

The Imitation of Christ by Thomas A. Kempis

BOOK THREE: INTERNAL CONSOLATION

Chapter 37: Pure and Entire Resignation of Self to Obtain Freedom of Heart

Quote:

“The Voice of Christ

MY CHILD, renounce self and you shall find Me. Give up your own self-will, your possessions, and you shall always gain. For once you resign yourself irrevocably, greater grace will be given you.

The Disciple

How often, Lord, shall I resign myself? And in what shall I forsake myself?

The Voice of Christ

Always, at every hour, in small matters as well as great -- I except nothing. In all things I wish you to be stripped of self. How otherwise can you be mine or I yours unless you be despoiled of your own will both inwardly and outwardly? The sooner you do this the better it will be for you, and the more fully and sincerely you do it the more you will please Me and the greater gain you will merit.

Some there are who resign themselves, but with certain reservation; they do not trust fully in God and therefore they try to provide for themselves. Others, again, at first offer all, but afterward are assailed by temptation and return to what they have renounced, thereby making no progress in virtue. These will not reach the true liberty of a pure heart nor the grace of happy friendship with Me unless they first make a full resignation and a daily sacrifice of themselves. Without this no fruitful union lasts nor will last.

I have said to you very often, and now I say again: forsake yourself, renounce yourself and you shall enjoy great inward peace. Give all for all. Ask nothing, demand nothing in return. Trust purely and without hesitation in Me, and you shall possess Me. You will be free of heart and darkness will not overwhelm you.

Strive for this, pray for this, desire this -- to be stripped of all selfishness and naked to follow the naked Jesus, to die to self and live forever for Me. Then all vain imaginations, all wicked disturbances and superfluous cares will vanish. Then also immoderate fear will leave you and inordinate love will die.”

Definition:

Transformation - Renewal or change through a relationship with God to become more like Christ and fulfill God's purpose.

Scripture:

Romans 12:1-2:

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. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Galatians 2:20:

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Matthew 16:24:

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'

Concept:

The path to inner peace, virtuous living, and a meaningful relationship with God begins with a radical shift towards selflessness, daily acts of surrender, and sacrifice

Discussion:

How do the themes of selflessness, surrender, and sacrifice discussed in the passage align with the biblical concept of transformation as seen in Romans 12:1-2? What does offering ourselves as a living sacrifice entail in the process of renewing our minds and conforming to God's will?

In Galatians 2:20, the apostle Paul emphasizes the idea of being crucified with Christ and living a life of faith in Him. How does this notion of dying to self and allowing Christ to live through us relate to the call for self-renunciation and following Jesus in the passage? How does this transformation impact our daily lives and relationships?

Reflecting on Matthew 16:24, where Jesus instructs his disciples to deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow him, how does this command exemplify the essence of selflessness and surrender in the pursuit of spiritual growth and a deeper connection with God? How does this self-denial lead to true transformation and a closer walk with Christ?