

## Particular Examination

238 The general examination implies defence. The particular, attack. The first is your armour. The second, your sword.

142 If you are really fighting, you need to make an examination of conscience. Take care of the daily examination: find out if you feel the sorrow of Love, for not getting to know Our Lord as you should.

110 In Christian asceticism the examination of conscience meets a need of love, and of sensitivity.

205 We were reading — you and I — the heroically ordinary life of that man of God. And we saw him fight whole months and years (what 'accounts' he kept in his particular examination!) at breakfast time: today he won, tomorrow he was beaten... He noted: 'Didn't take sugar...; did take sugar!' May you and I too live our 'sugar tragedy'.

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1. Choose a particular aspect of the virtue that you need to acquire. The suggestions of your spiritual director can be most helpful. This aspect of the virtue is not the whole virtue itself, but just a way to be particular and practical so as to know where to struggle each day. It is to get a small grasp of the overall struggle that is the virtue we seek to inculcate.
  2. Formulate small questions, ones that can be answered quickly and clearly with a yes or no. They will highlight this aspect of the virtue chosen that will be the focus of the struggle. It is not that we abandon the larger aspects of the struggle, but that we emphasize a part of the virtue.
  3. Choose a time to ask the questions; perhaps the best time is at noontime, or right before having lunch.
  4. Take a short time to go over the questions, in the presence of God, no more than 2 minutes or so. Look at how the struggle has gone for that morning; add a brief review of the day before, how the struggle went after the previous days examination. Seek that simple yes or no answer to the questions.
  5. Hold oneself accountable. Thank God for the help of grace for the times we see we struggled well. Note quickly where the successes or defeats have been.
  6. Make an act of thanksgiving, or an act of sorrow of love. For the victory is with God, we can do all things in God who strengthens us; the defeats are all ours, as we have run away from the grace available, and want to have contrition, -sorrow of love, that will be a grace itself.
  7. Make a small but firm purpose of amendment, in the small battles that our questions have isolated. If we have consistently achieved victory in a certain question / aspect, we can choose a new question, and speak to our spiritual director about it.