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

**BOOK ONE:** THOUGHTS HELPFUL IN THE LIFE OF THE SOUL

**Chapter 25: Zeal in Amending our Lives**

**Definition and Scriptures:**

**Evil:** As a prerequisite for any discussion of evil, moral evil must be distinguished from physical or natural evil. This essay uses the term "moral evil" to include both social offenses (ethics — murder, theft) and cultic sins (those offenses aimed directly against the deity blasphemy, idolatry). Moral evil, therefore, whether its setting be cultic or social, when carried out may be considered a sin. That cultic and ethical values were one and the same in the Hebraic mind may be illustrated by the similar penalties exacted for the severest offenses in either category (death, being cut off). Cultic values are addressed in the first four of the Ten Commandments and by the first of Jesus' "Great Commandments"; ethics are considered in the last six of the Ten Commandments and by the second "Great Commandment". (Biblestudytools)

**Exodus 20:1-17:** And God spoke all these words:

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

“You shall have no other gods beforeme.

“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

“You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not steal.

“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

**Mark 12:28-34:** One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2012%3A28-34&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24705c)] There is no commandment greater than these.”

**Proverbs 6:16-19:**

There are six things which the Lord hates,
Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:
Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood,
A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that run rapidly to evil,

**Quote:**

"Always remember your end and do not forget that lost time never returns. Without care and diligence you will never acquire virtue. When you begin to grow lukewarm, you are falling into the beginning of evil; but if you give yourself to fervor, you will find peace and will experience less hardship because of God's grace and the love of virtue. A fervent and diligent man is ready for all things. It is greater work to resist vices and passions than to sweat in physical toil. He who does not overcome small faults, shall fall little by little into greater ones. If you have spent the day profitably, you will always be happy at eventide. Watch over yourself, arouse yourself, warn yourself, and regardless of what becomes of others, do not neglect yourself. The more violence you do to yourself, the more progress you will make."

**Discussion:**

A fold is a sheep pen that a shepherd puts the sheep in at night to protect them from predators. Do you think God gave us the Ten Commandments as a way to protect us from evil or are they a personal invitation to be in relationship and why?

What does it mean to be spiritually alive by passionately pursuing a personal relationship with God and how does pursuing our own pleasures in this life lead us to eternal separation from God?