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

**BOOK THREE:** INTERNAL CONSOLATION

### **Chapter 33:** Restlessness of Soul--Directing Our Final Intention Toward God

**Quote:**

"The Voice of Christ

MY CHILD, do not trust in your present feeling, for it will soon give way to another. As long as you live you will be subject to changeableness in spite of yourself. You will become merry at one time and sad at another, now peaceful but again disturbed, at one moment devout and the next indevout, sometimes diligent while at other times lazy, now grave and again flippant.

But the man who is wise and whose spirit is well instructed stands superior to these changes. He pays no attention to what he feels in himself or from what quarter the wind of fickleness blows, so long as the whole intention of his mind is conducive to his proper and desired end. For thus he can stand undivided, unchanged, and unshaken, with the singleness of his intention directed unwaveringly toward Me, even in the midst of so many changing events. And the purer this singleness of intention is, with so much the more constancy does he pass through many storms.

But in many ways the eye of pure intention grows dim, because it is attracted to any delightful thing that it meets. Indeed, it is rare to find one who is entirely free from all taint of self-seeking. The Jews of old, for example, came to Bethany to Martha and Mary, not for Jesus' sake alone, but in order to see Lazarus.

The eye of your intention, therefore, must be cleansed so that it is single and right. It must be directed toward Me, despite all the objects which may interfere."

**Definition:**

Intention - The underlying purpose, motive, or reason behind one's actions or behavior

**Scripture:**

Proverbs 4:25-27:

Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.

Colossians 3:1-2:

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

James 1:6-8:

But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

**Concept:**

As Christians we are to look beyond fleeting emotions and maintain a steadfast focus on a pure and unwavering intention directed towards God's purpose for us, free from self-seeking desires and distractions, in order to navigate life's changes with constancy and spiritual clarity.

**Discussion:**

How can one cultivate a "single and right" intention as described in the text amidst the ever-changing nature of human emotions and external distractions? What practices or approaches could help individuals maintain focus on their desired end despite fluctuations in feelings and circumstances?

The text mentions the concept of being "undivided, unchanged, and unshaken" in the face of various changes and disturbances. How can individuals develop resilience and inner strength to remain steadfast in their intentions and beliefs, especially during challenging times or periods of uncertainty?

The text highlights the challenge of self-seeking tendencies and distractions that can cloud one's intention. How can individuals distinguish between genuine intentions driven by a higher purpose and intentions motivated by self-interest or external gratification? What strategies can be employed to purify one's intentions and maintain a focus on what truly matters in life?