

## + Desires of the Heart: Themes of Ignatian Spirituality +

### ***DESIRE & GRACE***

*Seeking God and naming my desire*

#### **BACKGROUND**

In the Spiritual Exercises, one of the first things an exercitant does is ask God for a grace: “What I want and desire”. Doing this centres ourselves and reminds us how we need to turn toward God in our need. Long before modern psychology, Ignatius understood the importance of “You need to name it to claim it”. Can we truly claim our time of prayer as a time of needing our Lord and God?



Ultimately, our *deepest* desire should be to praise, reverence, and serve God. Desires are important because we ultimately want them to lead toward God (the desire under the desire).

#### ***The grace I ask for should be...***

- according to what we might be praying with (Resurrection: sharing in Christ’s joy; Passion: sharing in Christ’s suffering)
- something I do not have, something I want, and something only God can give
- Ignatius has us focus on affective graces—things to be felt and experienced

#### **PRAYERFUL REFLECTION**

- ❖ What desires are in my heart? I reflect on the deep desires that lead me toward God, not away from God.
- ❖ What are God’s desires for me? I recognise that God has dreams for me.
- ❖ Might my desires and dreams align with God’s?
- ❖ I ask God for this **grace**: *That I may have the desire to want what God wants for me.*

#### **RESOURCES**

[jknirp.com/ignatz.htm](http://jknirp.com/ignatz.htm) - Commentary on what our desires can mean to our faith life  
[goo.gl/PFB8PA](http://goo.gl/PFB8PA) - Asking for a grace

*“There lives the dearest freshness deep down things.”*  
 - Gerard Manley Hopkins, SJ

*“Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart’s desires.”*  
 - Psalm 37:4 (NRSV)