

Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola

Principle and Foundation

The Principle and Foundation grounds the entire dynamic of the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* with a faith perspective that encompasses all reality. This faith vision recognizes that all creation is fundamentally connected to the Creator. As such, humanity, within the order of creation, must find its proper and ultimate purpose within this loving relationship with its Creator. Furthermore, everything exists purely as God's gift, caught up within its very existence by the divine creative love. As all gifts are freely given, we must use them insofar as they help us to grow closer to God. Any that impede our growth must be recognized and rejected, so that we may remain in a state of spiritual freedom and balance. Within this faith vision, all human life and action find their ultimate fulfillment directed toward a life of greater reverence and loving service for God.

Prayer adapted from the First Principle and Foundation

(David Fleming, S.J., adapted by David C. Robinson, S.J.)

The goal of our life is to live with you forever,
the God who loves us, and who gave us life.
Our own response of love allows your life
to flow into us without limit.

All things of this world are your gifts,
presented to us so that we can know you more easily
and more readily make a return of love to you.

As a result, we appreciate and use all your gifts
insofar as they help us to develop as loving persons.
But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives,
they displace you and so hinder our growth toward our goal.

In everyday life, then, help us hold ourselves in balance
before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice,
and are not bound by some obligation.

May we not fix our desires on health or sickness,
wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or a short one.
For everything has the potential of calling forth in us
a deeper response to our life in you.

May our only desire and our one choice be this:
to want and to choose what better leads
to the deepening of your life in us. Amen.

“The Principle and Foundation: A Poetic Rendering”

Love made me – Love sustains me – Love leads me forth.
For this I sing praise, bow low, and put my life at the disposal of Love.
Every tree – every single star in the sky points back toward the Beloved.
May nothing pull me away from Love –
no small wish of mine next to the immensity of the Beloved.
With the Beloved may I shine.

Christine Rodgers

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The Principle and Foundation

(Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, #23)

Pre-Note: Creation is the continuous action of God, the ongoing self-expression of God.

Principle and Foundation *(adapted from the traditional translation of Louis J. Puhl, SJ)*

Creation:

Human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord and by this means to save our souls. The other things on the face of the earth are created for us, to help us in attaining the end for which we are created.

Our Use of Creation:

Hence, we are to make use of them in so far as they help us in the attainment of our end, and we must rid ourselves of them in so far as they prove a hindrance to us. Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and are not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short life. That same holds for all other things.

Our Only Desire:

Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we have been created.

Principle and Foundation *(adapted from the contemporary translation of David L. Fleming, SJ)*

Creation:

The goal of our life is to live with God forever. God, who loves us, gave us life. Our own response of love allows God's life to flow into us without limit. All the things in this world are gifts from God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily.

Our Use of Creation:

As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God insofar as they help us to develop as loving persons. But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives, they displace God and so hinder our growth toward our goal. In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some obligation. We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or a short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response to our life in God.

Our Only Desire:

Our only desire and our one choice should be this:

I want and I choose what better leads to God's deepening his life in me.