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

**BOOK TWO:** THE INTERIOR LIFE

**Chapter 12 Part 3:** The Royal Road of the Holy Cross

**Quote:**

"The whole life of Christ was a cross and a martyrdom, and do you seek rest and enjoyment for yourself? You deceive yourself, you are mistaken if you seek anything but to suffer, for this mortal life is full of miseries and marked with crosses on all sides. Indeed, the more spiritual progress a person makes, so much heavier will he frequently find the cross, because as his love increases, the pain of his exile also increases.

Yet such a man, though afflicted in many ways, is not without hope of consolation, because he knows that great reward is coming to him for bearing his cross. And when he carries it willingly, every pang of tribulation is changed into hope of solace from God. Besides, the more the flesh is distressed by affliction, so much the more is the spirit strengthened by inward grace. Not infrequently a man is so strengthened by his love of trials and hardship in his desire to conform to the cross of Christ, that he does not wish to be without sorrow or pain, since he believes he will be the more acceptable to God if he is able to endure more and more grievous things for His sake.

It is the grace of Christ, and not the virtue of man, which can and does bring it about that through fervor of spirit frail flesh learns to love and to gain what it naturally hates and shuns.

To carry the cross, to love the cross, to chastise the body and bring it to subjection, to flee honors, to endure contempt gladly, to despise self and wish to be despised, to suffer any adversity and loss, to desire no prosperous days on earth–this is not man’s way. If you rely upon yourself, you can do none of these things, but if you trust in the Lord, strength will be given you from heaven and the world and the flesh will be made subject to your word. You will not even fear your enemy, the devil, if you are armed with faith and signed with the cross of Christ.

Set yourself, then, like a good and faithful servant of Christ, to bear bravely the cross of your Lord, Who out of love was crucified for you. Be ready to suffer many adversities and many kinds of trouble in this miserable life, for troublesome and miserable life will always be, no matter where you are; and so you will find it wherever you may hide. Thus it must be; and there is no way to evade the trials and sorrows of life but to bear them."

**Definition:**

Chastise: The Latin root of chastise is castigare, which means "to set or keep right," or "to make pure."

**Scripture:**

[Job 5:17](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Job/5/17)

“Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.

Hebrews 12:8:

If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.

Jeremiah 31:18

“I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself:
‘You have chastised me, and I was chastised,
Like an untrained bull;
Restore me, and I will return,
For You *are* the Lord my God.

Psalm 118:18

The Lord has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death.

Psalm 119:67

Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I obey your word.

Proverbs 3:11

My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline,  and do not resent his rebuke,

**Concept:**

When we ask Jesus to come into our heart, we must also ask Him to instruct and correct us so that we can become more like him

**Discussion:**

What does it mean to have a heartfelt relationship with Jesus?

In what way does technology make us value discipline less?

How does discipline promote meekness (power under control)?

How does meekness bring about inner peace?