

# HOW DOES GOD GUIDE US ?



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Ignatian discernment, a practice developed by **St. Ignatius of Loyola**, is a spiritual process for identifying God's will by paying attention to the inner movements of the heart and soul, such as emotions, thoughts, and desires. It involves distinguishing between movements of "consolation," which bring peace and lead toward God, and "desolation," which bring restlessness and come from other sources, and then using **St. Ignatius's Rules for Discernment** to choose the path that best aligns with God's greater glory.

## Key Concepts

- **Interior Movements:** These are the inner experiences of thoughts, feelings, desires, and inclinations that occur in our hearts and minds.
- **Consolation:** Movements that bring peace, joy, hope, and a desire to serve God. These are generally believed to come from the Holy Spirit.
- **Desolation:** Movements that bring restlessness, emptiness, sadness, or confusion. These are often seen as coming from "The Enemy of Human Nature".
- **Discernment of Spirits:** The skill of recognizing the source and direction of these interior movements to understand what aligns with God and what leads away from Him.

## How it Works

- 1. Pay Attention to Inner Experiences:** Become aware of your emotions, thoughts, and desires as they arise in everyday life.
- 2. Identify Consolation and Desolation:** Notice when these movements lead to a feeling of peace, inner strength, and a desire to follow God (consolation). Contrast this with movements that cause restlessness, hollowness, or disquiet (desolation).
- 3. Apply the Rules for Discernment:** Ignatius created a set of rules to help understand these movements and make discerning choices.
- 4. Seek God's Will:** By understanding these movements, you can choose between good options and identify the path God desires for you, moving towards greater joy and serving Him.

## Purpose

- **Make Good Decisions:** Discernment helps in making significant life choices as well as everyday "micro-choices".
- **Grow Spiritually:** It provides tools to navigate times of spiritual dryness and even to grow from them, rather than being harmed by them.
- **Connect with God:** It helps recognize and foster God's presence in your life, leading to a deeper and more joyful relationship