



ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

Rules of Discernment

THIRTEENTH RULE

Likewise, he acts as a licentious lover in wanting to be secret and not revealed. For, as the licentious man who, speaking for an evil purpose, solicits a daughter of a good father or a wife of a good husband, wants his words and persuasions to be secret, and the contrary displeases him much, when the daughter reveals to her father or the wife to her husband his licentious words and depraved intention, because he easily gathers that he will not be able to succeed with the undertaking begun: in the same way, when the enemy of human nature brings his wiles and persuasions to the just soul, he wants and desires that they be received and kept in secret; but when one reveals them to his good Confessor or to another spiritual person that knows his deceits and evil ends, it is very grievous to him, because he gathers, from his manifest deceits being discovered, that he will not be able to succeed with his wickedness begun. – St. Ignatius of Loyola

Explained

There is often a feeling of a need to be secretive with the devil's temptations as if one needs to be sneaky and not get caught because others would not approve of the actions he is suggesting morally and/or this action he is proposing will produce shame when completed. The best way one can fight this is to be forthright and honest with a trusted individual (a spiritual director or counselor) or a trusted group of individuals (a support group or accountability group).

1. Can you describe a time in your life when you were doing something you knew was wrong and had to go to great length to hide it from others?
2. How "hiding it (the above event) begin to monopolize your life?
3. Have you ever told a lie and then had to tell another one and another one in order to keep the person in the dark?
4. How does working with trusted individuals help you avoid sin?





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FOURTEENTH RULE

Likewise, he behaves as a chief bent on conquering and robbing what he desires: for, as a captain and chief of the army, pitching his camp, and looking at the forces or defenses of a stronghold, attacks it on the weakest side, in like manner the enemy of human nature, roaming about, looks in turn at all our virtues, theological, cardinal and moral; and where he finds us weakest and most in need for our eternal salvation, there he attacks us and aims at taking us. – St. Ignatius of Loyola

Explained

The devil in his temptations does not attack us where we are strong but instead he attacks us and temps us at our weakest point as a good military leader would. It is therefore important for us to be honest with ourselves and take a personal invitational (examination of conscience) to see where we are weak (where we are constantly giving into the devil's temptations). We should then work to strengthen those areas of our life but also being aware at this time that the devil will then begin looking for our next weakest spot.

1. Why in wartime is it so important for opposing generals to discover each other's weaknesses?
2. What are some things that lead to weakness in the military and how can they help understand weaknesses in our spiritual and moral life?
3. What are some of the areas in which you let the devil breach your defenses quite often?
4. How can you strengthen your defenses against the devil?
5. What are some of your strongest virtues? What are some of your weaknesses?
6. Remembering that the virtue is always in the middle of two vices, how can you prevent the devil from out flanking you on either side of a particular virtue?

