

The Longings of Our Hearts Must Be Examined and Moderated

by Thomas a Kempis

To live a life pleasing to God, we must examine and moderate our desires, subjecting our flesh to the spirit and aligning our will with God's good pleasure.

Scripture: Romans 8:5, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Galatians 5:24, Philippians 2:13, Colossians 3:5

Topics: "Spiritual Discipline", "Godly Desires"

Description

Thomas a Kempis emphasizes the importance of aligning our desires with God's will, warning against selfishness and urging us to be earnest doers of God's will. He cautions against being driven by desires that do not honor God, reminding us to discern whether our actions are for His glory or our own benefit. Kempis advises exercising restraint in pursuing desires, resisting temptations, and disciplining the flesh to be in submission to the spirit, even if it requires force and chastisement.

Transcript

THE VOICE OF CHRIST

MY CHILD, it is necessary for you to learn many things which you have not yet learned well.

THE DISCIPLE

What are they, Lord?

THE VOICE OF CHRIST

That you conform your desires entirely according to My good pleasure, and be not a lover of self but an earnest doer of My will. Desires very often inflame you and drive you madly on, but consider whether you act for My honor, or for your own advantage. If I am the cause, you will be well content with whatever I ordain. If, on the other hand, any self-seeking lurk in you, it troubles you and weighs you down. Take care, then, that you do not rely too much on preconceived desire that has no reference to Me, lest you repent later on and be displeased with what at first pleased you and which you desired as being for the best. Not every desire which seems good should be followed immediately, nor, on the other hand, should every contrary affection be at once rejected.

It is sometimes well to use a little restraint even in good desires and inclinations, lest through too much eagerness you bring upon yourself distraction of mind; lest through your lack of discipline you create scandal for others; or lest you be suddenly upset and fall because of resistance from others. Sometimes, however, you must use violence and resist your sensual appetite bravely. You must pay no attention to what the flesh does or does not desire, taking pains that it be subjected, even by force, to the spirit. And it should be chastised and forced to remain in subjection until it is prepared for anything and is taught to be satisfied with little, to take pleasure in simple things, and not to murmur against inconveniences.

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