

## **Ignatius' First Principle and Foundation Exercise #1**

In this first session of retreat, Ignatius encourages retreatants to spend time marveling at God. His hope is that as one takes the time to notice the activity of God, they will actually "experience" Him afresh.

For this exercise, we want to "experience" God by taking time to look back at the many ways God has already blessed you in the past, knowing that these blessings are evidence of God's presence in your life.

### **Option #1 – Count your blessings**

Take your journal and begin to write out a "list of blessings". Make a list of all the things God has blessed you with, all the things that make your life wonderful. Look for the small things. Take notice of the things you would overlook or take for granted.

Start by writing out 10 blessings and then try to increase it to 50. Then, each day on retreat, continue to add to the list.

This exercise helps us change the way we think. Often we spend our time thinking about our problems (and, of course, we do have problems). But "counting our blessings" helps us see God's goodness in our lives and reassures us of His continual activity.

### **Option #2 – Look Back**

Take your journal and begin to record any times you believe God "intervened" in your life. Review the years you have lived, and ask the Holy Spirit to help you see His activity in your life. These need not be big things like healings or deliverance from danger but may be times of provision or encouragement.

List as many as you can and then begin to consider how these "interventions" have affected your life.

Then simply thank God for His goodness.