

# **Topics**

## From the Works of Dallas Willard

**Scribe's Comments** - These quotes were transcribed from written and audio works of Dallas in good-faith effort but it is not verbatim. The **bold** and underline offer the scribe's emphasis and the [brackets] offer commentary.



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## **Topics**

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### **--> A - Anger & Contempt**

Source - "Streams in the Desert" @ Baylor

\* "Anything you can do with anger you can much better without it. You can stand for what is right so much more strongly without anger, so much more clearly. The moment you let anger get in to it, it's no longer about what is right it's about who is going to win. We have two kingdoms in conflict and neither one of them is probably the Kingdom of God. So, we learn how this [the Kingdom] moves. Gradually the contentment in God takes over our lives."

~ ~ ~

\* Matthew 5:21-26: Jesus begins to talk about anger, contempt, cultivated lust. That's where we have to go to surpass the righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees through an internal transformation that transforms our body itself so that it is ready to do the right thing rather than the wrong thing. As we do that we come to know the "action of God" in our lives. We can't do it on our own. It looks rather hopeless. When we put ourselves in it as disciples of Jesus we begin to experience the upholding and empowerment to become different kinds of people.

\* "We can live without anger and contempt. Jesus goes deeper and deeper. Think of the harm that comes from anger. How many would not be murdered if it weren't for anger?"

\* "Filthy language is always an expression of contempt. Contempt is a twin brother of anger. Watch a fight and see how quickly it moves from anger to contempt or the anger is predicated on the contempt that is already there. Jesus like a surgeon puts his knife at the roots of our behavior and says that's where we change.

\* Legal contest - That situation is filled with anger & contempt. Jesus is saying when you go to law, be friendly. Care about them. Love them. See what can be done in a genuine attitude of helping. Don't impose it just because Jesus said it. See what can be done in a general attitude of helping. Jesus is describing how we handle human relationships love all in the framework of learning to live in the Kingdom of the heavens. As a disciple, I am learning how to do that.

~ ~ ~

*(continued on next page)*

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Source - *The Divine Conspiracy*

### **Anger**

"Jesus understanding of them [anger & contempt] and their role in life becomes the basis for His strategy for establishing Kingdom goodness. It is the elimination of anger and contempt that He presents as the first and fundamental step toward the rightness of the Kingdom heart." (147)

#### *1. "Spontaneously arises when our will is obstructed"*

Anger - "a feeling...toward interfering with, and possibly even harming, those who have thwarted our will and interfered with our life." "The preliminary function of anger in life is to alert me to an obstruction to my will." (147)

#### *2. "It includes a will to harm them"*

"We know that people who are angry at us will our harm." "Some degree of malice is contained in every degree of anger. That is why it always hurts us when someone is angry at us." (148)

#### *3. "We choose or will to be angry"*

"We can actively receive it and decide to indulge it, and we usually do. We may even become an angry person...rage in constant readiness." (148) "Find a person who has embraced anger and you find a person with a wounded ego - the importance of the self." (149)

"There is nothing that can be done with anger than cannot be done better without it." (151)

### **Contempt**

"Worse than anger." "Contempt makes it easier for us to hurt them or see them further degraded." (151) Contempt means to *Exclude - Push away - Leave out - Isolate*

"Contemptuous actions and attitudes are a knife in the heart that permanently harms and mutilates people's souls." (152) "Contempt spits on this pathetically deep need [to belong]." (153) "You fool!" - Combines all that is evil in anger and contempt" (154)

### **Condemnation with Anger & Contempt**

"The decision to step aside from [condemnation], neither giving it nor receiving it, is a major turning point in one's life. Of course, half the battle with condemnation is won when we give up anger and contempt." (221) "It [Condemnation] often grows into shame" (222)

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### **--> B - The Beatitudes**

Source -Dallas Willard, *"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures"*  
Harvey Fellows 2007 Summer Institute

"The Beatitudes don't tell you to do anything. They are announcements about the reality of the Kingdom of God in the kingdom of man. The Beatitudes are proclamation of the Kingdom not practices of the saved. Look at the grammar. It's proclamation of the Kingdom, the availability of the Kingdom. [Session 6 @ 55:40 & 59:45]

~ ~ ~

"The meaning of the Beatitudes is the openness of the Kingdom to all who trust in Jesus. That's the story of the gospels - person after person coming to Jesus. You see the remarkable generosity of Jesus in the Kingdom of God. He's comfortable with all of them because he is solidly situated in the Kingdom of God. We have to grow as His disciples before we can enter into that kind of thing. But we ought to have in mind that we can be anywhere with anyone and be perfectly safe and perfectly strong in the Kingdom of God." [Session #6 @ 1:06:50]

~ ~ ~

" Why do we try to constantly go back and civilize the Beatitudes [such as] how Mourning will save you. How "Poor in spirit" is a matter of thinking you are poor?

We try to fit them in the legalistic mindset. They are disgraceful. They are like the Elder brother looking at others with reproach.

The announcement of the Kingdom is the stone that is cut out without hands that crushes human order and fills the whole Earth. (Daniel 2) That's the eventual outcome of the Kingdom of God. It shakes the foundations (Haggai). The kingdoms of the World have become that of our Lord and of His Christ.

This is a very essential part of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. That gospel inverts the natural human orders we see about us in the wisdom of the world. In our fellowships of disciples we will not respect the human pecking order of values. "

[Session 6 @ 1:07:45]

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"The Beatitudes - You only understand the gospel of the Kingdom of God if there is no limit to whom you can go and say, "Blessed."

Write your own Beatitudes - "*Blessed are the \_\_\_\_\_* "

Somebody in the human scale who is nothing. Someone who is not blessed. They are not blessed because of the condition they are in, they are blessed because the Kingdom is available to them. The blessing is not in the condition it is in the Kingdom.

All those who are un-blessable are blessable if they enter the Kingdom. The Beatitudes are all about the kingdom and entering into the Kingdom.

This is a radical message and it will upset most churches if you preach it. This message will break down the pecking orders of our social system that most people in our churches assume to be valid. Who are the "nobodies" in our church and how do they get treated? Does Jesus mean treat them all the same."

Source - The DC Lecture -# 7 Introduction

~ ~ ~

Matthew 5 - Blessedness in the Beatitudes

"This is a Master Teacher who knows exactly what He is doing therefore there is a reason he orders the things the way He does. That's why he opens with...

The issue of "Who is Blessed?" - Determines how one behaves. We act for what is good in our eyes. The first thing He discusses is, "Who is well off?"

Shocking statements He made - "You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the Earth." Often thought to not apply to me and you. Put on your bathroom mirror, "You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the Earth. " If you are not the light, there is not going to be any light. That's your calling.

The Beatitudes are taking the list of the humanly un-blessable and announcing that they too can be blessed in the Kingdom of God. If you don't understand that, you won't understand when He announces to very ordinary people, "*You are the salt of the Earth.*" [Session 10 @ 30:35]

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### **--> B - The Body**

"Willpower is not the key to spiritual maturity or we end up hopelessly bound in legalism and we become Pharisees. If we put in on our will, we will experience a constant stream of failure.

\* Example: Peter, 'I won't deny you.' Jesus, "Yes you will."

Peter's body was loaded with readiness to act in certain ways

Romans 7 - My body is ahead of my intentions. Until the Kingdom of God hits your body, it has not hit you. Live with enough space to recognize what is happening. Peter lacked 'space' to see what was happening when the girl challenged him."

"Spiritual & Emotional Maturity" Conference

TALK #2 - "*The Dimensions of Human Life from which maturity/immaturity arise*"; June 27, 2012

~ ~ ~

Source - *The Great Omission* - Ch. 8 The Spirit is Willing But... (80-90)

#### *The Body as a Tool for Spiritual Growth*

"Becoming Christ-like never occurs without intense and well-informed action on our part. This in turn cannot be reliably sustained outside of a like-minded fellowship. Our churches will be centers of spiritual formation only as they understand Christ-likeness and communicate it to individuals, through teaching and example, in a convincing and supportive fashion." (80-81)

"Probably the least understood aspect of progress in Christ-likeness is the role of the body in the spiritual life." (81)

~

#### *Human Nature*

"When we come to new life in Christ, our bodies and their deformed desire system do not automatically shift to the side of Christ, but continue to oppose him." This is why Paul speaks of 'putting to death the misdeeds of the body' (Romans 8:13) and disciplining his body. (1 Corinthians 9:27) (83-84)

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### *Christlikeness Must Be Planned For*

"I have inquired before many church and para-church groups regarding their plan for putting to death or mortifying 'whatever belongs to your earthly nature' or flesh (see, for example, Colossians 3:5). I have never once had a positive response to this question. Indeed, mortifying or putting things to death doesn't seem to be the kind of thing today's Christians would be caught doing. Yet there it stands, at the center of the New Testament teachings." (84)

"Deny ourselves, pick up our cross and losing our life for His sake, forsaking all to follow Him" (Mt. 10:39; 16:24-26; Luke 14:25-35. The same in Paul's words - "crucified the flesh" (Gal. 5:24). Our part in this transformation, in addition to constant faith and hope in Christ, is purposeful, strategic use of our bodies in ways that will retrain them, replacing the 'motions of sin in our members' with the motions of Christ. This is how we take up our cross daily. It is how we submit our bodies, as a living sacrifice, how we offer the parts of our body to him as "instruments of righteousness." (Romans 6:13) (84-85)

"Often when we come to do the right thing we have already done the wrong thing, because that is what was sitting in our body 'at the ready.' Intention alone cannot suffice in most situations where we find ourselves. We must be 'in shape.' If not, trying will normally be too late, or totally absent. Instead, our intention and effort must be carried into effect by training which leaves our body poised to do what Christ would do, well before the occasion arises. Such training is supplied by the disciplines for life in the Spirit." (85-86)

"A 'discipline' is an activity in our power." (86)

"The teachings of Jesus are viewed as so 'hard' only because our embodied personalities are formed against them." (87)

"The purposive, lustful stare... or the striking back by word or fist... or practicing religion for human applause... No law of nature forces the 'easy' and disobedient response in these situations. It is just a habit embedded in our bodies and, of course, habits always produce powerful rationalization for themselves. It is not a law of nature that makes us assassinate the humanity of others." (87)

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### *How We Can Change (87ff)*

1st - "Acknowledging the good of what we are going to do and ask God for assistance." 2nd - "We begin to practice controlling our tongue."

"The body is the place of our direct power. It is the little 'power pack' that God has assigned to us as the field of our freedom and development. The body can acquire a 'life of its own' – tendencies to behave without regard to our conscious intentions. In our fallen world this life is prepossessed by evil, so that we do not have to think to do what is wrong, but must think and plan and practice – and receive grace – if we are to succeed in doing what is right.

Learning Christlikeness is not passive. It is active engagement with and in God. And we act with our bodies." (89)

~ ~ ~

"Embodied will is where one of the other two has sunk down into your body to such an extent that you automatically do what they dictate. And this is the standard situation for most human beings on earth. Their body is running their life from choices that have formed their will and positioned it in their body"

The one reason why the idea of spiritual transformation through being merely preached at and taught doesn't work is because it does not involve the body in the process of transformation. One of the ironies of spiritual formation is that every "spiritual" discipline is a bodily behavior. We have to involve the body in spiritual formation because that's where we live and what we live from. So now spiritual formation is formation of the inner being of the human being, resulting in transformation of the whole person, including the body in its social context. Spiritual formation is never merely inward.

Spiritual formation in Christ would, then, ideally result in a person whose reflective will for good, fully informed and possessed by Christ, has settled into their body in its social context to such an extent that their natural responses were always to think and feel and do as Christ himself would."

<http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=58>

**--] End of "Body"**

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### **--> C - "Circles of Sufficiency"**

*Renovation of the Heart* (179-180)

The natural condition of life for human beings is one of reciprocal rootedness in others. As firmness of footing is a condition of walking insecure movement, so assurance of others being for us is the condition of stable, healthy living. There are many way this can be present in individual cases, but it must be there. If it is not, we are about walking wounded, our lives will more or less be in shambles until we die.

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)

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)

### **--] End of "Circles of Sufficiency"**

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### **--> D - "Dallas: Just Call Me Dallas"**

*"I'm called Dr. Willard but I'm one of those doctors who can't do anybody any good. I'm content if you just call me Dallas. We're all standing on a level. Jesus talked about that. It really does make a difference. What I have to give to you is not a specialist thing. My credentials mean nothing. When we are serving Jesus, the only thing that means anything is what is going to happen now. What we're hoping to see come out of this can only be accomplished if we do our best and the blessing of God falls and changes us on the inside. I'm hoping to lead you into an easy life of righteousness and joy. That's what Jesus came to give."*

### **--] End of "Dallas: Just Call Me Dallas"**

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IT1phEMrS7E>

--> **D - "Death"**

**Source: The Divine Conspiracy Lectures #4** [1:13:25-1:23:45]

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

**Luke 12 (Matthew 6)**

**Phil 4:6ff** - *"Anxious for nothing...Let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God will set a guard around your hearts and minds... Peace beyond understanding."*

*"What you seen in me, do those things & the God of peace will be with you"*

**Mt. 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.

**John 8:51-52** - Freedom from **Death**

Are the riches of Christ so great to include that?

*The Gold Cord* by Amy Carmichael [1:18:30-1:21:50]

*"Three Tender Mercies"*

\* Story of a Lala - a child's joyous passing

What's **death** going to be like?

You won't know that you have died until much later

If you're planning on seeing death give up. You won't.

That is the basis upon which the early church understood Jesus had abolished death.

**II Timothy 1:10** - Jesus destroyed death and brought life & immortality

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### **Knowing Christ Conference**

*How to Step into the Kingdom* - Friday, 11 AM

**Q** - Life beyond Death?

**A** - What Jesus teaches is that within His presence and His Word, we began to live in Heaven now. Those who keep my word will never experience death as humans understand it. The body stops working but they continue to exist as the people they are in the presence of God. Many people will not realize they have died until later and then they recognize something is different.

[47:30]

Paul in Philippians - Rejoice in the Lord - that's where you find the basis for joy - in the Lord. Our part living in the Kingdom is to turn back to keep Christ as fully present as we can and thank God His grace to help us where we can't. We rejoice. It is something for us to do. We don't have a thing to worry about. Everything is taken care of.

When people first hear about the Kingdom, they think their problems will be solved. Our great need is to see our place in Christ's world, in His Kingdom and to know that everything is taken care of. You see all the terrible things that happen. I have plenty to worry about. But that's not the solution. The solution is to acknowledge the presence of the Kingdom in the most terrible events.

\* Where was God in Auschwitz? He was in Auschwitz.

He is overall. He will see to it what is good and right is done. You have to add the larger picture.

~ ~ ~

**--] End of "Death"**

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### **--> D - "Discipleship"**

Source - *The Divine Conspiracy*

The resources of God's kingdom remain detached from human life. There is no gospel for human life and Christian discipleship, just one for death or one for social action. To counteract this we must develop a straightforward presentation, in word and life, of the reality of life now under God's rule, through reliance upon the word and person of Jesus. In this way we can naturally become His students or apprentices. **We can learn from Him how to live our lives as He would live them if He were we. We can enter His eternal kind of life now.**" (58)

~ ~

"To follow Him meant in the first place to be with Him. I am with Him to learn how to be like Him." (276)

The Paraclete - His preferred way is to speak, to communicate, thus the absolute centrality of scripture to our discipleship." (277)

~ ~

"Discipleship - real life apprenticeship to Jesus, is the passageway within The Kingdom Among Us from initial faith in Jesus to a life of fulfillment and routine obedience." (281)

"Discipleship remains, a distant, if only beautiful ideal....one can be a professing Christian and church member in good standing without being a disciple. There is apparently no real connection between being a Christian and being a disciple."

"A disciple of Jesus is one who is with Jesus, learning to be like him, what, we must ask, is the state of the soul that would bring us to choose that condition?" (291)

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### **Chapter 8 - "On Being a Disciple, or Student of Jesus" pages 299-310**

#### **Help Others Find Their Way into Discipleship**

"Clearly thought out and decisive apprenticeship to Jesus is the bridge between initial faith in Him and the life of obedience and fulfillment in His kingdom." (299)

**Be Disciples** - "If we would make disciples, we should be disciples." (299)

"We learn from Jesus how to make disciples as He did" (300)

Three fold ministry of Jesus - Proclaiming, Manifesting & Teaching (300, 16, 99, 288, 305)

"Non discipleship is the elephant in the church. The fundamental negative reality among Christian believers now is their failure to be constantly learning how to live their lives in The Kingdom Among Us." (301)

**Intending to Make Disciples** - "To bring others to the point where they are daily learning from Jesus how to live their actual lives as he would live them if he were they." (302)

"Consumer Christianity stands against any intention." (302) "Non disciple Christians." (303)

"A pervasive intention to make disciples would radically change the church." (304)

**Changing People's Real Beliefs** - "You lead people to become **disciples** of Jesus by ravishing them with a vision of life in the kingdom of the heavens in the fellowship of Jesus. And you do this by proclaiming, manifesting and teaching the kingdom to them in the manner learned from Jesus himself. You thereby change the belief system that governs their lives." (305)

"To enable people to become disciples we must change whatever it is in their actual belief system that bars confidence in Jesus as Master of the Universe." (307) "Be honest about what we and others really believe." (308)

"Beliefs are the rails upon which our life runs." (309)

**The Only Way Forward** - "If we cannot break through to a new vision of faith and discipleship, the real significance and power of the gospel of the Kingdom of God can never come into its own." (309)

~ ~ ~

*The Divine Conspiracy Lectures, 2007*

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Once you understand who Jesus is and what it means for your life, you'll realize discipleship to Jesus is the greatest opportunity you'll have in life.

~ ~ ~

*Does the gospel I preach have a natural tendency to produce disciples to Jesus Christ or does it just produce more consumers of religious goods and services?*

#4 @ 1:34:05

We have a nonparticipant spectator, consumer version of Christianity in this country. That's why people go from church to church to find a better service to consume. Not rooted in the body of Christ. Not focused on discipleship and personal transformation. Not focused on living in the power of God in a way that you can bring to bear where you can stand as Christ's person and expect the Kingdom of God to make a difference you yourself could never make if your life depended upon it. #4 @ 1:35:00

~ ~ ~

### **Make Disciples in the Gospel of the Kingdom**

A. Requires us to **Be a Disciple**

B. Make Disciples is to **Form Intentions**

Grace will not force you to "easily & routinely" do what Jesus says. This is fundamental truth about this whole business of discipleship [29:45]

When we are talking about making disciples, we are talking about people who actually **intend** to do it. This is the missing link.

The key is generating intention - and that is what Discipleship is about

C. Make Disciples by **ravishing them with the Kingdom**

~ ~ ~

If you have Disciples living in the presence of the Trinitarian life that flows in community of disciples of Jesus, then you can now teach them to do everything Jesus said. That is how discipleship in the gospel of the Kingdom comes together. **If you don't preach a whole life gospel or you'll never make disciples.** #5 @ 44:00+

Discipleship = from running our own Kingdom to bringing our whole being into the presence of God often one step & part at a time. #5 @ 45:00

What is a Disciple? **One who is with Jesus and learning to be like Him**

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Prepared to invoke Him, invite Him and experience His presence but not in our own strength, Discipleship is not merely by Human effort but one living in the Trinitarian presence. #5 @ 45:40

~ ~ ~

### **What is the cost on non-discipleship? #6 @ 14:45**

Living a life of joy, peace & love or not having it without discipleship.

~ ~ ~

### **Areas of Discipleship**

#6 @

22:10

#1 Discipleship Areas - Learning to do what Jesus said.

- To become the kind of person who would naturally do them.

#2 Discipleship Areas - Learn to live life in the areas without explicit command.

#3 Discipleship Areas - How do we act with the power in the Kingdom?

~ ~ ~

Discipleship is the process through which the character of Christ becomes the settled or habitual patterns of our action. It is largely outsourced to our body in our social context. #6 @ 51:45

~ ~ ~

What does this {disciplines} have to do with being saved? Situation in our churches - Discipleship is one thing and being Christian is another. #8 @ 35:40

~ ~ ~

If the message we preach doesn't naturally lead into discipleship and transformation then it's not going to happen. #9 @ 50:30

As we preach the gospel of the Kingdom discipleship begins to emerge.

### **The primary field of evangelism in our day is the American Church.**

The gospel of discipleship and kingdom living needs to be taught in the large array of non-discipleship Christianity. They who are identified as Christians but not as Disciples need to be evangelized. They need to hear the gospel. If

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we do that, discipleship will naturally emerge. People are not disciples because they have refused it. By and large they have never been invited.

~ ~

### **Church Priority # 2**

#10 @ 1:05:15

#### **Find the Means to Carry out the Intention of a Discipleship Model**

##### **1. Become Disciples** {see *The D.C. Lectures* p. 35-38}

Learning how to do what Jesus said in the clear & unclear areas.

##### **2. Build Disciples**

What are you going to do to help people who want to be a disciple and grow.

#### **~ ~ ~ Discipleship**

Source - *The Great Omission*

"[Jesus] told us, as disciples, to make disciples. Not converts to Christianity, nor to some particular 'faith and practice.' He did not tell us to arrange for people to 'get in' or 'make the cut' after they die, nor to eliminate the various brutal forms of injustice, nor to produce and maintain 'successful' churches. These are all good things, and he had something to say about all of them. They will certainly happen if – but only if – we are (his constant apprentices) and do (make constant apprentices) what he told us to be and do" (p. xii)

~ ~ ~

"For at least several decades the churches of the Western world have not made discipleship a condition of being a Christian. One is not required to be, or to intend to be, a disciple in order to become a Christian, and one may remain a Christian without any signs of progress toward or in discipleship. Contemporary American churches in particular do not require following Christ in his example, spirit, and teachings as a condition of membership — either or entering into or continuing in fellowship of a denomination or a local church...

"...So far as the visible Christian institutions of our day are concerned, discipleship is clearly optional...." (p. 3-4)

~ ~ ~

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“Discipleship can be made concrete by actively learning how to love our enemies, bless those who curse us, walk the second mile with an oppressor” (p. 8)

~ ~ ~

“Non-discipleship costs abiding peace, a life penetrated throughout by love, faith that sees everything in the light of God’s overriding governance for good, hopefulness that stands firm in the most discouraging of circumstances, power to do what is right and withstand the forces of evil... that abundance of life that Jesus said he came to bring” (p. 9)

~ ~ ~

“Do I as a minister have the faith to undertake the work of disciple-making? Is my first aim to make disciples? Or do I just run an operation?” (p. 11)

~ ~

“The Golden Triangle of Spiritual Formation in Christ” (p. 26-28)

Three keys to transformation in Christ-likeness:

1. Faithful acceptance of everyday problems (seeking to learn from Christ in the midst of our trials)
2. Interaction with God’s Spirit in and around us (practicing God’s presence)
3. Practicing spiritual disciplines as means of grace (a variety of practices suited to you today and targeted for your progress in discipleship to Jesus)

~ ~

“You cannot be a pew potato and simultaneously engage in spiritual formation in Christ’s likeness. You have to take your whole life into discipleship to Jesus Christ” (p. 61)

~ ~

Faith in Christ has been separated from obedience to him and living in his abundance. “The necessary bridge is discipleship... A gospel of justification alone does not generate disciples. Discipleship is a life of learning from Jesus Christ how to live in the Kingdom of God now, as he himself did” (p. 62).

~ ~

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"...Constant discipleship, with its constant seeking for more grace and life" (p. 214-217).

~ ~ ~

### **Three Main Aspects of Discipleship**

Source - *"Emotional and Spiritual Maturity" Conference - June 27, 2012*  
[When Dallas speaks of "power" he speaks of "Grace".]

#### 1. Learning to do what Jesus taught.

Problem in our assemblies - Teaching people how to do what Jesus taught. Learning where our personalities change. If you want to do what Jesus said, you have to learn how to not do what Jesus said. Not a matter of trying to do what Jesus said - emphasis on behavior. Put emphasis on the sources of behavior - the path of discipleship.

The heart is drawn to Jesus with others to have a mind, heart like His. In a certain way that will be adapted to the individual. Where our minds don't think what our minds use to think

#### 2. Learning to handle the ordinary events of daily life within the principles and power of God's rule.

Discipleship is not for the church. The Church is for discipleship. Discipleship is for the world. Primary place of discipleship is at "work" where we spend most of our time. The world of business, finances, education, government would be transformed if we had more disciples living like Jesus in the "work" of life.

#### 3. Learning to Act in God's power

Learn to stop trusting ourselves and learn to trust God and stop manipulating.

The dominance of a Gospel that has no connection with Spiritual Transformation and Emotional Maturity. We have to get past the views of salvation and the gospel that ignores facing this. What is our message? What is our gospel? Is what I preach, my message, one that naturally produces disciples of Jesus? The reason we don't see progress is because the message they have heard has no connection.

**--] End of "Discipleship"**

## Topics

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### --> E - Easy Yoke

Source - "Knowing Christ" Conference

The way you live in the easy yoke is by following the great commission. You begin with discipleship. Bring disciples together in Trinitarian fellowship. The Trinity is doing the work and you get to watch. With that foundation it is easy to lead people into obedience. Without that foundation it is simply impossible. Without that you are following traditions & legalism [means] good bye to the easy yoke. You'll have a hard yoke and you'll have to pull the load by yourself. When we step into the message of Jesus in the Kingdom of God, we become bearers of the Kingdom.

Jesus proclaimed the availability of the Kingdom to everyone regardless of their standing in life [preaching the gospel of the Kingdom], taught what it is like [teaching in the synagogues] and then manifested it's presence [healing every disease and sickness]. He invites us to step into that and watch it happen where we are.

~ ~ ~

#### 1. The Secret of the Easy Yoke

The words of Jesus in Matthew 11:29-30 present an alternative to the desolation of life lived apart from God. Yet, in all honesty, most Christians probably find both Jesus' statement and its reiteration by the author of I John 5:3 to be more an expression of a hope or even a **mere** wish than a statement about the substance of their lives. To many, Jesus' words are frankly bewildering. (Spirit of the Disciplines, 2)

Many Christians cannot even believe he actually intended for us to carry them out. What is the result? His teachings are treated as a **mere** ideal, one that we may better ourselves by aiming for but know we are bound to fall glaringly short of. (SD, 2)

We're in a period of grace - we are saved by grace, not by anything we do - so obedience to Christ is actually not necessary. And it is so hard anyway; it cannot be expected of us, much less enjoyed by us. And so we reason. All of our reasonings cannot, however, remove the thought that Jesus calls us to follow Him - to follow Him now, not after death.

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All of our lack of understanding does not cancel his offer of an easy yoke and a light burden, in which our souls can find rest. That offer, like His call to follow Him, is clearly made to us here and now, in the midst of this life where we labor and bear impossible burdens and cry out for rest. It's true. It's real. We have only to grasp the secret of entering into that easy yoke. (3)

Think of certain young people who idolize an outstanding baseball player. They want nothing so much as to pitch or run or hit as well as their idol. So what do they do? When they are playing in a baseball game, they try to behave exactly as their favorite baseball star does.

Will they succeed in performing like the star, though? We all know they won't succeed if all they do is try to be like him in the game - no matter how gifted they may be in their own way. The star performer himself didn't achieve his excellence by trying to behave in a certain way only during the game. Instead, he chose an overall life of preparation of mind and body, pouring all his energies into that total preparation, to provide a foundation in the body's automatic responses and strength for his conscious effort during the game. (3-4)

A successful performance at a moment of crisis rests largely and essentially upon the depths of a self wisely and rigorously prepared in the totality of its being - mind and body. (4)

As Plato long ago saw, there is an art of living, and the living is excellent only when the self is prepared in all the depths and dimensions of its being. Furthermore, this is not a truth to be set aside when we come to our relationship with God. We are saved by grace, of course, and by it alone, and not because we deserve it. That is the basis of God's acceptance of us. But grace does not mean that sufficient strength and insight will be automatically "infused" into our being in the moment of need.

A baseball player who expects to excel in the game without adequate exercise of his body is no more ridiculous than the Christian who hopes to be able to act in the manner of Christ when put to the test without the appropriate exercise in godly living. (4-5)

Jesus was able to...

...lead a public life of service through teaching and healing...

...love His closest companions to the end...

...die a death unsurpassed for its intrinsic beauty and historical effect.

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And in this truth lies the secret of the easy yoke: the secret involves living as He lived in the entirety of His life - adopting His overall lifestyle. Following "in His steps" cannot be equated with behaving as HE did when He was "on the spot" (see p.9). To live as Christ lived is to live as He did all His life.

Our mistake is to think that following Jesus consists in loving our enemies, going the "second mile", turning the other cheek, suffering patiently and hopefully - while living the rest of our lives just as everyone around us does. (5)

The general human is to want what is right and important, but at the same time not to commit to the kind of life that will produce the action we know to be right and the condition we want to enjoy. This is the feature of human character that explains why the road to hell is paved with good intentions. We intend what is right but we avoid the life that would make it a reality. (6)

We cannot behave "on the spot" as He did and taught if in the rest of our time we live as everybody else does. The "on the spot" episodes are not the place where we can, even by the grace of God, redirect un-Christlike but ingrained tendencies of action toward sudden Christlikeness.. Our efforts to take control at that moment will fail so uniformly and so ingloriously that the whole project of following Christ will appear ridiculous to the watching world.

Jesus never expected us simply to turn the other cheek, go the second mile, bless those who persecute us, give unto them that ask. These responses, generally and rightly understood to be characteristic of Christlikeness, were set forth by Him as illustrative of what might be expected of a new kind of person - one who intelligently and steadfastly seeks, above all else, to live within the rule of God and be possessed by the kind of righteous that God Himself has, as Matthew 6:33 portrays.

Jesus did invite people to follow Him into that sort of life from which behavior such as loving one's enemies will seem like the only sensible thing to do.

True Christlikeness, true companionship with Christ, comes at the point where it is hard not to respond as He would.

So if we wish to follow Christ - and to walk in the easy yoke with Him - we will have to accept his overall way of life as our way of life totally. (7-8)

The secret of the easy yoke is to learn from Christ how to live our total lives, how to invest all our time and our energies of mind and body as He did. We must learn how to follow His preparations, the disciplines for life in God's rule that enabled Him to receive His Father's constant and effective support while doing His will.

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This attitude, this action is our necessary preparation for taking the yoke of Christ and is the subject of the rest of this book. (9)

Do you believe that such a life is possible? I do. Emphatically. I am writing about what it means to follow Him and about how following Him fits into the Christian's salvation. (10)

The secret of the easy yoke is simple, actually. It is the intelligent, informed, unyielding resolve to live as Jesus lived in all aspects of His life, not just in the moments of specific choice or action. (10)

**--] End of "Easy Yoke"**

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### --> E - Ephesians

#### 5 Areas of Content:

Text - Ephesians Commentary by Dallas Willard

Teaching Points

- I. Sole Devotion (Soul Devotion) to Jesus as "Lord" - *W. Nee & Willard*
- II. Mindful of Jesus as Lord - *Thoughts by Dallas Willard*
- III. Living as Jesus is Lord - *Thoughts by Dallas Willard*
- IV. Leading Others to Jesus as Lord - *Thoughts by Dallas Willard*

### **Ephesians Commentary by Dallas Willard**

Introduction - "Read Paul as what he was. Paul was a brilliant analytical mind. Read Paul as though he was a University Professor talking about social & psychological reality. Currently in the context of knowledge, "Sin" is not a category. It does not explain anything. We can't introduce evil or sin to explain.

\* Educators are farmers who don't believe in weeds or bugs. They believe in fertilizer. They can't deal with evil. It is not a category of explanation. Sin is not a category. For Paul, Calvin, Luther, sin was a category."

**Ephesians 3:8-10** - "Unfathomable riches of Christ of the mystery hidden in God."

**3:10** - "*manifold wisdom of God that made known through the church to the rulers & authorities in Heavenly places (angels).*"

They do not understand the greatness of God.

**2:7** - "*in order that in the ages (eons, millennia, galaxies of time) to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*" ("ages" see also **Rev. 5:22**)

This means the Church is a revelation to the universe of the greatness of God. God's ultimate intention is the Kingdom of God and human beings place in it.

**Ephesians 3:8**, "*Unto me the least of all saints this grace is given to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.*"

Paul On Grace. Grace is God acting in our lives to bring about what we can not do on our own. Guilt? No. God acting in us? Yes

Is it unmerited favor? Of course it is, but not only that or you don't say what it does. This is where the teaching of Grace can slip over into the default gospel - Grace just has to do with the imputation of righteousness. The merit of Christ substituted for your demerit to bring you out of the red into the black. You have to say Grace is more than unmerited favor.

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- *Grace is God acting in our lives to bring about what we can not make happen on our own.*

- *Grace is not opposed to effort but to earning.*

God acting in our lives does not mean that we do nothing. Grace means we never come to the place that we earned what comes out of the process. Whether earning heaven, success in ministry, a lovely family. You always winding up saying, "Thank God" for the activity of God on your behalf.

The effect is to eliminate pride, boasting, self reliance, self will. It is to say to God, "I am dependent upon you. I am surrendered to you. I am following your direction. I am expecting your help. I will do my very best but I don't trust my best. I will engage in disciplines but I don't trust disciplines. I will seek knowledge but I will not trust knowledge. I don't trust that. My trust is in God."

Grace does not make you passive but it doesn't allow you to be proud. It doesn't allow you to trust yourself. You recognize something your involved with is far greater than anything you can do.

**Ephesians 3:20**, "*Exceedingly, abundantly more than we can ask or think...*"

?) What is a Disciple? A disciple is interactive with Jesus.

I never go into a situation where I assume I'm in control of the outcome. If I have to do something that I can't do, I won't assume it can't be done. If I think know what's supposed to happen, I don't think that it will happen that way. I try to never assume what will happen. Sometimes I assert my Kingdom when I start acting like I'm in charge. It would be very foolish of me to assume I know what's supposed to happen. I have ideas, hopes and plans that are always held in abeyance with the idea that Jesus knows what supposed to happen. I am very hopeful a lot of things happen that I don't even think about.

- *How we gather as Churches*

What we do know is not what the church has always done. Not wrong but not always. The Church has always gathered. People have come together. Once you get past that, there's not a lot we've always done. Often what we do is from society rather than something that would be wise for the church to do.

Pastors & leaders have the primary responsibility of enabling people to be together to flourish and grow in Christlikeness. They will develop spiritual competence. They will be able to do things we associate in being a Christian - be able & competent in things like Speaking the Gospel, helping people

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who need help, praying, enduring suffering joyously. That's what we're aiming at.

### **Ephesians 4** - *What we do when we gather as a church.* UNITY!

The basic objective - Paul is talking about gifting of people in the church.

#### **4:1** - *"Walk in a manner worthy of the calling in which you've been called."*

The communities use to gather in the churches. That is no longer possible. The demographics are very different. Have to think differently than 75 years ago.

The church - A community where there is no rejection. Offenses will be dealt with forgiveness. People would not go off on their own and sulking.

#### **4:3** - *"Preserving the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One body, spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God and Father of all..."*

The kind of unity in love that is envisioned in the disciples of Jesus.

The Church Gifting - People acting with extraordinary power to accomplish the ends of the Church. Not a manifestation of human abilities but a manifestation of the Kingdom power. The Kingdom comes into the Church. People in Leadership are exercising gifts - grace to accomplish what they can't from Christ beyond human ingenuity.

#### **4:11** - *"Gifts to equip the saints for the work of service to build the body."* Church growth is not more Christians but bigger Christians.

#### **4:13** - *"Until we all attain the unity...maturity...fullness of Christ."*

Being perfect is growing into "fullness of Christ".

\* A perfect child; A perfect teenager - As people grow, they are perfect all along the line though they have much growing to do

A kind of purpose driven completeness that Jesus is talking about.

**Mt. 5:48** - "Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Teleoi "perfect" does not mean legal perfection but functional completeness to function in love and in kingdom reality as your Father in Heaven does. Does not refer to legal righteous in perfect adherence to the law. Give up on that one. You'd never do that and if you did, you'd be overwhelmed with pride.

#### **4:14** - Results: *"No longer children..."*

Solid believers who can't be thrown around

#### **4:15** - *"Speaking the truth in love."*

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When you talk about church growth, talk about this passage. Numbers are not to be despised but the truth is you get more numbers when you have this kind of growth than if you don't. The natural process for the spread of the gospel and bringing of people into the body of Christ is one on one contact with individuals who have in them something so strong and so powerful that other people by and large will naturally want it. The ordinary person will, when they see this, this realization of Christ in individuals, they will come. You won't have enough room to hold them.

We want to turn our churches into Centers of Love. That means Let our Yes be Yes and our No be No. As we do that the body grows in fulness, people nourish one another and change comes about. The body of Christ grows up into the fulness of Jesus Christ and stands in the world as a contact point between Heaven and Earth where the Angels of God descend and ascend upon Jesus who is in the midst of the people.

**4:17** - "Gentiles" people without God who stand outside the covenant relationships with God. They are getting to know Him as His mystery is being revealed.

"The futility of the mind" - the mind that doesn't get anywhere by thinking. They don't work. They have distorted reality in their premises. "Calloused" - Don't feel.

We live in a sensual age. "Feelings". We don't learn to "feel good". That's why we are so addictive. "I gotta have the feeling." The only way out of addictions is to realize you have a will distinct from your feelings. You don't have to feel good. If you live for feelings, you will become callous. If you live for feelings, you will do whatever is required to get the feeling.

Once you get that callous mind and you misunderstood your nature in such a way that you're only going for feeling, then social institutions & arrangements will conform to that.

**4:22** - "*Lay aside the old self.*" - Put Off Old

Something you do. It won't just happen. It won't happen unless you have help. Mortify - let it die.

\* Mortgage = "Kill something off by degrees"

\* Ref: Colossians 3 - "Your life is hid with Christ in God. Mortify therefore your members which are on the Earth." The parts of your life that you can do in the flesh. "Get rid of evil concupiscence." (inherently bad, lustful desire)

**4:25** - "*Put on the new self*" - "*Speak truth*" - Put On the New

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Truth is so central to the kind of growth and community life we are talking about.

Take the similar passages in Galatians, Colossians, Sermon on the Mount. Not all the say the same thing because they are not Laws. It's not the "list". *They are all expressing a kind of life and activity that naturally wells up from interchange that comes with becoming a Kingdom person following Christ.*

If you become the kind of person who lives **Ephesians 4**, you'll take the Sermon on the Mount in a walk. Colossians 3 will easy. These are not laws. If you get one, you'll have the others. Because you will have changed to such extent.

If you become one who can bless those who curse you, you will have become the kind of person who will be able to do nearly all the others things mentioned. That's not true if you try to treat it as laws. The character of legalism is you have to always be thinking and you can't think fast enough to stay up with it.

**Ephesians 4** - Take the inner transformation as our goal. We don't expect Paul's words in Ephesians 4 and we don't make it our goal. We have too low expectations. The flourishing in Christ is the exception not the rule. We often adjust our group policies to the mediocre, consumer Christian who has no expectation that they will change and grow. The result is that have people who do not grow. We are often filled with people who are mean, angry, contentious toward each other. We walk on egg shells so we don't offend each other. The inner reality does not change.

### **Ephesians 5:9 & Galatians 5**

The "Fruit of the Spirit" takes the place of the works of the flesh

"Fruit" comes from nature - a natural expression

Fruit of the Light & Spirit go together - Live by the Spirit = Light floods our lives. Spiritually mature are not hiding - completely honest, straight forward, nothing hidden, authentic. Meet a healthy person!

I am trusting myself to the Kingdom of God that surrounds me. Constant contact with God frees me up from the chaos and conflict of the works of the flesh.

**—] End of Ephesians**

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### --> F - Four Life Questions

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~ ~ ~ "Life's Four Big Questions"

**The Divine Conspiracy Lecture #4** (4:30) [1:27:50-1:32:20]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IT1phEMrS7E>

### **#1 - What is Reality?**

Knowledge and truth help us come to terms with reality. Being Christ's people means we affirm the reality of the Kingdom of God. What is reality?

Answer - **God and everything that comes from His hand.**

### **#2 - Who is well off? Who has the good life? Who is Blessed?**

**Answer - Anyone alive in the Kingdom of God.**

What about the poor? He said Blessed are the poor, for they too can have the Kingdom of God. Blessed are the poor in spirit, people who have no religion going for them. They are poor in spirit like His apostles. He chose people like that to make His messengers to the world. It is certainly because He did not want anyone to take a human fix from the world. He wanted people to understand the cure for the world is life in the Kingdom of God.

### **#3 - Who is a really Good Person?**

**Answer - Anyone permeated with agape love**

Love is comes forward out of the nature of God, brought to human beings, Christ shows you how to realize it, what it is and then finally...

### **#4 - How do you become a really good person?**

**Answer - Becoming a disciple of Jesus**

Jesus answers each of these far superior than anyone else. Just compare.

\* Peter, "To whom shall we go?" (That is a real question isn't it.)

People in LA, Manilla, Bombay have the exact same questions.

How does Christ compare to Krishna? Buddha? L. Ron Hubbard?

~ ~ ~ **End of Section** ~ ~ ~

[NOTE: Also in "The Divine Conspiracy" Lectures - Search for "Well Off" and "Good Person" for teaching on the Sermon on the Mount for answers to these four questions]

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### ~ ~ ~ "Life's Four Big Questions"

#### The Divine Conspiracy Lecture #7 (16:30)

[00 - 16:30]

**1. What is reality?** - God & His Kingdom. Everything under that is real. You depart from that and you become increasingly less real.

**2. Who is well off? "Blessed"** (*The Divine Conspiracy*, Chapter 4)

Will mean peace and not peace if you understand where well being lies and it lies in the Kingdom of God . The good life is found in God not somewhere else. Human beings worry if well being lies somewhere else. **We people in ministry often spend a lot of time worrying about if we're in the right place.**

\* Gen. 28:12 - Jacob's Ladder.

*"God is in this place and I did not know it."*

Imagine angels ascending & descending on you. It is very important to understand God is where we are. We don't need to be someplace else. We do not have to say, *"Who will ascend into Heaven to bring Him down?"*

*"The word is nigh thee. It is in your mouth. It is the word of faith that we preach."*

God is where you are. Where you are is the doorway to Heaven. Remember Heaven does not mean what happens after you die. Heaven means the presence of God, the Kingdom of God is here. It does not matter what you are, who you are, what you've got for you, against you. Answers the driving question, "Am I in the right place for God's will?"

That's the lesson of **The Beatitudes** - You only understand the gospel of the Kingdom of God if there is no limit to whom you can go and say, "Blessed."

[2 Contexts: Humans healed by Jesus; Spiritual presence of the Kingdom]

\* Write your own Beatitudes - "Blessed are the \_\_\_\_\_ ."

Put somebody in the human scale is thought to nothing. Nobody. Someone who is not blessed. **Remember, they are not blessed because they are in the condition they are in, they are blessed because the Kingdom is available to them.**

\* Blessed are the...unemployed, the pregnant too many times; those who can't get pregnant, the fat...

**The blessing is not in the condition it is in the Kingdom.**

If you have trouble going to people who are considered un-blessable and pronouncing their blessing in the Kingdom, then you have not got the message of the Kingdom yet. The message of the Kingdom is precisely "All those human beings regarded as un-blessable are not un-blessable if they

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enter into the Kingdom. If they don't that's another story because the Beatitudes are all about the kingdom and entering into the Kingdom.

That is a radical message and it will upset most churches if you preach it. This message will break down the social barriers, the pecking orders that most people in our churches assume to be valid. Who are the "nobodies" in our church and how do they get treated? Does Jesus mean treat them all the same?

Read Chapter 4 of *The Divine Conspiracy*. "**Who is well off?**" is fundamental to human life. We are responsible for our lives. We make choices. We may feel shut out from God because we are among the un-bleasable. That is where we have to understand what is contained in the phrase, "Whosoever will may come."

The Sermon on the Mount deals with the two central questions:

*Who is well off?* and *Who is a really good person?*

### 3. Who is a really good person?

[10:25]

*"Unless your righteousness exceeds the Scribes and Pharisees..."*

Matthew 5:20

"Righteousness" (diakosune) = what makes you a really good person (agape is goodness) [NT Wright defines 'diakousune' as "Covenant Justice"]

Entering into an engagement in your life and practice with the Kingdom of the Heavens. Jewish experience of Heaven and God. God appeared in the atmosphere - the "Heavens" - 1st Heaven = the atmosphere all the way to the ground. Entering into the Kingdom of the Heavens means to engage with what God is doing in the world around us.

Unless you get out of the Scribes and Pharisee mode and come to a different level of goodness, you will not be in interactive relationship with the Kingdom of the Heavens.

3 "Unless" passages describe what it means to enter Kingdom of God:

1. John 3:5 - Unless you are born again
2. Mt. 18 - Unless you repent and become like a child
3. Mt. 5:20 - Unless you exceed Pharisees righteousness

What is Jesus saying in Matthew 5:20 and following?

What is the righteousness of the Scribes & the Pharisees?

The Righteousness of the Deed - Mostly what one did not do. "*Shall not.*"

The commands led to a system of righteousness which referred to what you did. "To go beyond the righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees" means to locate your righteousness in something other than what you do.

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- \* A thief is not just someone who steals. A Thief is someone who would steal if the situation were right. There is a great difference of the soul of a person who would steal if the situation is right compared to someone who would never steal no matter what the situation was. One can have the soul of a thief, murder or adulterer and never do it. Perhaps because of the fear of what would happen if they did. It is better not to do it.

Jesus is saying unless you get beyond just *not* doing it, you're not going to be in interaction with the Kingdom of God. If you want to interact with the Kingdom of God, you have to move to a different level - your thoughts, feelings, character, habitual way you live in your body and your world.

~ ~ ~ End of Section ~ ~ ~

~ ~ ~ "Life's Four Big Questions"

**The Divine Conspiracy Lecture Lecture #6** (4:20)

[17:50-22:10]

### **The Great Life Questions**

1. What is reality?
2. Who is well off?
3. Who is a good person?
4. How do you get to be a good person?

This is a framework for genuine witnessing for Christ. If you want to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, bring these questions to the minds of people. That's what all the philosophers and thinkers have tried to answer through the ages. That's what we want to keep before the people we teach in our fellowship and that's what we want to bring to the people not in our fellowship in the witness of the Kingdom.

~ ~ ~ End of Section ~ ~ ~

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### ~ ~ ~ "Life's Four Big Questions"

Worldview (UCLA Veritas)

(8:00)

[14:50-20:50]

#### 1. What is the Nature of Reality?

- What counts as knowledge of Reality? Knowledge enables us to negotiate reality.

**"Reality" is often what you run into when you're wrong.**

\* Running out of gas = reality

Are human beings just a physical organism?

Are thought, will, artistic genius, aspiration, etc. just chemistry?

#### 2. Who is well off? [Who is "Blessed"? "Wealthy?" "Successful"?]

"Blessedness" - The Good Life

Can you still be well off if you have cancer? Don't have enough money?

A profound world view question that reflects itself in nearly everything that we do.

#### 3. Who is a "really good" person?

[16:50]

Get a fight from someone if you question if they're a "good person".

Can discuss "well off" but don't try a person's "goodness".

One of the deepest world view questions, "*Am I a good person?*"

\* "I am a stinker!" Or, "Joe thinks I'm a stinker!"

Blood pressure goes up.

#### 4. How do you get to be a good person?

#### 5. What counts as knowledge?

[18:30]

All teaching institutions and teachers give answers to these questions.

There never has been anyone more influential in teaching answers to these questions than Jesus. He's not the only one - Plato, Buddha, Freud, UCLA.

**In the university setting the dominating world view is expressed through what is accepted as research and what counts as possible knowledge.**

Is there a single course of studies on UCLA, USC, Berkeley that you're engaged in that regards knowledge of God as a part of the subject matter? Where your grade might be determined by something you had to say about God? That is the sociological reality.

People who are caught up in the sociological wave will hear it all and dismiss it. To them it's just like the dinosaur. I want to take the time to insist that you are in a system which teaches a worldview without responsibly defending it.

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### **Jesus Worldview (2:00)**

[25:25-27:25]

Jesus has an answer to these questions. We ought to think Jesus was halfway smart. After all He is the single most influential person in history. He got that way by being able to do a lot of stuff. If he didn't get that way by doing a lot of stuff, you'll have to explain how he got that way.

1. Reality is God and his activities [Kingdom] including the natural world (physical, social.)
2. The person who is well off has a life deriving from God and His Kingdom. [Blessed]  
\* Put that next to "Go to Sears and get the good life at a good price."
3. A Good Person is the person pervaded with God's agape love.
4. You become a good person by becoming an apprentice of Jesus Christ.

That's a worldview and that competes with a worldview from UCLA, USC, Harvard. You have a world view that is taught by inflection, action, model, and so on. If you get crosswise of that, you will soon find out you are not acceptable. It's very powerful. It's a sociological reality.

**~ ~ ~ End of Section ~ ~ ~**

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### ~ ~ ~ "Life's Four Big Questions"

**Streams in the Desert (Session 1)** (21:40)

[25:00-46:40]

[Free Download Audio Source](#)

#### I. *What is the nature of reality?*

Sounds so abstract, so philosophical. But it's always the basic question. Always the issue with idolatry. Who is supreme? What is ultimate?

The primary message we have to confront today is the physical universe is ultimate reality. Spiritual reality is not often thought of as a subject of knowledge and genuine interaction but rather, something off to the side. There is a long sustained effort to place it there.

\* John Dewey, *The Common Faith* - Spiritual reality is merely a quality of physical or social reality, not itself an ultimate principle itself.

\* *Humanist Manifesto* - Redefine spirituality in a way that is a mere function of human life, not something ultimate in itself.

Psalm 46 is not talking about that. Psalm 46 is talking about spiritual reality as if it were an ultimate and irreducible reality from which everything else came.

The problem is in all of our areas of professional and academic competence, spiritual reality does not play a part. A PhD in any area I think in any school in the country, you'll find God has nothing to do with the subject matter. That's a point we have to address because as leaders in our congregations, we have a different story to tell.

The most important thing I have to say to you this evening - **We have to understand this is an issue of what counts as knowledge. We have to assert the teachings of Jesus as knowledge of reality.** That's one of the hardest things to do today.

Reality is what you're going to have to deal with. I will say to my students reality is what you run into when you're wrong. It's quite unyielding. The bitterness of truth is that it doesn't care what you think or want. Reality is the same way.

As we bring the Word of Christ and that teaching tradition of a God who is overall, we have to be sure that we present that as a body of knowledge, not as mere tradition, or mere faith in some sense short of knowledge.

*I am going slow because this is tough.*

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

**Knowledge** (def.) "You have knowledge of something if you are able to present it as it is on an appropriate basis of thought and experience."

Knowledge includes the Bible & Christian tradition. There are a lot of things in the Christian tradition that is not knowledge. But there is a solid core of the creedal tradition of the Christian Church that constitutes a body of knowledge.

**I think it is the single most important thing that we have to do in taking care of ourselves and watching our teaching. We understand and present the reality of God, the Trinitarian reality - God in Himself, a wonderful loving community creating a world and me in that world.**

"*A very present help in time of all trouble*" (Psalm 46) I don't just mean I turn to Him not just in times of trouble but I turn to Him at all times. He is the primary atmosphere in which I live. That's crucial for us in our churches.

**My experience - the primary battle - inability to believe in the reality of God.**

We have placed so much emphasis on "profession" in our religion often for cultural and historical reasons that we often can not distinguish between professing something and actually believing it. We need to bring people to a place where they really do believe in God, really do believe that Jesus made clear what God is and made Him accessible, "*Through Him who believe in God.*" **I Peter 1:21**

~ II. *Who is well off?*

A function of the nature of reality. This is what people pursue:

- Does our well being reside in good reputation, money, good health?

Jesus talked about this (Luke 6): "*Woe be to you that are rich.*"

Not because there is something sinful about being rich. If you put your confidence in that, you're headed for trouble.

*Blessed are the poor.*" Not because there is something glorious about being poor. It's not a good condition.

**The blessing is not in the condition but in the Kingdom.**

**Q - What is the Kingdom? God in action.**

**What is well being that we bring to ourselves and others?**

**It is living in the action of God.**

"*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness?*"

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

What are you seeking? You're not seeking the millennium or some political arrangement. You're seeking to be involved in what God is doing. God's kingdom is what God is doing. It's an everlasting kingdom. It's going to be around forever. **We are invited to count on that reality and base our life on it and become involved in it.** Whatever situation we are facing in life day by day or over the long haul, **our well being is a matter of being alive in the Kingdom of God and learning to act on it.** Jesus said if you do that, everything else will be added to it.

**Joshua 1:8** - That's talking about finding the Kingdom of God. God's law is God's ways.

How do you seek it? How would you know if you found it?

Most people in our religious culture think, "I'm trying to get to heaven when I die." It's not about heaven when you die. That'll take care of itself?

It's about knowing life now in the reality of God.

~ *III. Who is a really good person?*

Who is good and who is not has many claims and is often very political.

**Jesus says a really good person is one who is pervaded by agape love** - body, soul, spirit, character, all organized around agape love.

**Agape Love is the intention to do the things that are good for the people that are loved. Love is intention for good.**

\* I love chocolate cake - I don't intend the good for it. I want to eat it.

We dwell in it, we learn it. That kind of love comes from being loved. We love Him because He first loved us. That goes all the way back up to the top. **The ultimate reality is at the center of the universe is a God of love not just that He loves me but He is love.**

~ *IV. How do I become a really good person?*

Answer - Being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

**Learning from Him how to live in the Kingdom of God from the abundant resources of His Kingdom and His nature and that releases you from all of the burdens of running your own kingdom.** [37:25]

That's where our trouble comes from - running our own kingdom. We have to lay it down or we have all these other problems.

Psalm 46 - "*God is our present strength, a very present help in time of trouble.*"

\* Sunday School answer - "What is a lie?" "An abomination to God...and a very present help in time of trouble.

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

\* Children Lying - Children learn young. They know it is a way of managing to stay alive. We grow up and still have the same project. When we come to Jesus He has to help us change those habits.

*"Don't lie one to another seeing you have laid aside the old person with his deeds."* (Colossians 3)

We learn that by accepting Christ and His teaching into our lives in such a way that we know it is now safe to tell the truth.

**The greatest relief being a follower of Christ is the burden that goes off once you concede it is safe to do what is right.**

I was raised to believe I had to lead a life with a large part hidden. That's what we learn when we step into Jesus' teachings and begin to see that this is real. Then we can move into our local congregations and speak truth to one another. We can live on a basis of truth. We don't need to mislead people.

\* A little child is naturally open but very quickly learns it has to hide and develops all the techniques of hiding and perhaps by age 30 they have to hire someone for \$250 an hour to find them because they have so much duplicity and deceit worked into them. It spills over into our organizations, our **families**, often into our churches. A huge burden falls on us to manage all of that.

A great part of what Jesus is talking about when He teaches,

*"Come unto me all you who are heavy burdened..."*,

you can step out from under all of that. You don't have to manage the truth. You don't have to make things come out. You can leave that to God. The battle is the Lord's. You get to stand in the truth watch it happen. In the middle of that you can love the people who hate you, you can bless those who curse you, pray for those who spitefully use you. What an incredible blessing to learn what Jesus has to teach us.

### • **Summary of the Four Questions**

[42:15]

All of the great teachers of life have to address this. These are unavoidable questions.

\* When I get up in the morning, I have to decide first, "What is reality?" What am I going to have to deal with? Is the first reality God? Have I learned to meet it in that way? I can not manage it.

*Help me God to be truthful, genuine, to recognize where I need to bring the reality of your Kingdom to bear on the life of another person. Help me to know when I need to send to someone by my prayer the joy you have given me into their heart.*

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

Those are first thing in the morning questions. And, What am I going to pursue? Who am I going to be? What am I going to learn from Jesus today about how to do all that?

I have had to learn things like it is not what I accomplish but the person I become. My life is infinitely ahead of me compared to this life.

We sing, "*When we've been there 10,000 years.*" Occasionally we need to think it. What are you going to be doing in 10,000 years from now?

What kind of a person will I be in God's world as He brings that to me.

**I am very convinced that God's intent for each of us is to become the kind of person that He can empower to do what we want.**

That's what human history is about. It's what "we" want. Now, our want will have to go through some changing - the last point is about changing the "wanter".

**As we live in the school of Jesus we can progressively come to know the goodness of the rightness under God and we are prepared to sign off on the goodness of doing the thing that is right. [46:40]**

~ ~ ~ End of Section ~ ~ ~

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### ~ ~ ~ "Life's Four Big Questions"

**The Genius of Jesus** (6:00) & (14:30)

[11:35-17:35]

[http://www.veritas.org/genius-jesus/?view=presenters&speaker\\_id=1950](http://www.veritas.org/genius-jesus/?view=presenters&speaker_id=1950)

***The reason that Jesus stands forth as someone who should be heard in a University context is because of the centrality of these four questions.***

#### **1.) Nature of Reality?**

[11:35]

That may sound like a metaphysical question that is irrelevant. That is the most important question you ever deal with.

The University teaches an answer to that question. Not necessarily by a course on reality. We don't have them at USC. We need one. An answer is provided by the way we conduct ourselves.

What is reality? Reality is what you have deal with.

When you go through a University you pick up answers to that question.

*What do I really have to deal with?*

Reality is what you run into when you're wrong. Then you have to deal with it.

**One of the beautiful things about truth is it enables you to harmonize your life with reality. Instead of running into it, you can prosper your relationship with it.**

The most important question you're going to have to deal with. What is reality? What are you going to have to deal with?

The answer that most often comes in our culture - "Your body."

\* Magazines - "Buns & Abs" --- "Beautiful Skin"

If people understood and invested in the things that are really going to effect their lives as much as they do in the things that really make little difference, they would be much better off and much more able to live the lives they were meant to live.

What is the nature of reality? Every person has to deal with this question. Every institution deals with it. Our education is organized around it usually in some narrow focus so we come technically competent in some area and deal with that well but it leaves our life as a whole untouched.

#### **2.) Who is well off?**

[14:35]

Who has the good life?

Who has blessedness?

#### **3.) Who is a really good person?**

[14:50]

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

This one is more important for most people than the second question. You can get in a fight quicker questioning their goodness rather than being well off. It goes right to the heart of a person.

Am I worthwhile?

Am I worth admiring?

Do I have something to contribute to the world?

### **4.) How do you become a really good person? [15:30]**

You and I will practice answers to those questions no matter what we do or say. Every University conveys answers to those questions. There's a myth in our culture that at universities we don't teach morality. We teach morality. If you get crosswise of it you will find out how real and how forceful that morality is. We convey an impression as to who is well off and a good person. Universities answers these questions, not in a straightforward and responsible manner. You won't have a course in which you deal with these issues in being well off or being a good person in specific terms it will be conveyed by the whole spirit of the campus. The attitudes, the suggestion of language, the examples that are set, what is regarded as adequate teaching and research in the various fields. All those will convey answers.

For example - **Today it is assumed that in no field of knowledge is knowledge of God required.** [Absence of Theology in Universities]

The assumption in the answers that the University gives is that expertise in no field of knowledge requires the knowledge of God. It does not matter what field. The assumption is that God is irrelevant. That is not something that was discovered but it is something that has evolved. [17:35]

### **The Genius of Jesus (continued) (14:30) [21:00-35:30]**

**The Historical power of Jesus** has been precisely the way in which He has responded to these issues of human life. [Four Main Questions]

Of those four questions we can go to anyone. One of the great things about the University campus is it should be open to examine all of the options. To look seriously at those who are going to answer those [4 questions]. It should be open. It has been in the past. When the field was open, the historical power of Jesus came through the power of the answers which He gave to those questions.

**Arguably, without much question, Jesus is the single most influential person in human history.** That is open for discussion. I don't who else you might suggest. In terms of influence I can't imagine anyone else who has that kind of influence. Currently there is tremendous influence of Jesus even

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

on people in other religions who are not so sure or are antagonistic of Christianity as it is historically understood but being influenced by the person of Jesus.

**Why is that? It is because of the power in the answers that He gives to the four basic questions. That is what made him such a force in history. His vision of reality, well being and life simply has nothing close to it.**

### **I. What does Jesus say about reality?**

[23:00]

This is the first story, the one that the Universities in the Western World as we know them was founded on. **Reality is God and His Kingdom.**

**The kingdom of God is the range of God's effective will.**

That would include nature in so far as God has created nature. This is one reason why people go out into nature and experience it and they seem so refreshed. They don't even have to believe anything when they experience the greatness of nature.

\* Chesterton - Atheists - no one to thank for created beauty.

When people turn away from God they often turn to worship beauty in the arts or in nature. That's because these are expressions of the greatness of God.

**Kingdom of God is where God wants done what is done.**

In order to understand it, compare it to your kingdom, queendom or person-dom - the range of your effective will.

\* Going through your backpack, immediately feel something is wrong.

\* Driving off in your car. Something would be wrong.

That's your kingdom - what you have say over. The range of your effective will.

The Kingdom of God is what God has say over. He invites us to come and live in His kingdom and know it as an experiential reality.

The trouble of your kingdom is that it can not run on it's own. It is finite. It is limited. That's were the issues about conflict between truth and DESIRE and will - we find ourselves at war within ourselves and at war with those around us. We live in the midst of kingdoms in conflict. DESIRE is in conflict. There is nothing to subordinate that to. There is no greater reality in which people can be. On our own it is impossible to be simply what we know we should be.

**Only life in the Kingdom of God harmonizes the lives of human beings. That is why Jesus taught the way forward is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and then you have the ability to love your neighbor as yourself.**

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

This is really important for us to think about because when we come back and look at University life - What does God have to do with it? [26:40]

**God invites us to live in a spiritual reality in which all of the aspirations of the human heart for welfare and being a good person can be realized. Jesus understood what would make human life work. He understood that the basic problem for human beings is to find a spiritual home in which they can know that they are cared for, eternally cared for and from which they can care for others and not spend their whole life fighting over what to do.**

\* LA Riots - Rodney King - "Can we all just get along?"  
The answer is obviously "No, we can't get along."

The question is - why can't we?

\* Siblings, Parents & Children, Neighborhoods, Nations

We can not get along because we want our way, we want our kingdom to prevail and we can not find a larger kingdom in which to live together with others. **That is what Jesus brought into human life. He made clear what morality is and how it can be lived.** That is the number one problem or omission from University life today. It has nothing to say about that. It teaches a morality. But you don't teach a morality by preaching at people. You do it by body language, subtle suggestions, example, who you criticize, who you laugh at. That's how morality is taught. That is how it is taught in the home.

—> **Morality is a matter of passing on a certain kind of life.**

**Morality** (def.)

[29:30]

*"A shared public understanding with associated emotional postures concerning what types of persons are to be or are not to be admired, approved, imitated, encouraged and supported without regard of whether they prosper or not. It is a matter of character and will."*

In any context there is always a governing morality. There is one in our University and cultural situation but it is not the one that goes with the Theistic story because it is based upon a different reality, and that is taking humanity as an ultimate point of reference. As long as we do that we will never find the basis for living out the kind of morality that we know that we should. We'll never be able to do the things we know that are right. That's why Rodney King was wrong.

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

Of course we use the words...

\* Poster in the Cincinnati airport by Protective Insurance Company  
*"Treat others the way you would like to be treated."*

Do you know where that came from? It came from Jesus.  
Now, how do you do it?

**The historical power of Jesus comes from the fact that He knew what to do and could enable people to do it. He was able to provide a morality that would actually make people good.**

### **III. Who is a good person?**

[32:00]

(The reason I go out of my way to make this statement is because I doubt you'll have anyone here represent a view on this matter in any faculty - "Who is a good person?")

[32:27] *"A morally good person is a person who is intent upon on advancing the various goods of human life with which they are effectively in contact in a manner that respects their relative degrees of importance and the extent to which the actions of the person in question can actually promote the existence and maintenance of these goods."*

Having said that, this is what Jesus is talking about when He said,  
*"Love your neighbor as yourself."*  
*"Treat others the way you want to be treated."*

### **What does that mean and how do you do it? (4th Life Question)**

It is only for those alive in the Kingdom of God who are in personal interactive contact with the ultimate reality learning from that ultimate reality through Jesus and through His people is the only person who can spell that out and really tell you how to do it.

We can say, *"Love your neighbor as yourself."* What if you don't love yourself? There are a lot of people who don't. Much of the wrong doing that is done by people who have no idea what it is to value and love themselves. We talk about human dignity in our culture today but what does it really mean in a consumer culture where the pursuit of pleasure is confused with the pursuit of happiness?

That's why Jesus refines his teaching. He doesn't just say, *"Love your neighbor as yourself"* He says, *"Love one another as I have loved you."*

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

That's different. He says, "*Greater love has no one than they lay down their life for their friends.*"

With that fill in, you can begin to ask yourself, "*Has there been a single day in which I can say honestly I have loved my neighbor as myself? Is there progress? Am I learning how to do it?*"

If we follow up the teaching about love and morality and who the good person is by the question, "How do you become a good person?", that is where above all Jesus Christ shines greater than anyone else.

In an open discussion, we want to compare Him to any other candidates.

\* Students come to me and say, "*Why are you a disciple of Jesus Christ?*"  
My answer is always, "*Who else did you have in mind?*" [35:30]

**~ ~ ~ End of Section ~ ~ ~**

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### ~ ~ ~ "Life's Four Big Questions"

**Bringing Truth to Life (#3)** (8:30)

[15:20-23:50]

- 1.) What is reality?
- 2.) Who is really well off?
- 3.) Who is a really good person?
- 4.) How do you get to be a really good person?

Every religion, every culture is going to try to answer those questions.

Aristotle - you'll see that he extends himself to answer these four questions. The classical moralists like Plato or Aristotle were more interested in the 4th question than any other. Most of what they did to answer that question they were emerging from the Tribal life in which the answers were in the tribal stories. Greek culture was in a process of finding answers that were trans-tribal and not tied to the particular stories in Homer or others but were based in an understanding of human life and human nature.

### **Jesus Answers the Four Life Questions**

[17:19]

#### **1.) What is real? God and His Kingdom**

What is real is what you can count on. It won't let you down.

An illusion will betray you. Sooner or later, it will let you down.

Reality will not betray you. If you get in its way, it will run over you. That's why truth is so important.

#### **2.) Who is well off? Anyone alive in the Kingdom of God.**

Does not matter what else is going on, how hard life is.

A poor person in the Kingdom of God is as well off as a rich person.

"Blessed are the poor" and "Woe be to you who are rich".

What is the difference? The Kingdom of God!

There is no blessing in being poor. The blessings is in the Kingdom.

Rich - you are blessed! No, that's not it.

Anyone alive in the Kingdom of God is well off forever.

#### **3.) Who is a really good person? Anyone pervaded with agape love.**

John - "anyone who loves is of God. He that does not love is not of God, for God is love." The whole law is summed up in God.

#### **4.) How do you get to be a really good person?**

You learn that and you'll be well off and situated in reality.

**You learn that by trusting Jesus.**

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

You trust Jesus when you turn your life over to Him. Jesus is marching through history. The lost person is the person who missed out on Jesus. The saved person is now participating in what Jesus is doing on Earth. They have a life in them that is eternal.

**Colossians 3:1**, *"If you have been risen with Christ..."*

That's salvation - having the life of Christ living in you.

Only the Bible answers those questions in a way that is adequate to the human need and faithful to reality. You test them in the Bible and test them against life and you know their adequacy because of what you find when you live in them. You do that by discipleship. To say I am a disciple is to say, *"I am learning something right now from Jesus. I am His student and He is the maestro."*

**The maestro of life has come to town and is giving masters classes on how to live in the Kingdom of God.**

[22:45]

That's how we present Jesus as the master of life in Himself and His teachings. We make Him available through our lives and through our words. The word of the Kingdom of God that Jesus brings to us in His own person has a life of it's own and I don't have to do anything but do it and speak it.

~ ~ ~ **End of Section** ~ ~ ~

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

~ ~ ~ "Life's Four Big Questions"

**The Value of Truth - LSU Veritas** (6:20)

[39:00-45:20]

[http://www.veritas.org/value-truth/?view=presenters&speaker\\_id=1950](http://www.veritas.org/value-truth/?view=presenters&speaker_id=1950)

### **The Great Questions We Need Truth On**

For every great teacher - Buddha, Confucius, Freud has to answer these.

#### **1.) What is reality?**

What is the answer to that question that is given by LSU? There is one that is given. They don't teach it in class. There is not a "Department of Reality" at LSU. That's going to be true of all of these questions.

Faculty are by in large good people. They are doing the best they can. The problem is they are caught in a system that does not deal with reality.

You're going to have to deal with it.

—> Exercise - write out what you think is real.

Real is what you've got to deal with, what you can count on.

*What do you think you can count on? What is reality for you?*

#### **2.) Who is well off?**

[40:50]

Who's got it made? Who has the good life?

\* Peugeot ad - *"Pursue happiness in a car that can catch it."*

Never mind there are lot of miserable people driving Peugeots.

\* Sears - *"The good life at a good price."*

We have to think deeply about who is well off.

Jesus' answers:

1.) Reality is God and His kingdom, whatever God is doing.

2.) Who is well off is anyone who is living in the kingdom of God.

If you're living interactively with God you are well off. It doesn't matter what has happened to you, it's not going to ruin your life.

#### **3.) Who is a really good person?**

[42:30]

That question goes right the heart of our being. It effects our health, our moods that control our lives, how we approach others.

Let me ask, *"Are you a really good person?"*

I'm not getting personal but I'd like you to get personal with you.

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

You might have some good ideas because the teachings of Jesus has so permeated Western Culture. That if I were to say to you, "A person is really good if their life is permeated with love. Love their neighbors, families, fellowships." Love means they are devoted to the good of others.

\* Martin Luther King, Jr.

*"Anyone can be great because anyone can serve others."*

You want to be great? Be a person of love. Learn how that works down the level of your body, your social relationships.

There is not a Department at LSU or USC about "Really Good Persons."

### **4.) How do you get to be a good person?**

[44:20]

That's a big question, isn't it? Everyone I know wants to be a good person.

I ask, *"Anyone here want to be a bad person?"*

Jesus answers these questions.

You want to be a good person? Follow him. Put his words into practice. Trust him. Learn how to live with Him in the kingdom of God and that will be taken care of.

**~ ~ ~ End of Section ~ ~ ~**

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

~ ~ ~ "Life's Four Big Questions"

**Spiritual Formation in the Academy" 2008** (11:20) [24:00-35:20]

Session 3 - "Christian Teachings Banished from Knowledge" [YouTube 3/3]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP4SIYnAJ5I>

1.) What is the nature of reality?

What you have to deal with or what you can count on.

Or, what you run in to when you are wrong. It is unyielding. It does not give way just because you have a contrary opinion.

The University, the system of knowledge, provides no reliable answer.

They don't have a Department of Reality.

Actually, they surreptitiously present one by policy and personnel that gives you an impression of what is important and not important.

Is there an answer? In particular, is there a God and can you know that? What is the answer given by the University?

There is not a single area of knowledge in order for you to be qualified that you have to know about God. Could you have responsible teaching of an area without talking about God? Up until 1880, it was assumed you could not. If there was a God, and you omitted Him, you really left something out. It was decided, not discovered, that God had nothing to do with the subject matters.

George Marston, *The Soul of the American University*

\* Cole & William Graham Sumner - God was left out of political science.

2.) Who is well off?

[28:45]

There is no Department of True Well Being

There is something communicated but it is pretty ragged. At USC, we talk about "success". If you are successful, you will have a good life and you will be among the blessed. The way to be blessed is to come to USC. Normally, that means you will get into a good professional school.

3.) Who is a really good person?

[30:00]

All worldviews answer these questions.

4.) How can one become a really good person?

[30:25]

That is spiritual formation.

The Universities have practically nothing to say. On the other hand, that has been the primary question ever since Plato up until the 20th Century.

Every great teacher or system must try to answer these.

Since Modernity - "How do we know the answers to Questions 1-4?"

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

It was taken out of the hands of Christian institutions and the learning that was present with that. It now defaults largely to media and that's totally out of control. It's a matter of economics by and large.

In terms of the questions 2 & 3 & 4, the Christian comes along and says, "Here's the answer to the questions".

A good person is someone permeated by love, whose life is governed and developed around love.

How do you become a good person? You become a disciple of Jesus

Is that something we have knowledge about? The Christian church has forsaken the responsibility for knowledge. They made a deal over a period of years to hand knowledge over to the secular world, primarily the Universities in a period where they were splitting off historically and socially from the Church.

The question as we stand on the campus or in our culture, do we have moral knowledge to guide people? Are we representing moral goodness and moral development as it is on an appropriate basis of thought and experience? Or are we jabbering away with the thought that something will happen?

**~ ~ ~ End of Section ~ ~ ~**

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### ~ ~ ~ "Life's Four Big Questions"

**Spiritual Formation in the Academy 2008** (8:40) [04:00-12:40]

Session 4 - "Christian Spiritual Formation: Knowledge Fields" [YouTube 2/3]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcK4p-1-hEQ>

### **Four Big Questions**

[4:00]

[Dallas states, "I gave you last time Four Big Questions. I want to return to them just to review." He teaches this in Youtube (3/3) @ 24:00 which means this talk labeled ("YouTube 2/3") is talk #4 of 4 and out of order in YouTube. Talk #2 or 4 is not available on YouTube.]

The academic scene has no intellectual response to these questions. The context out of which the Universities grew did. But as a result of specialization and professionalization, they lost it because none of the fields answer those questions.

#### **1.) What is reality?** God and His Kingdom. [5:00]

I wanted to give you a very simple argument for the existence of God. I gave you a passage in Romans 1. [Session 3 - 36:00 - 41:10]

You can know God exists. You can't know everything about him. That is a different story. That is important to know that. Knowledge has a different role in life and in spiritual formation than does belief, commitment or profession.

#### **2.) Who is well off?** [6:08]

*Anyone alive in the Kingdom of God*

This is the gospel of the Beatitudes - Proclamation of the Gospel

*"Blessed are the poor."*

Why? It's so wonderful to be poor! Poor people are just spiritual.

The blessing is in the kingdom not in the condition.

*"...for theirs is the Kingdom of God."*

#### **3.) Who is a really good person?** [7:30]

*One whose life is pervaded with agape love, governed, inner-penetrated with agape love.*

#### **4.) How do you get to be a really good person?** [7:45]

*Become a disciple of Jesus.*

If you can find anyone better, be their disciple but I recommend Jesus. He has a track record that runs around the world and through the ages. Bring anyone else up against Him as you wish. We want to be honest, open,

## **Topics**

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thorough. The Christian wants everything to be exactly what it is. We're open, not hiding, ducking.

\* I've never had a crisis of faith but I've had a lot of people who have had one for me. One day the Lord said to me, *"If you can find a better way than Jesus Christ, He'll be the first one to tell you take it."* He's not going to say, *"Well, that's better but it's not Christian..."*

Jesus is on the side of truth. He climbed up on the cross and said, *"Hit me with your best shot!"*

Becoming a disciple of Jesus - A challenge to anyone you meet, anywhere you meet them. If they think there is someone smarter than Jesus, make them give you their list. Just be open.

I wanted to say to you more than anything else in coming here, you have answers to these questions. If you want to, you can know them and you can present them as knowledge not your little leap of faith.

We don't need to be bullies or arrogant but if we're followers of Christ, we won't be. That takes care of that. Because we know who we can trust. We live with others in the light of the knowledge we have. Obviously there is a lot of stuff we don't know.

We have to interpret knowledge itself. I hope you will make it part of your business to interpret knowledge. That is a primary confusion that people wonder about. Try what I suggested to you. You can improve on it. Don't get a definition of knowledge with no one knowing nothing nohow.

*If Knowledge is if you can represent something as it is on an appropriate basis based on thought and experience, you've got a winner. You can bring in traditions, scripture, revelation.*

Do it honestly, openly, thoroughly and God will be with you.

**~ ~ ~ End of Section ~ ~ ~**

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### ~ ~ ~ "Life's Four Big Questions"

#### Sermon on the Mount (Gordon) (13:20)

[5:40-19:00]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xq9Q1z5uWZo&list=LLHJmBk0sg4WoTB38asmaiqQ&index=2&t=0s>

YouTube title: "Spirit of the Disciplines - (3/3) Case Study - Sermon on the Mount. *It is talk #2 (not #3)*

Jesus addresses the **two** questions every thoughtful person who considers the human situation has to address:

#### 1.) Who is really well off?

The gospel of the Kingdom addressed in the Beatitudes

People who are the last

#### 2.) Who is a good person?

[8:30]

Unless your righteousness goes beyond, not more of the same, you will not make contact with, enter, become part of the Kingdom of God. Why? What Jesus knew is you can never succeed in keeping the law by trying to keep the law.

\* Shooting a duck that's flying. Don't shoot where the duck is. Shoot where the duck's going to be.

That's the sense where you have to go beyond the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees. They try to keep the law by aiming at not doing anything wrong. Being a really good person has to go a long ways beyond, "*I didn't do anything wrong.*" And a long ways beyond, "*I did everything right!*"

You cannot succeed keeping the law by trying to keep the law.

Is keeping the law important? You bet it is

Jesus, "*The law will not pass away until it is fulfilled.*"

And he is not talking about it being fulfilled through His atoning death.

Whatever you say on that issue, that's not the point of Matthew 5

When He enunciated about how to keep the law, they thought He was coming to overthrow the government.

How do you do it?

You become the kind of person who keeps the law without thinking. What you have to think about shows your character.

\* Jesus healing the man with the withered hand.

He asked a question, "*Is it right to heal on the Sabbath?*"

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What was most revealing? They had to think about.

What you have to think about is what reveals your character.

\* You visited me in prison. *"When did we do that?"*

\* Not letting your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

Your right hand just does it and you don't have to think about it

\* Good Samaritan - *"He took pity on him."* He had compassion.

What did the others do? They thought about it

\* Jack Benny joke - "You're \$ or your life." "I'm thinking."

*"Beyond the righteousness of the scribes & Pharisees"* will bring us through a consideration of some the teachings in Matthew 5 to the disciplines.

Jesus is not about external/internal. The contrast is not between external and internal, it's between what you would do and not do. It's between the action and what you would do whether you'd do it or not. What is most important is what we could, might think or do.

\* Thief - *not one who steals but one who would steal if the occasion were right.*

That's where you get down to the real stuff of your soul. That's not to be grim. That's to give you hope. Because that can be changed. When that happens you don't have to set on a guard on your heart to avoid doing what is wrong.

That's why Paul says, *"Love is the fulfillment of the law."* *When you love people you don't have to worry about killing them.*

\* When I fly to Boston, I am not greeted by someone who says, *"Great, you didn't go to New Orleans."* I don't have to think about going to New Orleans because I was thinking about going to Boston.

This is the whole story. Then we can look at Matthew 5 and see what Jesus is talking about.

**~ ~ ~ End of Section ~ ~ ~**

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

~ ~ ~ "Life's Four Big Questions"

**Spiritual Formation: Obedience** (6:30)

[4:30-11:00]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BeiwAfK8SvM&t=89s>

### Four Key Questions

[4:30]

#### 1.) What is the Nature of Reality?

Reality is what you can count on. That's why truth is important. Truth enables us to come to terms of reality in a good way.

\* Gun Aim mechanism: If it's true, you can hit what you are shooting at.

Come to good terms with reality. If you don't have it, you'll come to terms with it anyway. Reality is what you run into when you are wrong.

Reality is God's work. We don't construct it. One of the great myths today is "Constructionism" - we construct reality, we construct truth.

#### 2.) Who is well off?

[6:50]

We want to be well off. That's where our reality assumptions come in. It has to deal with reality. It can't be about illusions.

It's important to get this right. Jesus' teaches us about that.

Reality - God in His Kingdom

Well off - Living in the Kingdom of God.

#### 3.) Who is a really good person?

[7:45]

Someone who is permeated with Agape love.

In particular, not controlled by desire.

If you love something, you are set to achieve what is good for it.

If you love your plant, you take care of it. If you love your neighbor, you care for them. If you love God, you look out for what is good for God.

#### 4.) How do you become a really good person?

[8:45]

Jesus - the answer to the question of moral knowledge [9:05]

Jesus is not an airhead who stands haplessly before PhD's. Jesus is the master of knowledge. When He speaks about moral issues and spiritual issues, we listen to Him as one who knows.

The central teaching about the heart of religion, morality and spirituality is:

**Mark 12:29** "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one."

{That's the reality statement}

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

And love your neighbor as yourself."

The Torah, the Law, is not just a set of commandments, it is all we need to know to live and live well with God.

**[— End of "Life's Four Big Questions" Teachings by Dallas Willard —]**

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### --> G - "Grace"

#### ~ ~ ~ "GRACE: Kingdom of God"

[3:26]

{See separate file by the same name}

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlycWlmx2JM>

"I lay down the burden of success and trying to think about it in various ways that probably have come from sources in my past. I start thinking about success as the present Kingdom of God in my life now relationally not just to Christ Himself but those who are around me. How am I going to live together with them now?" "GRACE" YouTube clip

"To be a disciple means I receive **GRACE**. Perhaps one of the most concrete meanings of **GRACE** is now is the time to go on. Mercies of God are new every morning. I accept those. I don't beat myself up because I have not done things now I think I should be doing."

-*"Finding the Kingdom of God"* YouTube (RT 3:27)

**GRACE** is God acting in your life to accomplish what you can't accomplish on your own. *"Theology & Disciplines in the Workplace"* lecture

"There is not a single thing that Jesus teaches us to do that we can not do if we will discipline ourselves under **GRACE**." *"Theology & Disciplines in the Workplace"*

### >> Q&A with John Ortberg & Dallas Willard

**Q** - Discipleship - To be a disciple with Jesus and in the Acts 2 church seems so clear. Today, we're kind of Christian and kind of not Christian. [1:15:25]

**A** - Seek to learn how to do what Jesus said. Am I a disciple today? I am learning from Him. There are occasions when I haven't learned a thing.

Does God let you get away with things? Yes, that's the way of **GRACE**.

Bring us into the fullness of the likeness of His son. In order to do that, He gives us a life. We make choices. They matter. He is not keeping score. He cares about who we become. When we become more like Christ, there are not things to keep score.

**Q** - Life beyond Death?

**A** - With His presence and His Word, we began to live in Heaven now. Those who keep my word will never experience death as we humans see it. The

## **Topics**

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body stops working but they continue to exist as the people they are in the presence of God.

Rejoice in the Lord - that's where you find the basis for joy - in the Lord. Our part is to turn back to keep Christ as fully present as we can and thank God His **GRACE** to help us where we can't. We don't have a thing to worry about. Everything is taken care of.

The solution is to acknowledge the presence of the Kingdom in the most terrible events.

\* Where was God in Auschwitz? He was in Auschwitz. He will see the good and right is done.

### ~ ~ ~ **"GRACE: "Kingdom of God"**

Dallas Willard sermon, Christ Church, London (YouTube)

The Gifts of the Spirit - Special manifestation of the Kingdom of God located in people who in community can serve one another in love. Outcome is greater than could possibly be explained or understood by human ability.

The mark of the Spirit is the incommensurability of the outcome to the input. God loves to take people who don't have anything going for them and turn them into great spouts of divine **GRACE**. The first shall be last and last shall be first. That's in the Kingdom. The gifts of the Spirit are God in action with you. We are made to live with God. That's our destiny in eternity to rule & reign with Him forever and ever.

### ~ ~ ~ **"GRACE: Spiritual Disciplines"** [Grace in action]

*"Emotional and Spiritual Maturity" Conference - June 27, 2012*

Spiritual Disciplines - Habits to change the embedded habits of wrongdoing.

Discipline - Activity in your power that enables you to do what you can not do by direct effort.

Churches - Centers enabling us to take on the actions of Christ and His practices.

"Indirection" - Practicing a sport, instrument, etc. to perform well. Training doing what you won't do for their own sake - running, throwing, musical scales.

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[\* Webster illustration - Tiger Woods sweating profusely during 100 degree weather golf day in Bethesda, July 29. "That's why I train. To handle the physical demands thrown at us on tough days. Carrying the extra pounds around adds a lot of insulation."]

I can strike every note in Beethoven's sonata but I can't do it when it needs to be done and how it needs to be done because I lack the discipline of practicing piano.

Still need "**GRACE**" to accomplish by God's power what is not in our own power. Spiritual disciplines are a means of **GRACE**. **GRACE** is not opposed to action. People in action are caught on fire by **GRACE**.

Why did God set life up requiring disciplines? We can determine to some degree what kind of persons we will become. Learning a language. Playing an instrument. Loving our neighbor. Loving our enemies.

**GRACE** is not opposed to action. It is opposed to earning.

\* Abraham & Hagar - Acted on their own.

\* Abraham & Sarah could not do so on their own. Isaac - child of promise

Always remember a discipline is not a righteous deed, though some activities that are disciplines are in other capacities righteous deeds - deeds we are commanded to do. As a discipline an activity is wisdom. A good means to a good end.

~ ~ ~ "**GRACE**" *The Great Omission*

**GRACE**, you know, does not just have to do with forgiveness of sins alone... The gospel of the entire New Testament is that you can have new life now in the Kingdom of God if you will trust Jesus Christ... the whole person of Christ in everything. (p. 61-62)

**GRACE** is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning. Earning is an attitude. Effort is an action... In fact, nothing inspires and enhances effort like the experience of **GRACE**. (p. 61, 80)

Currently we are not only saved by **GRACE**; we are paralyzed by it. (p. 166)

~ ~ ~

**"The Golden Triangle of Spiritual Formation in Christ"** (p. 26-28)

Three keys to transformation in Christ-likeness:

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1. Faithful acceptance of everyday problems (seeking to learn from Christ in the midst of our trials)
2. Interaction with God's Spirit in and around us (practicing God's presence)
3. Practicing spiritual disciplines as means of **GRACE** (a variety of practices suited to you today and targeted for your progress in discipleship to Jesus)

Abiding in God's love provides the unshakable source of joy, which is in turn the source of peace. All is based on the reality of God's **GRACE** and goodness. Faith, hope, love, joy, and peace – the 'magnificent five' – are inseparable from one another and reciprocally support each other. (p. 129)

### ~ ~ ~ **"GRACE: Theology & Disciplines in the Workplace"**

If we are going to deal seriously with this issue of taking theology and spiritual disciplines into the workplace, we have to recognize where the problem is. What we get by GRACE through the gospel does not extend to the workplace. There is no conceptual connection between being saved as that is commonly understood and taking our workplace for Christ.

Point #10 - Disciplines are for Disciples [47:25]

Humans can determine very largely the people they will become.

God has placed discipline in ordinary human life to allow people to achieve things that would otherwise would simply go by them.

\*\* Lifting weights, become a musician, speak another language

Basic equipment of what we have under God to gain dominion under **GRACE**. **GRACE** will not impose but it is available to those who open themselves to it. Human beings are given disciplines by God as part of the good news. If we don't teach them, we are depriving them of who they can be before God. Activities in my power to do what I can not do by direct effort.

Point #11 - There is not a single thing that Jesus teaches us to do that we can not do if we will discipline ourselves under **GRACE**.

Reigning by **GRACE** - "Reigning" - to have supreme supervision of what's going on. Have things at your disposal. Have things going your way. Under the abundance of **GRACE**. You can't do that on your own. The problems for

## ***Topics***

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human beings is they want to reign without God. They want to reign without **GRACE**. We are made to live under **GRACE**. **GRACE** is God acting in your life to accomplish what you can't accomplish on your own.

Yes, it is unmerited favor but if unmerited favor is all you know, you don't know much about **GRACE**. Forgiveness of sins will be a part of this **GRACE**. You are no longer under the dominion of the dead hand of the past. Free of the burden of guilt & failure.

**—] End of "Grace"**

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### **--> H - Humility**

Source - *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, p. 145-146

"Humility is the framework in which all virtues live. Humility, which involves losing our self sufficiency, is a secret of soul rest because it does not presume to secure outcomes. When living in the cradle of humility, we understand that God has a plan for our lives that goes far beyond anything we can work out. We simply rest in His life as He give it to us. While resting in God, we can be free fro all anxiety, which means deep soul rest. We don't fret or get angry because others seem to be doing better than we are, even though we think they might be less deserving than we are."

**—] End of "Humility"**

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### **--> J - "Jesus as Master"**

Source - *The Divine Conspiracy*

God's desire is that we would live in him. He sent us the Way to himself – Jesus. As we learn to continually put our confidence in Jesus, as our Master, He leads us to be His apprentices in eternal living.

Jesus entered our world in the most ordinary way...He grew up in the home of a carpenter...He learned the trade of what we would call a "blue-collar" worker. If He had been born today He could hold down any job ...a clerk, accountant, banker, teacher, construction worker, run a housecleaning service, repair cars. In other words if He were to come today He could very well do what you do. He could live in your house, hold down your job, have your education and life prospects, and live within your family, surroundings and time. None of this would be the least hindrance to the eternal kind of life that was his by nature and becomes available to us through him.

What a beautiful thing it is to realize that we were created to be a container of the Divine, a place where the life of God flows.

With Jesus as my Master I'm learning to place myself as His apprentice in eternal living. In my relationship with him I realize that if he were born today he could very well live my life so I ask him daily, in all kinds of situations,

*"Lord, if you were me right now how would you handle this situation...how do you see it? Give me eyes to see this situation as you see it, and by your Spirit will you change me to act as you would in this situation."*

### **--] End of "Jesus as Master"**

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### --> J - "Joy"

*"Outward acts are necessary to support inward tempers. Outward acts of **JOY** support is necessary to raise and support the inward joy of the mind. We are neither all soul or all body...we must not only meditate and exercise our souls, we must practice and exercise our bodies."* William Law

~ ~ ~

If you think of what Jesus talks about, you think Jesus must be crazy. *"Don't worry. Look at the birds. How many birds are you worth?" "Look at the flowers."*

What's He thinking about? All of that is said with this understanding, "God is absolutely sufficient. God is enough. If you have God, everything else takes care of itself."

That's where we have to stand as we do our ministry and carry out our work and deal with the difficulties that come day by day. If we understand that, we will know God is the only and sufficient foundation of **JOY**. Once you know there is God, that's enough.

*"The Lord being my portion."* The Lord is what I have. If we have that fixed in our mind, we have an unceasing fountain of **JOY**. We bring that in the form of Christ. We learn not only that God is, we learn what God is like. We learn of His extreme goodness.

Think about that. It takes some getting used to. The idea that if I have God, nothing else matters. I can be **JOYFUL** no matter what happens to me if I have God.

Willard, "Streams in the Desert"

~ ~ ~

Prayer - *"Help me God to be truthful, genuine, to recognize where I need to bring the reality of your Kingdom to bear on the life of another person. Help me to know when I need to send to someone by my prayer the **JOY** you have given me into their heart."*

Willard, "Healing the Heart"

~ ~ ~

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

The nail we need to hit the hardest - Circumstances do not determine **JOY**, peace, happiness & contentment.

Willard, "Healing the Heart"

~ ~ ~

The surrendered will turns all dimensions of the person to love of God and love what God loves.

"Bless those who curse you" is the easy way.

You have to have stabilized your mind and God and the feelings that govern your life must go with love, **JOY**, peace, faith, hope and so on.

That's the heart of the teaching - We just do the things that Jesus said - loving God and our neighbor. It isn't an outward thing, it's an inward thing. We can do it by the grace of God if we go by the inward route. We can't even do it by the grace of God if we do it by the outward route.

That's what Jesus is talking about when He says, "You have to go beyond the righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees." (Matthew 5:20)

Willard, "Healing the Heart"

~ ~ ~

**"JOY** defined: A pervasive sense of well being." Dallas Willard

~ ~ ~

"He actually knows how to enable people to be good...a heartfelt love toward all...not acts and projects, but a pervasive condition of vision, **JOY** and love in which we habitually reside...the same quality of God's love...perfect as our Father in the heavens is perfect." Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 129-130

~ ~ ~

**"JOY** is our portion in His fellowship. Joy goes with confidence and creativity. It is His joy, and that is not a small joy or a repressed joy. it is a robust joy, with now small element of outright hilarity. For nothing less than joy can sustain us in the Kingdom rightness." Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 290

~ ~ ~

## **Topics**

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Abiding in God's love provides the unshakable source of **JOY**, which in turn the source of peace. All is based on the reality of God's grace and goodness. Faith, hope, love, **JOY**, and peace – the 'magnificent five' – are inseparable from one another and reciprocally support each other. Willard, *The Great Omission*, p. 129

~ ~ ~

"Rejoice in the Lord - that's where you find the basis for **JOY** - in the Lord. Our part is to turn back to keep Christ as fully present as we can and thank God His grace to help us where we can't. We don't have a thing to worry about. Everything is taken care of." Willard interviewed by John Ortberg, "Christ the Center" conference, 2013

**--] End of "Joy"**

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### --> L - "Law"

#### ~ ~ ~ "Obedience is the organ of knowledge in the spiritual life."

The way we come to know God and His kingdom is by obeying. Obeying turns out to be a pilgrimage. It's a trip. We find that out when we start out to obey God from where we are we find out we can not do it. Then we are drawn on and we find out how to do it. We are changed inwardly. The outcome is that we are transformed so that doing the **LAW** and doing the things that Jesus said are simply expressions of who we are.

*"A good tree can not bear bad fruit."* (Matthew 7:18)

~ Dallas Willard, "Streams in the Desert" teaching @ Baylor University

#### ~ ~ ~ "How can I accomplish the good?"

Good - Creating good things. Being a blessing to others. Accomplishing the good. Achieving the aspirations of my heart to account for something that is good. Everyone wants to leave the world a better place than how we found it. Having a desire to create what is good. We can't do that on our own. Self-will as it comes in breaks us up.

Here is the outcome - The deeds of the flesh are evident - Gal. 5:17-21

When we live from self-will, we have to resort to these things in order to succeed in our project of getting what we want. This is the natural outcome of a life that is devoted to getting what I want.

In contrast - Fruit of the Spirit - Galatians 5:22

Why is it called fruit? These only come from the deep character of a person. Love, Joy, Peace...

- Joy - A pervasive sense of well being. It goes with peace.
- Peace is real peace when it hits your body. We have an epidemic of sleeplessness in this country. It's really tied to the lack of peace.

These come from the transformation from the change on the inside. That goes beyond modifying behavior.

- Aristotle - How to have people who are able to do the right thing and be happy. The universal problem.
- OT - Psalms & the **LAW** - a life that can do the things that are right and know the power of God and realize it.

## **Topics**

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- Jesus - The **LAW** and the nature of God. The Psalms. That's a life than can produce people who know the power of God.  
~ Dallas Willard, "Healing the Heart" teaching @ Valley Vineyard

### ~ ~ ~ **"The Kingdom and the LAW"**

The LAW of God is key to harmonizing our souls to what God is doing.

**Psalm 1** - "The One Man"; *"His delight is in the LAW of God"*

**Joshua 1:8** - Saying the LAW of God out of your mouth. Meditate.

**Matthew 6:33** - "...all these things will be added unto you."

**Psalm 23** - "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

**Psalm 19:7** - "The LAW of the Lord is perfect restoring the soul."

The Kingdom of God is God in action. The LAW tells you what God does. When you come to the LAW and absorb yourself it then your actions begin to go with the flow of God's life. That's how the soul is renewed and given new strength. The LAW is precious and tender.

We live in a nation that is antinomian. We hate LAW.

*"The Australians got caught and we were the ones who got away."*

A lot of teaching about grace is antinomian and it's false. The LAW is a grace and it is beautiful and it is wonderful.

**Psalm 119** - The beauty of the LAW. The soul thirsts for the LAW. Psalm 1, *"Delight in the LAW of God."* You delight in something because it is beautiful and good. It's not easy to get good LAWS. Ancient people treasured LAW because it told them how to live well.

\* Socrates - "How could I leave Athens and do that to the LAW that looked after me and cared for me all my 70 years?"

The LAW is a beautiful thing but it's hard to see. Today we confuse the institutions of LAW and the personalities of LAW with the LAW. The LAW is a wonderful thing. Students are drawn to the LAW.

\* Think how many TV programs are about the LAW. Back door acknowledgement of how important LAW is and what a good thing it is.

Old Testament - "Tenderness of the LAW" - Ex. 23:19

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

Deuteronomy 24:21 - Gleaning the harvest. Leave food for others.

\* Ruth gleaning the harvest. Boaz says, "Leave a few handfuls..."

Life is such a grind if you don't have tenderness in it.

LAW is not opposed to grace, it is a grace. Here is how it works. Upon our confidence in Christ and sincere intention, we are able to walk in the ways and reality of the Kingdom of God upheld by grace. It won't happen without our decision to do it. It won't be imposed on us. The Son and the Spirit in our lives make it possible for the requirements of the LAW to be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. You don't live in Romans 7, you live in Romans 8. The broken depths of our soul are reintegrated in a life in union with God. The soul heals. That's how the LAW of the Lord is perfect restoring the soul.

\* Like setting a broken limb. Put it back in position, hold it there, it heals.

You will progressively see people who engage with Christ this way with intention beginning to heal.

**Sanctification is a condition of life where we are established in relationship with Christ.** It is not an experience or some special kind of status. Sanctification is a process. You can be more or less sanctified. There are places where you are not.

\* A cup of coffee getting warm in the microwave can still be cold.

We are living from the reality of the King as we walk with Christ. Healing is in a walk with Christ and the Kingdom of God. As we do that, all the parts of the self are healed and the whole person begins to effortlessly abide in the vine of which we are the branches. One of the deepest teachings - the model of the branch in the vine. The branch rests in the vine. The vine's fruit is in the branches.

Sanctified does not mean we are being weird or proud of our humility. The misunderstanding is that holiness is misery. The worry is we have to give up. They don't understand the heart of sanctification is rootedness in God. That allows you to be anywhere like Christ. He did not have to avoid places. Because He was established in God anywhere, anytime, any-who, you're easy because you are not struggling, you've come to rest. Easy yoke, light burden.

John, "His commands are not burdensome." Because we're transformed.

**Our soul now works because we are not carrying the burden of outcomes because we are not on the throne of life.**

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

You stop trying to please people. Instead you try to do them good. That's love! Don't work for anybody but Jesus. He is the one who is going to pay you anyways. Work for Him. When you do that, you'll do other people so much more good. You have to be established, to be settled, no where you're drawing, to have rest in your soul.

This whole thing is not about not sinning. That's important but as the **LAW** restores our soul and walk with Christ, less and less of our life is a struggle with temptation. You don't even go there. Pride points are but "dung" - a good four letter word we can use in church. Sin is even worse. Sin is seen for what it is. Why would anyone want to do that? Only if their soul is dying and they living on their own trying to run the world. They're flushed with bitter, harmful feelings that make their glands pump like the Colorado River. That's what Paul means about being dead to sin. Is that for you?

There's a point we're not sure we don't want that.

*"Well, what would I be without my temptations? I could do it if I want to.*

*I have not decided not to do it."*

There's a real struggle with identity.

### **Romans 6:13**

I've learned the best way to deal with temptation is to see how stupid that is. We can learn how to be dead and to realize that grace is for life and not just for guilt. When we do that we realize the Christian life is not about not sinning. It's about something much greater than that. It's about living in something that makes sin look like stupid, dung, slop.

**God's intent for us is we should become the kind of person whom He can empower to do what we want. When our souls have been knit together and made whole, that can begin to happen. That is our future in the universe.**

~ Dallas Willard, "Healing the Heart" teaching @ Valley Vineyard

**--] End of "Law"**

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### --> M - Matthew 6

*"Finding the Kingdom of God"*  
Dallas Willard, Christ Church, London

#### **Matthew 6:33**

[3:50]

Seek first the Kingdom and His righteousness. Can't separate the Kingdom from a certain kind of "righteousness". You can't get the Kingdom in and leave the righteousness out. Jesus is teaching more than anything else - seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness and the kind of goodness in it. Let that be the thing you most desire.

Seek it first. Seek it most and everything else you need will be provided. That is said in the context of the whole Sermon on the Mount.

**Romans 14:17** - *"The Kingdom of God is not food & drink but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."*

Why are you fussing so much about what you eat & drink? It is a kind of righteousness, a kind of peace and a kind of joy that can only come in living interactively with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a major part of what is in the Kingdom of God.

#### **Chapter 6 - Two Warnings**

[7:30]

1) Warning about Religious Reputation - Seen by men will be your reward.

When you look to the merely human, the merely natural, that's what Paul calls it the "mind of flesh". If you want to live there, this is one of the great mysteries of God's plan for the Universe, if you want to turn away from God, you can.

One of the things people turn their minds to is what other people think of me. One of the worst problems of religion - performing for the approval of other people.

Jesus talks about giving, praying and fasting to be seen.

Help them set that aside and live before the audience of One.

If we don't do that we will be distracted from our lives as God meant it in His Kingdom.

Think of the time and effort people put into managing how other people see them.

Jesus says, "Lay that down. I'll take care of you. Your reputation is safe with me."

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### 2) Trusting Money - v. 17

[10:00]

You don't have to have \$ to trust it. There's an idea if you just have possessions or money, you can trust them. "Don't lay up for yourselves treasures on Earth." If you lay up your treasures on Earth, your heart will be on Earth and you will not trust where the true treasures are in Heaven.

\* When you go out to preach, don't bring your credit card. Jesus wanted them to live on what they were preaching - the immediate availability of the Kingdom of God. If we put our trust in resources then we will not receive the support of God. If you want to trust me, you can have resources as long as you don't trust them. When you begin to trust them, you step out of the interaction which is the Kingdom of God.

Mt. 6 - Diversions to appear good in case they are considered not good.

Trying to get people to think well of you. Bad trap for religious people who want to be thought good in case they can't be good. He's going to teach us we're not very good after all. Give it up. We can let people think what they think. We stand before God and receive His righteousness for both forgiveness and the removal of the practices that are wrong. He takes that away. He breaks the power of cancelled sin. He sets the prisoner free. Not just for guilt. You come to the point you don't find sin interesting and you find righteousness powerfully interesting. That's the righteousness of the Kingdom of God.

You learn you don't have to trust money but money will be supplied.

**--] End of "Matthew 6"**

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### **--> P - Philippians 4**

Source - Session III - "How to Live Without Hurry and Worry" @ 04:30  
Baylor University, February, 2004

v. 4 - "Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I say rejoice." God is the only foundation of joy. "My peace lies in the greatness of God and nothing else."

v. 6 - "Be anxious for nothing...and the God of peace will keep your heart and mind - set a guard over your heart.

You won't understand how it works like the farmer with the grain growing all by itself. You live with thankfulness and gratitude with God and issues you take up with God. Makes you more confident, bolder. You're not wasting all your energy on worry. You have greater clarity in what you do.

v. 8 - "Whatever is true, honorable, just, pure...worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things."

Paul was blessed with encounters with Jesus Christ that made him so sure of this great stream of living water which is God that he says concentrate on these things in Philippians 4. God is bursting with goodness and that's why He created the world. We can contribute to the goodness of the world. We are set free to do that.

v. 9 - "The things you have learned, and heard and seen in me"

I have to be able to say that. I can't just talk about it. That means I have to be realistic and except grace because there are things in me that have not been lined up with what we're talking about. I have to be able to say my confidence is still in God and in what little I can, I want to point you to Him through me. I have to find a way to do what Paul said.

v. 20 - "Not that I speak from want..." Psalm 23

"I have learned to be content..." He had found the great fountain of sufficiency in God through Jesus Christ.

"I have learned the secret of abundance..."

"Wear the world like a loose robe that touches you at few places and there lightly." St. Francis

v. 13 - "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

In order to enter into that, we have to be responsible how we direct ourselves. Paul had learned to do these things through a process of experience and in large measure an experience that he had chosen.

## ***Topics***

From the Works of Dallas Willard

I must do it by the practices I have chosen for myself. You do not become a disciple, a person who is content no matter what happens, unless you have chose on how to live your life. That's one of the biggest problems for us today. The teaching of grace we have has made us passive. Grace is treated as something that comes upon you like lightning not something you make a point of cultivating. Disciplines are about cultivating grace.

**--] End of "Philippians 4"**

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### **--> P - "Prayer"**

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Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*

"The Grandest Prayer of All" (The Lord's Prayer) - Matthew 6:9-13

Although he [Jesus] spent much time alone in prayer, he also spent much time praying in the presence of his students. (p. 253)

We live in a Trinitarian universe, one where infinite energy of a personal nature is the ultimate reality. When we pray, we enter the real world, the substance of the Kingdom, and our bodies and souls begin to function for the first time as they were created to function. Indeed, the transfiguration of Jesus must be regarded as the highest revelation of the nature of matter recorded in human history. (254)

Jesus, the quintessential man, that is, the Son of Man, is the only one who has brought the role of matter to its fullness in his own personality. (254)

### **Our Father, the One in the Heavens**

"God must be addressed." "...failure or inability to place themselves within this configuration and receive it by grace...may be because they actually do not live within the Kingdom configuration." (254)

"Take time to fix our minds on God and orient our world around Him. Our Father always near us...in the heavens." (257)

### **Five Requests in the Lord's Prayer**

1. Hallowed be Thy Name - "Let your name be sanctified." (258)
2. Thy Kingdom Come - "Asking for the kingdom, God's rule, to come, to be in effect." (260) "Culture is where wickedness takes on group form." (260)
3. Give Daily Bread Daily - "Today I have God and He has the provisions." "When we accept and practice Jesus' teaching on prayer, we are entirely freed from concerns about the future." (261)
4. Don't Punish Us for Wrong - "Jesus teaches us to ask for pity. Without it life is hopeless. The gift of pity as an atmosphere in which we can then live." (264-265)
5. Don't Put us to the Test - "A vote of 'no confidence' in our own abilities." (265)

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

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Dallas Willard - The *Divine Conspiracy* Lectures

Harvey Fellows 2007 Summer Institute - Session 12

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rd4\\_PKVVtVY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rd4_PKVVtVY)

**Matthew 6, Luke 11 & 18** - Teachings on Prayer [clock - 1:04:50]

Prayer works by bringing to bear the action of the one who is praying. When you pray, you get involved with it and you stay there. You pour out your energy in prayer. You will begin to see things happen. They won't necessarily be always what you had in mind. If you ask for a stone but you really want bread, probably you'll get bread if you need something to eat. That's where the Kingdom of God takes over and directs the prayer. Jesus' teaching is praying is asking. You get involved and stay there. "*Men ought always to pray and not give up.*"

\* The Widow and the Unjust Judge - The power of asking.

The widow's a nobody and the Judge is one mean guy, but he is a judge. The little lady has no pull on the judge. All she can do is ask. "I'm going to give her the request lest she wears me out in her frequent coming." This somehow applies to God. We stay involved.

\* The Man with the Unexpected Guest - **Luke 11** [1:07:20]

Simply the power of the request. The "shamelessness" of the request. Like a dog begging, no shame whatsoever. The man remains until the man inside gets up and gives him food.

**This is one of the deepest teachings on the nature of the universe and God and prayer is the way that you enter into to it.**

When you do that, you transform everything in the community. No longer a battle of will against will. It's a process of coming to grips to things that are needed and what needs to be said. We put our requests in the context of our overall walk with God. Then our business is His business and His business is our business. We learn to stay in prayer in the community of love.

In asking - I recognize and welcome God's presence. I make my presence known to Him. It's presence of one person to another. When I go to a brother, I just ask. I make myself present to him. The other might not make himself present to you because he is hiding. The pressure is still there. You bring that under God. You wait on God to move. That's the context of change.

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

**That's what prayer is about. Prayer is a way allowing us to count. Prayer is a special arrangement so human beings can be free and significant.**

The basic practical issue - Does God ever do anything in answer to prayer that He did not intend to do in the first place? Does He not do things He intended to do in answer to prayer.

**In the end, it comes down to this - Does your prayer make any difference or is it just mood adjustment like a cocktail hour?**

The real question is - Is the universe the kind of universe in which there is more to be done as a result of our prayers than just what would happen anyway?

### **The Strange Arrangement of Prayer** [1:12:15]

The arrangement allows us to be involved in what God is doing and make a difference. **Giving & Prayer are the two baby steps in learning to act in the Kingdom.** Prayer & giving are the opportunities for the youngest and smallest to make a contribution that God can act with. **Acting with God is the secret of life in the Kingdom of God.**

This arrangement allows one to step right in and begin to work without allowing you to hurt yourself. That's what we do in teaching and growing and every aspect of life with young people. We try to arrange things where they can begin to get involved without being hurt or hurting others and they grow and learn and they become more and more capable.

\* **Luke 21**- Widows 2 mites - Jesus is watching people put in their gifts.

Why does Jesus pull out Widows so often? Widows had the least going for them in human terms. "Blessed are the widows." "*She has put in more than all the others.*" Did she put in more? It was "more" because it was with God.

*"Little is much if God is in it."* Bob Pearce, World Vision founder

That's the insight you need to understand the teaching of Jesus. She did put in more. The total of what came in for the Kingdom of God with her two mites was greater than what came in with all the others.

### **The Lord's Prayer...in Kingdom language** [1:16:00]

"Our Father always near us,  
may your name be treasure and loved,  
may your rule be completed in us—  
may your will be done on earth  
in just the way it is done in heaven.  
Give us today the things we need today,  
and forgive us our sins and impositions on you

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

as we are forgiving all who in any way offend us.  
Please don't put us through trials,  
but deliver us from everything bad.  
Because you are the one in charge,  
and you have all the power,  
and the glory too is all yours—forever—  
which is just the way we want it."

*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 269

"Our Father, who are in Heaven". Most people mean "way off & way later"

Means - "Our Father, always near us." Heavens are always accessible.

"Hallowed" - May your name be treasured and loved.

"Your Kingdom" - May your rule be completed in us.

"Please don't let us walk into trials."

This is a child's prayer. Ask not to be put through trials.

"Amen" means, "That's just the way we want it." "Let it be that way."

Might want to say "Whoopee!"

**Summary** - Prayer opens up the Kingdom and makes it possible for us to be present to others and present to God in a way that creates a wonderful community of love and non condemnation. That's how we can live together under God in the Kingdom of God. That's what Jesus is talking about. [ End 1:19:15]

~ ~ ~

How do we act with the power in the Kingdom? **Prayer** and Giving are the two baby steps in learning Kingdom life. We ought always to be undertaking things we can not do. We are meant to live in the Kingdom of God under the direction of God. Counting on God to do big things.

Dallas Willard - "The Divine Conspiracy" Lectures

Harvey Fellows 2007 Summer Institute - Session 6 @ 25:00 +/-

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### **Discipleship & Disciplines**

Discipleship Confused with Church Involvement - These don't come to transformation into Christlikeness to be what it's supposed to be and do what the church is supposed to do = people progressing to the place where they routinely & easily do what Christ taught us.

Dallas Willard - "The Divine Conspiracy" Lectures

Harvey Fellows 2007 Summer Institute - Session 5 @ 21:50

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

Churches have to organize program of spiritual growth around the disciplines. You can not get growth and Christlikeness out of church as usual. There isn't enough there. A couple of hours in church, some giving, isn't enough. You have to plan for more. Making available more intensive experiences.

Dallas Willard - "The Divine Conspiracy" Lectures  
Harvey Fellows 2007 Summer Institute - Session 8 @ 26:00 +

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People don't see that **prayer** - real, two-way conversation with God - makes any difference. If you interpret the conversation simply as God telling you what to do, you don't see the importance of talking with and hearing God. But **prayer** is an honest exchange between people who are doing things together.

Learning how to hear God is to be sought only as a part of a certain kind of life a life of loving fellowship with the King and his other subjects within the Kingdom of the Heavens. We must never forget that God's speaking to us is intended to develop into an intelligent, freely cooperative relationship between mature people who love each other with the richness of genuine agape love. We must make it our primary goal not just you hearing the voice of God, but to be mature people in a loving relationship with Him.

Dallas Willard, *Hearing God*, Willard, p. 39

~ ~ ~

The kind of with-God life into which we should expect to grow - a life in which one hears from God amid frequent times of conversational **prayer**. (p. 147)

Dallas Willard, *Hearing God*, p.146

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The worldly wisdom will begin to role of what you might do to to prove your very smart. Then you have to say, "My being smart is not the issue here." For many people it is. It becomes an ego thing. Many people are permanently stopped int their **prayer** life. They **pray** and God answers and they say, "Maybe that was a coincidence..." God normally doesn't speak in an overwhelming voice. You don't know God's voice. You have to learn it. You think, "Maybe it's just my thought." And then you won't obey.

Dallas Willard, "Healing the Heart" Session II "The Thought Life"  
[right before 37:20]

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## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

**Prayer** - A power sharing device for a world of recovering sinners.

Prayer is a way of taking on eternal life - eternal living now.

When we pray, participate in eternity, we become more hopeful, content.

Dallas Willard, "Emotional & Spiritual Maturity" (6/27/12)

Session IV - "Spiritual Disciplines"

~ ~ ~

"Bible study, **prayer**, and church attendance, among the most commonly prescribed activities in Christian circles, generally have little effect for soul transformation, as is obvious to any observer... Their failure to bring about the change is precisely because the body and soul are so exhausted, fragmented, and conflicted that the prescribed activities cannot be appropriately engaged in and by and large degenerate into legalistic and ineffectual rituals. Lengthy solitude and silence, including rest, can make them very powerful."

Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission*, p. 153-154

~ ~ ~

J.P. Moreland remembers when an undergraduate philosophy major said to him, "Do you think Jesus can walk up to you?" Moreland, continued, "So I asked [the student], what do you mean by that? and he said that he came from Dallas Willard's office and 'he told me about Jesus', and he said, "'Now when you **pray**, Jesus will walk right up to you and he will listen to you'."

"I met that student twenty years later at philosophy conference," Moreland said, "and he was still talking to Jesus. Now who talks like that, 'Jesus can walk up to you?'" It is a person that truly believes that invisible things like the Trinity and the Kingdom are actually real."

As Dallas would later say, "There is a great difference between speaking with someone who's present and speaking with someone who's not there. There's a great difference, isn't there? And I remember that for many of my years when I was a young person growing up I would pray, but it was like talking to a person who wasn't there. You know that experience. And then I went through a series of experiences with **prayer**, incidentally involving the **Lord's Prayer** and working with the Lord's Prayer, and since that time I've never had the experience of speaking to God as if He wasn't there."

*On Becoming Dallas Willard*, Gary Moon, p. 131-132

--] End of "Prayer"

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### **--> R - "Rest"**

"Relentlessly eliminate hurry from your life. You can move fast without being in a hurry. You work hard from a restful position. You stop hurry when you lay down control over outcomes. You put it back in God's hands and that allows you to step free to have a life."

Dallas Willard

"Streams in the Desert" [After 33:00, Session 3]

~ ~ ~

*"Just say, "I don't perform. I stand before God. He is an audience of One. That's where I live." Out of that you can not perform, you minister the Kingdom of God. The presence of God in your life comes out to everyone around you. Peace, rest, relaxation everywhere because of that."*

Dallas Willard

"Kingdom of God & Grace"

### **--] End of "Rest"**

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### --> S - "School of Jesus"

As we live in the **school of Jesus**, we can progressively come to the point where we know the goodness of rightness under God and we are prepared to sign off on the goodness of doing the thing that is right.

Dallas Willard, "Streams in the Desert", Baylor University, 2004

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Eternal life is the Kingdom walk. We learn to walk this way through apprenticeship to Jesus. His **school** is always in session.

Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission*, XIV

~ ~ ~

The organized churches must become **schools** of spiritual discipline where Christians are taught how to own without treasuring. (Matthew 6:21)

Dallas Willard, *Spirit of the Disciplines*, 213-214

~ ~ ~

The local assembly, for its part, can then become an **academy** where people throng from the surrounding community to learn how to live. It will be a school of life (for a disciple is but a pupil, a student) where all aspects of that life seen in the New Testament records are practiced and mastered under those who have themselves mastered them through practice.

Dallas Willard, *Spirit of the Disciplines*, p. 247

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If we want to understand the richness of life in the kingdom of God, the path is to accept Jesus as our constant teacher and do the things that will enable us with Him to learn how to do them.

"*Bless those who curse you. Loving your enemies.*" You can do that but you have to learn. We do that by entering the **school of Jesus** in our whole life and He as our master and we are his apprentices.

"Apprentice of Jesus Our Teacher" Wheaton, 2001 [24:35]

~ ~ ~

Our churches can be **schools of obedience** to train people in obedience to Christ. They don't exist to perpetuate themselves. They exist to bless the world through discipleship that reaches out to every area of life so that in every area of life the kingdom of God is implemented by disciples who are reigning in that area. "*They are reigning in life through one Christ Jesus.*" Romans 5:17

"Spiritual Formation: Obedience" Bethel, 2008 [1:13:00]

### --] End of "School of Jesus"

## Topics

From the Works of Dallas Willard

### --> S - "Spiritual Formation"

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#### **Spiritual Formation**

"Spiritual formation for the Christian is a spiritual driven process of forming the inner world of the human self - our spiritual or invisible aspect of human life- inserting way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself.

We will simply "walk the walk" as we say. (12)

"Spiritual formation in Christ is the process through which disciples or apprentices of Jesus take on the qualities or characteristics of Christ himself, in every essential dimension of human personality. (55)

"We will take Christian spiritual formation to be the process through which the individual increasingly comes to resemble Christ in all of the essential dimensions of the self presented in the diagrams. [In Renovation of the Heart.] (86)

"The process of reshaping or redeveloping it's it has, to a substantial degree, the character of the inner dimension of Jesus himself. Of course this is a process to which the agency of the Holy Spirit is indispensable, along with other instrumentalities of God and his kingdom. One can think of the process of formation of the human spirit as well as formation by the divine Spirit, indeed it is both." (303)

—> Source - *Renewing the Christian Mind*

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**Spiritual Formation - [Parenting]** The process of shaping the individual so they love God with all their heart, soul, mind & strength and love their neighbor as themselves.

Source: "*Spiritual Formation & Theology*" - Westmont

~ ~ ~

**Spiritual transformation** is the process of moving from the conformity to the world to the conformity to the Kingdom of God. Should always be called transformation. The problem is not formation. Everyone gets one. it's like education. the problem is the one we got. The difficulty is to move from that to the Kingdom of God.

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

Christian **Spiritual Formation** in Christ is the process through which inner and outer dimensions of human personality take on the character of Jesus Christ himself.

*"Transformed by the Renewal of the Mind"*, Trinity (Part 2)

~

If we are going to be transformed into Christlikeness and out of conformity to the world, it will be because we have done certain things. **Spiritual formation** is not passive. It does not happen to people.

Christian **spiritual transformation** is the process that happens to people in the status of disciple.

*"Transformed by the Renewal of the Mind"*, Trinity (Part 3)

~ ~ ~

**Spiritual formation** in Christ as portrayed in the Bible is not behavior modification although modification of behavior will be an outcome. **Spiritual formation** is the process of reshaping the inner side until it has the character of the inner dimensions of Jesus Himself - the Mind of Christ, the heart of Christ, having Christ's peace, having Christ's Joy.

~

A view which takes salvation the same thing as justification, forgiveness of sins and assurance of Heaven based upon it, can not come to see **spiritual formation** as a natural part of salvation.

—> Source - *"Transformation & Salvation"* - Wheaton

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

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### **—> Source: *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice***

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Spiritual formation in Christ is an orderly process. (13)

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Spiritual formation for the Christian refers to the Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self becomes like the inner being of Christ himself. Christian spiritual formation is focused entirely on Jesus. Obedience is an essential outcome of Christian spiritual formation. (15)

~

Christlikeness in the inner being is not a human attainment. It is, finally, a gift of grace. Spiritual formation is the way of rest for the weary and overloaded, of the easy yolk and light burden, of cleaning inside of the cup and dish, of the good tree that cannot bear bad fruit. (18-19)

The primary learning in spiritual formation is not about how to act, just as the primary wrongness or problem in human life is not what we do. Profound transformation there is the only thing that can definitively conquer outward evil. (21)

Taking love itself – God’s kind of love– into the depths of our being through the way of spiritual formation will by contrast, enable us to act lovingly to an extent that will be surprising even to us at first. (21-22)

Spiritual formation is the way of those learning as disciples or apprentices of Jesus to “do all things I’ve commanded you” within the context of “I have been given say over everything in heaven and earth” and “Look, I’m with you every minute’. Matthew 28:18,20 (22)

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The human heart is the executive center of the human life. (24)

The ideal is for the whole person to do only what the heart directs.

Spiritual formation in Christ is the process leading to that ideal and its result is the love of God with all of the heart, soul, mind, and strength and love of neighbor as oneself. (25)

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The path of spiritual formation lies through the illumination that we have ruined souls. (35)

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

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Christian spiritual formation rests on this indispensable foundation of death to self and cannot proceed except in so far as that foundation is being firmly laid and sustained. (46)

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The single most important thing in our mind is our idea of God and the images associated with it. (71)

The process of spiritual formation in Christ is one of progressively replacing those destructive images and ideas with the images and ideas that filled the mind of Jesus himself. (72)

~

After God has implanted new life from above in us by Word and Spirit, we must take the initiative in progressively retaking the whole of our thought life for God's kingdom. Spiritual formation requires thinking. (74)

~

What does a will or heart look like that has been transformed into Christlikeness? It is characterized by single-minded joyous devotion to God and His will, to what God wants for us, and to service to Him and to others because of Him. This outcome of Christian spiritual formation becomes our character it governs the responses of every dimension of our being. (99-100)

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Spiritual formation, good or bad, is always profoundly social. Relationships must be transformed if we are to be transformed. Jesus gave a sure mark of the outcome of spiritual formation: We become people who love one another. (John 13:35) (122)

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Those spiritually formed in Christ likeness find the natural condition of life to be one of reciprocal relatedness in others. Stable, healthy living requires the assurance of others being for us. If this assurance of others being for us is not there, we are but walking wounded. Our lives will be more or less in shambles until we die. Dealing with the spiritual formation of our social dimension begins with this *woundedness*. (124)

~

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

If spiritual formation in Christ is to succeed, the power of assault and withdrawal must be broken so they are eliminated as *indwelling realities* or as *postures* we take toward others.

Spiritual formation in Christ will mean becoming persons who would not and therefore do not assault others. (127)

~

Efforts at spiritual formation in Christlikeness must reverse the process of distancing the soul from God and bring it back into union with Him. *The law of God can help us do that.* (148)

~

"Children of the light" will be empowered by God in eternity to do what they want, as free creative agents. Spiritual formation in Christlikeness during our lives here on Earth is a constant movement towards this eternal appointment. (151)

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When found to be wrong, they will never defend it. They're thankful to be found out. When accused of being in the wrong when they are not, they will not defend themselves but will say only as much as is required to prevent misunderstanding of the good. The meaning of being justified by grace alone has penetrated to every part of their being.

This is the outcome of spiritual formation in Christlikeness. (154)

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Churches that caused children of light to emerge and mature have turned their efforts under God toward making spiritual formation in Christlikeness their primary goal. (162)

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The way to get as many people into heaven as you can is to get heaven into his many people as you can – That is to follow the path of genuine spiritual formation or full throttle discipleship to Jesus Christ. (165)

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"*God's Plan for Spiritual Formation*" (167-168)

- 1.) Making disciples – apprentices of Jesus
- 2.) Immersing the apprentices at all levels of growth in the Trinitarian presence. This is the single major component of the prospering of the local congregations: the healing and teaching God in their midst.

## **Topics**

From the Works of Dallas Willard

3.) Transforming disciples inwardly in such a way that doing the words and deeds of Christ is not the focus but is the natural outcome or side effect.

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The process of spiritual formation in Christlikeness is a process through which all the dimensions of our lives are transformed as they increasingly take on the character of our Teacher. (171)

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All of the other details of church activities will matter little, one way or the other, so long as all are organized around God's plan for spiritual formation in the local congregation. (174)

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Spiritual formation in Christlikeness is the sure outcome of well directed activities that are under the spiritual supervision of Christ and are sustained by all of the instrumentalities of His grace. (177)

***--] End of "Spiritual Formation"***