

Fénelon Moments

Did you ever have a commitment on your calendar that seemed routine on the surface but in the end brought joy and wonder at what God can do? The intent of one such engagement for me was fairly routine, but after the predictable greetings between myself and a long-time colleague, I heard a gracious "How's it going?" sort of question ... that quickly morphed into a "How's your soul?" kind of question. What? How's your soul?

I was stunned. I couldn't help but think: Wait! Confirm. Did she really just say that? Did you hear her correctly? Did she just say, "Well then, with all that's going on, I have to ask, How's your soul?" And my next thought came so quickly and unexpectedly: Yep, she actually said that! Abort! Abort! You don't have to answer that question! Make that crackling noise like you're losing cell coverage and end the call!

Oh my, how was I to respond? There were limited options:

"Great. Thanks. How's your soul?" With a bit of sarcasm.

"Wow, I don't think anyone has ever actually asked me that question! That's gutsy!"

"Well, to be honest..."

The Holy Spirit had been doing a work in my soul about a sin that had plagued me for far too long. I should have recognized it for what it was and confronted it more powerfully years ago. Instead, I had allowed it to worm its way into relationships and circumstances, rendering me less effective at times than both the Father and I would prefer. Revelation and confession had been sweet, and I was grateful for what it was doing in the depth of my being.

Let my soul be at rest again, for the Lord has been good to me.

Psalm 116:7

This dear, bold sister in Christ responded so beautifully to the truth. She simply asked if she had ever shared her favorite quote with me...



"The closer you get to God, the more miserable things you will find in your heart. This is not a negative thing - God allows it to let you lose confidence in yourself. You will have accomplished something when you can look at your inner corruptness without anxiety or discouragement and simply trust God."

François de Salignac de La Mothe Fénelon, a French Roman Catholic archbishop, theologian, poet and writer, penned this God-truth over 300 years ago.

And now I had a name for what I knew I needed to experience more often: a Fénelon moment.

May you have a few of your own. And experience how it changes the way you shepherd...

Diving Deeper Questions

Do you need a Fénelon moment?

What action will you take?

Do you need to get closer to God to find more miserable things in your heart?

Can you learn to look at your inner corruption without anxiety and "simply trust God?"