



# The Imitation of Christ: By Thomas à Kempis & Illustrated

Written by Thomas ã Kempis

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# Imitation of Christ: By Thomas À Kempis & Illustrated

By Thomas À Kempis

## The Imitation Of Christ

How is this book unique?

Illustrations included

# The Imitation Of Life

Unabridged

## The Imitation Of Christ Pdf

The Imitation of Christ (Latin: *De Imitatione Christi*) by Thomas À Kempis is a Christian devotional book. It was first composed in Latin ca.1418-1427. It is a handbook for spiritual life arising from the *Devotio Moderna* movement, of which Kempis was a member. The Imitation is perhaps the most widely read devotional work next to the Bible and is regarded as a devotional and religious classic. Its popularity was immediate, and it was printed 745 times before 1650. Apart from the Bible, no book has been translated into more languages than the Imitation of Christ. The text is divided into four books, which provide detailed spiritual instructions: "Helpful Counsels of the Spiritual Life", "Directives for the Interior Life", "On Interior Consolation" and "On the Blessed Sacrament". The approach taken in the Imitation is characterized by its emphasis on the interior life and withdrawal from the world, as opposed to an active imitation of Christ by other friars. The book places a high level of emphasis on the devotion to the Eucharist as key element of spiritual life.

“You can get used to anything,” chuckled a retired SS captain in a documentary recently about his posting to Auschwitz, after he’d described how the bodies in the gas chambers always formed a perfect pyramid, with its apex at the grille in the roof. We might take issue with this particular instance of “anything,” but the fact remains that human beings are amazingly adaptable when it comes to pushing the psychological boundaries. The initial shock of a new and unpleasant experience fairly quickly “You can get used to anything,” chuckled a retired SS captain in a documentary recently about his posting to Auschwitz, after he’d described how the bodies in the gas chambers always formed a perfect pyramid, with its apex at the grille in the roof. We might take issue with this particular instance of “anything,” but the fact remains that human beings are amazingly adaptable when it comes to pushing the psychological boundaries. The initial shock of a new and unpleasant experience fairly quickly levels out to a plateau that becomes the new norm.

What we today accept as normal, everyday life would have seemed a vision of hell to a man of the Middle Ages: technology run riot; workers enslaved to capitalism; sex, money and power the presiding deities; religion apparently the preserve of the ignorant, the superficial and the deceived.

The airwaves are creaking like an over-laden galleon under the weight of advice on everything from cosmetic surgery and nutrition to beauty therapies and relationships.

I watched a woman on TV last night having liposuction and extensive, invasive surgery to make her feel happier with her body. The lump of flesh on the operating table, drenched in blood and with two huge wings of fat and skin laid out on either side, made her look like the aftermath of a Viking Blood Eagle execution, or the subject of a tortured painting by Francis Bacon.

It seemed a perfect symbol for the way in which we have lost our way in the materialistic jungle, and certainly if I were Satan I’d be celebrating down the pub “mankind has been successfully hoodwinked, flooded and distracted with gadgets, obsessed with youth, beauty, money and sex, all

thoughts of salvation gone out the window.

The purity of the original message from any of the great religions seems to get contaminated as soon as it enters the corrupt medium of the world, so that what we end up with is an idea of the "Will of God" - if it exists at all - as one that is wholly bent on evil, as Umberto Eco suggests in "The Name of the Rose".

There is a need for a return, for a restoration of the spiritual balance without which life is a burden and a struggle, a minimalist drama by Beckett rather than a glorious opera by Mozart. Society will go marching on its self-destructive way, but as individuals we can look out for ourselves and try to rectify the psychic disorders by purifying ourselves of the rubbish that is constantly seeking to make inroads.

Thomas À Kempis's wonderful book is more relevant today than when it was written. You don't have to be a Christian or even particularly religious to derive nourishment from it. It hasn't been out of print for six hundred years, and is worth more than a library of modern "self-help" books.

The Imitation consists of four books on general spiritual topics, each divided into subsections dealing with more focused aspects: "On trust in God in all trouble", "On knowing ourselves", etc. After the Bible itself, no other work can compare with its profound wisdom, clarity of thought, and converting power. Christians of such widely differing period and outlook as Thomas More and General Gordon, Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley, Francis Xavier and Dr Johnson are but a few of the thousands who have acknowledged their debt to this work.

Although À Kempis spent most of his life in the cloister, his burning faith and love of God speak to us on the level of shared humanity. As F.R.Cruise says in his authoritative work on À Kempis, "Beyond doubt, the Imitation most perfectly reflects the light which Jesus Christ brought down from heaven to earth, and truthfully portrays the highest Christian philosophy."

...more

## The Imitation Of Christ Book

A classic. Not everyone's cup of tea. Demanding and ascetic, the upward road to salvation. No platitudes here and calming words, just the raw grain of uneasy truth. Handle with caution.

This is my go-to daily read I've carried around for the last few years, and it never gets old. When I need a good kick in the butt, I read Kempis. His excerpts are short but pack so much truth, and I can't tell you how many times I've just cried over his words as God has used this book to convict me of my self-exaltation and pride, and how the mercy of God meets us in our repentant and contrite hearts.

## The Imitation Of Life Cast

The Imitation of Christ consists of four "books". One each on:

- 1.) Good advice on the life of Christian faith;
- 2.) The interior life of the follower of Christ;
- 3.) Spiritual comfort; and
- 4.) Reflections on the Eucharist.

Each of these is further subdivided into anywhere from twelve to fifty-six mini-reflections on related topics. The third and longest book "the one on "spiritual comfort" is my personal favorite. Even though it's been over forty years since the first time I read Imitation I vividly recall my reaction to the "books". One each on:

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I still cry when I read " or listen to an audio version of " Jesus "speaking in the quiet of my heart" as Ã Kempis puts it.

Since that first time, I've read or listened to this spiritual classic more times than can be remembered. Even when I was turning my back on all things related to God, I went in search of a copy of this book. I was led to a modern translation of it in a little bookstore in Germany, where we were living at the time. That was my favorite translation ever but along the way someone else needed it more, so it's gone.

I've bought this book as gifts for Confirmation and graduation and I've tried out several different translations. The older " and yes more literal " ones tend to be a bit off-putting. Thomas Ã Kempis "the most probable author" was a 14th century monk. It was a different era. They took their spirituality seriously back then. Well some did anyway. If they were genuine and the author of Imitation seems to be the real deal.

So how much of it is applicable to modern people living in the world? I guess it depends on you. You can always get yourself a copy and just read what appeals to you. A place to begin might be where Jesus

tells how much He loves you, how good God is and how to look for lasting peace and consolation in Him. Once you fully saturate yourself in the mercy and love of God, then maybe youâ€™ll be ready to move on to some of the more challenging lessons. Nothing says the book has to be read in order.

For some years now I listen to this audio version while driving or crocheting. Itâ€™s an excellent modern translation. I can also recommend *The Heart and Soul of Imitating Christ: A Fresh Look at the Thomas a Kempis Classic*. I keep that with my Bible.

The Imitation of Christ is the most popular devotional after Holy Scripture.

Most highly recommended. ...more

This book is said to be written by a monk for monks. So, it talks about things that a normal human being like me, or probably like most of us who read for pleasure, hard to implement. Common, who among us can abandon our comfortable lives, pack another pair of clothes and join a religious organization just like what St. Francis of Assisi, Beatified Mother Teresa or the disciples of Jesus? For me they are the super-humans who are different from all of us.

I will never claim that I am religious and This book is said to be written by a monk for monks. So, it talks about things that a normal human being like me, or probably like most of us who read for pleasure, hard to implement. Common, who among us can abandon our comfortable lives, pack another pair of clothes and join a religious organization just like what St. Francis of Assisi, Beatified Mother Teresa or the disciples of Jesus? For me they are the super-humans who are different from all of us.

I will never claim that I am religious and that I always doubt that if I die now, I will go straight to heaven. Why? Because one thing that I find hard to do or will never ever do is to abandon what comforts I am enjoying now like living away from my wife and daughter and join the monks to pray and serve my fellowmen. I mean, what will happen to my wife and daughter? Especially my daughter who is still studying? She still needs my support and I have a responsibility to her as her father. Jesus said in Mark 20:25 that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for someone rich to enter the kingdom of God. And since it was Jesus who said that that basically is what the first part of *The Imitation of Christ*, "Helpful Counsels of the Spiritual Life" is all about. Well, aside from the importance of solitude and silence that I always find to have especially during the early mornings when I wake up to urinate and I could not sleep, I grab the rosary in my side of the bed and pray.

The second book "Directives for Inner Life" tells us that we are all passers-by in this world and that being passers-by, we should attribute everything to God. We should take up our cross just like the way Jesus did. If it is work that we consider us our cross, we should work hard and dedicate everything we do in the office to Him rather than to our boss. Everything is fleeting and ephemeral. Everything will pass. Your boss, who does not see your hard work and who is focused on himself or his own agenda will also pass. The job that you think you need will also pass and you will move on. Everything happens for a

reason and the important thing is that you live your life based on what God has designed for you. We should open our hearts and accept him. However, again, that is easier said than done. Again, read Mark 20:25.

The third book is my favorite not only because it is in the form of a dialogue between Jesus and one of his disciples but it can be summarized by one of my favorite biblical passages, John 14:16 that says "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Nothing else is important. If your boss scolds you, refuse to talk back and think of Jesus being the more important person than them (if they are wrong). What Jesus thinks of you is more important than what your boss thinks about you even if he thinks that you suck and you are deserved to be sacked. Don't worry, Jesus who sees the real you will show you the way.

The fourth and final book "On Blessed Sacrament" is also in the form of dialogue just like the third book but it is focused more on the sacraments as the practices that should remind us of Jesus Christ when he was still on earth like the holy mass and the sacred communion. It is through the sacraments that we can form union with Jesus and it is through following Him, through imitating Him that we can have share an eternal life with Him. ...more

## The Imitation Of Mary

Truly, this is a 1.5 star book in my record, but I didn't have the option. Although one of the most popular books in Christian literary history, I found this text difficult to connect with because of the jabbing absolutes and insistence on isolation. Kempis' Christianity resounds with joylessness; and as one member of our book group commented, he comes across as the kind likely to be disappointed by heaven.

The overwhelming theme of the text is suffering, that is, imitating Christ through suffering. Truly, this is a 1.5 star book in my record, but I didn't have the option. Although one of the most popular books in Christian literary history, I found this text difficult to connect with because of the jabbing absolutes and insistence on isolation. Kempis' Christianity resounds with joylessness; and as one member of our book group commented, he comes across as the kind likely to be disappointed by heaven.

The overwhelming theme of the text is suffering, that is, imitating Christ through suffering. Many times in the text, this point crescendos to suffering for the sake of suffering, rather than for any particular religious goal. Perhaps that impression stems from his lack of balance in describing Christian humility and our post-salvation predicament. Kempis endorses a life void of rejoicing in one's salvation, and suggests that to do so would imply haughtiness of spirit and a lack of contempt for sin. He also emphasizes disdain for the world, that the more mature one becomes in their faith, the more one should enjoy suffering and despise both self and world.

While I agree that humility is a difficult virtue to exist alongside human intellect, as humanity is always inventing ways to be impressed with itself, I cannot endorse Kempis' view that the world and self should be completely despised. Scripture tells us that the Kingdom of God is NOW, not just in the future, but occurring since Jesus began his ministry and finding its fulfillment in heaven. Why Kempis avoids this discussion, I do not know. However, if God is able to reside in my own heart, then there is that part of me which should never be despised.

Kempis also insist on solitude in the Christian life, and while it is true that we all eventually fail one another due to our own sinful imperfections, nowhere in scripture do I find solitude and isolation endorsed. Kempis says that one should seek God not above others, but instead of others. Again, this avoids a scriptural discussion on the body of Christ and our needs and obligations to others. Again and again, scripture resounds with the reminder that we cannot exist outside of community. Which, I suppose, is why even the monks retired from the world in the company of others.

The emphasis on suffering was a good reminder that adversity is, indeed, a guarantee of the Christian life (of any life, for that matter); and Kempis' insistence on faithfulness in the experience of suffering is a needed reminder for today's feel-good age. Also enjoyable, and boosting my review from 1 to 1.5 stars, is the end portion on communion. Reading Kempis' guide to communion preparation reminds the spirit of what a contrite posture feels like, and helps one bend into that impossible pose.

Overall, this is not a book I enjoyed reading, but my own disagreements with the text were quite stimulating. Perhaps that is the aim of Thomas a Kempis' impossible absolutes. ...more

This book is going to forever be in either of two places in my home; my coffee table or my bedside. Reading this book this morning was like drinking deep of Christ's love. Thomas a Kempis wrote this

devotion in such a way to fan the flame in our soul with beautiful gentle words. It is a book that calls one deeper and farther in to the heart of God. Psalm 42:7 sums it up: "Deep calls unto deep at the sound of thy waterfalls; All thy breakers and thy waves have rolled over me.

## The Imitation Of Life 1934

It would be difficult to overstate the impact this book has had on me. Yes, it's really, really Catholic. Yes, it's ascetic. No, it's most definitely not pro-woman. Even so, I think Jesus meant it when he said to deny ourselves and take up our crosses daily but mention that to a modern evangelical and watch them recoil in horror. This little book calls the reader to a life of intensity and discipline in following Christ. It's not comforting or particularly warm and it makes no accommodations. You need to do that yourself. It would be difficult to overstate the impact this book has had on me. Yes, it's really, really Catholic. Yes, it's ascetic. No, it's most definitely not pro-woman. Even so, I think Jesus meant it when he said to deny ourselves and take up our crosses daily but mention that to a modern evangelical and watch them recoil in horror. This little book calls the reader to a life of intensity and discipline in following Christ. It's not comforting or particularly warm and it makes no accommodations. You need to do that yourself. It took me 4 years to finish this book because every passage is so incredibly rich that I couldn't take in too much at any one time. Honestly I can't even recommend it to very many people because it's so hard core. If you're a nominal Christian who likes feel-good sermons and that book about the little boy who goes to Heaven, bless you but skip this one. Try Dennis Okholm's "Monk Habits for Everyday People" if you want to get all monastic but think denying yourself means not sleeping in on Sunday. I'm serious, it's a good book. I think I gave it 4 stars. But if you're 100% serious about following Jesus, if knowing God is the highest priority in your life, if you get the concept of willingly plucking out your eye to keep yourself out of Hell, then get this book and read it slowly and carefully. There's a lot of chaff, let that go but hold on tightly to the wheat. It will nourish you. ...more

Currently reading and re-reading (for the rest of my life). Anyone who embraces the wisdom in this book and lives by its precepts, will be a happy and content person. Imitation of Christ was written by a Benedictine monk around 1429. The truth he writes of transcends centuries and applies as much to today's modern man/woman as it did back then because it addresses the issues and attitudes that lie in the human heart. Our world will never change until we, collectively, change our heart attitudes.

## The Imitation Of Christ Quotes

If anyone can claim the credentials to be a "card carrying evangelical", it's me. Born and raised Church of the Nazarene. Saved at grandma's Methodist church camp. Baptized, second-act-of-grace sanctification, Youth for Christ trained, Billy Graham crusade foot soldier. It is a membership that lasted well over forty years. But by the end of the 2004 presidential campaign, if there had been somewhere I could go and turn in my card, I would have gladly done so. By that time the word "evangelical" If anyone can claim the credentials to be a "card carrying evangelical", it's me. Born and raised Church of the Nazarene. Saved at grandma's Methodist church camp. Baptized, second-act-of-grace sanctification, Youth for Christ trained, Billy Graham crusade foot soldier. It is a membership that lasted well over forty years. But by the end of the 2004 presidential campaign, if there had been somewhere I could go and turn in my card, I would have gladly done so. By that time the word "evangelical" had pretty much lost any sense of religious identification for me. It had been almost completely co-opted by Republican political operatives and Christian Fundamentalists with whom I had little or no sense of theological community.

In retrospect, my departure from mainstream evangelicalism had starting years earlier, when I discovered the Social Justice wing of the church, which, in my own view, remained Protestant and Wesleyan. But as I grew old and crusty, my faith journey started to take some strange twists and turns. In retrospect, the mile stones in this journey became marked by a reading list that grew ever wider from the boundaries of my Protestant upbringing and education.

This book shelf, "Evangelical Escape Pod" is actually a literary history of books that have brought me to a place that would probably send my Nazarene Sunday School teachers into a frenzy of Wednesday night Prayer Meeting intercession (or possibly intervention). It began with this book, "The Imitation of Christ", which I first read probably sometime in the late 80s. It was the first sharp departure from my Protestant Reformation comfort zone, and began a long, slow and still evolving transformation ...more

When I do not remember who to be, or how to live, or what to think, then it is best for me to recall this book. But perhaps all the times I have not done so have made the moments where the mists clear and I do find it all the better.

I do not think it is possible to create a piece of art that could help people as much as this book. That is no loss, though. The same thing does not need to be said a thousand times - it only needs to be really heard, and then lived. This is, for me, the summation of When I do not remember who to be, or how to live, or what to think, then it is best for me to recall this book. But perhaps all the times I have not done so have made the moments where the mists clear and I do find it all the better.

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heard, and then lived. This is, for me, the summation of human talent and wisdom. What is philosophy, or science, or politics, or art, or culture for, if not to live well? Almost every discussion I've seen of living well has lacked so terribly much. Thomas À Kempis illustrated it perfectly. It is difficult. It is, perhaps, impossible. But the path he points to seems, to me, to be the most true. And perhaps that is why it so hard, because we do not want to hear the truth. Still we can know it, for its frailest fruits are more valuable, peaceful, brave, and beautiful than the greatest cities of luxuries. ...more

## The Imitation Of Christ Amazon

For someone who goes so far wrong sometimes (and he really does), when a Kempis gets things right, he hits the nail dead on the head. There were definitely things that I didn't agree with in this book, but the main, overarching themes -- the supreme importance of God, dying to self, not attaching oneself to earthly things, not pursuing knowledge for knowledge's sake -- are absolute, incontrovertible truth. These ideas can certainly be wrongly applied, and he did definitely stray too far in the direction of asceticism and dualism, but he's still absolutely right when he says, "Help me to know continually that there can be no true happiness, no fulfilling of thy purpose for me, apart from a life lived in and for the Son of thy love." All in all, this was an incredibly helpful and timely book to me, in reminding me where my priorities and affections need to be, and on Whom my security/stability needs to be founded. In spite of its flaws (I won't even get into his ideas about the Eucharist), it spoke to me where I was at, and the Lord used it to solidify some very important lessons in my mind. You just have to chew the meat and spit out the bones -- and after all, that's going to be true of even the best books by the most orthodox authors.

"Oh, if men bestowed as much labor in the rooting out of vices and planting of virtues as they do in proposing questions, there would neither be such great evils and slanders in the world, nor so much looseness among us. Truly, when the day of judgment comes, we shall not be examined as to what we have read, but what we have done (Matt. 25); not how well we have spoken, but how we have lived."  
...more

I read this back in 2006. Although I don't agree with much of the theology presented by a Kempis, I found the book beautiful and moving. The man loved God and he pours out his heart on the pages. He also writes what he believes Jesus tells him in response. The book brought tears to my eyes a few times.

## The Imitation Of The Behaviors Of Others Is Called

The solipsistic faith enjoined in this book doesn't resonate with me at all. The basic thrust is that a person's mortal life is nothing but garbage compared to the glories awaiting those who erase themselves and express enough love toward God. Whereas this book instructs the devout to eliminate all relationships and attachment to "the world," I believe in a Christianity that calls for deeper human connection to each other and to God's present creation.

This is one of the heaviest books I've ever read in the realm of christian thought. Each 1-4 page chapter has to be digested individually (thus the snail's pace taken to get through it) and meditated upon afterwards in order to get the full effect. It's definitely a book to own, as I could easily see how you could read it once a year for the rest of your life and still get something meaningful and enlightening out of it each time.

It just occurred to me to revisit the preface and sure enough I di This is one of the heaviest books I've ever read in the realm of christian thought. Each 1-4 page chapter has to be digested individually (thus the snail's pace taken to get through it) and meditated upon afterwards in order to get the full effect. It's definitely a book to own, as I could easily see how you could read it once a year for the rest of your life and still get something meaningful and enlightening out of it each time.

It just occurred to me to revisit the preface and sure enough I discovered my justification in slow reading pace and heaviness of text:

"We offer a final word about the act of reading these spiritual classics. From the very earliest accounts of monastic practice it is evident that a form of reading called *lectio divina* was essential to any deliberate spiritual life. This kind of reading is quite different from that of scanning a text for useful facts and bits of information, or advancing along an exciting plot line to a climax in the action. It is, rather, a meditative approach, by which the reader seeks to taste and savor the beauty and truth of every phrase and passage."

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