

# Imitating Christ and Despising All Vanities on Earth

by Thomas a Kempis

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*To truly understand and follow Christ, one must imitate His life and habits, and seek the kingdom of heaven through contempt of the world.*

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 1:2, Matthew 6:19, John 8:12, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 1 John 2:15

**Topics:** "Imitating Christ", "Contempt Of World"

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## Description

Thomas a Kempis preaches on the importance of imitating the life and habits of Jesus Christ to be truly enlightened and free from blindness of heart. He emphasizes that understanding the words of Christ requires patterning one's entire life after Him, rather than just hearing the Gospel. Kempis highlights that true wisdom lies in seeking the kingdom of heaven through contempt of the world, warning against vanity in pursuing worldly riches, honor, and desires of the flesh.

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## Transcript

HE WHO follows Me, walks not in darkness," says the Lord.[1] 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." [2] 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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