

THE MAN WHO HAS REACHED the knowledge of the extent of his weakness has reached perfect humility.

St Isaac the Syrian, *Ascetical Homily 48*, p. 363
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ONE DAY, THE BODY OF A DEAD MAN was carried on the road. Our great father Pachomius came across it and saw two angels behind the bed, following the dead man. Reflecting about them, he prayed God to reveal to him what had happened. Then the two angels came to him, and he said to them, “Why is it that you, who are angels, are following the dead man?” The angels told him, “One of us is the angel of Wednesday and the other of Friday. Because this soul did not miss fasting on Wednesday and Friday until the day of its death, we have followed its body, since it has kept the fast until death. For this cause therefore we have also glorified it, because it has contended in the Lord.”

Pachomian Koinonia, tr. Armand Veilleux,
Cistercian Publications, Volume II, p. 137

WHEN MEN ARE NOT SATISFIED with what they need to remain alive but desire more, they enslave themselves to passions that disturb the soul, inflicting upon it thoughts and fantasies that what they have is inadequate. And just as tunics that are too large hinder runners in a race, so the desire for more than one needs does not allow one’s soul to struggle or to be saved.

Saint Anthony the Great
Philokalia, Faber & Faber, Vol. I, pp. 337–8, #57

PEARLS FROM THE HOLY FATHERS

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