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

**BOOK TWO:** THE INTERIOR LIFE

**Chapter 1:** Meditation Review

**Scripture:**

**Luke 15:11-24**

**The Parable of the Lost Son**

**11**Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. **12**The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So, he divided his property between them.

**13**“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. **14**After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. **15**So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. **16**He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

**17**“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! **18**I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. **19**I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ **20**So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

**21**“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

**22**“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. **23**Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. **24**For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So, they began to celebrate. (NIV)

**Synopsis:**

To move from rebellion against God (impious) to being comforted by God (consolation) requires connecting with God through scripture (meditation).

There are three primary aspects of Christian meditation. They are: 1.) Prepare a fit dwelling for God. This requires us to be still before God to admit to God that we put other things above him and to welcome God into our heart. 2.) Prepare for a relationship with God. This requires boundaries and trust. 3.) Prepare for worship of God which requires, meditation, sanctification, communion, and the quieting of the mind.

The purpose of eastern meditation is to connect with one’s inner being or inner self. The purpose of Christian meditation is to seek God’s consolation by letting go of our impious thoughts and to connect with God through scripture.

**Concept:**

**Prepare a fit dwelling for God in your heart**

Be Still

 Be still and know I am God (Psalm 46:10)

Admit that we have made other things or other people a higher priority than God

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also,” (Matthew 6:21)

Welcome God into your heart

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. (Revelation 3:20)

**Discussion:**

How does the quieting of our mind (meditation) and confessing our true intention (selfishness) produce a greater passion for God and people within us?

What blinded the prodigal son to the love of his father and how did the father’s love for his son allow him to welcome back his son?

**Concept:**

**Prepare for a relationship with God**

Boundaries

But do not follow foolish stories that disagree with God’s truth, but train yourself to serve God. (1 Timothy 4:7 — New Century Version (NCV)

Trust in God above all else

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5)

**Discussion:**

Do we run away from authority because we don’t trust it or because it does not make us feel good?

In the prodigal son, was the son more responsible for not having self-control or was the father responsible for not setting boundaries in prematurely giving his son his inheritance?

**Concept:**

**Prepare for worship of God**

Meditate on Christ and let go of earthly things

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

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

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. (Colossians 3:1-4 (ESV)

**Discussion:**

How does changing the way we think, live, and believe (sanctification) as well as changing our focus from earthly things to an eternal relationship with God (intimacy) bring about inner peace?

How did the father’s forgiveness of the prodigal son restore their relationship?

**Concept:**

**Prepare for the quieting of the mind**

Quieting the mind

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. (Matthew 23:25-28)

**Discussion:**

How does money lead us to impurity of heart and anxiety of the mind?

How did God purify the heart of the prodigal son and calm his mind by having him feed the pigs?