



ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

Rules of Discernment

FIRST RULE

In the persons who go from mortal sin to mortal sin, the enemy is commonly used to propose to them apparent pleasures, making them imagine sensual delights and pleasures in order to hold them more and make them grow in their vices and sins. In these persons the good spirit uses the opposite method, pricking them and biting their consciences through the process of reason. – St. Ignatius

Explained

In a person moving away from God in his or her life by committing one mortal sin (a sin that has three of the following: grave matter, full knowledge, and full intent) after another, he or she will feel the Holy Spirit as causing discomfort to their conscience in order to get them to stop their evil ways. The evil spirit on the other hand encourages the sinner to continue sinning through providing physical and emotional pleasure.

1. Can you name a time in which you were doing something you knew was wrong? How did your parents (and others who loved you) act towards you?
2. Can you see any similarities between how God might act and how your parents (and other who loved you) acted?
3. How does love dictate this type of response?
4. Can you name a time when you gave into peer pressure and thus do something illegal, immoral, or both?
5. Why do you think the people who pressured you into doing something did what they did?
6. Can you see any similarities between how they acted and how the devil might tempt sinners further away from God?





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SECOND RULE

In the persons who are going on intensely cleansing their sins and rising from good to better in the service of God our Lord, it is the method contrary to that in the first Rule, for then it is the way of the evil spirit to bite, sadden and put obstacles, disquieting with false reasons, that one may not go on; and it is proper to the good to give courage and strength, consolations, tears, inspirations and quiet, easing, and putting away all obstacles, that one may go on in well doing. – St. Ignatius

Explained

In a person who is striving to live a good and holy life by developing one's relationship with God and trying to avoid sin the Holy Spirit encourages him or her through providing physical and emotional pleasure. The evil spirit though tries to sidetrack the individual from doing God's will by causing discomfort to their conscience by providing doubts. The devil only has two lies: "You are not good enough" and "You are alone". Both of these we know to be false because of the love God has for us.

1. Can you name a time when you did the right thing even though you knew it would make you unpopular?
2. How did it make you feel when you did the right thing and others around you did not like you because of it? How is this similar to the way the devil works when one is doing God's will?
3. How did you feel inside? How do you think God rewards people who do the right thing despite peer pressure?
4. What are the devil's two lies? How effective are they on you?
5. How does God encourage you to do good?
6. What is the devil's reaction to you doing good?

