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

**BOOK THREE:** INTERNAL CONSOLATION

### **Chapter 38:** **The Right Ordering of External Affairs; Recourse to God in Dangers**

**Quote:**

“The Voice of Christ

MY CHILD, you must strive diligently to be inwardly free, to have mastery over yourself everywhere, in every external act and occupation, that all things be subject to you and not you to them, that you be the master and director of your actions, not a slave or a mere hired servant. You should be rather a free man and a true Hebrew, arising to the status and freedom of the children of God who stand above present things to contemplate those which are eternal; who look upon passing affairs with the left eye and upon those of heaven with the right; whom temporal things do not so attract that they cling to them, but who rather put these things to such proper service as is ordained and instituted by God, the great Workmaster, Who leaves nothing unordered in His creation.

If, likewise, in every happening you are not content simply with outward appearances, if you do not regard with carnal eyes things which you see and hear, but whatever be the affair, enter with Moses into the tabernacle to ask advice of the Lord, you will sometimes hear the divine answer and return instructed in many things present and to come. For Moses always had recourse to the tabernacle for the solution of doubts and questions, and fled to prayer for support in dangers and the evil deeds of men. So you also should take refuge in the secret chamber of your heart, begging earnestly for divine aid.

For this reason, as we read, Joshua and the children of Israel were deceived by the Gibeonites because they did not first seek counsel of the Lord, but trusted too much in fair words and hence were deceived by false piety.”

**Definition:**

Divine guidance – Seeking and following the will, wisdom, and direction of God in making decisions and navigating life's challenges.

**Scripture:**

Proverbs 3:5-6:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

James 1:5:

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

Proverbs 16:3:

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.

Psalm 32:8:

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you."

**Concept:**

Seek divine guidance and wisdom before making decisions to avoid deception and negative outcome

**Discussion:**

How do the Bible verses provided support the idea of seeking divine guidance as a way to make sound decisions and avoid deception in light of the passage about Joshua and the Gibeonites?

How does the concept of taking refuge in the secret chamber of your heart and earnestly seeking divine aid relate to the biblical definition of divine guidance? In what ways can this practice help individuals in making important decisions in their lives?

Reflecting on the story of Joshua and the Gibeonites, what lessons can we learn about the dangers of relying solely on outward appearances and not seeking counsel from God before making decisions? How can we apply these lessons to our own lives today?

In what ways can the principles of divine guidance, as defined in the Bible, provide believers with clarity, wisdom, and protection in navigating life's challenges and making important choices? How can we cultivate a deeper connection with God to seek and follow His guidance more effectively in our daily lives?