

# Freedom From Self

by Fenelon

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*The only remedy for the problem of self is to renounce self and become accessible to God's will, leading to true peace and freedom.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 10:28, Luke 9:23, Romans 12:2, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 4:7

**Topics:** "Self Denial", "Surrender To God"

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## Description

Francois de Salignac de la Mothe-Fenelon preaches about the importance of renouncing self to find true peace and freedom from the conflicts and injustices of the world. He emphasizes that by surrendering our will to God's will, we become invulnerable to the attacks of others and store our treasure in God's hands. Fenelon encourages complete self-renunciation, even in the face of contempt, pain, and death, trusting in the eternal peace and rest promised by God.

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## Transcript

Francois de Salignac de la Mothe-Fenelon (1651-1715) - Known simply as Fenelon, he was archbishop of Cambrai, France in the late 1600's and early 1700's. Most of what we have of his writings are actually letters written to persons in varied states of soul trouble.

So long as we are centered in self, we shall be prey to the contradiction, the wickedness, and the injustice of men. Our temper brings us into collision with other tempers; our passions clash with those of our neighbors; our wishes are so many tender places open to the shafts of those around; our pride, which is incompatible with our neighbors', rises like the waves of a stormy sea;--everything rouses, attacks, rebuffs us. We are exposed on all sides by reason of the sensitiveness of passion and the jealousy of pride. No peace is to be looked for within when we are at the mercy of a mass of greedy, insatiable longings, and when we can never satisfy that "me" which is so keen and touchy as to whatever concerns it. Hence in our dealings with others we are like a bed-ridden invalid, who cannot be touched anywhere without pain. A sickly self-love cannot be touched without screaming; the mere tip of a finger seems to scarify it! Then add to this the roughness of neighbors in their ignorance of self, their disgust at our infirmities (at the least as great as ours towards theirs), and you soon find all the children of Adam tormenting each other, each embittering the other's life. And this martyrdom of self-love you will find in every nation, every town, every community, every family, often between friends.

The only remedy is to renounce self. If we set aside--to lose sight of--self, we shall have nothing to lose, to fear, or to consider; and then we shall find that true peace which is given to "men of good will," that is,

those who have no will save God's, which has become theirs. Then men will not be able to harm us; they can no longer attack us through hopes or fears, for we shall be ready for everything, and refuse nothing. And this is to be inaccessible, invulnerable to the enemy. Man can only do what God permits, and whatever God permits him to do against us becomes our will, because it is God's. So doing, we shall store our treasure so high that no human hand can reach to assail it. Our good name may be tarnished, but we consent, knowing that if God humbles us, it is good to be humbled. Friendship fails us; well! it is because the one true Friend is jealous of all others, and sees fit to loosen our ties. We may be worried, inconvenienced, distressed; but it is God, and that is enough. We love the Hand which smites; there is peace beneath all our woes, a blessed peace. We will that which is, we desire nothing which is denied us; and the more absolute this self-renunciation, the deeper our peace. Any lingering wishes and clings disturb it. If every bond were broken, our freedom would be boundless. Let contempt, pain, death, overwhelm me, still I hear Jesus Christ saying, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." (Matt. 10:28) Powerless indeed are they; even though they can destroy life, their day is soon over! They can but break the earthen vessel, kill that which voluntarily dies daily. Anticipate somewhat the welcome deliverance, and then the soul will escape from their hands into the bosom of God, where all is unchanging peace and rest.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/fenelon/freedom-from-self/>

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