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

**BOOK THREE:** INTERNAL CONSOLATION

### **Chapter 25:** The Basis of Firm Peace of Heart and True Progress

**Quote:**

The Voice of Christ

MY CHILD, I have said: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you.

All men desire peace but all do not care for the things that go to make true peace. My peace is with the humble and meek of heart: your peace will be in much patience. If you hear Me and follow My voice, you will be able to enjoy much peace.

The Disciple

What, then, shall I do, Lord?

The Voice of Christ

Watch yourself in all things, in what you do and what you say. Direct your every intention toward pleasing Me alone, and desire nothing outside of Me. Do not be rash in judging the deeds and words of others, and do not entangle yourself in affairs that are not your own. Thus, it will come about that you will be disturbed little and seldom.

Yet, never to experience any disturbance or to suffer any hurt in heart or body does not belong to this present life, but rather to the state of eternal rest. Do not think, therefore, that you have found true peace if you feel no depression, or that all is well because you suffer no opposition. Do not think that all is perfect if everything happens just as you wish. And do not imagine yourself great or consider yourself especially beloved if you are filled with great devotion and sweetness. For the true lover of virtue is not known by these things, nor do the progress and perfection of a man consist in them.

The Disciple

In what do they consist, Lord?

The Voice of Christ

They consist in offering yourself with all your heart to the divine will, not seeking what is yours either in small matters or great ones, either in temporal or eternal things, so that you will preserve equanimity and give thanks in both prosperity and adversity, seeing all things in their proper light.

If you become so brave and long-suffering in hope that you can prepare your heart to suffer still more even when all inward consolation is withdrawn, and if you do not justify yourself as though you ought not be made to suffer such great things, but acknowledge Me to be just in all My works and praise My holy name--then you will walk in the true and right path of peace, then you may have sure hope of seeing My face again in joy. If you attain to complete contempt of self, then know that you will enjoy an abundance of peace, as much as is possible in this earthly life.

**Definition:**

Equanimity - A state of mental calmness, composure, and evenness of temper, especially in difficult situations

**Scripture:**

Philippians 4:11-13

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

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.

James 1:2-4

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

1 Peter 5:6-7

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

**Concept:**

Surrendering oneself completely to the divine will of God empowers believers to embrace both the peaks of prosperity and the valleys of adversity with unwavering equanimity and gratitude fostering hope and resilience in the face of suffering and finding peace through selflessness and acceptance of God’s divine plan.

**Discussion:**

How can individuals cultivate a mindset of offering themselves entirely to the God’s will and not seeking personal gain in various aspects of life?

How can Christians maintain equanimity and gratitude in both prosperous and adverse circumstances?

In what ways can individuals develop the bravery and long-suffering needed to endure suffering while maintaining hope and humility, and how can one attain complete contempt of self to enjoy peace as much as possible in this earthly life, as suggested in the passage?