Running Head: READING REPORT: FENELON

Reading Report: Fenelon, Francois. Let Go.

Jennifer Loewen

ID #117950

SF 770 – Dr Robert Reimer

Due: February 17, 2023

Although I completely read Fenelon's "Let Go" twice in the last two days, this is not at all the way to read this book.

> Think you God can speak in those soft and tender accents that melt the soul, in the midst of such a tumult as you excite by your incessant hurry of thought? Be quiet, and he will soon be heard. (p. 6)

I read to get the information into my head, but each letter deserves to be mulled over and considered carefully, to get the message to the heart. I certainly did not leave that kind of time for the purpose of this assignment. The beginning of Lent is a few days away, and I will be taking the opportunity to read one letter each day instead of cramming all 40 into a couple of hours.

There were moments in my reading that resonated in positive ways, but other times that I know I need to sit with the Holy Spirit in examination of my heart, not taking offence, but being open to what he is trying to reveal in me.

> He who sees in us what we cannot see, knows full well where the blow should fall; He takes away that which we are most reluctant to give up. Pain is only felt where there is life, and where there is life, is just the place where death is needed. Our Father wastes no time by cutting into parts which are already dead. (p. 5)

I would like to do this book with a few others sometime, reading over 6-8 weeks, meeting once a week to discuss how we have heard the Lord speaking to us individually; growing in community. Before recommending this book to someone, however, I would want to know they are truly open to examination of motive and

practice in their spiritual walk, and not just looking for a quick fix to find peace and joy. The power of Fenelon's words will be found in true examination. I think we all long to live lives full of peace and joy, but usually the things we choose to cling to are the exact reasons for our lack of peace and joy. We are blind to what we need to let go of, and Jesus is too much of a gentleman to simply tear them away from us. We must grant him permission to cut away that which robs us of his best for us.

So often I get caught up in all I must do to be a good Christian, and then I crash into disappointment with myself because I simply cannot live up to the standard. I do not think I am alone in this at all. Where did the standard come from? I know it is not from me alone as many of the to do list items are not things that bring me fulfillment, peace, or connection with God. Quite the opposite, many of the things that lead me into His presence do not appear on the standard "Good Christian Must-do list." I found reading Fenelon, even at a fast pace, reminded me that what is important is not the things prescribed as requirements by those around me, for I can "never succeed in doing it to their satisfaction, and it is not worth the pains." (p.21) I want to strive to do God's will, not the will of people. But wait! "All I ask of you is, that you will rest in a teachable spirit of faith, and that you will not listen to self." (p.51) Striving is not necessary at all!

I have reread Letters VIII and XV several times; it feels like Fenelon is writing directly to or about me. I know and fully believe so many of the things he is saying in these two letters. "God will teach you more than the most experienced Christians, and better than all the books that the world has ever seen (p10)." Yet, I find myself jumping hoops to prove myself worthy to be in ministry. When Jesus called his disciples, he

chose the outcast and uneducated. I have heard God call me, and I clearly see his hand in my life. I am trying to be obedient to him, but the way forward gets cluttered with human expectations and requirements that discourage and dishearten. “Remain in peace; the fervor of devotion does not depend on yourself; all that lies in your power is the direction of your will.” (p.7) I will keep looking to Jesus and place my hand in his and walk where he leads.

One thing I would like to be able to teach others is the beauty of silence, stillness, and solitude. It took a car accident to completely teach me to not just value, but long for and need these times in my life. There is so much noise in our world all the time. The question I have been asked most by people when I encourage others to spend time in silence and stillness is: “Even if I turn off all the external noise, how do I turn off the noise in my head? And how will I know if what I hear is the Holy Spirit or just my own thoughts?” I am not sure there is a quick and easy answer to that as it just took practice for me. It is my hope to use “Let Go” as a 40 day challenge for others: read one letter, ask God what he wants to say about what was read, then sit still for 7-10 minutes and wait, slowly adding time as the days and weeks go by until 10-15 minutes does not feel like an eternity, but a beginning.

Fenelon, Francois. Let Go: to Get Peace and Real Joy. Whiaker House, 1973.

Normally, I would say that I read this book thoroughly and entirely, since I read it twice, but due to the nature of this particular book, I would have to say, with integrity, I have read this book quickly and entirely—100%