



ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

Rules of Discernment

THIRD RULE

Of Spiritual Consolation. I call it consolation when some interior movement in the soul is caused, through which the soul comes to be inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord; and when it can in consequence love no created thing on the face of the earth in itself, but in the Creator of them all.

Likewise, when it sheds tears that move to love of its Lord, whether out of sorrow for one's sins, or for the Passion of Christ our Lord, or because of other things directly connected with His service and praise.

Finally, I call consolation every increase of hope, faith and charity, and all interior joy which calls and attracts to heavenly things and to the salvation of one's soul, quieting it and giving it peace in its Creator and Lord. – St. Ignatius

Explained

Spiritual Consolation is any movement of the heart in which one feels close to or a desire to be close to the Lord. This reaction can be one of happiness like being in the embrace of a love one or it can be one of tears when we realize that we have harmed a love one but also realize the one that we love has forgiven us. True spiritual consolation always leads to an increase in oneself of hope, faith and charity.

1. Can you describe a time in which you felt loved?
2. How did you feel when you knew you were being loved?
3. Have you ever had an experience where you felt God's love?
4. How does God show people that He loved them in the Bible?
5. How do you feel when you realize that you have hurt someone whom you have loved? How does it feel to be forgiven by them?





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FOURTH RULE

Of Spiritual Desolation. I call desolation all the contrary of the third rule, such as darkness of soul, disturbance in it, movement to things low and earthly, the unquiet of different agitations and temptations, moving to want of confidence, without hope, without love, when one finds oneself all lazy, tepid, sad, and as if separated from his Creator and Lord. Because, as consolation is contrary to desolation, in the same way the thoughts which come from consolation are contrary to the thoughts which come from desolation.

Explained

There are times in our life when it “feels” like God is not present. It is important to remember that God is always present whether we feel Him or not. Imagine if you can being in a totally dark room and then all of a sudden being hit in the face with a spotlight. While you would no longer be in the dark you would at the same time feel like you were because of the brightness of the light.

1. Have you ever missed a love one? How did it feel to have the love far away but at the same time know that they still loved you?
2. Have you ever found yourself lost so much in thought that you fail to recognize that someone has been talking to you or has entered the room?
3. Have you ever lost a loved in a crowd, from moving, or from death? How did it feel?
4. How does it feel to know that you have hurt someone? What do you tend to do? Have you ever withdrawn from a relationship because you were too proud to apologize? Have you ever thought God could be the same way?
5. What are some other words that you could use to describe the feeling of “Desolation”?

