

Pursuing the Higher Life: The Imitation of Christ



Exploring Book 1: *Counsels on the Spiritual Life*

By G. E. Carlin

INTRODUCTION

Thomas a Kempis: *The Imitation of Christ*

Max Heindel refers to Thomas a Kempis' book, *The Imitation of Christ* as his "own special book" on Rosicrucian Christianity. As, he believed that this devotional classic addressed all aspects of what might be needed or addressed in one's life in the pursuit of a higher life and "to accelerate their devotional nature".

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.
(1 Tim 4:13 KJV)

The Imitation of Christ calls the reader to imitate and study the life and habits of Christ so that we might grow in our spiritual life. Hence the very first line of the book reads, "HE WHO follows Me, walks not in darkness," (John 8:12). If we follow or imitate the life of Christ then his light will guide our way, show us truth and wisdom, and provide us with peace and salvation.

We must imitate Christ's life and his ways if we are to be truly enlightened and set free from the darkness of our own hearts. Let it be the most important thing we do, then, to reflect on the life of Jesus Christ. – The Imitation of Christ

The Imitation of Christ is actually four books, written in the 1400's by the monk, Thomas a Kempis, as an instructional guide for the spiritual life of monks. It addresses the start of a brother's life in the monastery, how one's spiritual life should progress, and the sacrament of Holy Communion. The overall theme of the book focuses on *humility* which is considered to be the "antidote" to our greatest obstacle, our *pride*.

The four books of *The Imitation of Christ* are:

- Book 1: *Admonitions, Useful for the Spiritual Life*
- Book 2: *Admonitions Concerning Internal Things*
- Book 3: *Of Internal Consolation*
- Book 4: *Concerning the Holy Communion.*

Each book consists of chapters that deal with a specific topic, *such as*:

- *Imitation of Christ and contempt for worldly vanities,*
- *Intimate friendship with Jesus,*
- *Humble obedience following the example of Jesus Christ,*
- *Submit in faith to Christ as an imitator not an investigator, etc.*

For instance, in Book One, Chapter Two, Thomas a Kempis encourages us to have a *humble opinion* of ourselves and to understand that the possession of knowledge and talent does not make us better than others, it means we must have greater humility and understand that we have much more to learn in our journey of self-realization and things can always change.

*EVERY man naturally desires knowledge; but what good is knowledge without fear of God? Indeed a humble rustic who serves God is better than a proud intellectual who neglects his soul to study the course of the stars. ... The more you know and the better you understand, the more severely will you be judged, unless your life is also the more holy. Do not be proud, therefore, because of your learning or skill. Rather, fear because of the talent given you. If you think you know many things and understand them well enough, realize at the same time that there is much you do not know. ... Wherefore, if you see another sin openly or commit a serious crime, do not consider yourself better, for you do not know how long you can remain in good estate. – **The Imitation of Christ***

His writing of the book was constructed as specific directions in the first two books for the reader and directions embedded within a narrative between Christ and a disciple for the next two books. It was written to reflect the “*humility, discipline and love*” of Jesus Christ so as to provide specific information on how to best *imitate* (follow) Him in their daily lives.

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (John 8:12 KJV)

In his form of imitation, Thomas a Kempis provided guidance for inner spiritual development and the establishment of ideal virtues of a Christian interior life. And just as with St. Francis, he tried to impress a great love for the Eucharist and its connection to Christ as an being essential to one’s spiritual development and progression in their imitation of Christ.

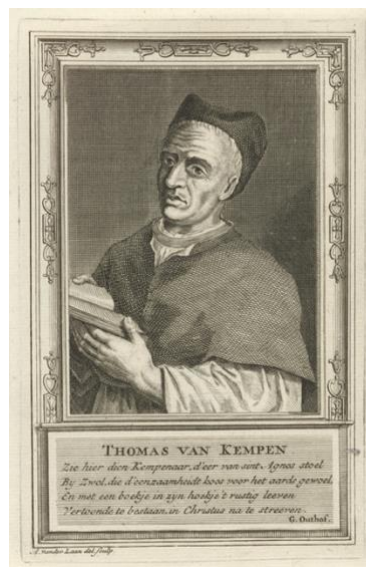
*For they truly know their Lord in the breaking of bread, whose heart within them so vehemently burneth, whilst Thou, O blessed Jesus, dost walk and converse with them. – **The Imitation of Christ***

In order to imitate Christ, it is essential that we put our entire trust in Him and not trust others or even yourself. We should accept that humility will bring us suffering, because it through our suffering we grow spiritually and learn to completely submit ourselves to God. In addition, we need to separate ourselves from the temporal thing of this life and focus on the things of heaven in our next life.

*For Thou, O Lord, my God, art best above all things; Thou only art the Most High, Thou only the Almighty, Thou only the All-sufficient, and the Fulness of all things; Thou only the All-delightful and the All-comforting; Thou alone the altogether lovely and altogether loving; Thou alone the Most Exalted and Most Glorious above all things; in Whom all things are, and were, and ever shall be, altogether and all-perfect. And thus it falleth short and is insufficient whatsoever Thou givest to me without Thyself or whatsoever Thou revealest or dost promise concerning Thyself, whilst Thou art not seen or fully possessed: since verily my heart cannot truly rest nor be entirely content, except it rest in Thee, and go beyond all gifts and every creature. - **The Imitation of Christ***

Thomas a Kempis calls upon us to not only have “*humility, resignation, and patience*” in our spiritual life but to make sure that we also fulfill our duties for ourselves and others. Whatever we do we should always seek to do our best and build upon our knowledge so we may better serve others so that they see us as examples of living a righteous life for the glory of Christ. By living a life of service, “*walking the path of duty*”, we will increase our spiritual consciousness so that we can apply of higher knowledge we gained of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control.

Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. (James 3:13-18 KJV)



The Imitation of Christ as a Devotional Book

In *The Rosicrucian Philosophy in Questions and Answers, Vol. 2*, Question #81, Max Heindel declares that *The Imitation of Christ* fills the need for a devotional book for The Rosicrucian Fellowship and students can find passages for every aspect of their spiritual life that they can read and reread to “*accelerate their devotional nature*”. For Heindel, just as Thomas a Kempis, strongly advocates imitating Christ in our daily life so that we can move towards our Higher Self.

There is a way to be prepared, and it is sure: “Look to Christ,” and keep your mind busy every waking moment when not engaged in your daily work, studying how you may serve Him. Endeavor by every available means to carry out in a practical manner the ideas thus conceived. The more closely we imitate Christ, the more loyally we follow the dictates of the Higher Self, the more certainly shall we vanquish the lower nature and win the only war worthwhile winning. -Max Heindel

Rudolf Steiner goes even further to say that *The Imitation of Christ* is “*almost on a par with the New Testament*”. In many letters to his students, Rudolf Steiner advises students everyday as part of their morning exercise to select a sentence from Thomas a Kempis’ *The Imitation of Christ* to exclusively concentrate on for *six to eight* minutes over an extended period of time (“*weeks*”). He describes the effect of this concentration on a single sentence from *The Imitation of Christ* as penetrating, spreading and filling your consciousness so that a “*spiritually alive thought*” is absorbed into every aspect of your being. While it also builds your strength to provide you with the courage and confidence you need to overcome life’s obstacles and persevere so you can continue to spiritually grow and fulfill God’s will. While Heindel also includes the use of *The Imitation of Christ* as part our devotional exercises so that we can learn how to become closer to Christ by building the habits within ourselves that lead to a humble and virtuous life that seeks only to love our neighbors, heal their pain and suffering, and serve the will of the Father.

Devotional exercises are a powerful means of putting us in tune with the Christ. Through them we gain an intuitional faculty whereby we feel the suffering of others, and at the same time we find the way to ease their pain So first and foremost, let us have devotional exercised, reading from the Bible with reference to how Christ healed the sick and comforted the suffering. Take THE IMITATION OF CHRIST, by Thomas a Kempis, or anything else of a thoroughly devotional nature, [to further understand how to pursue a higher spiritual life].

– **Max Heindel**

How to Read *The Imitation of Christ*:

Lectio Divina (Divine Reading)

In spiritual reading we are called to read spiritual classics such as *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis and even magazine and online spiritual articles so we can grow in *divine love*. In spiritual reading we read anything that reflects God's glory, speaks to a devout, spiritual, or holy life, helps us grow in our dedication to God, or teaches us how to live a life that is pure, righteous, or sacred in the eyes of God. A very common type of spiritual reading is the lives of saints and the writings of the church Doctors so that we can learn through the example of others who have greatly pleased God or their significant contribution to church doctrine.

Lectio Divina or divine reading is a form of spiritual reading that is primarily used for the Bible but may be used for any devotional reading. It consists of four steps:

- 1. *Lectio*** (Read) As most of the chapters in *The Imitation of Christ, Book One* are relatively short, you can select a chapter to read. The Key is to read it slowly more than once. As the first read will familiarize you with the reading and subsequent readings will then allow you to listen and watch as you read to see, hear, or feel if God is directing you to a specific word, phrase, or sentence. In the case of *The Imitation of Christ*, you might also put yourself with Thomas a Kempis imagining he is speaking these words to you as a friend who is imparting advice. Then you might consider what specifically touched you in his words, connected strongly to you, or even brought you somewhere else in your mind.
- 2. *Meditatio*** (Mediate/Reflect) Put the word, phrase, or sentence into a loop within your mind so it repeats slowly over and over again. Try to just watch and experience it and not drift off into other thoughts and feelings. In time it should find its way into your heart. As here in reflection is where we should become clear on the meaning of the identified word(s), how they relate to you now, the purpose of them being brought now to you, and what action(s) they are leading you towards.
- 3. *Oratio*** (Pray/Respond) This is your time to tell God what you heard Him telling you, how you felt about what He was telling you, how you plan to respond, what help or materials you might need from Him, and even ask any questions or just make comments on your thoughts. Whether it is a conversation, a prayer, or a monologue is up to you.
- 4. *Contemplio*** (Contemplate/Rest) You said what you have need to say and now it's time to simply rest in the silence of God's presence. You are an empty vessel into which the Lord will now fill with his divine spirit so it may transform your heart so it may be opened to new ideas, find the power to forgive, let go of what is not needed, find new ways to love, show you the next step in your spiritual journey, or whatever is needed for you so you may move closer to the Lord. So, just be silent as difficult as it may be for you and relish your time within the silent embrace of the Lord.

Spiritual Reading and *St. Alphonsus de Liguori*

In his book *The True Spouse of Jesus Christ*, St. Alphonsus de Liguori, the patron saint of lawyers, moralists, confessors, and moral theologians writes a section entitled “*On Spiritual Reading*” which he describes spiritual books as “*not less useful than mental prayer*”. It was his firm belief that “*spiritual reading and prayer are the arms by which ... paradise is won.*”. St Bernard expands upon this concept, that we should “*seek*” holy and devout thoughts by reading spiritual books then when we meditate upon what we have read we will find what we were seeking, as “*reading puts into the mouth the food that is afterward masticated by meditation*”.

In addition, spiritual books act as “*shields*” to protect us from our own negative thoughts. While they can also function as a “*mirror*” to help us identify our own areas of imperfections so we can work to improve them. Yet, perhaps the greatest blessing of spiritual books is that God has the opportunity to speak to us through these books and if we intently listen with an open heart and open ears, we will hear God’s voice as we read. In your mind the spiritual book you are reading can be your own Sermon on the Mount, epistles from Jesus or any saint on any range of spiritual topics, private instruction on healing, divine love, service, etc. In order to effectively receive the greatest benefit (“*great fruit*”) from spiritual books St. Alphonsus Liguori proposed a five-step approach.

St. Augustine writes that good books are, as it were, so many letters of love the Lord sends us; in them he warns us of our dangers, teaches us the way of salvation, animates us to suffer adversity, enlightens us, and inflames us with divine love. Whoever, then, desires to be saved and to acquire divine love, should often read these letters of paradise.
- St. Alphonsus Liguori, *The True Spouse of Jesus Christ*

St. Alphonsus Liguori Steps for Spiritual Reading

1. Start with a Prayer

As God will speak to you through the reading of your spiritual book it is proper if you first let God know you are ready to hear His voice and to obey His commands. It is helpful to also God to open our minds so we fully understand His will during the course of our reading. St. Alphonsus Liguori recommends starting with the words of Samuel: “***Speak; for thy servant heareth***”. And adding “**O my Lord, for I wish to obey Thee in all that Thou wilt make known to me to be Thy will.**”

And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. (1 Samuel 3:10 KJV)

2. Continue Slowly

Spiritual reading differs in most reading in that its purpose is not to acquire knowledge but to open ourselves to new realities so that we may enrich ourselves in a greater wealth of divine love. Therefore, we need to slow down while reading and not read quickly just to finish because we are simply trying to satisfy our curiosity.

3. Meditate While Reading

As you read your spiritual book *slowly* you should put your full *concentration* on what you are reading. For this St. Augustine makes the analogy that nutrients for your body only come from “*well masticated food*” or spiritual information that is read slowly and concentrated upon from the spiritual books so that your body can use it to “*nourish your soul*”. After a while as you read spiritual books, you may notice that the words themselves dictate the pace (tempo) at which you read them and they become less “*static*” and more dynamic in terms of what they are intended to present to the reader. Just as in music where there are rests, periods of silence, reading should also include times of silence when we begin to fully concentrate while reading.

Concentration during reading may mean going line-by-line or short paragraph-by short paragraph so that you are not only fully connected to what the words are saying but you are establishing connections with these words to other things or texts (past, present, and future), the symbolism they touch upon, chronology, theology, consider its application to your own life, etc. Remember, when we concentrate, we allow any of your other thoughts or emotions about the text to simply pass and not distract us so that we can stay in the present moment with the spiritual book. Ideally, what we read has to be read more than once!

4. Pause to Pray at Heartfelt Times

There will be times when you are reading a spiritual book that something special or insightful touches you or “*penetrates the heart*”. So, stop reading and offer a heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving to God. Do not be concerned if you have only read a brief amount in your spiritual book before you stop to offer a pray to God. It’s not about finishing the book – it’s about mining the *divine love* from the book and then remembering to thank God when you do find it. Also, allow your prayer to remain active and conclude of its own volition.

5. Take a Thought with You During Your Day

After you have finished your spiritual reading, there should be some idea, concept, application, or practice that you can reflect upon throughout the day in terms of how it might apply to your life and how you want to interact with others. As you go throughout your day visualize this idea, concept, application, or practice, write some notes or thoughts about it, talk to a trusted friend/mentor about this, try a few simple attempts and notice the reactions of others, etc.

Using this Guide Book

There are many different translations of *The Imitation of Christ*, this guide book is primarily based upon the translation by Leo Sherley-Price, Dorset Press, NY, 1986 (ISBN 0-88029-078-1) with the *Applications* section based upon the translation by Richard Challoner, D.D., Tan Books and Publishers, Rockford, IL, 1989 (ISBN: 0-89555-348-1).

However, you may use any translation of *The Imitation of Christ*. There are several free .pdf file versions of the book available online.

This book addresses the twenty-five chapters of *The Imitation of Christ*, Book One: *Counsels on the Spiritual Life*. For each chapter, the following is provided:

- Scripture quote related to the chapter using the AMP Bible translation
- Visual related to the chapter content
- Synopsis of the chapter
- Additional Scripture quotes related to topics in the chapter
- Prayer related to the chapter or portion of the chapter
- Meditation Quote(s)
- Reflection Questions
- Contemplation on a Heindel Quote for Application in our Life
- Applications

Balloon Method: Mapping Out the Quote Table

For each chapter there is a Contemplation On a selected Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life that uses the “*Balloon Method*” that is thoroughly modelled in Chapter 1: *On the Imitation of Christ*.

In the table to map out the Heindel quote you start by (1) breaking the quote into smaller phrases. (2) Identify the action of the phrase. Possible actions include:

- **Step:** a measure or action, especially one of a series taken in order to deal with or achieve a particular thing.
- **Qualifier:** a word or phrase used to attribute a quality to another word or subject
- **Outcome:** a final product or end result; consequence; issue.
- **Subject:** a person or thing that is being discussed, described, or dealt with
- **Action:** a thing done; a deed, do something (an act).
- **Alternative:** (of one or more things) available as another possibility.
- **Reason:** a cause, explanation, or justification for an action or event.

(3) Identify the Key Word and its meaning from each phrase, and (4) What are your thoughts and connections to the Key Word?

Suggestions:

- *Lectio Divina* (divine reading) can be used for any and all the Scripture quotes in the chapters as well as the chapter readings.
- *Visio Divina* (divine seeing) can be used for meditating on the images provided for each chapter.
- Spend *one-week* on each chapter of the Guide Book for the *Imitation of Christ*.
- Read the original chapter for each chapter of *The Imitation of Christ*. Sometimes it is also helpful to read different translations.
- Adapt the prayer as you feel best serves you.
- When several quotes are provided for the *Meditation* section, select the one that you connect best with for your meditation.
- The *Reflection Questions* require that you consider your understanding of the information from the chapter and how it applies or connects to your present life.
- The *Balloon Method* used for Heindel's quote allows you to connect with Christ for His insights on how the quote applies/connects to your life and your needed actions.
- The *Applications* sections addresses the actions, steps, and plans that you plan to implement in your life in relation to the chapter topics.
- In your spiritual reading you may use either the *Lectio Divina method* or the *St. Alphonsus Liguori Steps for Spiritual Reading*.
- Keep an ongoing journal of your work with the Guide Book.

Spiritual reading, therefore, is slow, deliberate, meditative reading in which we allow the words to penetrate our heart and question our spirit. - **Henri J.M. Nouwen**

Chapter 1: *On the Imitation of Christ*

Therefore become imitators of God [copy Him and follow His example], as well-beloved children [imitate their father]; and walk continually in love [that is, value one another—practice empathy and compassion, unselfishly seeking the best for others], just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God [slain for you, so that it became] a sweet fragrance.

(Ephesians 5:1-2 AMP)



In terms of finding the spirit of Christ we may first start by following His life. Yet, we cannot begin to have Christ within ourselves if we are filled with our own vanity. We need to learn to go beyond ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit to be our guide. If we let our pride go unchecked then we begin to believe that we know best, better than God, then just as with Saul we will lose God's blessing. *“For those who follow only their natural inclinations defile their conscience, and lose the grace of God.”* Therefore, we need to move our heart from the temporary things of life to the eternal, invisible nature of God's glory and presence. Money, fame, and fulfilling our desires is meaningless and empty compared to the light we shall walk in when we follow Him.

In order to help us keep ourselves focused on God's love and always serve Him we must bring our vanity to the cross so it may be crucified. And as Thomas a Kempis advises we should always have within our mind the following scripture from the Bible:

“The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing” -
Ecclesiastes 1:8 KJV

My Prayer to Walk in the Light

Lord and Teacher, Light of the World, allow me to follow Your way so I shall not walk in darkness. Fill me with Your Spirit so that I may delight in Your Words and serve You alone as my Master and thereby have the Light of Life. Guide me Lord in my efforts to mold my life in accordance to Your divine nature so that I too may overcome the trappings of this world and have the daily privilege of feasting upon Your heavenly manna and also receive the small white stone as a special gift of fellowship to be celebrated at Your banquets with a good heart that can absorb Your spiritual Light. As I have previously walked in darkness with a blind heart and suffered the pain of walking apart from you my Lord, I now ask that you restore my sight so I may always be in Your Light protected from evil and any destruction that might come my way. Therefore, let my eye be single so that Your Light will fill my entire body and as I imitate Your ways of righteousness without sin, allow me to will walk in the Light so I may see the reality of Your will and live in Your divine power knowing that I am living my life by Your Word, directing my affections to the eternal so that I may grow in the gift of Your grace. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

[O]ur imitation of God in this life — that is, our willed imitation as distinct from any of the likenesses which He has impressed upon our natures or states — must be an imitation of God incarnate: our model is the Jesus, not only of Calvary, but of the workshop, the roads, the crowds, the clamorous demands and surly oppositions, the lack of all peace and privacy, the interruptions. For this, so strangely unlike anything we can attribute to the Divine life in itself, is apparently not only like, but is, the Divine life operating under human conditions.

– C. S. Lewis

Reflection Questions:

1. What will be your first steps in following the life and ways of Christ?
2. What is the “spirit of Christ”?
3. What are your greatest vanities?
4. What are the “visible things” that you so greatly love?
5. How will you direct your affections to the invisible things?

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Balloon Method

a. Read the quote several times (if possible, memorize it):

“When we are content to follow “in His steps” to that point of self-sacrifice where we can say from the bottom of our hearts, “Thy will, not mine,” then we have surely the light within, and there will never henceforth be for us that which we feel as darkness. We shall walk in the light.”

b. Mapping Out the Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections
<i>follow “in his steps”</i>	Step 1	Steps:	
<i>“Thy will, not mine,”</i>	Qualifier	Will:	
<i>have surely the light within.</i>	Outcome	Light:	
<i>never henceforth be for us that which we feel as darkness</i>	Outcome	Darkness:	
<i>We shall walk in the light.</i>	Outcome	Walk:	

c. Slowly recite/read the quote word by word in your mind.

d. Focus on each word and phrase in terms of what it means to the chapter heading, i.e., Chapter 2: ***“Imitation of Christ”***

d. Imagine that for each connection you make to one of the words/phrases in the quote a helium balloon with the name of that connection attaches to the chapter heading (i.e., a heavy metal sign of the chapter heading name, “i.e., *Imitation of Christ*”).

e. As you continue to reread the quote in your mind more balloons will attach to the chapter heading sign while others disappear (burst, fly away, or simply vanish).

f. Eventually through repetition you will be left with a small set of balloons (connections) to your chapter heading sign. Continue your repetition to confirm the final set of balloons (connections) as this will be the connections you need to consider in terms of how they apply to your life.

g. Then imagine you are in the presence of Christ and listen for His insights on the remaining balloons (connections) and how they apply them to your life. As Christ may choose to release some of the remaining balloons, change the wording of the connections on some of the balloons, or even add a new balloon (connection) to the chapter heading sign. In addition, He may choose to enlarge or shrink some balloons, fill the balloons with different amounts of attractive energy, change the color of the balloons, change the font type/size/color/highlighting of the connection words, or move the balloons closer/further from the chapter heading sign.

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

e. Now consider how you would you place the meaning and insights from the final balloons (connections) from this quote within your life.

f. When ready, remain in silence in the presence of Christ and experience the intimacy of His loving embrace.

g. Contemplation Reflection: *On the Imitation of Christ*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How have you sought to KNOW Christ in your life?</i></p>	<p><i>How have you sought to LOVE Christ in your life?</i></p>
<p><i>How have you sought to FOLLOW Christ in your life?</i></p>	<p><i>What is most challenging for you in living as Christ lived, why?</i></p>
<p><i>When have you smelled the “sweet fragrance” of Christ on your life?</i></p>	

Chapter 2: *On Personal Humility*

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit [through factional motives, or strife], but with [an attitude of] humility [being neither arrogant nor self-righteous], regard others as more important than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3 AMP)



As Rosicrucians it is vital that we acquire certain knowledge upon our spiritual path. However, we should not become fixated upon acquiring knowledge or to use it in boasting to others. We must always respect the knowledge or skill we have worked to acquire, always remembering how much we do not know.

“Do not be conceited, but [rather stand in great awe of God and] fear [Him]” – Romans 11:20 AMP

Isaac Newton who is considered one of the world’s most intellectually gifted men went as far as to say;

“I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”

With the acquisition of knowledge, we must always have a fear or reverence of God and realize our unworthiness if we wish to raise our soul to the Father. As Thomas a Kempis states, *“A true understanding and humble estimate of oneself is the highest and most valuable of all lessons.”* Ultimately, it is love that God asks of us to live a holy life not to find ways to imagine you are better than others.

“If anyone imagines that he knows and understands anything [of divine matters, without love], he has not yet known as he ought to know.”

– **1 Corinthians 8:2 AMP**

Therefore, our task is to always:

1. *“Take no account of oneself”*
2. *“Think well and highly of others”.*
3. Don’t consider yourself better than someone *“doing evil or carrying out a wicked purpose”*
4. *“Consider none more frail than yourself.”*

My Prayer for Humility

Christ, My Lord of Righteousness, through Your love and mercy help me to decrease my pride and arrogance so that I may increase the lowliness of my mind and be great now in Your kingdom. Allow me to truly see myself in comparison to Your greatness so that I know that I must always be dependent upon Your grace. Should I excel at anything let me understand that that all my abilities and accomplishments come from You, my Lord. For then I can live by faith in which I always submit to Your will, have total trust in Your Way, and put the needs of others above those of myself. I know that the power to be saved only comes from You, my Lord, and Your willingness to exchange our sins for Your righteousness. Christ, My Lord of mercy, through Your love and goodness help me to decrease my pride and arrogance so that I may increase my humility and through my fear of Your greatness open me to the instruction of Your wisdom, realizing that I must have patience and self-control. For then I am ready to deny myself and take up Your cross ready to follow You in which it is; “Not my will, but yours be done”. For I know that the power to be saved only comes from You, my Lord, and I will be Your obedient servant ready to fulfill Your divine will. Therefore, my Lord, teach me to be humble and to ignore selfish ambition and vain conceit and to live a life committed to the betterment and service of others. For I only wish to choose Your way and walk in humility with You, my Lord, as You always show favor to the humble and promote us when the time is right. Yet, let me not walk in humility alone but in the community of others so that we lift each other up so we may all become more like You in Your majesty. Amen (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

*He who knows that he is dust and ashes, and into dust must soon return, will never proudly exalt himself: and he who has pondered upon the eternity of God, and reflects upon that short space, or, so to speak, point of space, which constitutes human life, will ever keep death before his eyes, and be humble and lowly. For this corruptible body weighs down the soul, and our hearts, entangled with so many things, become depressed by this earthly tabernacle. Wherefore, let us say in all humility: - "Lord, my heart is not exalted, nor are my eyes lofty; neither have I walked in great matters, nor in wonderful things above me." All true humility, then, is to be sought, not so much in words as in the mind, so that in the innermost conviction of our souls, we should acknowledge ourselves to be nothing; nor ought we ever to imagine ourselves either to know or to understand anything, or to be anything at all. - **Saint Jerome***

Reflection Questions:

1. What *knowledge* has been important in making you who you are today?
2. How do you demonstrate your *fear of God*?
3. What knowledge do you believe is important/not important for your *soul*?
4. What skills or knowledge do you have that can cause you to be *conceited*?
5. How do you keep yourself *humble* each day?

*But I say, walk habitually in the [Holy] Spirit [seek Him and be responsive to His guidance], and then you will certainly not carry out the desire of the [a]sinful nature [which responds impulsively without regard for God and His precepts]. (**Galatians 5:16 AMP**)*

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

Let go of ego and embrace humility, for it is through humility that true spiritual progress is made.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Personal Humility*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How can I use my thoughts to know Christ more deeply?</i></p>	<p><i>How have you applied Christ's teachings on Salvation in your life?</i></p>
<p><i>How have you applied faith to all divine and human sciences?</i></p>	<p><i>What have I neglected to do for my salvation because of my pride?</i></p>
<p><i>How is my life hidden in You, my Lord?</i></p>	

Chapter 3: *On Teaching the Truth*

But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth [full and complete truth]. For He will not speak on His own initiative, but He will speak whatever He hears [from the Father—the message regarding the Son], and He will disclose to you what is to come [in the future]. (John 16:13 AMP)



Thomas a Kempis reminds us that *conquering self* should be our primary concern as it will only be then that we can “*advance in holiness*”. Yet, in order to conquer self, we must be guided by *Truth*, a true living Truth that comes from God and allows you to merge in Oneness with the Father in His everlasting love. Anything short of this has no value and will mislead us. The pursuit of knowledge has value but our time is better spent working towards a holy life that is grounded in a good conscience so that we may bear fruit. Truth is that which aligns with what God’s will so that how we think and then behave is a reflection of God’s glory in which all earthly things are meaningless. For then we can set our will aside and now accept the will of God then our eyes will begin to see “*everything as in One*” and we will receive light and understanding and be at peace with the Father.

Jesus said to him, “I am the [only] Way [to God] and the [real] Truth and the [real] Life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. (John 14:6)

“At the Day of Judgement, we shall not be asked what we have read, but what we have done; not how eloquently we have spoken, but how holily we have lived.”
We must be careful in our learning not to forget that we must also put our time

towards the service of God and as we acquire knowledge to always be humble and seek to first be “*instructed by Truth*”. It is the Eternal Word that will not only show us the road to the Father but will move us closer His Light and compassion. By conquering ourselves we learn to seek the glory of God from within and not the desires, pleasures, and admiration of a world by our external self-seeking. It is by our eagerness and perseverance to live a good life in which we place within ourselves the virtues of a holy life, even if imperfect, that we will be placed before the throne of the Father. And for this, the time must be now, as time passes to quickly and will not wait for us to reveal within ourselves the “*self-expression of God*”.

“The world is passing away, and with it its lusts [the shameful pursuits and ungodly longings]; but the one who does the will of God and carries out His purposes lives forever.” (1 John 2:17)

My Prayer for Truth

Lord, Our Only Path to God, You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life, open my eyes to see and my ears to hear so I may understand the eternity of Your divine principles. For You are truth and You have provided us with Your laws and instructions so that we may always know Your way of truth. And through You, the Father’s Son, we have directly experienced the embodiment of the way and the truth which provides the sacred door that we must pass through to come to the Father. While we also read the truth in Your Gospel message that we may always find hope and salvation for our souls in which we may enjoy an eternal life in fellowship with God. For we as believers, are never without Your truth as the Spirit of truth has been placed within our deepest recesses of our hearts so that it may always lead us into the essence of Your truth so we may be set free. Therefore, my Lord, help me to first fasten the belt of truth about my waist so You may witness the expression of Your truth as I worship You and I set myself as a rock for my brothers constantly showering them with acts of love and compassion. For in Your truth, I will know right from wrong, never uncertain, and always clear upon the path I must choose. My Lord, you are the living truth, our only true teacher, ready to unite with us through Your everlasting love and mercy. For Your truth has shown us that the wise are humble in their minds and pursue only the eternal so we may gain You, my Lord, in an enduring state of joy as we delight in the gift of grace within Your presence. Know my Lord, that I am but an empty vessel ready to be instructed by the Eternal Words of Your divine truth. Amen
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Meditate Upon:

It is Satan’s purpose to steal the seed of truth from your heart by sending distracting thoughts... The difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is: though they both may have good and evil thoughts; Christ gives His followers strength to select the right rather than the wrong. – Billy Graham

Reflection Questions:

1. How may we *see* everything as in One?
2. How can we prevent ourselves from *self-seeking*?
3. How do we *conquer self*?
4. How may we keep a *humble knowledge* of ourselves?
5. What will you say at the *Day of Judgement*?
6. What *service* have you performed for God?
7. How in your life have you *chosen to be great* instead of humble?
8. How have you sought to *win Christ*?
9. When in your life have you *renounced* your own will?



Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

Divine symbols which have been given to mankind from time to time speak to that forum of truth which is within our hearts, and waken our consciousness to divine ideas entirely beyond words.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Teaching Truth*

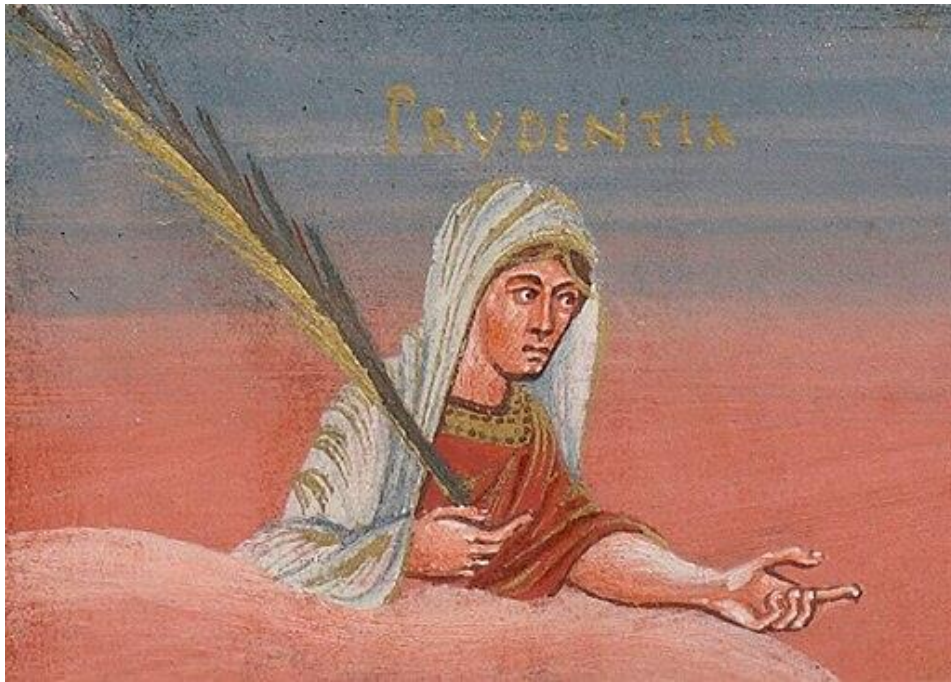
<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How are you practicing the TRUTHS of Christ?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you allow Christ's WORD to speak to your heart beyond just understanding?</i></p>
<p><i>How do you know what you must DO for your own salvation?</i></p>	<p><i>What knowledge MOVES or CHANGE your heart?</i></p>
<p><i>How have you DETACHED yourself so that you may focus your entire being on Christ?</i></p>	

Chapter 4: On Prudence in Action

The naive or inexperienced person [is easily misled and] believes every word he hears, But the prudent man [is discreet and astute and] considers well where he is going. A wise man suspects danger and cautiously avoids evil, But the fool is arrogant and careless. (Proverbs 14:15-16 AMP)



We have a responsibility to use careful judgement and discernment as we make our way in the world and not to be quick to decide anything before considering it in the light of God's will. As a virtue, prudence allows us the foresight to see the potential dangers and consequences of our actions so we then might plan a righteous life that acknowledges our fear of the Lord and best aligns us with God's will. As Thomas a Kempis states, we must step back before we take action, not hold blindly to our opinions, or so quickly express our thoughts and beliefs to others. Ultimately, we need to seek to be guided by those who are wise and conscientious and far better than ourselves.

At all times bless the Lord, your God, and ask him that all your paths may be straight and all your endeavors and plans may prosper. (Tobit 4:19)

Wisdom is a result of a good life that values humility and obedience to God and from which God grants us peace. If we are patient, willing to stop and reason, then prudence is a discipline that brings us the understanding and wisdom of the Father so we will always make our best decisions in all aspects of life and be pleasing to God.

A man that hath travelled knoweth many things; and he that hath much experience will declare wisdom. (Ecclesiasticus 34:9)

My Prayer on Prudence

Christ, Lord of All, though I hear many words guard my ears so that I might discern those words that carry Your Spirit-led wisdom so that I might think carefully before I act or speak. Help me in my quest to be responsible and develop sound judgement within myself that actively governs my words and behavior towards others and the many choices I make in my daily affairs. Guide me in management of my talents and watch over me as so that I may wisely use the resources You have so generously provided. Open within me the intellectual ability to develop the habits that will light the way towards only that which is virtuous. As I only wish to apply the wisdom You have instilled within me to discipline my efforts in manifesting love in ever encounter as You showed us when You walked among us my Lord. For then as I consider the many paths placed before me, I can be confident that my decision will please You. As it is only with Your gift of prudence that I can exercise the foresight that will always prompt me to sufficiently prepare myself and plan my steps towards You my Lord with a filled lamp and extra oil so I may always be ready to see any dangers and understand the consequences of all my actions as I spiritually progress. For in coming to deeply know You my Lord I have placed all earthly things aside without loss and I am now filled with unequalled joy because I am certain that I have gained the Redeemer of my salvation. Therefore, I will be sober and vigilant, making only godly decisions, a son who faithfully gathers his crops in the summer, as I wait for You, my Savior to come again. Amen. (© GEC 2026)

Meditate Upon:

We must believe what is good and true about the prophets, that they were sages, that they did understand what proceeded from their mouths, and that they bore prudence on their lips. – Origen

Reflection Questions:

1. How is your life influenced by the *words and ideas of others*?
2. What examples in your life show a time when you patiently considered something “*in accordance with the will of God*?”
3. What *opinions* do you firmly hold on to?
4. Who do you *take counsel from* to guide your life, why?
5. How *wise and at peace* are you in everything you do?

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

Be quick to learn; slow to absorb; steady in application; and the spirit of investigation will be developed.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Prudence in Action*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How do I show LOVE to my neighbors?</i></p>	<p><i>How do I keep PEACE with my fellow man?</i></p>
<p><i>How can I use COMPASSION so as not to wound my fellow man?</i></p>	<p><i>How do I RESOLVE issues with my fellow man?</i></p>
<p><i>What problems/wounds must I still reconcile with my neighbors/fellow man?</i></p>	

Chapter 5: *On Reading the Holy Scriptures*

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall read [and meditate on] it day and night, so that you may be careful to do [everything] in accordance with all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will be [a]successful. (Joshua 1:8 AMP)



Reading the Holy Scriptures is a search for truth that will provide “*food for our souls*”. As Thomas a Kempis suggests we need to “*read with humility, simplicity, and faith*”. While it is also important to understand that we must learn to *actively* read so that we ask questions of that which we read, silence our minds so we not only hear the words of the writers but also hear the spirit in which they were written, and then take time to meditate upon the words of the parables and the inner messages they were meant to communicate.

Also remember that there are many other devout books to better help us understand the truth in scripture and God’s will and we should not worry in what regard the author is held or their academic or professional achievements. Great truth is found in both the “*lofty and profound*” writing as well as in simple basic devotional writing. Our Father speaks to us in many ways and He does not concern Himself with who the messenger is or the fanciness of their words, He

values simplicity that provides clarity so that we may hear His word and carry it in our lives.

Be willing to hear every godly discourse, and let not the parables of understanding escape thee.” (Ecclesiasticus 6:35)

My Prayer on Reading Scripture

Almighty, Author and Perfecter of Our Faith, As I open Your Word, I ask that You help me to read the Scriptures in the “spirit in which they were written.” Teach me to be patient as I slowly and purposefully read the Scriptures and work to take Your Word into my body as “food for my soul” so that I may hear Your voice, see Your intent, and make connections to other parts of the Scripture. As I search for Your truth, lead me to the concepts and questions You wish me to contemplate upon and should I become stuck in a passage, calm my mind so that I know to stop and pray for your wisdom and guidance. Lord, bring into my heart the love of Your words so I may thoughtfully read the Scriptures with “humility, simplicity, and faith”. Open my spiritual eyes to see the images of the Scripture scenes within my mind so I may experience the setting of the stories, see and hear the different people speak, and watch the events that are taking place and how it effects the different people in the stories. All the while entering into a conversation with You that keeps my mind focused on Your Word, reflecting as I read so as to let my mind seek clarification by asking questions so I may delve more deeply into Your Word to behold the meaning of the many wondrous deeds and words of Yourself and Your prophets. As it is Your will, allow the truth of Your words to enter and move within me so they may pass from my mind into the actions and words of my life that reflect Your will. Finally, my Lord, allow me to set my gaze upon You and rest in Your presence while contemplating on the meaning of the Scripture You have placed before me, understanding how it was meant to transform my heart. Amen. (© GEC 2026)

Meditate Upon:

*Those who read fast, reap no more advantage than a bee would by only skimming over the surface of the flower, instead of waiting to penetrate into it, and extract its sweets. Much reading is rather for scholastic subjects, than divine truths.
– **Jeanne Guyon***

*Some people like to read so many [Bible] chapters every day. I would not dissuade them from the practice, but I would rather lay my soul asoak in half a dozen verses all day than rinse my hand in several chapters. Oh, to be bathed in a text of Scripture, and to let it be sucked up in your very soul, till it saturates your heart! – **Charles Haddon Spurgeon***

*A readiness to believe every promise implicitly, to obey every command unhesitatingly, to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God, is the only true spirit of Bible study. – **Andrew Murray***

Reflection Questions:

1. What *essential truths* have you found regarding your life in the Holy Scriptures?
2. How do you read scriptures in their *intended spirit*?
3. What other *devotional books* have you been drawn to read, why?
4. How does *God speak to you* in different ways?
5. How do you read with *humility, simplicity, and faith*?
6. What are some of your recent *questions* from reading the Scriptures?



Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

The Bible has been given to the Western World by the Recording Angels who give to each and all exactly what they need for their development

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i>	<i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i>
<i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i>	<i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Reading Holy Scriptures*

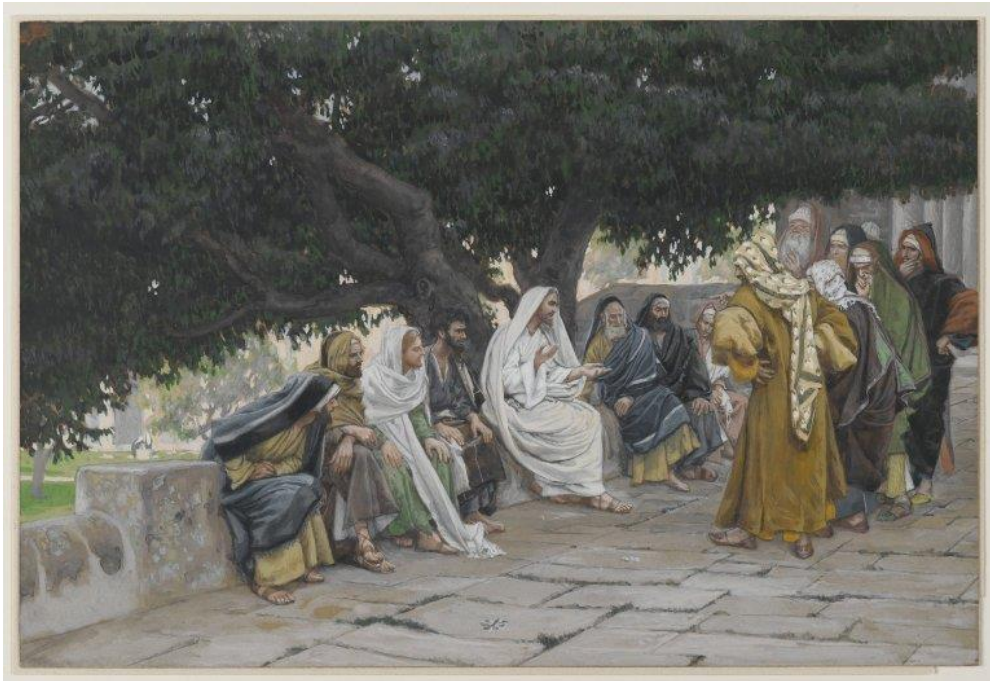
<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How do you read for TRUTH?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you engage the Holy Spirit in your reading?</i></p>
<p><i>How do you ensure that you are reading the Scriptures with “faith, humility, respect and docility”?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you ensure that you will follow the law and will from your good books?</i></p>
<p><i>What is the spirit in which the Imitation of Christ was written, explain?</i></p>	

Chapter 6: *On Control of the Desires*

But I say, walk habitually in the [Holy] Spirit [seek Him and be responsive to His guidance], and then you will certainly not carry out the desire of the [a]sinful nature [which responds impulsively without regard for God and His precepts]. 17 For the sinful nature has its desire which is opposed to the Spirit, and the [desire of the] Spirit opposes the [b]sinful nature; for these [two, the sinful nature and the Spirit] are in direct opposition to each other [continually in conflict], so that you [as believers] do not [always] do whatever [good things] you want to do. 18 But if you are guided and led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the Law. (Galatians 5:16-18 AMP)



In order to be at rest and enjoy true peace of the heart, we must let go of our ego and surrender all of our personal desires and accept God's purpose for us. Yet, this requires us to be "*poor and humble*", dead to self so that we will no longer be tempted by the worldly desires and passions. If we hold on to our desires and remain weak in spirit, we will always be restless, plagued by worldly temptations and passions in which we are angered when they are withheld from us. However, if we relent and give in to our desires regardless of how small they may be then our conscience suffers and peace moves beyond our reach. Therefore, only a "*fervent, spiritual man*" can obtain peace as he builds his spirit to resist his desires and passions.

Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh [and died for us], arm yourselves [like warriors] with the same purpose [being willing to suffer for doing what is right and pleasing God], because whoever has suffered in the flesh [being like-minded with Christ] is done with [intentional] sin [having stopped pleasing the world], so that he can no longer spend the rest of his natural life living for human appetites and desires, but [lives] for the will and purpose of God. For the time already past is [more than] enough for doing what the [unsaved] Gentiles like to

do—living [unrestrained as you have done] in a course of [shameless] sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and wanton idolatries. In [connection with] all this, they [the unbelievers] are resentful and surprised that you do not [think like them, value their values and] run [hand in hand] with them into the same excesses of dissipation and immoral freedom, and they criticize and abuse and ridicule you and make fun of your values. (1 Peter 4:1-4)

My Prayer to Control My Desires

My Lord, Holy and True, I have been restless too long suffering with my pride and greed for material things. Help me to acknowledge my complete dependence upon You, my Lord as I am empty without Your grace. Turn me to Your ways so that I take up Your cross and follow in Your footsteps. Fortify my soul so I may avoid temptation and “free myself from worldly lusts” and be born again to see the Kingdom of God. As I humbly follow You, show me how I must give up my earthly life for You so I may obtain “true peace of heart” in the eternal life. For when I die to self, I am crucified with You, my Lord, so I may live within You no longer a prisoner of my desires and with a conscience that is unblemished. Then I completely belong to You so by Your nature I can now work towards a life devoid of passions and desires and filled with Your peace and joy. Therefore, my Holy and True Lord, I beseech You to keep myself intensely focused upon my inner affairs so I may guard myself from even the smallest of desires that arise from my physical “senses and bodily passions” knowing that I cannot do this on my own, trusting that Your death “provides us with the power in Your Spirit to win the battle against our sinful desires”. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

Self-control is at the root of all the virtues. Let a man yield to his impulses and passions, and from that moment he gives up his moral freedom.

- Orison Swett Marden

There never has been, and cannot be, a good life without self-control. Apart from self-control, no good life is imaginable. The attainment of goodness must begin with that. - Leo Tolstoy

Stop allowing your mind to be a slave, to be jerked about by selfish impulses, to kick against fate and the present, and to mistrust the future.

- Marcus Aurelius

Reflection Questions:

1. How *restless* are you in your life?
2. What does it mean to be “*perfectly dead to self*”?
3. How well have you *freed* yourself from your senses and bodily passions?
4. How is *yielding* to passions different from resisting passions?
5. How *fervent* are you in your spiritual work and finding peace in the heart?

Dearest Jesus! I know well that every perfect gift, and above all others that of chastity, depends upon the most powerful assistance of Your Providence, and that without You a creature can do nothing. Therefore, I pray You to defend, with Your grace, chastity and purity in my soul as well as in my body. And if I have ever received through my senses any impression that could stain my chastity and purity, may You, Who are the Supreme Lord of all my powers, take it from me, that I may with an immaculate heart advance in Your love and service, offering myself chaste all the days of my life on the most pure altar of Your Divinity. Amen.

– St. Thomas Aquinas



Thomas a Kempis writing

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

True freedom comes from letting go of attachments and embracing detachment.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Control of the Desires*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How have you found “peace of the soul”?</i></p>	<p><i>How have you preserved your “peace of the soul”?</i></p>
<p><i>What “moral awareness” is your conscience currently providing you with?</i></p>	<p><i>How have your passions and desires made you restless and caused trouble in your life?</i></p>
<p><i>How do you fight your passions and desires so as to find peace?</i></p>	

Chapter 7: *On Avoiding Vain Hope and Conceit*

Humble yourselves [with an attitude of repentance and insignificance] in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you [He will lift you up, He will give you purpose]. (James 4:10 AMP)



Our confidence or trust should never be in any other or ourselves as it should only be in the grace of God. We need not worry how much we have to offer and simply do the best we can and we can be assured of God's blessing. Regardless of how much knowledge, wealth or influence we have through those we know we must not boast or become filled with pride for God "*aids the humble, and humbles the proud.*" We should live to be servants of others, not looking for recognition of our good deeds, and unconcerned that we might appear poor to others. We must put aside vanity for our appearance and good qualities and not believe that we are better than anyone for it was God who endowed us with all of our natural gifts and has given others more. Therefore, we must always humble ourselves and place others above ourselves so that we may rid ourselves of pride and jealousy to find the peace of God within ourselves. We should boast only of God, as God "*desires above all things to give you Himself.*"

But He gives us more and more grace [through the power of the Holy Spirit to defy sin and live an obedient life that reflects both our faith and our gratitude for our salvation]. Therefore, it says, "God is opposed to the proud and haughty, but

[continually] gives [the gift of] grace to the humble [who turn away from self-righteousness].” (James 4:6)

My Prayer for a Humble Heart

O Lord, Our Righteousness, as Your faithful servant I place all my trust and confidence in You as I turn away from my pride and self-righteousness. I will be a servant of my brothers and give all that I am able to knowing that I shall receive your blessing for my good intentions. I will not foolishly boast of my knowledge or possessions but I shall speak of Your glory and the grace you shine upon the poor and humble as You will give us all we need and more. It is not my own achievements that I should point to but to that of my fellow man's. I am aware that anything I am vain about concerning myself will only offend You my Lord and that which I so prize can simply change or suddenly disappear. Even if I have talents, help me to understand that I am not better than my fellow man and that there are others who have far more. Let my good deeds of service to my fellow man come from my heart and not because I desire recognition or praise. Place Your mirror in front of me so I may see myself as You see me and when I recognize my selfish conceit help me to now look upon You, my Lord, so I become less and You become greater. Therefore, my Lord remove any remaining pride or jealousy You might find within my character and humble my heart so that I “develop a healthy self-image that blesses You and those around myself” so that I may come to experience true peace in Your divine love. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

Lay aside all conceit Learn to read the book of Nature for yourself. Those who have succeeded best have followed for years some slim thread which once in a while has broadened out and disclosed some treasure worth a life-long search.
- Louis Agassiz

Man believes himself always greater than he is, and is esteemed less than he is worth. - **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**

Now repentance is no fun at all. It is something much harder than merely eating humble pie. It means unlearning all the self-conceit and self-will that we have been training ourselves into for thousands of years. It means undergoing a kind of death. In fact, it needs a good man to repent. And here's the catch. Only a bad person needs to repent: only a good person can repent perfectly. The worse you are the more you need it and the less you can do it. The only person who could do it perfectly would be a perfect person - and he would not need it. - **C. S. Lewis**

To be infatuated with the power of one's own intellect is an accident which seldom happens but to those who are remarkable for the want of intellectual power. Whenever Nature leaves a hole in a person's mind, she generally plasters it over with a thick coat of self-conceit. - **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

Reflection Questions:

1. Do you “*appear poor in this world*”?
2. How do you put *trust* in the grace of God?
3. What do you take the most *pleasure* in about yourself, why?
4. How have you *acknowledged others* as better than yourself?
5. How have you worked to eliminate *pride and jealousy* in your life?

*Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the Lord [with reverent awe and obedience] and turn
[entirely] away from evil.*

*It will be health to your body [your marrow, your nerves, your
sinews, your muscles—all your inner parts]
And refreshment (physical well-being) to your bones.
- Proverbs 3:7-8 AMP*

*“For if anyone thinks he is something [special] when [in fact] he is
nothing [special except in his own eyes], he deceives himself. But
each one must carefully scrutinize his own work [examining his
actions, attitudes, and behavior], and then he can have the
personal satisfaction and inner joy of doing something
commendable without comparing himself to another. For every
person will have to bear [with patience] his own burden [of faults
and shortcomings for which he alone is responsible].”
– Galatians 6:3-5 AMP*

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

Be true to yourself, for your own soul knows best what is right and what is wrong for you.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Avoiding Vain Hope and Conceit*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How do you depend only upon God?</i></p>	<p><i>How are you confident of God's faithfulness in all things?</i></p>
<p><i>What good works and abilities has God endowed you with?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you remember to give glory to God for all things?</i></p>
<p><i>How do other see that you attribute nothing to yourself?</i></p>	

Chapter 8: *On Guarding Against Familiarity*

Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor (respect) except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household." And He could not do a miracle there at all [because of their unbelief] except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. He wondered at their unbelief.

(Mark 6:4-6 AMP)



Thomas a Kempis warns us that we should only allow ourselves to become familiar with “*God and His angels*” and associate only with the devout who are humble and simple. We need to keep to ourselves and only seek counsel from those who are virtuous and hold God in a reverent awe. Even though we should love all men it is in our best interest to not become too familiar with them, especially the young people, strangers, the wealthy, and the other sex but entrust them to God’s care. Even those who are thought to be wise and well-respected may not actually be so, just as we may “*offend others by our ill behavior.*”

Do not reveal your thoughts to anyone, or you may drive away your happiness.

(Ecclesiasticus 8:19)

My Prayer to Guard against Familiarity

O Lord, Ruler of God’s Creation, help me to “live in charity with all men” in which I do not reveal my heart to all those around me so that I do not drive away my happiness. Keep me among those who are humble and devout and hold You in deep reverence for Your holiness so that I may seek their counsel and spend time glorifying Your name. Help me to understand although I should seek familiarity with You my Lord, I must be cautious not to allow my familiarity to become comfort or routine that would diminish my reverence for Your majesty. Just as those in Your hometown of Nazareth allowed their familiarity with Your early life to cause them to have a lack of faith, do not allow the closeness I seek to not take

on Your heart and delight in Your Word. Know that I witness your signs and miracles even in the smallest things in my life and the many prayers You continue to answer. The miracles of Your mercy and compassion abound and I am committed to not doubt Your promises and power so that I may come to You my Lord and have life. Therefore, keep my heart open and my familiarity fixed upon You so that I may come to a deeper understanding of Your Word that will fill my soul with enduring faith. Amen (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And are not His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not [living here] among us? Where then did this Man get all this [wisdom and power]?" And they took offense at Him [refusing to believe in Him]. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household." – Matthew 13:55-57 AMP

She said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as I have time after time and shake myself free." For Samson did not know that the Lord had departed from him. – Judges 16:20 AMP

The Lord said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me disrespectfully and reject Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the [miraculous] signs which I have performed among them? – Numbers 14:11 AMP

Reflection Questions:

1. Who have you *opened* your heart to?
2. Who do you *spend your time* with beyond work?
3. How do you work to be familiar *only with God*?
4. How can we *live in love* with our fellow man but not avoid familiarity?
5. Who in your life is *wise and fears God*?

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

You should not reveal your most private thoughts to anyone. If you do, you may as well throw away any chance of happiness

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Guarding Against Familiarity*

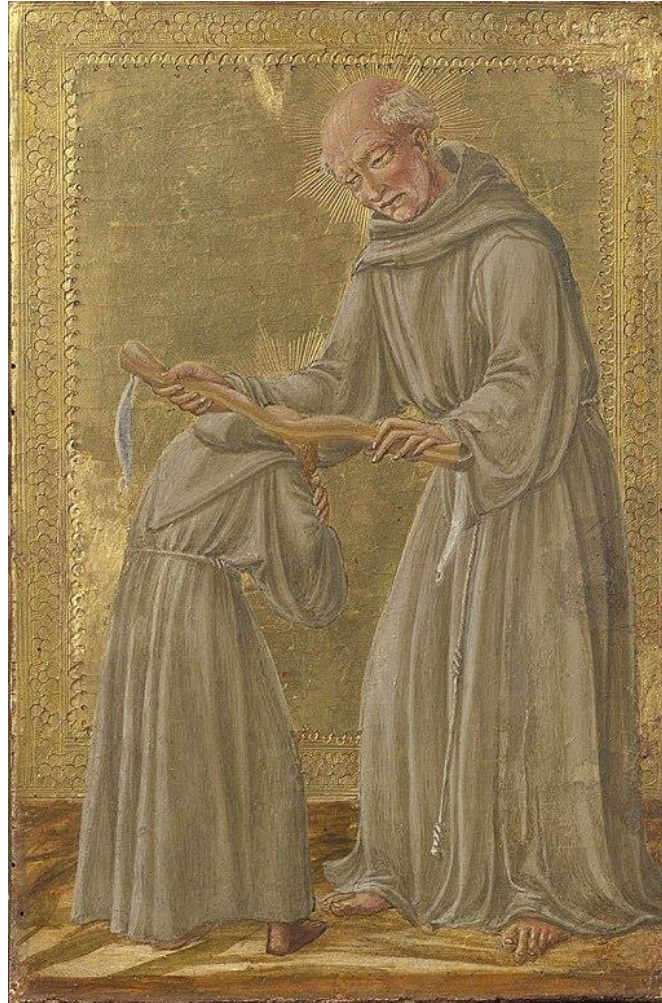
<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How do you “avoid worldly company”?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you love Christ with your whole heart?</i></p>
<p><i>What is your “interior discipline”?</i></p>	<p><i>What makes your friends “devout”?</i></p>
<p><i>What topics of conversations do you have with your friends to edify?</i></p>	

Chapter 9: *On Obedience and Discipline*

If you keep My commandments and obey My teaching, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain in His love. I have told you these things so that My joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy may be made full and complete and overflowing. "This is My commandment, that you love and unselfishly seek the best for one another, just as I have loved you. No one has greater love [nor stronger commitment] than to lay down his own life for his friends. You are my friends if you keep on doing what I command you. (John 15:10-14 AMP)



Ultimately, we should be obedient because of our love for God so that our mind may become free. It's not about only doing what we want or like to do and only liking those with similar thoughts and ideas. We will only find rest when we are humbly obedient to rule of God and release our own opinions as we do not know all things. For if we are only obedient because we feel we have to then we will be constantly unhappy always finding reasons to complain. We must not be concerned with the "*rightness of our own views*" but be open to the views of others. Even if our beliefs are to be trusted we should still be prepared to give them up for the love of God and accept that of another. We should be careful in

giving advice and always be prepared to accept sound advice and not let our pride prevent use from coming to an agreement when more than one opinion is valid.

Jesus answered, "If anyone [really] loves Me, he will keep My word (teaching); and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling place with him. (John 14:23)

My Prayer for Humble Obedience

Lord of All, King of the Eternal, You are my Master to whom by love I offer my obedience in all things. As I am Your dutiful servant always ready to do as You say and yield to Your will. Yet, I keep Your Word not because I expect a reward but because I love You and it is my privilege to serve You by obeying Your laws. First and foremost, You have commanded that I love You, God, with all my heart, soul, and mind and that I also love my neighbor as myself, as I take up my cross and follow You. For when I willingly submit to Your authority, I am demonstrating my faith by confessing that You are Lord and Master and acknowledging Your rightful sovereignty and surrendering myself to Your divine guidance. While I am also affirming my belief in Your resurrection, for only then can I "attain true freedom of mind". Yet, it is my dependence Upon You that provides me with the power to do as You command, for You are the vine and I am the branch abiding in You so I might bear fruit. Therefore, my Lord guide me with Your rod and comfort me with Your staff so I may come to still waters and green pastures to enjoy the benefits of my obedience in Your protection and through Your peace and blessings in my new birth. For in this my heart is light now knowing I can confess to You, my Lord, in my times of imperfect obedience as You will then cleanse me through Your blood so the Father will forgive me, and help me to find the courage and strength to deal with those things that distracted me from my obedience. Therefore, my Lord place within my heart the willingness and obedience to always hear Your words so I may "eat the good of the land." Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

"[To have Faith in Christ] means, of course, trying to do all that He says. There would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice. Thus if you have really handed yourself over to Him, it must follow that you are trying to obey Him. But trying in a new way, a less worried way." – C. S. Lewis

God's promises are all on condition of humble obedience. - Ellen G. White

*I know the power obedience has of making things easy which seem impossible.
- Saint Teresa of Avila*

If you tell God no because He won't explain the reason, He wants you to do something, you are actually hindering His blessing. But when you say yes to Him, all of heaven opens to pour out His goodness and reward your obedience. What matters more than material blessings are the things He is teaching us in our spirit. - Charles Stanley

Obedience opens the door to the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. And the spiritual gifts and abilities activated by the power of the Holy Ghost enable us to avoid deception - and to see, to feel, to know, to understand, and to remember things as they really are. - David A. Bednar

Reflection Questions:

1. When have you yielded your *opinion* for those of others?
2. How well do you consider the *views of others*?
3. How often do you find yourself *giving and accepting advice*, why?
4. How *obstinate* can you be and are you willing to *comprise* for the sake of agreement over your own desires and preferences?
5. How willing are you to *place your view/opinion aside* and follow that of someone else, even when you consider yours to be sound?

The first step of humility is unhesitating obedience, which comes naturally to those who cherish Christ above all. Because of the holy service they have professed, or because of dread of hell and for the glory of everlasting life, they carry out the superior's order as promptly as if the command came from God himself. The Lord says of men like this: No sooner did he hear than he obeyed me (Ps 117[118]:45); again, he tells teachers: Whoever listens to you, listens to me (Luke 10:16). Such people as these immediately put aside their own concerns, abandon their own will, and lay down whatever they have in hand, leaving it unfinished. With the ready step of obedience, they follow the voice of authority in their actions. Almost at the same moment, then, as the master gives the instruction the disciple quickly puts it into practice in the fear of God; and both actions together are swiftly completed as one.

– **The Rule of St. Benedict**

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

Spiritual development requires discipline, self-control, and a constant striving for higher ideals.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
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Contemplation Reflection: *On Obedience and Discipline*

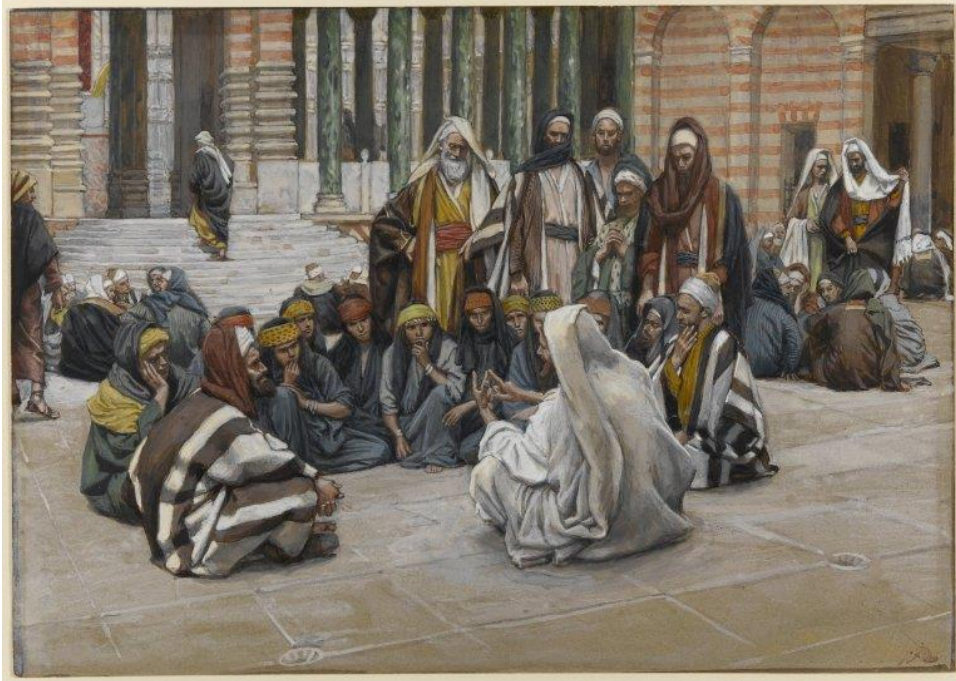
<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How do you practice obedience to God?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you utilize self-denial in your spiritual life?</i></p>
<p><i>How do you utilize self-renunciation in your spiritual life?</i></p>	<p><i>How do your actions demonstrate your obedience to be generous and constant?</i></p>
<p><i>How does your obedience help you to make Christ your master?</i></p>	

Chapter 10: *On Avoiding Talkativeness*

Do not let unwholesome [foul, profane, worthless, vulgar] words ever come out of your mouth, but only such speech as is good for building up others, according to the need and the occasion, so that it will be a blessing to those who hear [you speak]. (Ephesians 4:29 AMP)



Everyone likes to talk about the things they like and desire to have in their lives as well as all the people, places, and things they dislike or find annoying. There is much to be said about remaining silent and not engaging in conversations concerning worldly affairs as they only lead to our corruption through our pride and damage our conscience. Unfortunately, we are fond of conversation with each other because we think we can “*find consolation ... and to refresh a heart wearied with many cares.*” In place of all of our talk we should be more concerned with watching and praying.

Keep actively watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” (Matthew 26:41 AMP)

Our natural tendencies to not watch our speech in idle talk, gossip, and boasting is a major obstacle in obtaining the true peace of our hearts. There is a right time to speak that is appropriate with meaningful purpose in establishing our “*inner and divine consolation.*”

Do not let unwholesome [foul, profane, worthless, vulgar] words ever come out of your mouth, but only such speech as is good for building up others, according to the need and the occasion, so that it will be a blessing to those who hear [you speak]. (Ephesians 4:29 AMP)

As our speech should only be used in building others in their faith, knowledge, and character as our spiritual progress is greatly enhanced by our “*devout conversations on spiritual matters, especially with those who are heart and soul with us in the service of God*”.

In the same sense, the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. (James 3:5 AMP)

My Prayer to Prevent Excessive Talking

O Son of God, Lord of Glory, help me to understand that there is no consolation from our many worries and concerns in excessively talking with our fellow man as we all are really in need of what comes from “inner and divine consolation” to keep our souls from trouble. Touch my tongue so it may be tamed and cleansed from the evil and poison it holds and place within me the wisdom to remain silent and not gossip as this will only bring distress and injury to my conscience. My body is weak from insufficient spiritual work and evil habits causing me to fear the temptations that plague my soul. Yet, I will do as You have instructed and continue to pray so that You may assist me in my inner battles and how I might guard the words of my lips. For then I will know the proper time to speak and when I should remain silent. From this point on my words from within and spoken aloud will only be heard in devout conversations that praise and worship You, my Lord, and encourage and inspire my fellow brothers with hope and courage. Therefore, my Lord develop within me the discipline to be a discreet man of few words who demonstrates self-control and an even temper so I might become a “man of understanding and wisdom”. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

If you love truth, be a lover of silence. Silence, like the sunlight will illuminate you in God.

— **St Isaac, 7th Century Hermit Monk**

We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature – trees, flowers, grass- grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence... We need silence to be able to touch souls.

— **Mother Teresa**

We too are called to withdraw at certain intervals into deeper silence and aloneness with God, together as a community as well as personally; to be alone with Him — not with our books, thoughts, and memories but completely stripped

of everything — to dwell lovingly in His presence, silent, empty, expectant, and motionless. We cannot find God in noise or agitation.

— **Mother Teresa**

Silence is God's first language; everything else is a poor translation. In order to hear that language, we must learn to be still and to rest in God.

— **Thomas Keating**

Reflection Questions:

1. How often do you discuss *worldly affairs*, why?
2. Do you often *regret* things you have told others, why?
3. How does *gossip* come into your life?
4. Is talking a form of *therapy* for you, why?
5. Do you judge when it is the *appropriate time* to speak and only speak in positive way to build others up?
6. When do you have *devout conversations* on spiritual matters?

Let us follow the Prophet's counsel: I said, I have resolved to keep watch over my ways that I may never sin with my tongue. I have put a guard on my mouth. I was silent and was humbled, and I refrained even from good words (Ps 38[39]:2-3). Here the Prophet indicates that there are times when good words are to be left unsaid out of esteem for silence. For all the more reason, then, should evil speech be curbed so that punishment for sin may be avoided. Indeed, so important is silence that permission to speak should seldom be granted even to mature disciples, no matter how good or holy or constructive their talk, because it is written: In a flood of words you will not avoid sin (Prov 10:19); and elsewhere, The tongue holds the key to life and death (Prov 18:21). Speaking and teaching are the master's task; the disciple is to be silent and listen.

Therefore, any requests to a superior should be made with all humility and respectful submission. We absolutely condemn in all places any vulgarity and gossip and talk leading to laughter, and we do not permit a disciple to engage in words of that kind.

— **The Rule of St. Benedict**

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

Constructive criticism, which points out defects and the means of remedying them, is the basis of progress; but destructive criticism, which vandalistically demolishes good and bad alike without aiming at any higher attainment, is an ulcer on the character and must be eradicated. Gossip and idle tale-bearing are clogs and hindrances

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
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Contemplation Reflection: *On Avoiding Talkativeness*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How do you “watch and pray”?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you speak to ensure the purity of your heart?</i></p>
<p><i>What good and necessary things do you speak about?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you “seek within yourself”?</i></p>
<p><i>How does your prayer unite you with God?</i></p>	

Chapter 11: *On Peace and Spiritual Progress*

Now may the Lord of peace Himself grant you His peace at all times and in every way [that peace and spiritual well-being that comes to those who walk with Him, regardless of life's circumstances]. The Lord be with you all.

(2 Thessalonians 3:16 AMP)



It is our responsibility to ensure that we create and maintain peace within our lives by worrying about ourselves and working to stay pure at heart by eliminating all worldly desires on focusing on our love of God and the service we can offer. We need to monitor our spiritual progress and work on our betterment so we may die to ourself by freeing ourselves from our passions and lusts. It will be difficult but we should not become discouraged, always standing firm, and not returning to our former ways as the Lord is always there to help and support us. It is not our outward religious practices that will help us in this endeavor, it is the peace that will come from moving beyond our passions that will free us.

And already the axe [of God's judgment] is swinging toward the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (Matthew 3:10 AMP)

It is a continuous effort of zealously addressing our faults that leads to our perfection by the growth of virtue. Yet, we should do “*a little violence to ourselves at first*” so in the future we will be “*enabled to do everything easily and gladly.*” Conquering our will and putting aside bad habits is not easy and requires

time and patience, but it is through these efforts we can then succeed in accomplishing the greater. For true peace is experienced when we have removed our evil habits and can resist our tendencies to deviate from the will of God. For our spiritual progress advances as we “*follow the perfect way of the Saints*” and “*savour spiritual things*” so as to “*win experience of heavenly contemplation*” and experience the great peace and joy within ourselves.

“Blessed [anticipating God’s presence, spiritually mature] are the pure in heart [those with integrity, moral courage, and godly character], for they will see God. (Matthew 5 :8 AMP)

My Prayer to Enjoy Peace

Almighty God, Prince of Peace, bless me with the ability to enjoy much peace and stay pure in heart so that I will “remain long at peace” so that one day I will come to see You, my Lord. Support me in my efforts to not live after the flesh and put to death all my wicked impulses and desires so that I may confidently place You alone within my heart with absolute control of my thoughts and feelings concerning worldly affairs and my spiritual progress. Help me to Free myself from my inner conflicts so I may your perfect way and find peace in my soul. Place within my hands the axe that I may cut the roots of the tree within myself that are not bearing good fruit and cast them into the fire. Keep my passion strong so that I can put aside old habits and strengthen my will so I may stand firm and constantly grow by Your grace. Bring me to victory in casting off my faults so I may delight in Your abundant prosperity and peace. For it is from the “clearness of spirit” that comes from You that I will have a life with great peace that opens my spiritual eyes to see Your endless beauty in Your Word and the world You created, so I may spread this peace and joy to my fellow man. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

The peace of God is first and foremost peace with God; it is the state of affairs in which God, instead of being against us, is for us. No account of God's peace which does not start here can do other than mislead.

- J. I. Packer

Never be in a hurry; do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset.

- Saint Francis de Sales

Each one has to find his peace from within. And peace to be real must be unaffected by outside circumstances.

- Mahatma Gandhi

Reflection Questions:

1. How well do you *focus* just upon your own life?
2. What *faults* of our own have you spent time trying to resolve?
3. How *free* are you from worldly passions and lusts?
4. How do you typically *respond* when confronted with a difficult situation, why?
5. What *one fault* would you like to start dealing with now, why?
6. What *old habits* that were not in your best interests did you give up, how?
7. How *peaceful* does your heart feel now, why?



Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

Live in harmony with nature and the universe, recognizing the interconnectedness of all things.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Peace and Spiritual Progress*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

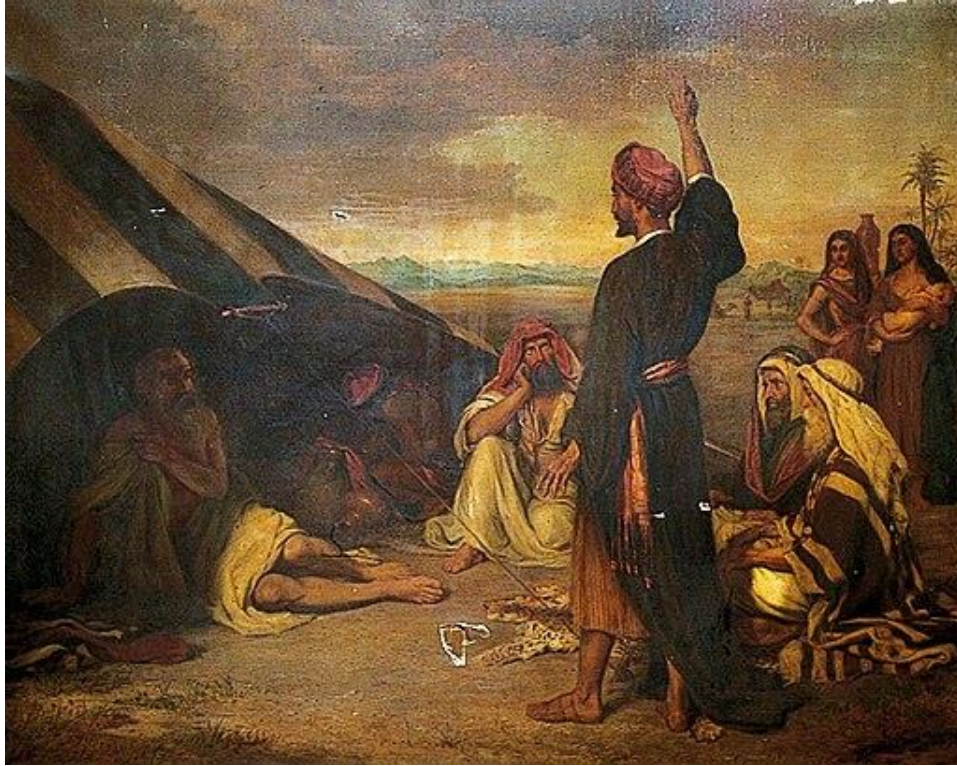
Applications

<p><i>How are you working to conquer your evil nature?</i></p>	<p><i>How do we die to ourself so we may do good?</i></p>
<p><i>How have you resigned your will in all things?</i></p>	<p><i>How strongly is the comfort of this life holding you from true peace?</i></p>
<p><i>How confident are you in your salvation in terms of your spiritual progress?</i></p>	

Chapter 12: *On the Uses of Adversity*

Consider it nothing but joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you fall into various trials. Be assured that the testing of your faith [through experience] produces endurance [leading to spiritual maturity, and inner peace]. And let endurance have its perfect result and do a thorough work, so that you may be perfect and completely developed [in your faith], lacking in nothing.

(James 1:2-4 AMP)



Although adversity may not be pleasant it can at times be helpful in reminding us that we should only put our trust in God and turn to Him when difficulties arise and to take the time to search our minds and reflect upon our motives in how we deal with others and the situations in our lives. In addition, sometimes others will oppose us, think badly of us, or even misjudge us but we need not worry because these actions help to ensure they we don't become filled with pride or conceit and learn to be humble and recognize our limitations. For there is no need to expect hope or encouragement from others as our trust must rest completely with God, *"without whom we can do nothing good."* Yet, in desperate times when we become *"troubled, tempted, or vexed by evil thoughts"* are only thoughts and prayers should be of our need of God. Yet sometimes in our suffering we wish for death so that we may be with Christ, however, God desires that we stay with His People so we may serve His will even though we will not have *"complete security nor perfect peace"* until we come to be in fellowship with Christ.

But I am hard-pressed between the two. I have the desire to leave [this world] and be with Christ, for that is far, far better; **(Philippians 1:23 AMP)**

My Prayer to Use Adversity to Increase Faith

O Lord, My Good Shepherd, You are the ultimate security and protection in my life but I know that does not mean I will not have difficulties or troubles. For even when I am faithful and obedient You still desire that I search my heart for the righteousness of my conduct and deeds. There is nothing of this world I should put my trust in or expect comfort from, so I must learn to always turn to You as my “inward witness”. The trials and hardships that You bring into our lives are necessary so that we understand that security and peace are not to be perfect on earth and regardless of our spiritual progress we always still need to find ways to increase our faith. As You, Our Lord, desire that we learn to show humility so that we may mature into our understanding that as people of faith we need to realize we can do nothing good without You and that it is good and necessary for us to encounter adversity so that we search our hearts to discover why we have allowed ourselves to become exiles and how we can return to Your glory in our homeland. Therefore, my Lord, as I find myself in the struggle of heart, during my most difficult tribulations that so greatly test my faith and cause me to desire to depart and be with You, know that I will remain and endure all as long as there is work for me within Your divine plan. For to be kept in perfect peace upon the earth will come from my efforts to keep my heart and mind focused on You, my Lord, and Your promises and truth so that I may “keep in step with the Spirit” so that through my righteousness I will have your promised peace. For with Your presence in my life there is nothing for me to fear as Your rod and staff will guide and protect me, leading me towards perfect peace. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

*Adversity is like a strong wind. It tears away from us all but the things that cannot be torn, so that we see ourselves as we really are. - **Arthur Golden***

*Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; adversity not without many comforts and hopes. - **Francis Bacon***

*No difficulty can discourage, no obstacle dismay, no trouble dishearten the man who has acquired the art of being alive. Difficulties are but dares of fate, obstacles but hurdles to try his skill, troubles but bitter tonics to give him strength; and he rises higher and looms greater after each encounter with adversity. - **Ella Wheeler Wilcox***

*Sweet are the uses of adversity which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head. - **William Shakespeare***

*There is no better teacher than adversity. Every defeat, every heartbreak, every loss, contains its own seed, its own lesson on how to improve your performance the next time. - **Malcolm X***

Reflection Questions:

1. Do you see the *value* of adversity in your life, why?
2. Where do you put your *trust*, why?
3. What is your *reaction* when others do not think well of you, why?
4. How willing are you to *endure* a difficult life to continue the work of God?
5. Do you ever feel like you are a *spiritual exile* as a follower of Christ?



Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

In the face of adversity, find strength in your innermost being and trust in the divine plan.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Uses of Adversity*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How is God proving and purifying your love?</i></p>	<p><i>What contradictions have you experienced in your life?</i></p>
<p><i>What disappointments and opposition have moved you closer to God?</i></p>	<p><i>How has temptation purified you?</i></p>
<p><i>What experiences has God put before you to bring you more closely to Him for His help?</i></p>	

Chapter 13: *On Resisting Temptation*

No temptation [regardless of its source] has overtaken or enticed you that is not common to human experience [nor is any temptation unusual or beyond human resistance]; but God is faithful [to His word—He is compassionate and trustworthy], and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability [to resist], but along with the temptation He [has in the past and is now and] will [always] provide the way out as well, so that you will be able to endure it [without yielding, and will overcome temptation with joy]. (1 Corinthians 10:13 AMP)



We exist in a world of temptation and must always be prepared when it arises. Yet just as with adversity, temptation can also benefit us *“for by them we are humbled, cleansed, and instructed.”*

strengthening and establishing the hearts of the disciples; encouraging them to remain firm in the faith, saying, “It is through many tribulations and hardships that we must enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22)

Temptation is always with us as it is part of our nature and even when we overcome one temptation it will be followed by another. We cannot run or hide from temptation we must work to develop patience and humility if we wish to

claim victory over their power. It is an internal struggle that we must undertake with “*patient endurance*” and with the help of God if we seek to overcome temptation. Our temptation begins when we do not have sufficient trust in God which leads to an unstable mind. Ultimately, “*temptation reveals our true nature*” in so much as how much temptation we are capable of bearing before we give in. In resisting temptation, we stand our best chances of success when we “*resist at the beginning*” before we let it into our minds. As once within us it will quickly create a “*vivid picture*” which we find pleasing so that we agree to accept the temptation. How much temptation each man receives depends upon the “*wisdom and justice of God’s ordinance*” in terms of what is needed for our salvation. When tempted, it is a time for trust and earnest prayer for His guidance and assistance as He will always provide a way by which we may overcome it. Therefore, even in our most challenging times we must remain “*humble in spirit*” and as we continue to be tested, we must persevere so that even in adversity we appear patient and virtuous. As we must always remember it is not in trusting ourselves but in trusting the hand of God that we He will save us and raise us up to be “*stronger than all our foes*”.

No temptation [regardless of its source] has overtaken or enticed you that is not common to human experience [nor is any temptation unusual or beyond human resistance]; but God is faithful [to His word—He is compassionate and trustworthy], and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability [to resist], but along with the temptation He [has in the past and is now and] will [always] provide the way out as well, so that you will be able to endure it [without yielding, and will overcome temptation with joy]. (1 Cor. 10:13 AMP)



Thomas a Kempis

My Prayer for Resisting Temptation

Almighty Son of God, Our Precious Cornerstone, each day I live in temptation trying my best to be cautious and alert and not to be deceived by the Devil, a roaring lion seeking to devour those that succumb to their “unstable mind and lack of trust” in You, my Lord. In this time of spiritual warfare, I find that my temptations are a result of my own immoral nature which manifests through my disobedience to Your will. Help me to be as Abraham so that I can demonstrate a true faith and obedience by always trusting that You will guide and protect me. I am ready to accept any test or trial You may put before me so that I may show my gratitude, trust, and love while being strengthened in my ability to withstand the pull into sin. Though I may find myself drawn by pride and lust I am confident that You will not tempt me beyond my abilities so that I can always choose to be faithful to You, my Lord and receive the crown of life You have promised. Therefore, I will continue to glorify You through my prayers and actions regardless of what others may believe as I am not afraid of the lion’s den because I trust that You will protect me and “deliver me from evil” and when tempted I will turn to Your Word and walk with the Spirit. For You have shown humanity from Your time in the wilderness with Satan that temptation can be avoided when we are empowered by Your love and grace. Yet, since my flesh is weak, I will diligently work to make myself ready and always be watchful by filling my heart with Your divine Truth and carrying the sword of Spirit, Your Words, capable of slaying all temptations. Ultimately, temptations will be our source of perseverance so that we may progress in our spiritual work “not lacking anything” from You my Lord. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

*We should every night call ourselves to an account: what infirmity have I mastered today? what passions opposed? what temptation resisted? what virtue acquired? Our vices will abate of themselves if they be brought every day to the shrift. - **Lucius Annaeus Seneca***

*Every conquering temptation represents a new fund of moral energy. Every trial endured and weathered in the right spirit makes a soul nobler and stronger than it was before. - **William Butler Yeats***

*We gain the strength of the temptation we resist. - **Ralph Waldo Emerson***

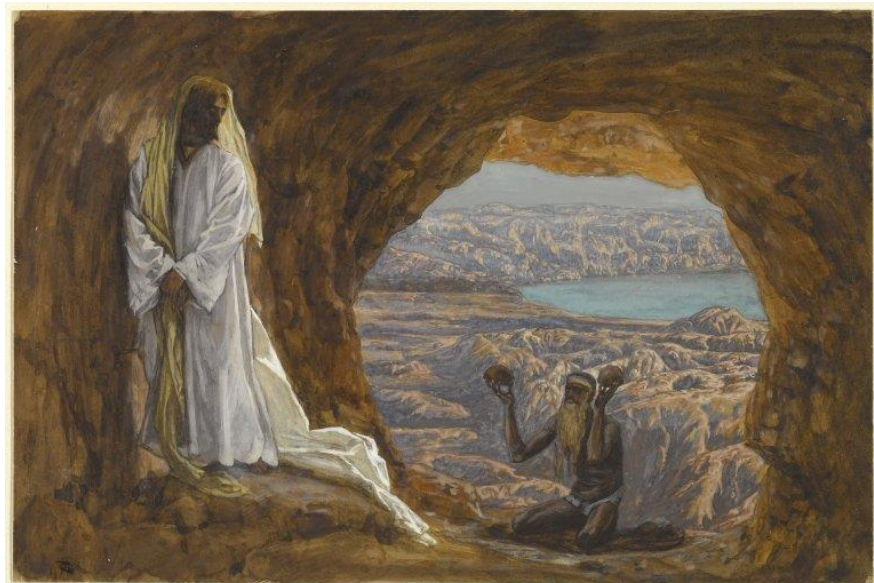
*The biggest human temptation is to settle for too little. - **Thomas Merton***

*Temptation is like a knife, that may either cut the meat or the throat of a man; it may be his food or his poison, his exercise or his destruction. - **John Owen***

*Why comes temptation but for man to meet
And master and make crouch beneath
his foot, And so be pedestaled in triumph?* - **Robert Browning**

Reflection Questions:

1. What are your greatest *temptations*, why?
2. How do you *guard* yourself from temptations?
3. When have temptations been *helpful* in your life, why?
4. How have you experienced dealing with one temptation to then have it *replaced* by another?
5. What have you found the *best method* to deal with your temptations?
6. How do you seek regular *advice* regarding temptation?
7. How does temptation *reveal* your true nature?
8. What is the best way to *resist* temptation at its very onset?
9. How do you feel the amount of temptation in your life is a reflection of your *conditions and merits*?
10. How has temptation *tested* your spiritual progress?
11. What *frailty* have temptations allowed you to discover about yourself?



Christ Tempted by Satan

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

As exercise is necessary to the development of physical muscle, so development of the moral nature is accomplished through temptation. The soul being given choice, may exercise it in whatever direction it chooses, for it learns just as well by its mistakes as by right action in the first place, perhaps even better.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Resisting Temptation*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>What has temptation freed you from?</i></p>	<p><i>How has temptation humbled you?</i></p>
<p><i>What suffering has been revealed by your temptations?</i></p>	<p><i>How has temptation caused you to realize your dependence upon God?</i></p>
<p><i>How have your temptations helped to free you from pride and self-love?</i></p>	

Chapter 14: *On Avoiding Rash Judgements*



It is not our purpose to judge others but to judge ourselves. Judgement can often be incorrect as it is often based simply upon our feelings and motives. By constantly focusing our desires on God, we would have no need to be concerned if what we believed to be true in advancing a holy life was ignored or disregarded by others. In life people tend to follow impulses and circumstances that align with their interests and desires which then keeps the mind in a calm state. However, when the impulses and circumstances do not align with our interests then our minds “*become distressed and disconsolate*”. This is seen when people disagree with each other’s beliefs and opinions leading to disagreements, fights, and on a larger scale civil war within a country or even war between countries. Therefore, we need to learn to rely upon Christ in which we humbly submit to Him and not rely upon our opinions, habits, and reasoning of the mind. For the key to obtaining true wisdom lays in our perfect obedience to God that is fueled not by the work of our minds but our “*burning love for Him*”.

who, by exerting that power which enables Him even to subject everything to Himself, will [not only] transform [but completely refashion] our earthly bodies so that they will be like His glorious resurrected body. (Philippians 3:21 AMP)

My Prayer to Not Judge Others

Son of God, Judge of the Living and Dead, You have asked that I should only judge myself and not others. But how can I judge myself if I will always seek my own favor or personal feelings will influence my judgement? While You have also shown me that if I judge others, I will most often be wrong, leading to transgressions of your laws and commands. Being only human, we tend to follow those inner impulses and outward circumstances that we are most attracted to in some way or it is to our advantage to make these hypocritical judgements. Breaking my old habits on self-righteously judging people is difficult to change. Help me to learn to submit to You my Lord so I may attain wisdom through my obedience in which I set aside reasoning in making judgements so that I may rise "on the wings of burning love for You." For I do not wish to condemn my brothers by my sanctimonious judgements, as I will also be judged in the same manner. Instill within me the ability to self-reflect on my own faults using God's Word before looking at the actions of others. Then I can use my judgments in encouraging others and promoting Your truth. Therefore, my Lord, as I watch over my brothers let me not be indifferent, always show kindness and gentleness in restoration, and carefully consider the purpose of my judgements so that I might best help others and be restored in You. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

Judgements prevent us from seeing the good that lies beyond appearances.
- **Wayne Dyer**

Every judgement of conscience, be it right or wrong, be it about things evil in themselves or morally indifferent, is obligatory, in such wise that he who acts against his conscience always sins. - **Thomas Aquinas**

The only justice is to follow the sincere intuition of the soul, angry or gentle. Anger is just, and pity is just, but judgement is never just. - **D. H. Lawrence**

Many that live deserve death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be too eager to deal out death in judgement. For even the very wise cannot see all ends. - **J. R. R. Tolkien**

Reflection Questions:

1. How prone are you to *judge others*, why?
2. On what *basis/criteria* do we judge others?
3. When have you relied upon “*the virtue of submission to Jesus Christ*” to bring you wisdom in dealing with your opinions and judgements of others?
4. How has judgement of yourself brought *positive benefits* into your life?



Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

Lead your life and walk your path, but do not judge or criticize others for walking theirs. Their experiences and karma are not for you to decide.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Avoiding Rash Judgements*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How do you allow yourself to be biased in your judgements?</i></p>	<p><i>What do you condemn in others?</i></p>
<p><i>What won't you forgive within yourself?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you seek to please God in all things?</i></p>
<p><i>How do you seek to be guided by the "light of the understanding"?</i></p>	

Chapter 15: *On Deeds Inspired by Love*



There is nothing that can justify causing pain in suffering in others, as our purpose in life is to do good works for others, Yet, all of our good works must be done with love or they are meaningless as God is always looking for the reasons that lead to our actions. He wants love to be our only motivation for everything we do in our life and not our own desires for success and achievement. We need to look beyond ourselves to serving our community without expecting acknowledgement or reward. For the more love we have in our hearts the more we are capable of doing and as we do those things well, we can then even do more. When we are inspired by “*true and perfect love*” than it is never about ourselves but only in serving God’s glory and desiring “*above all good things to merit the blessing of God.*” As man is not the source of good, only God is, so when we understand that “*all earthly things are full of vanity*” then we can begin to experience His “*perfection and peace*”.

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good deeds and moral excellence, and [recognize and honor and] glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16 AMP)

My Prayer on Doing Works from Love

Christ, Our Great God and Savior, You are the source of all good things and my heart loves much and wants to do much in Your name so that I may help others in need. Let not my good works be lost because I did not do my work with love, as only works of love can be fruitful. For I will do no evil regardless of the justification and my good deeds will not be a product of “worldly motives for natural inclination, self-will, hope of reward, and our own self-interest”. I am moved by only true and perfect love in which my only desire is to share the glory of Your name and word, and serve Your divine mission in all my deeds inspired by love. I rightfully give all credit for my good deeds to You, my Lord, for I wish no

pleasure or gratification but to be acceptable to receive Your blessing. Know my Lord that the true love that lives within my heart so that I may do good works that will ignite a spark within my heart so I may enjoy the perfection of Your peace confident that the earthly things I left behind would only fuel my vanity. Therefore, my Lord, let me serve others before myself and my deeds be inspired by love and set them where they are needed so that they may encourage others to do greater works of love. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world. - **William Shakespeare**, The Merchant of Venice

That best portion of a good man's life; His little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love. - **William Wordsworth**

A tree is known by its fruit; a man by his deeds. A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love.
- **Saint Basil**

There is inestimable blessing in a cheerful spirit. When the soul throws its windows wide open, letting in the sunshine, and presenting to all who see it the evidence of its gladness, it is not only happy, but it has an unspeakable power of doing good. - **Orison Swett Marden**

Job was astonished at seeing Almighty God so intent on doing good to us that He seems to have nothing more at heart than to love us and to induce us to love Him in return. - **Alphonsus Liguori**

Reflection Questions:

1. When have you responded with a *good deed* when someone has done evil/harm to you?
2. When have you been moved by *true and perfect love* to do a good work?
3. How have you seen a *good work* change for something that is better?
4. What are some of the *small things* that you do regularly out of love?
5. How have you experience greater love allowing you to *do more*?

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

The purpose of life is not to seek happiness but to find meaning and fulfillment through service to others.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
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Contemplation Reflection: *On Deeds Inspired by Love*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How well do your actions in your spiritual work please God?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you put love and affection into your work?</i></p>
<p><i>How is everything you do for the honor and glory of God?</i></p>	<p><i>How do your good deeds make your love active and renewed?</i></p>
<p><i>How do you seek Christ in and before all things?</i></p>	

Chapter 16: *On Bearing with the Faults of Others*



We all have faults and we should ask God's help to patiently "*endure them in good heart*" as it is not about expecting everyone to be perfect and being reprimanded if they are not. When the faults of others touch our lives, we need to give all things to God for His will and look upon our neighbors as we look upon ourselves as we work to better ourselves.

Gal 6:5 For every person will have to bear [with patience] his own burden [of faults and shortcomings for which he alone is responsible]. (Galatians 6:5)

Part of bearing the burden of our fellow man is to accept their "*fault and frailties*" and support, comfort, and encourage one another. Which means taking the time to extend a helping hand with words and actions of encouragement and advice and showing kindness and compassion in giving our time and effort to teach others and model a correct life in the eyes of God.

Carry one another's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the requirements of the law of Christ [that is, the law of Christian love]. (Galatians 6:2)

Even when others are unwilling to make an effort to address their faults, remain patient without argument as God will intercede at the appropriate time to bring forth good. Our responsibility to the Father is to work to eliminate our own faults so with a sincere heart we may follow His laws while bearing our neighbor's burdens as "*none is sufficient in himself; [and] none is wise in himself*". It is in our most difficult times that we show God our true nature.

Therefore encourage and comfort one another and build up one another, just as you are doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

My Prayer on Bearing the Faults of Others

Dear Lord, Holy and True, help me to patiently bear the faults of my brothers and provide me with your grace to endure them with a kind and loving heart. If a brother remains unchanged even after their warnings, I shall not become angry or argue with them, I will commit them up to You as You know best how to bring the good out in all situations. As I myself also have my own faults which my brothers must also bear as I work to correct them. Therefore, I cannot ask for my brothers to be reprimanded for their faults when I too am with faults and frailties. We are all imperfect and should learn to judge our neighbor's faults as we judge those of our own. By Your wisdom guide me in supporting my fellow man as they struggle so they may find comfort and rest with one another. At times, we all need help and advice as to how to deal with our faults and to bear our burdens. In my own times of trouble let me be the man who is always first to encourage, teach, and offer a helping hand so that You may judge my true nature as a leader, having molded myself into a model of a corrected man that can patiently endure all obstacles of those burdened with faults. Let me grow my Lord, and not weaken as I willingly bind myself to Your rules, bear my brother's burdens, and strive to be patient. For I am not completely sufficient myself and in Your name I will open my heart to bear the faults of others so that we both find wisdom in Your ways. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

Human greatness does not lie in wealth or power, but in character and goodness. People are just people, and all people have faults and shortcomings, but all of us are born with a basic goodness. - Anne Frank

Truly it is an evil to be full of faults; but it is a still greater evil to be full of them and to be unwilling to recognize them, since that is to add the further fault of a voluntary illusion. - Blaise Pascal

To be angry is to revenge the faults of others on ourselves. - Alexander Pope

I look only to the good qualities of men. Not being faultless myself, I won't presume to probe into the faults of others. - Mahatma Gandhi

It is one of the severest tests of friendship to tell your friend his faults. So to love a man that you cannot bear to see a stain upon him, and to speak painful truth through loving words, that is friendship. - Henry Ward Beecher

Had we not faults of our own, we should take less pleasure in complaining of others. - Francois Fenelon

Reflection Questions:

1. What faults of yourself and others have you prayed for God to correct and have had to learn to *patiently wait and endure* in good heart?
2. What faults of others most *offend* you, why?
3. How do you respond to those *unwilling* to address their faults?
4. In observing the faults of others do we consider them in the same way as we *judge ourselves* for the same faults, why?
5. How do you *bear the burden* of your fellow man?
6. When have difficult times shown your *true nature*?



Table of the Moral Sins (Greed)

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

If we strive to strengthen our body now; to overcome our faults; to cultivate new virtues; the Sun of our next life will rise under much more auspicious conditions than those under which we now live, and thus we may truly rule our stars and master our fate.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i>	<i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i>
<i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i>	<i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Bearing with the Faults of Others*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How do you show love to those who have faults that you cannot correct?</i></p>	<p><i>What suffering of your own has humbled you?</i></p>
<p><i>What things do you see in others that you need support for yourself?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you bear the faults of others without causing them discomfort?</i></p>
<p><i>How do you carry the burden of others to fulfill the law of charity, meekness, and patience?</i></p>	

Chapter 17: *On the Monastic Life*



It's difficult to find and maintain "*peace and harmony*" living with others even in a Religious Community. It requires discipline and a transformation of your life with a "*complete mortification of the passions*". Having stability with a mature spirituality so that can deepen our knowledge of Christ requires that we accept that we are both an "*exile and pilgrim on this earth*".

All these died in faith [guided and sustained by it], without receiving the [tangible fulfillment of God's] promises, only having seen (anticipated) them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. (Hebrew 11:13 AMP)

We should learn to seek only God and His gift of salvation to experience the joy that proceeds from the Holy Spirit. By allowing ourselves to "*be the least and servant of all*" we bypass all troubles and grief so we may always remain at peace.

But it is not to be this way with you; on the contrary, the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest [and least privileged], and the [one who is the] leader, like the servant. (Luke 22:26 AMP)

In living a monastic life, we should not expect to be a ruler but to serve others by our “*labour and endurance*”. For if we truly love God than we will actively work in brotherhood, controlling our tongues, and humbling ourselves before our brothers so we will have the blessing of living a happy life that faithfully submits our entire heart for the love of God.

Submit yourselves to [the authority of] every human institution for the sake of the Lord [to honor His name], whether it is to a king as one in a position of power, (1 Peter 2:13 AMP)

My Prayer for the Monastic Life

Lord of All, Our Righteous Branch, humble me to discipline myself so that I may live together with my brothers in peace and harmony. May I learn to live with my brothers without any fault, “preserving faithfully to death.” As I am but an exile and pilgrim upon the earth. From Your throne touch my head so that I might be transformed in Your ways and released of my earthly desires and passions so my soul may be saved. For I shall place myself last and a “servant of all”. By Your ways I shall always serve and never rule, my body will do Your labor, and my heart shall always pursue humility for Your blessings and love. Above all else let me be regarded as a fool for You my Lord, disciplined to seek only You, and the salvation of my soul. Then my life upon the earth shall be a monastic life filled with labor and endurance in service so I may be purified, as gold placed in the furnace. Lord, hear my prayer as I ask you to grant me this peace and contentment as Your servant. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

My imagination is a monastery, and I am its monk - John Keats

If I were to ask about my seven months at the Abbey, "Did it work, did I solve my problems?" the simple answer would be, "It did not work, it did not solve my problems." And I know that a year, two years, or even a lifetime as a Trappist monk would not have "worked" either. Because a monastery is not built to solve problems but to praise the Lord in the midst of them. - Henri J.M. Nouwen

*Mankind does not need monasteries to live, but monasteries need mankind to live!
- Mehmet Murat ildan*

I like the monastic life... in the prayer and the praising... this has charged me with new energy, spiritual energy. This is very important for my ministry outside the monastery. - **Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria**

First and foremost, the monk should own nothing in this world, but he should have as his possession's solitude of the body, modesty of bearing, a modulated tone of voice, and a well-ordered manner of speech. He should be without anxiety as to his food and drink, and should eat in silence. - **Saint Basil**

To be a monk is to have time to practice for your transformation and healing. And after that to help with the transformation and healing of other people.
- **Thich Nhat Hanh**

Reflection Questions:

1. How have you created a *disciplined* life?
2. How does your life being an *exile and pilgrim* on the earth?
3. What things have *distracted* you from seeking God and your salvation, why?
4. How have you sought to *make yourself the least* and serve all others?
5. How have you *humbled* yourself for the love of God?

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

The path to enlightenment is paved with self-reflection and self-discipline.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

Contemplation Reflection: *On the Monastic Life*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How do you restrain yourself in living with family members?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you restrain yourself at your place of work?</i></p>
<p><i>How do you practice “interior mortification” of the passions?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you practice “true humility of the heart”?</i></p>
<p><i>How do you live a monastic life in a secular world?</i></p>	

Chapter 18: *On the Examples of the Holy Fathers*



Luckily for us we have the example of the Holy Fathers on how to lead a holy and sacred life that follows “*in the footsteps of Christ*”. However, it’s impossible to compare our present lives to the hardships and strictness of their lives in which they endured hunger, thirst, coldness, constant physical exhaustion, relentless temptations of the flesh, and endless attacks from the Devil. In their lives in which they dedicated themselves to fully becoming One with the Father as they spent long hours in prayer and learning to serve their fellow man for the glory of God. It was a self-denying life that held no material wealth and sought no honor or recognition. Untimely, they were “*destitute of earthly goods, [but] they were abundantly rich in grace and all virtues.*” They lived their lives as “*strangers to the world*” and considered themselves to be nothing of any importance only wishing to live simple and humble lives in complete obedience to the Father.

So, while they were materially poor, they were rich in Spirit and examples of holiness for our encouragement to walk with God so as to be patient and filled with charity so inwardly we also might become “*refreshed with grace and heavenly consolation.*” It is impossible to fully comprehend how much our holy Fathers gave of themselves, how devoted they were to the to their new way of life by their dedication to their prayer life, pursuit of godly virtues, and their strict “*observance of the Rule!*” Yet, to God these early fathers were more precious than any riches of the world and He beloved each one as His family. In the earthy world, the “*Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins*” and all those who sought to imitate the Holy Fathers may have “*hated their lives in this world, that they might keep them to life eternal.*”

*The one who loves his life [eventually] loses it [through death], but the one who hates his life in this world [and is concerned with pleasing God] will keep it for life eternal. **John 12:25 AMP***

Therefore, we should look to them so that we too may also spiritually cleanse ourselves and, in our purity, and uprightness come to God. Therefore, in these current times that ask us to so rigidly conform and expect our unquestioning patience we must recognize the longing in our hearts to walk with Christ and follow the many examples of the “*Saints and friends of Christ*” who dared to follow in His footsteps so we might grow in the grace of God.

*and walk continually in love [that is, value one another—practice empathy and compassion, unselfishly seeking the best for others], just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God [slain for you, so that it became] a sweet fragrance. (**Ephesians 5:2 AMP**)*

My Prayer to Follow the Examples of the Holy Fathers

*Everlasting Father, King of the Ages, Your legion of followers over time has endured thirst and hunger in the desert and nakedness and cold in their cells of persecution without ever letting go of their endless hours of prayer and meditations in Your name. How long they grieved, fought the advances of the deceiver, and worked to overcome their vices so they might follow in Your footsteps and be granted eternal life. Theirs’ was a strict life of toil and weariness plagued with countless trials and temptations. For in continuous prayer the Holy Fathers dedicated their lives in their efforts to gain purity and praise and honor Your glory, My Lord. Therefore, I search my heart to see if I could also live such a holy life, renounce all my material possessions, beliefs of my self-importance, and family and friends that might distract me from Your perfect presence. Could I accept the poverty within the world and live a life of simple obedience so I might have a walk “in charity and patience” and thereby receive Your divine grace? Thankfully, You have given us the examples of the Holy Fathers so we may understand through their witness how to move forward in our own holiness with passion to develop our own virtues. Empower me now my Lord, to fight with the same strength, courage, and zeal that the early Holy Fathers fought with to find Oneness with You as I must not lose the fervor that was begun by my past brethren. Hear my prayers to now let me feel the same fire within my body as the Holy Fathers first fanned to life and continue to increase the Spirit within me through Your grace. Amen. (© **GEC2026**)*

Meditate Upon:

Let us, therefore, forsake the vanity of the crowd and their false teachings, and turn back to the Word delivered to us from the beginning. - **Polycarp of Smyrna**

The holy Fathers relate a story that when the thief of the Gospel came to the gates of the Kingdom, the Archangel with the flaming sword wanted to chase him away, but he showed him the Cross. Immediately the fire-bearing Archangel himself withdrew and permitted the thief to enter. Understand here not the wooden cross. But which? The Cross in which the chief Apostle Paul boasts and concerning which he writes, 'I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus' (Gal. 6:17).
- **Anatoly of Optina**

Do not seek the perfection of the law in human virtues, for it is not found perfect in them. Its perfection is hidden in the Cross of Christ. - **Hesychius the Priest**

Pray without ceasing on behalf of other men...For cannot he that falls rise again?
- **Ignatius of Antioch**

Your accumulated offenses do not surpass the multitude of God's mercies; your wounds do not surpass the great physician's skill. – **Cyril of Jerusalem**

Reflection Questions:

1. How does your life compare to that of the *early Christians*?
2. How much do you *pray* and provide *service* for God each day, why?
3. What things have you *renounced* for God?
4. Do you consider yourself a *dear and familiar friend* of God?
5. How *strict* are you in your obedience to God?
6. How have the current times made you *lukewarm* with God?

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

Life is a school in which experience is the teacher, and the curriculum is of our own choosing.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
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Contemplation Reflection: *On Examples of the Holy Fathers*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>Which Holy Fathers have you drawn inspiration from?</i></p>	<p><i>What virtues have the Holy Fathers best illustrated for you?</i></p>
<p><i>What spiritual practices have the Holy Fathers brought into your life?</i></p>	<p><i>How has your suffering compared to that of the Holy Fathers?</i></p>
<p><i>How have you "grown in grace" by the examples of the Holy Fathers?</i></p>	

Chapter 19: *On the Practices of a Good Religious*



We must live each day of our lives as purely as possible displaying the holy virtues both inwardly and outwardly as God will search our hearts to confirm our goodness and that we love Him above all else. While remembering that this should be a daily ritual designed to “*renew our resolution, and bestir ourselves to fervour, as though it was our first day of conversion*”.

“Help me, O Lord God, in my good resolve and in your holy service: grant me this day to begin perfectly, for [up to this point] I have accomplished nothing.” –
Prayer within the Chapter

Our resolution to our spiritual growth must be sincere if we expect make progress and we need to make the time each day to “*examine and order both our inner and outer life*”. However, we must put our whole trust in God and learn not to look to our own wisdom but the Grace of God to ensure our spiritual progress.

A man’s mind plans his way [as he journeys through life], But the Lord directs his steps and establishes them. (Proverbs 16:9 AMP)

We must have consistency in our spiritual practices yet allow for interruptions when our brothers are in need and our assistance is required. There will be times that we fail but when we “*have a firm resolve*” we are well prepared to immediately resume our spiritual practices. Each day we should make it our practice to perform a retrospection so we can atone for our wrongdoings against God and our brothers in our actions, words, and thoughts. As part of our spiritual exercises, we need to consider the purity of our diet keep ourselves active in prayer and meditation, reading and writing spiritual materials, and serving others. Personal devotions should extend beyond the common observances and performed privately. Choose the personal devotions that are best suited to your needs and temperament, the Season, and Festivals. The prayers of the Saints are often helpful in connecting us to the themes of the Festivals and as we await the

next Festival we should strive to live a devout life as if in preparation of our passing to a “*heavenly Feast*”. While the holy seasons require even greater devotion and strict observance of the rituals so that in our hearts, we stand ready for the fulfillment of God’s promises and rewards knowing that God will decide when we are ready and worthy for His glory. Therefore, our work now is to make ourselves ready when Christ returns and we depart from this world.

For I consider [from the standpoint of faith] that the sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us! (Romans 8:18 AMP)

My Prayer to Renew My Resolution

Lord of Eternity, Our Light in Darkness, each day I humbly come before You so that You may search my heart so that I may then renew my resolution to Your Kingship. Know that my purpose is to always stand firm in accordance with Your will. As Your disciple I have put my trust and faith in You to set me on the right path and honor Your promises as I proceed. Therefore, You can hold me accountable to abide by Your laws and commands so that I may live a worthy life of virtue. For I know if I should slip or fall Your merciful hand will reach out to help me and whenever I am confused or lost You are always available through my prayers and with Your inner guidance through the Holy Spirit. Though I seek resolution through my wisdom I know that resolution comes primarily by Your grace. As Your servant I have chosen to be committed to Your will through faith and obedience and to remain steadfast even in the greatest adversity and opposition. For I will not turn my head to look back as I plow the fields as the past is the past, and I am dedicated to the ongoing mission of the Kingdom without delay. Yet, there will be times that I might offend You my Lord through my carelessness or unknowing at the time so each night I will examine my conduct for the day so that I may atone and thereby strengthen my resolve so as to advance my spiritual progress. I will resolve to use the great Festivals and Holy Seasons as reminders to renew my devotion, labor intently with my spiritual exercises, and live each day preparing to be ready for Your return. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

A holy life will produce the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns; they only shine. - Dwight L. Moody

Doctrine is useless if it is not accompanied by a holy life. It is worse than useless; it does positive harm. Something of 'the image of Christ' must be seen and observed by others in our private life, and habits, and character, and doings. - J. C. Ryle

We know certainly that our God calls us to a holy life. We know that he gives us every grace, every abundant grace; and though we are so weak of ourselves, this grace is able to carry us through every obstacle and difficulty.

- Elizabeth Ann Seton

Christianity is a religion which concerns us as we are here and now, creatures of body and soul. We do not "follow the footsteps of his most holy life" by the exercise of a trained religious imagination, but by treading the firm, rough earth, up hill and down dale. - Evelyn Underhill

Reflection Questions:

1. What will God find when He *searches your heart*?
2. How do you *renew your resolution* each day for your holy service to God?
3. What faults are most *hindering* your spiritual progress, why?
4. By what practices do you *examine* your inner and outer life?
5. What daily strategies best help you to build a *firm resolve* so you do not become a victim of your faults?
6. In what ways do you try to live your life from one great Festival to the next (i.e., *Easter to Christmas*) and during the Holy Seasons (i.e., *Lent, Advent, etc.*)?
7. How are you making yourself ready for the *coming of the Lord*?

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

Our true self is eternal and divine; we are merely here on Earth to learn and grow.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

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Contemplation Reflection: *On the Practices of a Good Religious*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How strong is your desire to please God?</i></p>	<p><i>What is your greatest obstacle to being whole in your devotion to God?</i></p>
<p><i>What promises have you not fulfilled for God?</i></p>	<p><i>How well are you doing the will of the Father?</i></p>
<p><i>In what ways are you giving/not giving yourself to God?</i></p>	

Chapter 20: *On the Love of Solitude and Silence*



We should make time to frequently meditate in silence on the “*loving kindness of God*” and find places by ourselves to “*serve God in solitude*”. For in whatever ways, we chose to spend our time, we should strive to do only those things that will intensify our devotion to the Lord.

But when you pray, go into your most private room, close the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees [what is done] in secret will reward you. - Matthew 6:6 AMP

Our spiritual practice requires that we watch over ourselves and it is far easier to keep silent when we are by ourselves than among others when we are more prone to say far more than we should. Therefore, in order to promote our spiritual life, we must abandon the crowds and learn to remain silent so we can put forth our “*holy contrition*”. As Thomas a Kempis advises, “*If you desire heartfelt contrition, enter into your room, and shut out the clamour of the world, as it is written, ‘Commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still.’*”

Come, my people, enter your chambers And shut your doors behind you; Hide for a little while Until the [Lord's] wrath is past.

- Isaiah 26:20 AMP

For progress in our spiritual growth only occurs when we place ourselves in silence and quietness so we may study the Word of God and purify ourselves each night. We must move further from our earthly life so we may then move closer to our heavenly life with the Father. Moving beyond the world of our brothers in obscurity helps to ensure the salvation our souls as it places us beyond our earthly desires so as to maintain the purity of our conscience and heart.

The world is passing away, and with it its lusts [the shameful pursuits and ungodly longings]; but the one who does the will of God and carries out His purposes lives forever. - 1 John 2:17

All of God's miracles are right before us so there is no need to venture into the places of the world that will only distract your heart. Rather than trying to go everywhere to find satisfaction in your life, simply focus your eyes upon God and ask His forgiveness and place "your attention to those things that God commands you."

*Lift up your eyes on high
And see who has created these heavenly bodies,
The One who brings out their host by number,
He calls them all by name;
Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power,
Not one is missing.
- Isaiah 40:26 AMP*

Instead of pursuing the meaningless events and activities of the world and spending your time in idle talk about it, search for solitude and privately commune with Christ and you will be certain to find the greatest peace!

My Prayer for Solitude and Silence

Christ, My Lord, King of the Eternal, I will now close my lips so that in silence and quietness I can commune with my heart and come to an earnest contrition. For it is only when I close the door to my room to the many voices of others that I am become still and able to enter into Your loving-kindness and compassion. Just as the Holy Fathers served You in solitude, I now wish to limit my unnecessary talk, gossip, and idle chat and focus my thoughts only upon holy things. Let me be withdrawn from the crowd so I may happily remain silent and "seek out the hidden meaning of the proverbs" and "ponder the obscurities of the parables" while escaping the temptations that seek to ensnare me. Then as I work towards the salvation of my soul through silence and solitude, I pray that You my Lord and Your angels will draw me closer in Oneness, washing me of my impurities and cleansing my conscience so that my heart be unburdened. Come with me into the stillness of my room as I call upon You, My Savior, join with me in fellowship of

solitude and silence so that I may experience Your perfect peace. As it is here that I desire to continuously dwell so our fellowship in solitude and silence becomes a “dear friend and a welcome comfort.” Amen.

Meditate Upon:

*There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but Nature more*

- Lord Byron

I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time. To be in company, even with the best, is soon wearisome and dissipating. I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude.

- Henry David Thoreau

I need to be alone. I need to ponder my shame and my despair in seclusion; I need the sunshine and the paving stones of the streets without companions, without conversation, face to face with myself, with only the music of my heart for company. - Henry Miller

The soul that sees beauty may sometimes walk alone.

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Reflection Questions:

1. What things do you study that *move your heart* to devotion?
2. On what things do you *meditate*, why?
3. How in your spiritual life do you “*withdraw yourself from the crowd*”?
4. How have you exercised yourself in holy *contrition*?
5. In what whys have you *withdrawn* yourself for God?
6. What are the *things of the world* you so desire to go out and see, why?
7. How have you given your *attention* to those things that God has commanded of you?

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

However, there is the true mystic prayer—the prayer where we meet God face to face, as Elijah met Him. Not in the tumult of the world, the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, do we meet Him, but when all is still the soundless voice speaks to us from within. However, the silence which is required for this experience is not a mere silence of words.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

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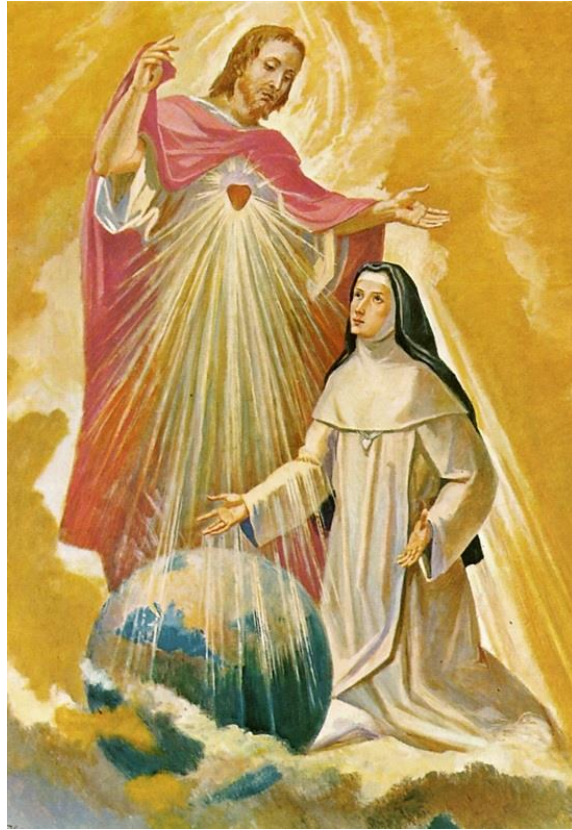
Contemplation Reflection: *On the Love of Solitude and Silence*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
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<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How have you separated your soul from your senses?</i></p>	<p><i>Where is silence in your life now?</i></p>
<p><i>What holy desires are you inspired by?</i></p>	<p><i>How have you withdrawn your heart into solitude?</i></p>
<p><i>How have you sought to bring an “interior retirement” into your life?</i></p>	

Chapter 21: *On Contrition of Heart*



In finding repentance we must truly grieve for the sins we have committed and recognize the guilt we hold in our conscience for failing to respect the power and authority of God, the Father. We must humble ourselves and fear God so we will turn our lives from sin and commit ourselves to His true devotion.

The fear of the Lord leads to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil. (Proverbs 19:23 AMP)

Through “*proper sorrow*” we can will find our “*single purpose*” in contrition of the heart so we may grow in holiness. Our life should only be concerned with monitoring our own affairs and making the needed corrections that demonstrate your fear of God as /his faithful servant. On the Earth we should have few comforts as our comfort should come from God for contrition of the heart. For the deeper we look within ourselves the greater reasons for sorrow we will find, showing ourselves to be “*unworthy of God’s comfort*”. In contrition the earthly world “*becomes grievous and bitter*” as our sins strongly grasp our heart and leaving us unable to “*contemplate heavenly things.*” For we are more concerned with a long easy life of many pleasures rather than working to live a holy life that is often filled with hardship, suffering, and sorrow but with contrition we will come to a far better life in the comfort of God’s arms. Therefore, we must “*Humbly beg Our Lord, therefore to grant you the spirit of contrition and say with the Prophet, ‘Feed me, O Lord with the bread of tears, and give me plenteousness of tears to drink’*”

You have fed them the bread of tears, And You have made them drink [bitter] tears in abundance. (Psalm 80:5 AMP)

My Prayer for Contrition of the Heart

O Holy Servant, Intercessor of Love, I come to You with a broken and contrite heart for I have not always watched myself and I am now broken with grief and sorrow for my wrongdoings. For I sought too much freedom, allowed myself to be governed by my senses in pursuing my desires, and my worship failed to express reverent fear of You, my Lord. Yet, in my repentance I come to You contrite and ready to offer myself to devoutly follow Your ways aware of my faults and wrongdoings. Remove the many stains from my blemished conscience so I may now dedicate myself to the “single purpose of contrition” so that I “may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil”. As I have eaten much of the bread of tears and have excessively drunk the bitter tears You provided me to nourish my longing soul, so that I might ask that You, my Lord, grant me the spirit of contrition. I know that I am not worthy of Your comfort and the greater I look within myself the more reasons I find for grief and sorrow and that I should suffer much more greatly. Yet, help me to release the hold of my wrongdoings and unholy thoughts so I may contemplate the true and everlasting beauty of Your creations and the majesty of Your pure and immaculate signs and visions so that I may become zealous to live a life deserving of Your comfort, unburdened of hardship, and joyful in its delights. For Your love and mercy has moved my cold and calloused heart so that I will unchain my vanity and need of consolation for the release of that which is not eternal so that I may give myself entirely to contrition of the heart. Amen.

Meditate Upon:

There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love.

- Washington Irving

Humility has such power. Apologies can disarm arguments. Contrition can defuse rage. Olive branches do more good than battle axes ever will. - Max Lucado

Our preaching does not stop with the law. That would lead to wounding without binding up, striking down and not healing, killing and not making alive, driving down to hell and not bringing back up, humbling and not exalting. Therefore, we must also preach grace and the promise of forgiveness - this is the means by

which faith is awakened and properly taught. Without this word of grace, the law, contrition, penitence, and everything else are done and taught in vain.

- Martin Luther

Where I say that He abideth sorrowfully and moaning, it meaneth all the true feeling that we have in our self, in contrition and compassion, and all sorrowing and moaning that we are not oned with our Lord. And all such that is speedful, it is Christ in us. And though some of us feel it seldom, it passeth never from Christ till what time He hath brought us out of all our woe. For love suffereth never to be without pity. - Julian of Norwich

Reflection Questions:

1. How do you live in *fear of God*?
2. What has contrition of the heart *revealed* in your life?
3. In what ways have you *corrected* yourself?
4. How are you living as a *servant of God*?
5. How have you felt God's *comfort*?
6. What *sorrows* do you currently find in your life?
7. In what ways do you feel you should be *zealous* in living a better life?
8. How are you working on your spiritual life so you may grow in the *spirit of contrition*?

Act of Contrition

*O my God,
I am heartily sorry for having offended you,
and I detest all my sins because of your just punishments,
but most of all because they offend you, my God,
who are all good and deserving of all my love.
I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace,
to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin.
Amen.*

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

Regret and remorse have no place in the scheme of life. What a man has done, he has done; all the regret in the world will not bring back a lost opportunity.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i>	<i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i>
<i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i>	<i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Contrition of the Heart*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How do you deal with your suffering without offending God?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you maintain a humble modesty in your life?</i></p>
<p><i>How have you caused pain by disobeying your moral duty?</i></p>	<p><i>How patient are you in your pain and suffering?</i></p>
<p><i>How are pain and suffering connected to your spiritual progress?</i></p>	

Chapter 22: *On Human Misery*



Happiness is only found in God and until we come to God, we can only expect trouble and anxiety. Money and power are meaningless and “*even burdensome*” in that they lead only to fear and worry. Happiness is not found in the “*abundance of this world’s goods*” but in a living a sin-free life suffering for the love of God and not being bound by our bodily needs.

For those who are living according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh [which gratify the body], but those who are living according to the Spirit, [set their minds on] the things of the Spirit [His will and purpose]. (Romans 8:5 AMP)

Ultimately, we do not need much for our lives and we should work to set ourselves free of our daily necessities so we focus our lives on the eternal things. The time to start is now and it will be a difficult path but we will come out born anew so you can then “*come to a place of rest*”. Discipline is essential as we are prone to sin in our mortal bodies and “*lost our innocence.*” Therefore, we no longer experience true happiness and our lives are burdened with “*weariness and sorrow*”. For it will only be by our patience that one day by the mercy of God that our sins will be cleansed and we may die into a new life. Unfortunately, as humans we are weak and often repeat our sins so we must always live with humility that keeps our pride in check so as not to lose the benefits of God’s grace.

Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity. Than a [rich] man who is twisted in his speech and is a [shortsighted] fool. Prov19:1 AMP

Our quest for holiness will be a never-ending process in our lives so we must not give in to our weariness or belief we have met the goal and need to journey no further if we expect to reach “*a haven of peace and security*”.

While they are saying, “Peace and safety [all is well and secure!]” then [in a moment unforeseen] destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains on a woman with child, and they will absolutely not escape [for there will be no way to escape the judgment of the Lord]. (1 Thessalians 5:3 AMP)

My Prayer to Find Happiness

O Beloved Christ, Radiance of God’s Glory, turn my gaze from the wealth of my earthly possessions and show me the folly in believing that the gold of this world would allow me to rest and relax, eat, drink, and be merry so I might continuously celebrate in happiness. Open my eyes to see that I will only find happiness when I turn to You so that you may release my soul and cleanse it of all its wrongdoings so I may now delight in Your laws, My Lord. Teach me to live on only that which I need and to see the earthly things and bodily pleasures that I once loved so much as vile and worthless. Help me to turn my eyes towards those invisible things which are good and eternal so that I may progress through the purifying fire and water of my spiritual life to find a place of rest and joy in Your presence. Through a deep longing for humility and righteousness open me to Your divine favor and place me within a state of blessedness so that we may walk more closely together, allowing me to feel the flow of Your spiritual joy and happiness as we spiritually transform into One. Let the Holy Spirit that dwells within me put forth its fruit of joy as I live a life in which the Spirit which directs me to “store up treasures in heaven”. Allow me, my Lord, to know Your heart and live my life by Your will, for as a believer I remind You of Your promise of eternal joy. Therefore, I will put away my procrastination so I can rise up and fight now for your mercy and help by living in obedience and amending my ways. For then I can experience Your divine power to change my life in the world that you created for our enjoyment. Yet, keep me grounded in the fact the happiness You wish us to have is within You, my Lord, and I should not abuse Your gift of the Spirit or value it more than You. O Lord, by Your laws revive my soul and allow my heart to rejoice. As I will trust You in the most challenging of times, when my heart only feels sorrow because I know that there will always be happiness when I turn to You. Amen.

Meditate Upon:

Nothing is miserable unless you think it so; and on the other hand, nothing brings happiness unless you are content with it. – Boethius

Create all the happiness you are able to create; remove all the misery you are able to remove. Every day will allow you, --will invite you to add something to the pleasure of others, --or to diminish something of their pains.

- Jeremy Bentham

There is no greater sorrow than to recall in misery the time when we were happy. - **Dante Alighieri**

*When we our betters see bearing our woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.*

- William Shakespeare, King Lear

Whoever is spared personal pain must feel himself called to help in diminishing the pain of others. We must all carry our share of the misery which lies upon the world. - **Albert Schweitzer**

What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like. - **Saint Augustine**

Part of every misery is, so to speak, the misery's shadow or reflection: the fact that you don't merely suffer but have to keep on thinking about the fact that you suffer. I not only live each endless day in grief, but live each day thinking about living each day in grief. - **C. S. Lewis**

Reflection Questions:

1. How have you *turned to God*?
2. What makes you *happy*?
3. How strongly are you *attached* to what your life is now, why?
4. How will you *guard* against any future wrongdoings?
5. What is the “*good life*” and how are you working to a “*haven of peace and security*”?

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

Life is a journey, and in order to reach our destination, we must first learn to navigate the rough seas.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

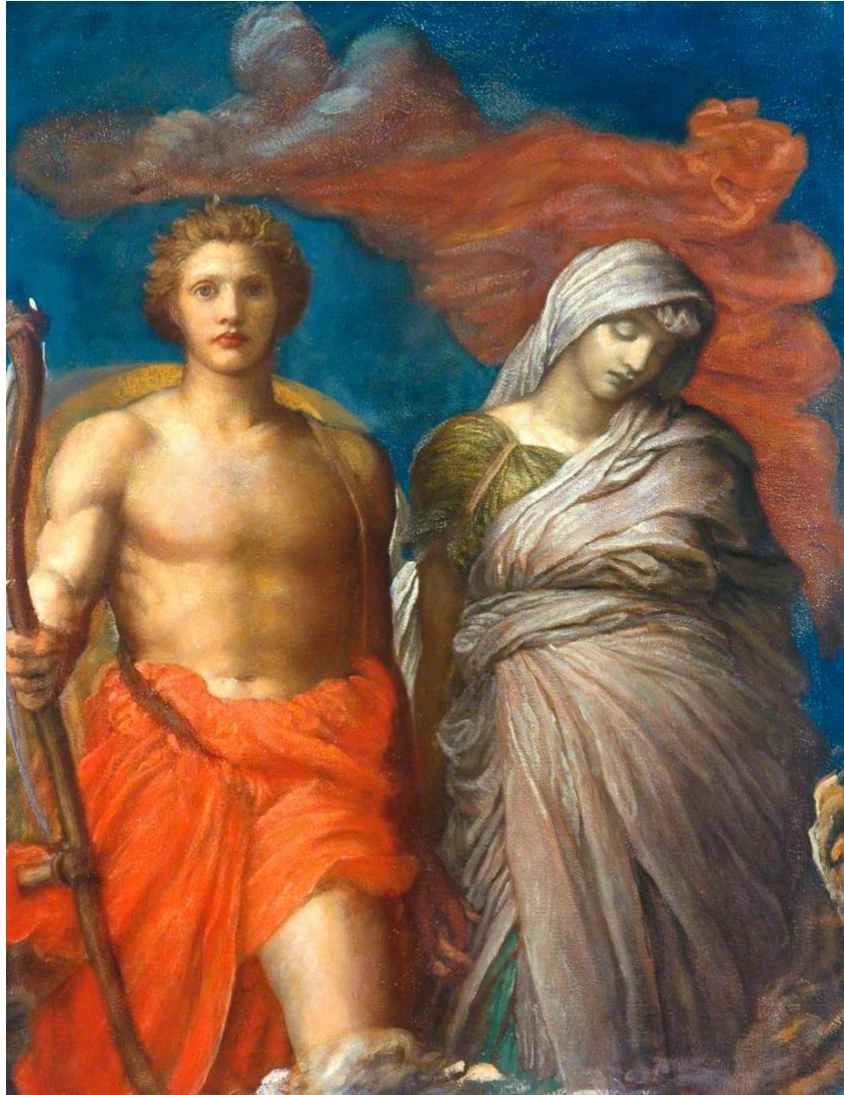
Contemplation Reflection: *On Human Misery*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How is suffering a part of your happiness?</i></p>	<p><i>How can you love the miseries of your life?</i></p>
<p><i>What has been the most offensive things that you have suffered for God's sake?</i></p>	<p><i>What "hunger" have you learned to love in your life?</i></p>
<p><i>What things have caused you to (or consider) withdraw your heart from God?</i></p>	

Chapter 23: *A Meditation on Death*



Your life moves quickly and death is upon you in no time, it could even be tomorrow as we have no guarantees. Therefore, we must not squander the time we are given but live each day as if it were our last careful in the things we say, do, and think. In preparing for our death, we must learn to put our sin aside and make amends for the wrongs we have committed.

Blessed (happy, prosperous, to be admired) are those servants whom the master finds awake and watching when he arrives. I assure you and most solemnly say to you, he will prepare himself to serve, and will have them recline at the table, and will come and wait on them. (Luke 12:37 AMP)

“Blessed is the man who keeps the hour of his death always in his mind, and daily prepares himself to die.” As we all will die and who will remember us many years from now? The wise man strives to find death the same way he lived his life in making efforts to grow spiritually, disciplined, obedient, and grateful for the opportunities to express his love for Christ even in the most difficult and

challenging times. In most cases, when sickness comes it only makes it more difficult to stay upon your spiritual path.

But keep alert at all times [be attentive and ready], praying that you may have the strength and ability [to be found worthy and] to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand in the presence of the Son of Man [at His coming].” (Luke 21:36 AMP)

Others cannot help you in the salvation of your soul and as you alone must “*make timely provisions and to acquire merit in this life ... so you may win eternal life hereafter.*” It is our responsibility to always be mindful of our impending death and make our best effort to live a holy life so at the time of your death you are ready to live your life with Christ. As it is only when we release ourselves of all earthly desires and passions that we may freely come to Christ in joy without any fear upon our death. Now is the time to “*gather the riches of everlasting life ... and care only for the things of God*”. Walk upon the earth knowing that earthly affairs will only distract you from keeping your heart dedicated to God praying at all times that at your death your soul “*may merit to pass joyfully into the presence of God*”.

For here we have no lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come. (Hebrews 13:14 AMP)

My Prayer to Keep my Death in Mind

Christ, My Lord, The Last Adam, help me to think beyond my present life and live a life in which I will be ready to die today with my conscience intact. Let all my words and actions be a testament to the closeness to the end of my time upon the earth and provisions I wish to carry into the future as there is no escape from our death and I have no certainty of my tomorrow. Show me the virtue of a life of purity in which I live each day in Your glory rather than worrying if I should live a long heedless life. Help me to be ready to see my mortality each day as I wish to be ready at all times for that unknown hour so I will have no grief or sorrow for a thoughtless life taken for granted. When death finds me let it find me prepared so I may pass in a happy death as I lived my life as I so greatly desired to “be found at death.” Now while I am Your faithful servant and able, build within me a longing to pursue holiness, accept obedience and discipline, practice self-denial, and build the strength to withstand all obstacles so that I might grow in Your love. Impress upon my heart the need to care for my soul now by putting my time to its best use to freeing myself by “dying to the world” so I may live with You, my Lord. Guide me in your ways as I live my life in “holy fear” ready for my passing so I spend every second of my life gathering the “riches of eternal life” so that on the day you choose I will joyfully pass and be welcomed into Your presence within an “eternal home” of love. Amen. (© GEC206)

Meditate Upon:

He who learns to die daily while he lives will find it no difficulty to breathe out his soul for the last time. – **Charles Spurgeon**

When God would have us die to self, he always touches the tenderest spot.
– **François Fénelon**

Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favourite wishes every day and death of your whole body in the end: submit with every fibre of your being, and you will find eternal life. – **C. S. Lewis**

The deeper we are willing to enter into the death of self, the more shall we know of the mighty power of God, and the perfect blessedness of a perfect trust.
– **Andrew Murray**

Death reminds us that we are creatures. Yet as fearsome as death is, it is nothing compared with meeting a holy God. When we encounter him, the totality of our creatureliness breaks upon us and shatters the myth that we have believed about ourselves, the myth that we are demigods, junior-grade deities who will try to live forever. - **R.C. Sproul**

Reflection Questions:

1. How have you *provided against the future* for God?
2. Are you ready to *die today*, why/why not?
3. How do you keep your *death in mind* each day?
4. Will your death be a *happy death*, why/why not?
5. How are you living with *Christ now*?
6. Do you pray that your soul may “*joyfully pass into the presence of God*”, how or why not?

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

At the moment of death, when the seed atom in the heart is ruptured, which contains all the experience of the past life in a panoramic picture, the spirit leaves its physical body, taking with it the finer bodies.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

Contemplation Reflection: *A Meditation on Death*

a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?

b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?

c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?

d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?

What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?

Applications

<p><i>How much do you fear your death, why?</i></p>	<p><i>How does your fear of death motivate a good life within you?</i></p>
<p><i>Are you currently living in the same state in which you plan to die, explain?</i></p>	<p><i>How are you prepared to die?</i></p>
<p><i>How are you dying daily to Christ?</i></p>	

Chapter 24: *On Judgement, and Punishment of Sinners*



One day we will all be judged and everything will be revealed so we must live our lives prepared to answer to God. There will be no excuses or defense for any wrong doings even when the deeds of others may have prompted our unkind response.

*But with righteousness and justice He will judge the poor,
And decide with fairness for the downtrodden of the earth;
And He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,
And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. (Isaiah 11:4 AMP)*

We must pray for our enemies and forgive them while grieving for them. Compassion for others is foremost, while anger is cast aside so that we may work to purify ourselves now in the present so as to avoid the payment of our sins in the hereafter. Retribution for our wrong doings will be swift and harsh and the damned will have no peace or comfort. Therefore, we need to take the time to grieve our sins now and submit to our judgement now so we may find our humility in which a “*disciplined life and hard penance prove more worth than all worldly delights.*” If we learn to endure now then we will lessen that which we

need to be accountable for and from this we can find true happiness in that we will “*also reign with Christ in Heaven.*” We need to set aside our vanity and look only to love and serve the Father so we will have no of our judgement and retribution as “perfect love enjoys sure access to God.”

nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the [unlimited] love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:39 AMP)

For without the fear of God we are without goodness and be judged accordingly, so take notice and “*prepare yourself against the Day of Judgement.*” By your labors to live a patient, wholesome, and righteous life with a clean conscience reflecting upon the pain and suffering you have caused so you may “*cleanses [your] soul and make peace with God.*”

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a right and steadfast spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10 AMP)*

My Prayer to Prepare Myself for Judgement Day

My Lord, My Just Judge, I know that on the day you select, I will come before you to be judged in which I cannot hide anything or offer any justifications. Therefore, turn me in my ways so I may prepare myself now for Your Day of Judgement and while I live let my sorrow for my wrongdoings wash my conscience and cleanse my soul so that my penance is acceptable to You my Father so I may find peace with you and be counted among the blessed. Yet, help me to grieve even more for my brother's wrongdoings, pray for my enemy's forgiveness, and replace my anger against others with compassion. As I need to make amends for my immoral and wicked ways now so I may be cleansed in advance of Your judgement so as to lessen the severity Your divine retribution. For then I can confidently place myself with the righteous and stand in the presence of those who tormented and caused trouble undeservedly to others now as their judge. I am confident that I can endure the hardship and difficulties always continuous and devout in my prayers within a life of holy deeds. As the only pleasure that I wish to obtain is to love You with all my heart so I may reign with You, my Lord, in heaven. Therefore, if I can perfect my love for You there is nothing that “will be able to separate me from the Your unlimited love”. For the reverence and awe, I have for You, My Just Judge, will keep me in a good life so that I can answer You with pure heart in which my body always responds to the Spirit, without the fear of Your verdict on the Judgement Day. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

For Christians, the final judgement will be a time to receive the Goal of our Faith. - J. S. Gyimah

God's grace is not infinite. God is infinite, and God is gracious. We experience the grace of an infinite God, but grace is not infinite. God sets limits to His patience and forbearance. He warns us over and over again that someday the ax will fall and His judgment will be poured out. - R. C. Sproul

The verdict of the final judgement is declared in advance for those who belong to Jesus Christ, and on the day of judgement that verdict will be proclaimed to the world. What is remarkable is that believers enjoy now the end-time verdict. Believers have assurance of salvation by faith alone because the verdict of the final day is already theirs! -Thomas Schreiner

Don't wait for the last judgment - it takes place every day. - Albert Camus

But this we may positively state, that nobody has made any progress in the school of Christ unless he cheerfully looks forward to the day of his death and to the day of the final resurrection. - John Calvin

Reflection Questions:

1. How will you be *judged* by God on the Day of Judgement?
2. How have you worked to *expiate* your sins and vices now?
3. What will you be must severely *punished* for, why?
4. How will you prove that you can “*endure a little now*” to spare yourself troubles at the end?
5. How have you *removed the vanity* from your life so that you could love and serve God alone?

But you, why do you criticize your brother? Or you again, why do you look down on your [believing] brother or regard him with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God [who alone is judge]. For it is written [in Scripture], “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God.” So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. – Romans 14:10-12 AMP

Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

Lead your life and walk your path, but do not judge or criticize others for walking theirs. Their experiences and karma are not for you to decide.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i>	<i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i>
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Contemplation Reflection: *On Judgement and Punishment of Sinners*

<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How are you preparing for God's Judgement?</i></p>	<p><i>How much do your desires and passions tempt you for their brief gratifications?</i></p>
<p><i>How do you reflect upon the conduct of your life each day?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you watch over yourself and correct your faults?</i></p>
<p><i>How do you condemn and punish yourself in this life?</i></p>	

Chapter 25: *On the Zealous Amendment of our Life*



In our spiritual work we must always be “*watchful and diligent in the service of God*” as our reward will be in living a life without fear and sorrow. If we can be faithful in every aspect of our lives, always remain filled with hope, and persevere we will “*find great piece of soul, and everlasting joy.*”

But as for you, be clear-headed in every situation [stay calm and cool and steady], endure every hardship [without flinching], do the work of an evangelist, fulfill [the duties of] your ministry. (2 Timothy 4:5 AMP)

The commitment we make to God is the prescription we need to banish our anxieties and worries and strengthen us so we may find God’s comfort. We need not fear the difficulties and cost of the life God has asked of us for greater we overcome life’s difficulties the greater rewards we receive and the more clearly, we show ourselves as deserving God’s “*abundant grace.*” If we wish to change our lives we must be “*diligent and zealous*” in which we stand firm in stepping away from our vices and develop within ourselves a “*fervent pursuit of any grace of which we stand in particular need*”. Take note of all the positive attributes of

“good manners and discipline” you wish to put into your life so you may use them in improving your life.

And do not be conformed to this world [any longer with its superficial values and customs], but be [a]transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His plan and purpose for you].

(Romans 12:2 AMP)

Our purpose in life is to imitate the life of Christ so that the “likeness of Christ crucified” is always in our hearts and minds. Therefore, we need to meditate and contemplate of the life of Christ as this is the key to bringing His divine abundance into all that we need.

Set your mind and keep focused habitually on the things above [the heavenly things], not on things that are on the earth [which have only temporal value].

(Colossians 3:2 AMP)

In a disciplined life of obedience, we are choosing the more difficult way. However, with this way comes stability so that we will avoid much sorrow. For the more we spend time praising God and giving “yourself to spiritual things” the happier our lives will be. Yet, as humans on Earth we still have our needs of our bodies which prevent us from enjoying much of “the spiritual feasts of the soul”. Once we understand that our comfort is not found in anything of the world then we begin to “enjoy God perfectly, and [we] will be well content with whatever befalls [us]”. Then we understand what it means to trust God and see that in Him there is no death for everything continuously lives and serves His will. In our spiritual efforts to acquire virtue we must respect our time and continuously offer prayer so God will grant us peace and help us in our efforts by His love and grace.

*and walk continually in love [that is, value one another—practice empathy and compassion, unselfishly seeking the best for others], just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God [slain for you, so that it became] a sweet fragrance. **(Ephesians 5:2 AMP)***

It is a difficult path we walk with God, a war we must wage against our desires and passions so we can overcome the power of our sins. Yet, in small battles we win we find ourselves more prepared to deal with our larger faults. Most importantly, we need to strictly watch ourselves regardless of the actions of others, reprimand and correct our wrong doings, and “never neglect our own soul” for in our strictness we will find the greatest spiritual progress.

*Therefore see that you walk carefully [living life with honor, purpose, and courage; shunning those who tolerate and enable evil], not as the unwise, but as wise [sensible, intelligent, discerning people]. **(Ephesians 5:15 AMP)***

My Prayer for the Amendment of My Life

Beloved Son of the Most High, Judge of the World, may I be clear-headed in all my accounts so that I may faithfully perform service in Your name. Transform and change me from this superficial world by helping me to focus my mind upon Your godly values and moral principles so that I may understand that Your will is perfect for the purpose You hold for me within Your divine plan. By working to make spiritual progress, I ask that You put aside my fears and sorrows so that I may “find great peace of the soul and everlasting joy.” For in my heart I have great hope to “win the victor’s crown ... and receive the reward of my labors”. Comfort me, my Lord, by relieving me of my anxiety and worry of what will happen to me as I commit myself to Your will, for I wish to do good and “dwell in the land feeding upon Your faithfulness”. Clear my mind of all fears for “difficulties and the cost of victory.” Therefore, my Lord, help me to stay diligent and filled with passion in the pursuit for my “amendment of life” so that I may change my conduct so that I continually walk in charity with empathy and compassion for my fellow man. As my God and Savior, keep my purpose firmly planted within my mind by holding an image of Your crucifixion upon the cross always before me. While in my earnest and devout contemplations upon Your life allow me to discover an abundance of those invisible things, I need so that I may continue to be instructed in Your way. As my happiness will only be found in my perpetual praise of You from my thoughts and prayers, regardless of what occurs within my life. For “in You nothing perishes or dies, for all things live for You, and serve Your will continually.” And by Your grace help me to find peace and lessen the burden of my spiritual struggles as I continue to watch myself and find time for prayer, so that I may overcome my faults and acquire virtue. As I shall seek to fervently amend my life so that I may build my soul and be prepared for anything You ask of me. Amen. (© GEC2026)

Meditate Upon:

I would like my life to be a statement of love and compassion—and where it isn’t, that’s where my work lies. – Ram Dass

You find peace not by rearranging the circumstances of your life, but by realizing who you are at the deepest level. – Eckhart Tolle

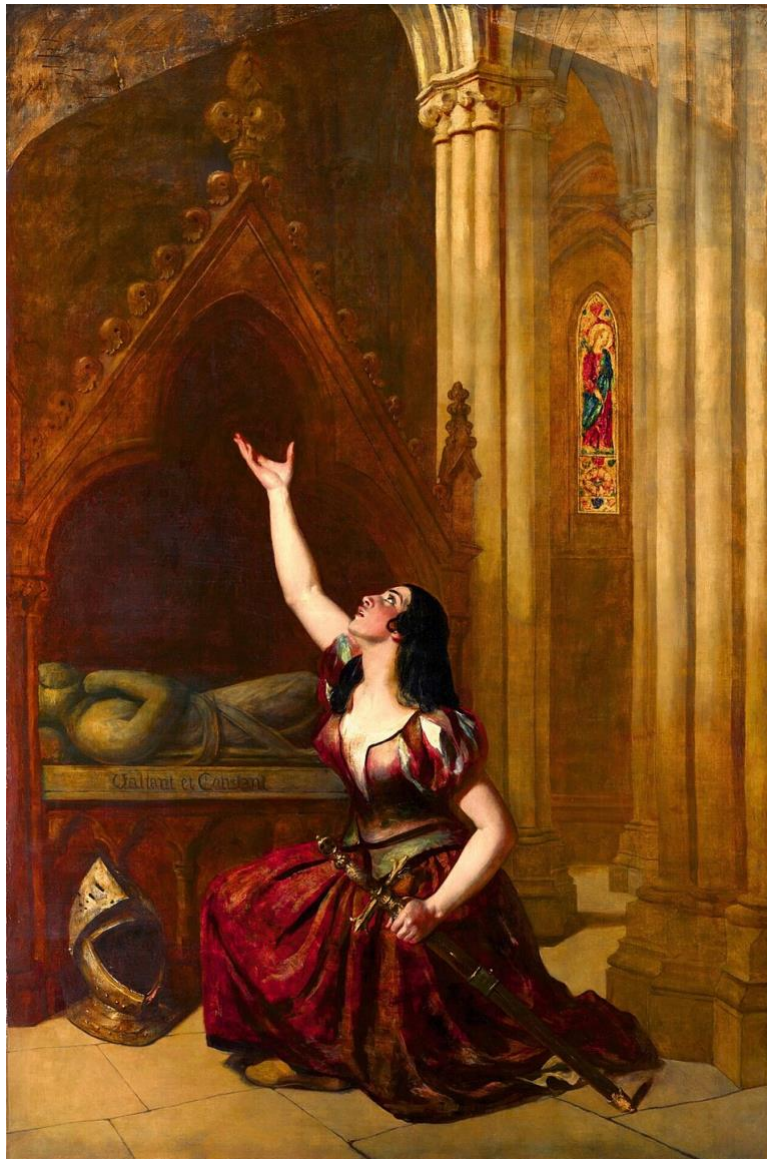
We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us. - E. M. Forster

You must be the change you wish to see in the world. - Mahatma Gandhi

To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often. - Winston Churchill

Reflection Questions:

1. What do you most need to *overcome* in your life, why?
2. What things *displease* you the most in other people do you need to overcome in yourself?
3. What will others *see and learn* about you if they observe you?
4. How do you take *comfort* in God?
5. How do you *fervently* pursue grace?
6. How do you perform “*inward consolation*”?
7. In what ways do you live a *monastic life*?



Contemplation On a Heindel Quote for Application in Our Life:

Use the Balloon Method from *Chapter One* for a contemplation on the Max Heindel quote below:

The strength of character does not lie in its penchant to resist wrong, but rather in its ability to differentiate what is wrong.

Map Out the Heindel Quote to help you prepare for the contemplation.

Quote Phrases	Phrase Action	Key Word Meaning	Thoughts and Connections

Balloon (Connection) Changes

<p><i>a. Initial connections (balloons) to Chapter Heading sign.</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the connections (balloons) change with repetition of the quote?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What changes to the connections (balloons) did the presence of Christ produce?</i></p>	<p><i>d. What meaning and insights came from your contemplation?</i></p>

Contemplation Reflection: *On Zealous Amendment of Life*

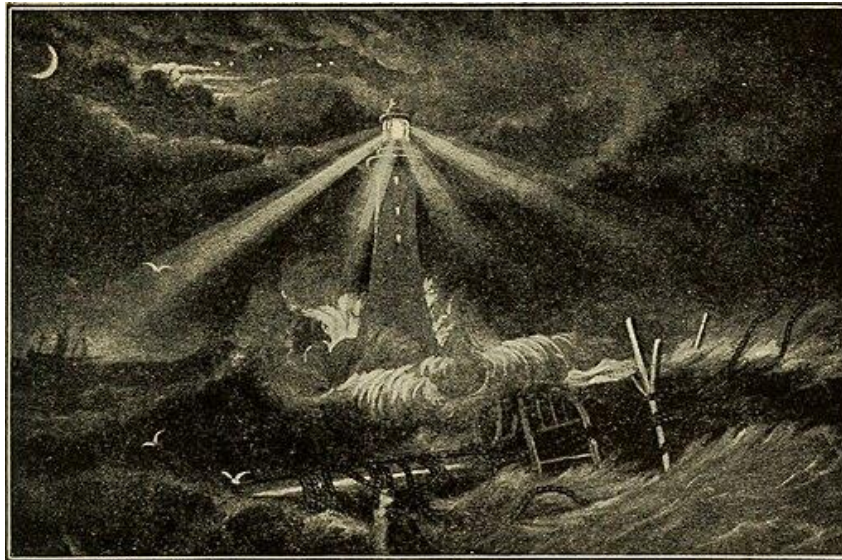
<p><i>a. What did you learn from your contemplation that you should apply to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>b. How did the presence of Christ help you to better understand what must be applied to your life?</i></p>
<p><i>c. What will be your first steps in applying the meaning of your contemplation to your life?</i></p>	<p><i>d. How does Heindel's quote reflect Scripture from the Bible?</i></p>
<p><i>What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenges in apply your insights and understandings from your contemplation, why?</i></p>	

Applications

<p><i>How do you take advantage of the good you see in your life?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you renounce yourself in all things of your life?</i></p>
<p><i>How do you work to overcome yourself to help secure your salvation?</i></p>	<p><i>How do you express your foremost source of happiness in denying yourself?</i></p>
<p><i>How are you working to strengthen your determination to follow God's will in your life?</i></p>	

Additional Thoughts for Meditation from *The Imitation of Christ*

- *Let our chief effort; therefore, be to study the life of Jesus Christ.*
- *IT IS good for us to have trials and troubles at times, for they often remind us that we are on probation and ought not to hope in any worldly thing.*
- *Sorrow opens the door to many a blessing which dissoluteness usually destroys.*
- *Christ will come to you offering His consolation, if you prepare a fit dwelling for Him in your heart, whose beauty and glory, wherein He takes delight, are all from within.*
- *If you know how to suffer in silence, you will undoubtedly experience God's help.*
- *Simplicity leads to God, purity embraces and enjoys Him.*
- *The noble lover does not rest in the gift but in Me Who am above every gift.*
- *Divine love conquers all and enlarges the powers of the soul.*
- *Habit already formed will resist you, but it shall be overcome by a better habit.*
- *The better you dispose yourself to suffer, the more wisely you act and the greater is the reward promised you.*



Praying on God is Light from *The Imitation of Christ*

The Imitation of Christ also provides us with many possible prayers. In considering *1 John 1:5* the nature of God is expressed as “God is Light”. In searching *The Imitation of Christ* there are many lines we could use as prayers or thoughts we could meditate upon related to “*God is Light*”.

*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that **God is light**, and in him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)*

- *Light eternal, surpassing all created brightness, flash forth the lightning from above and enlighten the inmost recesses of my heart.*
- *The Lord is my light, my salvation. Whom shall I fear? Though armies unite against me, my heart will not fear, for the Lord is my Helper, my Redeemer*
- *Your light will enshroud my heart, and all self-esteem, no matter how little, will sink in the depths of my nothingness to perish forever.*
- *You fill me with the light of Your presence, restore me to liberty, and show me a friendly countenance. ... nothing pleases me or will please me but You, my God, my Hope, my everlasting Salvation*
- *Enlighten me, good Jesus, with the brightness of internal light, and take away all darkness from the habitation of my heart.*

- *Send forth Your light and Your truth to shine on the earth, for I am as earth, empty and formless until You illumine me.*
- *Do not allow me to judge according to the light of my bodily eyes, nor to give sentence according to the hearing of ignorant men's ears. But let me distinguish with true judgment between things visible and spiritual, and always seek above all things*
- *Protect and preserve the soul of Your poor servant among the many dangers of this corruptible life, and direct him by Your accompanying grace, through the ways of peace, to the land of everlasting light.*
- *You have set Your word as the guiding light for my feet. Without them I could not live aright, for the word of God is the light of my soul and Your Sacrament is the Bread of Life.*
- *Thanks to You, Lord Jesus, Light of eternal light, for the table of Your holy teaching which You have prepared for us by Your servants, the prophets and Apostles and other learned men.*

Additional Selected Short Prayers of Thomas a Kempis

- *SPEAK to me, that it may be some comfort to my soul, and the amendment of my whole life; and also to Thy praise, and glory, and everlasting honor.*
- *O LORD, teach me to do Thy will; teach me to converse worthily and humbly in Thy sight; for Thou art my wisdom; Thou knowest me in the truth, and didst know me before the world was made, and before I was born in the world.*
- *LORD, teach me, I beseech Thee, the way of truth, that I may always seek Thee in simplicity of heart.*
- *MY God, my Love, Thou art all mine, and I am all Thine.*
- *LET me sing the canticle of love, let me follow Thee, my Beloved, on high, let my soul quite lose herself in Thy praises, jubilant in Thy love.*
- *VERILY Thou art worthy of all service, all honor, and of eternal praise.*
- *STARS have fallen from heaven, and I, dust that I am, how can I presume?*
- *GRANT me Thy grace, most merciful Jesus, that it may be with me, and labor with me, and continue with me unto the end.*
- *BE with me, O Lord Jesus, in all places and at all times.*

THOMÆ A KEMPIS
CANONICI REGULARIS
ordin: S. Augustini
DE IMITATIONE
CHRISTI

Libri quatuor;
*Ex recensione Hereberti
Rosweidi Soc: Iesu.*



Coloniæ
Apud Corn. ab Egmond.
Anno 1626

