

God's Perspective: A Look at the First Principle and Foundation

Grace: Ask for the grace to see yourself as God sees you and to love yourself as God love you.

Introduction:

Learning to see things as God sees them is quite an ambitious goal. Yet, Saint Ignatius encourages those making the Spiritual Exercises to open themselves to seeing the world as God sees it and to see their life from God's perspective.

To begin, start by looking at your own life and trying to see yourself as God sees you. What is your purpose in life? Why did God create you? While these may be basic questions about identity, they are not easy to answer. Saint Ignatius suggests that the very first principle that we should consider and the foundation of the Spiritual Exercises can be summed up as follows: ***“God created you to praise, reverence and serve God and in this way to save your soul. God created all of the rest of creation to help you achieve the purpose for which God created you.”***

What prevents you from praising, reverencing and serving God? Do you believe that all of creation is God's gift to you? What keeps you from loving yourself? What prevents you from seeing God's love? What keeps you from being free?

Read the Scripture passages and select the one that most speaks to you. Re-read the one you select and underline the words that stand out. What feelings do the readings evoke? How does the Scripture relate to your life? Allow yourself to go back to a significant moment in your life and ask the Holy Spirit to show you how God sees that moment. Does your vision of that moment differ from God's vision and if so, how? Can you probe deeply by asking God to reveal to you how your vision and His vision became different? Dare you ask for the grace to look at your life and truly see it as God sees it? How might this new perspective change the way you live your life? What is important in your life? How might the First Principle and Foundation help you to put things in your life into perspective?

After spending some time in quiet, read the *Footprints* reflection. Bring the images and experience that came to mind during your quiet time to the reading of the reflection. Write about your experience by completing the Spiritual Exercise Journal.



Ephesians 1:3-11 - Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the spiritual blessings that Christ has brought us from heaven! Before the world was created, God had Christ choose us to live with him and to be his holy and innocent and loving people. God was kind and decided that Christ would choose us to be God's own adopted children. God was very kind to us because of the Son he dearly loves, and so we should praise God. Christ sacrificed his life's blood to set us free, which means that our sins are now forgiven. Christ did this because God was so kind to us. God has great wisdom and understanding, and by what Christ has done, God has shown us his own mysterious ways. Then when the time is right, God will do all that he has planned, and Christ will bring together everything in heaven and on earth. God always does what he plans, and that's why he had Christ choose us.

Romans 8:35-39 - Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Isaiah 49:8-16 Restoration of Israel - This is what the LORD says: "In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances, to say to the captives, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Be free!' "They will feed beside the roads and find pasture on every barren hill. They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water. I will turn all my mountains into roads, and my highways will be raised up. See, they will come from afar— some from the north, some from the west, some from the region of Aswan." Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me." "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me."

Footprints - One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with Jesus, the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord. When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life. This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it: "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me." The Lord replied: "My son, my precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."



In these or similar words ... This scripture passage affects me a lot. In it says "who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall troubles or hardship or persecution or failure or danger or sword?" The quote reminded me of 9/11. In that time period I questioned my faith. I asked, "Why would God let that happen?" What also messed with my mind was that he was clearly there after it happened because of all the miracle stories. I want to know how God saw that day; if it happened for a reason. This day affected my life very strongly. I knew people that worked in the buildings. I thank God for saving them. Another thing I would ask God is, "Was I missing something in that day?". Am I not seeing it fully as I should? So I ask again please let me see it through your eyes. The biggest effect of that day was I questioned my faith but my question was answered. I believed strong in the fact that God had saved my loved ones and many more. This is where I liked the scripture quote, "for I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any power, neither height nor depth will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, Our Lord". It doesn't refer to me directly but in essence it does. God loves Jesus and Jesus loves me. I will never forget that day, the day I questioned and strengthened my faith.

Practicing What You Preach ... To increase your ability to see things as God sees them, write a list of 10 goals that you have for yourself. After reviewing the First Principle and Foundation, think about how each of the goals will help you to praise, reverence, and serve God. If necessary, are you willing to re-align your priorities or set new goals?

