



(1.9)Obedience and Discipline

Watch your step when you go to the House of God.¹ Listen attentively to the Scriptures and homily and prayerfully take their precious guidance into your heart; Jesus reaffirms us that no one who obeys Me will ever have to blush, no one who acts as I dictate will ever sin.²

Many attend the sacrifice of the Mass because of obedience, of what they were taught, and not because of the love they have for the Lord; and these often show a lack of discipline in how they genuflect, bless themselves, and leave early, perhaps not purposely but certainly out of carelessness. These cannot have freedom of mind and spirit until they submit themselves to the universal call to holiness. They may seek out other parishes or denominations, deluding themselves that such a change will make a difference. People tend to gravitate towards those who are agreeable to their points of view, but we need to recognize wisdom when offered and sometimes relinquish our own views if we are to have true peace and understanding. We are all called to *be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth.*³

Who is so wise that he is able to understand all things? Therefore do not be smug in your own beliefs but be willing to listen to what others have to say. Even if you feel your opinion is correct the wisdom of another may improve your way, and bring you greater blessings than you alone would have received. Many people believe that it is the safer path to act upon advice rather than to give it.

As it often happens each person's ideas are good, but to be unwilling to yield when reason and occasion requires it is a sign *that your proud heart has misled you.*⁴

*There is no room for self-delusion. Any one of you who thinks he is wise by worldly standards must learn to be a fool in order to be really wise.*⁵

This article is based on Book 1, Chapter 9 of Thomas of Kempis' writing, "Imitation of Christ." It is not a translation, and there are many of those, but a personal (layperson's) reflection on his writing; if any of it helps give credit to Thomas of Kempis; if any of it fails the responsibility is mine. (rfm)

¹ Eccl 4:17

² Sirach 24:22

³ Ephesians 4:23-24

⁴ Obadiah 1:3

⁵ 1Cor 3:18