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

**BOOK TWO:** THE INTERIOR LIFE

**Chapter 7 Part 2:** Loving Jesus Above All Things

**Quote:**

"Affection for creatures is deceitful and inconstant, but the love of Jesus is true and enduring. He who clings to a creature will fall with its frailty, but he who gives himself to Jesus will ever be strengthened. Love Him, then; keep Him as a friend. He will not leave you as others do, or let you suffer lasting death. Sometime, whether you will or not, you will have to part with everything. Cling, therefore, to Jesus in life and death; trust yourself to the glory of Him who alone can help you when all others fail. Your Beloved is such that He will not accept what belongs to another--He wants your heart for Himself alone, to be enthroned therein as King in His own right. If you but knew how to free yourself entirely from all creatures, Jesus would gladly dwell within you."

**Definition and Scripture:**

Heart - In the Bible the heart is considered the source of life or strength. Hence, it means mind, soul, spirit, or one's entire emotional nature and understanding.

Proverbs 3:5 (MSG)

Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don’t try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God’s voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he’s the one who will keep you on track. Don’t assume that you know it all. Run to God! Run from evil! Your body will glow with health, your very bones will vibrate with life! Honor God with everything you own; give him the first and the best. Your barns will burst, your wine vats will brim over. But don’t, dear friend, resent God ’s discipline; don’t sulk under his loving correction. It’s the child he loves that God corrects; a father’s delight is behind all this.

Proverbs 4:23 (MSG)

Keep vigilant watch over your heart; that’s where life starts. Don’t talk out of both sides of your mouth; avoid careless banter, white lies, and gossip. Keep your eyes straight ahead; ignore all sideshow distractions. Watch your step, and the road will stretch out smooth before you. Look neither right nor left; leave evil in the dust.

Matthew 6:19-21 (MSG)

“Don’t hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or—worse! stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it’s safe from moth and rust and burglars. It’s obvious, isn’t it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.

Psalm 51:7 (MSG)

Soak me in your laundry and I’ll come out clean, scrub me and I’ll have a snow-white life. Tune me in to foot-tapping songs, set these once-broken bones to dancing. Don’t look too close for blemishes, give me a clean bill of health. God, make a fresh start in me, shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life. Don’t throw me out with the trash, or fail to breathe holiness in me. Bring me back from gray exile, put a fresh wind in my sails! Give me a job teaching rebels your ways so the lost can find their way home. Commute my death sentence, God, my salvation God, and I’ll sing anthems to your life-giving ways. Unbutton my lips, dear God; I’ll let loose with your praise.

**Concept and Scripture:**

The things of this earth will eventually grow old and fall apart, but the word of God is steadfast and will last forever. Therefore, we are to give our heart to God for he is steadfast and true; whereas, the things of this earth are destined for decay and destruction.

**Discussion:**

What does it mean to seek God with all your heart?

What does it mean to cling to Jesus?

Why do you believe Jesus is God?