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

**BOOK TWO:** THE INTERIOR LIFE

**Chapter 9 Part 2:** Wanting No Share in Comfort

**Quote:**

" A man must fight long and bravely against himself before he learns to master himself fully and to direct all his affections toward God. When he trusts in himself, he easily takes to human consolation. The true lover of Christ, however, who sincerely pursues virtue, does not fall back upon consolations nor seek such pleasures of sense, but prefers severe trials and hard labors for the sake of Christ.

When, therefore, spiritual consolation is given by God, receive it gratefully, but understand that it is His gift and not your meriting. Do not exult, do not be overjoyed, do not be presumptuous, but be the humbler for the gift, more careful and wary in all your actions, for this hour will pass and temptation will come in its wake. When consolation is taken away, do not at once despair but wait humbly and patiently for the heavenly visit, since God can restore to you more abundant solace.

This is neither new nor strange to one who knows God's ways, for such change of fortune often visited the great saints and prophets of old. Thus there was one who, when grace was with him, declared: "In my prosperity I said: I shall never be moved.'" But when grace was taken away, he adds what he experienced in himself: "Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled." Meanwhile he does not despair; rather he prays more earnestly to the Lord, saying: "To Thee, O Lord, will I cry; and I will make supplication to my God." At length, he receives the fruit of his prayer, and testifying that he was heard, says "The Lord hath heard, and hath had mercy on me: the Lord became my helper." And how was he helped? "Thou hast turned," he says, "my mourning into joy, and hast surrounded me with gladness." If this is the case with great saints, we who are weak and poor ought not to despair because we are fervent at times and at other times cold, for the spirit comes and goes according to His will. Of this the blessed Job declared: "Thou visitest him early in the morning, and Thou provest him suddenly."

**Definition:**

Grace: In Christian theology, the spontaneous, unmerited gift of the divine favo

.321/99999999999999999996666666666666666665555555559r in the salvation of sinners, and the divine influence operating in individuals for their regeneration and sanctification.

**Scripture:**

John 1:16–17

For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:14

For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

2 Corinthians 12:9–10

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

James 4:6

But he gives more grace. Therefore, it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

**Concept:**

To receive God’s grace, we must battle our own selfish pride within us.

**Discussion:**

What does God’s grace look like in a tangible way?

What can people achieve through God’s grace?

How does our own selfish pride prevent us from receiving God’s grace?