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

**BOOK TWO:** THE INTERIOR LIFE

**Chapter 1 - Part 3:** Meditation

**Concept:**

Meditate on Christ and let go of earthly things

**Quote:**

"You have here no lasting home. You are a stranger and a pilgrim wherever you may be, and you shall have no rest until you are wholly united with Christ.

Why do you look about here when this is not the place of your repose? Dwell rather upon heaven and give but a passing glance to all earthly things. They all pass away, and you together with them. Take care, then, that you do not cling to them lest you be entrapped and perish. Fix your mind on the Most High, and pray unceasingly to Christ.

If you do not know how to meditate on heavenly things, direct your thoughts to Christ's passion and willingly behold His sacred wounds. If you turn devoutly to the wounds and precious stigmata of Christ, you will find great comfort in suffering, you will mind but little the scorn of men, and you will easily bear their slanderous talk."

**Scriptures:**

**Isaiah 26:3:** You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

**Discussion:**

How does the ways of this world make us lukewarm towards God?

**Concept:**

Sanctification (transformation) and communion (intimacy) transform us into Christlikeness

**Quote:**

"Had you but once entered into perfect communion with Jesus or tasted a little of His ardent love, you would care nothing at all for your own comfort or discomfort but would rejoice in the reproach you suffer; for love of Him makes a man despise himself.

A man who is a lover of Jesus and of truth, a truly interior man who is free from uncontrolled affections, can turn to God at will and rise above himself to enjoy spiritual peace.

He who tastes life as it really is, not as men say or think it is, is indeed wise with the wisdom of God rather than of men."

**Scriptures:**

**Colossians 3:1-4 (ESV):** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

**Discussion:**

Do you believe that God values life in the spirit more than life in the flesh and why?

If life is in the spirit, why did God create the flesh?

**Concept:**

Impurity of heart results in the anxiety of mind

**Quote:**

"If all were well with you, therefore, and if you were purified from all sin, everything would tend to your good and be to your profit. But because you are as yet neither entirely dead to self nor free from all earthly affection, there is much that often displeases and disturbs you. Nothing so mars and defiles the heart of man as impure attachment to created things. But if you refuse external consolation, you will be able to contemplate heavenly things and often to experience interior joy."

**Scriptures:**

**Revelation 3:14-16:** To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

**Matthew 7:16-17:** You can detect them by the way they act, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit. You need never confuse grapevines with thorn bushes or figs with thistles. Different kinds of fruit trees can quickly be identified by examining their fruit.

**Matthew 23:25-28:** Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

**Discussion:**

How does the internal battle between good and evil build godly character?

Is Satan’s intention to make us lukewarm towards God or outright angry towards God?