study guides is available at <https://livingintograce.com/study-group-aids-for-kneeling-with-giants-learning-to-pray-with-historys-best-teachers-by-gary-neal-hansen>. While based on the book, this guide was not prepared in cooperation with the author, Gary Neal Hansen, nor the publishers (InterVarsity Press).



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

For all other uses or cases, © Copyright 2022, Andrew Smothers, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

