

Daily Devotion For January 7, 2022

Let me do something different today. Wednesday during our Bible Study I shared with the group that for the beginning of 2022, I am re-reading the most widely read book of Christian devotion, outside of the Bible in the world. It is the book, "The Imitation of Christ" by Thomas a' Kempis, written in the early 1400's. I first read this book in the summer of 1977 and was inspired to read it again after hearing that another friend was reading it.

It has been said that "The Imitation of Christ" is the most exquisite document after the New Testament and many regard it second only to the inspired word of God. Please enjoy the first chapter and let me know what you think.

IMITATING CHRIST AND DESPISING ALL VANITIES ON EARTH

He who follows Me, walks not in darkness," says the Lord. (John 8:12) By these words of Christ we are advised to imitate His life and habits, if we wish to be truly enlightened and free from all blindness of heart. Let our chief effort; therefore, be to study the life of Jesus Christ.

The teaching of Christ is more excellent than all the advice of the saints, and he who has His spirit will find in it a hidden manna. Now, there are many who hear the Gospel often but care little for it because they have not the spirit of Christ. Yet whoever wishes to understand fully the words of Christ must try to pattern his whole life on that of Christ. What good does it do to speak learnedly about the Trinity if, lacking humility, you displease the Trinity?

Indeed it is not learning that makes a man holy and just, but a virtuous life makes him pleasing to God. I would rather feel contrition than know how to define it. For what would it profit us to know the whole Bible by heart and the principles of all the philosophers if we live without grace and the love of God?

Vanity of vanities and all is vanity, except to love God and serve Him alone. This is the greatest wisdom -- to seek the kingdom of heaven through contempt of the world. It is vanity, therefore, to seek and trust in riches that perish. It is vanity also to court honor and to be puffed up with pride. It is vanity to follow the lusts of the body and to desire things for which severe punishment later must come. It is vanity to wish for long life and to care little about a well-spent life. It is vanity to be concerned with the present

only and not to make provision for things to come. It is vanity to love what passes quickly and not to look ahead where eternal joy abides. Often recall the proverb: "The eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear filled with hearing." Ecclesiastes 1:8

Try, moreover, to turn your heart from the love of things visible and bring yourself to things invisible. For they who follow their own evil passions stain their consciences and lose the grace of God.

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