



**Coptic Orthodox Diocese of
the Southern United States**

**The Monthly Message
to the Priests' Wives
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The Simplicity That Is in Christ

Simplicity is a neglected virtue which many are not keen to acquire because they do not realize its importance and the necessity of striving to acquire it like all other virtues. Acquiring the virtue of simplicity is not optional but it is a mandatory commandment that one must obey lest he falls under condemnation. The Lord Jesus Christ ordered us clearly saying, *“Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves”* (Matthew 10:16). He also warned us that *“whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it”* (Luke 18:17) meaning that acquiring the child’s simplicity is a condition to enter the kingdom of God. In fact, simplicity is one of God’s attributes Himself. He is not compounded but simple. The linguistic definition

of simplicity is the state of being uncomplicated, innocent, and direct. As for the law of simplicity in psychology, it indicates that elements are always perceived in the easiest way possible, meaning that the mind seeks the simplest available interpretation of observations.

Simplicity is a common trait among saints who because of their minds and hearts being always attached to God acquire to themselves His simplicity. The book of Acts describes to us the state of the early church which was adorned with simplicity among many other virtues saying, *“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people”* (Acts 2:46–47). Although simplicity is a common attribute among saints, yet the Holy Spirit granted to St. Paul the Simple, the disciple of St. Anthony, this virtue abundantly to the degree that he was called *The Simple*.

Complicating things puts extra burdens on one’s shoulders. The weight of daily stresses and problems

duplicates when one approaches them with a complicated way. Simplicity makes things easy and reduces the weight one's burdens. The one who lacks simplicity, not only he complicates problems but also he creates them by making easy things hard and hindering them. On the contrary, a simple person is loved by all because he inspires an atmosphere of calmness, meekness, and optimism.

The Holy Bible instructs us about many fields of simplicity:

(1) **Simple talk** which is a straight talk void of indirectness and deception. It is one clear frank word that has no many meanings, “*But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one*”(Matthew 5:37).

(2) **Simple eye** which means a simple pure perception of things, “*The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness*”(Matthew 6:22-23).

(3) **Simple mind** which does not complicate things with personal misinterpretations and bad expectations in a continuous way that leads to a gloomy pessimistic atmosphere. It neither doubts, disputes, nor thinks evil. Nevertheless, it is not naïf but wise as long as the simplicity of mind does not contradict the virtue of discernment. “*Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore, I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly*”(Romans 16:17-20); “*But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ*” (2 Corinthians 11:3); “*Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a*

crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:14-15).

(4) **Simple heart:** which means a pure heart and a good intention, *“Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ” (Ephesians 6:5); “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people” (Acts 2:46-47).*

(5) **Simple conduct** which is a spontaneous action void of hypocrisy yet void of impulsivity and foolishness, *“For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you” (2 Corinthians 1:12).*

(6) **Simple attire.** Jesus Christ lived on earth in a simple apparel and home. He also used to eat simple food. *“Do*

not let your adornment be merely outward, arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel, rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God” (1 Peter 3:3-4).

A priest’s wife needs, more than others, to acquire the virtue of simplicity. The nature of her role and the role of her husband priest puts on her shoulders a lot of complicated responsibilities and stresses. Therefore, she needs to approach things with an easy way that inspires optimism and simplifies things instead of making them more complicated. What helps a priest wife to acquire the virtue of simplicity is to also acquire the virtues of faith and surrender to God. These two virtues are interconnected with the virtue of simplicity as every one of them leads to the other.