

Simple Stuff

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The words “simple” and “sincere” originally meant essentially the same thing. In fact, the word “simple” is defined by word experts as meaning without duplicity; free from dissimulation or guile; innocent or harmless. The word “sincere” means all of those things, too. In both words, the concept is something true, devoid of pretense, not falsified or perverted in any way (see the Oxford English Dictionary).

Christianity is about the simple, sincere things of life. It is not a complicated maze of instructions and liturgies, one where a multitude of days and feasts are to be observed. Paul says we have been delivered from all that (Galatians 5:1). Nor is this Christian life one where there is no discipline, one where a subjective ethic becomes the rule of faith and practice in one’s life (Acts 23:1-ff). It is simply a submission of ones will to the will of Jesus with all that that entails.

Christianity is not measured by great deeds, but by the multitude of small things done. There is little flamboyance in it, nor is there much need for any. Rather, it’s the sincere desire of a person to do his best, whatever is his situation or assignment. It’s rather simple, actually. It’s just knowing where you are going and doing the best you can to make it there.

Whatever happened to simplicity? Whatever happened, for instance for doing small acts of kindness just for the thrill of doing them, and just because it’s right? Whatever happened to doing small things when nobody is looking or when you can by no means be profited from the action? There is much to be said for the simple life. It’s very enjoyable.

A simple, sincere attitude toward truth is a noble thing. Even if nobody admires you or rewards you for it. What’s wrong with looking for holiness and piety and truth and righteousness without making some big deal out of it?

A right attitude toward truth is not complicated. It just means that you have subscribed to the Bible and that you have made a commitment to follow it regardless of where it leads or what are the consequences for having done so. It means you want to apply it to yourself even when it hurts and even when you know it may be neither easy nor popular. But you don’t have to make some big deal out of that; it just says you realize that “ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). That’s not too hard, now is it?

A simple love is a noble thing and, in the final reality, is the divine bonding that holds

everything good together. “And put on love, which is the bond of perfectness,” the Apostle Paul said (Colossians 3:14). It is love that binds one to his brethren; it is love that binds the husband and wife; it is love that forms the bond with those who consider themselves your enemy; it is love that marks your growth as you make your way toward your reward; it is love that binds desire to expectation to form hope; it is love that makes kindness and patience work together. Simple? Powerful!

I once saw a saying scribbled on a torn piece of paper which still bore the creases from having been folded up in some purse or billfold. It said, “The stature of a man is measured by his friendliness and courtesy for someone who can do absolutely nothing for him.”

God is not looking for flamboyant Christians, but for sincere ones—those who will love one another because they have been loved by God; those who will correct one another, but in the love of Christ; those who will suffer if need be in order to do the simple things that fit them for divine association. It’s a simple matter of sincere devotion to Him and to one another.