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

**BOOK TWO:** THE INTERIOR LIFE

**Chapter 5 Part 2:** Ourselves

**Quote:**

"The interior man puts the care of himself before all other concerns, and he who attends to himself carefully does not find it hard to hold his tongue about others. You will never be devout of heart unless you are thus silent about the affairs of others and pay particular attention to yourself. If you attend wholly to God and yourself, you will be little disturbed by what you see about you. Where are your thoughts when they are not upon yourself? And after attending to various things, what have you gained if you have neglected self? If you wish to have true peace of mind and unity of purpose, you must cast all else aside and keep only yourself before your eyes."

**Concept and Scripture:**

We will not envy others when we focus on the comfort and fulfillment that God brings through a personal relationship with him rather than our social status in this world

Ezekiel 3:1-9

As I opened my mouth, he gave me the scroll to eat, saying, “Son of man, eat this book that I am giving you. Make a full meal of it!” So I ate it. It tasted so good—just like honey. Then he told me, “Son of man, go to the family of Israel and speak my Message. Look, I’m not sending you to a people who speak a hard-to-learn language with words you can hardly pronounce. If I had sent you to such people, their ears would have perked up and they would have listened immediately. “But, it won’t work that way with the family of Israel. They won’t listen to you because they won’t listen to me. They are, as I said, a hard case, hardened in their sin. But I’ll make you as hard in your way as they are in theirs. I’ll make your face as hard as rock, harder than granite. Don’t let them intimidate you. Don’t be afraid of them, even though they’re a bunch of rebels.”

Philippians 3:17-21

Stick with me, friends. Keep track of those you see running this same course, headed for this same goal. There are many out there taking other paths, choosing other goals, and trying to get you to go along with them. I’ve warned you of them many times; sadly, I’m having to do it again. All they want is easy street. They hate Christ’s Cross. But easy street is a dead-end street. Those who live there make their bellies their gods; belches are their praise; all they can think of is their appetites. But, there’s far more to life for us. We’re citizens of high heaven! We’re waiting the arrival of the Savior, the Master, Jesus Christ, who will transform our earthy bodies into glorious bodies like his own. He’ll make us beautiful and whole with the same powerful skill by which he is putting everything as it should be, under and around him.

**Discussion:**

What is the difference filling our bellies verses filling our minds?

What is the difference between engaging a person’s flesh verses engaging their spirit?

**Quote:**

"Where are your thoughts when they are not upon yourself? And after attending to various things, what have you gained if you have neglected self? If you wish to have true peace of mind and unity of purpose, you must cast all else aside and keep only yourself before your eyes."

**Concept and Scripture:**

If attending church does not change our personal values and perceptions of life on this earth, then we are wasting our time by attending church

Romans 2:12

If you sin without knowing what you’re doing, God takes that into account. But if you sin knowing full well what you’re doing, that’s a different story entirely. Merely hearing God’s law is a waste of your time if you don’t do what he commands. Doing, not hearing, is what makes the difference with God.

Matthew 7:26

“But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don’t work them into your life, you are like a stupid carpenter who built his house on the sandy beach. When a storm rolled in and the waves came up, it collapsed like a house of cards.”

**Discussion:**

How does God use church to change our values and perception of ourselves?

What values are required to live life on this earth and how do they differ from the values required to be spiritually alive in Christ?