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

**BOOK THREE:** INTERNAL CONSOLATION

**Chapter 3:** Listen Humbly to the Words of God. Many Do Not Heed Them.

**Quote:**

“THE VOICE OF CHRIST

MY CHILD, hear My words, words of greatest sweetness surpassing all the knowledge of the philosophers and wise men of earth. My words are spirit and life, and they are not to be weighed by man's understanding. They are not to be invoked in vanity but are to be heard in silence, and accepted with all humility and with great affection.

THE DISCIPLE

"Happy is the man whom Thou admonishest, O Lord, and teachest out of Thy law, to give him peace from the days of evil," and that he be not desolate on earth.

THE VOICE OF CHRIST

I taught the prophets from the beginning, and even to this day I continue to speak to all men. But many are hardened. Many are deaf to My voice. Most men listen more willingly to the world than to God. They are more ready to follow the appetite of their flesh than the good pleasure of God. The world, which promises small and passing things, is served with great eagerness: I promise great and eternal things and the hearts of men grow dull. Who is there that serves and obeys Me in all things with as great care as that with which the world and its masters are served?

"Be thou ashamed, O Sidon, for the sea speaketh." And if you ask why, listen to the cause: for a small gain they travel far; for eternal life many will scarcely lift a foot from the ground. They seek a petty reward, and sometimes fight shamefully in law courts for a single piece of money. They are not afraid to work day and night for a trifle or an empty promise. But, for an unchanging good, for a reward beyond estimate, for the greatest honor and for glory everlasting, it must be said to their shame that men begrudge even the least fatigue. Be ashamed, then, lazy and complaining servant, that they should be found more eager for perdition than you are for life, that they rejoice more in vanity than you in truth.

Sometimes indeed their expectations fail them, but My promise never deceives, nor does it send away empty-handed him who trusts in Me. What I have promised I will give. What I have said I will fulfill, if only a man remain faithful in My love to the end. I am the rewarder of all the good, the strong approver of all who are devoted to Me.

Write My words in your heart and meditate on them earnestly, for in time of temptation they will be very necessary. What you do not understand when you read, you will learn in the day of visitation. I am wont to visit My elect in two ways -- by temptation and by consolation. To them I read two lessons daily -- one reproving their vices, the other exhorting them to progress in virtue. He who has My words and despises them has that which shall condemn him on the last day.

A PRAYER FOR THE GRACE OF DEVOTION

O Lord my God, You are all my good. And who am I that I should dare to speak to You? I am Your poorest and meanest servant, a vile worm, much more poor and contemptible than I know or dare to say. Yet remember me, Lord, because I am nothing, I have nothing, and I can do nothing. You alone are good, just, and holy. You can do all things, You give all things, You fill all things: only the sinner do You leave empty-handed. Remember Your tender mercies and fill my heart with Your grace, You Who will not allow Your works to be in vain. How can I bear this life of misery unless You comfort me with Your mercy and grace? Do not turn Your face from me. Do not delay Your visitation. Do not withdraw Your consolation, lest in Your sight my soul become as desert land. Teach me, Lord, to do Your will. Teach me to live worthily and humbly in Your sight, for You are my wisdom Who know me truly, and Who knew me even before the world was made and before I was born into it."

**Definition:**

Commands - In the [Bible](https://www.abibleaday.com/bible-dictionary/bible/), commands are generally used to refer to instructions from [God](https://www.abibleaday.com/bible-dictionary/god/) to His people in order to teach, guide, protect, and develop His people not control or limit them.

**Scripture:**

Deuteronomy 8:2-3

Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

**Concept:**

If we are to seek eternal life and believe that the creator of the universe spoke through the Bible then we must allow God to teach us through His commandments.

**Discussion:**

How can admonishment make a person happy?

How can God’s commands give us peace from the days of evil?

How does God’s commands develop God’s people?

How are God’s commands still relevant and applicable today as they were thousands of years ago?