

Purity and Simplicity

They that hope in the LORD will renew their strength, they will soar on eagles' wings;¹ and be lifted above earthly concerns; two such uplifting wings, according to Thomas of Kempis, are simplicity and purity.

Simplicity must be your objective while purity directs your thoughts and actions. Simplicity aspires to godliness while purity experiences it. Be free from immoderate affections, follow the will of your heavenly Father, live the Great Commandment; then *your hearts will be encouraged and strengthened in every good deed and word.²*, and you will benefit with inner freedom.

The aim of this instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith³ for then all of creation will mirror life and holiness. Nothing is so insignificant as not to manifest the wonder of the Almighty One; everything created by God is good.⁴

Your outward judgments reflect your inner being and if your spirit is simple and pure then you will comprehend things correctly because you discern them clearly and quickly, be they from above or below.

A clean heart create for me, God⁵ and I



will surely find joy where it exists; on the other hand a distressed conscience always magnifies misfortunes⁶ and is attracted to tribulations.

Just as metal becomes purified and glowing by fire *the work of each will come to light, for the Day will disclose it. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire [itself] will test the quality of each one's work.⁷*

After a time a man often grows lukewarm, eases up on responsibilities and settles for worldly consolations, but when he eventually takes stock of himself and comes to the realization of how he has slipped, he is guided back to the path of Christian perfection and his priorities are rightly adjusted.

This article is based on Book 2, Chapter 4 of Thomas of Kempis' writing, "Imitation of Christ." 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 Isaiah 40:31

² 2Thess 2:17

³ 1Tim 1:5

⁴ 1 Tim 1:4

⁵ Ps 51:12a

⁶ Wisdom 17:11

⁷ 1 Cor 3:13