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

**BOOK FOUR:** INTERNAL CONSOLATION

**Chapter 15:** The Grace of Devotion is Acquired Through Humility and Self-Denial

**Quote:**

“The Voice of Christ

YOU must seek earnestly the grace of devotion, ask for it fervently, await it patiently and hopefully, receive it gratefully, guard it humbly, cooperate with it carefully and leave to God, when it comes, the length and manner of the heavenly visitation.

When you feel little or no inward devotion, you should especially humiliate yourself, but do not become too dejected or unreasonably sad. In one short moment God often gives what He has long denied. At times He grants at the end what He has denied from the beginning of prayer. If grace were always given at once, or were present at our beck and call, it would not be well taken by weak humankind. Therefore, with good hope and humble patience await the grace of devotion.

When it is not given, or for some unknown reason is taken away, blame yourself and your sins. Sometimes it is a small matter that hinders grace and hides it, if, indeed, that which prevents so great a good may be called little rather than great. But if you remove this hindrance, be it great or small, and if you conquer it perfectly, you shall have what you ask. As soon as you have given yourself to God with all your heart and seek neither this nor that for your own pleasure and purpose, but place yourself completely in His charge, you shall find yourself at peace, united with Him, because nothing will be so sweet, nothing will please you so much as the good pleasure of His will.

Anyone, therefore, who shall with simplicity of heart direct his intention to God and free himself from all inordinate love or dislike for any creature will be most fit to receive grace and will be worthy of the gift of devotion. For where the Lord finds the vessel empty He pours down His blessing.

So also the more perfectly a man renounces things of this world, and the more completely he dies to himself through contempt of self, the more quickly this great grace comes to him, the more plentifully it enters in, and the higher it uplifts the free heart.

Then shall he see and abound, then shall his heart marvel and be enlarged within him, because the Hand of the Lord is with him and in the hollow of that Hand he has placed himself forever. Thus shall the man be blessed who seeks God with all his heart and has not regarded his soul in vain. Such a one, receiving the Holy Eucharist, merits the grace of divine union because he looks not on his own thoughts, nor to his own comfort, but above all devotion and consolation to the glory and honor of God.”

**Definition:**

Grace of Devotion - God's unmerited favor, revealed in Jesus Christ, not only offers salvation but also continually teaches, empowers, and motivates believers to live lives of faithful commitment, holiness, eager service, and ongoing fellowship with God

**Scripture:**

**Titus 2:11-14**

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

**Concept:**

True Christian devotion is rooted and sustained in God's grace

**Discussion:**

What does it mean to live a life of devotion rooted in God's grace?

The text emphasizes the importance of patiently awaiting the grace of devotion. How does patience deepen one's faith, and in what ways does impatience hinder spiritual growth? Provide examples from personal experiences or Scriptures.