



GOD VIEWS

You Rang My God Bell?

The purpose of the Ignatian Exercises is to help Christians conquer their flesh so that they will not be influenced in their decisions by any inordinate attachments to “this world.” They can help us inoculate ourselves against “Midas” desires or turning God into our personal butler.

Ignatius wrote, “Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord...all other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him fulfill the end for which he is created.” He goes on to suggest that we (Christians) must make ourselves “indifferent” to all created things, “in so far as it is left to the choice of our free will and not forbidden. Acting accordingly, for our part, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short one, and so in all things we should desire and choose only those things which will best help us attain the end for which we are created.”

Ignatius’ words are hard to hear. They uproot the “name it, claim it” theologies that spring up and grow in the church like ragweed. But, like the notion of picking up our cross and following our Lord, we may wince at the notion of such a radical commitment.

■ Exercise

Take a few moments and list all the things in your life that may cause a lump in your throat when you pray for an attitude of indifference.

Then pray that God will at least give you the grace to loosen your grip on these things as you ask Him to increase your attachment to things of His kingdom.

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³ Please see *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. A very readable version is translated by Anthony Mottola, and published by Image Books. The above quotes are taken from page 47 of the 1964 edition of this text.



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Bible Study

READ GENESIS 13:1-15.

So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. ²Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.

³From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier ⁴and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the Lord.

⁵Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. ⁶But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. ⁷And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

⁸So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. ⁹Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left.

¹⁰Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company. ¹²Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. ¹³Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning against the LORD.

¹⁴The LORD said to Abram after Lot parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. ¹⁵All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.

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1

What does this passage tell us about Abraham's faith? (Note: Abraham went back to Bethel ("house of God") to ask for God's guidance before making his astounding offer to Lot.)

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2 How would you describe the maturity of Lot's faith?

3 From the perspective of how things turned out in the future for Abraham and Lot, who was blessed with the true "Midas touch"? (Note: Read verses 14 and 15 again to be reminded of how richly God rewards when we hold His possessions with open palms.)

4 Do you believe that Abraham would have known what Ignatius meant by the concept of "indifference"? What makes you think so?

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Bible Study

READ MATTHEW 26:36-45.

³⁶Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

³⁹Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

⁴⁰Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. ⁴¹“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

⁴²He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

⁴³When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

⁴⁵Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

- 1 Some would argue that what Jesus did in Gethsemane was equally as important as what He accomplished on the cross. Do you agree? Why, or why not?

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2 Do you see any similarities between the previous passage (Genesis 13:1-15) and the present passage (Matthew 26:36-45)? How so?

3 In Matthew 26:39b, Jesus cries out, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” How do these words contrast with the idea of giving orders to God as if He were our butler?

4 If you are willing to share, tell about a time in your life when you lived through a “Gethsemane” experience and were able to pray the prayer of Jesus, “...Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

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Transparency

Session Outline

I. INTRODUCTION



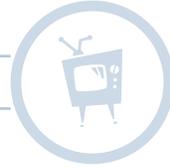
- Welcome
- Prayer
- Review

II. WARM-UP



- Retelling of Synopsis
- Questions
- Exercises and Discussion

III. CONTENT



- Video Vignette
- Class Response
- Discussion/Question

IV. BIBLE STUDY



- Small Groups or All Together

V. SUMMARY



- Review

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