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

**BOOK FOUR:** INTERNAL CONSOLATION

**Chapter 8:** The Offering of Christ on the Cross; Our Offering

**Quote:**

“The Voice of Christ

AS I offered Myself willingly to God the Father for your sins with hands outstretched and body naked on the cross, so that nothing remained in Me that had not become a complete sacrifice to appease the divine wrath, so ought you to be willing to offer yourself to Me day by day in the Mass as a pure and holy oblation, together with all your faculties and affections, with as much inward devotion as you can. What more do I ask than that you give yourself entirely to Me? I care not for anything else you may give Me, for I seek not your gift but you. Just as it would not be enough for you to have everything if you did not have Me, so whatever you give cannot please Me if you do not give yourself.

Offer yourself to Me, therefore, and give yourself entirely for God -- your offering will be accepted. Behold, I offered Myself wholly to the Father for you, I even gave My whole Body and Blood for food that I might be all yours, and you Mine forever.

But if you rely upon self, and do not offer your free will to Mine, your offering will be incomplete and the union between us imperfect. Hence, if you desire to attain grace and freedom of heart, let the free offering of yourself into the hands of God precede your every action. This is why so few are inwardly free and enlightened -- they know not how to renounce themselves entirely.

My word stands: "Everyone of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be My disciple."

If, therefore, you wish to be My disciple, offer yourself to Me with all your heart.

**Definition:**

Offering- A gift or sacrifice presented to God as an act of worship, gratitude, or atonement

**Scripture:**

**Genesis 4:3-5**

In the course of time, Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

**Exodus 35:29**

All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the Lord freewill offerings for all the work the Lord through Moses had commanded them to do.

**Leviticus 1:3-4:**

If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, you are to offer a male without defect. You must present it at the entrance to the tent of meeting so that it will be accepted on your behalf.

**John 3:16**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

**2 Corinthians 5:14-15**

For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

**Romans 12:1**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

**Hebrews 13:15-16**

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

**Concept:**

The heart attitude behind the offering is even more important than the offering

**Discussion:**

What role does intention or heart attitude play in the act of offering, as opposed to the offering itself? Compare the sacrifices of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:3-5) to discuss how God values the heart behind the offering. Why do you think the heart attitude is emphasized?

How can acts of freewill offerings (Exodus 35:29) and praise (Hebrews 13:15-16) cultivate a deeper spiritual union with God?

What is the relationship between offering oneself to God and experiencing grace and freedom of heart?