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"Teachers of the Nations: The Human Side of Holiness" — Session 3

Q - [1:10:50] - **Youth ministry** - decision based trying to get kids to make decisions. I'm wondering what kind of shift we could make from that to surrender. What could ministers do differently?

A - [Dallas Willard] Well, now you have provoked me. I think, if I may say so, youth ministry is one of the great wastelands and problems. It is partly based upon that fact that young people are not respected. They are not presented with opportunities to think things through, to come to honest convictions. We wind up trying to entertain them and keep them coming back with the hope they will not do drugs or get pregnant. That's what their parents often want to do for kids in the church.

We have to respect young people much more and allow them to come to make decisions. There is a time to ask a person, "*Would you like to become a disciple of Jesus?*"

That requires discernment. To know when it would be the right thing to help that person make a move. Too often we harass them into decisions or social pressure. That way they don't become disciples. That's what we have such a high graduation rate from church when kids pass out of High School when they get on their own and are not under the pressure.

We need to pay attention to thoughtful teaching, listening. With young people the primary aim form of witnessing is listening, not talking and being with them. Letting them come to faith and decision and so on.

If we think the decision is the thing, then we will aim at the decision. The decision is not the thing, the decision is an outcome. What we want to do is help people understand. We can often do much more by asking them a question than we can by asserting something.

Communicating this idea that they have a kingdom is one of the most helpful things in bringing them to the point where they can make a decision.

They struggle with the idea, they don't have words for it, they don't know how to handle it, they feel guilty about it. We need to be able to help them understand what it is and to know that it is a good thing and understand how to handle it. [Ends Session 3 @ 1:14:10]

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"Streams in the Desert" - Session 3 Q&A

Q - How did I lose the enthusiasm of simple living with Christ in my **youth group** in So CA? [43:15]

A - - [Dallas Willard @ 43:45] You have become a responsible leader. What happens is people will identify you and say, "This leader can help us" and you will fall heir to all their expectations of what you are supposed to do and that will encourage you to take charge and be responsible to them.

You need to stand in the simplicity of Kingdom living. That's a beautiful thing you can have wherever you are but you will have to find the practices that will bring you back into and that will loosen you up from being a responsible leader. Probably your heart is there already. We can find our way if we decide to be intentional about it. If we are in leadership, we'll have to re-educate everyone to go along with us.

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"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" — Session 4

In **High School, kids** hit a moral wilderness or a moral sewer and nothing is taught to them except a brand of secular legalism." [past 1:02:00]

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The Divine Conspiracy Continued, Chapter 5

RAISING UP HEROES - Jesus is the greatest hero of all. This can and should be debated. (79)

Few **children**, even those from Christian homes, "dress up" like Jesus and go trick-or-treating on Halloween. This must change. Why? Because Jesus is seldom regarded as a heroic individual who with courage and moral integrity chose to live and die for the ultimate good of all humanity. (80)

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Renovation of the Heart

When the required type of “for-ness” is adequately present, human “Circles of Sufficiency” emerge.

The most fundamental form is that of **Mother and Child**.

(179; 2012 Edition)

These “Circles of Sufficiency”, natural and essential to the human condition and so profoundly beautiful to behold, are always illusory at the merely human level, and even the illusion itself is terribly fragile. To assure an anxious child we may say, “Everything is okay now.” But it never is. In this world it is never true that *everything* is okay, and perhaps it is least true in those very situations where we feel the need to say it.

Every human circle presupposes for its really being okay a larger context or circle that supports it. The mother and child, for example, presuppose the larger family that cares for and sustains them, making it possible for them to be absorbed in one another as they need to be, ignoring all else. These larger circles also depend upon yet larger circles, which, while ever less intimate, are still crucial to make the inner circles possible. That is just how human life is. The togetherness of the mother and child may be drastically affected by economic conditions on the other side of the earth.

Ultimately, every human circle is doomed to dissolution if it is not caught up in the life of the only genuinely self sufficient “Circle of Sufficiency”, that of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For that circle is the only one that is truly and totally self sufficient. And all the broken circles must ultimately find their healing there, if anywhere.

Only when rooted in that divine Trinitarian circle can the broken individuals from the broken circles recover from the wounds received in their circles of origin and find wholeness on their long journey from the womb to the eternal City of God. Of course it was never God's intention that the natural human “Circles of Sufficiency”, of reciprocal rootedness, would be illusory, fragile, and eventually broken; and if they lived in within his kingdom, they would not be. (180)

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Renovation of the Heart

A **child** who is not adequately received in this world is likely to be incapable of giving and receiving love in decent human relationships for the rest of his

life. He will be perpetually left out, if only in his imagination. And in this matter, imagination can have the force of reality.

But if a **child** is totally received in his early years by his **parents** and **siblings**, he will likely have a rootedness about him that will enable him to withstand most forms of rejection that may come upon a human being. He will carry his solid relationships to and from his family members throughout life, being sustained by them even long after those loved ones are dead. He will receive a steady stream of rest and strength from them." (180-181)

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Renovation of the Heart

Our soul is like an inner stream of water, which gives strength, direction, and harmony to every other element of our life. Rooted in the vastness of God and his kingdom, including nature, and all else within us is enlivened and directed by that stream.

A little **child** that has been allowed to develop naturally and as been nurtured in all of the aspects of it's being gives us the best presentation of what a life flooded with a healthy soul looks like. (205)

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"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" - Session 1

The greatest challenge of the people of Jesus Christ today is to stand in our world as representing knowledge of reality with love and intelligence to show that we have that knowledge by the lives that we lead.

That is the pressure point of the work that we do today.

The basic idea in the first session is this - There is a Divine Conspiracy and it will win. It is a conspiracy because God must be hidden that humanity may take the alternatives that presents itself to SELF-WILL and CHARACTER grow out of that [decision].

* **Raising CHILDREN** - at a certain point allowing them to do what they want to learn wrong & right.

Character only develops with freedom. This is a profound spiritual truth about the meaning of human history and what God is doing in the cosmos.

Youth, Children & Families
Quotes by Dallas Willard

There are a certain amount of dead hens you have to work through before you see what is good and what is right. That's true of individual life and corporate life.

When you look at the contemporary scene - business, military, music, pop culture - that's what's really going on. God is at work far beyond what we call the church. God is just as much involved in business, science, art, etc. I say that because of what I believe about the Kingdom of God.

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"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" - Session 4

His Riches: Glorious Future of the Individual Human [1:13:25]

Matt. 18:10 - Caring Provision - God assigns angels to attend to each child.

He has individuals to see to it that they are cared for in the Kingdom of God, this side of death or the other. He not only takes care of sparrows, he takes care of **children**. How can this be when you see what happens to them in this world? No matter what happens to them in this world, the goodness of God sees to it that those children continue to exist in conditions that makes them thankful to no matter what happens to them. You have to go beyond death.

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"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" - Session 5

Make Disciples by ravishing them with the Kingdom

It's amazing how little we hear about Jesus in our churches. Help them understand about the greatness of Jesus and what He is doing. He is often presented in a very narrow perspective. He is just Savior & Judge. Present Christ. Lift Him up in all of His glory and with Him the Kingdom comes because He is a great King.

"The Unfathomable Riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8)

Go to people and ask them, "*How are you doing with your kingdom?*"

Help them be responsible for their lives. Help them understand who Jesus is. Self will is not bad until we exalt it to the top position. We all have a Kingdom that we bring with us to each moment and gathering

* Breakdown of kingdoms in **families**

*"Hearts of Fathers to **Children**"*

[37:10]

These are kingdoms that are broken. Then we bring people to Jesus and see life in His Kingdom. That's how we make disciples.

"Look, this is your greatest opportunity in life."

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"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" - Session 6

The Inversion of the Two Kingdoms

[39:30]

The New Testament calls it "the World".

Early followers disowned the World, the Flesh & the Devil.

[Ephesians 2, I John - Eyes, Flesh & Pride; Eve in the Garden of Eden]

The World - Socially organized flesh superintended by the prince of this world Satan whose primary job is to direct the ideas of this world that people are controlled by a false system of belief. One of the primary components is the way people are ranked.

* "Pecking order of chickens" - ranking who is up and who is down

* **Children** on a playground - heartbreaking to see it. One of the most brutal places in the world is playgrounds in schools. As you grow up, you get hardened to it. This is where contempt comes in because contempt is tied to the rankings.

Jesus is especially conscious of this and how it is tied to theology. How human rankings are identified with God's rankings. Central to Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom is the inversion of Human ideas about rank. God has a different ranking. *"First, last. Last, first."* What human beings regard as good, respectable, decent, to be applauded and the people who wind up in those places as being well off, to be good, to be respected. If you are in those good rankings, that means God is on your side. One of the biggest rankings is wealth & social influence, and the right qualifications.

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"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" - Session 6

Luke 14:26 - Jesus, "Hate Your Mother & Father"

[57:55]

Jesus didn't teach people to hate their **parents**. He was contradicting a generalization that your Mother & Father should determine what you do for life - if you respect & love them, you'll do what they say.

* Zebedee, *"These **children** must hate me. They left me for Jesus."*

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Jesus is not teaching anyone to hate anyone. He did realize that the interpretation of loving which meant that you would do what your **PARENTS** said even after you have grown up had to be corrected because PARENTS often misdirect you and you have to have a place to stand in the Kingdom of God to redeem **FAMILY** relations.

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"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" - Session 9

BUILDING DISCIPLES in FAMILIES

They need this so badly. Dads need to learn how to do this.

* Dallas, "*I hurt my son badly when he was young. I did not do what I know I needed to do - to be as gracious and kind and patient with him as I should have been.*"

Could we teach people to be like that? Could we say...

We teach FATHERS & MOTHERS how to deal with CHILDREN in such a way that they do not become frustrated and angry, that they are not hurt. How we handle the situation between parents & children is one where they are nourished and brought up. Even if they are not obedient, we still manage to live with them, love them and grow with them.

One of the biggest problems in today's families is impatience. Children needs lot of patience and understanding. But if the parents are so worried and hurried, they can't be? Can we say to people,

"We can teach you how to live without hurry. How to keep sabbath. How to be strong, rested and present with your children."

"We teach you how to have love in your heart so that the things said in I Corinthians 13 come out - Love is kind, patient, does not envy..."

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"The Divine Conspiracy" Lectures - Session 12

PRAYER is "asking". Look at the teachings of Jesus. It's all about asking. Your relationship to God is not all about asking. Have a relationship with God that is greater than asking. People who don't understand prayer and the kingdom misunderstand asking the Father for our needs. **Children** ask. Dogs ask.

* **Children** are not afraid to ask. They also curl up in your lap and say "*I love you, Daddy*" not to get something they want but just because they love you.

Our relationship to God is much bigger than prayer. But prayer is fundamentally asking and receiving and living in a relationship where that happens. [54:00+]

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The Allure of Gentleness, Chapter 2

As a teacher at a university, I deal with many, many **students** who had not been encouraged in their churches to be honest with her questions and doubts. When they get to the university, looking more or less like me, who say, you know, these Christians... Hey don't really know how to think and They don't know the truth. The students are not equipped to think about the issues they come up in that environment and they often leave their face. Many churchgoers have been taught not to question what they hear in church and that doubt is a bad thing. But they are missing the great value in doubt—you can stimulate you to keep thinking and asking questions. Look in the Scriptures, and see how much Jesus did by asking questions.

Our culture teaches us to think better person who doubts is essentially smarter than a person who believes. So I tell people,

"If you're going to be a doubter, you need to believe your beliefs and doubt your doubts as well as to doubt your beliefs and believe your doubts."

This is how knowledge grows. (27-28)

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The Allure of Gentleness, Chapter 4

You have to face this with your **children**. If you had the power to completely control your children, I'm sure you would decide that you should not use that power most of the time. This because you know you would destroy your children. Children must choose. And to choose, they must have some distance, some freedom. Children must be able to do things without being known. And God chooses not to know everything. (65-66)

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The Allure of Gentleness, Chapter 6

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT (125-127) [and Raising Children]

If you think deeply about it, you'll understand the great value of an environment that provides human beings with choice and the possibility of developing good character or poor character. When we tell children to "make good choices", are we just hoping they will manage to stay out of trouble for the day, or that the "good choices" will become habits & the children will

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grow into people who naturally do the right thing? A world that permits the development of moral character - one that makes it possible for persons to become the immeasurably precious and even glorious beings that they sometimes do become - is of much greater value than any world that does not. (125-126)

The moral development of personality is possible only in a world of genuine freedom.

* Raising **Children** - They have to choose, to learn, to grow.

To nurture moral perfection, horrendous moral crimes must be permitted by God - though He Himself never approves of, actualizes, or requires them. If children are never permitted to do wrong, they will never become capable of developing a nature or character that resolutely chooses the good. Good persons must live in a world where doing evil is a readily available option. Producing people with character without giving them choice is impossible, because the capacity to choose is a part of character. (126)

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Life Without Lack, Chapter 3

It is rare to find a marriage relationship that truly has the grace of God in it to such an extent that both people are completely at home and confident, never in doubt, and full of love, and concern for each other. People are so busy protecting themselves that they cannot love each other. That violation then spreads down to their **children**, who also struggle with attacks and withdrawals, doubts, and questions that are always there.

The element of mistrust makes it impossible for people to confidently step forward in the grace of God and raise the goodness that God intended them to have in their relationship to one another. (63)

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Life Without Lack, Chapter 7

All You Need is Love

(162-164)

As a mother or father, or a grandparent with a grandchild, we are simply to pour ourselves into that child in love. When people love one another like this it creates a self-contained circle within which there is complete sufficiency in human terms. **Children** who are deeply loved and raised within such a circle can endure almost anything. I think this is why Jesus used children to illustrate so many truths, such as "*Assuredly, I say to you, unless you're*

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converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:3 (162-163)

The pure, unfiltered love of children is why they have such a redeeming effect on people. (Isaiah 11:6) In the love between a small child and a parent, we come the closest to seeing and experiencing love in its purest form.

People who have grown up in an environment of love, even if it is only human love without a consciousness of God, will always have a tremendous resource that can never be taken away from them. If they have been loved rightly by their family, they have a treasure. Unfortunately, many people who were not loved rightly in their families enter marriage thinking, *now, at last, I'm really going to be loved*, but they soon find out that both they and their spouse are hampered in loving each other. (163)

All of these things direct us to the truth that perfect love is only found in God. Love is a gift from God, who is love. We can not perform for a gift.

The call to us is not to *do* as much as it is to *receive*. We love because He first loved us. This is why the preaching of the gospel is essential, and why there is nothing more important on the face of the earth than ministers and teachers of the gospel teaching plainly – plainly! – the love of God toward every person. (163-164)

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Life Without Lack, Chapter 7

The Joy of Loving (180-182)

One of the greatest things in the world is to love people. It is so much better than hatred or indifference. We were created for love.

Jesus taught what we may call the reciprocity of goodness. (181)

"Judge not and you shall not be judged. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." Luke 6:37-38

As you give love, you receive love and experience joy. Joy in turn will increase your capacity to love, and you will become capable of being kind to the "hard to loves" in your life.

Family - **Children** do not always do what we believe they should do. We are wounded by this and tend to feel that they are walking evidence that we

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have been wrong, that we are not good people. Or the reverse may be true for a child having to deal with a difficult parent.

Begin by asking God to help us delight in them, focus on what is good for them, and celebrate what is valuable within them. Go back in memories, "Lord, help me to remember the good." We must seek to see them, to relate to them, to be with them as it is appropriate and good. Set our mind to be with them, and pay attention to them. Do what is good for them. Look into their eyes, and talk to them and listen to them, serve them, help them, give to them. Enjoy them. Praise God for them. (182)

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The Disappearance of Moral Knowledge, p. 377-380

Is it too much to think that our contemporary disasters such as failures of covenants in **family**, business and government, obesity, addictions, crime, financial chaos, failure of educational system.

If the teachers, students and administrators in our schools were pursuing a life of virtue, how much would that change in our schools?

All of these rest in some significant degree upon the failures of lives and character of some people involved. And those failures rest in some significant degree upon the disappearance of moral knowledge from our society in a sense explained. It would be a mistake to ascribe all of our problems to that disappearance. Not everything can be solved in this world by sincere effort even if it is informed by moral knowledge. There are other problems.

This disappearance has had and is having a very harmful effect on much our life in present and that is the responsibility of our institutions of knowledge to make moral knowledge available in the extent to which that is possible. Not by teaching rules, not by imposing condemnation or praise, but by the dispassionate analysis and communication of the nature of virtue and vice and character.

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The Great Omission, Chapter 14

Finding the Kingdom of God is seeing and working with His activities in our lives in and around us. The Kingdom of God is God-governing, God-acting. To know God-acting we have to put ourselves into everything we do expecting to interact with God there. The **student** at the university or college can see the hand of God in everything they do. And so can anyone else. (179)

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Renewing the Christian Mind

Chapter 20 - "The Problem of Evil"

1.) Permit a universe that allows for the development of moral character

The moral development of personality is possible only in a world of genuine freedom. To nurture moral perfection, horrendous moral crimes must be permitted by God— Though he himself never approves of them, actualizes them, or requires them. Nurturing moral perfection (within a suitable world) and not allow wrongdoing is impossible. If a **child** is never committed to do wrong, it will never become capable of developing a nature or character that resolutely chases for good. Good persons must live in a world where doing evil is a genuine choice for them. (355)

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Hearing God, Chapter 1

Obviously God must guide us in a way that will develop spontaneity in us. The development of character, rather than direction in this, that, and the other matter, must be the primary purpose of the Father. He will guide us, but he won't override us. That fact should make us use with caution the method of sitting down with a pencil and a blank sheet of paper to write down the instructions dictated by God for the day. Suppose a **parent** would dictate to the **child** minutely everything he is to do during the day. The child would be stunted under that regime. The parent must guide in such a manner, and to the degree, that autonomous character, capable of making right decisions for itself, is produced. God does the same. (35)

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Healing the Heart - Session 1 - "Healing from Brokenness"

Children can escape the brokenness if they are welcomed in the presence of parents who are not themselves at the mercy of brokenness and are able to make a place of love and generosity and beauty for the child. [19:00]

Jesus, "Repent and become like a child or you can't enter the Kingdom of God." (Matthew 18:3)

We need to give a lot of thought to that when we are talking about this kind of transformation.