

Be Humble

If you have reached the point where, having learnt, explored and investigated wisdom and reflection, and recognized evil as being a form of madness, and folly as something stupid,¹ then you truly look to God in fear, awe, and reverence. *The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge; fools spurn wisdom and discipline.*²

A poor and uneducated man that obediently serves God is much more pleasing to Him than is a great philosopher who ponders the mysteries of the universe but ignores his own spiritual life.

The person who truly knows himself is humble and finds no satisfaction in the superficial praises of others. God will judge each of us according to our works so even if I have great knowledge but *if I am without love, I am nothing.*³

Refrain from a self-centered desire for knowledge as it can cause serious distractions hindering the soul in its quest for love and grace. Learned people willingly appear in public and desire to be deemed wise. But there are many things which are of little or no importance to the spiritual life so it is important that *your knowledge and complete understanding helps you come to true discernment so that you will be innocent and free of any trace of guilt when the Day of Christ comes.*⁴

Skills, gifts, and knowledge have been given to you but on that account *do not become haughty, but stand in awe.*⁵ If you believe that you know and understand many things, then believe also that there are many more things of which you are unaware. *Do not be wise in your own estimation.*⁶

If you realize that there are many with greater talents than yours then you will not put yourself ahead of others. If you desire something helpful to your spiritual life then don't worry about being unknown and anonymous, simply be yourself, admit to your nothingness, and think well of others and their abilities. Humility means understanding your weaknesses as well as your strengths.

Be careful in judging others even when you see them doing wrong and sinful things and then thinking yourself better, for you might also revert to weakness at unexpected times.

*LORD, let me know my end, the number of my days, that I may learn how frail I am.*⁷

This article is based on Book 1, Chapter 2 of Thomas of Kempis' writing, "Imitation of Christ" concerning humility. It is not a translation, and there are many of those, but a personal 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 7:25

² Proverb s 1:7

³ 1 Cor 13:2

⁴ Phil 1:9-10

⁵ Rom 11:20b

⁶ Rom 12:16b

⁷ Psalm 39:5