

# THE ART OF EXAMEN

## DEEPER GUIDE

*"For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him." Colossians 1:16*

We worship a creator God. Paul highlights this creativity in the life and being of Jesus Christ – the man who revealed God to us in human flesh. This revelation of God drew pictures in the sand, rubbed mud in eyes, told stories that engaged hearts and prayed with such energy and vibrancy that disciples asked:  
*"Lord teach us to pray."*

*"God is not a static thing but a dynamic, pulsating activity. Almost a kind of drama. Almost...a kind of dance"*  
CS Lewis

God has, throughout history, filled people with his Spirit to engage in creative ways of following him. From Bezalel in the book of Exodus making furniture in the Tabernacle, to Hildegard of Bingen writing eloquent opinions or creating music and poetry and to CS Lewis creating characters like Aslan to share allegories of the Kingdom of God. How might you engage creativity as a source of energy in your own life? Creative praying? Creative living? Creative language? Creative acting. Let creativity loose in your world this week.



*"Could creativity be a tool to  
freshen up parts of our faith that have become stale?"*  
- Carla Harding

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## EXAMEN PRAYER

As mentioned in the film we'd like to encourage you to pray the Examen prayer each day this week. Check out the 24-7 Prayer website for information about how to do this. Particularly this week, use this structure to help you pray:

INVITE THE HOLY SPIRIT  
GRATEFULLY REVIEW YOUR DAY  
WHEN DID YOU CONNECT WITH JESUS?  
PRAY ABOUT ONE THING THAT STANDS OUT  
LOOK TO TOMORROW

## DAILY READINGS

### MONDAY

*Genesis 1:1-2*

In the first five words of the Bible, God introduces Himself as Creator. He made all that we have around us. We can understand God as creative and as creator. Reflect on all the beauty around you. Columbanus suggested that 'if you want to know the creator, first understand and know creation.' Go for a walk today and try and understand the Creator a little more.

### TUESDAY

*Jeremiah 18:3-6*

God is creative even with us. He made us. Jeremiah spoke of Israel as like clay in God's hands. His hands shaped the nation. How has God shaped you? Thank him that he's made you a creative, innovative and thoughtful being. Thank God for your mind, your hands, and your feet. He made you with love.

### WEDNESDAY

*John 12:1-3*

Mary worships Jesus in a creative way and He loves it. We are wired to response to God and he encourages us to be creative. Nicholae Moldoveanu was imprisoned for 12 years in Communist Romania for his faith. In prison he would cover his window with soap and write music with his finger. He'd then commit songs to memory. On his release he wrote down more than 300 songs from memory, and they have now become the songbook of the Romanian Church

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## THURSDAY

*Ephesians 6:18*

Carla reminds us how creativity can enable us to reach the full potential of prayer. There was nothing formulaic about the way Jesus prayed. He was creative and vibrant. Paul encourages the Ephesians to pray all kinds of prayers on all occasions. Many of these prayers are silent, are loud, are colourful, and are simple.

Try something new today.

## FRIDAY

*John 8:3-11*

Jesus wrote in the sand whilst people tried to be cruel. This simple act brought a different atmosphere to a violent moment and through this he was able to bring grace to her.

How might you engage in creative thinking or action to change circumstances today? How might creativity result in kindness?

## SATURDAY

*Matthew 13:31-33*

Jesus told Parables. These wonderful upside-down stories highlighted the otherness of the Kingdom of God yet also it's nearness to all of Jesus' hearers. Here was the God-man bringing the Kingdom into each of their lives. Not all of us are good with words by why not experiment with them today. Write something that expresses how you feel about God.

## SUNDAY

*Psalms 24:1*

The earth is the Lord's. All the wonder that exists around us is made by Him and given to us as gifts. The splendour of mountains, the beauty of rivers, the simplicity of soil, the energy of the Bumble Bee, the vastness of the Whale.

All these things are made by the God who made us. Reflect on your feelings and emotions at the end of this week where we've considered creativity. What have you learnt?



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## DEEPER GUIDE EXTRA TIME:

*Take some action*

Spend a week on your own creative retreat.

This can be done in your normal pattern of life, but it involves moving wholeheartedly into being creative. Discipline yourself to being creative in the way you respond to the Bible. Write poems and draw pictures rather than write notes. Take your friends to see a film and go for a coffee to discuss it afterwards. Take a walk in nature during your week. Resolve to think creatively when problems arise. Cook creatively. Dress creatively.

Reflect each day on what's gone on in your daily Examen.