**The Imitation of Christ by Thomas A. Kempis**

**BOOK ONE:** THOUGHTS HELPFUL IN THE LIFE OF THE SOUL

**Chapter 25: Zeal in Amending our Lives**

**Definition and Scriptures:**

**Nature:** There is a close bond between humankind and the rest of creation. There are physiological similarities between humankind and the rest of creation. Humankind shares in creation's dependence on God's goodness for its continuance. Nevertheless, creation order distinctiveness is particularly apparent as it pertains to humankind. Only people were created in the image of God. Only people were the result of God's direct creative activity. Only into humankind did God breathe the breath of life. Only to people did God give dominion over the earth and the other creatures in it. Only to people did God give the responsibility to cultivate the earth. Only to humankind did God give special instructions regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When a helper for Adam was sought, none of the other creatures was suitable; only God's special creative act could provide that helper. Humankind's creation order distinctiveness is also described as "very good". (Biblestudytools)

**Galatians 5:22-23:** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

**Proverbs 25:27-28:** It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it honorable to search out matters that are too deep. Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.

**1 Timothy 3:2-3:** Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

**Quote:**

"Two things particularly further improvement--to withdraw oneself forcibly from those vices to which nature is viciously inclined, and to work fervently for those graces which are most needed."

**Discussion:**

To believe that the creator of the universe spoke through the Bible to humankind and to believe in the Bible that it is the word of God is to believe that God develops the fruit of the spirit as written in Galatians 5:22-23 in humans, but not in animals. Why would God develop the fruit of the spirit though time spent reading the Bible and being in fellowship with God and other people rather than time spent with animals or pets?

The carnal mind is built on vices; whereas, the spiritual mind is built on grace. Why is it important to seek out a spiritual leader who is above reproach, faithful to others, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given into drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money?