

HEART OF PERFECTION – WEEK TWO

SUMMARY NOTES

Stalking Joy (Chapter Three)

- Perfection robs us of our joy because we are never happy with the past (shame) and we are fearful of the future (anxiety).
- A common manifestation of perfectionism is spiritual elitism and a critical spirit.
- Rather than seeking commonalities, I focus on what divides me from others.

- Angelique Arnauld (1591-)
 - o Appointed abbess at the age of 11; knew very little about the faith
 - o The convent was a boisterous place, far from the haven of spirituality it was meant to be.
 - o She experienced conversion and was persuaded to help reform the convent.
 - o Her zeal and passion for God morphed into disdain for those who didn't see things her way.
 - o Jansenism was rampant – belief that only a few could be saved, we are unworthy of receiving Holy Communion, we will never measure up to God's standards.
 - o Angelique died at odds with the Church she claimed to love.

- We need to resist the tendency to pride and self-righteousness.

- Suggestions for overcoming spiritual elitism and a critical spirit:
 - o Limit exposure to negative people and conversations.
 - o Ask God for the grace to curb runaway complaining before it starts.
 - o Minimize screen time.
 - o Listen to praise music instead of secular rock.
 - o Celebrate what is good, beautiful and true.
 - o Sacrifice for or serve another.

Braving the Waves (Chapter Four)

- My fear is directly related to my image of God – vengeful, vindictive, and manipulative?
- Fear is not of God.

- Saint Alphonsus Ligouri (1696-)
 - o Grew up in a home that emphasized perfectionism and scrupulosity.
 - o Dual degrees in civil and canon law at age sixteen
 - o Major conversion when he lost a high-profile legal case
 - o Turned to extreme fasts, wearing a hair shirt, stones in his shoes, scourging himself
 - o Received helpful advice to counter this extremism
 - o Needed to change his image of God from a demanding and vengeful father to a loving and merciful Father.

- Jesus came to save us, not scare us.
- I need to overcome the belief that I must earn love from God and others.

- Suggestions for living free from fear:
 - o Pray for the grace to live free from fear.
 - o Buy time when I'm tempted to act out of fear.
 - o Ask questions and search for alternatives when I feel trapped.
 - o Guard against blaming, shaming, or judging others.
 - o Admit when I fail, but don't punish myself.
 - o Seek the counsel of spirit-filled, prayerful people.
 - o Trust that God is always by my side.