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

**BOOK THREE:** INTERNAL CONSOLATION

### **Chapter 8:** Self-Abasement in the Sight of God

**Quote:**

#### “THE DISCIPLE

I WILL speak to my Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. If I consider myself anything more than this, behold You stand against me, and my sins bear witness to the truth which I cannot contradict. If I abase myself, however, if I humble myself to nothingness, if I shrink from all self-esteem and account myself as the dust which I am, Your grace will favor me, Your light will enshroud my heart, and all self-esteem, no matter how little, will sink in the depths of my nothingness to perish forever.

It is there You show me to myself -- what I am, what I have been, and what I am coming to; for I am nothing and I did not know it. Left to myself, I am nothing but total weakness. But if You look upon me for an instant, I am at once made strong and filled with new joy. Great wonder it is that I, who of my own weight always sink to the depths, am so suddenly lifted up, and so graciously embraced by You.

It is Your love that does this, graciously upholding me, supporting me in so many necessities, guarding me from so many grave dangers, and snatching me, as I may truly say, from evils without number. Indeed, by loving myself badly I lost myself; by seeking only You and by truly loving You I have found both myself and You, and by that love I have reduced myself more profoundly to nothing. For You, O sweetest Lord, deal with me above all my merits and above all that I dare to hope or ask.

May You be blessed, my God, for although I am unworthy of any benefits, yet Your nobility and infinite goodness never cease to do good even for those who are ungrateful and far from You. Convert us to You, that we may be thankful, humble, and devout, for You are our salvation, our courage, and our strength."

**Definition:**

#### Self-Abasement in the Sight of God – The belittling or humiliation of oneself

**Scripture:**

Matthew 23:11

Do you want to stand out? Then step down. Be a servant. If you puff yourself up, you’ll get the wind knocked out of you. But if you’re content to simply be yourself, your life will count for plenty.

Job 40:8

(God speaking to Job)

Do you presume to tell me what I’m doing wrong? Are you calling me a sinner so you can be a saint? Do you have an arm like my arm? Can you shout in thunder the way I can? Go ahead, show your stuff. Let’s see what you’re made of, what you can do. Unleash your outrage. Target the arrogant and lay them flat. Target the arrogant and bring them to their knees. Stop the wicked in their tracks—make mincemeat of them! Dig a mass grave and dump them in it— faceless corpses in an unmarked grave. I’ll gladly step aside and hand things over to you— you can surely save yourself with no help from me!

**Concept:**

We will learn to love God and ourselves when we humble ourselves before God and serve others

**Discussion:**

How can self-abasement be beneficial to one's mental health?

How is the advocating of self-abasement, humility, beneficial to society?

How does self-abasement in the sight of God diminish pride and boost gratitude?

How does self-abasing ourselves before God strengthen our relationships with other people.