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

**BOOK THREE:** INTERNAL CONSOLATION

**Chapter 1 Part 1:** The Inward Conversation of Christ with the Faithful Soul

**Quote:**

"I WILL hear what the Lord God will speak in me."

Blessed is the soul who hears the Lord speaking within her, who receives the word of consolation from His lips. Blessed are the ears that catch the accents of divine whispering, and pay no heed to the murmurings of this world. Blessed indeed are the ears that listen, not to the voice which sounds without, but to the truth which teaches within. Blessed are the eyes which are closed to exterior things and are fixed upon those which are interior. Blessed are they who penetrate inwardly, who try daily to prepare themselves more and more to understand mysteries. Blessed are they who long to give their time to God, and who cut themselves off from the hindrances of the world.

Consider these things, my soul, and close the door of your senses, so that you can hear what the Lord your God speaks within you. "I am your salvation," says your Beloved. "I am your peace and your life. Remain with Me and you will find peace. Dismiss all passing things and seek the eternal. What are all temporal things but snares? And what help will all creatures be able to give you if you are deserted by the Creator?" Leave all these things, therefore, and make yourself pleasing and faithful to your Creator so that you may attain to true happiness."

**Definition:**

Inward conversation with Jesus – A personal and intimate dialogue that an individual has with Jesus Christ, whom they have believed and accepted to be their Lord, Savior, and a divine figure.

**Scripture:**

John 15:4-5

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. **5**I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Proverbs 3:5-7 MSG

Trust God from the bottom of your heart;
    don’t try to figure out everything on your own.
Listen for God’s voice in everything you do, everywhere you go;
    he’s the one who will keep you on track.
Don’t assume that you know it all.
    Run to God! Run from evil!

2 Corinthians 10:5

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

1 Samuel 30:7-8

Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelek, “Bring me the ephod.” Abiathar brought it to him, and David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?”

“Pursue them,” he answered. “You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.”

2 Samuel 5:22-25

Once more the Philistines came up and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; so, David inquired of the Lord, and he answered, “Do not go straight up, but circle around behind them and attack them in front of the poplar trees. As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the poplar trees, move quickly, because that will mean the Lord has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army.” So, David did as the Lord commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeonto Gezer.

**Concept:**

We are to commune with Jesus and to bring Jesus into our inward thinking and decision making process

**Discussion:**

Why is it important to seek God first in all things especially in our decision making?

How does our inward thinking and decision making effect our outward behavior?

How does being heard, seen, and understood by Jesus foster a sense of belonging?

Why are feelings of belonging to Jesus critical for fostering spiritual community?