

VOV: A Disciple's Renewal

O MY SAVIOUR,

Help me.

I am so slow to learn,
so prone to forget,
so weak to climb;

I am in the foothills when I should be
on the heights;

I am pained by my graceless heart,
my prayerless days,
my poverty of love,
my sloth in the heavenly race,
my sullied conscience,
my wasted hours,
my unspent opportunities.

I am blind while light shines around me:

take the scales from my eyes,
grind to dust the evil heart of unbelief.

Make it my chiefest joy to study thee,
meditate on thee,

gaze on thee,
sit like Mary at thy feet,
lean like John on thy breast,
appeal like Peter to thy love,
count like Paul all things dung.

Give me increase and progress in grace
so that there may be
more decision in my character,
more vigour in my purposes,
more elevation in my life,
more fervour in my devotion,
more constancy in my zeal.

As I have a position in the world,
keep me from making the world my
position;

May I never seek in the creature
what can be found only in the Creator;
Let not faith cease from seeking thee
until it vanishes into sight.

Ride forth in me, thou King of kings
and Lord of lords,
that I may live victoriously,
and in victory attain my end.

Fenelon Letter 17

LETTER 17

Quietness in God Our True Resource

When it comes to accomplishing things for God, you will find that high aspirations, enthusiastic feelings, careful planning and being able to express yourself well are not worth very much. The important thing is absolute surrender to God. You can do anything He wants you to do if you are walking in the light of full surrender.

Living in this blessed way involves a continual death which is known to very few, but it is in this position that you can be really effective for God. A single word spoken to another person from this restful, abandoned position will do more to change circumstances than all our most eager and carefully planned schemes. You see, when you speak from this position of abandonment to God, it is the Spirit of God who is then speaking, and the word you speak out of context loses none of its force and authority. Only one word perhaps--but it enlightens, persuades, blesses, and moves to action. We have accomplished everything, and have scarcely said anything. On the other hand, if the old self gets the way, we end up talking forever. We discuss a thousand different possibilities. We are constantly afraid of not saying or doing enough. We get angry, excited, exhausted, distracted, and finally make no headway at all.

I am saying this because I have noticed a tendency in you to talk about problems rather than abandoning yourself to God and leaving them with Him. And you will be better off both physically and spiritually when you quietly place everything in God's hands.

As the saying goes, "Let the water flow beneath the bridge." You can't change men from being men. People will always be weak, vain, unreliable, unfair, hypocritical and arrogant. The world will always be worldly. And you cannot change it. People will follow their own inclinations and habits. And since you cannot recast their personalities, the best course of action is to let them be what they are and bear with them. Do not allow yourself to be troubled and perplexed when you see people being unreasonable and unjust. Rest in peace in the bosom of God. He sees it all more clearly than you do, and yet He permits it. So be content to do whatever you feel you should, quietly and gently and don't worry about anything else.

Perspective "God-Planned Life"

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GOD-PLANNED LIFE

"But I want to be able to see God's plan *all the way through* to the finish!" insisted the man.

Strange how a man can demand such an impossible thing of God—and be bitter about it. Not impossible for God—but *for man!* It's *utterly unreal* to insist on being shown the whole way. It simply doesn't work out in *real life!*

Because *man is not equipped* to see the whole plan!

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Our trip to Canada last summer was all worked out on a road map. The maps were stretched out on a table. *We saw the whole trip* from Los Angeles to Canada and return . . .

BUT THEY DIDN'T BEGIN TO TELL THE STORY of the trip! *We had to travel those miles* to experience them. Every turn in the road—the crest of every hill brought new delights—new thrills.

The maps couldn't possibly show us these things—give us these thrills. Nor could they tell of the flat tires—the detours—the running out of gas—the trials we would have liked to escape.

(Strangely enough—the troubles helped to make the trip more enjoyable! *Not when they were happening!* But now that it's over—we talk much about the trials—get *some of our biggest laughs* out of them!)

We saw the whole plan on the maps. *But we really didn't see anything* when you get right down to it! WE HAD TO TAKE THE TRIP: mile by mile—hour by hour—incident by incident—*before it meant anything* to us.

Suppose we could have gone high enough in a plane to see the whole plan? It would be *only a blob and a blur*. Nothing distinct—nothing real!

Something else too: What if a man could see the whole plan? He'd try to by-pass the troubles *which conceal some of life's greatest blessings . . .* and he'd be so preoccupied with the good things of the future—he'd miss what was *right under his nose*.

Furthermore, actually seeing the whole plan laid out from beginning to end WOULD NOT INSPIRE CONFIDENCE! It would not be real. It would be *like a picture or a map*.

What does inspire confidence is the knowledge that GOD IS LEADING EVERY STEP OF THE WAY. *Every single moment is in His control!* Providing a man wants it that way—yields to God's will. This is the assurance a man needs! THIS IS THE ASSURANCE WE HAVE!

When a man stops whining for the whole plan—and

takes life as it comes—realizing *he can count on God* every moment—every step . . . he begins to live as the Christian man should. *A life of confidence and strength*.

This is real freedom—real efficiency—real productivity. THE MAN THAT WALKS WITH GOD IS READY FOR ANYTHING! *God wants you* to walk with Him. He's ready . . . whenever you're ready to start!

"The Lord knows the way of the righteous—but the way of the ungodly shall perish . . ."—Psalm 1.

Utmost 4/12

Complete & Effective Dominion

Death no longer has dominion over Him....the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God... —[Romans 6:9-11](#)

Co-Eternal Life. Eternal life is the life which Jesus Christ exhibited on the human level. And it is this same life, not simply a copy of it, which is made evident in our mortal flesh when we are born again. Eternal life is not a gift from God; eternal life is the gift *of God*. The energy and the power which was so very evident in Jesus will be exhibited in us by an act of the absolute sovereign grace of God, once we have made that complete and effective decision about sin.

“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...” ([Acts 1:8](#))— not power as a gift from the Holy Spirit; the power is the Holy Spirit, not something that He gives us. The life that was in Jesus becomes ours because of His Cross, once we make the decision to be identified with Him. If it is difficult to get right with God, it is because we refuse to make this moral decision about sin. But once we do decide, the full life of God comes in immediately. Jesus came to give us an endless supply of life— “...that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” ([Ephesians 3:19](#)). Eternal life has nothing to do with time. It is the life which Jesus lived when He was down here, and the only Source of life is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even the weakest saint can experience the power of the deity of the Son of God, when he is willing to “let go.” But any effort to “hang on” to the least bit of our own power will only diminish the life of Jesus in us. We have to keep letting go, and slowly, but surely, the great full life of God will invade us, penetrating every part. Then Jesus will have complete and effective dominion in us, and people will take notice that we have been with Him.

Utmost 4/14

Inner Invincibility

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me... —[Matthew 11:29](#)

“Whom the Lord loves He chastens...” ([Hebrews 12:6](#)). How petty our complaining is! Our Lord begins to bring us to the point where we can have fellowship with Him, only to hear us moan and groan, saying, “Oh Lord, just let me be like other people!” Jesus is asking us to get beside Him and take one end of the yoke, so that we can pull together. That’s why Jesus says to us, “My yoke is easy and My burden is light” ([Matthew 11:30](#)). Are you closely identified with the Lord Jesus like that? If so, you will thank God when you feel the pressure of His hand upon you.

“...to those who have no might He increases strength” ([Isaiah 40:29](#)). God comes and takes us out of our emotionalism, and then our complaining turns into a hymn of praise. The only way to know the strength of God is to take the yoke of Jesus upon us and to learn from Him.

“...the joy of the Lord is your strength” ([Nehemiah 8:10](#)). Where do the saints get their joy? If we did not know some Christians well, we might think from just observing them that they have no burdens at all to bear. But we must lift the veil from our eyes. The fact that the peace, light, and joy of God is in them is proof that a burden is there as well. The burden that God places on us squeezes the grapes in our lives and produces the wine, but most of us see only the wine and not the burden. No power on earth or in hell can conquer the Spirit of God living within the human spirit; it creates an inner invincibility.

If your life is producing only a whine, instead of the wine, then ruthlessly kick it out. It is definitely a crime for a Christian to be weak in God’s strength.

Utmost 4/15

The Relapse of Concentration

But the high places were not taken away out of Israel; nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days. — [2 Chronicles 15:17](#)

Asa was incomplete in his external obedience, he was right in the main but not entirely right. Beware of the thing of which you say — “Oh, that does not matter much.” The fact that it does not matter much to you may mean that it matters a very great deal to God. Nothing is a light matter with a child of God. How much longer are some of us going to keep God trying to teach us one thing? He never loses patience. You say — “I know I am right with God”; but still the “high places” remain, there is something over which you have not obeyed. Are you protesting that your heart is right with God, and yet is there something in your life about which He has caused you to doubt? Whenever there is doubt, quit immediately, no matter what it is. Nothing is a mere detail.

Are there some things in connection with your bodily life, your intellectual life, upon which you are not concentrating at all? You are all right in the main but you are slipshod; there is a relapse on the line of concentration. You no more need a holiday from spiritual concentration than your heart needs a holiday from beating. You cannot have a moral holiday and remain moral, nor can you have a spiritual holiday and remain spiritual. God wants you to be entirely His, and this means that you have to watch to keep yourself fit. It takes a tremendous amount of time. Some of us expect to “clear the numberless ascensions” in about two minutes.

Utmost 4/16

Can You Come Down?

While ye have light, believe in the light. — [John 12:36](#)

We all have moments when we feel better than our best, and we say — “I feel fit for anything; if only I could be like this always!” We are not meant to be. Those moments are moments of insight which we have to live up to when we do not feel like it. Many of us are no good for this workaday world when there is no high hour. We must bring our commonplace life up to the standard revealed in the high hour.

Never allow a feeling which was stirred in you in the high hour to evaporate. Don't put your mental feet on the mantelpiece and say — “What a marvellous state of mind to be in!” Act immediately, do something, if only because you would rather not do it. If in a prayer meeting God has shown you something to do, don't say — “I'll do it”; *do it!* Take yourself by the scruff of the neck and shake off your incarnate laziness. Laziness is always seen in cravings for the high hour; we talk about working up to a time on the mount. We have to learn to live in the grey day according to what we saw on the mount.

Don't cave in because you have been baffled once, get at it again. Burn your bridges behind you, and stand committed to God by your own act. Never revise your decisions, but see that you make your decisions in the light of the high hour.

Utmost 4/17

Neck or Nothing

Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him,...and did cast himself into the sea. — [John 21:7](#)

Have you ever had a crisis in which you deliberately and emphatically and recklessly abandoned everything? It is a crisis of will. You may come up to it many times externally, but it amounts to nothing. The real deep crisis of abandonment is reached internally, not externally. The giving up of external things may be an indication of being in total bondage.

Have you deliberately committed your will to Jesus Christ? It is a transaction of will, not of emotion; the emotion is simply the gilt edge of the transaction. If you allow emotion first, you will never make the transaction. Do not ask God what the transaction is to be, but make it in regard to the thing you do see, either in the shallow or the profound place.

If you have heard Jesus Christ's voice on the billows, let your convictions go to the winds, let your consistency go to the winds, but maintain your relationship to Him.

Utmost 4/18

Readiness

God called unto him...and he said, Here am I. — [Exodus 3:4](#)

When God speaks, many of us are like men in a fog, we give no answer. Moses' reply revealed that he was somewhere. Readiness means a right relationship to God and a knowledge of where we are at present. We are so busy telling God where we would like to go. The man or woman who is ready for God and His work is the one who carries off the prize when the summons comes. We wait with the idea of some great opportunity, something sensational, and when it comes we are quick to cry — "Here am I." Whenever Jesus Christ is in the ascendant, we are there; but we are not ready for an obscure duty.

Readiness for God means that we are ready to do the tiniest little thing or the great big thing, it makes no difference. We have no choice in what we want to do, whatever God's programme may be we are there, ready. When any duty presents itself we hear God's voice as Our Lord heard His Father's voice, and we are ready for it with all the alertness of our love for Him. Jesus Christ expects to do with us as His Father did with Him. He can put us where He likes, in pleasant duties or in mean* duties, because the union is that of the Father and Himself. "That they may be one, even as We are one."

Be ready for the sudden surprise visits of God. A ready person never needs to get ready. Think of the time we waste trying to get ready when God has called! The burning bush is a symbol of everything that surrounds the ready soul, it is ablaze with the presence of God.

*mean: as used here, something or someone ordinary, common, low, or ignoble, rather than cruel or spiteful.

Spurgeon 4/12 AM

“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.”— [Psalm 22:14](#)

Our blessed Lord experienced a terrible sinking and melting of soul. “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?”

Deep depression of spirit is the most grievous of all trials; all besides is as nothing. Well might the suffering Saviour cry to his God, “Be not far from me,” for above all other seasons a man needs his God when his heart is melted within him because of heaviness.

Believer, come near the cross this morning, and humbly adore the King of glory as having once been brought far lower, in mental distress and inward anguish, than any one among us; and mark his fitness to become a faithful High Priest, who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.

Especially let those of us whose sadness springs directly from the withdrawal of a present sense of our Father’s love, enter into near and intimate communion with Jesus.

Let us not give way to despair, since through this dark room the Master has passed before us. Our souls may sometimes long and faint, and thirst even to anguish, to behold the light of the Lord’s countenance: at such times let us stay ourselves with the sweet fact of the sympathy of our great High Priest.

Our drops of sorrow may well be forgotten in the ocean of his griefs; but how high ought our love to rise! Come in, O strong and deep love of Jesus, like the sea at the flood in spring tides, cover all my powers, drown all my sins, wash out all my cares, lift up my earth-bound soul, and float it right up to my Lord’s feet, and there let me lie, a poor broken shell, washed up by his love, having no virtue or value; and only venturing to whisper to him that if he will put his ear to me, he will hear within my heart faint echoes of the vast waves of his own love which have brought me where it is my delight to lie, even at his feet forever.

Spurgeon 4/14 AM

“All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,”—
[Psalm 22:7](#)

Mockery was a great ingredient in our Lord’s woe. Judas mocked him in the garden; the chief priests and scribes laughed him to scorn; Herod set him at nought; the servants and the soldiers jeered at him, and brutally insulted him; Pilate and his guards ridiculed his royalty; and on the tree all sorts of horrid jests and hideous taunts were hurled at him.

Ridicule is always hard to bear, but when we are in intense pain it is so heartless, so cruel, that it cuts us to the quick. Imagine the Saviour crucified, racked with anguish far beyond all mortal guess, and then picture that motley multitude, all wagging their heads or thrusting out the lip in bitterest contempt of one poor suffering victim!

Surely there must have been something more in the crucified One than they could see, or else such a great and mingled crowd would not unanimously have honoured him with such contempt. Was it not evil confessing, in the very moment of its greatest apparent triumph, that after all it could do no more than mock at that victorious goodness which was then reigning on the cross?

O Jesus, “despised and rejected of men,” how couldst thou die for men who treated thee so ill? Herein is love amazing, love divine, yea, love beyond degree.

We, too, have despised thee in the days of our unregeneracy, and even since our new birth we have set the world on high in our hearts, and yet thou bleedest to heal our wounds, and diest to give us life.

O that we could set thee on a glorious high throne in all men’s hearts! We would ring out thy praises over land and sea till men should as universally adore as once they did unanimously reject.

“Thy creatures wrong thee, O thou sovereign Good!
Thou art not loved, because not understood:
This grieves me most, that vain pursuits beguile
Ungrateful men, regardless of thy smile.”

Spurgeon 4/15 PM

“Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.”—[Psalm 28:9](#)

God’s people need lifting up. They are very heavy by nature. They have no wings, or, if they have, they are like the dove of old which lay among the pots; and they need divine grace to make them mount on wings covered with silver, and with feathers of yellow gold.

By nature sparks fly upward, but the sinful souls of men fall downward. O Lord, “lift them up forever!” David himself said, “Unto thee, O God, do I lift up my soul,” and he here feels the necessity that other men’s souls should be lifted up as well as his own.

When you ask this blessing for yourself, forget not to seek it for others also.

There are three ways in which God’s people require to be lifted up.

They require to be elevated in character. Lift them up, O Lord; do not suffer thy people to be like the world’s people! The world lieth in the wicked one; lift them out of it! The world’s people are looking after silver and gold, seeking their own pleasures, and the gratification of their lusts; but, Lord, lift thy people up above all this; keep them from being “muck-rakers,” as John Bunyan calls the man who was always scraping after gold! Set thou their hearts upon their risen Lord and the heavenly heritage!

Moreover, believers need to be prospered in conflict. In the battle, if they seem to fall, O Lord, be pleased to give them the victory. If the foot of the foe be upon their necks for a moment, help them to grasp the sword of the Spirit, and eventually to win the battle. Lord, lift up thy children’s spirits in the day of conflict; let them not sit in the dust, mourning forever. Suffer not the adversary to vex them sore, and make them fret; but if they have been, like Hannah, persecuted, let them sing of the mercy of a delivering God.

We may also ask our Lord to lift them up at the last! Lift them up by taking them home, lift their bodies from the tomb, and raise their souls to thine eternal kingdom in glory.

Spurgeon 4/17 PM

“The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.”—[John 12:21](#)

Evermore the worldling’s cry is, “Who will show us any good?” He seeks satisfaction in earthly comforts, enjoyments and riches. But the quickened sinner knows of only one good. “O that I knew where I might find Him!”

When he is truly awakened to feel his guilt, if you could pour the gold of India at his feet, he would say, “Take it away: I want to find Him.”

It is a blessed thing for a man, when he has brought his desires into a focus, so that they all centre in one object. When he has fifty different desires, his heart resembles a mire of stagnant water, spread out into a marsh, breeding miasma and pestilence; but when all his desires are brought into one channel, his heart becomes like a river of pure water, running swiftly to fertilize the fields.

Happy is he who hath one desire, if that one desire be set on Christ, though it may not yet have been realized. If Jesus be a soul’s desire, it is a blessed sign of divine work within. Such a man will never be content with mere ordinances. He will say, “I want Christ; I must have him—mere ordinances are of no use to me; I want himself; do not offer me these; you offer me the empty pitcher, while I am dying of thirst; give me water, or I die. Jesus is my soul’s desire. I would see Jesus!”

Is this thy condition, my reader, at this moment? Hast thou but one desire, and is that after Christ? Then thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven.

Hast thou but one wish in thy heart, and that one wish that thou mayst be washed from all thy sins in Jesus’ blood? Canst thou really say, “I would give all I have to be a Christian; I would give up everything I have and hope for, if I might but feel that I have an interest in Christ?”

Then, despite all thy fears, be of good cheer, the Lord loveth thee, and thou shalt come out into daylight soon, and rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ makes men free.