

St. Ignatius' Principle & Foundation

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord,
and by this means to save his soul.

And the other things on the face of the earth
are created for man and that they may
help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created.

From this it follows that man is to
use them as much as they help him on to his end,
and ought to rid himself of them so far as they hinder him as to it.

For this it is necessary to make ourselves **INDIFFERENT** to all created things in all that is allowed to the choice of our free will and is not prohibited to it; so that, on our part, we want not health rather than sickness, riches rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, long rather than short life, and so in all the rest; desiring and choosing **ONLY** what is most conducive for us to the end for which we are created.

St. Ignatius' Rules for Discernment of Spirits

“be a discerning presence”

AIR

1. Aware

2. Identify

3. Respond

*“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits
to see whether they are from God” (1 John 4:1).*

1st Rule: Persons going away from God to sin.

The enemy facilitates this movement through the imagination of sensual pleasures.

The Good Spirit stings the conscience to help us turn back to God.



2nd Rule: Persons going away from sin to God.

The enemy bites, stings, saddens, places obstacles, disquiets with false reasons.

The Good Spirit encourages, strengthens, consoles with tears, inspires, eases and takes away all obstacles.

3rd Rule: Spiritual consolation: I am in consolation when I have: **faith, hope & love** + sense of **God's closeness** & some combo of: **peace, tranquility, transparency, holy desires.**

4th Rule: Spiritual desolation: I am in desolation when I do **not** have faith, hope & love + sense of **absence** of God's closeness & some combo of: **distress, agitation, secrecy, worldly desires.**

Be aware of non-spiritual desolation too. It is a vulnerability. Make sure to take care of your body for the love of God.

Whereas **spiritual desolation** is always a work of the enemy and must therefore always be rejected, **the dark night** is always a work of God and must therefore always be accepted.

5th Rule: “Defense” = In times of desolation,
NEVER make a change in spiritual proposals. Be
firm and constant in proposals made in preceding
consolation. Right decisions can NOT be reached
with **the enemy** as a counsellor.

Ask yourself:

1. *Am I in a time of **desolation**? If yes,*
2. *Am I considering changing a spiritual proposal that was in place before this **desolation**? If yes,*
3. *Renounce the lie in **Jesus’ name** (also see Rule 6).*

6th Rule: "Offense" = Resist the **desolation** by changing oneself intensely against it through increased:

1. Prayer:

- Prayer of petition: "Jesus, help me!" "Come Holy Spirit." "Blood of Christ drench me." "Spirit of ____, I renounce you in the name of Jesus."

2. Meditation:

- Truths of faith: Jesus is with me at all times.
- Verses of Scripture: I have died to sin (Rom 6:11).
- Memories of God's fidelity in the past:

3. Much examination:

- Name it: What's going on here? How did it get started?

4. Suitable penance:

- One small step with **The Good Spirit** precisely against the temptation:
+1 min,

7th Rule: “Consider” = In times of desolation,
consider how **the Lord** has allowed the trial so that
you can resist — **the Good Spirit** is always with
you. **God** may take away consolations, but **He** always
leaves sufficient grace for salvation.

Key thoughts:

- 1. “trial”** = there’s great spiritual meaning in this: *“Consider it a great joy when trials of many kinds come upon you”* (James 1:2).
- 2. “so that you can resist”** = **God** is giving me the opportunity to resist this & grow stronger.
- 3. “sufficient grace”** = I have enough grace to resist this trial.

8th Rule: “Be patient” = In times of desolation,
be patient and think that consolation will soon
return. Diligently resist (see Rule 6).

Think this...

1. desolation will pass,
2. consolation will return (“we are on a roller coaster to God”),
3. and a lot sooner than the desolation is saying!

9th Rule: 3 reasons **God** allows **desolation**
(and the **fruit** if we resist it):

1. Our fault —> **conversion**
2. A trial —> **learning & wisdom**
3. Consolation is a gift —> **humility**

Remember...

Desolation exposes a person's affective disorder and allows him to work out inordinate attachments, to allow healing in much the same way that a person works out a cramp in a muscle.

10th Rule: In times of consolation, think how you will conduct yourself in desolation which will come after (see Rule 14), taking new strength for that time.

Remember...

Consolation is also a great time to seek God in your painful past.

11th Rule: In times of consolation, receive it with **humility**, remembering how little you are able to do in time of desolation.

In times of desolation, think how much you can do to resist the enemy with **God's grace** (see Rule 6).

12th Rule: “Stand firm in the beginning”

The enemy (fighting woman or spoiled child) weakens and flees when resisted promptly, by doing the opposite of the temptation. But if you lose heart in the face of temptation, **the enemy** gains strength and grows fierce.

Remember...

1. The **enemy** is essentially weak (a coward).
2. The easiest moment to resist the **temptation** is right away (**do the opposite ASAP**).
3. God **NEVER** calls us simply to passively endure **desolation (and temptations)**.
4. Saying a firm **NO** = essential in the spiritual life (both to what is bad & what makes us spiritually soft).

13th Rule: “Break the spiritual silence”

The enemy (false lover) wants temptations kept secret, knowing he cannot succeed if they are brought to light with the **appropriate spiritual person**.

Remember...

Desolation claims power to interpret our spiritual past, predict our spiritual future & present itself as our spiritual identity. But it's a LIE. Either an outright lie or a skewed presentation of truth. **Desolation** is *permitted* but NEVER caused by **God**.

Tips...

Confession & spiritual direction & ARRR (tell it to) **Jesus** —> do NOT hold back in breaking the silence.

14th Rule: “Strengthen the weak point”

The enemy (brigand) attacks at our weakest point. Take stock of your strengths and weaknesses to know where the battle will be engaged. Then you will be more ready for the attack.

Remember...

Develop **counter-habit of holiness** = opposite acts of virtue to root out sin. Focus only on 1 vice at a time. Develop a love for what is most difficult rather than choosing spiritual exercises that feel good. Transform our weak point into a strength by building your entire spiritual life around strengthening it.

Be aware that the enemy willingly works in our vulnerabilities, even in non-spiritual areas, like depression, tiredness, physical problems.