



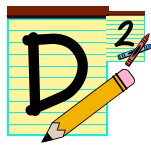
Shadows and Footprints

“There is no greatness where there is not simplicity, goodness, and truth.” Leo Tolstoy

“As you simplify your life, the laws of the universe will be simpler.” Henry David Thoreau

“Simplicity is making the journey of this life with just baggage enough.” Charles Dudley Warner 1829 - 1900

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From the Morass of Mediocrity through Defining Disciplines to Seeking an Equilibrium of Excellence by Going Green.

Many a trip has been ruined by people taking too much baggage – they become slaves to their bags instead of enjoying the journey! In the same way, countless numbers of people today seriously compromise their quality of life by the baggage, things, with which they have surrounded, burdened and smothered themselves.

A very haunting and contemporary *Bible* passage is:


“As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?” *Eze 34:17 - 19*


We can protest all we want about our “rights,” but we had better know to whom we are addressing these assertions! “I earned it, it is mine! . . . I can do with it whatever I want . . .” is true if your standard is the *United State Constitution*. But, and this is the rub, what if there is something/Someone eternally over these temporal laws?

The foundational theme of the *Bible* is the sovereignty of God – God did not write nor is he bound by any man-made constitution. For the Christian the *Bible* is their Constitution. The Christian Constitution says:

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. *1Pe 4:10*

Everything we have is from/of grace and we will be judged by how faithfully we have administered God’s grace; if we (as Americans surely) have been given great pasture must we selfishly trample the rest of the pasture with our hoarding and greed – not being satisfied with more than enough, but wallowing in the excess? Is it not enough for us to have and drink clear pure water must we also muddy the rest with our feet? Must others feed on what we have trampled and drink what we have muddied with our feet? Hopefully, instead, we will be people who cast long shadows while leaving

small footprints. Consider: what if we spent 1/2 the time trying to build people (leaving long shadows) as we do trying to get, keep, pay for, guard, clean, use, repair, replace . . . “things” (big footprints) both we and others would be much better off.  (Going Green) offers this opportunity.

And while governments have a grave responsibility to legislate on a “macro,” physical, basis they cannot legislate a successful personal green “model.” Personal *Going Green* is a matter of individually tailored  (Defining Disciplines) that “suit” me for what I was and am designed for. There is not one size fits all in *Going Green*; *Going Green* is not asceticism, seeing how little we can live on or being guilty for what we have – our blessings. A profitable, personal, *Going Green* means we will be thankful and satisfied with what we have been given while, at the same time, rather than hoarding the excess (that will, if we keep it, only be to our hurt) actively look for ways to find the even greater blessing of giving to those in great need – yes, there are many in the world that are in great need! Generosity, as parents strive to teach their children, is finding the joy of helping and sharing with others from what is mine. And the challenges and lessons of openhandedness and liberality grow as we age and have more, more, more – what good was the lesson of sharing cookies, as children, if not leading to sharing the greater gifts of life we have and are responsible for as we age?

Simplicity, *Going Green*, is also not just any simplicity, but one that is personal, purposeful and effective; simplicity of the type prized by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

“I wouldn’t give a fig for the simplicity on this side of complexity; I would give my right arm for the simplicity on the far side of complexity.” Oliver Wendell Holmes

As such it requires thinking, not finding a plan devised by others that we can adopt and implement “off the shelf.” We can’t even fix an unalterable course continuing on it without change; like the child given a new toy or cookie, we receive blessings day by day – with each blessing we likewise have the opportunity, responsibility and **potential** blessing of using these gifts as God desires. While our first thought might be “Oh, thank you LORD for what you have given me!” our next thought would wisely be: “Now, LORD, what do you want me to do with this so that it is truly a blessing for me rather than, if improperly used or hoarded, becoming a curse?”

Going Green is purposely limiting ourselves to that we are able to use, control, enjoy . . . rather than the excess baggage that becomes a burden in time, money and emotions. *Going Green* allows us to pursue quality rather than the current fad of quantity – the *Supersize* mentality. While I am not a connoisseur, *Going Green* is a fine glass of wine compared to the supersized 36 ounce soft drink. All more upon more is doing for us is making us unhealthy, unhappy and unsatisfied.

Going Green is another way to saying: “Move away from the edge! Move away from the edge!” Living on the edge causes stress and strife – Can I afford, maintain and replace? – Do I have time to use? Can I protect? We tend to get as close to the edge (financially, time-wise, etc.) as we can without falling over and into difficulties. There is great peace, however, in being far away from the edge.

Going Green also does not mean cheap poor quality – just the opposite – it can allow us to purchase that which is a higher quality, more efficient, less demanding and more satisfying.

For those who really value life, *Going Green* (not trampling the pasture or mudding the waters) has been in vogue a long time; it is a Christian discipline and responsibility.

Simplicity is the final achievement. After one has played a vast quantity of notes and more notes, it is simplicity that emerges as the crowning reward of art. Frederic Chopin

A little man often cast a long shadow. G. M. Trevelyan

From the Morass of Mediocrity through Defining Disciplines to Seeking an Equilibrium of Excellence will only be accomplished by Going Green!

Seek to leave a long shadow while, at the same time, leaving small, clean, footprints – **Go Green!**