

**God's Voice Within: The Ignatian Way to Discover God's Will**  
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**Discussion Guide**

Notes from the book:

The Spiritual Exercises provide us a framework to practice discernment in making decisions. St. Ignatius believed that God desires for us to make good decisions and will help us to do so.

All our thoughts, feelings, & actions are moving us either closer to God or further away from God. A false spirit will cause us to fall away and a true spirit provides an inner pull towards God's plan.

**Desolation is the state of being under the influence of the false spirit.** You are empty of faith, hope, & love, and empty of the sense of God's being close to you. You will experience restlessness and agitation, boredom and apathy, fear and worry, and secrecy.

**False consolation is an advanced form of desolation.** It is the experience of being drawn to feelings, thoughts, and actions that look good and holy at first, but that ultimately lead to actions that the person is not called by God to do at that particular time.

**You are in consolation when you have faith, hope, & love, the sense of God's closeness, peace and tranquility, great desires, and transparency.** Reflect on a time of deep inner peace, during which you experienced great desires of faith, hope, & love. Note that this peace does not imply that all interior and exterior problems in your life are solved and resolved, but that you have a new and different relationship with those problems.

**Eight ways to deal with desolation:**

Name it.

Make no unnecessary changes

Rely on your support network

Consider logistical or moral causes

Be aware of the false angel of light

Be firm with the false spirit

Be gentle with yourself

Have faith that God is at work in your desolation.

**While you are in consolation, you should prepare for desolation:**

Observe the course of thoughts-what caused the desolation and how did I react?

Look out for false consolation-extreme positive emotions may lead to a loss in objectivity

Attend to vulnerabilities-what are your defense mechanisms?

Seek God in your painful past-find God in all things.

**Using discernment to make a decision:**

Lay a foundation-what is your mission statement? What do you seek? Do you have a grateful heart?

Ignatian Indifference: A state where you truly desire to follow any of the perceived paths so long as it leads to God's greater glory.

**Four phases to good discernment:**

Get quiet-develop a consistent and meaningful prayer life.

Gather data-are you a hasty or hesitant decision maker?

Dream dreams-tap into your deep desires.

Ponder the dreams-weighing desolations and consolations. Peace vs. disquiet; inflamed energy vs. deflatedness.

**Five things to remember:**

1. The degree of thoroughness within a discernment process depends upon the gravity of the decision and upon the time allotted to make the decision.
2. As I set out to live my commitment, it would be completely natural for me to have buyer's remorse.
3. Waiting for confirmation does not mean waiting until I have certainty before I act.
4. I must have faith that God really will make good come from any sincere choice of mine.
5. What is crucial is that at any given moment, I choose that which I believe to be the Magis [the desire to choose that which gives God more glory].

*When we have done our best, we should wait the result in peace. –John Lubbock*