

The Time of Temptation and Distress Is No Time to Form Resolves.

by Francois Fenelon

In times of temptation and distress, it is unwise to form resolves, and instead, one should wait until calm and recollected to make decisions.

Scripture: Psalm 46:10, Proverbs 3:5, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Philippians 4:6, James 1:5

Topics: "Spiritual Discernment", "Faithful Obedience"

Description

Francois Fenelon emphasizes the importance of not making resolutions in times of distress and temptation, as our judgment can be clouded by emotions and self-love. He encourages waiting until calmness is restored to discern and act according to God's will, returning to devotion, simplicity, and selflessness. Fenelon warns against self-deception and advises seeking guidance from experienced mentors before making decisions. Ultimately, he urges listeners to be faithful in yielding to God's designs and to be willing to sacrifice anything for His sake.

Transcript

LETTER XXVII.

The time of temptation and distress is no time to form resolves.

Your excessive distress is like a summer torrent, which must be suffered to run away. Nothing makes any impression upon you, and you think you have the most substantial evidence for the most imaginary states; it is the ordinary result of great suffering. God permits you, notwithstanding your excellent faculties, to be blind to what lies immediately before you, and to think you see clearly what does not exist at all. God will be glorified in your heart, if you will be faithful in yielding to his designs. But nothing would be more injudicious than the forming of resolutions in a state of distress, which is manifestly accompanied by an inability to do anything according to God.

When you shall have become calm, then do in a spirit of recollection, what you shall perceive to be nearest the will of God respecting you. Return gradually to devotion, simplicity, and the oblivion of self. Commune and listen to God, and be deaf to self. Then do all that is in your heart, for I have no fear that a spirit of that sort will permit you to take any wrong step. But to suppose that we are sane when we are in the very agony of distress, and under the influence of a violent temptation of self-love, is to ensure our

being led astray. Ask any experienced adviser, and he will tell you that you are to make no resolutions until you have re-entered into peace and recollection. You will learn from him that the readiest way to self-deception is, to trust to ourselves in a state of suffering, in which nature is so unreasonable and irritated.

You will say that I desire to prevent you doing as you ought, if I forbid your doing it at the only moment when you are capable of it. God forbid! I neither desire to permit nor hinder: my only wish is so to advise you that you shall not be found wanting toward God. Now it is as clear as day, that you would fall in that respect, if you took counsel at the hands of a self-love wounded to the quick, and an irritation verging upon despair. Would you change anything to gratify your self-love, when God does not desire it? God forbid! Wait, then, until you shall be in a condition to be advised. To enjoy the true advantages of illumination, we must be equally ready for every alternative, and must have nothing which we are not cheerfully disposed at once to sacrifice for His sake.

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