

# Despair at Our Imperfection Is a Greater Obstacle Than the Imperfection Itself.

by Francois Fenelon

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*Despair at our imperfections is a greater obstacle than the imperfections themselves, and we can overcome this by focusing on loving God without ceasing.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:10, Luke 7:47, Galatians 5:22, Philippians 4:7, 1 John 4:18

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Godly Love"

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## Description

Francois Fenelon emphasizes that despairing over our imperfections is a greater hindrance than the imperfections themselves. He encourages focusing on loving without ceasing, as true love consumes our defects and brings forgiveness. Fenelon warns against seeking selfish pleasures in love rather than genuine love itself, as this can distract us from fully embracing God. Peace and love are key in overcoming our faults, as being preoccupied with self can lead to restlessness and distance from God's presence.

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## Transcript

LETTER XIII.

Despair at our imperfection is a greater obstacle than the imperfection itself.

Be not concerned about your defects. Love without ceasing, and you shall be much forgiven, because you have loved much. (Luke vii. 47.) We are apt to seek the delights and selfish supports of love, rather than love itself. We deceive ourselves, even in supposing we are endeavoring to love, when we are only trying to see that we love. We are more occupied with the love, says St. Francis of Sales, than with the Well-beloved. If He were our only object, we should be all taken up with Him; but when we are employed in obtaining an assurance of his love, we are still in a measure busy with self. Our defects, regarded in peace and in the spirit of love, are instantly consumed by love itself; but considered in the light of self, they make us restless, and interrupt the presence of God and the exercise of perfect love. The chagrin we feel at our own defects, is ordinarily a greater fault than the original defect itself. You are wholly taken up with the less of the two faults, like a person whom I have just seen, who, after reading the life of one of the saints, was so enraged at his own comparative imperfection, that he entirely abandoned the idea of living a devoted life. I judge of your fidelity by your peace and liberty of soul; the more peaceful and enlarged your heart, the nearer you seem to be to God.

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