

When true simplicity is gained,  
To bow and to bend, we will  
not be ashamed.

Joseph Brackett, *Simple Gifts*



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“Los que viven según las inclinaciones de la naturaleza débil, sólo se preocupan por seguirlas; pero los que viven conforme al Espíritu, se preocupan por las cosas del Espíritu.” —Romanos 8:5

Thursday, December 22, 2022

## Bowing and Bending

by Scott Stoner

*When true simplicity is gained,  
To bow and to bend, we will not be ashamed.*

—Joseph Brackett, *Simple Gifts*

These next lines from *Simple Gifts* remind us that one manifestation of simplicity is: “to bow and bend we will not be ashamed.”

In the Christian tradition, as in other religious faiths, bowing is a sign of reverence, respect, and love. One recent manifestation of this came to light during the pandemic within the worship services of many churches. In churches that exchange a sign of the “Peace of Christ” with one another, people would share the peace by bowing to one another rather than by shaking hands as they usually would.

When I think of bending, I think of being flexible. When I am grounded in the simplicity of God’s love, I know that I am much more flexible, willing, and open to listen to others, reconsider my position, and even change if needed. In fact, one of the ways I know I am not grounded in God’s love is that I become rigid and inflexible. In such a state, I can rarely bow or bend to others, or even to God.

I also want to call attention to the final words of this section from *Simple Gifts*, the words “will not be ashamed.” The essential point of these words is that as an expression of my faith, I bow and bend in a spirit of love, reverence, and respect, not from a place of shame or guilt. When I am grounded in God’s love, I want to, and freely choose to, offer the gift of bowing and bending to others.

**Making It Personal:** Plans don’t often go as expected during the holidays, so how might you have the opportunity to bend and be flexible right now? What difference do you see in offering the gift of bowing and bending because you choose to, rather than from a place of feeling like you have to?

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**Bless**

## Advent Day 26

Make sure to pick up an extra present or two – a nice candy sampler or a warm pair of slippers or pajama pants, just in case you have extra friends or guests drop by. Ask God to bless those who travel and those who may be alone in the coming days. Take some bottled water and sports drinks over to your local community cold weather shelter. They will be extra glad to have that during the winter months.

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