



# THE NOBLE HEART™

“Noble Simplicity and Quiet Grandeur”

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I’ve been intrigued by the phrase “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur” which was used by the German art historian Johann Jachim Winckelmann describing the Greek aesthetic. (I don’t want to sound like something I’m not – an intellectual and a broad-reader. I ran across this expression on the internet as I was researching the word “noble”.)

To live a life of “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur” seems right and true. For, it is the man or woman with “a noble and good heart, who...produce a crop.” (Luke 8:15) We are to live in “simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.” (2 Cor. 11:3) We are to be “a display of God’s splendor.” (Isa. 61:3) And, we are to “be completely humble, gentle and patient...” (Eph. 4:1,2)

A life of “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur” stated another way would be: A life that is magnificent (lofty) and yet unpretentiousness (genuine), majestic (splendid) and yet unobtrusive (humble).

This is the life that you and I, as those who have been restored and released by the work of Christ, have been given. But, it is not the life that this world values and therefore it must be battled for. As Paul disclosed, “I press on (strenuously pursue) to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” (Phil. 3:12) In other words, living this life of “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur” is hard-won. Why?

Because, we are up against so much resistance to this authentic life, this pilgrim’s life which is characterized as traveling lightly with great purpose.

We encounter the vastness and complexity of life.

We encounter the expectations, demands and verdicts on us by our culture.

We encounter the overwhelming needs that surround us.

Thomas Merton wrote, “To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything is itself to succumb to the violence of our times. Frenzy...destroys the fruitfulness of our work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful.”

Perhaps the greatest assault against us living this life is the belief that we hold deeply in our heart about who we are, what we have to offer and how life works. This belief or image that has been formed over

decades of interaction with our world has everything to do with the type of life we choose to live; in other words the plan that we form of how we will interact with our world. Prov. 20:5 says that “a plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, but a man of understanding draws it out.”

Years ago I asked God to reveal to me what I truly believed about myself since He knows my heart better than me. Instantly, Radar O'Reilly in the TV series M.A.S.H. came to mind and it made complete sense. You see, Radar O'Reilly was accepted in the “player’s circle” because he could do things for them. He was needed for what he could do, not wanted for who he was; which had become my personal philosophy – the life-plan which had been scratched into my heart over the years. Therefore, my life was filled with trying to prove myself and earn my way into relational and work circles through carrying heavier loads and working longer hours. It was not a life of “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur”, but rather to have “succumb to the violence of our times” as Merton wrote.

Paul said that we can “exchange the truth of God for a lie” (Rom. 1:25) which is exactly what I had done because the lie remained in darkness unaddressed.

I confessed my accepting / agreeing with this lie, renouncing it and announcing the truth of scripture about my life.

Jesus said, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (John 8:31)

Peter wrote, “I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you... to stir you up by way of reminder.” (2 Peter 1:12)

Paul admonishes us to “stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth” (Eph. 6: 14)

Let us strenuously pursue this magnificent (lofty) and yet unpretentiousness (genuine), majestic (splendid) and yet unobtrusive (humble) life God has given us and called us to - that we may alter the world.

Your friend and ally,

Gary