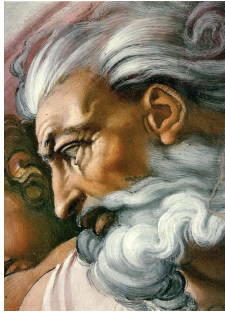


Rules for  
**DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS**  
from the Spiritual Exercises of  
St. Ignatius of Loyola

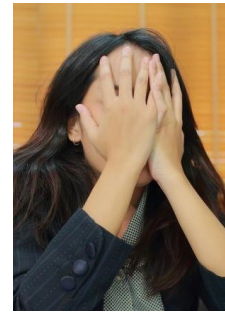
**REFLECTION GUIDE**  
Part I

**SAMPLE**

Shellee Leif



# MOVERS



## PROFILE OF GOD

- Faithful and true (Revelations 19:11, Psalm 33:4, 2 Corinthians 1:18)
- Father training his children (Hebrew 12:6)
- Father who cares (Matthew 7:11)
- Loving Creator (Isaiah 45:12)
- Giver of Gifts (Ezekiel 36:26, John 16:23)
- Merciful Lord (Exodus 34:6)
- Merciful Judge (Psalm 89:4)
- Keeper of Promises (2 Corinthians 1:20, 2 Peter 3:8)
- Good Shepherd (John 10:11-18)
- Slow to anger (Psalm 145:8)
- Forgiver of Sins (1 John 1:9)
- Life-giving Vine (John 15:1-5)
- Worker of our good (Romans 8:28)
- Patient Lover who doesn't force but patiently waits, always wooing (1 Peter 3:9)
- Generous, holding nothing back, sharing his very life with us in Jesus (John 3:16)
- Personal Savior/Redeemer (Acts 5:31)
- Intimate Friend and Lover (John 15:15)
- The One Who Calls (1 Thessalonians 5:25, Timothy 1:9)
- Head of the Body (Colossians 1:18)
- Messiah inviting us to work with Him (Luke 9:23)
- Counselor, Consoler (Isaiah 9:6)
- Teacher, Guide (John 14:26)

## PROFILE OF THE ENEMY

- Liar and Deceiver (John 8:44)
- Adversary (1 Peter 5:8)
- Accuser of Brethren (Revelations 12:10)
- Prosecuting Attorney (Zechariah 3:1)
- Roaring Lion/Paper Tiger – Reckless and he becomes a coward (1 Peter 4:8, James 4:7)
- Weak when faced with strength and strong when faced with weakness (Rule 12)
- False lover, wishing to remain secret and hidden, revealed in the dark (Matthew 23) (Rule 13)
- Murderer or Military Commander, striking out with sporadic attack, but in full frontal attack, intent upon conquering and robbing (1 Peter 2:2) (Rule 14)



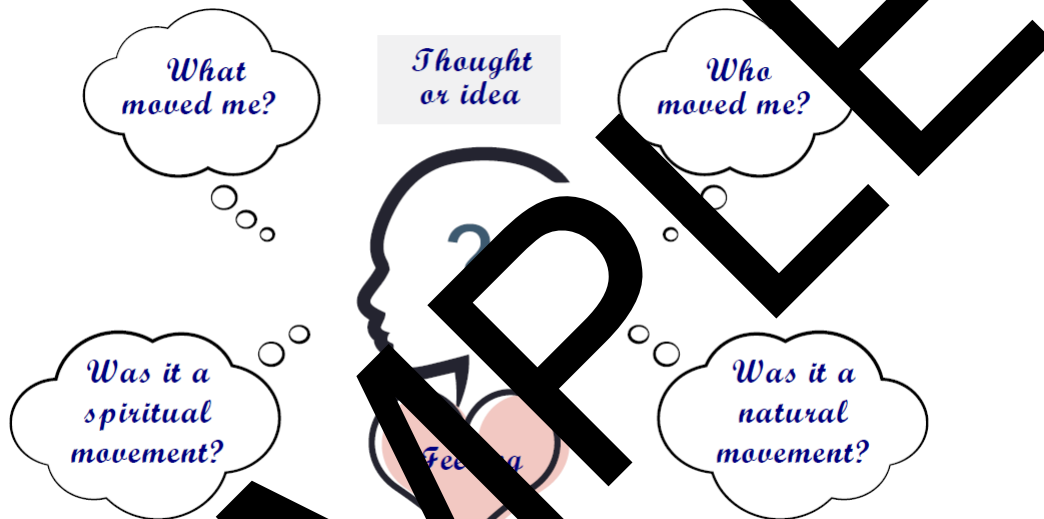
## PROFILE OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

- Image and likeness of God
- Body and Spirit
- Good but fallen, needing healing, being healed and healed
- Thomas Merton, Imitation of Christ, describes the fallen human spirit:
  - ◊ Inclined to its own satisfaction
  - ◊ A friend of pleasure and an enemy of suffering
  - ◊ Readily inclined to anything that is comfortable with its own temperament, personal tastes, and caprices, or satisfaction of self-love
  - ◊ Resistant to humiliations, penances, renunciation, mortification
  - ◊ Desires success, honors, applause, and pastimes
  - ◊ Promotes anything that will arouse admiration or notoriety
  - ◊ If someone goes against it, they are branded as inept and incompetent
  - ◊ Spontaneous natural impulses and inclinations usually traced to: some natural cause, disposition, stimulated senses, or interior powers
  - ◊ Often persist in spite of prayer
  - ◊ Like sheep, wandering away, following our own paths (Isaiah 53: 6)
- Scupoli, (*Spiritual Combat*, ch. 27) describes four human situations and responses to sin:
  - ◊ Those so overwhelmed by sin that they never even consider the possibility of breaking the chains
  - ◊ Those who want to free themselves from the slavery but they do nothing to accomplish this
  - ◊ Some who think they are secure in their virtue and for that very reason are very far from being so
  - ◊ Others, after attaining a high degree of virtue, fall all the more heavily

SAMPLE

# MOVEMENTS

We have a nature that is both body and spirit; therefore, spiritual movements are natural for humans. For the purpose of this type of discernment we are learning to distinguish a movement that happens as a result of an encounter with a person (either the Lord or the enemy) from a movement that arises from merely human psychological feelings, or natural bodily sensations (such as hunger, cold, fatigue, etc.), or the thoughts produced from natural reasoning. In this guide, a spiritual movement is defined as an encounter with the Lord or the enemy, and a natural movement is defined as arising from those human feelings, sensations or thoughts.



## SPIRITUAL MOVEMENTS HAVE TWO IDENTIFYING ASPECTS:

1. They pertain to our relationship with God (our faith/trust, hope, and love toward God)
2. They urge us to move in a direction (moving toward or away from God)

### WHAT DIRECTION IS IT LEADING?

Towards → **GOD** → Away

*Important distinction: these rules only apply to spiritual movements.*

#### OVERALL ACTIONS OF THE GOOD SPIRIT

- Strengthening the movement toward God
- Weakening the pull away from God

#### TYPE OF MOVEMENTS

- Inviting and sweet (consolations)
- Pricking conscious, conviction (allows desolation)

#### OVERALL ACTIONS OF THE EVIL SPIRIT

- Weakening the movement toward God
- Strengthening the pull away from God

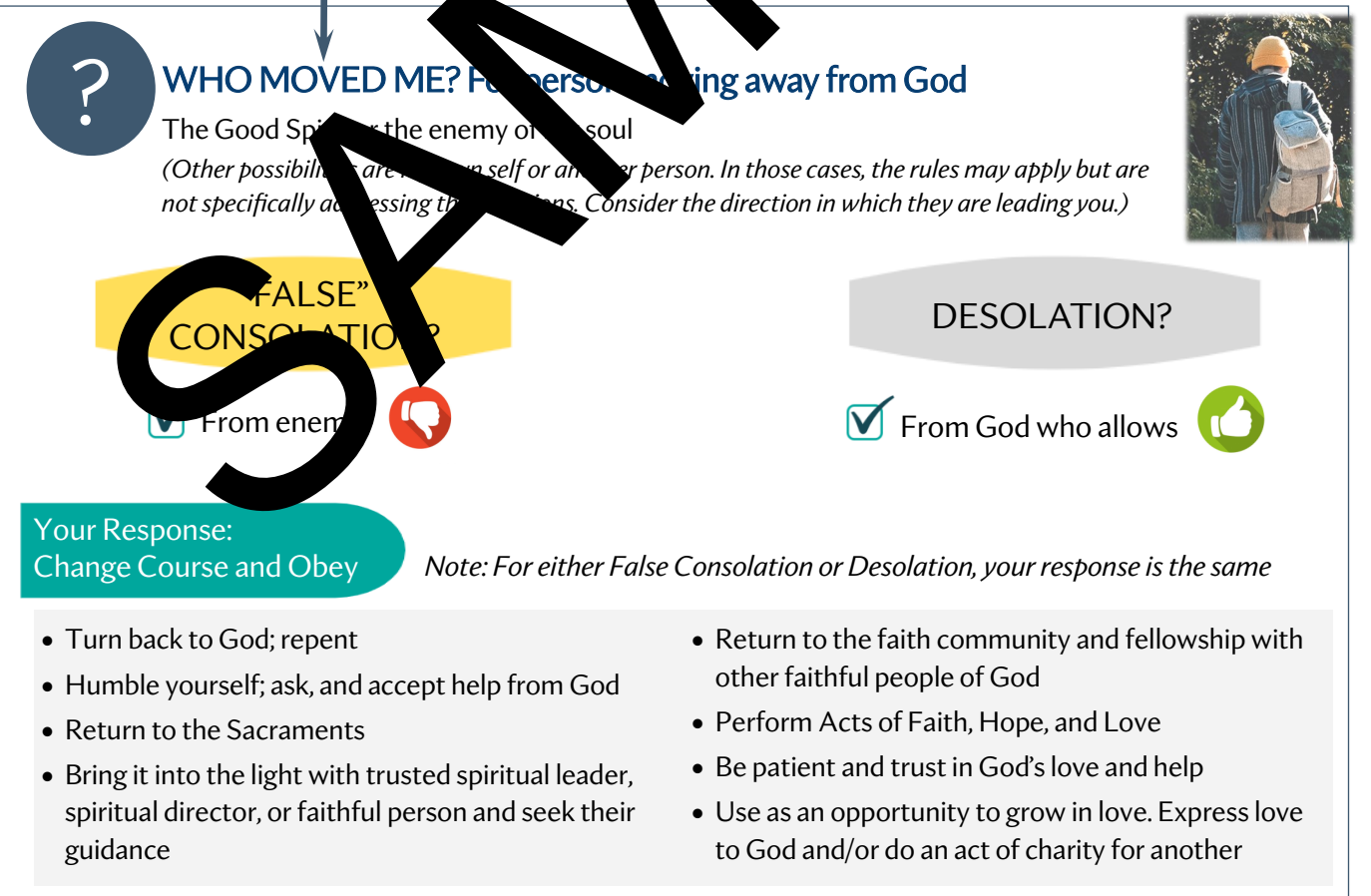
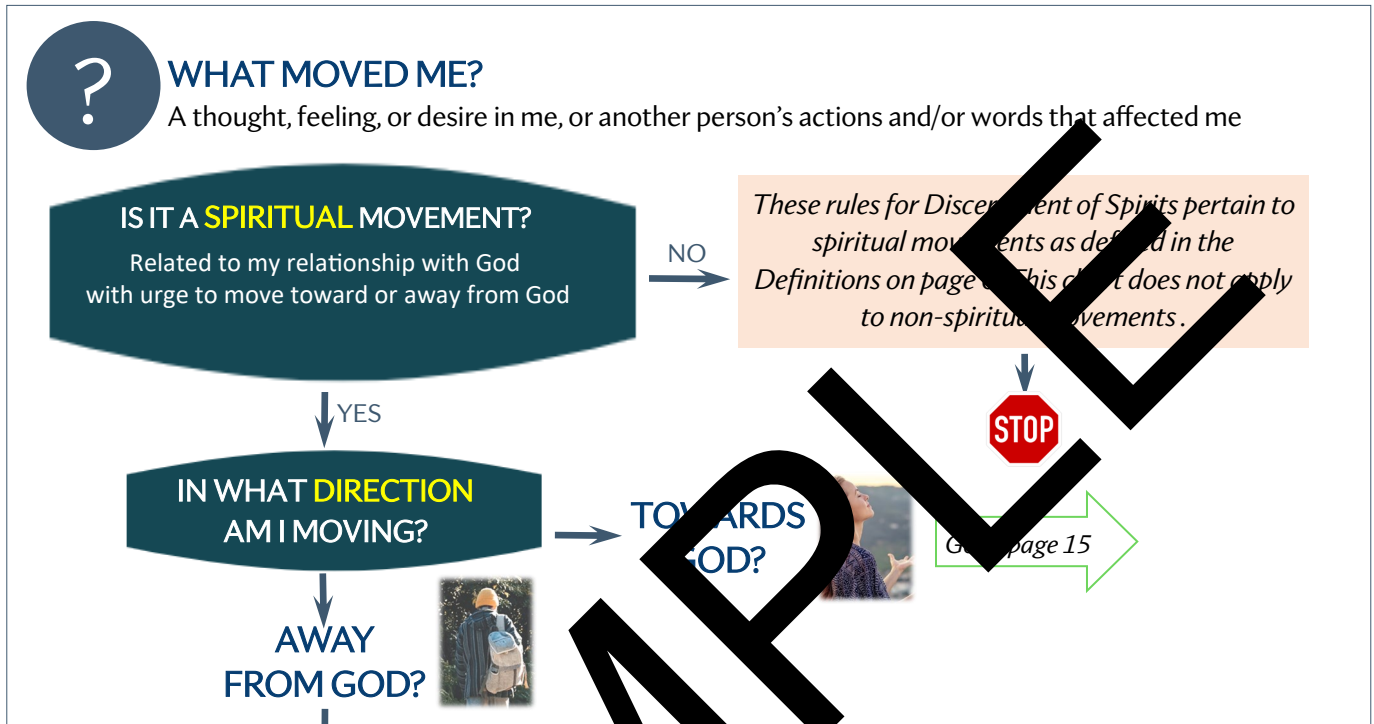
#### TYPE OF MOVEMENTS

- Sadness, false reasoning, despair (desolation)
- Inviting, tempting, deceiving (false consolation)

# DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS REFLECTION GUIDE

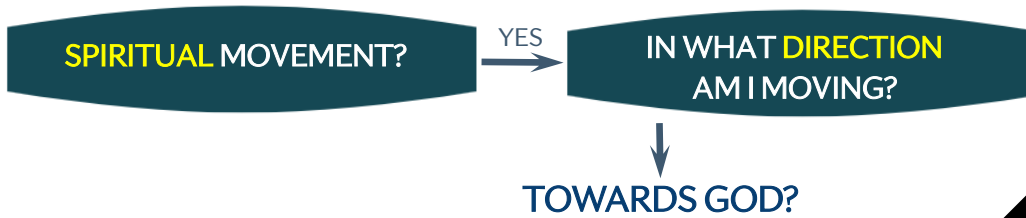
Using the FIRST Set of Rules for Discernment of Spirits by St. Ignatius of Loyola

Use this chart to determine who moved you and how to respond. Discerners seek to answer *WHAT* moved me and *WHO* moved me before an act of free choice to cooperate with the Good Spirit and reject the enemy.



# DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS REFLECTION GUIDE

Using the FIRST Set of Rules for Discernment of Spirits by St. Ignatius of Loyola



## WHO MOVED ME? For person moving towards God

The Good Spirit or the enemy of my soul

*(Other possibilities are my own self or another person. In those cases, the rules may apply, but are*



YES



YES

From God

Your Response:  
Receive and Express

- Cooperate with the grace
- Receive His love
- Relate to the Lord
- Express love
- Make decisions to love and serve God better and to help fulfill His desire

Go to Reflection Guide Part II, page 14

### NOTE:

Part II is a separate document using the second set of rules for discernment of spirits. To order, see page 20.



From enemy



Your Response:  
Resist and Counter

- During the desolation, do not make a change in direction, proposals, determinations, or a major life decision
- Bring it into the light with trusted spiritual leader or mentor
- Persevere, hope, and be patient, bear this trial, trust God to use it for good, relying on God's help and sufficient grace
- Resist the enemy's tactic, reject temptation
- *Agere Contra* (counter-punch): Do the opposite of the inspiration or temptation
- Recommit or stay faithful to existing commitments, prayer, meditation, sacraments, penances, and daily examen (intensify a little)
- Be attentive to the thoughts, watch for half-lies, deliberately recall God's graces and blessings, look for the actual whole truth and at the possible consequences to self and others if you followed this message; look for and speak truth.
- Use as an opportunity to grow in love; express love to God and/or others

# DEFINITIONS

## Part I: Using the FIRST Set of Rules for Discernment of Spirits by St. Ignatius of Loyola

### SPIRITS

Ignatius defines spirits as those affective stirrings in the heart (joy, sadness, hope, fear, peace, anxiety, and so on) with their related thoughts that influence our life of faith and our progress toward God.

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### AWARENESS

There are three kinds of interior awareness: **psychological** awareness (personal thoughts), **moral** awareness (sins), and **spiritual** awareness (the various agitations and thoughts which the different spirits bring the person). Awareness is needed to notice movements or changes in the feelings of the heart or in the thoughts. The psychological and moral movements are considered **non-spiritual movements** within the context of these rules. *Also see Movements, page 11.*

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### SPIRITUAL MOVEMENTS

Certain movements in our heart or thoughts that lead to greater or lesser faith, hope, love, confidence, and trust in God and likewise charity toward neighbor are considered spiritual. It is a movement at the level of the heart, directly related to your relationship to God and to living the Christian life which contains a message regarding the direction in which the Lords leading you in life – a religious dimension – presupposing Christian faith and Christian understanding of God at work in the various factors which influence human interior life.

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### MOVERS: THE ENEMY, THE GOOD SPIRIT, OTHERS, OR SELF

Thoughts, Feelings, Persistent Desires, Actions, Good or Bad Habits, Virtue Struggles, Perceptions, Inordinate Desires (i.e., esteem, self-sufficiency, pleasure, comfort, our own will), Core Wounds, Past Hurts, Personal Vows, Expectations of Others (real or perceived), and the like.

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### ENEMY OF OUR SOUL

Includes the **World** (people or cultures that encourage or tempt us towards sin and disobedience to God), **Flesh** (weakness of our humanity, un-healed places in our own psyches such as wounds, habits, attachments, concupiscence, capital sins, and our own disordered intellect, will, or senses), or the **Devil** (satan and his demons).

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### FRUIT OF THE ENEMY

Spirit of falsity, lack of curiosity, confusion, anxiety, and deep depression (not chemical), obstinacy, constant indiscretion, restless spirit, pride, vanity, false humility, despair, lack of confidence, discouragement, presumption, vain security, disobedience, hardness of heart, impatience in suffering, stubborn resentment, uncontrolled passions, hypocrisy, duplicity, scrupulous adherence to letter of the law, etc. *Aumann*

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*“For this reason, since the day we heard about you,  
we have not stopped praying for you.  
We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will  
through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,  
so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord  
and please him in every way bearing fruit in every good work,  
growing in the knowledge of God,  
being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might  
so that you may have great endurance and patience,  
and giving joyful thanks to the Father,  
who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people  
in the kingdom of light.  
For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness  
and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.”*

Colossians 1:9-13

To order additional copies of this Reflection Guide Part I  
or the companion guide Part II, visit

[discerning-life-ministries.org](http://discerning-life-ministries.org)  
[sleif.talks@gmail.com](mailto:sleif.talks@gmail.com)