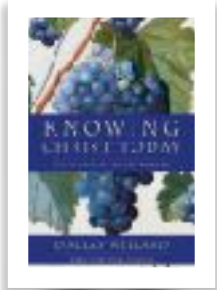


Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide



“Knowing Christ Today” Course Study Guide



“For it is the God who said, ‘Light will shine out of darkness,’ who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

II Corinthians 4:6

The central question facing the church today—Is the Gospel true?— is addressed by Dallas Willard's impassioned argument that Christian spiritual ideals are a reliable source of wisdom that should be granted the same authority as science or philosophy. He shows how faith and reason are complementary even with the challenge of other faiths. This 8-session course based on Dallas' book “*Knowing Christ Today*” will explore:

- Can Faith Ever Be Knowledge?
- Exactly How We Perish for Lack of Knowledge
- How Moral Knowledge Disappeared
- Can We Know That God Exists?
- The Miraculous and Christ's Presence in Our World
- Knowledge of Christ in the Spiritual Life
- Knowledge of Christ and Christian Pluralism
- Pastors as Teachers of the Nations

The 8-session course offers wise application, winsome affirmation and weekly accountability to envision and experience intentional, Christlikeness naturally developing from a biblical, accurate and true understanding of life that is really life in Jesus Christ.

Each session presents key themes through interactive teaching, open Q&A, and practical application engaging a global community of friends of Jesus. A study guide and additional resources are provided for further personal transformation and group study.

This free course, the 21st offered by [Jesus College](#), 18th in partnership with [Dallas Willard Ministries](#), engaging over 2200 participants in 52 countries, is offered without cost thanks to our generous supporters of these ministries

~ ~ ~

[Jesus College](#) — “*Be a student of the greatest teacher in history!*”

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

STUDY GUIDE TABLE of CONTENTS

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Miss or re-watch a session? — The sessions and presentation slides (PDF) are recorded and posted in the [Jesus College Library](#) in case you miss a session, you want to study further, or lead others through the material.

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

Your "V-I-M"¹ Participation

We are confident by God's grace through His Spirit you will find *Knowing Christ Today* as excellent, insightful teachings of Dallas Willard through the integration of knowledge in relationship to life and Christian faith.

We encourage you to make your experience more than just a free webinar added to your Christian study routine. Place it as an intentional discipline for spiritual growth. Ideally, invite a partner, a spiritual growth "spotter", to journey with you to better learn, apply, and grow in Christlikeness as a launch pad from the sessions.

Here are a few suggestions on how to make the most of this course.

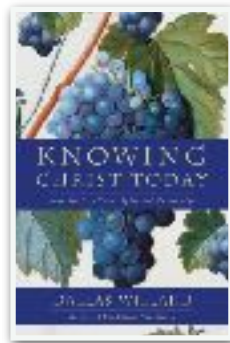
- 1) READ each chapter slow enough to capture the depth of insights. See the course schedule (next page) for the chapter discussed each week.
- 2) REVIEW each session's outline and scriptures adding your own notes to contribute to each session.
- 3) SHARE - Offer questions and comments that stood out in your personal study with Jesus and Dallas in the Word. Enter them in the Q&A tool on the bottom of the Zoom screen during the session. Linger longer for the post "Q&C" time.
- 4) PRACTICE - Answer the V-I-M questions and put into action the "Means" - the spiritual action question in each week's guide.
- 5) RETREAT - As part of your practice, invest one hour solo weekly with Jesus discussing your key discovery from the week.
- 6) REFLECT - At the end of the course, type or write a 300 word summary or journal entry recognizing the impact of the study and the vision of how it can, by God's grace, form your spiritual growth in Christlikeness.

1 - V-I-M = *Vision-Intention-Means* — Dallas calls this the reliable pattern for spiritual change, really any change. As you envision a life of hearing God and truly intend to want to hear God, you will seek and find the means to practice a life of hearing God. For expansion on V-I-M, see *Renovation of the Heart*, chapter 5 ([Webinar on the book](#).) Another rich resource on V-I-M is in the [Life With God Bible](#) Introduction, xxv-xxxvi]

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

2023 COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Book Chapter	Suggested Video*
6/15/23	1 - Can Faith Ever Be Knowledge? "Church & State"	#1 Part 1 [0:00 - 32:00] #3 @ 27:00-31:30
6/22/23	2 - How We Perish for Lack of Knowledge	#1 Part 2 [32:00-50:59]
6/29/23	3 - How Moral Knowledge Disappeared** with Dr. Aaron Preston, PhD., Co-editor, <i>Disappearance of Moral Knowledge</i> by Dallas Willard	#3 [01:50-43:43]
7/6/23	4 - Can We Know That God Exists?	#2 Knowledge of God Today
7/13/23	5 - The Miraculous and Christ's Presence with special guest Nick Vasiliades	
7/20/23	6 - Knowledge of Christ in the Spiritual Life	#7 Life & Spiritual Life
7/27/23	7 - Knowledge of Christ - Christian Pluralism	
8/3/23	8 - Pastors as Teachers of the Nations	#8 The Mission [0:00-49:00]



More Related Resources:

* - [Dallas Willard, "Knowledge of Christ in Today's World" \(2003\) - \(8\) videos](#)
(page 6 for series directory and video links. Outlines & transcripts p. 15-134)

Dallas Willard, ["Are Reason and Spirituality Compatible?"](#) April 11, 2012

[Dallas Willard Ministries - "Knowing Christ Today" resources](#)

** - ["Disappearance of Moral Knowledge" by Dallas Willard](#)

Knowing Christ Today book reviews

["More Than Deep Feelings" Christianity Today, W. Jay Wood, June 9, 2009](#)

[Apologetics 315, December 31, 2011](#)

[Brandon Vogt](#)

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

COURSE SESSION OUTLINES DIRECTORY

<u>Session</u>	<u>Topic (book pages)</u>	<u>Study Guide Page</u>
1	Chapter 1 - Can Faith Ever Be Knowledge? (13-36)	7
2	Chapter 2 - How We Perish for Lack of Knowledge (37-63)	8
3	Chapter 3 - How Moral Knowledge Disappeared (65-94)	9
4	Chapter 4 - Can We Know That God Exists? (95-116)	10
5	Chapter 5 - The Miraculous & Christ's Presence (117-138)	11
6	Chapter 6 - Knowledge of Christ in the Spiritual Life (139-167)	12
7	Chapter 7 - Knowledge of Christ & Christian Pluralism (169-191)	13
8	Chapter 8 - Pastors as Teachers of the Nations (193-212)	14

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

["Knowledge of Christ in Today's World" Teaching by Dallas Willard](#)

[Notes Link - 9 pages \(pdf\)**](#)

This 8-part series, presented by Dallas Willard on June 26-27, 2003, became the foundation for the book "Knowing Christ Today." At the time, Dallas had begun writing an academic book called "The Disappearance of Moral Knowledge," and he saw this series as a way to help the church community understand the reasons for his concern about the loss of moral knowledge in our culture. He concludes the teaching by pointing out the important role pastors and the Church play in redeeming this situation. Dallas said he hoped that one outcome of this teaching is that when we see the phrase "knowledge of God," we will understand it as "interactive relationship with God."

Each session provides Dallas' original outline handout and full transcript.

<u>Session</u>	<u>Topic (with link)</u>	<u>[Length]</u>	<u>Study Guide Page</u>
1:	<u>"How People Perish for Lack of Knowledge"</u>	[51:00]	
	Outline		15
	Transcript		16
2:	<u>"Knowledge of God Today - How it is Possible"</u>	[52:06]	
	Outline		29
	Transcript		30
3:	<u>"Understanding Opposition to Knowledge of Christ in Today's World"</u>	[55:08]	
	Outline		43
	Transcript		44
4:	<u>"The Bible as Indispensable Source of Knowledge: The Best Knowledge on the Most Important Topics On Earth"</u>	[48:48]	
	Outline		59
	Transcript		60
5:	<u>"Reason in Human Life and Religion; The Redemption of Reason"</u>	[51:45]	
	Outline		73
	Transcript		74
6:	<u>"Moral Goodness and the Degradation of Morality by Desire & Human Supremacy"</u>	[1:01:08]	
	Outline		89
	Transcript		90
7:	<u>"Life & Spiritual Life: The Spiritual & Non-Spiritual Person"</u>	[53:03]	
	Outline		105
	Transcript		106
8:	<u>"The Mission of Christ's People on Earth and Beyond"</u>	[41:08]	
	Outline		120
	Transcript		121

** — The 1 page outline for each session does not always correspond to Dallas' teaching.

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

SESSION 1 OUTLINE – Chapter 1 - “Can Faith Ever Be Knowledge?” (p. 13-36)

For many, the teachings of religion are not possible subjects of knowledge. (14)
The disparity between what Christians profess and how they behave. (15)

Knowledge, Belief, Profession & Commitment

Knowledge (def.) “We have knowledge of something when we are representing it (thinking about it, speaking of it, treating it) as it actually is, on an appropriate basis of thought and experience.” (15) (and 60, 71, 108)

Knowledge involves truth – accuracy of representation. (15)

Belief – A matter of tendencies, a readiness to act involving the will. (16)

Commitment – Choosing and implementing a course of action. (16)

Profession – Greater distance from knowledge even if professing belief. (17)

Why Knowledge Matters

Knowledge, but not belief or commitment, confers on its possessors an authority or right – even a responsibility – to act, to direct action, to establish and supervise policy, and to teach. (17)

This is because knowledge involves truth secured by experience, method, and evidence. (18)

“Belief” and “Knowledge” are different things with different roles in life. (18)

Knowledge makes true belief more effectual, accessible and shareable. (19)

Religion Based on Knowledge – “*What is real and what is right*”

Knowledge of God - Abraham, Moses, David - acting with faith not a blind leap
John 17:3, “Eternal life as a knowledge of God and Jesus” with Paul & Peter

The Struggle for the Western Mind

Christians – Faith Without Knowledge - Gospel of the Left & Right (23-25)

Tolerance & Knowledge

If you know, you are certain and perceived intolerant. Do we deny knowledge?
Genuine tolerance is based on what is real & right. (29)

The Politics of Knowledge - *Separation of Church (faith) & State (knowledge)*

“Special knowledge” is political power to lead. (29) Joseph & Daniel

Knowledge Alone is Never Sufficient for Human Life (33) I Cor. 8:1-3

Personal Meditation – I Corinthians 8:1-3

Application for Knowing Christ in Your Next 10,000 Minutes → **V-I-M**

Vision – What do I see lost in my world when faith is removed from knowledge?

Intention – Do I have knowledge of the things I have faith in or profess?

Means – With whom will I talk this week about faith, knowledge, tolerance?

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

SESSION 2 OUTLINE — Chapter 2 - “How We Perish for Lack of Knowledge” (p. 37-63)

How the lack of the indispensable knowledge of Jesus Christ affects our lives.

Knowledge: Secure Access to Reality

Knowledge is treasured for its access to reality. We perish without it. (38-39)

Worldview & Knowledge - “Secured Truth”

Worldview (def.) — “Assumptions about what is real and good.” (43)

Idolatry is a mistake about reality at the “worldview” level. (41)

Knowledge of Christ, or lack thereof, competes for the human soul. (43)

You can not “opt-out” of a worldview. What we “assume” governs. (44)

Life’s Four Most Important Questions

Q1.) What is reality? (45-46)

Q2.) Who has it made? The good life; Blessedness (46-47)

Q3.) Who is truly a good question? — The character question (47-48)

Q4.) How does one become a genuinely good person? (48-50)

Jesus’ Answers to Life’s Four Most Important Questions

A1.) God and His Kingdom (50-51)

A2.) Anyone alive in the Kingdom of God (51-52)

A3.) Anyone pervaded with love (53)

A4.) Put your confidence in Jesus and become His apprentice (53-54)

A Fifth Question - *Which of the answers to the 4 questions are true?*

The Church is Out, Universities are In (56-58)

Knowledge is redefined through specialization by feeling, force, politics, traditions

Looking Back in History, Finding a Way Forward

History — Authority, Reason, Experience. “No science is omni-competent.” (60)

Future — Definition of “knowledge” revisited

First, “Appropriate basis of thought and experience” is open ended.

Second, we do not need to know that we know. Progression is messy. (61)

Three Operational Worldviews — Theistic, Nirvana & Naturalist

Personal Meditation — Hosea 4:6

Application for Knowing Christ in Your Next 10,000 Minutes —> **V-I-M**

Vision — Of whom am I a disciple and how has it shaped my worldview?

Intention — Have I/will I take time to reflect on my answers to life’s big questions?

Means — Study Matthew 4:17-7:29 to find Jesus’ answers to life’s big questions.

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

SESSION 3 OUTLINE — Chapter 3 - "How Moral Knowledge Disappeared" (p. 65-94)

The Disengagement of the Academy & Society from Jesus and His Church

To really know Christ now...try to think of Him as an actual human being.
What kind of person could have brought such teachings and influences. (67)

Being good and being right are no longer what they use to be. (68)
Social and governmental policy decisions can no longer be reached, justified, and sustained on the basis of publicly recognized moral values, and principles or rules. (69)

From Morality to Law - Courts, police, political process, often lawyers (69)
Moral vulgarization proceeds apace without moral shame or opprobrium.
What shall be done is by human desire and will with the power to do so. (70)

The Disappearance of Moral Knowledge (71)

The removal of the recognized values and principles of Christian/traditional moral understanding from the domain of knowledge taught by knowledge institutions.
* Like gaining then losing the knowledge of electricity

Major Causes for the Dismissal of the Moral Teachings of Jesus

- 1.) The church's failure to apply His teachings in the 1700s and 1800s.
- 2.) Failure to find an intellectual basis in knowledge for His teachings.
- 3.) Professionalization of University "research" as the source of knowledge.
Plurality of cultures, not bad, just different. Christianity was a "folkway".
Therefore, none were true as a body of moral knowledge. (76)
- 4.) Psychology and the loss of the human soul - "person" is not scientific.

Three More Forces against Moral Knowledge in the 20th Century

- 1.) Moral standards are social and economic power. (79)
- 2.) Morality is harmful to a full and free life. (80)
- 3.) Knowledge itself is said to be oppressive imposing on "what I want". (81)

Freedom & "Feeling Good" — *Free to feel good for pleasure & sensuality* (82)

Jesus & the Nature of Agape Love — John 13:35, 15:13

"Love wills what is good of what is loved." "Love is everything." (83)
Love your neighbor - "one in effectual contact" (86)
The Golden Rule & The Silver Rule (89) Love can be trusted. (93)

Personal Meditation — John 6:68, "You have words of eternal life."

Application for Knowing Christ in Your Next 10,000 Minutes —> V-I-M

Vision — Where do you see the disappearance of moral knowledge in your world?
Intention — How are my views of what is good & right shaped by desire & feelings?
Means — How will I "love my nearby friend" to reflect the heart of Jesus' morality?

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

SESSION 4 OUTLINE — Chapter 4 - "Can We Know That God Exists?" (p. 95-116)

Knowledge of God is what Christ is primarily about. John 14:9; Col. 1:15 (95)

The Biblical Vision of God (96-98) Creator - Can such a God be known to exist?

Impressions of God's Existence 1.) Creation - Romans 1:19-20 2.) Experience

How do we know? The physical universe began by something not nothing.

Everything arises out of something (101) not physical but "spiritual". (102)

"Causal Closure" - Physical event = physical cause or others will arise.

To propose a self-starting universe avoids responsibility to a living God.

The Nirvana Story - the universe is "spiritual" without a "god".

"Causal Series" - A physical world requires a first event or source. (104-105)

* Falling dominoes without a first domino? A copy without an original?

Logically, at least one self-existent entity radically different for the natural world.

One way to not know what is knowable is to refuse to think matters out. (108)

Those who reject the existence of God have a haunted universe.

Atheists can never again feel at ease. (109)

Knowledge of This "Something More" (110-111)

This "creator" is powerful to initiate but not caused to act with a "will" with "choice", and the "creator" must be able think and choose between alternatives in a very high degree of intellect and order, like making a birthday cake or an airplane.

What about Evolution? (113-114)

It requires an elaborate order or design. It presupposes life.

It is not a cosmic absolute, a self-sufficient, self-explanatory being.

Evolution did not evolve into being. It is an order requiring explanation.

It would count in favor of the existence of God.

Summary (114-115)

There exists a very great nonphysical being that is the source of the universe.

This being has "will" and "intellect". An "intelligent author".

Our argument does not give us the loving Father God Jesus spoke of, but it does give us a magnificent "Creator", not yet personal and loving.

Do not underestimate the importance of what we have gained.

There are real possibilities of knowledge of such a personal presence.

Personal Meditation — Genesis 1:1-27

Application for Knowing Christ in Your Next 10,000 Minutes —> V-I-M

Vision — How has this study opened my vision of the existence of a Creator?

Intention — How seriously will I engage diligent thinking to know God exists?

Means — See Dallas Willard's, *The Allure of Gentleness*, chapter 4, "Faith & Reason"

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

SESSION 5 OUTLINE — Chap. 5 - "The Miraculous & Christ's Presence" (117-138)

Evidence strongly favors Jesus' resurrection and continued presence.

Deism and a Distant God

With a firm basis to know of a non-physical deity, no one has to know it.

"A Mind" - CS Lewis "An Intelligent Author" David Hume

Deism - "God, and no more". Indistinguishable from atheists. (119)

Jesus is a mere human. "Religious studies" in academics today. (121)

Secular Bible & Reality

The approach — the Bible is a historical artifact in strictly human terms. (121)

But is reality truly secular? It can not stand as an unquestioned truth. (123)

God's intervention — Miracles— is ruled out because:

1.) It is foolish 2.) It is beneath God to interact with humans (124)

Miracles — Impossible or Possible?

If natural laws are impossible to interrupt, Christianity cannot be true.

Regularly true but common laws are interrupted with certain conditions. (125)

Laws of nature lie outside physical nature in the non-physical creation source.

That "Being" could modify the conditions of well-known regularities. (126)

- Physical reality is not a causally "closed" system. Miracles could enter.

Testimony & Consequences — Corroboration from community & tradition.

Present facts indicate past realities. (131)

The improbability of an event occurring within natural regularities? (132)

The Biggest Miracle — The Resurrection of Jesus I Corinthians 15:17

Essentials: Jesus interacted in a body and He continues to present time. (133)

Transformation of followers into a force for moral & social regeneration. (134)

Can we know of Jesus' resurrection? Yes, if we simply but do the math. (134)

If it's not just "faith" or irrelevant. Suddenly reality is not longer safely secular.

Personal Meditation — I Corinthians 15:12-17

Application for Knowing Christ in Your Next 10,000 Minutes —> V-I-M

Vision — Where have I seen God intervene in the course of nature?

Intention — Do I give "adequate consideration to the available evidence"? (136)

Means — Like R.A. Torrey, will I ask God alone to supply what I need? (137)

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

SESSION 6 OUTLINE — Ch. 6 - "Knowledge of Christ in Spiritual Life (139-167)

"The Christ Focus" (p. 156, 159) - Practicing humble obedience to Jesus today.

Seeking & Entering the Kingdom of God - Interactively with Jesus today

A way of *knowing Christ today* is now available - "*tangibly present*"

Knowledge by "acquaintance" {Job, Thomas} not just "description" (141)

First hand interaction with Jesus and His Kingdom - John 17:3; Mt. 6:33

Dynamic interaction with Jesus not mere belief and facts about Jesus (143)

Can decent, intelligent people take Christianity seriously? No, unless...

We seek Jesus and His Kingdom - "the light that gives light". (146)

- His teachings disrupt human systems
- His crucifixion and resurrection end human systems
- He is simply here among us.

"Stand what He stood for by inviting Him to take our life into His & walk with Him"

Practical Steps to Kingdom Living — *It's all about Agape Love*

Two Preliminary Steps — Childlike Humility & Intention to Inward Rightness
Two Substantial Elements — Obedience in His Presence where we are Today

Practicing Spiritual Disciplines — Solitude, Silence, Fellowship, Prayer, Giving

What happens? Remarkable Change ~ Hearing God ~ Easy Yoke Life

The Critics Continue

They don't know Christ as a life today. They do not want their to be a God.
Christians often know no more life with Jesus & His Kingdom than atheists.
"We must show the reality they deny..and contest their claim." (165)

Personal Meditation — John 14:15-16

Application for Knowing Christ in Your Next 10,000 Minutes —> **V-I-M**

Vision — How visible is Jesus and His Kingdom to me today, now, here?

Intention — Does "settled intention carried into practice" (152) show in me?

Means — Which of the five disciplines will I practice intentionally this week?

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

SESSION 7 OUTLINE — Chapter 7 - "Knowledge of Christ & Christian Pluralism" (169-191)

Christian Pluralism is the generosity and justice of God revealed in Jesus.

Knowledge without Being Arrogant & Unloving

Knowledge of Truth is exclusive of contrary belief. (170-171)

Pluralism is *not*... "All religious beliefs are true and religions equally true."

Pluralism is... "How we treat those who disagree with us...as neighbors."

Weaker View of Pluralism — No one religion has all truth. Many teach some truth.

Stronger View of Pluralism — All religions come out at the same place.

The Difference in the Present Life and After Life

Lesser - Which religions are better for human beings now.

Greater - Ultimate issues about God and life after death.

For Christians, it is a great difference who we are and become. (176)

The Cosmic Christ as God calls us to Himself by love through grace.

The Right "Circumcision of the Heart" Beyond Religion to God's Love

God's wide mercy through Jesus opens His Kingdom to all with a heart for Him.

Essential Clarifications "Human beings are addicted to monopoly of religion."

1.) Our God of love accepts all who call upon Him.

2.) Jesus, the eternal Word not just Jesus of Nazareth, is the way to the Father.

"*In Jesus Name*" (Acts 4:13) Healing the man in no other mortal name.

His name gives access to the Kingdom of God's power to heal.

3.) Christian Pluralism is *not* the gospel of life in the Kingdom in Jesus.

"The only way to be sure is relying upon Jesus and following Him." (189)

Personal Meditation — John 14:6 - the Cosmic Christ offering union with God

Application for Knowing Christ in Your Next 10,000 Minutes —> V-I-M

Vision — How do I see Christ loving my neighbor who does not know Him?

Intention — What does "circumcision of the heart" mean to me?

Means — What one "neighbor" will I love like Jesus no matter their belief system?

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

SESSION 8 OUTLINE — Ch. 8 - "Pastors as Teachers of the Nations (193-212)

Feeding the Good Shepherd's sheep with knowledge of eternal life in real life.

The Mission of Spokespeople for Christ — *Apprentice Makers* Matthew 28:18-20

The Mission - Teach students by speaking & being to do what the Master taught.

"To know Christ, and in knowing Him, to make knowledge of God and of life in God available to those around them." (195)

"The failure of the American church to do this is very obvious." (197)

The Task — Present Christ's answers to life's four great questions as knowledge of what is real and good. (198)

The Makeup of Spokespeople for Christ

One who has a solid basis of knowledge as calm, clear, courageous. (201)

One who magnifies the office presenting testable and available knowledge. (202)

Not just believe, commit or profess but knowledge to govern lives. (204)

One with fairness, thoroughness & openness to other worldview answers. (205)

Christian Higher Education — Colleges, Universities, Seminaries

Present "Mere Christianity" as a proprietary body of Christian knowledge. (206)

How does what I believe relate to knowledge in my professional fields?

Is Christianity personal preference or knowledge of truth and reality? (208)

Is faith at home in knowledge? Does faith integrate with knowledge?

Work as a Divine Calling — Kingdom Living where we work and live

Routinely and easily doing what Jesus said and did.

Discipleship trains for the sake of the world: "our job is our calling". (210)

"Divine service is not church service, divine service is life." (211)

Personal Meditation — Colossians 3:17, 22-24

Application for Knowing Christ in Your Next 10,000 Minutes —> **V-I-M**

Vision — What do you see at the purpose of "church"? Your local church?

Intention — Do I want knowledge, or merely belief, commitment or profession?

Means — How are you training others to engage God's Kingdom at work at work?

Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

"Knowledge of Christ in Today's World" 8 teachings by Dallas Willard

Session 1: ["How People Perish for Lack of Knowledge"](#) [51:00]

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being my priests. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children." (Hosea 4:6)

"Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end time; many will travel back and forth and knowledge will explode." (Daniel 12:4)

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18)

1. People are destroyed for lack of knowledge because knowledge provides truth about reality, and they must deal with reality. If they do not have knowledge and do not act on the basis of truth, reality will destroy them.
2. What we believe matters because belief governs action. False beliefs damage or destroy our lives.
3. Distinguish belief, truth, knowledge and commitment.
 - Knowledge is capacity to represent things as they are, and on an appropriate basis of thought and experience.
 - Truth: A thought or statement is true provided that what it is about **is** as it is represented in the thought or statement.
 - The 'do's' of Daedalus (Plato's *Meno*): Mere belief is unstable, and behavior goes with it.
4. The 'double minded man is unstable in all his ways.' (James 1:8 & 4:8) Acting on contradictory beliefs; e.g. the reality of God and His Kingdom against the 'cosmos' as the sole reality.
5. **The four great questions of life.**
 1. What is Reality?
 2. Who is well-off? What is Blessedness? The Good Life?
 3. Who is a really good person?
 4. How does one become a really good person?(Compare Kant's questions.)
6. It is these large questions that determine direction or orientation, in other, determine what our life is about.
7. The inevitability of "World View"—Orientation is a biological necessity.
8. The currently dominant 'World View' and our "educational" system:
 - "Naturalism"
 - It is an inherently irrationalist system:
 - ◆ The disappearance of Logic—a word from Screwtape
 - The politics of contempt.
9. The gospel of Jesus in this context. *"Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is now available to you."* (Matt. 4:17)
10. Considering the competition to him on the four questions.
 - "Where shall we go?"



Knowing Christ Today Course Study Guide

TRANSCRIPT — Session 1: ["How People Perish for Lack of Knowledge"](#) [51:00]

Welcome by Rebecca Willard Heatley of [Dallas Willard Ministries](#)

You're listening to "Knowledge of Christ in Today's World", a series of eight talks by philosopher and theologian Dallas Willard. Dallas considered this to be one of the most important topics he taught and placed special interest on this material towards the end of his life.

Session Introduction

We're going to be talking about knowledge, in particular knowledge of Christ in today's world. And that may, for a moment worry you, because you may be used to talking about faith. And in some people's minds, faith and knowledge, are actually opposed to one another. The idea that faith is something you couldn't possibly know. I want to say at the outset, that that is not a scriptural or traditional view of faith. The idea that faith is a wild leap of some sort beyond all conceivable evidence is a reaction from the 19th century to the increasing problem that people were having in reconciling their traditional teaching from the church with what was happening as science, a new form of knowledge emerged.

Knowledge and Faith in the Bible

[02:00]

We're going to be talking a great deal about knowledge. We need to just start out by saying very flatly, that in the scriptures, knowledge is not opposed, our faith is not opposed to knowledge. In fact, faith is a kind of knowledge. It is, but in particular, it is a kind of knowledge with the spiritual and invisible world. Faith is opposed to sight in the Scripture, not to knowledge. And the fact that we have a world in which increasingly knowledge is restricted to sight is one of the primary problems for human beings in our world. Because what it does is it leaves us cut off from the most important things in human life, which are in fact, not visible. Friendship, for example, isn't visible. Love. Knowledge itself is not visible. You can't see it. Belief isn't. Truth isn't. Beauty is not visible in any straightforward sense by the senses. But it involves the senses. Beauty is good made manifest to the senses, but beauty itself goes far beyond the senses. And mathematics. In fact, most of what we know about physics today that's really interesting is not visible. Sub-particle physics is way beyond vision. And in fact, science itself has moved far beyond anything that you could describe as visible.

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Eternal Life as Knowledge — John 17:3

[03:40]

We're going to have to talk about these things at some length, because the real subject that we want to deal with is eternal life. And [\[Dallas writes on the white board\]](#)

Eternal Life = Knowledge

And if you...I see a number of you have your Bibles there. And you might want to just look at **John 17:3**. And, actually, one of the things that I need to talk about in these sessions is how the Bible functions in knowledge. [\[Session 4\]](#) Because if you don't have a theory of knowledge that includes the Bible, then you will see exactly the course of events that we've been looking at for several decades now in America and for a couple of centuries in Europe. And so we're going to be talking about how the Bible functions in knowledge. We have to have an epistemology - to use a big word - an epistemology of the Bible. How does the Bible fit into knowledge? Now when you look at this verse, you're going to see the only description of eternal life that is actually given in the Scriptures. And as you may want to read there, eternal life, Jesus, in this great prayer of his, eternal life is knowledge of God and of Jesus, His Son. It's knowledge of.

Now, you want to understand that when the Bible talks about knowledge, it never is talking about what we call head knowledge. And the distinction between the head and the heart is one of those important distinctions which has actually been badly used to enable us to have a faith, call that cognitive, which doesn't touch our life. And that's important because we have so many people who profess faith, but it doesn't touch their life. And so we like to say that, for example, it's merely cognitive with them. And that seems to help us understand the situation. In fact, it only confuses the situation more.

Knowledge is Interactive Relationship

[06:09]

When the Bible speaks of knowledge, it is referring to interactive relationship.

Knowledge is interactive relationship.

[\[Dallas writes on the white board\]](#) — Interactive Relationship

And I think you can tie on to that pretty fast. Because the things that we know best are always the things that we have an interactive relationship with isn't it? Think of this — The effect of writing something out on your learning is eight times greater than just hearing it... eight times. Now, why is that? Well, it is because writing it out involves your whole body and a set of skills and interactions that affect you eight times more deeply than just reading or hearing something. And if you have been involved in school or education, or much, you know how important it is to write things out. If you're an author or someone who writes a lot, you know how

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important is go through books and write out the main sentences in the passages. It affects you different because it is an interactive relationship.

See, when God says, through the prophet to Israel, *"You only have I known of all the nations that are upon the earth."* [Amos 3:2] He wasn't saying he didn't know about the others was he? He was saying you are the only ones that I have entered into an interactive relationship with of all the people on earth. And that covenant relationship that God was referring to is knowledge.

When Mary said, "How can I have a child since I know not a man," [Luke 1:34] she wasn't saying I don't know about men, she was saying that she had not been in the appropriate interactive relationship with a man and therefore could not have a baby.

So, remember this now okay.

[Dallas points to "Interactive Relationship" on the white board.]

Profession and Belief and Commitment

[08:35]

Now, our culture has come to place a great emphasis on knowledge that is not interactive relationship. And in religion that has taken the form of saying if you believe certain truths about Jesus or about God, that is eternal life. If you believe certain truths. Now, professing to believe the truth is even weaker than actually believing them. And what we have done in our culture is water things down even further. So that we now mistake belief or a profession of belief for belief. And if you are taught that God would like it if you profess to believe that Jesus is alive right now and running the universe, you might say, "Okay, I'll say that." See, because, well, God wants me to. You see, that's very different from actually believing it. Actually believing it. Actually believing it means something about your will. Where your will is.

Like, for example, this gentleman here I can tell, believes in this couch. He trusts it. And you can tell he does by the way, he's sitting there. See that belief touches his will. He's like this, you know, and you know what it's like to sit on a chair you don't trust? Have you ever done that? That's something we identify with can't we? See, that's the way with what we profess in our religion. To even want to believe it, and hope to believe it, and try to believe it and commit yourself to believing it is very different from believing it. So when you believe it, you sink back into it. You rest upon it. You trust it. And so for example, that becomes an interactive relationship. See this gentleman here Rick has an interactive relationship with that sofa. You see that? It's a rewarding one, isn't it? Absolutely. And that's the kind of knowledge we're talking about.

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Knowledge in Our World

[11:30]

Now, knowledge is a big business in our world. And it's a very old theme that the Prophet spoke about what happens when you don't have knowledge. And where most of us, I think, may be familiar with the statement in the prophet Hosea 4:6, "My people perish for lack of knowledge." And we want to just focus on that idea for a moment perishing for lack of knowledge. And we know how it's always happening, right? I mean, lack of knowledge, for example. I mean, some of these things are almost unspeakable. But for example, in a part of in parts of the world, there are men who have AIDS who believe they will be cured of age by having sex with a small child. Now, they really believe that and they act. And then people perish. Constantly, we see people perishing for lack of knowledge in the history of the world and up to the present. If we don't perish, we suffer for lack of knowledge. And so that theme is a very important one. And this is curious, because in our world, there's hardly anything bigger than knowledge. And the prophet Daniel spoke about how in the last days people who will be traveling everywhere and knowledge will explode, literally explode. And that's what's happened, hasn't it? If you think, for almost up to the last up to 1900, the amount of knowledge that was a bit was very small compared to what we have today. We have incredible amounts of knowledge. And so what happens is that human business of knowledge becomes a kind of obstruction to the traditional knowledge that people had of God. And historically, there arises a conflict between the human structure of knowledge and the knowledge that God has provided to people really throughout the world, and through the centuries, but specifically focused in the knowledge that comes in interaction with Jesus Christ.

Knowledge

[14:08]

So now, we have to think about knowledge. And I want to give you a statement about knowledge, and you try it on. And then we talk about truth. And then we will talk about belief. So we can kind of get clear on all of these things. And knowledge is actually a very simple thing. If you know something, then you are able to think about it and talk about it if you want represented as it is. You're able to represent it as it really is.

So last weekend, I had an adventurous time in San Diego with my Buick and some mechanics. And sometimes, you know, now these cars are smarter than the people who work on them. And so I now have a new starter, which I probably didn't need. And we managed to get it back up here and got a different set of mechanics working on it. And now we have some additional new parts. And so that's a case you see the problem with representing things as they are. Go to the doctor. Have someone look at your roof where it's leaking. We all know that there are people with credentials who can't do what their credentials say that they can do. They are

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incapable of representing things as they are, we have doctors who pull the wrong tooth, take out the wrong kidney, and so on. So, we all know what that means. And when that happens, we say they didn't know what they were doing. So that's knowledge.

Knowledge is the ability to represent things as they are on an appropriate basis of thought and experience. So knowledge isn't just guessing, right? Knowledge means you have come to it in a way that allows you to really get a hold of the subject matter. And that's what explains your capacity to represent it right. Now, "Mr. Goodwrench", [\[American auto repair slogan\]](#) has had some training. But, probably not enough. And so sometimes when they diagnose it, it is a case of guessing. And they guessed wrong, and that's not knowledge. And knowledge requires truth.

Truth

[16:45]

So now we want to talk about truth. And some of these things...see, I shouldn't tell you that I have some of these on the sheet there, because otherwise you'd write it down and get the benefit of reading it eight times. So when I hand things out, I often make groups promise to read it eight times.

Truth is a very simple notion. Knowledge requires truth. Because if you don't have truth, then you can't...you're not representing things as they are. You have to have truth. If you're going to have knowledge. And if you don't have truth, you can still have belief. The belief doesn't make things true. That's one of the tragedies of our day is that people confuse truth with belief. And they wind up saying truth is relative, because belief is relative. Something isn't believed unless someone believes it. But things aren't truth because someone "truth-ed" it. Right. Belief and truth are two different things. And so just to be nice, we can say, Well, it's true for you and false for me. That's that's just another way of saying you believe it, and I don't. The truth and belief aren't the same thing. Truth is where what you're thinking about matches up to your thinking. It's where your belief accurately depicts the relationship. The truth is very important. Do you love truth? Think about in a moment. I mean, do you love it? Would you die for it? An interesting question, isn't it? I put this off into my students at SC. [\[University of Southern California\]](#) And usually, they will tentatively say, "Oh, yes, I love truth." But when you say Would you die for it? There's a hesitation.

Truth is extremely important. Not just for the success of our enterprises, but also to prevent evil, nearly every evil you can think of that human beings do would be stopped. If it could not be hidden, or if they didn't think it could be hidden. So that's why there's such a rush to hide evil. And evil only lives in the dark. You go down into your cellar, and you turn the light on and you hear some rats running around trying to find a hiding place. Well, the light didn't create the rats. The rats

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were there before the light came on. And when the light came on, then the rats began to try to hide from the light. That's the nature of light it tries to make things hide unless they're prepared to live in the light. And human beings are constantly troubled by the temptation to set truth aside and if you can suppress the truth or manage the truth, that's what we call spinning. Isn't that high paid People - spin doctors we call them? That's spin doctors are people who know how to let your yes be yes and your no be yes. and people they need that to, to keep things under control. See, it's because we can't control reality that we try to control truth. Right?

My favorite illustration of this is — the little girl who is asked what a lie is in Sunday school and she replies,

"It's an abomination to God, and a very present help in times of trouble."

And truth is very important. Because you see, if I rob you of truth, then I rob you of the ability to deal with reality. And I head you straight for the wall. That's why it's so important for me not to rob you of truth. That's why it's important for me to be transparent. And to live in the open. So when the light comes on, I don't run for cover. I can stand. And what incredible peace there is for the person who has learned how to stand in the grace and live love of God and let things be true. Let God be true, though every man is a liar, as the scripture says. [\[Romans 3:4\]](#)

Belief

[21:30]

Okay, so we've got knowledge and truth. Now belief.

If you believe something, you're ready to act as if it were true.

If you believe something, I didn't put this on the sheet so you have to write it down. Okay. There's not going to be a test.

You believe something if you're ready to act as if it were true.

You see how important it is then for us to try to manage the beliefs of other people, even beyond the truth, because that way we control their action. And that's a big thing on the human agenda. Often, unfortunately, it shouldn't be that way. But it is. So now, if we want to have reliable beliefs, we have to move back towards knowledge. Because knowledge guarantees truth and we can rely on beliefs that are true.

Commitment

[22:39]

Now, one more word and and that's commitment. And we have to talk about these things because there's such confusion about it today. And so here's what commitment is:

When you commit to something, you act as if you believed it.

So we've got another "as" here. As is weaken the connection. You can commit yourself to something which you don't believe. But that means you're going to act as if you believed it. Now, let me tell you one of the greatest tragedies in my life —

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people confuse commitment with belief. They confuse commitment with belief. And so if I am a minister, or a teacher, I might try to get you to commit yourself to something that you didn't believe. Instead of helping you come to a true belief. Now, if I get you to commit yourself to something you don't believe, then you're going to have to come around regularly so I can restart you. If I get you to believe something, you will be a self starter. And that's a huge difference. It's a difference between people trying to do things they think they ought to do but they don't believe in it and people who really do believe in it. And we have consistently confused commitment with belief because commitment is something that I can get you to do if I'm smart enough and clever enough, and can work on your emotions just right, I can get you to commit to something you don't believe in. That commitment will not involve an interactive relationship. Interactive relationships is different. That'll bring genuine belief.

So now, remember Paul's statement in Romans 10, *"If you will confess with your mouth, the Lord Jesus that is that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*

In fact, you'll be off like a rocket. If you believe in your heart, that means you're ready to act as if he were raised from the dead. You're ready to act as if he were now alive, and conducting the affairs of this universe for his father. And looking ahead to a time when you will be with him in the enterprise of governing the universe. Because that's your destiny. I don't know if you had something else planned. Maybe a few million years of solitude on the back porch or something. Or parked in a warehouse somewhere. You're going to be very active with him. That's your future. You see, now listen to these words,

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above where Christ is seated on the right hand of God, set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth, for you are dead." [[Colossians 3:1-2](#)]

Now see, you I believe that "I'm already dead and my life is hid with Christ in God". That is what my life actually amounts to is something that is hidden in the depths of Christ, that is hidden in the depths of God is hidden. We have to talk more about that now in the next session, but you don't know who you are. What your life really amounts to is hidden from you. Whereas it hidden? In Christ and Christ is hidden in God — Eternal life.

See, to have an eternal life means to have a life that is caught up in what God is doing in such a way that it can't be separated from what he is. My life and your life can be, I mean, the one we actually live. I don't mean some ideal that we're not doing. I mean, the things I do day by day, that can be made a part of God's life. That is, it's a part of what he is doing. Not just what you're doing. But so you have to understand, and you have to have knowledge of this reality in order for that to take place. If you don't have knowledge of that reality, very likely, you'll just sort of

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be out there on your own. And you will lead an unstable existence. You remember James says that "a double minded person is unstable in all of their ways" [James 1:8] there depends on what is coming by, and that sets the tone for their whole existence — who's around them, what they're doing, rather than just a stable vision. I am God's person. My life is caught up in His life. And that is a reality which I know by experience as well as by teaching day by day. My life is a part of His life.

Let me tell you something might help you think about this. You know, you have a child and this little child grows up, or you have a mate and you live together for years. And what happens to all of that past life that is gone. It's not gone. It is caught up in the soul of that person. And all of it is preserved. That's how when people think "well, I know my loved ones in Heaven." You will know them, but not because of their bodies. You will know them because you will see who they are. Their whole soul will be present.

Poets try to capture this. "Believe me if all those endearing young charms that I looked on so fondly today, you know that I look on so fondly." You know that song? Bobby Burns. "Believe me if all those endearing young charms that I look on so fondly today were to fade by tomorrow and melt in my arms like the fairy gift fading away." Now what's the rest of it? The poet goes on to talk about how that would all still be there. You see, a human being is meant to be an eternal being in which the whole life is caught up and preserved.

Do you ever wonder how the apostles knew who Moses and Elijah was on the Mount of Transfiguration? See, the real person comes through the body. We use our bodies to hide the real person. "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Our bodies are used to hide the real person. But God intended our bodies to be a revelation of the real person. And once we get out of the idea that we have to manage others through our bodies, and how we appear and how we're strong, and all the crazy stuff that you see, the advertisements on televisions about buttons and abs and things of that sort. I heard the phrase the other day "six pack abs." You know what that is? I'm afraid to think.

But you see, all of this is silly. Because the real person is beyond all of those kinds of considerations. But as fallen human beings, we tend to work in terms of the body instead of working in terms of the soul. And we want to work on others with our bodies, instead of working in terms of who we are in the depths of our soul. And because of that we our action is not stable. We go one way under one circumstance, one way on another.

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The Main Areas of Knowledge - *Life's 4 Big Questions*

[32:05]

Well, now I want you to please think about the main areas of knowledge. And I guess I'd better write them up here. The main areas of knowledge that we're concerned with.

1.) What is reality?

Okay, so everyone is interested in that. All our schools teach something on this. And you can just think about reality if you want to as what you're going to have to deal with. What you're going to have to deal with. Reality is something that is there whether you want it to be or whether you're thinking about it or not. Reality is like that it's very unyielding. You don't have to think about it to be there. You don't have to want it to be there. And sometimes I simply for my students just say reality is what you run into when you're wrong. That's what reality is. Reality is what you have to deal with. So this is a big question. And every one of us when we go out in the world, every day, we make assumptions about that.

2.) Who is well off?

[33:20]

Or to use the biblical term "Blessed". Who is blessed? Who's got it made? We're all interested in that question as well. Other way to put it who has the good life and for example, if you look at your newspaper, you'll see advertisements a series was running a bunch of commercials the good life had a good price. You see those? You believe that? Well, we're in kind of an adult condition and so we invest huge amounts of money and saying silly stuff. Who is well off?

3.) Who is a really good person?

[34:10]

Now people will fight you over this one quicker than they will about number two. If you question someone as to whether or not they have a good the good life, they may be mildly irritated with you but if you call in question whether or not they're really good person, you have a fight on your hands. This one is very serious, biologically serious, Serious for your health. For example, if you are convinced you are not your blood pressure and other aspects of your physical health will change. And you may become depressed or find other ways of turning in on yourself and hurting yourself. Who is a really good person?

4.) How do we become really good persons?

[35:03]

And those are the four things that we have beliefs about that govern our action. And they are the most important questions in life. And, one way or another, we will answer them in action or in thought. And it is important for our beliefs about the

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answers to these questions to be true. For example, is it true that all there is to reality is the physical world? Is it true that all there is to you is your body? Now, depending on what you believe about that, that will determine the course of your life. These other questions are dependent on number one. They're very important, who is really well off or blessed? I mean, if we were to just take two minutes and you were to write down an answer to question two, what would you write out? In the question arises, is that true? And then finally, is there knowledge?

Today's Education — Selling Success not Knowledge

[36:45]

Now, we have a whole system of education now that is devoted to saying that you can't answer that question. So what they do is sell success. If you come to USC, bring your child to USC, and talk to the people there about the course of studies there, which will cost you a considerable amount of money unless you get some good scholarships. The one thing they will promise you is that your child will have a good shot at success. And then the next thing you want to do is to ask them — how do they define success? And then you can have a good discussion. But when they mean success, mutually that means you'll get into a good Post Graduate School and you will get into a good profession. Which means that it's respectable, and you make money. And that's about as far as that goes.

Don't even take this one up with them.

[Dallas points to #3 "Who is a good person?"]

You don't want to hear what they have to say. They will say some good things, but it will be an incoherent mess, it won't tie together to make any sense.

And on this one, [Dallas points to #4 "How do we become really good persons?"]

You will get a lot of different things like, "Well, go to USC..." After that psychoanalysis. And so... No, I'm just kidding. But actually, I'm really not. The one thing I want you to come out of this first session with is a sense of how absolutely fundamental these questions are. Together they constitute...the answers to them constitute what we call a worldview. And your worldview is your orientation in life, whether you know it or not. Because one of the sneaky things about these questions is — you don't have to really know what answer you're operating on to be operating on it. Because it's built into your body.

How many of you coming here this evening we're worried about dinosaurs? Anyone? See, that's part of your worldview. Your worldview does not include dinosaurs. Now, after you saw "Jurassic Park", you might have had a few images, but you didn't really go with that. You see, what governs our action without our thinking about it is the most important part of what our belief system consists in.

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Jesus' Answers to Life's Four Most Important Questions

[39:45]

Now, I want to go over the answers to these questions that Jesus Christ gives. And I want to tell you that these answers constitute knowledge, not just belief, and not just commitment. They're very simple. You already know them. I'm just going to remind you of them.

Jesus' Answer to Question #1 — *What is reality?*

[40:07]

God and His Kingdom. That's reality. God in His Kingdom. Now the kingdom of God is simply where what he wants done is done. That's the Kingdom of God. It's the range of his effective will. That's Jesus's answer to this question. He answers it on the basis of his firsthand experience and knowledge of this reality. And the reason why people concluded that Jesus was God, for all practical purposes, so we won't get into a long discussion about Trinity in this session, was that He could speak to anything and it would obey Him. That's a pretty good reason for believing, isn't it? You see, they saw that. They experienced that. They watched him take a couple of little biscuits and some fish and turn it into a huge banquet with baskets of scraps leftover. How do you do that? Well, you know, energy converts into mass. $[E=MC^2]$ And if you know how to do it, and you have the industry, you can make biscuits and fish. You can make anything you want. You can turn water into wine. I used to have a good friend, a colleague in the chemistry department, he was a he was a ex-Baptist. And so he used to say to me, he said, "you know, Dallas, Jesus couldn't turn that water into wine. If he had done that that would have released so much energy, it would have melted the pots." Well, I didn't want to let the air out of his balloon, so I would never suggested to him that if Jesus could do that to water, he could take care of the pots. He can do that couldn't he?

The Kingdom of God extends to all of nature. Actually, the only thing that is not already in the Kingdom of God are rebellious wills. That'll come up later as we go along. But he allows that. And you know, he's given you a body and me a body. And if I want to use the energy that's in this body to rebel against God, He allows me to do that...for a while. And that's extremely important in the story that we're going to be telling now as we go along. So remember it.

Jesus' Answer to Question #2 - *Who is well off?*

[43:10]

Anyone who's alive in the kingdom of God. Anyone who is alive in the kingdom of God is well off. They are blessed. So Jesus takes a stream of people that everyone says isn't blessed - the poor, those without reputation, those who are mourning, who were in all kinds of trouble, and says, "*Blessed are they for theirs is the kingdom of God*". The blessing is not in the condition. They're not blessed because

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they're poor, or blessed because they're mourning, but blessed because they're in the Kingdom and being in the Kingdom means no matter what else happens, they are blessed. They can rest in that. Their future in God is secure.

Jesus' Answer to Question #3 — *Who's a really good person?* [44:07]

A really good person is anyone who is pervaded with agape love. Agape love, love means the will to good, the will for the benefit of the person love, we say we love chocolate cake, but we don't we want to eat it. And that is not love. That's something else. And we have a real problem in our culture would distinguish between love and desire. In fact, an almost overwhelming problem and love, agape love, wills the good of whatever is loved. And, of course, that was Jesus wasn't it? And the teaching of love, which still permeates Western civilization in its better moments, always understands that and that this is the highest call of moral being is to love and the act out of love. That's the good person.

Jesus Answer to Question #4 — *How do you become a really good person?* [45:15]

And then finally, how do you become a really good person? And the answer to that is very simple — apprentice yourself to Jesus Christ. Apprentice yourself to Jesus Christ, become an apprentice in Kingdom living. Learn how to live in the Kingdom of God as he lived in the kingdom of God. As Jesus's disciple, I'm learning from him, how to lead my life, as he would lead my life if he were I. That's what I'm learning. And as the answer would be true of each of you, you're learning from him to lead your life, as he would lead your life, if he were you. And now, if you ladies have a problem with that, don't worry about it, He could be you. There's not a person in this room He couldn't be.

He came in a lowly form. He led a lowly life. He learned to live in the Kingdom of God as an ordinary human being. He could do it right here on Pelican, whatever, what is this, Pelican Circle? Yes, he could, he could do that. Anywhere. He could live in your circumstances, he could be you. Now, see what I need to learn is how he would do that for me. And I'm coming out of a deep hole because I was raised in a world where that was not what was done. So I had all learned all these tricks like that girl I told you about in Sunday school. I learned to lie and learn to steal and mislead, learned to hurt others, to hate others, to see others suffer and enjoy it in the others. That's what we learned just by coming in to the world - to put ourselves up by putting others down. To rejoice when others fail. To be sad when they succeed better than we do. See, all of that's a part of the deplorable human condition that comes from living outside the reality of the Kingdom of God.

[47:35] Jesus comes into the world and he brings us knowledge of reality that enables us to begin to step into this eternal life that is an interactive relationship

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with him where we are in that interactive relationship. Now remember, I said knowledge is the ability to represent things as they are on an appropriate basis of thought and experience. That interactive relationship is the appropriate basis of thought and experience. So we look at the past, we look at the Bible, we use our reason, we learn everything we can that's useful. But, the focus of our life is now and living in the Kingdom of God now, and learning to do and to act in the power of Jesus Christ. So that as Paul says in Colossians 3:17, "*Whatsoever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father through Him.*" To act in the name of Jesus means that I do it on his behalf, and in His power. I say that again — to act in the name of Jesus means that I'm acting on His behalf and in His strength or power. That's what it means. And so then I'm learning to do everything that I do.

So, last weekend I was learning how to sit with a car that wouldn't run. I said, "Lord, do I deserve this?" I've learned is now, "What am I to learn from this? What is what am I being taught about living in the Kingdom of God?" And, once I start on that approach, then I can begin to learn what I need to know to lead my life as Jesus would lead my life if he were I.

So now, people perish for lack of knowledge especially because they don't know this. [[Dallas points to the White board with the four questions written.](#)]

They don't know the answers to these and when you when you go back into your daily life, tomorrow and as you go on, check these out and you will see that people behave as they do because they are misled about these four questions. You will find that it is true that human life generally is set on a different course and they are perishing for lack of knowledge. Well, thank you for this time around. We'll take up again in a moment.

[End of Session 1 @ 50:40](#)

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SESSION 2: "[Knowledge of God Today - How it is Possible](#)" [52:06]

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident among them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools." (Romans 1:18-22)

See also Acts 14:15-17, 17:22-31; Nehemiah 9:6-10

1. The three stages of theistic evidence:
 - A. Uncaused cause, a self-sufficient being.
 - The impossibility of an infinite sequence of cause of this event.
 - B. It's character as mind:
 - Self-initiation. Not causally determined.
 - "Design" capacity. Our experiential data.
 - The follies of mere "logical possibility"
 - And the anthropic principle.
 - C. "Interventions" - The Covenant-making Creator
 - Psalm 8—"What are human beings that you pay attention to them?"
 - The presence of the kingdom now - Jesus' gospel
 - "Religious experience" not solely a matter of "mystical states"
2. Why God is a hidden God. (Isaiah 45:15; Job 23:9; Jeremiah 29:13; Matt. 6:32)
 - What would life be like if he were not?
 - What would make human history, life on earth, a good thing?
 - A community of morally glorious persons in which God dwells eternally?
 - How to be "safe" in this world.
3. Room to choose. Bertrand Russell and Norwood Hansen.
 - Why "more evidence" would not help.
 - The question is: *What do you want?* What would you prefer to be devoted to?
 - To overwhelm your wants would only yield "a man convinced against his will."
 - Screwtape again.
4. "Hearing God" today. — Seeking and finding.
 - Accepting the evidence because we want it to be so
 - Spirit wants to be wanted.
 - This does not give the evidence validity, but it allows it to "carry weight" with "seekers"



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TRANSCRIPT - SESSION 2: "[Knowledge of God Today - How it is Possible](#)" [52:06]

Welcome by Bill Dwyer of Dallas Willard Ministries

Not Knowing God is a Choice

[00:31]

Alright, in this session we want to concentrate on this thought that [\[Dallas points to this phrase written on the white board\]](#)

Not knowing God is a choice.

That anyone who wants to know God can know God. I am going to really extend that to say that anyone anywhere on earth anytime who wants to know God can know God because God will find them. And this is a very serious point in our contemporary setting because currently, we have a system of education that teaches us that reality omits the spiritual. That reality is not spiritual. That reality is physical. And anything that amounts to spirituality is a spin off of the physical. So the fundamental reality on the teaching that prevails in our culture is the physical world and that would mean things especially such as that you are your body. And one reason why we cannot solve the problems of race and gender and so on is because we have no way of thinking about human beings other than their bodies. Am I saying anything that makes sense to you? You see, because the system of teaching that we have about reality is that the physical is it. So you are your brain or your DNA or something like that. And that's all there is to you.

Speciesism - Humans as Animals

[02:25]

Now, I've enjoyed talking for the last few weeks about the recent discovery that they've now found a chimpanzee that has 99.4% of human DNA. So what does that mean? What is what what is the conclusion that is drawn from that by the people who are supposed to know? The conclusion is you are very much like a chimp. That's the conclusion. Now, if you watch the news, and you know the news is a giant rumor mill that spins off of research that's done usually under the heading of university research. You watch the news you'll see time after time efforts to show that human beings are just animals. And now we have even something called "speciesism". And speciesism is what people who think that human beings are better than animals are guilty of. Don't you feel yourself flushing with embarrassment? Because some of you probably believe that. Let's see you now in a world where there is a serious question about that.

Four or five years ago there was a fire over in Malibu, which is not exactly news, but this was a bad one. And a man went back to his trailer house to get his cat in

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the fire killed him and the cat survived. And, the person who was writing the Op Ed piece on this apologized for any suggestion that the man was of greater value than the cat. See, worldview is seen in that form. That's worldview. Worldview is what creeps up on you and you find yourself, "Oh, well, I I didn't think about that. But that's a problem. Speciesism is a problem." It's a worldview it says human beings.

Reality of Human Self – DNA vs. Experience

[04:53]

Now, to go back to the chimp. Do you think that the people who published this result that the chimp has 99.4 percentage of Mike's DNA here? Do you think those people believe that the chimp has 99.4% of their experience? You think they believe that? They don't believe that. They don't believe if a chimp had 99.4% of the experience of my students, they'd make better grades than my students do. Because my students off often are using a great deal less than 99.4% of their DNA in their studies. So you see, now here's another conclusion. The chimp has 99.4% of Mike's DNA. What's the conclusion? There's an awful lot more to make than DNA. But that is not admissible because of the teaching about reality that is dominant. Because experience is not physical. Experience is a different kind of reality. And we have lost the human self and we have lost human experience, intentionality, will, character. See all these people standing around in the street corners wringing their hands about character when they just lost all their retirement in Enron or something, and they are worried now about the character of the man who was running it. Well, character is a big issue, we should be worried about character. But if we're going to worry about character, we have to recognize that a human being is not a physical being, but a spiritual being, because that's what character amounts to. Character isn't in your brain or your DNA. They're not going to find a DNA particle that they could insert and make people incapable of telling lies. That would certainly stop the traffic wouldn't it? They did that. They're not going to find that because it's not in that category. It's spiritual.

The Spiritual Being of Humans in Grace

[07:45]

And so now, [\[Dallas points to what is written on the white board\]](#)

"Growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" [II Peter 3:18] means to grow and interactive relationship.

That's spiritual reality. So that's where I say, I am not just a physical being, I am a physical being, I'm not just a physical being. And my physical being is to receive spiritual life. My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Well, that means more than just words. That means that in this body, there is a spiritual being, which is me. And I receive a spiritual being, which is the Spirit of God. And that's interactive relationship. That means different kinds of stuff happen. See? [\[Dallas points to what is written on the white board\]](#):

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Grace is God acting in my life to accomplish what I cannot do on my own.

I mentioned transparency and truthfulness. Nobody can do that on their own. Now, they don't have to, right? They don't have to. Because when they get ready to do it, help is available. But they have to want to do it. They have to want to receive that help. Henry David Thoreau said, "men will lie on their back talking of the fall of man, and make no effort to get up". And actually, that's what we wind up often doing in our religious circles. Talking about how will we can do nothing without Jesus. That's right. And if you do nothing, it will be without him.

Knowing Grace

[09:30]

It's when you trust Him, and act that you begin to know grace. Okay, I'll test your knowledge of old hymns now. "Trust and obey. For there's no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey." Do you know that song? You ever hear that song? That's a good song. That says the whole thing. See? So, now God acting in my life to accomplish what I cannot do on my own. Now, if you do inductive Bible study and you study grace, Old and New Testament, you'll see that's what it is. Is it unmerited favor? Of course, it's unmerited favor. But just to say it's unmerited favor does not tell you what form it takes.

And so very subtly over history, the idea has arisen that the form it takes is a credit transfer, like wiring funds to an account so that when you profess to believe the right things about Jesus that He died on the go Cross for your sins, which he did, and if you believe that, then that wire starts humming and all the credit you need to pay off your sin debts are transferred to your account. And now when you die and go up to the pearly gate, they will punch in your number and it'll come out saying, "Owes nothing". And they won't be able to find any reason to keep you out.

Growing in Grace Beyond Guilt to Interactive Relationship [11:18]

I hope you're going to think about the way I told that little story because one of the primary blocks to people coming to a full knowledge of God in Jesus Christ is the idea that grace has only to do with guilt. It doesn't. If we had never sinned, we would still need grace. I will say that shocking thing once again. If we had never sinned, we would still need grace. We would still need this.

[Dallas points to this quote on the white board:]

"Grace is God acting in my life to accomplish what I can not do on my own."

It's a real problem for me not now to just launch into an hour's discussion of grace, but I can't. But I hope that you will take these things about grace and do your

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inductive Bible study. Watch where grace shows up. [[Dallas points to this quote on the white board:](#)]

And see that this is what grace is and to "grow in grace" [II Peter 3:18] does not mean to grow in forgiveness. It means to grow in the amount of God acting in your life. And that will be knowledge because knowledge is interactive relationship.

Now, to know God is a simple thing. You just have to be willing to let him be God and you have to come down to the point to where you have run out of tricks on your own. That's why Paul says echoing the Old Testament, "*whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" [[Romans 10:13](#)] But if you got a few more tricks, he will let you work those out. See, I can tell you what you always find God at the end of your rope. That's His address. That's God's address - the end of my rope. If I've got a few more tricks, which it's very hard to get through all my tricks, then he'll let me work those out. And that's why so many people have been saved, really saved and come to a solid knowledge of God by praying the Sinners - the "Atheist's Prayer" they call it. Different from the Sinner's Prayer. The atheist prayer is, "Oh my god, if there is a God saved my soul if I have a soul." And you would be surprised if you haven't looked into this, how many people come to know God through praying that prayer. But the secret is not the prayer, the secret was they were at the end of their rope.

Witnesses to the Knowledge of God

[14:15]

Now there's all kinds of witnesses to the knowledge of God. We want to talk about some of those in this hour. And I want to just outline some of the main points and knowledge of God. You remember Paul says in in Romans one, that what can be known of God is available to people. God has made it evident to them. This is Romans 1:18-19.

"Since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes..."

Invisible: did we hear that word last time? [[Session 1 Introduction](#)] What does faith have to do with? Faith is knowledge of the invisible. Faith is opposed to sight but not to knowledge. So Hebrews 11 is about knowledge. Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible. II Corinthians 4, "*While we look not at the things that are seen, but the things that are unseen.*" See, that's knowledge of the invisible. Paul says, "*If you just look, you will see His eternal power, divine nature, being clearly seen being understood through the things that are made, so that they are without excuse.*" No one has an excuse. Okay, that's fine. [[Dallas points to the White Board](#)]

Not knowing God is a choice. It's a choice.

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Three Stages of Evidence for God

[15:55]

And so I want to just say a few things about some of the sources of this knowledge. And I wish I had time to just do exposition here of Acts 14 and Acts 17 and Nehemiah 9:6-10, and so on, but I don't. So I'm just going to be very brief here and outlining.

There are really "Three Stages in Evidence for God".

Now, again, don't just think of it as head knowledge, but [[Dallas points to the white board](#)] as interactive relationship.

Stage I - God in Nature

[16:30]

But of course, one of the places that we interact with God is in nature, in the world of the world of nature. That's a part of God's kingdom. By the way, that's one reason why you get so refreshed when you go out into nature. I've spent a lot of time flying over the American southwest, it's one of the most desolate places on the face of the earth. But I love it. Just looking down on it, and desert and rocks and all that stuff. Isn't it amazing how a great pile of rocks and mountains will affect you? That's because that is God's kingdom. That is where generally speaking, what God wants done is done.

Now, here's one of the things you can know about any physical reality and that is that it owes its existence to something else. It owes its existence to something else. That's true of the sun. That's true of the tree, the rock. That's true of our bodies. It owes its existence to something else. Now, that sequence of depths for existence, that line of causation that goes back and back and back is not, cannot be infinite. It can't be infinite, it can't be endless.

* So, for example, if you have a line of dominoes here and this one has just leaned over on that one, as that one leaned over on that one and knocked him down. Okay. Now, this sequence back of this cannot be infinite. Because if it were infinite, it would never get to this one. That's what it means for it to be infinite.

* Or thinking like one, I like to use this, I have a copy in my office for which there's no original. I believe that one. I love to fool around with this stuff. Because if you learn how to just put it you ever no one has any doubts about it any longer. And I actually have students who say, "I'd like to see that copy."

See, finitude depends on something that is different in kind. And that's God. That's what God is like. God is self sufficing being. He is a being that does not need anything else to exist. He exists out of his own nature. And if you if you think about Him like apples and rocks, then that'll be a problem for you. But the whole point is, that's what He isn't. He never didn't exist. So, "Mommy, where did God come

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from?" The answer is He didn't come from. He's always been here. Did he cause Himself? No, He didn't cause himself because He's always been here. All the questions point to something that is self sufficing. And that is precisely spirit. God is spirit. Right? God is spirit. And now that was being given to a woman in John 4 to try to help her understand why it didn't matter where you worshipped. But the point of it is to make a statement about the nature of God.

And of course, it's it's an old statement. Exodus 3:14. Moses gets ready to go down to Egypt, Who shall I say sent me? What's your name? And the answer, "I Am that I Am." That is to say I am something whose being depends only on itself. I Am that I Am. That I Am comes from I am and, of course, you will know I think because I sense that you are pretty serious students you will know that I am becomes a name for God doesn't it? "I am". the great "I am". Now, this translators have trouble with Exodus 314. And someone some you'll see it translated as I am what I am. But if you will remember your comic strips, even Popeye, "I yam what I yam." I yam what I yam." everything is what it is. That's not the point. The point is here is something that doesn't owe its existence to anything else. And that's the nature of spirit. And we have a little experience of this in ourselves. The element of Spirit in us is primarily will or power to choose. And that is precisely something that exists out of itself. It is not caused by anything else.

That scares the bejeebers out of people who think they can reduce everything to law because it says there are some things that are not derived from anything else. And that's why in our world today, for example, people will never look for "will" as an explanation. They will always look for cause. And the social sciences, for example, including psychology, with very few exceptions, say absolutely nothing about the will. And so they will have a long delay.

Why are 50% of marriages, why do they end in divorce? No one will ever say, "because the people who are married choose to get divorced." They'll never say that.

Why is the leading cause of death in pregnant women murder. Oh, wow. You could really get going on that couldn't you with causation. No one will say...

See, this is a part of the general picture of the rejection of spirit as a category of reality and knowledge. And often it's done with the idea that this is compassionate because we shouldn't blame people for what they do. Now, there's an important point to that. And, I don't want to you to misunderstand me there. But we are not helping people by teaching them to say "I can't" when they could. Because it is only by making the "will" the executive center of the self that anyone can pull their life together and make something out of it. And the primary function of the "will" is to reach out to God and to begin to draw spiritual life into this system that we have that we call the human system. And when we begin to do that, then we say things like, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." [Philippians 4:13]

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Right? So that's choice. And doesn't mean that Jesus is going to jump on you and make you do things. That's causation. We're talking about spiritual being that lives back of the whole created universe. And then when we begin to look into it, we see that the spiritual being actually is not just to being you know - "the force be with you, brother." It's not that. It's a person. And actually, that's what stops the infinite regress.

Stage II - Intelligent Choice

[24:52]

It starts back here with something which is not just an event, but a choice. And moreover, an intelligent choice. [[Dallas goes to the white board and writes "Choice" and "Intelligent" underneath it.](#)] God decided at a certain time to initiate, shall we say, the Big Bang. That's why it happened when it did. Just because at that point, God chose to say, "Let there be light". Light is the primal form of energy. You know enough about it you can make fish out of it and biscuits. I don't know about that, but the Logos knows how to do that. All right. So now He shows up and begins to give us information about this choice.

You see, it's very interesting how these arguments go. And I know that many of you know, and JP [Moreland] and Bill [William Lane] Craig have just published a wonderful book. I think it's called [Philosophical Foundations of Christian Worldview](#). And I encourage, if you get excited about some of these things that I can only touch on tonight, I recommend that you look at that book.

But you see, as far as our evidence goes, for seeing something come into existence of a certain kind, the only source that we know is either something else that is already of that kind, generally speaking, or it's an intelligent being. So 747s, cameras, birthday cakes, we all know where they come from, don't we? They come from intelligent beings who utilize stuff at their disposal to make them. And as far as we have empirical evidence on the coming to be of an organized things, it always comes from a mind.

Of course, there's some things we didn't see come to be. Most of the things that we would call natural, we didn't see them come to be. But as far as the empirical evidence is concerned, the reasonable thing to believe is that they came into existence from an intelligent being. And if we looked at the goodness of what he's made enough, and I recognize there are problems with evil, but if you just look, I often when people come to me, and they say, "Well, you know, there couldn't be a God made a world like this." I say to them, "What kind would you like for him to have made?" And you get some pretty shallow answers. Serious answer is a world in which people could not do what is wrong. And then you can work that out. And we have to talk about that in the next installments. But that would mean that there would be no possibility of the development of moral beings, of moral character. And

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the price for that, in a world like ours, is sometimes too painful for us to observe. And yet, when you say, "What would you have done differently?" It's hard to come up with an answer. Often you get...I remember, a guy in graduate school, and we were talking about this waiting for the library to open. I said, "What would you like for? How would you like for God to make the world better?" And he said, "Well, I'd like like it where people didn't go to church on Sunday and looked down on people who didn't." We can fix that one pretty easily, I think, you know, but that wouldn't do much for the world. And the truth of the matter is, when most people approach this issue of the nature of the world and design and choice, they don't think very deeply about it.

And David Hume, one of the greatest naysayers people on the other side, after a lot of work, says in a couple of places, "A rational being looking at the world must believe that it was the product of a very great mind." And really, that's what we need at this level, you've already got at this level of proof that the world rests on something that is not of nature. And at this level, that what that something is must have been capable of choice, and of thought, and so is not just a force, but a person.

Stage III - Human Experience of God in History

[30:00]

And then you're ready for the third stage of the reasoning which is to look at human experience in history. And that would mean your own experience, of course, as well as the experience of others. And there are a lot of, there's a whole, there are several categories of evidence involved here. But, the primary one is the capacity of individual beings to experience God if they would like to do that. God is not far off. As Paul said to the people, the Greeks there on in Mars Hill, Acts 17, "*In Him we live live and move and have our being.*" And when Jesus came, He preached that "*the Kingdom of God is available.*" And we mustn't miss the point about the statement. For example, Matthew 4:17, "*Repent for the Kingdom of the heavens is at hand.*" That's not saying that something is about to happen, and then suddenly it got called off. That's not the teaching. The language is very clear, it doesn't mean that. And now we have systematic and hermeneutics, liberal and conservative, which try to say that the Kingdom of God is something that isn't here. It is something that is future or an illusion of some sort which Jesus had and it didn't happen. He was a nice man, but He missed it. But these are clearly not what Jesus had in mind. What Jesus was saying is that the Kingdom of Heaven - now remember, the Kingdom of Heaven is where what God wants done is done. Or you can think of it as "the range of God's effective will." That's the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus didn't bring it into existence. The Kingdom of God is from everlasting to everlasting. I mean, there wasn't a time when there wasn't a Kingdom of God. Even before creation, there was a Kingdom of God.

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What Jesus comes to announce now is that since He is present, the Kingdom of God is present. And that anyone can live in it by simply trusting Him. Not something he did, nor something He said. Trusting Him the person. See, that's what it means to say He is Lord. It's what it means to say, Messiah, Anointed One. That is to say that God's presence is here in Him. And so when He said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand", He saying, "think out your strategy on life, again, in the light of the fact that you can now step in to that Kingdom." That's the gospel of Jesus. It's like if I were walking down through this house, and someone were to say, "turn because the library is at hand." That's not saying the library is about to happen, and might not. It's going to happen it... No, no, it's right here. See, and then when you read the gospels, now you go back and read the gospels. And you'll see that that's the constant story. And this is captured in Luke 16:16. And in Matthew 11:11-12, "Until John, the law and the prophets were preached. Since the John, the Kingdom is proclaimed, and people are rushing into it." They're not standing on proprieties. Because all that is required is to see Jesus and say, "That's it. I give my life to that." And then you begin to experience [[Dallas writes on the white board](#)] the "Presence of God in human affairs".

And these are what I call the Three Stages of Theistic Evidence [[pointing to what he wrote on the white board](#)]:

- 1.) NATURE — And this one establishes that nature is not everything.
- 2.) CHOICE — This one establishes that more than nature is intelligent, personal life.
- 3.) PRESENCE of GOD'S KINGDOM — And then this one establishes that this intelligent personal life is now interactive with human beings who open their lives to it.

See, that's why you can say to anyone you want to you want to know God, you want to know Jesus? Then start acting on what He said. When you do that, you will meet Him. You will meet Him. Start acting on it. Put it to the test. Put it to the empirical test.

Why God is a Hidden God

[35:40]

Now, can you avoid that? Yes. So we have to talk a little bit now about why God is a hidden God. And God is a hidden God. And you may remember the cry of the Prophet, "Oh, that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down." [[Isaiah 64:1](#)]

And everyone, I think, at some point cries out, "Oh, God, come!" Well, you have to think about what it would be like if you did. So what would it do to your life? And the short answer is it would destroy it. If God literally came down, it would destroy it. And that's why the teaching of the Scripture about "No man has seen God and

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lives" is true. It would blow all your fuses and burn your wires out, and you wouldn't have a life left. You see, God is so big, that in order for us to avoid Him, He has to hide. And He's willing to do that in order for us to come to the place to where we are prepared to trust Him. And when we trust Him, then He begins to move into our lives, but not in the way of an atomic bomb. In the way of electricity that gently filters through the wires and comes down to where we can cook pancakes with it. You don't want the atomic power coming in to cook your pancakes. I mean, your pancakes and you would be gone. You want that power to come in a way that it still leaves you and the pancakes there together. And that's why that's why God is a hidden God is because he wants to leave space for you to seek Him. Space to seek. Now the promise is anyone who seeks will find. You really want to know God, you can know God.

[Dallas points to the white board where is written:]

Not knowing God is a choice.

Evidences, realities are there for anyone. You want to take him into your business, into your family, into your community, you can do that. All you have to do is to invite Him and watch for Him and trust Him and He will come just like that. And He will come in a way that will be a blessing to everyone involved.

God's Purpose for Human History

[38:40]

God's intention is to bring out of human history a community of people who are like Jesus Christ. That's what it's about. That's what human history is about is to bring out of human history a community of free beings who are like His Son Jesus. You know that that's true, don't you? Because you you've read the Bible. And you know that that's "bringing many sons to glory". Jesus leads the way. We're all meant to be little Christs. And eventually, we're going to be that. You might as well get used to the idea. Give up early and avoid the rush as they say. Say that's for me now. Now, you know, if you say that out loud, it sounds a little hokey. "Oh, you're gonna be a little Christ, are you?" Well, what are you going to be if you're not a little Christ? Are the alternatives all that attractive? Not really. I can accept that. And I can take my stand in that and say that's what my life is about because that, in the end, is what human history is about. And so God leaves room for us to choose or to reject Him and that is why He is a hidden God. That's why he doesn't come right down on the Earth and make His presence fully known. You'll remember that when he did that on Sinai, the mountain just sort of chugging away like a volcano, it was jumping up and down, there was so much energy on it. The energy in our Sun has to be kept a safe distance of 90 million miles or so away. And that's like a spark compared to the energy that makes up God, the power that makes him God.

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So, thank God that He has approached us in a way that allows us to trust Him through Jesus Christ and begin to say, "Yes, this is what my life is about. It is learning to do the things and be the kind of person that Jesus wants."

And then going back to those four questions, you see:

Who is well off?

Who is a really good person?

How do you get to be a really good person?

Now you have a perfectly coherent answer that can be tested by experience. It stands. The weight of evidence stands in its favor and all that is required is a will which is prepared to say, "Yes, I give myself to Jesus Christ."

Room to Choose - Bertrand Russell & Norwood Hanson [41:25]

I mentioned in the notes here, Bertrand Russell and Norwood Hanson, there are a couple of famous cases of people who said, "Well, you know, I'm ready to believe, if God would just give me more evidence."

And now, what form would the evidence take?

Well, Hanson suggests that it might take the voice of God speaking out of heaven to him, and saying, "I'm tired of your fooling around. I want you to line up and do what I want and forget all of this philosophical quibbling and obey me." Now, do you think if Norwood Hansen heard that voice, that would lead him to believe? No, it would lead him to a psychiatrist. That's what he would do. Because you see, that kind of thing never does the job. If you if you're have your will, and your understanding set against God, miracles don't do the trick. Now, miracles are important as testimonies to the presence of the Kingdom, but they will not convince people who are not seeking God. And that's why you remember in the case of Lazarus and Dives, the rich man and the poor man. Dives, the rich guy says, "well send Lazarus back to my brothers, so that they don't come in this place." Well, I mean, you have to use your imagination, what would have happened if Lazarus had shown up at their door? Do you think they're gonna fall on their knees and give up? No, they're not gonna do that. Jesus said that. He said, "*Neither will they believe if one is sent from the dead unto them.*" [Luke 16:31] And, no doubt, He was referring to what was going to happen in His own case. There has to be a willingness to receive.

Bertrand Russell said to Father Copleston, who in an interview, Father Copleston said to him, "What are you going to do, Bertie, when you stand up before God and you find that he exists?"

And Bertrand Russell said, "I'm going to say to him, 'why didn't you give more evidence?'"

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Well, probably God will have an answer. Probably it will go something like, "Well, seeing what you did with the evidence provided, there was no point." Or, perhaps He would have said something like, "I didn't want you to come on those terms. I didn't want you to come on the basis of being overwhelmed with the evidence."

Screwtape Letters by CS Lewis

[44:25]

Screwtape Letters has so much wisdom in it and I wanted to just on this point read the little statement that's right at the front of *The Divine Conspiracy*. This is Screwtape writing to Wormwood:

"You must have often wondered why the enemy does not make more use of his power to be sensibly present to human souls in any degree he chooses and at any moment. (That's what we've been talking about.) But you now see that the irresistible and the indisputable are the two weapons which the very nature of his scheme forbids him to use. Merely to override a human will, as his felt presence and any but the faintest and most mitigated degree would surely do, would be for him useless. He cannot ravish he can only woo. For his ignoble idea is to eat the cake and have it. The creatures are to be one with Him, but yet to themselves. Merely to counsel them or to assimilate them will not serve. Sooner or later He withdraws, if not, in fact, at least from their conscious experience, all supports and incentives. He leaves the creatures to stand up on its own legs to carry out from will alone duties which have lost all relish. He cannot tempt to virtue as we do to vice. He wants them to learn to walk and must therefore take away His hand. Our case is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending to do our enemies will, looks around upon a universe from which every trace of him, (God), seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys."

That's what God is calling us to. Because His intention for every one of us is that we should become the kind of person that He can empower to do anything we want.

[46:30]

I'm gonna say that again, because you might have missed it.

God's intention for each one of us, for every human being in fact, is that that human being should become the kind of person — now that's character transformation — the kind of person that He can empower to do what they want.

Imagine yourself being given the power to do anything you wanted? Now, I think normally, you'd feel a little nervous with that. Right? Because you yourself might worry about your want. You might think I've got a problem now. My want. My problem used to be I didn't have power. But, now I think maybe it was a good thing. You remember Jesus said, He told stories about this. He said, "well, a man

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gave some money to his servants and left. And he came back and some of them had been very successful in using that money. And his response was to give them more responsibility, more responsibility. You've been faithful over little take charge of 10 cities."

If you were mayor of Los Angeles, how would that go? I mean, not a mayor, like we have now that can't do anything anyway because I mean, every he's got built in protection, just because people know that rulers can't be trusted. That's the human problem in terms of government. How do you rule the rulers?

Now imagine someone that you didn't even have to worry about that. Not only could you be absolutely sure they would do what was right, but you could be absolutely sure that God would empower them to do what was right. Imagine that person were you. You had been faithful over little. Have responsibility over much.

See, that's where we want to go. We have to understand that not knowing God is a choice.

and now I've messed up my... This is the first. [[Dallas writes "No Regress" on the board under Stage 1 of Theistic Evidence](#)] So make a division there [[between "No Regress" \(see 24:40\) and "Not Knowing God"](#)]

Not knowing God is a choice. And that if we want to know God, the evidence is there. And in particular, it is there at the level of His presence in human affairs in the form of the Kingdom of God. And that if we want to live in a knowledgeable, interactive relationship with Jesus Christ, which we can recommend to anyone with any degree, pedigree, whatever, and say, test it, and you will find it to be true. That is where we turn is precisely to the grace of God that is present and active in Jesus Christ and through Him in us and anyone who says I really want to know. And those are the people who are on the path of growth that leads to the place where God can empower them to do what they want. I want to just leave that thought with you for you to meditate on and to apply to you personally.

Closing Prayer

[51:10]

Let's have a prayer now for the words that have been spoken.

"Father, there are wonderful people chosen by you in this room and I asked that you would give to them the solid sense of the reality of your Kingdom in everything they are involved with so that they can grow and appropriate knowledge of you, knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ as interactive relationship opening the Kingdom in this world. In Jesus name, Amen."

~ ~ ~ **End of Session 2 @ 51:57** ~ ~ ~

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SESSION 3: "[Understanding the Opposition to Knowledge of Christ in Today's World](#)" [55:08]

"Yet we do speak wisdom, among those who are mature, a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away, but we speak God's wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." 1 Corinthians 2:6-8

1. 'Godless' knowledge as the knowledge of today
 - The real cultural significance or separation of 'church' and state
 - Man entirely on his own so far as what really matters counts. The case of abortion as illustration.
 - Autonomy and happiness as the only recognized standard.
 - ◆ The ideology of "pleasure" and "pain."
2. The three stories about reality. —The only ones with any appeal.
 - A. The Theistic story.
 - B. The Big Bang story.
 - C. The 'New Age' story
3. What 'science' is, and its human destiny. Human mastery is the overriding aim. 'Knowledge is power.' White and black magic.
4. How this becomes "Naturalism." The hopelessly narrow limits of Empiricist "experience." Nothing of significance survives it.
5. "Naturalism" arises out of Empiricism as Science becomes more sophisticated. The supremacy of "hypothesis" or "Theory." Baconian and Galilean "science." "Hypotheses" as knowledge.
6. Naturalism still means making the "visible" world ultimate.
7. The elimination of Spirit from reality—"Spirituality" is not Spirit as Biblically recognized in God and humans.
8. "Spirit" means "unbodily personal power." This is totally rejected by naturalism and "science."
9. How 'godless knowledge' has mastered the church "visible" through the educational system.
10. "Constructionism," explaining Jesus. Avoiding Lewis' dilemma. Realism and Revelation.



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TRANSCRIPT — SESSION 3: "[Understanding the Opposition to Knowledge of Christ in Today's World](#)" [55:08]

Welcome by Bill Dwyer of Dallas Willard Ministries

Review by Dallas Willard

[00:45]

The theme of our series is "Knowledge of Christ in Today's World", in the contemporary worlds. Just to briefly summarize, we've talked about knowledge and to make sure that everyone understands that knowledge is primarily interactive relationship, not just information, but interactive relationship, which, of course, means that we are dealing with something that is real. Only what is real can enter into relationships and bring about consequences and have its effects. So, we're talking about growing today, in our contemporary situation, we are talking about growing in interactive relationship. We described grace as God acting in our lives to do something that lies beyond our own power. Grace is action, it isn't just unmerited favor but action, and that enters into, of course, knowledge.

Session Introduction - A Battle for Spiritual Reality

[01:50]

This evening, now, we want to come to deal with the topic "Understanding the Opposition to Knowledge of Christ in Today's World". Spiritual reality is a field of battle. And we are caught in the middle. In one way or another every religion on earth, every culture on earth, recognizes that. That we are in a conflict, there is a battle going on. It doesn't matter how primitive a culture you may find, as we might call them, or how advanced, there's always the same problem. And that is conflict, and it enters into the divided nature of the human self. So we find a conflict going on not only outside of us, but inside us as well. And in every culture that is recognized. In every culture the need for redemption is recognized. And so when you go to various parts of the world, you will find often astonishing attempts on human beings to bring about reconciliation between the forces that are working within them, and deal with what is clearly evil, or in Christian terms we would call it sin. To come to terms with it in some way, to escape the effects of it, to annul the powers of evil that prey upon the human soul.

Problem with Evil in Today's World

[03:10]

So, when we come to the modern world, now we have a real problem with evil. And you all will remember the almost scandal that was caused by George Bush [[US President 2000-2008](#)] when he referred to wicked, evil "evil doers", the reality of evil. And, especially if you're on a campus such as I am on, or you hear people who are speaking as professors, and so on, you will notice how uncomfortable they are with evil.

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Satan and His Ideas

[03:40]

Let's start with this thought this evening. And that is I've written up here,
"Satan works primarily with your ideas."

He works on ideas. That is because God has created the human soul in such a way, that if the will is not surrendered to evil, not necessarily to Satan, but to evil, if the will the human will is not surrendered to evil, then Satan cannot overwhelm it. God has made the human soul in that way. If it has surrendered to evil, or if it has been terribly attacked by evil, then it may be broken. And it may not function rightly, the human soul may not. It may not have the capacities for resistance, and its will may not be capable of standing up. But as long as that will says no to evil, evil cannot overcome it. So, the way that Satan works on us is through our ideas. And that's why this topic of knowledge is so very, very important. And, so, once he has the idea system going and that idea system subverts the will, then he can take a vacation. So much that is ascribed to Satan isn't his work at all. It's the work of the flesh, and it's the work of the world. And as long as he can channel the ideas in the right direction, then he doesn't have to make a special effort. He can let others do his work, or in fact, just let ideas do their work. Ideas are the primary place that the will looks to for its guidance. And so this issue of knowledge becomes tremendously important. And in particular, the idea that there is no spiritual world. The idea that we are simply physical beings, we live in a physical world where there are physical powers that we can use, and perhaps combine them with others. But, that ultimately all there is to it is natural physical powers and human beings and their capacity to manipulate them. And of course, there's almost no limit to what we will undertake as we're doing that.

Jesus and the Kingdom of God

[6:30]

Because, you see when Jesus came into the world he encountered this battle. And immediately the Kingdom of God, which I just remind you that last night we talked about the Kingdom of God. [[Session 1 @ 40:20](#)]

The Kingdom of God is God in action.

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

It is the range of God's effective will.

So now when he comes into the world, He brings that with him and confronts a world that is basically dominated by evil powers. It was a very respectable world. Evil can do right well with respectability. In fact, it does better that way. Because, then people don't see it for what it is, because it's nice. But the temptation of respectability is always to lead people to trust themselves, to hold their own well being, their own righteousness, even their own appearance, as the main thing to be taken care of. And when Jesus came into the world, he immediately confronted the evil powers that were already here. There's an interesting discussion in Luke 11

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where the people around him saw what he was doing, and attributed it to Satan, or Beelzebub - "The Lord of the Flies", the devil in one of his forms. And Jesus replies to them, in terms of if in fact, he were working in the power of Satan, then Satan would be divided against himself because he was using that power to defeat evil. And Jesus says, that, *"if I cast out demons by the finger of God"*. If I cast out demons by the finger of God. Now, that's an interesting phrase. I want you to think about it, *"then the Kingdom of God has come upon you"*. In other words, if I am acting with God's power against the Satan, the power of Satan or power of evil, than the Kingdom of God is now present here in a form that you're not able to recognize. But it's God in action.

See, when we talk about interactive relationship, as we did last night - interactive relationship as knowledge - [[Session 1 @ 06:10](#)] we're not just talking about abstractions, we're talking about things that are happening in concrete existence. And it comes down to the way that we live a life of prayer, and a life of action on behalf of and in the power of Jesus Christ and his Kingdom. And that's what knowledge of God really becomes, as we grow into it, and as we learn more about it, and as it becomes a natural part of what we do. And so Jesus is saying, and just think, "if I by the finger of God". See, that's God in action. Now, it's opposing evil. And so what do you see in the life of Jesus and his disciples? Well, they were using the power of God to defeat evil. And in that culture that took the form, usually of two things. One was sickness and the other was unclean spirits, that is spirit's possessing people and making them do things. The reason they're called 'unclean' is because they always make a mess. Right? And that's why they were called 'unclean': when a person is in possession of these, then there's always a mess. And sometimes it's a very literal, physical mess, and they have to be cleaned up. But God, coming through Jesus Christ, and into the people who followed Christ, was then confronting that. And that is still where we live today. And the form is sometimes different, but the reality is the same. And, in fact, what we're up against today, primarily, is a system of knowledge that is opposed to the knowledge of the Kingdom of God. And that's what we want to concentrate on. I don't want it to become so terribly abstract that you can't follow it. And so I'll try to keep it as close to the Earth as I can here.

Who Says What Counts as Knowledge?

[10:45]

But knowledge, you see, is the form that power takes in our world today. And there are large issues like, who gets to say what counts as knowledge?

See, that's, that's a major point for us — who gets to say what counts as knowledge? Because, you see, what counts as knowledge has authority, doesn't it? And people feel like they should obey it. And government and organizations, cultural forms, they stand for knowledge in many, many ways, not always scientific.

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Pop Culture as Knowledge

[11:30]

You know, one of the greatest events that happened in the last half of the last century was the upsurge of a certain kind of music. Primarily, the two most important figures were Bob Dylan, and the Beatles. Well, that's a little more than two, isn't it? Five most important figures. And if you go back and look at that music, what you will see is, they claimed knowledge. They claimed a perception. Now, many of you were right in the middle of that music at the time, and we all enjoyed a lot of it, everything from "The Yellow Submarine" to "Eleanor Rigby", and whatever. But what, you see, "The Yellow Submarine" stood for, "I have knowledge". And if you listen to Bob Dylan's music, all the same thing, "we have knowledge". And it always has a critical edge that was undermining what was called, in those days — the establishment. And it was always a form of moral knowledge. And so the moral instructors of that generation came to be the music of Bob Dylan, The Beatles, and to a lesser degree, "The King" [Elvis Presley], you know.

So we have this issue of who...of who has a pen that will write?

[Dallas writes on the white board]

"Who gets to say what counts as knowledge?"

And what doesn't count. See, our culture was founded on assumptions about who got to say, and it was primarily the biblical tradition that represented knowledge. And that was true up until about a century ago. And then it began to change. And really, since then, we've been in a real quandary about this issue of what counts as knowledge. But gradually, authority has shifted from the church to the popular culture, the popular arts, and the universities. And they're the ones that get to say. And how do they get that authority? Well, the way that Dylan and Elvis and the rest of them got that authority, and by the way, I'm not trying to knock this at present, please understand me. I'm trying to point out something. The way they got that was by the appeal of aesthetic feeling and insight. And so the whole shift was an earthquake of change. If you go back and listen to the music immediately before it, or even some that lasted along with it, like Bing Crosby, and just listen to the lyrics and the tone and all of that, you'll see it's a different world. And you want to think deeply about that, because it was out of the power of that aesthetic feeling that a moral teaching came that was accepted by many people as the basis upon which to lead their life. It certainly wasn't biblical and I'm not saying that the one they were opposed to was biblical either.

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Authority of Knowledge in Today's World

[15:05]

So we can put up one here, first of all, [\[Dallas writes on the white board\]](#):

Bible Tradition

Secondly, Popular Arts, and

Thirdly, Academic or Universities.

And the word, the magic word, here is 'research'. You ever hear of a 'knowledge university'? Anyone ever hear of a "knowledge university"? They don't exist, do they, isn't that interesting? 'Research universities'. See, what has authority is research and researchers. And then this gets caught in the popular media and the popular media becomes a mechanism for distributing "rumors of knowledge". And that's constant, every newscast you watch will have some rumors of knowledge on it. And often they have to do with health or something of that sort, but keep watching. And probably the next time around, it'll be, they will just, they'll have found that that was not right. And stay tuned, as we say.

So, now this is the big issue — who gets to say what counts as knowledge. And this evening, we're mainly going to be talking about that. If you've looked ahead, you'll see that the topic of the fourth talk is "[The Bible as Indispensable Source of Knowledge](#)."

Jesus and Paul Confronting the World's Knowledge

[16:55]

Now, it's not new, the battle between two forms of knowledge. And if you will notice the verse that I've quoted here from I Corinthians 2:6-8, Paul confronted this immediately. Jesus confronted it immediately, because the people who who are in authority in their day, both in Jewish and in Greek culture, did not know God, and they did not know Jesus Christ, and they did not understand the wisdom of the Kingdom of God. So, here's what he [Paul] says: "*Yet, we do speak wisdom among those who are mature, a wisdom, however, not of this age, not of the way the world works now, nor of the rulers of this age, the people in positions of authority, who are passing away*". This age is... the Kingdom of God that came with Jesus is putting the skids under this age. If we had time, it'd be great to look at Daniel 2 and see how he talks about that there. "*But we speak wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory*". And you may not have noticed that phrase, and so I call it to your attention "*to our glory*". And I want you to hold that with the thought we closed it last evening about how God's intention for each of us, is to become the kind of person that he can empower to do what we want. [[Session 2 @ 46:30](#)] "*Our glory, the wisdom, which none of the rulers of this age has*

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understood, for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory", the one who is in charge of glory.

Now, that was a confrontation between the reality of the Kingdom of God and the reality of the human kingdom. And the rulers of this age only understand the reality of the human kingdom. And regardless of what they say, in general, they do not trust anything but human abilities, and, in particular, their own abilities, and the so called wisdom by which human beings live and govern one another. So that's the contrast now. And we are set in the middle of this conflict. And it's very important to understand that when we say, for example, that the popular arts or the universities or whatever, represent a different kind of knowledge, I'm not necessarily criticizing them. I'm trying to help us understand the limitations under which they work. Because, given the current situation, they cannot access the reality of the Kingdom of God because it is not a natural reality, it is a spiritual reality. But that's not the position you're in. You and I and indeed, anyone in those contexts, is in a position to know the Kingdom of God where they are right now. That door is open. And the reality of Christ is here present. The reality of God is here present. And if they want to know the reality of it, all they have to do is to seek it.

And knowledge is like that, isn't it? Most knowledge is something you seek. It's especially true of spiritual knowledge. We talked some last night about God being hidden. [[Session 2 @ 35:45](#)] But I don't think I properly emphasized that it's the nature of spirit not to show up where it's not wanted. Spirit loves to be wanted. And that's true of you. Do you like to go to a party where no one wants you? No, you don't want to go! Spirit is very tender. And that is why rejection is one of the most brutal blows to the human spirit, rejection. And it's touching to realize that the Spirit of God, in all its greatness, is something that can be resisted and grieved. Do you know that language? "To grieve not the Spirit of God whereby you're sealed unto the day of redemption resist.." Stephen in his sermons, says, "You stiff necked and uncircumcised of heart, you do always resist". See, God allows himself to be resisted. So, if a person doesn't want to know it, they don't have to know it. But if they seek it, they will find it. That's why I said last night, that not knowing God is a choice. [[Session 2 @ 15:45](#)] And that, I think if I were to take one sentence from all of the time I'll be talking to you that I hope you will take away most vividly burned into your mind, it is that sentence, that **not knowing God is a choice.** And human beings constantly want to shift it onto God. And God is saying, no, if you want to know Me, I'm here. And if you want to know me, you will seek Me and find Me. If you don't really want to know Me, you won't find Me. Because I'm not in the business of jumping down people's throats. Of standing relentlessly over their shoulders. Sometimes, if He really wants someone for His purposes, He may do something that looks like that. And one might think about the Apostle Paul being confronted with Christ on the road to Damascus. I think actually, if you look into

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that case, more carefully, you'll be impressed with how Paul was seeking God. Ignorantly, not wisely, with a lot of bad motivation, but he really wanted to find God. And that's how he could recognize later the situation of others in Judaism, who had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. And that's where these ideas come in to see what Paul was ready to, he was killing people, he was putting them in jail. That was because of an idea system that had obsessed him about who God was.

Godless Knowledge as the Knowledge Today

[23:25]

Now, our situation today can be described as one where knowledge is thought of generally as godless: what is recognized as knowledge is not thought of as having anything to do with God. I want to try to drive that point home by just asking, do you know of any field of competence where, in order to get your credentials, you have to know something about God? Can you imagine anyone being examined in a PhD dissertation session in terms of their knowledge of God? Or, in the field of management, or chemistry, or mathematics? You see, that's almost out of any comprehension, you can't you can't imagine actually. That was quite imaginable 150 years ago and earlier, because in those days, it was thought that knowledge, to be complete, knowledge had to include knowledge of God. And that was assumed, as today it is assumed that the knowledge in any field has nothing to do with God. And I can show you some divinity schools where that's still true. Where it is not thought you have to have any knowledge of God in order to be a Christian minister. And indeed, often it's taught, you can't have any knowledge of God. I don't know how one could, in good confidence go out to be a minister on those, on those terms, but it is done. And that just illustrates the extent towards what we call knowledge today has nothing to do with God. That's what I call 'godless knowledge'. Godless knowledge is knowledge that is thought to be complete without God.

Having Knowledge Without Knowing God

[25:28]

Now, of course, you can know a lot in a field and know nothing about God. In particular, you can know a lot for example, about the various forms of energy, in terms of what can be done and not be done with them. But when you take them into the larger context of human life, you may be at a loss as to how to control them. And that's certainly true of the more powerful forms of energy that has been... that have been developed in the last 75 years. And now what we constantly face that is called "Terrorism", is primarily due to the fact that now a few individuals can control incredible amounts of energy and no one knows what to do about it. Blow them up before they blow you up. Not a very good solution. Our understanding of life is not complete without a knowledge of God. And our understanding of any field, concluding from mathematics on down, is never

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complete, without an understanding of the whole of which it is a part and that must include God. But that isn't the picture that is present today.

Separation of Church and State

[27:00]

You know, that's the real import of the business about separation of church and state. See, if the church were thought of as having essential knowledge, no one would ever consider separating church from state. You understand what I'm saying? And that's why we have this setup, which has nothing to do with the origins of America, the legal papers, and all, it has to do with something that has developed over time about the nature of law.

We had an interesting illustration of that in the USA today on the front page. The recent...the decision that was reached about sodomy. And here's what Mr. Kennedy said on the bench about this decision. He said, Kennedy cited "an emerging awareness that liberty gives substantial protection to adult persons in deciding how to conduct their private lives."

Now, what I want you to understand is that is cited as a basis for the decision. I'll read it again an "emerging awareness". So what is cited as the basis of law is social consensus. And the idea that social consensus might be wrong doesn't come up. You see what I'm talking about? Social consensus. And, in addition, then, Mr. Kennedy, I have no idea why he thinks that there is such an emerging awareness, but that is passing as knowledge upon which you base law. I'm not trying to discuss the merits of the case. The point is...the point has to do with how the decision is reached and what role knowledge plays in this. See, you can't have law that's just based on thin air, can you? You have to cite something. And, in this case, there was a departure from precedence in favor of another form of knowledge. And law then becomes based upon somebody's reading, of social consensus. Would you want to think about whether or not Mr. Kennedy is right that there is an emerging awareness that liberty gives substantial protection to adult persons in deciding how to conduct their private lives? Well, would you like to think about what privacy means? Is it private? What's private? Is anything you do not seen in public - is that private? Well, that depends on what it means to the person who is public and all persons are public.

And so now I'm just trying to use that to illustrate what you begin to step into, when you begin to think separation of God from life. Is that what we're talking about when you're talking about separation of church and state? That is how it has come down. The idea that reality has nothing to do with God, that God is some sort of tradition, or practice that people have in various sorts of ways. And we ought to certainly be tolerant and considerate of how people do it differently, but it has nothing to do with reality. That's the assumption. That's the assumption that leads

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to separating church and state as we know it. Now, church and state as they knew it in the Federal Papers, that's a different story, actually has nothing to do. It's a sign of the confusion of our times that people cannot distinguish questions about church from questions about God. And so we have ourselves in a position where, for example, if God had given the multiplication tables to Moses, we wouldn't be able to teach them in our public schools. Because they would then be church and not state.

~ The Autonomy of Human Life

So, what it really means is that we're now in a situation where we want the human being to live on their own, to be autonomous, to follow ideals that are agreeable to them, that are socially acceptable, that wonderful phrase, about "an emerging consensus", acceptance and so on. If the idea would be that whatever emerged as a consensus would be the basis for law. And whatever is going to emerge will be in terms of human desires, and pleasure and happiness and man is entirely on his own, so far as what really matters. And then that will, in our world, will certainly turn into questions about what people want, and what they find pleasure in, and human happiness and human pleasures and pleasure will turn into the final standard for everything. So then, now that will stand as knowledge, and anything that contradicts that will be regarded as non- knowledge. So, authority will go with human desire. And that in terms of pleasure and pain, and freedom. Freedom and pleasure are the only two recognized standards in our culture today. What you want, and what you feel good about. That immediately authorizes action. Anything else has to confront those. And in that confrontation, they will lose.

The Kingdom of God as a Standard of Right and Wrong [33:00]

Now, of course, the Kingdom of God doesn't go that way and the Kingdom of God says, what matters is the standard of right and wrong and goodness that has been provided to us by revelation through God, and through His Son, Jesus Christ. And so to go back to our questions of last time — Who is well off? Who's a really good person? How do we get to be a really good person? — Has a totally different set of answers. So with each view of knowledge, there goes a different kind of life form. And in our world, it is feeling that rules. It is the sense of the sensible. We live in a sensual culture. And again, I'm not, I'm not here tonight to lament this, but to call it to our attention so that we can think about it. And when you, when you look at the all of the things that form a part of our life, the way we live, it's directed towards the sensual. That does not mean that every individual is, but that the world system as a whole, is set up in a way to accentuate that. Because if you can just get you on the level of feelings and images under the appropriate ideas, then your behavior will fall in line with what Satan has in mind for human beings. And he's had a round with God and didn't get anywhere with that and so his main effort is to

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attack God's project of humanity. And so he's constantly working at this level, to change things so that they will be different.

The Authority of Science Today

[34:43]

Now, in our day, the great authority that we all come up against is science. I'm not saying that science itself is the problem, it isn't. I firmly believe that the scientific enterprise is a part of what God is doing for the human race. I believe that also in business. In all of the aspects, I think God is moving along, towards his purposes, for each of us individually and for humanity as a whole. So it isn't like science itself is wrong, it's good. It's wonderful. It's a part of what God has given to us so that we could be responsible in this world before God. But it isn't always used in that way. And science becomes, in the hands of those who are obsessed with themselves and with the natural world, and with the sensuality and the powers of their own thought and creativity, it becomes an instrument to push away the Kingdom of God. The primacy of God, the reality of God's action become something that is not... is used inconsistently with that. Now I say again, because it's so important to understand this, it isn't in the nature of science. It's in the nature of the human will driving for its own supremacy, to use science wrongly, to set aside the spiritual world and that is where the problem arises.

Now, I just want to say a few words about that now, and I won't be too hard on you with it, I hope, but we really do need to understand that this drive to make science thee authority for knowledge, that drive to make science, thee authority for knowledge is deeply rooted in the intention of fallen humanity to master the world for themselves. That's what lies at the root of it.

The Creation Covenant in Humankind - Genesis 1:26-27

[36:58]

God put us in a world, gave us responsibility for it, stamped his image on it... on us and intended to live in that interactive relationship with us. See, when the creation covenant was given in Genesis 1:26-27, it was with the idea that human beings would be responsible under God for what happens in the world. And we still have that stamped on us and that's why if a bunch of killer whales get trapped in an ice floe in the Arctic, immediately someone says, "let's go get them out!" Right? And you say, why should anyone think that thought? It's because in us, there is still that mark that says, "you're responsible". You're responsible for the world, you're responsible for what's happening in it, you should do something about it. Not everyone will worry about the whales, but they will worry about taking care of themselves, and being responsible for themselves, and they will make themselves the ultimate point of reference. And sometimes the whales would make a better one, depending on the person. But, you know, that's the way. At USC we...people

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there using your tax dollars to figure out how to stop earthquakes. Just inch them along, you know, so there won't be any big moves, or something like that.

Science and Prayer

[38:30]

Now Agnes Sanford, when she lived over in Monrovia, God told her to move there to pray against earthquakes. And while she lived there, no earthquakes happened. They've had several big ones since. Go figure! See, prayer is another way of dealing with the issue that science deals with, not necessarily exclusive, because you can still pray while you do science, and still do science while you pray, and that would be the ideal combination. See, that would be taking our responsibility for the world under God. But that is not the picture.

Science as Knowledge for Human Power

[39:10]

You see, science has become a way of controlling human destiny on our own. It could be what used to be called in the Renaissance "white magic". But now it becomes "black magic" in the hands of people who are bent on using it for evil. And often, bent on using it for what human beings agree as good. So the Empiricist experience - the experience of the sense perceptible and feel-able world is the source that is used to magnify the human kingdom over against the Kingdom of God. And knowledge is power, and we find power in the empirical world. And that's what happens in the rise of science is that people learn that you can actually manipulate the physical world if you just get the key. And much of this was driven by, for example, desire to find out how to throw projectiles through concrete walls or rock walls. Warfare has always driven science, that should tell us something right there. And, it's partly because of the failure of the human kingdom. The human kingdom invariably sets itself against itself and what it wants is more power through knowledge, in order to be able to be more destructive. And that has grown and grown and grown and the inability to deal with it, because of our failure to understand the spiritual world, that is ourselves as spiritual beings in the world of God the Creator, because of the failure to understand that, then the growth of power has just made our situation more and more desperate.

Science & Knowledge: Empiricism & Naturalism

[41:05]

There's just one other phase of this that I want to try to explain to you which I hope will not wipe you out of entirely. But, we often think that science is observational, that it observes. And within limits, that's true. That's the Baconian [Francis Bacon 1561-1626] idea of science. Bacon's idea of science was you observed what happened and you figured out what went with what and you made generalizations from observation. But that's an extremely limited view of science and the Galilean [Galileo Galilei 1564-1642] concept is you form hypotheses, and

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you test them against observations, but you don't allow observation to provide your hypotheses. Hypotheses are developed by imagination, creative thinking. Actually, when you read the history of science, you find that they emerge in ways which you would have to almost think was God's revelation sometimes, because they show up in ways that you can't account for in human terms often. But the basic idea is that science becomes a set of hypotheses not limited to the observable, but in the end, tied to it.

And that's what makes the difference between **Empiricism** and **Naturalism**. And that's why old fashioned Empiricism is no longer thought to be a significant view. Empiricism would say that we know what we can observe. Naturalism says no, hypotheses of various kinds form our knowledge and they're not necessarily testable by observation. That turns out to be crucial because the single most important, for human life, most important hypothesis is not one that is testable by observation, and that's **Evolution**. And Evolution is the main replacement for the biblical view of the world.

Now, I won't go into that any further, but I do want us to understand, you see, that what we're up against here is not something that can even be tested by observation anymore, but rather, it's a set of hypotheses that are tested against observation to a degree. But the testing usually comes much later, and sometimes never comes, depending on the nature of the hypotheses. See, Einstein's theories were tested much later, empirically, then when they were formulated. And science generally now refers to something that is not testable by ordinary experience, but requires a system of authority and a culture that goes with it. And that is where we come into trouble. Because unless that system is subordinated to an understanding of the spiritual Kingdom of God, and the spiritual nature of human beings, unless that hypothesis system is subordinated to that, it will go absolutely wild. And there will be no restraint on what might be done. And you find yourself in the position of saying, well, we do it because we can do it. And the implications for human life, are probably ultimately catastrophic and disastrous.

So, it really turns on the fact that we eliminate the spiritual from our consideration, and then act as if somehow the physical reality was running on its own, and we're part of it, and the physical science is a part of it also. And then we run into the question that CS Lewis confronts so clearly in his little book *The Abolition of Man*. And if you haven't read that book, I hope that you might find an opportunity to read it. It's easier to understand than what I'm saying to you now, so let that be an encouragement to you to try to find that book - *The Abolition of Man*. What it does it points out what happens when you eliminate the reality of the spiritual nature of God and the person from your understanding of the world. And basically, man is abolished because nature takes over in the form of force, and judgments about value and rationality that should guide our life and could guide our life if we lived it

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in the light of the Kingdom of God, are simply set aside. So historical inevitability of a sort takes over.

The Presence of the Spirit of God — Romans 8

[45:43]

Now, I want to just remind you at this point of what Paul says in Romans 8. In Romans 8, the great difference between Romans 8 and what comes before it, is the presence of the Spirit of God. It is the Spirit that solves the problems of humanity that are laid out in Romans chapter 1 through chapter 7. And in Romans chapter 8, the Spirit of Christ moves into human life. And now then we have those wonderful words, *"There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit"*. Now just think of flesh as all of the natural human powers. There's a cut off point, what you can achieve by yourself without special assistance from God's Spirit is flesh. Flesh is often very nice. And if you study Philippians 3, for example, you see Paul talking about all of his nice flesh. And it's pretty good. You may recall, he says in that passage, *"If anyone thinks they have a right to boast in the flesh, I've got more"*. And then he begins a list of credentials. And then he says, I count all of that as dung. Now, we can't use a proper word for that in our language here. It's not fitting in church. A better word is offal, and offal is awful, but dung will have to do us here. That's flesh as far as compared to Christ is concerned. As Paul says, in Romans 8, *"the law was weak through the flesh"*. Why? Because the law is tied to what we can do, our own abilities. It can't bring us to our own aspirations of goodness and wholeness. He says, *"the law was weak for the flesh, but the Son came into the flesh, and met us that those who then walk according to the Spirit, can do the good, and the right, that is set forth in the law. For the mind of the flesh", he says, "is death. But the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace"*. And that discussion of the Spirit, now, is where we turn when we come to Christ and the knowledge we have living interactively in the Kingdom of God. That's knowledge of the Spirit. The reality of the Spirit is confirmed in our life as we act with it in seeking the Kingdom of God and finding it. So, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God". [Matthew 6:33] What does it mean to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness? They all go together. You seek the Kingdom of God by finding what God is doing, and acting with it. That's how you seek the Kingdom of God. I'll say it again. Because I find that we love the song, "Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God". Wonderful song, but how do you do it? And are we ever supposed to actually find it? Or do we just seek it? And the answer is, we're supposed to find it. And we can. It's a very simple thing. Seeking the Kingdom of God means to find what God is doing and act with it.

Now, the simple and most obvious part of that is just think of all the things God says is good and right, and invest in that. That's how you seek the Kingdom of God. And as you do that, it will be in His kind of righteousness. And His kind of righteousness is spelled out, as we said last evening — [Session 1 @ 44:10]

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pervaded with agape love. So where we are, the Kingdom of God is there. We find it where we are by determining what God is doing in that place, and acting with that, and not on our own ideas and devices.

So, if we're in a business, and we're faced with a problem, what do we do? Hire the best consultants, right? Well, who is the best consultant? Now, with that question, everything I've said in this talk comes together: Who is the best consultant? And now our faith is really tested. And I'm going to say the answer in a moment, and you know what it is already. But I, see, I don't want us to take it as a cliché when we say that Jesus is the best consultant. That's not a cliché. It's not an empty headed little bit of "Christianese" that we use to dodge the realities.

To seek the Kingdom of God means that when we are living our lives, whatever the situation may be, our eyes are upon Jesus Christ, and our expectation is from him, and we are waiting and learning to hear from him and see how he will act in that situation, and how he will communicate with us, and how that finger of God that Jesus mentioned in Luke 11 will come down in our lives. See, that's the whole story of the Bible.

Wonderful statement about Moses, I think it's Isaiah 52:8, I think, [[Isaiah 63:12](#)] where it speaks about how God's mighty arm...went at the right hand of Moses. God's mighty arm went at the right hand of Moses. And that idea of acting with God is just all through the Bible. We talked a little bit about that last night, [[Session 1 @ 48:30](#)] but you have to understand that's how we seek the Kingdom of God is, wherever we are, whatever we're doing.

Like I mean, me standing up here talking right now. What is my confidence in? My cleverness? The fact that I've read a bunch of stuff and written a bunch of stuff and all of that? Not for a moment. I wouldn't show up here if that was it. I have to trust God to act now in your heart and in your mind and do what He wants and not what I want. And my task here isn't to look good in front of you, but to be the occasion upon which God does you good, whether I know it or not. Now that's true in my classroom, that's true in my family, wherever I am. I don't want to be out there acting on my own, I want to act with the Kingdom of God.

And that kind of knowledge, when you have a people who live together and walk together with that understanding of God and understand that the Spirit as un-bodily personal power is the ultimate reality of the universe, as well as immediately available to anyone who will simply turn and count on it through faith in Jesus Christ. See, that is the body of knowledge that allows us to have guidance in life.

See, here's, here's something that's brutally true. No matter how much chemistry you know, physics you know, mechanics you know, mathematics you know,

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economics you know, or any of the other areas of knowledge, you will still not know what to do. The question "what shall I do?" is only answered by a relationship to a living God with whom I live. And in that context of prayer and action, then I am ready to see and to know what I should do by His presence with me and by His conversation with me, and by His action with me. I can watch that and live in it. I love the words of the old song, "He walks with me and he talks with me and he tells me I am his own. And the joy we share while we tarry there...", that's the only part of the song, I would say, "when we go from there", you see, because that's what life can be if we live in the Kingdom of God. And, then all of the good things that come with knowledge in the other forms, that's fine. The insights that come from art, or from science, or from history, praise God. That's something that's good. Nothing wrong with that. Just as long as that is not our faith, our trust, our knowledge for life. It's then when we give ourselves up to God, moment by moment for eternity, that the true saving knowledge of Christ in the Kingdom of God becomes a real possession, wherever we are.

Thank you. We will quit for now.

End of Session 3 @ 54:55

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SESSION 4: "[The Bible as Indispensable Source of Knowledge: The Best Knowledge on the Most Important Topics On Earth](#)" [48:48]

"From childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (1 Timothy 3:15-17)

"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success." (Joshua 1:8)

1. The human burden: To find knowledge by which to live—to find an adequate basis for life in knowledge.
2. The three sources of knowledge—of information as well as misinformation.
 - Authority, thinking ("reason") and experience.
 - Warts on Logic
3. These are intended to be used interactively. Mutually corrective.
 - What happens when not so used? Can you say 'madness'?
 - This interaction makes room for responsibility and interdependence.
 - ◆ Excessive individualism kills.
4. Since there is a personal God of love, it is natural that:
 - He would speak. "He is there and he is not silent."
 - In a permanent form (written in a human tradition, but escaping human control)
 - Generally accessible—non-ethnically formulated
 - That his book would have the form our Bible takes.
 - That we would have no 'originals.'
 - That those who wish to dismiss it can find a reason.
5. How the Bible is to be savingly used
 - With humility and openness
 - ◆ With regard to our own opinions and our traditions
 - ◆ With regard to the opinions of others
 - ◆ With intelligence.
6. We can destroy ourselves with the Bible.
 - John 5:39-47—a careful and thorough reading.
 - II Peter 3:16
 - "When a jackass looks in to a mirror, he will not see an apostle looking out."
7. The present case of what the Gospel is.—"Sin management," or life from above in the kingdom of the heavens now.



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TRANSCRIPT — SESSION 4: "[The Bible as Indispensable Source of Knowledge: The Best Knowledge on the Most Important Topics On Earth](#)" [48:48]

Welcome by Bill Dwyer of Dallas Willard Ministries

I have the privilege of being Dallas' pastor for many, many years. I knew him as a man who loved the Bible. He memorized it. Studied it. Most importantly, he lived it. Session 4 explains his life long devotion to scripture. It was not just a wonderful, devotional, book for Dallas, but an indispensable source of knowledge. See more at DallasWillardMinistries.com

Review of Session 3 by Dallas Willard

Now, I didn't quite get done with my last talk, it ran over a little bit here. So I want to do a little drag drop operation. If you're looking at your notes at the end of the third talk, because I have a couple of comments to make here that I need to handle carefully. [[See point 9 on Session 3 outline.](#)]

Godless Knowledge in the Church through Education

And one is that godless knowledge has mastered the church visible through the educational system. Here's how that works. Generally speaking, the person who is trained in a divinity school is trained by people who are themselves credentialed by the professional organizations. And so the result of that will be that they get their acceptance from a group whose standards are culturally conditioned, and are not tied to knowledge of the Kingdom of God. And this comes out in the fact that, for example, in nearly all theological schools, now, thankfully this is changing, and some nearby have changed it, there is no training at all in the spiritual life. It's all training in terms of how to run a church, preach a sermon, counsel, ancient languages, history, and so on. But the spiritual life itself is left out. Now, the spiritual life is that interactive relationship we've been talking about. See, that's it. I mean, the test of my standing before God is what I can do in the moment of need from the resources of the Kingdom of God. It doesn't matter if I do or do not have a degree in anything. And it is remarkable that throughout history, God has repeatedly chosen the people who were not trained to carry forward his work. Can any of you guess why that is true? It is because those people are the ones who often in their desperation, have to trust the presence of the Kingdom. And so Wesley's band of uneducated preachers or St. Dominic. St. Dominic, if you know, when you read in a book, and it's from a Catholic source, and it has "O P." after the name, "OP" stands for "Order of Preachers", those are Dominicans. And so Dominic got all sorts of criticism because he enlisted people without training. And he said, "we'll just pray for them". And see, and they had a tremendous effect for good. And

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through the ages. I mean, Jesus's own disciples were chosen from the very people that he mentioned when he said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit", because they had nothing going for them. They were fishermen, tax collectors, and in the eyes of the people who thought they had authority, Jesus himself was like that. And that's why they came to him and said, ask the question, "where did you get your authority?" That was the question. Now, let's see, who did you study with? That was what that question was. Who did you study with? And nobody? Nobody. And so that question keeps coming up, you see.

Base of Knowledge - Reality of the Kingdom of God

[04:15]

Now training is good if it's the right training. And, we need knowledge of all kinds, but, we need to have knowledge of the reality of the Kingdom of God. And that knowledge is systematically weeded out by a naturalistic approach to the Christian teachings. If you have that framework, you will systematically eliminate the supernatural reality of the Kingdom of God and of a living God that you are walking with if you are under a naturalist framework, and that is what has actually happened in so many, many cases.

"Constructionism" explaining Jesus

CS Lewis, you will all have heard his statement actually, I think it comes from an older writer, but he's the one who made it famous. That Jesus couldn't have been just a good man. Now, if you watch your PBS specials, around Christmas or Easter, you will see Jesus presented as a good man, who somehow, when St. Paul and St. John got a hold of him, they turned him into the Son of God. And it is it has been one of the gifts of the late 20th century to find a way of getting between the horns of Lewis's dilemma. As Lewis said, You will recall, that Jesus could not have been just a good man, he was either a lunatic or a very bad man for saying the things that he said. And now, with the science of religion, as it is sometimes call is social science methodology, which is accredited in the worldly system of authority and knowledge, that social science methodology comes along and says, "oh, Jesus didn't say those things. Those are things that Paul said, that John said, Jesus didn't say those things." So he wasn't a lunatic. He was just a early representative of the American way of life that was kind of misguided and got killed. The words that the Jesus Seminar "he's a gentle cynic". Gentle cynic. Well, you know, the woods is full of gentle cynics. There have been several thousands of them in human history. znone of them have had the effect of Jesus. But this way of approaching it says, "Well, he was a good person. And he didn't say those things." And then, of course, they are left to account for why he had the historical effect that he's had - pretty clearly the single most influential human being who ever lived on earth. And if that's a gentle cynic, we need a lot more of them like that, don't we?

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"Constructionism" of our World by Language and Culture [07:45] Cutting us Off from Realism & Revelation

And so we just have to understand that this idea of constructionism that dominates the world of learning and popular culture like today - the idea that we construct our world, or that it is constructed for us by our language or by our culture. See, that cuts us off from the realism of revelation - a revelation that says God Himself, entered human history and acted among human beings, and still does that. That's realism. And the Christian tradition is one where there is a God great enough to get past all your constructions. He's willing to work with your constructions, but he will always get through them. And the realism of revelation is what we rest on when we think about the Bible as an indispensable source of knowledge.

Intro: The Bible as an Indispensable Source of Knowledge [08:30]

And that's what this hour is about - the Bible as an indispensable source of knowledge. Okay, now go back to something I said last time, that no matter how much chemistry you know, how much psychology you know, how much whatever you know, you still won't know what to do. [\[Session 3 @ 53:00\]](#) Because knowing what to do is not the kind of thing that you can learn from that kind of knowledge. Knowing what to do comes from living in personal relationships. I'm gonna say that again.

Knowing what to do, what I must be like in order to have a good life and be a good person because that's what everyone wants.

See, I have never met a person who wants to be a bad person. I've never met one like that. Had one girl once in a class at SC that's when I said that she said, "Oh, I want to be bad." Then it turned out she had been listening to a song by Madonna I think it was, "Only bad girls are good." Isn't that the way that went? Something like that. Actually bad turns out to be good in a certain subculture of our culture.. "You're a bad man." That means you're good. So a little confusion there. But the truth is everyone wants to be good. Here's the paradox of human life: Everyone wants to be good, but they're prepared to do evil. Now just stop and think about that. And you understand I'm speaking in generalities and I hope you're an exception to what I am saying. They're prepared to do evil because they don't see how their hopes can be fulfilled if they don't.

The Form of Temptation - To Do Evil to Get What We Want [10:35]

See that's the form, the general form of temptation. That's what our friend Eve and I'm sure Adam was standing right beside her. You will remember that when Satan spoke to her, he said, "Look at this fruit." Then she said, "Wow, that looks good. Ah, good to eat. Oh, make me wise." Three things. Now, remember what John says in I John 2:16 - is there are three things that are in the world.

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Lust of the flesh. "It's good to eat."

Lust of the eyes. "It's pretty."

The pride of life. "it'll make you wise."

Three things.

Jesus was tempted on those same three points.

What was the first temptation? Bread. Bread.

What was the second temptation? Looking good, looking good. Do you remember? "Just jump off of this while people think that's great." It's interesting, you know, that's they say that's how Simon Magnus died. He convinced himself he could fly and he leapt off of a pillar in Rome. And he didn't make it?

"Well, I'll give you all the power of all the kingdoms of the earth."

See those three things. Those three things. And they come to us and say, "Well, I may not get what I want. And so though I want to be good, I better take the shortcut." Now, what is that a picture of? That is a picture of a person who can only depend on themselves. That is a person who says, "I can only trust myself. I have to take action." And if you will observe in human life, you will see that's why, though people often desperately want to be good, and why they are overwhelmed with guilt if they do wrong, in many cases, they are still prepared to do what is wrong. It is because they don't know that the Kingdom of God is available for them to live in. So they have to take things in their own hands. You ever heard anyone say "business is business"? Now, in the normal case, what is the person getting ready to do when they say that? I don't have to tell you do I? You know. And the answer to that is, "business is never just business". So you have to be wise and solidly placed in the Kingdom before you know what to do in business. They don't teach that at USC do they? They don't teach that at Wharton, or Harvard. But the truth of the matter is the reason why we are so constantly plagued with the low standards in our public life, business, and government is because people do not know that the Kingdom of God is available to live in and do not choose it.

The Bible Leading us into the Kingdom of God

[14:20]

Now look at this. To Timothy, Paul says,

"From childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate and equipped for every good work." [\[II Timothy 3:16\]](#)

How many good works would that leave out

Joshua 1:8, *"This book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth."*

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Your mouth is where it's needed. *"But you shall meditate therein."*
Some read that as you will be muttering it day and night. And I guarantee you, it'll do more for you than muttering baseball scores or commercials. You know at USC, the kids often get together and see how many commercial songs they can sing, or how many songs from old series. All kinds of silliness in people's mouths. All kinds of negative, bitter stuff in their mouth. And the word here is from the experience of the Jewish people with the law,

"This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate there in day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein. Then you will make your way prosperous, then you will have good success."

Now, that one verse is worth more than any college education you can get that leaves it out. And this is the Old Testament equivalent of, *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then everything else will be added."*

[Matthew 6:33]

Why will it be added? Because you will be walking in the current of God's Kingdom.

Now, and this is the person who can say as the 23rd Psalm,

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not lack."

The Psalmist knew that from his personal experience and the Bible is an expression of the personal and corporate experience of people who have been called into God's Kingdom, and who have been indwelt by the presence of God. And that's the Old Testament purpose as well as the New Testament - is God would dwell in us. And then individually, we each individually are a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Using the Bible as a Source of Knowledge

[17:20]

So now, we want to be very sure here, that we're just not waving a Bible flag, okay. And we're not here to poo-poo any difficulties about the Bible, or to pretend that you have to do is quote Bible verses and that will solve every problem in your life. Because that's all false.

~ Approaching the Bible Honestly in Our Own Lives

[17:45]

The one thing you have to do if you're going to get the benefits of the Scripture for knowledge is be honest with it. Be honest with it. That has a lot of different bearings to it and we'll spell out some of them as we go along. But, I want to say it at the outset just quoting biblical language, using the concepts and all of that, that is not to use the Bible as a source of knowledge. Here's what it's like to use the Bible as a source of knowledge. It is to read it with a view to discovering how God would deal with you. That's what it means. To use the Bible as a source of knowledge it is to read it as a means of discovering what God would do with you.

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And that means you with your mind, and your feelings, and with your cultural setting.

~ The Bible is More than a Theology Book

[18:45]

The great thing about the Bible is it's not a theology book. That you've read a theology book or two, you'd be thankful for that, right? It's not a theology book. In fact, there is no way of generally characterizing the Bible in literary terms. There's just no way of doing it. It has all kinds of literature in it and it can't be classified. There is absolutely nothing like it on the face of the earth. And anyone who thinks "oh, well, there are lots of Bibles", has not read them. When you read the others that are offered as Bibles, and of course, in the sense, there are other Bibles, because it just means book will know the difference when they when they compare them honestly.

~ The Bible is a Book of Life for All Humanity

[19:40]

So you come to the Bible and you see in it a life happening. That's what's going on in the Bible. A life is happening. It's a life that is for individuals. It's a life that's for groups. It's a life that is for all of humanity. The Bible is not an ethnic book. It deals with ethnicities, but it's not an ethnic book. It's a world book. The whole point is it begins with humanity and ends with humanity. It doesn't stay within a language. It doesn't stay within a culture. It addresses the universal human condition. And it does not require that someone...I mean, non ethnicity is not something that breaks out for the first time in the New Testament in the book of Acts. It's been there all along. And for a little while it was buried because God was working with a particular family, the family of Abraham. But he was never exclusively working with that family. He had a special covenant relationship with them which was precisely designed to use them as the light of the world. They were to be a light to the nations and is written right into the Abrahamic covenant, "*In you, and in your seed, all the nations of the earth will be blessed.*" [Genesis 22:18]

So, it addresses the universal human problem. And it addresses it in such a way that you don't have to be a scholar to get it. Just start reading. And some of the greatest people who have worked with the Bible have been people who could hardly read or write. But in as they read, Bible became world class literary figures. John Bunyan, for example, or other others who could read or write like Milton and others, who bring that story to the world and help people of all kinds understand exactly what it is.

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The Human Burden - To Find Knowledge to Live By

[21:55]

You see, the universal human problem is fine to find knowledge by which to live. That's the universal human problem. It's that's true if you're a bushman living in South Africa, or wherever, the problem is always to find knowledge by which to live. Now, we talked at length last night, I'm thankful you survived it, because it was quite philosophical in a way. We talked about what knowledge is. You see, that's so important, because again, knowledge is not something for scholars, knowledge is for human beings. And what scholars often have is not...has very little to do with knowledge for human beings. Sometimes it does, and it always should. But it doesn't have to be because it gets running on a different track than reality. But knowledge is for reality. See, that's what you and I need constantly is knowledge. And the burden of human existence is to get that. If we live in a closed society knowledge will be in the charge of an elite few and the responsibility of the individual will be to conform to what they're told. If you live in an open society, the responsibility for knowing is placed upon the individual and they have the responsibility of using what they can get from the elites. But, they are the ones that are responsible for the knowledge that they live by. And so they're in a position of questioning and changing knowledge. And see, this idea of research universities, that's a good idea research is a good thing isn't a bad thing. It's when research replaces knowledge that you get in trouble and wind up asking what was the research research supposed to be about in the first place. So, we have a problem here, a human problem and God responds to that problem by giving us the Bible.

Three Sources of Knowledge

[24:00]

And now, you know, the Bible itself has all kinds of things happening in it - reasoning, personal experience, as well as authority. And those are the three sources of knowledge.

1.) Authority: what we learned from other people. I have learned today about some people that were picked in the NBA Draft. I know that now because I read the newspaper. And that's knowledge, but it's on authority. I didn't find it out by reasoning. I didn't find it out by experience. I wasn't there to see it happen. But I do know it and I know it on the basis of authority. Now, nearly everything we know we know on the basis of authority. But, authority has always to be open to question because authority represents power and power exercised by human beings deviates from truth in favor of desire. There's an old story. It deviates from truth.

2.) Reason: So it must be open to question and we have the power of reason to carry through with the questioning and that God has evidence, our ability to think our ability to think is our ability to see connections, to trace out the kinds of things that go beyond anything that we could test by our personal experience just by

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thinking. The tremendous power of mathematics, for example, and of theories that come to us in the form of the sciences. You see, that's, that's our power of reasoning.

I love the words of Isaac Watts, about logic. He says,

"The great design of this noble science is to rescue our reasoning powers, from their unhappy slavery to darkness. And thus, with all due submission and deference, it offers an humble assistance to divine revelation. Its chief business is to relieve the natural weakness of the mind by some better efforts of nature. It is to diffuse a light over the understanding in our inquiries after truth, and it renders its daily service to wisdom and to virtue."

You see, straight thinking we need to bring to the Bible. The Bible does not displace thinking. It provides a field of play for thinking by providing truth that cannot be arrived at by thinking. But still, it says, "Come now, let us reason together." [Isaiah 1:18] You see, reason, is one of the great sources of knowledge. And much that we know we know by reasoning.

3.) Experience: And then the third source is experience. And that's just examining particular matters of fact.

And those are the three great sources of knowledge. And we bring them all to the Scripture. The Scripture tells us about a reality. By our reasoning, we compare Scripture to Scripture, and we make connections, and we relate to truths of scripture to other things that we know. And then we take what we have learned and put it to the test of experience. It is one thing to know that there must be a God. It's another thing to experience the action of God. And we need both of those. We need both of them.

All Three Sources Used Interactively

[28:10]

And now, none of these are safe alone. They are meant to correct one another. And they're intended to be used interactively. So, you don't read the Bible thoughtlessly. You don't read the Bible without experience. You don't want your experience without thought you don't want to experience without authority. You need all of them. They are to be used interactively. The Bible without reason or tradition never really helps us. In fact, I would be willing to say it never really happens. You see, we hear people...we used to hear people who still do in some parts of the woods, who would say, "Now, I'm not telling you what I think, I'm just telling you what the Word of God says." This, see, you can't do that without thinking. And if you try to do it without thinking, you won't say anything worth hearing. And then you have to and then you have to relate it to your experience. And that's why Jesus says in Matthew 13 that a scribe that is instructed in the Kingdom of the Heavens is like a

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householder that brings out of his house things both old and new. That is to say out of your own experience. You teach about the Kingdom of the Heavens. You can't teach about the Kingdom of the Heavens unless you experience it. You have to experience it and that experience has to be thoughtful. And that thought has to be fed by the teachings that come from God through the Scripture.

What happens when you don't use it interactively is always some form of craziness. Madness. And you know, there is such a thing as religious craziness. And you're sure to get it if you try to use one of these without the others. If you try to use experience without this authoritative word of Scripture. If you try to use reason, always go the same way.

There's a book that's recently written called [Voltaire's Bastards](#). And, bastards here means illegitimate children, but actually, I think they were not illegitimate. Voltaire walked right into it. And it's a story of what happens when people try to run their life on theories that they just reason out. And it's one disaster after another. And, I encourage you, if you want to look into this matter, to see how that works. Also, another book that's very helpful here is [Paul] Johnson's book, [Intellectuals](#).

~ When Experience Lead Our Lives and the Church

[31:00]

And that, but unfortunately, you know, I suspect you all know people that have taken one or another of these things, perhaps not reason, perhaps experience. The drug addict is a person who is leading their lives in terms of experiences, feelings. Feelings. Addiction is always about and you can become addicted to religious feeling.

Let me call to your attention a parable of modern church life - a movie that is called "[Sister Act](#)". Watch "Sister Act" and think about the church. And see if you don't recognize something there that is tremendously instructive about how church might be done in our times. And it's 100% in terms of feeling. See, we have made the mistake of trying to manage people by working on their feelings. It's always a terrible mistake.

If you want to help people, you change their beliefs. You change their beliefs, and their feelings will follow. It's a very interesting thing. You cannot manage your thoughts by managing your feelings. But you can manage your feelings and your actions by changing your thoughts. And that's why the Scripture comes to us with law and gospel, with teaching of wisdom and history because it wants to help us have different ideas. It wants us to see different things, to enter into a different world.

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~ Jesus Offering Life in the Kingdom of God

[32:35]

See, the people around Jesus, they were constantly being shocked by the different things they were seeing. I mean, the the fact that Jesus didn't pay much attention to whose company he was in. This was a terrible thing for people. Now, it was a wonderful thing for the people who were normally outcast. And they were so happy they were delirious. Because here was someone who was obviously a person that, as Nicodemus said, a man sent from God, and he could sit right down with an ornery, old tax collector and have a nice lunch while everyone else was standing over here are these righteous people stand up and say, "*Oh, this man receives sinners and eat with them.*" Say, that's shocking. To see Jesus, his whole gospel was that the Kingdom of God does not draw those distinctions. "Whosoever will may come." And when you read the gospels...now, we want to remember what we said last night about the message of the gospel and how people pressed in. When you read the gospels, you see one after another, the people who are coming to Jesus are precisely the ones who couldn't come on the other story. The little leper. Little leper coming. Little lepers aren't supposed to be coming, they are supposed to be going. Here comes a little leper in Matthew 8 and says, "Master, if you would. Not that you would, but if you would, you could heal me." You remember that story? See, that really shakes people's ideas. He put his hand out and touched him. And everyone else was going, "Uhh, what's he doing?" See, he was living in the Kingdom of God. And he's giving a different story. And on his authority, people see different things, think different things. And then some of his friends, they start doing the same things. They start putting it into practice. That's experience.

Authority, reason, experience. You have to take all of them to the Bible. And if you take all of them to the Bible, then it makes a wonderful combination of access to the life that is in the Bible. See [this interaction between authority, thought and experience makes room for responsibility and interdependence. and freedom in the Kingdom of God.](#)

~ Our Personal Experience with the Bible

[35:30]

So for example, you as an individual, you're not waiting on someone else to act. The kingdom is open to you now. You read your Bible, you listen to God, the Holy Spirit speaks to you, you step out in action, and the authority and the reason and the experience comes together and gives you a whole life. That's how the Bible works. And the Bible was not primarily given to us for scholars. Scholars make it a football and there is a place for scholarship. But the Bible is primarily given to pastors and teachers in the local congregations to hand on to the people to fill out the body of Christ in that local place. And when we use it as it is intended, that will invariably happen. The knowledge that is contained in the Bible is not from any

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other source. Read any other book you want, religious or not religious, you will never find in the Bible, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son", you will never find that. And in a situation where I'm often where they're talking interfaith or diversity, or whatever, they want to say, "oh, you know, all religions are the same." So, well, now which let's see which one is it that says, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever put his confidence in him would not perish but have everlasting life." Guess what? Nobody can find another that says that. They're not equal. Now, that's not a point of pride. That's a vital point of information. So we don't say that, "Oh, well, you know, we're better." No, the point is, we have the responsibility of information. If there were, for example, the treatment of AIDS that someone had discovered, and it actually worked, it would not be considered a matter of pride, would it if they said, you know, none of the rest of these work, but this one doesn't, here's how it works?

How the Bible to be Savingly Used: Humility & Openness [37:55]

Oh, unfortunately, we have too much pride in our denominations, as well as between our religions so we don't, sometimes even Christians don't get around to discussing the essential point about knowledge - knowledge of reality. Because pride gets in the way. And this is a terribly unfortunate thing. And we need to say something about that, namely, that if the Bible is to be savingly used, it must be used with humility and openness. Humility and openness. Humility and openness with regard to our own opinions and our traditions. Now, we have several thousand different Christian denominations, and all of them are right. In fact, all of them are better than the others. Right? Now, that seems to me like God's way of reducing something to the absurd. And what we have to understand is that we are not, we are not saved because we're right. If we're right, it's because we're saved. And we need to lay down the burden of being right, and stick to the opportunity to be Christlike. And whatever we need to be right about in order to be Christlike, let's trust that God will lead us into it. And there is a necessity that we find a way of knowing about Christ and trusting him. But normally, when we come to trust Christ, we don't know much about him, except in the words of Muhammad Ali, "He's the greatest." Christ is the greatest. That's what I knew as a nine year old boy. That's what I was sure of. And that is where I started from, and then you can grow from that and you know, what we teach? It's important that we teach what is right. But you can be saved and believe a lot of things that are wrong. I pause over that just because I think you may not have heard that said before, and you need to think about it. But when we come to understand the path of salvation, relying upon Jesus Christ, that's what we need to understand.

~ The Problem of Reaching Muslims and Others with Christ [40:30]

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Now, let me tell you some things that scary. You see in the world today, a major problem is how to reach Muslims with Christ. And do you go in and lay on them correct doctrine? Well, if you do, you're not going to get much of a hearing. But, if you go in and you simply present Jesus Christ in the gospels and let the word and the Holy Spirit work, then people are drawn to Christ. You may know that in many parts of the Muslim world, especially east Africa, there are a lot of Muslims that are being converted by Christ appearing to them in dreams and visions. And if you're involved in that part of the world, you probably know about that. And see, so, Christ draws now same way with the Bible. We come to it, we don't come to it with this attitude, "oh, we got to get it all right." We come to the attitude there's truth here. There's life here. There's reality here. I want it. And above all, I am prepared to change my own views. If I see that the Bible teaches something different than what I believe. So Jesus, was confronted with people, and he said to them, "*you search the Scriptures, because in them, you think you have life and you will not come to me that you might have life.*"

~ Regarding the Opinions of Others

[42:00]

You see, we're in a very delicate balance here. We have the authority of the scriptures. But it isn't something that we defend as much as something we respect and enjoy. And it has an incredible power to take care of itself. And so we respect it, and we approach it in that way. We also hold lightly to the opinions of others. We try to be open, we try to be humble.

~ Use the Bible with Intelligence & Practice

[42:40]

We use our intelligence, we put it into practice. When Jesus said, "If you if you abide, in my words, if you dwell in them, then you are my apprentices. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." You see, he wasn't talking about a nonstop Bible study, he was talking about putting his words into practice. And are we do have to be perfectly right to do that? Well, I hope not. I'd like to see the people who are perfectly right, no, you get perfectly right in the process of doing. You dwell in His words. That makes you an apprentice as you put them into practice dwelling in the means to put them. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. And that attitude of humility, can you can recommend both to people who profess to be Christians and those who are not someone who's not a Christian say, Well, have you put his words into practice? Would you be willing to try it? And say, Well, I don't know. Well try it and see what happens. Then many people can approach Christ in that way, where if you approach them with all the right doctrines, they will never be able to make contact. The right doctrines come out at the other end of the pipe. At this end of the pipe, it's need and hope that is inspired by the Christ that is presented in the scriptures, and in the Christian life. And if we don't do it that way, then we're apt to find that we are destroying ourselves by

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Careful study of the Bible. And there have been multitudes of people who did that. But their careful study was directed towards firming up what they already knew must be true. And so, if you're any kind of religious person, almost, you can do that. And the scriptures are remarkably malleable. II Peter refers to the fact that people rest with the Scriptures to their own destruction. The medieval saying that used to be used was, "*when a jackass looks into a mirror, he will not see an apostle looking out.*" And that idea was that when you look into the Bible, be careful because you may only see yourself looking out. Only humility and openness and the grace of God can save us from that fate.

Three Forms of the Gospel

[45:25]

Now just finally then, we see so much of this in what is presented as the gospel in our day. The Gospel in our day is presented in usually in one of three forms.

1.) One is the form — *you take care of your church, and it'll take care of you.* It's a very old form. And actually, it's not restricted to one denomination. You'll see this view presented in many, many denominations. I've even seen it presented in Baptist denominations which would profess to be just exactly the opposite.

2.) Another version is *liberation*. That's the gospel of the left. Jesus is in favor of liberation. He is in favor of liberation, just like he's in favor of the church. But that's not the gospel.

3.) And then, finally, *the gospel of forgiveness of sins*. He's in favor of that, too. That's essential. liberation is essential. But forgiveness of sins is not the gospel. The gospel is — you can now live in the Kingdom of God by putting your confidence in Jesus Christ. The life from above will come to you in the new birth and you will not only see, but enter the Kingdom of God. That's the good news. That I can take my life into his life. That I can lead my life in terms of the great Trinitarian family. I can live in that. I can draw on it for insight, or resources or direction. And in everything I do, I can know the power of the Kingdom of God in my present living. And when we turn ourselves over to Christ, that's what we get, and that's what the gospel liberation comes with it, church comes with it, forgiveness of sins comes with it. But the basic reality is knowing the eternal life of God flowing through me now.

Closing Prayer

[47:45]

Father, we pray that You would help us to understand the absolutely unique and precious possession you have given us in the Scriptures. And that we will take our minds and our lives to the Scripture and bring it in just like that verse says, "This Book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth". And allow the order and power of Your Kingdom to be the order and power in which we live with complete hope and joy and confidence inspired by the presence of your Spirit and the Word as the flesh and blood of our actual life. In the name in honor of Jesus, we pray that Amen. Thank you.

~ ~ ~ End of Session 4 @ 48:35 ~ ~ ~

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SESSION 5: "[Reason in Human Life and Religion; The Redemption of Reason](#)" [51:45]

"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, well-pleasing to God, which is the rational thing to do. And do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renovation of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is—that which is good and well-pleasing and perfect." (Romans 12:1-2)

1. Reason is the mental power to trace out connections in reality. It indicates the human destiny appointed by God.
2. It is so powerful that it leads naturally to self-deification. *"Now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them."* (Genesis 11:6)
3. Pride stands in opposition to humility of mind, so necessary for human relations.
4. Reason is limited by the necessity of having premises to work from, the difficulty of correctness in inferences, the willingness to know truth that contradicts our desires.
5. Wesley's comments on what reason cannot do.
 - Give a clear and satisfactory evidence of the invisible world
 - Produce hope for life eternal and everlasting
 - Produce the love of God, love of neighbor, virtue, or happiness.
(See his sermon: "The Case of Reason Considered")
6. These incapacities are not just due to the nature of reason, but to how it is used by human beings who are distorted by evil.
7. How "education" as a strictly human enterprise fails.
 - It cannot get the true premises to work from and is corrupted by desire.
 - Plato ([The Republic](#))
 - Rousseau ([Emile](#)) and Schiller ([Aesthetic Education of Man](#))
 - Current Scene
8. Some primary issues:
 - What is the human being for? —The "Nothing" answer of today.
 - ◆ To love God and enjoy Him forever?
 - What is wrong with the human being? Sin.
9. "Education" is, no doubt, the solution, but which Education?
10. The Redemption of Reason through—
 - Making love of truth and faithfulness to logic:
 - ◆ Part of one's moral identity—what I must have to be a good person
 - ◆ Supported by faith in the God of truth.
11. The reasonable person is the one who is devoted to truth, and to finding it and living in it by all available means.
12. Only confidence in God makes this possible. He is the God of truth. Truth sets his people apart. (John 17:17)



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TRANSCRIPT — SESSION 5: "[Reason in Human Life and Religion; The Redemption of Reason](#)" [51:45]

Welcome by Bill Dwyer of Dallas Willard Ministries

In part five your interest is going to be gripped by Dallas' discussion of human reason where it has gone wrong and how it can be redeemed.

Introduction — Knowledge as Interactive Relationship [00:47]

Thank you very much. And it's good to see you again. And we're talking in these in this series about knowledge of Christ in the contemporary world. And the issue underlying the whole series is this issue of knowledge and what it is. So we need perhaps to be reminded that knowledge means an interactive relationship. And that's true, not just in the case of Jesus Christ, it's really true in relationship to everything. And that's why for example, if you have a course of information on something, you always need a practical component to put you in touch with it. And you can have people lecture you on even mathematics, which is about as abstract as knowledge gets, as long as you want. But then it really comes home when you go to the board, and then you have to figure it out, and you have to work with it. And it's that kind of interaction with the subject matter. That means real knowledge, true of everything from the alphabet on up. I mean, you know, the alphabet. How did you learn the alphabet? Well, you all probably remember how you learn the alphabet, you remember that? It was an interesting part of life, isn't it? And you learn how to make those letters. See, that's practice that's you're intimately interacting with the alphabet when you do that. And then when you grow up, and you talk and linked and write, you're still doing the same thing. That's just a little...

People often say to me, you know, they write about writing books. Writing books just becomes a habit. And once you get into it, it's hard to stop. But that's because of the intricate involvement with it, you see, and then it takes a life and carries on, really very much of its own.

Knowledge is like that. What we call head knowledge probably isn't even knowledge — it's the capacity to recite. And our school system, and our educational system is so focused on that. Now, of course, we don't recite, like we used to recite used to mean stand and deliver to take the name of the movie, if you remember, remember that movie. "Stand and Deliver". Now you recite on test. That's the same thing. I often joke with my students after they hand in their tests, "do you believe what you wrote?" And they all look at me quizzically and kind of laugh because they know

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that they don't have to believe what they write. They just have to know which of the answers are the right answers. Needless to say, they don't know what they wrote either. They just know that these are the these are the things you say.

That affects our religion a lot. And and you know, it's some people, I think, often suspect that they're going to have an examination in heaven, or to get into heaven or something of that sort and question it will they know the right answers. But it really isn't like that. Knowledge is interactive relationship. It's an awareness of things on the basis of experience and thought. So, when we talk about knowledge of Christ in the current world, we have a lot to overcome really, a lot of misunderstandings about what knowledge is. And we have to get away from this idea that it is kind of recitation. And it's really interacting with the subject matter. And then to know a subject matter is to be able to represent it, think about it, work with it, as it is on the basis of appropriate thought and experience. That will always involve truth. And so truth becomes a really big deal.

The Battle Between Truth and Falsity

[04:52]

So, now, in the warfare we live in as human beings and if you don't know we're in the war, check the morning newspaper and you'll see. I'm not referring to Iraq, I'm referring to the human condition which is a constant warfare. The warfare we're in there's a constant battle between truth and falsity, things that pose as knowledge but aren't and things that are real knowledge. And that's because our action in our life runs on our belief and we try to get to knowledge because knowledge will give us secure beliefs. The problem was with with mere belief is it's not stable. And you remember James talks about that, doesn't he? Yeah, unstable, "*the double minded person is unstable in all their ways*". He says, No, see that you see the connection there. Because when you have double mindedness, it affects all your ways.

Jesus used a similar teaching, remember, he said the light of the body is the eye. And if the eye is clearer than the whole body is full of light, the eye is not clear the body is in real trouble, isn't it? You see how that works. And it's so important, I think, to understand that the people who wrote the Bible were deeply thoughtful people who really understood important stuff and were rooted in real life. And because of that, they give us knowledge that we can take, and then put it into practice and use our reasoning on it, and come to the place to where we have a firm grasp of the truths that are essential to living and to living well.

So all of those questions now that we brought up about:

What is reality?

Who is well off? What is the good life?

Who's a good person?

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See all of that then, the answers to those rests upon the teaching that we receive and what we learned by experience and what we think out and, and so that's the way things go.

Leading Us to Believe Falsity

[07:12]

Now, there's another side to this, which is the side that's set on leading us to believe what is false. And I wanted to begin this morning just by looking at Paul's language. In II Corinthians 10. It's very familiar, you may not want to bother to look at it. Maybe just jot it down - II Corinthians 10:3-5, Paul was very conscious of the kind of problem about knowledge, false knowledge, belief, very conscious of what we talked about last night, [\[#3 @ 03:40\]](#) especially at the end about there being a battle and how Satan works through ideas. And if you can get the ideas set, right, he can sort of take a nap and evil will just run on its own. And it will run in terms of ideas and the associated images and patterns of reason and feeling that governs the will of human beings. And when you see a situation where someone is doing some terrible thing, whether it's Saddam Hussein, or whoever your favorite bad guy is, or just some pathetic individual it's winds up in the newspaper because of something terrible that they did. Back of that will always lie, a set of ideas and images. And that is the ultimate control system.

Paul - II Corinthians 3 - Battling Knowledge Fortresses [08:38]

Now listen to what Paul says here, verse 3 of II Corinthians 10, and following, "*For though we walk in the flesh...*" That's where we live. Walk always refers to living, we walk in the flesh. "*We do not war in terms of the flesh.*" Your translation may according to it's the Greek term "kata", which I think is most helpfully read in many of Paul's passages as "in terms of". We don't war, we don't carry out the battle we're in "in terms of" our natural abilities. And that's what flesh means — our natural abilities. Remember that flesh is not inherently bad, it only becomes bad when you trust it. And when it serves the Spirit, and then flesh is good, it is God's creation and it's designed for an eternal destiny. Even that is very great. So, we we walk in the flesh, that's where we live. So we're surrounded by natural abilities and nearly everything that we do involves our natural abilities. "*We do not war in terms of the flesh the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh.*" Again, we need to translate it because we have such a hard time keeping that clear. The weapons of our warfare are not natural human abilities, no matter how well refined, they're not natural human abilities. And the temptation to revert to those is something we have to constantly deal with. And we put our trust in them. As we said last night from Romans 8 [\[#3 @ 45:43\]](#) the mind of the flesh is dead. There's no more to it than that. Natural abilities are limited.

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And he says, "*but divinely powerful for the destruction of strongholds*" or fortresses. And there are places that are very resistant to truth, very resistant to trust. And where we're pointing our finger mostly in this discussion is in the idea system that dominates in our culture. We don't want to be mean and unpleasant about it, but we do have to recognize that there are sources of authority in our culture that are opposed to God. They're there, and they work constantly. So that's what he's talking about, "we are destroying speculations". And I'd like you, especially this morning to note that word "speculation" because we're going to be talking mainly about reason. And speculation is a matter of getting a larger view. We talk about a "spectacle". And one thing a spectacle cannot be is small. Did you know that? A spectacle cannot be small. It has to be big. It involves some sort of spread. And the Greek term "theoria" is a term that refers to an expansive view of things, encompassing, taking in. That naturally tends toward what we've called "worldview" which is the overall orientation of our life. That expresses itself, usually without our thinking about it, because it's just embedded in our whole being. Speculations. "We are destroying speculations." Isn't that an interesting phrase? We're destroying speculation. Well, that's where the fortresses are. And speculations are wide ranging views that may or may not be true. And they serve other purposes than truth.

"We're destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God."

See, that's what we've been talking about — knowledge of Christ in the contemporary world has a set of speculations that are raised up against knowledge of God. And a lot of that has to do with the very interpretation of what knowledge is. You remember that last night we talked about the question, "Who gets to determine what knowledge is?" And, in general, today, the assumption is - the Bible does not. The Bible is not knowledge. That Jesus himself is not a very intelligent person and isn't a source of knowledge. He's very nice, but not very smart. Almost no one will say, "Well, he's not a nice man." I mean, you have to really have a profound education to get to that point. Very few people make it. But very few people also understand that Jesus is the most intelligent person who ever lived. He is. So he really knows (Am I blowing up?) [[in response to an alarm going off.](#)] He really knows the truth that will guide us in life and so we come to Him, we approach that, we approach him in terms of knowledge. What? The knowledge of God.

You remember, one of the things that he said when he came was, "Forget everything you think you know about God." And that's a big offload, isn't it? All the things we know that ain't so about God. And Jesus was very conscious that the deepest problems in our knowledge has to do with God, and misinformation or lack of knowledge about God. And so he addresses that and Paul addresses that when Paul goes out into the world. As we again read last night, the rulers of this world did

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not understand that he was the prince of glory, and that he really knew what he was talking about. And they had their own ideas, which belong to this age, which is passing away and they crucified Him because of that. And, you and I might experience something close to crucifixion today, for the same reason, and many people in the world do experience persecution and death because of it.

Okay. *"We're destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God. And we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."*

That's, see, that's the center, that's the source of our life is our thoughts. The Gospel comes in the form of a thought. "God so loved the world that He gave His only son." His that's a thought. Right? Now, it comes to us with the administration of the Spirit of God, and impacts our lives, and if we then allow our will to relent and accept that, then we are on the path to an ever fuller knowledge of God in the sense of interactive relationship. If we can't accept that, then we are left to ourselves and the highest object that we can find to devote ourselves to will be us. And then everything else will be out of orientation, out of sync, because that we are taking as the ultimate point of reference, namely ourselves. That's what happened, of course, in the garden.

Reason Defined

[16:50]

And now once that happens, then we are left to our reason. And one we want to talk about reason that some length in this hour. Let's start with the statement:

"Reason is the God given power of human beings to see connections and incorporate them in mechanisms to extend that power to indefinite lengths."

And we can really appreciate this today when we know about computers. So when you...mathematics develops very slowly, but it began, maybe around the time of Abraham, or even before, it's very crude. But it was a discovery of reason that enabled people first of all, to just keep track of their commercial accounts. So the Sumerian clay tablets that nearly everyone learns about in school, those were primarily account ledgers, government or business. And to see, unless you have some kind of mechanism, you can't keep the connections before you because the truth is, our mind, like our will, is in itself very weak and very small. And anyone who counts just on their mental powers alone, without help from language, symbolism, or nowadays, computers, is, of course, pretty quickly in trouble.

And so reason now is fundamental to dealing with life. It is not a bad thing. Let's say at the outset, there is no such thing as a conflict between faith and reason. So let's say that again, because it's often said, you know, that there's a conflict between faith and reason. There is no such thing as a conflict between faith and reason. The conflicts come when reason is not used rightly. When you misuse

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reason, you're not only gonna have conflicts with faith, you're gonna run into the wall, probably. Reason is something that can be misused, but when it is rightly used, it never conflicts with faith. And I'm going to go back and remind you that faith in biblical terminology, is not opposed to knowledge, it's opposed to sight. And actually, faith is the instrument, if you wish, the organ of the human self that allows you to find appropriate premises, beyond the visible world, from which reason can then work to enable us to apprehend more and more comprehensive truth. Just God himself. I mean, you have to really think about God if you're going to get anywhere with him, and thinking wrongly about him can tie you in knots. And does that regularly. And as I said last time, [\[#3 @ 03:40\]](#) Satan is very much at work in this area. He wants to give us false ideas, which when we begin to reason with them, will defeat us and lead us astray.

So now, the verse that I have here on the page from Romans 12, is put in terms of reason.

"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice well pleasing to God, which is the rational thing to do."

Now, see that you will only do that if you have God in the right place, because there's no have gotten right place, your body will be in God's place, which is what we have in our society today by and large. And that's one reason why we live in a sensualistic society, not a new thing. The story in Romans 1 is a story about the descent into a socialistic society where feeling governs, where the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life are what make up the social system, say that's now once you have gotten in the right place, then you see, the reasonable thing to do is to submit your body as a living sacrifice, that is something given to God, it's alive has a life of its own, and that life is caught up in the life of God. And you will notice here how that's to be done.

"Don't be conformed to this age." That means don't be conformed to the way of thinking, which is, if you if you wish normal in this age, and that means the age we're living in to, *"but be transformed by the renovation of your mind."* Now, we, I think all of us here in this group are familiar with that teaching but we do need to think about what that would really mean to have a renovated mind. And it would mean that it would be a mind occupied with truth, and one that thinks straight, thinks correctly, and is not governed by false images, but is in control so that that mind, which the will has to work from, see your will has to work from your mind. And again, that's why Satan is so busy about ideas. Because, if if when you're in a situation, and the only thing you can think to do is something wrong, you'll do that.

And so what are the alternatives? Well, that only comes by a renewed mind where the primary source of the renewed mind is the Bible. And that's why the last talk was about the Bible was wanting to set that up and make sure about it. [\[Session #4\]](#) And we tried to emphasize the how your use the Bible is with humility and

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openness. There's much more that can be said about that. But that's the main thing. Use it, first of all, but then use it with humility and openness and be teachable and that will be a primary instrument in the renewal of your mind and, when your mind is renewed, you will be able to prove the will of God. Now, see that that doesn't come first. You don't first prove the will of God. You first give your body a living sacrifice. And then through the transformation to the mind you become you come to the place to where you can verify you can prove what God's will is. And God's will is of course expressed in the law. It's expressed in the teachings of Jesus. It's expressed in an easy example. It's expressed in the letters that are written by Paul and John and the others, Peter. So, that's the will of God, but you prove it in life and that's where it becomes knowledge.

So for example, suppose someone take a verse out of Paul, where he says, "*Lay aside anger.*" Well, you have to prove that, don't you? A lot of people don't believe that. And now Paul rather naturally says "*Now lay aside anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, false talking, seeing you put off the old man with his deeds.*" Whoo, wait a minute. Okay. Okay, I must be true, because Paul said it. It's in the Bible. But wait a moment. I haven't proved it yet. How do I prove it? I prove it by thoughtfully putting it into practice. And finding out how to lay aside anger. I have to test things out. Like for example, many people honestly believe they could not live without anger and they have thoughts like for example, if you're not angry, you can't stand up for justice. And we now have a society that is sick with battles over justice because it's intermingled with anger. So, you have to find for example, that everything you can do with anger, you can do better without it. Not being angry doesn't make you some kind of pushover, some sort of Casper milk toast, as we used to say. Does anyone know Casper milk toast anymore? We used to say Casper milk toast, and you know, milk toast is pretty malleable, shall we say. But no, no, actually you don't have to be angry to be firm.

I was counseling a couple of years ago, and they taught me such an interesting lesson because they're having trouble with their son. And after a while I said, "Well, why don't you try punishing him when you're not angry?" And they said, "What? Punish him in cold blood?" You see, that's interesting. Because if you're in hot blood, it seems like you're justified in what you're doing.

You know, people talk about righteous indignation. I've never seen any unrighteous indignation. All the indignation I've ever seen has been righteous in the person who was caught up in it. And check it out yourself. When you're angry, do you ever feel, "oh, this is I'm not justified." No, in the moment of anger, you always feel justified. So you see how you learn. That's what's called proving the will of God. And we have to use ruse reason to do that.

Reason — To Fulfill the Creation Covenant

[27:00]

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Now, the function of reason is to enable us to fulfill the creation responsibility of Genesis 1:26. [[See Session 3 @ 36:58](#)] And we need to look at that, and you'll see that we were given a real big job. When God made us and put us upon the earth,

His image on us was, in fact, dominion, or rule. In verse 26, of Genesis 1, he says,

"Then God said, Let us make man human beings in our image, according to our likeness. And let them rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps up on the earth."

Now I ask you, isn't that what we do? We rule over the fish. We rule over the trees, we rule over... Now, the trees and the fish are in real trouble. Because we're trying to run our kingdom instead of God's Kingdom. But rule does not mean do what you want to. It means be responsible for. Now, if we have the responsibility for the fish, there's a lot of fish aren't there. And so we need this ability [[Dallas points to the definition of reason on the white board](#)] to carry out the creation responsibility.

The human being is fundamentally creative will. And that happens immediately. A little child comes into the world...if you saw that beautiful little creature that came in here and gave me a hug. Now when she could almost do nothing else, she would want to give you something. If she was eating a cracker and you walked up, she'd like for you to give it back to but see, it's just built into us. It's built into us. We want to do, to give, to create, and so a little child makes things. We go through life making stuff. We want to make stuff. That's very deep. That's that's the image of God in human beings is to want to make good things.

What Human Beings Are For

[29:12]

That's what and now you test out the stuff I say to you, okay? You take it, you observe life, and read your scriptures and think about and see if this isn't true. Because really, one of the problems we need to talk about if we can today is the problem that is posed by the fact that people can't figure out what human beings are for. This is another one of the great fruits of intellectual development in the Western world. What are human beings for? Well, this is what they're for. [[Dallas points again to the definition of reason and "Creation Responsibility" on the board.](#)]

They're to be responsible for the world around them for good and that is the basis of morality in the nature of the human being. So the good person is the one who is responsible.

Self-Deification: Thinking We Can Change Anything (Point #2) [30:15]

Now, we run into all kinds of problems when we turn away from God and we try to use our reason on our own but the problem is not with reason. The problem is with the use of reason, and the misuse of reason. And that runs into problems like the

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Tower of Babel. I mentioned here Genesis 11:6 wonderful words. God looking at people putting up the tower of Babel says, "*Now nothing which they propose to do will be impossible to them.*" And that in a word is what modernity means is that we can change anything. So, there's DNA. Change it, right? Brain chemistry, change it. Can we clone people? Let's do it. Because there's no overriding check on it. If the human being is supreme, then what the human being takes it upon their head to do, let's do it. Right. So why did the guy say? Why did you climb El Capitan? "Well, it was there." Now, we use that as a joke. But it's no joke. It's no joke. What that man was saying, "Well, because it challenged my will." See, that's the human way. That's the Frank Sinatra version or the Burger King version, "Have it my way." That's the Burger King version of human life, or the Frank Sinatra version. Frank has a better song though the theology is equally bad, "I Did It My Way."

The Limitations with Reason (Point #4)

So here's some of the problems with reason. [\[Dallas wrote 4 points on the board.\]](#)

1.) Connect Starting Points

[32:10]

Reason has to have starting points. You can't deal with connections until you got something to connect. And so starting points. We would call these "premises" in logic, starting points. And if you start at the wrong point, no matter how furiously you reason, you're in trouble. And in fact, the best thing you can do is to slow your reasoning down, that way you will postpone your trouble. And so this is this is really difficult. In the book I mentioned last time, a *Voltaire's Bastards* [\[Session #4 @ 30:00\]](#) is a story about mistaken starting points, among other things. Voltaire - the reason we mention Voltaire is because Voltaire is the one who is, he's apparently paradigmatically thought of as the rationalist, that is the person who uses reasons. And he, of course, is one who brought much of this idea that there's an inherent conflict between faith and reason into vogue.

2.) Keeping the Chain of Connections

[33:20]

Second problem keeping the chain of connections, right. You have to make sure that the connections are all there and that they link up in the way that they do. Now, here's a real tragedy, because you see, one of the things that has disappeared from education in our day is logic. Don't teach logic. You teach method and the method is the accepted procedure in the discipline. But that isn't necessarily logic. Talked a little bit about judicial logic last time and about the reasoning of judges [\[Session 3 @ 28:00\]](#) and what dominates is accepted procedure in the legal profession. But legal reasoning is not necessarily logical, because it is it is it has different objectives.

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For example, the object of the legal system in part is to get a decision and that becomes an overriding consideration, and you wind up defining justice as due process. That's an interesting idea. Due process is not necessarily just in any other sense than that's what came out of the end of the legal pipe. As you see, if you don't have a rigorous sense of logic and you're able to follow it. We don't teach that anymore. That goes into what we were talking about earlier about how today the standard of reasoning is not how you reason, not your argument, but the conclusion you come to. [[Session 2 @ 2:25](#)] If the conclusion is not right, the reasoning must be wrong. But that's because they have no sense of logic here.

3.) Desire

[35:04]

Then desire gets in the mix. And desire will not necessarily like the starting point. I mean, if the starting point has to be, "God is God, I am not." Well, that can be disappointing. I might not want to start because comes to me and says, "now you know, what you want isn't exactly the ultimate issue." And fact, might be a real problematic one.

4.) Pride/Willfulness (Point #3)

[35:40]

So desire and then pride and willfulness. See these are things that cause reason to go wrong and cause us to misuse reason. Pride is a tremendous problem because it stands in opposition to humility of mind and there's probably nothing more necessary to loving relationships than humility of mind. You ever notice a child, if you tell them something they didn't know, they normally will say, "I know." Do you ever notice that? "I know. I knew that." That's very deeply rooted in human beings. Not to know is an insult to our pride. And children feel it inherently. They feel it very, very early age. And of course, knowledge is so important to. I mean, I don't mean to downplay, it's very important. People who have near death experiences when they come through them, and come back, they nearly always say that two things I have not done justice to in my life. And I'm going to now. One is knowledge and the other is love. And that interesting. That's just a little empirical tidbit there to think about.

And see if these things get away, then knowledge puffs up. And it's only love with knowledge. Now love doesn't exclude knowledge. In fact, love requires knowledge. As love means the will for the good of the object. Now, in order to love, I have to have knowledge to know what is for the good of the object, don't I? So love naturally requires knowledge. The problem is that knowledge can function independently of love and when it is guided with those things, [[Dallas points to the four points on the white board](#)] then it causes real problems.

Summary of the Limit of Reason

[37:45]

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So then, reason is limited by the necessity of having premises to work with, and we have to have the right ones. If we have the wrong one, then we're off in the wrong direction. It is troubled by the difficulty of correctness and inference, and it is troubled by the willingness, the fact that willingness to know truth contradicts our desires. The bitterness of truth is that it is utterly unyielding to desire. You cannot change what is true because you don't want it. All you can do is deny it. And so that's why we say sometimes that you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you flee. And if you're fleeing from truth, then reason will become an instrument for the wrong thing. And so that's how we get in such trouble with reason is we're really not honest with the truth in the first place, and then we start reasoning and our reasoning becomes something else that we have another word for it — our reasoning becomes "rationalization". Rationalization means you're using reason to justify something that is unjustifiable.

John Wesley on Reason (Point #5)

[39:10]

I've given some comments here from John Wesley's sermon on the case of reason considered, and for just your future reference, I really encourage you to read the sermon. Wesley has a very balanced view in which he tells you how great reason is and then he lists some things that cause problems that people try to force reason where it can't.

~ He mentions that reason cannot give a clear and satisfactory evidence of the invisible world. Now we've talked about giving an evidence, but you see, it doesn't give you enough. [[Session 2 15:55 - 51:00](#)] It gives you enough to make you uneasy if you're smart. And you will realize that this as the scripture says, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but it's not the end of wisdom. It's not the end, it's the beginning. It's where you start. You start to get smart at the point where you realize God has a perspective on me. He has something in mind for me. I better pay attention to this. See, that's the point at which you begin to get smart. That's like for example, now that's a correct starting point [[Dallas points to "Problems" point 1.](#)] and if you will reason from that starting point, and let your experience and your reasoning grow, then you will come out at an understanding of God that is very solid.

~ Wesley says it can't produce hope of life eternal and everlasting it can't. This is one of the things that comes from the teaching of Jesus, and we will be talking about it next time or the time after. But one of the things that comes from the teaching of Jesus is the assurance, the knowledge of life, beyond what we call death. And reason can't do that on its own humans struggle with that is unceasing and on successful.

~ Reason cannot produce love of God, love of neighbors can't produce virtue can't produce happiness by itself.

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How Reason is Misused (Point #6)

[41:22]

Now, these inabilities are not just due to the nature of reason. I want to go back and emphasize that reason itself is a good thing. You just don't want to use it for everything. You don't use a dining fork to pick your teeth, I hope. See, the dining forks are perfectly fine. That's not a problem with the dining fork. That's a problem with the use you're making of. And so we have to understand that about reason.

Education Failing as a Strict Human Enterprise (Outline #7)

[41:55]

Now, education, of course, is the field where we now supposedly receive knowledge about how to live. And what we have to say is very simple — education as a strictly human enterprise cannot succeed and it cannot succeed because it cannot get the correct starting points. [\[Dallas points to Problem #1 on the white board\]](#) The tragedy of Western culture is going to be that the people who knew the truth about God and human life threw it away and turned to an education without God. If there's a future in which history will be written, that will be one of the greatest tragedies and people will see that the incredible miseries of the 20th century and, who knows about the 21st, are due to that one fact. And so nationalism, racism, genocide, all of those things are based in a denial and an ignorance of the truth about God and about human beings that is contained in the Scriptures. And we are now in a situation in this country where you cannot find a basis for equal rights. They're proposed simply as something that is founded on law. But then, of course, there is no foundation for law. And the things that we hold dear, ethically and culturally, all derived from the Christian tradition, and now they stand without a foundation. And you have to give the devil his due, and poor Nietzsche, Frederick Nietzsche, Nietzsche is often dumped on and perhaps he should be, for some reasons, but you have to give him credit for understanding what was happening and for knowing that the change that had come was going to have incredibly disastrous consequences. And of course, he had no way at all to provide an alternative foundation but you have to give him credit. See, we are now skating on thin ice, and the ice is getting thinner, and it's getting thinner not just because it's getting unChristian itself. No, unChristian isn't the adequate word. It's getting thinner because it has departed from the knowledge of God and the human soul. That knowledge is now lost to education.

Primary Issues (Point #8)

[45:00]

I don't want to try to take time to go into that any further except to say primary points about this have to do with things like "What are human beings for?" There is no teaching based in knowledge that is conveyed through our educational system as to what human beings are for. And the idea that lies back of this is that there is not a human nature, there's no human nature. See, all of this is necessary in order

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that freedom should be exalted. Freedom and pleasure are exalted and when you exalt those, then you have to set aside nature. And so you hear the slogans like, well, all the differences of race and gender and so forth that we hear constantly about, these are constructions that are not nature, and in themselves, there is no such thing as human nature. And for all you would know, they would think maybe a human being could be a Brussel sprout or a squirrel or something like that. Now, of course, the Christian tradition the the destiny of man is to love God, to know God and enjoy Him forever. And in that context, to love and serve.

Another thing is wrong, of course, is there's you can't acknowledge sin. Today, educators are like farmers, who can't acknowledge bugs and weeds. And so all they know to do is pour on more fertilizer, makes the weeds grow better and the bugs happier. They said, Well, you know, there is there are bugs. Oh, okay. Well, there are weeds. Well, maybe we better do something about those. But see, we cannot acknowledge sin. And that's the general thing that lies back with the problem of evil.

Education is the Answer. Which Education? (Point #9) [47:00]

Other things that we could mention are well, things like the disappearance of logic, from education, and also the disappearance of any sensible moral theory in education.

So, what we have says, I think, put very simple education is the answer. The question is which one? Which education? Education, if you mean coming to know the truth and living in the truth, hat's the answer. But if you mean by education, a form of teaching that has no basis in the spiritual nature of God and man, and the reality of the moral law, and the purpose of human life founded in that, then education is not the answer. Education will simply produce more clever sinners and you will see that doesn't help people.

~ The Problem of Depression [48:00]

So, for example, what our situation today in this culture is that depression is epidemic. And in fact, now, the last thing that came out of the JAMA or whatever the journal is, the Journal of the American Medical Association was worldwide it is the leading cause of illness depression. Where does depression come from? Answer? Hopelessness. Hopelessness. And, then there's a whole framework of emotions that go with that. And you say, Well, it's a brain condition. Sure, it's a brain condition. If you get hopeless, it will affect your brain and then your brain will fit into the cycle and you'll have problems getting it regularized because, you know, the brain is a big gland. It's a chemical factory and the primary interface between the human soul and the body is the glandular system. Now, that doesn't mean you

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shouldn't do what you can for your brain to help it get back on a happy path. That's fine. There's nothing wrong with that, but we're not going to solve the problem just by manipulating the brain. The real problem has to do with the sense of hopelessness that is now people are burdened with almost well from their youth. If you just look at the billboards that have to do with things like avoiding pregnancy, and so on, you think about how a child feels when they look at that. They are raised in a world in which they're constantly told there are too many people with no place for them. Then, we've got the foundation for depression begins to step up.

Offering Our Bodies as Living Sacrifices (Points 11 & 12) [50:00]

So now, let's just say that offering our bodies as a living sacrifice to God, that is the key. We have to have the knowledge of God to do that and we began to use our reason rightly when we see things in the light of God and the spiritual nature of the person. We have to have confidence in God and we have to get that through Jesus Christ, we have to live in the truth and the truth sets us apart. As Jesus prayed once again in John 17, "*Sanctify them by Thy truth.*" See, truth is what sets people apart. Because when they hear the truth, they live in a different way. And they have a different source of life. The interaction between them and God brings the necessary truth and light into them and the energy is provided from the source of life, and God Himself. And then we learn how to do that and we find every means to maximize the life of Jesus and ourselves and in the life of others. And when we do that, we lead a reasonable life. "Come now let us reason together", God says. Reason in the light of faith, the knowledge that we have, by our understanding of God gives us what we need to lead a reasonable life.

Thank you.

~ ~ ~ End of Session 5 ~ ~ ~

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SESSION 6: "[Moral Goodness and the Degradation of Morality by Desire and Human Supremacy](#)" [1:01:08]

'Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.'
(Romans 13:8)

'...that the requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.' (Romans 8:4)

1. Who the morally good person is. One who is intent upon promoting human goods (including good humans) that are effectively in one's reach, in their relative degrees of importance. A morally evil person is: One intent upon destroying human goods. It's really very simple. Every child knows.
2. Some cases of human goods: physical necessities, health, knowledge, varieties of experience, loving family relationships, social openness and stability, etc. etc.
 - On "leaving the world a better place." "Contributing."
3. The basic moral conflict in human life: Between what we want and what we know we ought to do to further the good.
 - Some historical "solutions":
 1. Aristotle—Good habits
 2. Hobbes—Fear
 3. Butler—Conscience
4. One must know that reality is on the side of the "ought," of the demand to do what we do not want to do. "Ought" is always derived from an "Is." Hume's foolishness.
5. Morality is invariably degraded by human supremacy, which means the supremacy of human desire—the contemporary outlook, but as old as humanity. *"Fleshy lusts which war against the soul"* (1 Peter 2:11). The "three things that are in the world": *"the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life"* (John 2:16)
6. What it means to say that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. (Prov. 1:7)
You cannot start somewhere else and get to wisdom, to knowledge of how to live.
7. Compared to Luke 14:26: *"If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."*
(Compare Matt. 6:33)
8. "Ought" can only be derived from an "Is." The "is" of God's kingdom, in which I am perfectly safe and have no reason to do anything other than what is right. Compare "Business is business," etc.
9. What happened to moral theory in the 20th Century.
 - The moral consensus of 1880-1900.
 - The surrender of the spiritual nature of man.
 - Moral theory without a moral subject matter.



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TRANSCRIPT — SESSION 6: "[Moral Goodness and the Degradation of Morality by Desire and Human Supremacy](#)" [1:01:08]

Welcome by Bill Dwyer from Dallas Willard Ministries

What happened to moral theory in the 20th century. What a title...

Introduction by Dallas Willard - Great Moral Darkness [00:25]

All right, this is a discussion of "Moral goodness, and the degradation of morality by desire and human supremacy."

Our situation today is one in which there is great moral darkness. And you might be surprised at this when you see what a moral fuss is constantly made in the news, because everyone is always picking up on somebody doing something wrong, or they think someone is doing something wrong. But that actually is because moral discourse is such a powerful force in attacking others, and justifying ourselves. And that is because of this deep nature of the human being that requires acceptance and not rejection and morality is the fundamental level of acceptance. When people accept you as a good person that meets the deepest hunger of the human soul. That means that they will regard you as something to be treasured, to be emulated, to be supported, to be praised, to be associated with, and to be regarded as not a good person has just the opposite connotations. It's because morality is so powerful that is so constantly in the news. And of course, you know now, the first commandment of news is to get read, to get watched, and that will explain to you why the topics on your evening newscast are taken up in the order they're taken up. Somebody has made a judgment that these are the things that are most likely to get people to watch. And then they will string you along by telling you they're going to show you something which they may not even have time to show you. But, it's human well being and human well doing that forms the focus of natural human life.

The Loss of Moral Goodness Today [3:15]

And we want to talk about what moral goodness is. And the situation that we're in today is one where, because of the misguidedness of reason, we have lost any body of moral knowledge, any substantive body of moral knowledge that we can refer to, and teach people as if it were truth and reality. Reason would lead us back to this if it were used rightly. But, reason is not what is dominant in our culture. Technology has a certain dominance to it and efficiency. What is sometimes called instrumental reasoning. Max Weber (1864-1920) is the famous philosopher who analyzes reason in terms of efficiency and that efficiency is sort of the logic of technology. But that

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is not a logic of life. And it is not a logic that has a morality to it. Moral understanding requires an understanding of human ends of what human life is about, not just how you get wherever it is you want to go, which is all the technology can tell you.

CS Lewis, in many ways, I think was a real prophet and in *The Screwtape Letters*, again, he has Screwtape giving Wormwood his protege a bad time because his protege has tried to use argument to mislead his "client" as he calls him. And Screwtape says, he says,

"You're on the wrong path", he says, "It sounds as if you suppose that argument was a way to keep him out of the enemies..." (Now the enemy here is God, you understand?) "...out of the enemy's clutches that might might have been so if he had lived a few centuries ago. And at that time, humans still knew pretty well when a thing was proved, and when it was not. And if it was proved, they really believed it. They still connected thinking with doing and were prepared to alter their way of life as the result of a chain of reasoning. But what would the weekly press and other such weapons we have largely altered that. Your man has been accustomed ever since he was a boy to having a dozen incompatible philosophies dancing about together inside his head. He doesn't think of doctrines as primarily true or false, but as academic or practical, as outworn or contemporary, as conventional or ruthless. Jargon, not argument, is your best ally in keeping him from the church. Don't waste time trying to make him think that materialism is true. Make him think that it is strong, or stark, or courageous, or that it is the philosophy of the future. That's the sort of thing that he cares about."

He goes on to say, *"The trouble with the argument is that it moves the whole struggle under the enemy's own ground he can argue to. Whereas, in really practical propaganda, the kind I'm suggesting, he has been shown for centuries to be greatly inferior to our father below. By the very act of arguing you awake the patient's reason, and once it's awake, who can foresee the result."*

Now, what the situation we're in with reference to morality, is one where jargon has replaced reason and the result of that is that the very simplest elements of a moral understanding of life have been lost.

The Goodness of Love in the Bible

[7:49]

On your seat here, I give you Romans 13:8,

*"Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another,
for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law."*

And Paul goes on to talk about how if you love people, you do what is right by them. And we would need to rehabilitate the concept of love in our situation because part of what has happened is that very concept, which is fundamental to

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moral understanding, has been robbed of its meaning. So that love means something like desire, or liking. You love something if you like it. You desire it. And for example, it is hardly true to say to someone now, "Because I love you, I am going to not do what you desire." Whereas any sensible concept of love will mean that in some circumstances, because I love you, I won't do what you want. So, we have to rehabilitate that by adjectives like "tough love". But actually, it's not tough love, it's love. And let's just say once again what love is — If you love something you are set to promote its well being. If you love something, you are set to promote its well being.

And see, that's the basis of the saying that used to be accepted which is "you love the sinner and hate the sin". But since the concept of the self has so thinned out that people cannot distinguish themselves from their actions, you can't say that any longer. Because you will get back you can't...you can't love me and hate what I do. We used to say "love me, love my dog", right? Now, the dog has been transferred into the ego, so that I can't separate you from your dog and say, "I love you, but I hate your dog".

Well, this is just a part of the kind of general landslide that we've been in in our understanding of the self. And Paul goes on to say in Romans 8:4,

"The requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

You see, that's where spiritual life now comes in to make morality actual, to make it real. Because if you're going to love, you have to have the resources with which to love. You have to be in a position of understanding and feeling and habitual practice that allows you to be someone who effectively wills the good of another. Because if you're not possessed of love down to your toenails, the occasion will come when you are incapable of acting in love. So, it's the transformation of the whole person, by living in the Spirit of Christ, that makes it possible for us to be good persons.

The Loss of Moral Goodness in Our Education System [11:15]

Now, then, if we have taken that out of our educational system, if we say that's no longer a body of knowledge, then we're left in a position of inventing our own morality. And that's basically what we do on our campuses is we say to young people, "now, just don't hurt anybody." Isn't that an interesting phrase. "And don't interfere with other people's freedom." Of course, there's no way you can not do that. But that's the kind of ideal — do what you want. So the wants of the individual are made supreme. And of course, especially young people, they don't know what they want. It's pointless to say to someone, "Well, just do what you want" when they don't know what they want. And the result of that will be that they will be led to act on impulse and impulse will always defeat love.

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The central issue in morality is how to find a way of not doing what you want to do, and of doing what you don't want to do. Now you go back, and you read — start with Plato for kind of philosophical ethics. Certainly you see that if you take any of the religious texts that have appeared in the history of the world, and certainly with our Bible, you will see that that's primary. That there is no point to a morality that does not enable you to do what you don't want to do and to not do what you want to do. The primary issue of morality is how to deal with impulse and desire and direct it towards what is good. And then the teachings about how you do that give you different theories. The so-called "Silver Rule", "*Do not unto others as you would not have them do unto you*" comes out of one of the great religious traditions." It isn't the same as the "Golden Rule", "*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*" it's actually quite a different rule. One is defensive. And the other is, as we say today, proactive, which is a good word, actually. And so we are stepping forward for the good of another person, not just, "Well, I'm not going to do to you what I don't want you to do to me." With all that, if that's all you have, you're going to have a pretty weak moral system. It's basically means don't hurt anybody. Well, what about helping anybody? You see what about there? You have to have a positive conception of the good.

The Nature of a Good Person

[14:05]

Now I've written up here [\[on the white board\]](#)

A good person is the one intelligently devoted to the promotion of human goods for those around them.

Because I want to make this specific. And really, the good person is the one who is conscious of the welfare of themselves and others. We should act for our own welfare, that's a good thing. We're not called upon to brush somebody else's teeth. I brush my teeth. And others should brush their teeth unless there's some special difficulty and then I might help them with that. Let's see, we are primarily responsible for our body and how it works out into the world and among our duties is to take care of that. But there comes a point at which there are greater goods. And sometimes it may mean that I sacrifice my well being, my welfare, and any ethic that does not provide a place for the giving of one's life is a deficient ethic. And that's caught up in Jesus's teaching. "*Greater love has no man than this that he laid down his life for his friends.*" [John 15:13]

Now, you see if you're the king or queen in your world, that will be impossible because there isn't anything higher than you. But if you're living in The Kingdom of God and you've learned that there is a Kingdom of God and that actually God is taking care of you, if you put yourself in His hands, well then the time might come for you to give your life for something that is good.

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That is one of the hardest things to conceptualize now in our culture. Experiment with it with young people. I know that many of you are teachers, and you have leaders in various sections. It's a really a good exercise to say to a group of high schoolers. "Now, what would you be happy to give your life for?" Then just get a discussion going on that it actually helps them because many of them have never had a chance to discuss that. And they really are at a loss to think about it for a while. And you see this now this is comes more and more to the fore in a time where we're in now, where we're one of our one or more of our soldiers is usually killed each day and the attitudes that people have towards that. Very interesting to observe. I'm not trying to take a side on that particular issue. But I am saying that there should be a point at which one would say, "I would gladly give my life for this." What...there ought to be something in any life, where that's true. And in the way of Christ, it's the welfare of one's friends is enough to do that. That's enough. It might not be the only thing. The truth, for example, one could this, by the way, is another nice thing to discuss with young people.

Would you die for truth?

Would you die for freedom?

Would you die for pleasure?

Just go through the list. It's a very good thing to help them think it out.

A good person is one intelligently devoted to the promotion of human goods for those around them.

I've given a little more detail here on the sheet.

The morally good person is one who is intent upon promoting human goods, including good human beings, (because among human goods, are prominently, is other good human beings)... that are effectively in one's reach, "in the relative degrees of importance."

That is, these are things you can actually do something about. And, for example, in Jesus's teaching, a lovely illustration is John 13 where he talks about washing one another's feet. And, and actually, what we were likely to forget, in that context is their feet needed washing. They weren't wearing Nikes. So when you came into a house, your feet usually needed washing. They had something on more like that, you know, the dirt could get through it. [\[Dallas lifts his shoe and looks down.\]](#) And so this was a very homely but meaningful thing. That was a human good. And, of course, they were caught up in pride, and they were not going to wash one another's feet until Jesus got down embarrassed them all. Because I mean, you know, what they were thinking was exactly what he wanted them to be thinking, "Well, I should have done." But they were all caught up in the pecking order and they were not going to do them.

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But this is what a good person is, and I say "*in the relative degrees of importance.*" So that's why I put the word "intelligently" in this. See, moral goodness requires rationality. You cannot be an irrational person and be a morally good person. Now, in a very homely way, that just means that you're thoughtful. It means you see connections. Remember how I stated "rationality". [\[Session 3 @ 45:30\]](#) You see connections. That means you see what matters to people and you have an appreciation and understanding of what things are more important than others. And, you are now then set to act and and there will be varying degrees of that.

Moral Goodness in Professions

[20:00]

Like in your profession, you will be serving some really important things in the life of other people. I mean, that's what the profession is about, isn't it? So, the standard old professions - clergy, law and medicine, I mean, they obviously are serving some importance. But, think, for example, about journalism. Now, here's a very interesting case. Journalism doesn't quite make it into the list of standard professions but because there really isn't a specialist body of knowledge on which it's based and in terms of which people can be licensed. So, we don't license a journalist in our country. But sometimes you think we might do well. Because suppose there was a way of holding people responsible. Then, perhaps, we wouldn't have people manufacturing stories for one thing. But see, we haven't...there is no standard there to judge journalists except success. And yet how important it is, you just think of the role that journalism could play in informing people of things that really mattered instead of "the truck ran into the Taco Bell". If that matters to you, it's probably because you were already there. But oddities. So, when I watch the news, often I think of the old sideshows that they used to have on the circuses that ran across the country. "Come see the lady with the mustache", or whatever. And, and so often. But, it could be so important. We need a generation of journalists who will arise and be faithful to find and proclaim the truth about what is actually happening, you see, instead of just sort of waiting for things to happen, that are colorful. Well, that would be a great good, wouldn't it?

And actually business and professional life and community, these are all dimensions of what it is like to live together in love. And the meaning of our vocations are — these are avenues for us to be good people. That's what one's business is about. It isn't about profit, though profit is fine if it's kept in check by the desire of service. So, then when you had profits that would be to take adequate care of you, of course, but also to reinvest in helping others. So, if you have that understanding, then morality is a simple thing. And really it is. It is a kind of way of saying, "Here's what we live for." And then you need the background of teaching about reality and about God in order to do that.

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Cases of Humans Goods

[23:17]

So, I mean, a really outstanding moralist in Europe by the name of Emmanuel Levinas. You would guess from the name, probably, that he is a Jewish rabbi. Was. He recently died. Lived until he was over 100 years. One of the best things that's happened to European philosophy in the last century. And Levinas takes his start from the moral demand that the other places on us to feed them if they're hungry. Now, once again, you have to have a really deep education not to immediately see, "yes, you ought to give a hungry person some food." And Levinas is quite merciless, and insisting on this because he knows how moral theory has got lost in all kinds of other issues to the point of where they could stand a moral theories could stand and wonder about whether or not you have a duty to feed someone who's hungry. And I like to stay with the simple things. You notice the way I put it, "Devoted to the promotion of human goods" plural. If you start with good abstract, you may never figure out what it is, and in fact, that is what has befallen our contemporary culture. They've tried to figure out what "good" is. And, since they've already adopted empiricism as a mode of knowledge, they can't figure out what it is, because whatever it is, it is not sense perceptible. You can't smell it. You can't touch it, feel it, kick it, measure it, drop it into a test tube to see if it turns blue, or whatever. You can't you can't deal with good in that way. And so, I'm I don't want to drag you into that particular dimension of philosophical work, but you need to understand that that's where we have come is where people think you have to settle what good is generally before you deal with the issues of specific goods. So, we can think of things like food, water, rest, health, knowledge, varieties of experience — very important, especially in families.

Moral Goodness in Loving Families

[25:25]

Loving family relationships, social openness and stability, knowledge of God — see, all of these are human goods. These are things that people need. And the morally good person is the one who in their capacity and in their situation where they can effectively do something about these They devote their life to that. And, see, that now, we've had so much political stuff about family values, that one hardly knows what that means anymore. But, family values are basically the values that define family relationships and this is just exactly what we're talking about here. The person, man, or woman who works earns money, provides, looks after, and so on. See, that's the heart of moral goodness. And that's why the family is so important is because it is the basic place that we do this, and it is given to us as children and as we grow older. One of the main functions of older people is to have someone to take care of. And at both ends of life, that's how we are. We have to have someone to take care of us and then we take care of others and that's the basic structure of love.

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I like to talk of "Circles of Sufficiency". And in one of the chapters in [Renovation of the Heart](#) on social relations, I put it in those terms. [Chapter 10, p. 180ff] It's a wonderful sufficiency that you see among people who are caring for one another. And, of course, the mother and the child, and the father and the family, however you structure those relationships. And there are real issues about that, but love would see to it that that was done well and rightly. Unfortunately, it often isn't in a fallen world. And so, Jesus teaches us actually, that we have to come to Him to learn how to live in families and how to really love one another. Now fortunately, that is in many cases, not as necessary in others, because many people just naturally know how to do that and they haven't had their heads messed up with a lot of abstract talk, so they do it pretty well. And that's good. With family, you see, defines that kind of life. And so you see family relationships used in the scripture to teach us how to behave, how to regard... men should regard women and so on. And then the kingdom of heaven is presented to us as a family, "*Our Father who art in heaven.*" And Paul says, speaks of God's fatherhood and says, "*after whom all families in Heaven and Earth are named*". He uses that language in Ephesians. [3:15] And what he's saying is, well, that sets the standard for the kind of love that informs the family.

Moral Goodness in Loving Our Neighbor

[28:40]

And then of course, that's to be extended to our neighbor and our neighbor is the one who is close to us. Neighbor is "nigh bour" — the person who is close to you. And of course, Jesus redefines neighbor in the parable that we call the Good Samaritan. And in place of the question, "Who is my neighbor?" puts the question "To whom will I be a neighbor?" You remember how that story goes? And so it is living in that relationship of love. And we naturally feel this, I think and where it was, for example, people will quite naturally say, Well, I'd like to leave the world a better place. I want to contribute, I want to count for something. And that's a reflection of the basic nature of our moral being. As we have been created, we are not islands, we are deeply embedded in the life of others. And the whole distinction between my well being and the well being of others is one which in the end cannot be drawn. Because the well being of others and our well being are so intermingled, that we have to take care of both in order to take care of one. And that's just built into the nature of life and it reflects itself in the teachings about love.

Moral Goodness in History with Christianity

[30:10]

Well, I, we can talk a lot about the attempts to solve the problem historically. How do you get to be this kind of person who is careful of the good of others? I mentioned Aristotle and Hobbes and Butler here as different ways of thinking about that. Aristotle's "good habits have good laws that supposedly forged your soul right, and you're a good citizen and a good everything else." And unfortunately, that does

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not work. And that's what was found out by Aristotle and Plato and the other Greek thinkers because they realized that they could not bring that about. It was nice to talk about, but to put it in place was impossible. And the collapse of Greek ideals that led to the ascendancy of the Christian teaching is a major transition in human life. And so in place of reason, which we've talked about, [\[Session #4 @ 25:20\]](#) and [\[Session #5 @ 16:50\]](#) Aristotle and Plato tried to put everything on reason, and on love of the good and based on reason, you have a teaching about a God who loves and sends His son, and establishes a community on Earth, that is also of heaven. We have two cities - the City of God and the city of man. We live in the city of man, but we're of the City of God, and that city is eternal, and we live from the eternal point of view.

Christianity: Reality is on the Side of the "Ought" [31:38]

And the teaching that Christianity gives you is a teaching that says "reality is on the side of the ought." Ought is not something that hangs in thin air. And in fact, if we had time and interest, it would be nice to look at all of the thinkers that we know as moral thinkers to see how every one of them including David Hume, who is normally thought to be the one who says, "You can't get 'ought' from 'is' " actually gets ought from is you cannot get off from anything else. But it is because of what we are that we ought to do what we ought to do. And no thinker succeeds in avoiding that point. Every ethical theory is built upon a theory of human nature. And that's true right up to the present. A theory of human nature and that's where we go back to this issue of getting the right premises for our reasoning. Because if you don't have the right premises for your reasoning about that, you will wind up with a system that is unable to capture specific duties and place them in the context of life, and teach us how to be comfortable and strong in doing those things that are good and the things that are right.

Morality is Degraded by Human Supremacy - "Desire" [32:57]

And this is what has happened in our day. We have a sensualistic culture, as I've said, and morality is degraded my thinking of the human being as supreme. And when you do that, then morality has no point of reference other than human desire to go on. And usually it will turn out to be the desires of the stronger that dominate. And to have just to have a framework of thought, such as you have in the United States, and certainly it comes mostly from Christian Europe, a framework of thought that allows you to get beyond the idea that the human will and human desire is the measure of reality and obligations. You just have that is a great treasure. And that's basically what we've lost. And when you exclude the Bible from education, that's what you exclude. And it would be wonderful if something better was coming around the corner, but it isn't.

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The Loss of Moral Goodness in the Market

[33:58]

And so, then you develop a system where production and consumption is the only principle and the economy is based upon the market and not upon moral principles. Now, the market itself is an important subject, But it is not a moral teaching. And it was never intended to be by people like Adam Smith and others who understood the importance of the market. Because Adam Smith supplemented his teaching about the market with a moral theory of sympathy and identification with others that allowed people to go far beyond market forces to govern their relationships. And that, of course, was because Adam Smith existed fundamentally in a Christian frame of mind, the frame of culture.

Moral Goodness from Desire or Love

[34:53]

So we have to understand that that morality is degraded when it is governed by the supremacy of human desire alone. What's the alternative? Love. And that's why it's so important for us today to understand that desire and love are not the same thing. Desire is not bad. Did that again is one of the things that distinguishes the Christian teaching from stoicism, Buddhism and various other forms of "ism". Because for example, for Buddhism and stoicism, the desire is bad, you need to get rid of desire, just get rid of it is the teaching for the Christian framework is that desire is good and essential that indeed you can't will anything unless you have desire. You have to have ideas and desire in order to will anything. And if you're going to be a life affirming person, you have to have desire, but then desire is not an end in itself. See, desire is in the category of the flesh — natural good, but you don't put that at the top of the ladder. You put love and the spirit at the top of the ladder. And then you've got the framework within which desire can prosper, and be good and performance function.

So it's very important. Now if we don't, then I give you here, I Peter 2:11, *"Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul."* So, if all you have is just desire, it will tear your soul to shreds. And that is, again, what we see constantly around us. And we see people who are lost in the desires. They're trying to satisfy their desires and that's the only thing that they have to guide them. And the effect of that is that they are lost. And lost means they don't know where they are. Lost is not a matter of where you're going to wind up. Lost is I don't know where I am. If I don't know where I am, I can't even use a map. And then maybe I don't have a map. Or maybe someone tells me that the map is not knowledge but religion. And there's separation of church and state. So I've got a map, but I'm told it can't be used. The the lost person is someone who does not know where they are and when you are left trying to satisfy your desires only, then you don't know where you are. And that's true of the individual as well as the culture. Because, they have the problem of knowing which desires to satisfy, and which ones are to be ranked below others.

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And that is impossible to solve unless you have something more than desire to guide you.

And we've already mentioned [[Session #4 @ 10:35](#)] John's statement [[I John 2:16](#)] the three things that are in the world, "*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*". Now, that is actually one of the finest statements on the nature of a strictly consumerist society you will ever find. I enjoy the times I get to come by Fashion Island down here. [[Retail Shopping in Newport Beach, California, U.S.](#)] Partly because within a few minutes, I can see several hundred thousand things that I neither want nor need. A few things that I both want and need. But, it's wonderful just to see all the things I don't need. And it's great to have such a profusion of things available. But you know, suppose that's all you had and "Fashion Island" turned out to be the place you go to worship? Or to do things that make you feel good about yourself. Well, then you're in real trouble. And basically, that's where we are when we don't have a knowledge of God that allows us moral direction in our life.

Jesus Teaching Moral Goodness

[39:05]

So, then now, when Jesus comes to us, the call to straighten our morality out is to become His disciple. And that is why he hits us so head on in Luke 14:26,

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father, mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

Now, all of you know, I'm sure that he does not mean hate, in the way that we would normally take that language because how can you do that? If love is your actuating principle, see? So, so you have to understand the way Jesus teaches. And this is important to talk about just for a moment. Because if you don't understand the way Jesus teaches, you often will be totally incapable of getting what he's saying. So how does Jesus teach? Well, you know, to begin with, you want to remember that they didn't have recorders. They didn't have ballpoint pens. They didn't have notebooks or handouts. They had to get it like that. And...it isn't just Jesus, but you will notice that all of the great classical teachers of the human race are people who say things in ways that sound kind of strange, and that's because the way of teaching had to be one where you wouldn't have any problem remembering what he said. Now, do you think the people who heard Jesus say this had a problem remembering it? No, they didn't, it was so shocking, they couldn't forget it. I'm supposed to hate myself. I'm supposed to hate my father and my mother. See, they didn't have to let me, let me write that down so I can take it home. So they didn't have to do that. They would remember it. And in general, the way Jesus teaches is to take whatever balloon is floating by and just let the air out of it. He takes the assumptions that we make. The assumption in this situation is, above all else, you ought to love your father and mother. You understand the

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culture involved here enough to know that. You ought to be loyal to your family. And Jesus says, "You have to hate them." What he meant was, "you have to value me enough to let them go if you need to do that to follow me." It's very important to understand this because it has caused so much trouble in discipleship. I think most people just sort of skate on from this verse and they get down to one that says, "you have to forsake everything you have." And then they can't quite skate past that one. And so we get the ideology of "poverty as a form of holiness". That is put on the teachings of Jesus - you have to forsake all that you have. Well, what does it mean to forsake it? And then they will go to the rich young ruler, who was possessed by his possessions and needed to get rid of them literally, and say, "That's what it means." So where would that leave us? Well, when we would become mendicants. [\[beggars\]](#) We'd have to live by begging. And so that is then thought to be.

How Jesus Teaches about Goodness

[43:10]

See, that's all the confusion about how Jesus teaches. Also, in Luke 14, [v. 12-14] there's an interesting passage there because he actually tells you that when you have a dinner, you should not invite your friends or relatives. Remember that one? And depending on your friends and relatives, you might be glad to see that. He's not saying that. He said that, but that's not his what he's saying. And that's what you have to get from Jesus's teaching. When he says something, but that's not what he's saying. And that's how really great teachers teach. And if you've had, in your educational experience, really good teachers, they are people who are able to say things in a way that they really strike home. And you have to understand that about Jesus or you miss the point of all of his teaching. And some of you who've read [The Divine Conspiracy](#), you know, how I present the beatitudes in chapter four of that book. And the chapter and the Beatitudes have become not a blessing but a burden to endless generations of people. Because they say, "Oh, well, I better be poor. Well, I'd better mourn. Don't laugh. Woe be to you that laugh now."

The Cost of Discipleship and Non-Discipleship with Jesus [44:35]

And now anyone this is where this goes back to our teaching last night about the sources of knowledge, authority, reason, and experience. [\[Session #4 @ 24:00\]](#) So you have to have gone mad on something to bring out of Jesus's teachings, things that are obviously contradicting everything he stood for. So you have to be very thoughtful about how he teaches. And when Jesus makes the statement, he's talking about how you can succeed as his disciple. He's saying, "*if you want to be my disciple, you have to have nothing more important than being my disciple.*" Now, because that's so important, I want to say it again. Here's what he's saying in Luke 14 is, "*if you're if you're going to succeed as mine disciple, there must be nothing more important than being my disciple.*" And let me just add this, I don't

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believe Jesus is saying, "If that isn't true, I won't let you be my disciple." He's saying, you can't, you can't be it. You can't be my disciple. Like a person who had math teacher who might say, "Verily I say unto you, unless thou canst, do decimals, thou canst not do algebra." And he's not saying I won't let you. He's saying, "No, you just can't succeed." So go back and take care of that.

And that's Jesus is teaching the great parables: the parable of "The Pearl of Great Price". Do I mention that here? Somewhere? I think I do. But you will remember the pearl merchant who found this beautiful pearl. Then he went home and scraped together every little dingy pearl that he could find, and put them all together and bought the Pearl of Great Price. And now the point there is that this fellow was not griping about having to get rid of all of his little pearls. He understood what a tremendous opportunity he had. And that parable is teaching the same thing as Jesus is saying here in Luke 14.

So, how do you make a disciple? You ravish them with the Kingdom of God. You present Jesus Christ and His Kingdom in such a way that they say, "Ah, I can't miss out on this. I can't miss out on this." And perhaps they begin to see all their dingy little pearls for what they are and they're not moaning and groaning about what's going to happen.

See, we have to understand that when we count the cost of discipleship, you also count the cost of non discipleship. And that's the common thing that is missed is understanding what you count the cost of following Jesus, you don't don't just look at, "oh, I've got to lose this, I've got to lose that I'm gonna lose. And probably you don't even have to lose that." But you have to not put it in highest priority. No, you're saying, "Look at what I gained." You see when you count the cost of discipleship, you also have to count the cost of non discipleship? What's the cost of non discipleship? That's what Jesus is talking about here.

Now, you see, you have to have radical surgery on a soul that has been wrapped up in itself and thinks that it has to take care of itself. You have to have radical surgery to move to the point where you're easily do this, where you just routinely do that. And you have to have a form of training and teaching that allows you to step into doing good for others and for yourself, because that's sometimes appropriate. And being ready when it is appropriate to even sacrifice your good, even your life. And when you begin to do that, well then you see how the "ought" is derived from the "is" because the "ought" is derived from the "is" in the Kingdom of God. And it's the blessing of the Kingdom of God when we have learned to take our life into it. That allows us to easily do the things that we know we ought to do. And if you don't have that, then it's tough. It's impossible, I think.

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"Ought" Derived from the "Is"

[49:25]

And I often again, when I teach ethics, I'll often ask the class, "Do you think morality is a good thing?" They really struggle with that because fundamentally what they think morality is is this bunch of things that keep you from getting to do what you want to do. Guess what? They're right. But, see what they don't understand is how much better you're off...better off you are if you have learned to live in a world where it is safe to do what you know you ought to do. So the "is/ought" connection here — you can't avoid it and the people who... This is a commonplace. Many of you I know will have taken courses in which you've studied this and probably you heard about the great gap between "is & ought" and so forth and so on. And, that there's no way of deriving "ought" from "is" and that the "ought" just kind of hangs over there and you got to do it, but there's no connection with reality. Well, that's a tragedy. That's a...that's a part of the madness of a reason that has taken leave of its senses. And it doesn't have the right premises to operate from. And once the reason gets going, it's not going where we want it to go and so we wind up taking a flight, a jump away from reality, and we put morality over there and say, "well, now there's life and then there's morality." And now you immediately recognize that that's the same story as the person who thinks religion is one thing and reality is another.

And that's the knowledge that bring those back together is the knowledge that then makes it possible for us to walk easily in doing the thing that is good.

So just go back to anger for a moment. Something around 25-30,000 people are murdered every year in the United States depending on the year. How many of those you think would be murdered if anger was not involved? When Jesus comes to deal with this, he says, "you know, you don't get to the root of the problem by talking about murder, killing. If you want to deal with killing or murder, you talk about anger and contempt, and if you take care of anger and contempt, the killing will take care of itself."

See, that's real moral teaching. That's what Jesus has to give us is genuine insight into things. And now, there's remind you what we said last time, [[#5 @ 24:00](#)] you have to learn how to deal with truth without being angry, how to stand firm, but you can do that. That's all in the learning process once we begin to understand how the "ought" is rooted in the "is".

Business Ethics: Business is Never Just Business

[52:45]

And, then we can look at business. And we can say, "Well, business is never just business. Business is always a part of life. And life is lived in the Kingdom of God." Now, does that mean we can't take care of business? No, it means we will know

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how to do it better. Because we will not be running our business as if it were just our little kingdom, you see. And as if all we had to work with are our resources. Or, in my line of work, or in the academy, often, people talk about their careers. So, if you are the one that's managing your career, you probably have enough to be mad about. But, of course, the invitation is to step out of that. And to say, "No, I am not running my career." I often jokingly say to younger faculty, "I haven't had a career I've had a career." And a career is a wonderful thing to have in the Kingdom of God. But, that's because you can turn loose with it and loose of it and enjoy the ride. And in the process, you can devote yourself to this...

[Dallas points to the quote on the whiteboard]—> *"A good person is the one intelligently devoted to the promotion of human goods for those around them."*

I don't mean to say you do it perfectly because there will always be some specs on the record and no one should try to aspire to anything beyond that.

Grace for Limitations Not Just Sins

[54:22]

Rather, we should recognize that there's grace for us in that. And see, I need grace, not just for my sins, but for my limitations and the Cross covers that as well. So, there is grace for my limitations. All of us will have limitations coming out of our past we mourn in a certain place in time, certain kinds of family come with a set of ideas that are only partially right about how to manage things. And, again, not always having to do with sins, but just getting it right or wrong. Sanctification, by the way, should help us get smarter. A person who steps into the Kingdom of God and learns more of how to be there also will become more prudential. But there's in many of us we've lived where our family lived on the edge of things and that carries over into our attitude towards life and it can cause us to do things that are foolish. But, gradually wisdom comes and we recognize that there is grace for limitations as well as for sins. So, those are important things to understand.

Love is the Perfection of Morality — I Corinthians 13

[55:40]

I think I just have a moment just to say something about I Corinthians 13. Because this is a scary passage, isn't it? It's one of those passages that we almost want to run from. And we need to learn what it's saying. So if you remember, it starts out by saying that "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels." That's career work. And, of course, it comes into the church in that context. But actually, most of us I don't think have a very good impression of how important rhetoric was in the ancient world. To be able to speak well was a thing that not only was greatly admired but was greatly rewarded. And so to speak with the tongues of men and of angels, "if I speak with a tongue of men's tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I'm become like a gong." Remember "The Gong Show"? [American TV show from 1976-1978] Or, like little tinkling, symbols, bells, and you don't know what's being said. And if you speak without love, you won't know what's being said

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because there will be all sorts of other things at issue than truth. So, you'll just be pretty or impressive. *"Though I have the gift of prophecy, understand all knowledge, though I have all faith, so that I could move mountains and have not love profits me nothing."* Nothing. Zilch. And then it goes on to talk about giving your body, giving all your goods, and then start saying, well, you know,

"Love suffers long and is kind. Love does not envy, love isn't puffed up, doesn't exalt itself doesn't behave itself unseemly."

And so what I want to say to you is this — that is the perfection of morality. That is what every moral thinker is hungering to see whether they know it or not. And if you study moral theory, you will see that so much of it consists in efforts to deal with human life without arriving there. And some of them are much better than others. The thought of Immanuel Kant, for example, is very close to the Christian reading, though he doesn't really understand grace. But, that's the fulfillment of the moral vision which the human mind, individually and in corporate, that's what they aim at.

How Does Love Become Our Moral Vision?

[58:45]

How does it happen? Well, it only happens by welcoming love into your life. It doesn't happen by trying to do what love does. That verse does not say, "you suffer long and are kind." I hope you do, but it doesn't say that. It doesn't say you don't envy, it says love does. So, if we want to get there, then what we have to understand, and this takes us back to our 4th major question from our beginning:

How do you become a good person? Is you give place to love.

Let love be your aim. The opening of I Corinthians 14 says, "Let love be your aim." I want to be like that. See, that's what you say, "I want to be like that." That's the vision. And then you decide to do that. You say, "I'm going to do whatever is necessary to become that kind of person." And that will involve some spadework. You catch yourself envying and you say, "I want to bless this person instead." You open your life to love. You don't try to choke envy down, but you let it come as a result of love moving into your life. And that means you allow Christ to dwell in your heart to be your master, to be your guide, to be your teacher, and your director, and you will find out how you don't need envy at all. You can turn loose all the bad things as the good things come in to fill your life. See, that's the path by which we become the kind of person that God has made us to be.

Thank you.

~ ~ ~ **End of Session 6 @ 1:00:50** ~ ~ ~

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SESSION 7: ["Life & Spiritual Life: The Spiritual & Non-Spiritual Person](#) [53:03]

1. What is life? Self-initiating, self-sustaining, self-directing activity
2. Only God and his Son and Spirit have life in the full sense. (John 5:26) *"In him was life, and that life was the light of men."* (John 1:4) He gives life to all things. (I Timothy 6:13, 19)
3. "Flesh" is the kind of activity that does not immediately depend upon God's action. "Spiritual" life is life that is intermingled with and dependent upon God's action "with us."
4. The spiritual person is a person who is leading a life that is largely intermingled with and dependent upon the action of God and his kingdom. The non-spiritual person is one who is leading a life independent of God's action with them.
5. A look at Philippians 3:3-7—"good" flesh—I Corinthians 3:1-4, and Galatians 5:16-21; and why the "mind of the flesh" is death. (Romans 8:6)
6. Who you are and why you are here. You are an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.
7. No death. (John 8:51-53 and II Timothy 1:10)
8. All things work together for good. For who? (Romans 8:28)
9. God's intent for each of us is that we should become the kind of person whom he can empower to do whatever we want.
10. That is what I Corinthians 13 and II Peter 1:7-11 etc. are about.
11. A survey of the "Sermon on the Mount" (Matt. 5-7) The easy way to life—"My yoke is easy, my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30)
12. This elevates morality to its proper level—not just "I didn't do anything wrong," but the positive reality of the kingdom person, inside and out.
13. The secret to "renovation of the heart." Not will power but pervasive God power.



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TRANSCRIPT — Session 7: "[Life & Spiritual Life: The Spiritual & Non-Spiritual Person](#) [53:03]

Welcome by Bill Dwyer of Dallas Willard Ministries

Greetings from Dallas Willard Ministries. If you are looking for more resources, I suggest you check out our friend Doug Webster and Jesus College. He has people from all over the planet in his online courses. He has a vast collection of Dallas' teachings and he has committed his life to helping others become apprentices of Jesus. Just go to JesusCollege.com

Now, session 7 contains one of Dallas' most quoted quotes,

"You are an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe."

Introduction by Dallas

[00:47]

We've been spending a lot of time talking about knowledge, and the problems of knowledge that we have today, and especially the threat to the Christian teaching—the teaching of Jesus—that comes from an understanding of knowledge that sets the teaching of Jesus aside and says, it isn't knowledge, you see. And of course, we've talked a lot about the contemporary situation in which it is simply assumed that when you come to Jesus and His teachings, this is not a part of what constitutes legitimate knowledge. So, we've been evaluating that and talking about different aspects of the teaching of Jesus and how it relates to knowledge.

Maybe we could just review and remind ourselves that when we speak of knowledge, we're talking about, *"being able to represent things as they are on an appropriate basis of thought and experience."* And what we've been saying is that a part of that appropriate basis is the teaching of the Bible, and the presence of God in our lives, so that we actually have an interactive relationship with God with his Kingdom with Christ. And the eternal life that Jesus speaks of is actually an interactive relationship. That is to say, it's not entirely passive, and it's not entirely active. There are things that we do and God is not going to do those for us. And then there are things that God does and we're not going to do those for Him. It is, in other words, a genuine relationship because that's the nature of all relationships is to be interactive and to transcend the categories of activity and passivity. And that kind of relationship, of course, you can't always separate out what one person is doing and what the other person is doing. And you may have heard the definition of marriage is 100% on both sides. Well, that's about right. Because whatever is good in a relationship is going to come from the activity of each and the activity of each is going to be supported on the activity of the other.

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So, when we talk about a life of interaction, we're talking about a life of grace. We're talking about God doing in our lives things that we can't do on our own. And that's what grace is. Of course, it's unmerited favor, but the form it takes is God's action. And so, when we step into a life of faith in Christ, we are accepting our place in the Kingdom of God and His action on our part, and when we do that, then the issues of life including especially, we talked about morality, they actually more or less take care of themselves.

CS Lewis on Morality

[3:40]

And, you know, it just strikes me I would like to read, I think, a line from CS Lewis on that. Because at the end of book three of Lewis's *Mere Christianity*. Book Three was about morality and he has a wonderful statement here that I think would just fit in right here. He says, talking about behavior, Christian behavior, he says,

"I think all Christians would agree with me if I said that Christianity seems at first to be all about morality, all about duties and rules and guilt and virtue. Yet it leads you on out of all of that to something beyond. One has a glimpse of a country where they do not talk about those things, except perhaps as a joke. Everyone there is filled full with what we could call goodness as a mirror is filled with light. But they don't call it goodness. They don't call it anything. They're not thinking about it. They're too busy looking at the source from which it all comes. But this is near the stage where the road passes over the rim of our world and into the reality of God."

That's a beautiful statement. Beautiful statement, and it leaves us right where we want to be Now, as we start our seventh talk and that talk is on law. life and spiritual life, and the spiritual and the non spiritual person. What does it mean to be a spiritual person? And then finally, how spiritual life from Christ makes moral goodness easy.

And I want to open up further the theme that I struck in the last talk when I was talking about how when we count the cost of discipleship, we want to count the cost of non discipleship. And how we don't want to just consider if we're buying something, the money we pay out, but what we get in return. And we also have to consider what we're going to pay if we don't buy it. And we will pay something because then we will do without that. And when we when we look at the life of discipleship to Jesus, now disciple means a learner apprentice a student. So, I remind you that to say I am a disciple of Jesus is to say that I'm learning from him how to lead my life as he would lead my life if he were i. So now I'm learning that and I approach it as the as the best deal that I will ever have in life. The greatest opportunity. I like to say that Jesus Christ has come to town and He is teaching master classes in the school of life. And you know, an artist when it when another great artist comes to town and offers master classes, they beat the door down to

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get in. Because they know now there is their opportunity to to learn something that they couldn't learn in any other way. And that's how we approach discipleship. And that's why it looks like the pearl of great price that calls us into the life as it should be.

What is Life?

[07:10]

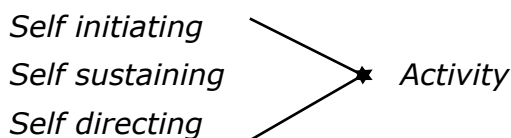
So now this discussion is mainly about life. And we want to sort of begin from the beginning about life. We can't assume an understanding of what life is. So now we want to talk about it as clearly as we can get right to the bottom of what life is. Let's start with this word from John, the 5th chapter and the 25th verse.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live."

Live. Dead. See, that's the contrast we want to think about. What characterizes a dead person, from the point of view of those who are still alive, is precisely that they do not act. There is no principle of life in their bodies. They are immobile. Someone who's asleep on the couch we might say is dead to the world and what we mean by that is there's no action in relationship to the world. But then Jesus goes, goes on to say he's primarily talking about the power of God to bring people back to life. At this important verse, verse 26,

"For just as the Father has life in himself, even so, he gave to the Son also to have life in himself."

Now life in himself is true only of God. Only God has life in Himself. Everything else that is alive, derives their life from God and they may have it in the form of a living body for example, but that living body does not have life in itself. It has to keep taking life in. Nevertheless, it does have life and we want to think of life now as...
[\[Dallas writes on the white board\]](#)



Now think of you go to the you go to the nursery and you buy a lovely looking plant. So you set it out in your garden or your yard. And because of your gangrene thumb, it dies. It dies. Now what do we mean when we say "dies"? We mean that this kind of activity no longer characterizes, it doesn't grow. It doesn't eat. It doesn't take in food. It doesn't allow, it doesn't reproduce through seed or some some other way. And so we say it's dead. Your goldfish in your tank dies. And that means none of that anymore. See, that's the nature of life.

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Now, it is only God that has this in the pure and full sense. But He gives it to others. And now then we have a natural life. And that's what we've been calling the life of the flesh. These are the natural abilities that people have in relative independence from God acting with them. Now, nothing is totally independent of God. But relatively speaking, a person can run around the block without help from God. Unless we're in real bad condition and then we might need a little help from God to get around the block. And that would be a natural kind of thing. And any kind of life like that is simply natural life that we recognize all around us. The goldfish had natural life. The plant had natural life. When it disappeared, these disappeared.

[\[Dallas points to the statement on the white board.\]](#)

While it was there, then it could do the things that were natural to it.

Life in Jesus

[12:15]

In respect to Jesus, we read the words also in John chapter 1, "*In him was life.*" And this life was the light of human beings of humanity. So in him, there was a kind of an activity. I think it's just important to just go over that wording so slowly. I think nearly all of us know that verse, "*In him was life, and that life was the light of human beings of man.*" What does it mean? It means that in Jesus, there was an additional kind of life than the natural. So, if you look candidly at His activities, you will see that there were some that you could describe as self initiating, self sustaining, self directing. He did them. And that clearly, it was not the kind of thing that you would find in just everyone. And this is the point at which the conflict between knowledge of Christ and knowledge that opposes Him comes to a head. Is there really a life like that? Is spiritual life a reality? That's where everything comes to a head in the conflict between the way of Christ and the way of the world around us — the knowledge that we learn by going to school we might say, in general. So, it's by focusing on that life and saying, "now this is what Jesus Christ comes to give to me." That's how we began to take on spiritual life and become a spiritual person.

The Search for Spirituality

[14:23]

Let's take just a little time with that and think about all the spirituality we talk...we hear around us right. I mean, the spiritualities are a dime a dozen nowadays. All kinds of spiritualities. Almost anything has a spirituality at times. So there's a spirituality to golf I learned the other day. I'm thinking about it. Spirituality attaches to different religious groups. There's a Quaker spirituality. There's a Benedictine spirituality. There's now there's even a Baptist spirituality. There's Presbyterian, Lutheran spirituality, and many, many others. And those are all quite interesting to know about. It's now okay to talk about spirituality in a Ph.D. oral exam in some fields. You wouldn't want to do that in chemistry, but it's okay in education. Now that's new. That's happened in the last ten or twelve years. In part, it's happened

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because there is a recognition that if you're going to do something like education, you better take into consideration the nature of the human being as not just a physical being. And indeed, the whole turn back to discussions about spirituality really have to do with the fact that the strictly scientific approach, if we can speak of such a thing, does not do justice to human life.

I mentioned the other session that no matter how much chemistry and physics you may know, you will never find out what to do from all that information. [[Session 3 @ 53:00](#)] Life calls for a kind of knowledge that is not just of the natural movements of the natural world.

The First of Two Aspects of Spirituality

[16:23]

All of the spiritualities that we have really focus on two things.

1.) IDENTITY - One is identity — Who am I? And in a world where people are bewildered and lost, such as ours were so many people are, identity is a huge question. Who am I? And if you listen to the various spiritualities — a good way to do that, if you have time is just turn on Oprah. And, and you hear a lot about spirituality there. You will hear that that has to do with “who I am?” And confusion about who I am is a problem that spirituality tries to address. That’s true of Satanism as much as one of the many of the spiritualities that float around us today. It always addresses that issue — Who am I? And people are desperate to know the answer to that question.

Identity in the Teaching of Jesus as Divine Nature

[17:33]

Now, of course, the teaching of Jesus is you are first of all God's creation in God's world and you are invited to become something with his same nature. I’ll just pause to let that soak in. We are invited to take on the divine nature.

Are you comfortable with that?

Here's what Peter says in II Peter,

“Grace and peace be multiplied to you.” (This is 1:2) *“...in the knowledge of God...”* There’s that word again. I hope one of the things that might come out of the series is when you read knowledge you would say, *“in the interactive relationship with God.”* And grace and peace comes through that. *“...seeing that his divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness.”* (That didn't leave much out did it?) *“...everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge...”* (There’s that word again.) *“...of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature.”*

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That's the new birth. Now to have the nature of God means to be like Him, And how you're like Him is in character, And that is what is offered in the new life because the new life is a different kind of "self initiating, self sustaining, self directing activity." And in that new life, you are invited to take your life and transfer it over so that actually, it's a spiritual life. And that would mean that in a significant measure, the life you are living is actually done in this different kind of power.

So that the life that comes now is the spiritual life of God that begins to move in you. And that's how the life that is in Him is in fact the light of the world. The light of the world—that means in the presence of that life people know what to do. Isn't that what light does? You bring light into a room and you can see. So if you want to walk through the room, you don't have to bust your shins. You can not fall over the furniture. You see where the door is because light. That life is light. That life is light.

I see here on the wall [[Matthew 5:16 posted on the wall of the home](#)]

"Let your light so shine before men (people) that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

To that good, those good works? Why doesn't it say they will see your good works and glorify you? Well, because your good works are not going to be a manifestation just of you. So, people are going to see your good works and recognize that this is a manifestation of a life that is beyond you. Not of you. And yet, it's yours. You see, we're beyond that active/passive thing.

Remember what Paul says, *"I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, yet not I."* [Galatians 2:20] Well, what's going on here? You have to get beyond the passive and the active. Because what you have now is one life that is so intertwined that you can't separate out the parts. So it's very important to understand that you don't do discipleship to Jesus by saying you're nothing. You're something. You're something very important. And so it doesn't help to try to be humble by saying I am nothing.

If you remember again Peter's words on this is, *"humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that in due season, He could exalt you."* [I Peter 5:6] You were made for exaltation but not self exaltation. That's the difference. God will exalt you. And that will be something...that's something He wants to do. But you humble yourself under the hand of God by learning to live in such a way that His hand acts in your life. That's how you humble yourself. You didn't Humble yourself by saying, "Oh, I'm nothing nothing." No, you're something something. You're something very important, something very crucial.

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And that is now to revert to our earlier discussion. [[Session 5 @ 43:20](#)] That's the foundation of equal rights. The foundation of equal rights is the standing of everyone before God. And God's intent and purpose for them is one that means that they are all equal before God and they should be respected and dealt with in love and care and thoughtfulness in a way that allows them to become the kind of person that God intended in making them because none of us took Him by surprise. You see, He's had you in mind from before the Big Bang. And then now when you read the Bible on it says before the foundation of the world you can say before the Big Bang, okay? Before He made the world He had in mind—you. And I feel like I almost just ought to stop and let you think about that a moment.

You are the light of the world and if you aren't the light of the world in your place, there isn't gonna be any light. That's your calling. You're put down in time and space, you are given a particular location by just being born into this world. God is the one who is running that show. And you didn't take Him by surprise. He has a purpose for you. Now, it might help you actually to write on your bathroom mirror, "You are the light of the world." You think you could do that? That's not self glorification. That's an appropriate call to the responsibility that I have as a human being is to say, "I am the light."

Now, I know that that light comes from the life of the one whose life is the light of the world. But see, that's the...we're talking about life in this session, and life has the power to communicate itself. We catch it from Jesus. It is catchable. It's infectious. It has the capacity to leap from organism to organism if you are comfortable with that way of talking about it. You see, the God of life is the God of a kind of life that is suited to you as a spiritual being. If you don't have that life, then you're going to spend all of your energy and time on the wrong things and your life will not come to anything that matters for eternity. You can do some things that are good, but it won't rise to the level of what morality itself apart from God cries out for unless you pick up the life that comes to us from the contagion of Jesus. Think of it like Jesus coming into the world and bringing an infection and it spreads through humanity and we're involved in that spread. I have a little more to say about that in the final session. You see, that's what I'm doing. I'm bringing that life in myself so that it is impacting the lives of others. And that's what it really means what it says "In him was life and this life was the light of human beings."

The Spiritual Person (#4 on Dallas' outline)

[27:27]

Now the spiritual person then is someone that has advanced in that life. We know from reading Paul and others in the scripture that even those who are identified with Christ can still be carnal. That old word "carnal", you know that one? That's an old word for flesh. We have chili con carne. And that's just referring to flesh. A carnal Christian is someone whose life is still dominated by the merely natural

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tendencies of life. And in fact, the discussion in I Corinthians about carnal Christians is not talking about people who are caught up in all sorts of "whoopie" we might call sinful activities. It's talking about competitiveness in a church. And people saying,

"Oh, I like this preacher best." "Well, I like that one best." "Well, this is really good." And Paul says, "aren't you carnal when you do that?" because you're talking about people in terms of their appearance and their natural abilities, maybe their administrative or their training, or whatever it may be. You're talking about that when you ought to be talking and thinking strictly in terms of how the spiritual life that is in them is operating.

And Paul, of course, you know, Paul was not a great speaker. In fact, he talks about that from time and he comments on how other people didn't think he was a great speaker. But Paul knew the power of the word that came through him because it had a life in it that was not tied to his natural abilities to speak. And that goes back to our point with I Corinthians 13, "though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels..." and so on? You see, it's the spirit of life that is in us that makes the word and the life have the impact that it does.

I learned a long time ago that people are going to forget nearly everything I say. But they're not going to forget who I am. You see, that goes deeper than saying, and what I am only matters insofar as it has this new kind of life that is moving in me. And so you learn in that way to humble yourself under the hand of God. Humble means depend on it. Depend on it. You humble yourself under the mighty hand of God when you depend on that hand to work. And then when you come where you are, then you will see the effects of that life that is in you because it is contagious. Actually, it turns out to be the best thing on earth. And you don't have to pump it or emphasize it. You just live it. And that is the person who is increasingly spiritual.

A spiritual person is a person who is leading a life that is largely intermingled with and dependent upon the action of God and His kingdom.

So, now, back to our theme about spirituality that we touched on a while ago because spirituality now normally means something like, well, creativity. It might be creativity. Creativity is often associated with spirituality. And that's not a bad connection unless it just means human creativity. And if that's all it means, that's good. As far as it goes, nothing wrong with that. But it really isn't spirituality in the sense of a new life that is coming from God into the individual.

So, we need to understand that when we talk about the spiritual person, we're not talking about someone, for example, who has a certain kind of clothing, or a certain kind of intonation, or activities of a certain. That isn't spirituality. Let's see if we

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think, "well, there's this kind of spirituality and that kind of spirituality and that kind of spirituality, we're going to miss identified." We're going to start treating spirituality as if it were just this peculiar way of being human. And I'll bet you many of you have heard it put that way. A spirituality is a peculiar way of being human. And then, of course, anything, any way of being human is the spirituality. Right? So there would be a homosexual spirituality and a heterosexual spirituality, and there's now even a secular spirituality, by the way. And, there's a book that's been published *Secular Spirituality*. and what is what does it mean? Well, it means a peculiar way of being human. But see, if that's all we're talking about, we really haven't gotten beyond just natural ability.

Spirituality in the Christian tradition is a life that is lived from another source. And this as we have been saying is the primary area where there is a confrontation between knowledge of Christ in the present world, or in the contemporary world, and the knowledge which stands as knowledge in this world because the knowledge which stands in as knowledge in this world precisely denies the reality of spirit. "Spiritualities" okay because spirituality just means a way of being human. But see, Christian spirituality means a way of being more than human. It means a way of having an identity that is not just human.

The Second Aspect of Spirituality

[34:10]

2.) Empowerment — And that brings that brings in the second thing that is always involved in talk of spirituality, and that is empowerment. Identity and empowerment are the two marks of spirituality as it is discussed in our world. In every case, identity and empowerment, but unfortunately, it refers to identity and empowerment in terms of purely human activities. And the difference is that when we talk about life and spiritual life, and the spiritual and non spiritual person, we're really talking about a life that is beyond the human.

A Formula for Spirituality (Dallas' outline #6)

[34:45]

So, now we need a formula that will help us capture this. And the one I like to use is this and I'll say it to you once and kind of work on it here for just a moment, and perhaps we can say to one another. It takes a little courage.

So who are you and why are you here? And the answer to that question is:

"You are an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe."

"You are an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe."

Now that's spirituality in the Christian tradition.

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No Death for Believers in Jesus (Dallas' point #7)

[35:35]

And once we understand that, then for example, the discussions of there being no death for those who put their confidence in Christ, you see, now we're into another reality. We understand that we are spiritual beings, and we have taken our life into the spiritual life of God. And so then when Jesus comes and says,

"He that believeth in me shall never die." [John 11:26]

Now, then we realize we don't just say that at funerals. We say that when I get up to go to work in the morning. And then we say things that will now since I'm never going to die, how am I going to live today?

Since I'm an unceasing spiritual being, how will I conduct my business?

How will I meet my students?

How will I think about issues in my family or my work or,

In the world, how do I think about the news? How do I think about Iraq?

All of this comes into a new perspective — *I am an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.*

Now, I want to ask you if you can say that? I'll say it once again and then you say it with me.

I am an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.

Now, can you say it with me? [\[The group speaks out loud together.\]](#)

I am an unceasing spiritual being, with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.

I will never see death. I will never taste death. I didn't say that. Jesus said that. John 8:51, 53. Now that is not just a statement about death, that's a statement about life. See, that's what we have to understand. It's a statement about a kind of life in the presence of which death is a non entity. We don't have time to go over all the scriptures on this, but I just refer you also to II Timothy 1:10. Where it says that, *"Christ destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."*

You know, that verse? You know death has been destroyed.

Now, from your point of view when you someone passes away, death is what you see. You don't see the life. Because what dies is the body. And that's not fun. I don't like death. The way we experience it as others die is a very hard kind of thing. But it is not hopelessness. Fo you ever wonder why Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus? Why should He weep? He knew He's gonna raise him from the dead.

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What's the deal? So, go back and read that passage in John 11 and think about it. Why did he weep? But he was weeping because of how death was experienced by people. That was a day in which you actually hired people to come to wail and moan so you could do it better. And that's what was happening in His context. And of course, He had Mary and Martha there and they were suffering terribly under this. He wasn't weeping for Lazarus unless He was weeping for the fact that he would have to come back from where he was and endure this part of the world a little longer. Maybe He was. He loved Lazarus. That's what the story says. That's, that's why Jesus wept was because of how people experienced death not because of what death is.

So, He said to the thief on the cross, you remember what He said? Almost... it's almost like, "Ahh, today you'll be with me In paradise!" Hard to improve on that. "Lord, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." "Ahh, no problem!" You see that's the life that's in Him and don't you see what a tremendous light that is to human beings once it is in their presence?

"I am an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe."

Would it be too much to ask you to turn to the person next to you and say that to them?

[The group is speaking the line one to another.]

Good. Good.

So that's why, as Paul said to Corinthians, "we sorrow not as others." It's okay to sorrow. When we lose a loved one, it hurts. It's like an amputation. And we should never be an in the least upset about that. That's natural and normal and right. But we do not sorrow as others that have no hope. We sorrow as those who have hope [I Thessalonians 4:13] and sorrow in the Christian life is always compatible with joy at the same time. You can be both sorrowful and joyful. You can't be sorrowful and have fun. But fun is not what we're living for. Joy is a pervasive sense of well being.

All Things Work Together for Good (Dallas' points 8-11) [42:30]

In the light of this then we can understand how all things work together for good.

"All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purposes." [Romans 8:28]

Now you you would have to put a further dimension of life in order to make that come out right. But, that dimension is there. And God's intent for us is that we should learn to live this life in such a way that as we go on our character, our

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abilities continue to grow. And, the reality of a life that conforms to his teachings like in the Sermon on the Mount or elsewhere, is just there. And that's how we learn that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. We learn it as we learn this life. It isn't easy unless you have the life.

It's easy for a happy person to be happy, isn't it? Not easy for an unhappy person. Very hard. And that's the secret. You see, we're being transformed, we're being caught up in this, and the result of that is that the moral dimension of our life fills out increasingly because our understanding is greater. Our joy is more full. Our confidence in who we are and where we're going is established by our experience of the Kingdom of God as we go from day to day. And as we do that, then the various parts of our lives become transformed.

Transformation of the Body

[44:30]

And we need to particularly say something about the body. I haven't really gotten into the details of human nature in this series because I've had to select what I would spend time on. But, you know what we're looking for is the transformation of the body. So, I think we need to say things like the primary instrument, for example, of evangelization is the human body, is the transformed human body. It's the human body in which righteousness and the Spirit dwell as a living principle. And that would mean simply that we're ready to do the right thing without thinking about it. So, we don't have to break out in a sweat trying to come to terms with it and bring it to pass. See, when Jesus hung on the Cross, and He said, "Father, forgive them", that was not hard for him. I think we often really make them make confused that thing back to us that somehow this was real hard for him. That was not hard for Him. And it wasn't hard for Him because that's what was in Him. For Him, what would have been hard is just the reverse of what might be true most human beings. I mean, what would have been hard for Him would be to say something like, "You blankety blank blankety blanks, just wait until my Father gets His hands on you." That would have been hard for Him because that was not what was in Him. He would have really had to put great effort into that.

And now you the hard part for us initially is to believe that we could be like that. And that's what we need to put our trust in and begin to grow in is that we can be like that, that that's what God is actually call to us. And that he will give that to us as we simply open ourselves to Christ, invite Jim in, and wait on his action instead of just jumping ahead with what we would normally do anyway. Give God a chance to let his hand act as we humble ourselves under that hand. And then we learned that we don't have to do all the things that we might say, "I can't help it." Right? Well, we can help it. Well, we can't help it if we just mean, "I can help it." But I can find the help that will help it.

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Spiritual Disciplines

[46:57]

And that's where this whole dimension of spiritual disciplines does come in. We're finding the ways to do what we cannot do just by direct effort. We're taking resources, and we're learning how to be still before God and let Him change us as we wait on Him. And then actively as we study, and as we serve others, and we try to learn how to know the activity of the Kingdom of God. Well, then, then we began to change. And just as our body was initially ready to do what was wrong without thinking, it becomes ready to do what is right without thinking. And instead of wooshing blessing, we woosh cursing as we do now, we come to blessing...just comes from us. So, now when you go back to that verse that I've already used to kind of illustrate, "Bless those who curse you" [Matthew 5:44]. See that's talking about coming to the place to where blessing is the natural outflow of who you have become and cursing would be the unnatural outflow. Whereas now, it's the other way around for most people. I'm sure at present company excepted. But, you know, when anyone gets cursed, anyone who drives gets cursed, right? That's what comes with driving. And at some point, perhaps not all the time, but you'll have some experience of that. And then you can practice with that. How do you feel about that person? What would it be like to really bless them? Well, to bless someone means to will their good under the invocation of God. That's what blessing means — to will their good under the invocation of God. That's how you bless people out you have to will it and God has to do it, and that's a combination that we can wish for. So the person who has just cursed us on the highway, they need a blessing don't they? They need help. They don't need a cursing. And so we can give a blessing to them. It may scare them so much they'll run off the road, but you can pray for their protection in that case.

Renovation of the Heart (Dallas' point #13)

[49:35]

So, now, just finally then on on this talk, we want to understand that the transformation of the will or I call it the "renovation of the heart" is not just willpower. It's not just a matter of clenching down and trying real hard. And in general, we just have to say trying is not the way forward. We had to put forth some effort, but not trying. See trying by itself will not help us. We have to train.

So, for example, in reference to something like "Bless those who curse you". What is the training we could go through that would help us become the kind of person who would naturally bless those who curse us? See how that would affect everything in our life. I mean our family life. Often in our families there's a lot of cursing going on, a lot of contempt, a lot of anger. That can be lifted. But it can't be lifted by trying.

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One of my favorite illustrations is a man in a seminar some years back in I think Asheville, North Carolina. And he said, "I cannot stop yelling at my son." I said, "Oh, yes you can." He looked at me. "No, I can't. I just can't." You see, he had been trying. And what happened to him is his son knew how to push his buttons. And so son would push buttons and the yelling would begin. So I said to him, "you can actually stop. And here's the way you do it. You promise to give \$5,000 to your wife's favorite charity the next time you yell at your son." Of course, he was a rich guy so \$5,000 would make a little dent. It was realistic proposal for him. But he looked at me sheepishly and said, "I see the point." Would it be worth losing a few thousand dollars to stop yelling at your son? Yeah. See, that's training.

So when we think about this life now, we want to understand that it's not something that just comes in and passively overwhelms us and transforms us one day while we're walking out a church or something. No, it's a practice of discipleship to Jesus Christ, and it affects all areas of our lives, and it is a blessing transformation that comes through submitting our bodies as living sacrifices, transforming our minds, transforming our feelings, changing our very body so that it no longer has the inclinations and activities in it that it used to have. And that is the way that the spiritual life takes over the whole life.

Thank you very much.

~ ~ ~ **End of Session 7 @ 52:45** ~ ~ ~

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SESSION 8: "[The Mission of Christ's People on Earth and Beyond](#)" [41:08]

"I have been given say over all things in heaven and on earth. So as you go, make disciples to me from all kinds of people, submerge them in Trinitarian reality, and teach them to do every-thing I commanded you. And look, I am always with you, until the job is done." (Mat. 28:18-20)

"In Jesus Christ the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. In order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 2:21-22 and 3:10)

"And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp; nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and forever." (Revelation 22:5)

1. "Christians" but not "Disciples."—The contemporary reality, but never the intention of Jesus and his Father.
2. A disciple/apprentice of Jesus is anyone who is learning from him how to lead their life as he would lead their life if he were they.
3. One becomes a disciple by realizing that apprenticeship to Jesus is the greatest opportunity in human life.
 - "Counting the cost."
 - The "Pearl of great price" and the field with the treasure (Mat. 13:44-47)
4. The places of discipleship: Where you are. Home and work, for the most part.
5. The three dimensions of discipleship.
 - Obedience to his commands.
 - Doing what he wants in all areas of life not commanded.
 - Learning to act in his power.
6. Good news for leaders of society, government and business.
7. How our local congregations could proceed to break the grip of non-disciple (consumer) Christianity.
 - Simply carry out the "Great Commission."
 - Announce that they teach people to do everything Jesus said.
 - Hold specific training sessions.
8. "When you've been there ten thousand years." What will you be doing 400 years from now?
9. *"The earth will be filled WITH THE KNOWLEDGE of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14)*



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TRANSCRIPT SESSION 8: ["The Mission of Christ's People on Earth and Beyond"](#)
[41:08]

Welcome by Bill Dwyer of Dallas Willard Ministries

You're listening to "Knowledge of Christ in Today's World", a series of eight talks by philosopher and theologian Dallas Willard. The topic for talk #8, is "The mission of Christ people on Earth, and beyond...being ready for forever." And now, here's Dallas Willard.

Series Review by Dallas Willard

[00:50]

This final talk, we want to spend some time thinking about the mission of Christ people on Earth and beyond. And I've used the words here "being ready for forever." In the last talk, we said some things about what it means to be a spiritual being and not to die and all of that. And that's very important for us to understand. But of course, there does come a time when we will pass beyond the limitations under which we now live. I like to describe it as moving into God's full world. But that isn't a good phrase because actually, the Kingdom of Heaven is here. The only difference now is there are other kingdoms also present. And that there will come a time when that's not true. "When the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." [Habakkuk 2:14] And of course, as long as I'm in this world, especially, perhaps the primary competitor for the Kingdom of God is my kingdom. That's the one I need to be concerned about. And I'm learning and I'm in the process of bringing that Kingdom of God into my life. And that's what I'm praying for when I pray, "Thy kingdom come", and I pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done", I'm not primarily praying about world peace and the millennium. I like that idea too, and I'm prepared to pray for it, and mercy knows we need it, and so, the quicker the better. Whenever God is done with human history and is ready to move us beyond that, it'll be much better. And as Paul says in Philippians [1:21] when he talks about he's in a kind of decision about whether to go or to stay. And then he says, "Going would be far better. For for me to live as Christ and to die is gain."

So now, I hope we have some sense of that. And we do want this to be included in the knowledge we're talking about—the knowledge of God and the knowledge of Christ. So, we're just very comfortable with these ideas of the meaning of death and what it doesn't mean, and the nature of the person that is revealed in the fact that "we are unceasing spiritual beings with an eternal destiny in God's great universe".

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Session Introduction - What is the Mission of Christ? [3:45]

So, we want to think now about what we're doing here and the mission of Christ's people on Earth is — that's us. What are we doing here? And I'll be talking about what we do together. What we might do, as we would say, local congregations of believers. And this is tremendously important for our own growth, as well as for bringing others to know what we know about the reality of the Kingdom of God. Is how do we live together? What are our aims? What are our purposes?

The Great Commission, as it is called in Matthew 28:18-20, really says everything that we need to know and it starts out with this wonderful statement that Jesus gives, "*I have been given say over all things in heaven and earth.*"

Now, put that in the context. This is the One who had lived among human beings and had manifested the Kingdom of God for a considerable period of time and had taken some people in particular for extensive training, shall we say, as His apostles, the close disciples. It wasn't just 12. There was a larger group probably best represented by the 120 who gathered in what is called the upper room in the book of Acts. There was a whole circle of people and many of them were quite significant beyond the apostles. And these are the ones that had been training. He took them into training. And by the way, you know, we should think like that, too. I mean, would we be would I be willing to spend two and a half years in intensive training in order to know what it's like to live in the power of the Kingdom of God and in the character of Jesus Christ? You know, one of our problems is that our training is not intensive enough. It's too spread out. And it might well be that the quickest way to get where we want to go would be to accept the fact that I'm going to need some intensive training* for a period of time. Plan for it and then find the way to do that. Actually, the churches should help us with those things.

[* - See p. 136 - Jesus College's "Master's in the Master" 3 year spiritual training]

First - Making Disciples [6:33]

And see, they were with this person who said, "*now all authority, all power has been given to Me in heaven and earth.*" And then He said, "*Go, and as you go, make disciples.*" So now, that's the first thing we need to think about as Christ's people on Earth is making disciples. Making disciples. We've talked about what a disciple is. Of course, we would have to be disciples. And then giving other people such a strong grasp of of the worth of this life that we're talking about that they would say, "I am prepared to abandon everything to have nothing more important in my life than to learn how to do this, to learn how to live in the Kingdom of God as Jesus knows how to live in the Kingdom of God." That's the most important thing I have to do. That then you know, right off, you're not, we're not talking about some canned version of religion or spirituality. We're not talking about churchy

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stuff. That's okay. But it's not thee place. Thee place is our life. And we're talking about learning how to live our life as Jesus would lead our life if He were us. If he were we - to be correct. We want to learn that. So, we look at His life, the things He taught the things He did, the character he manifested, we say, "that's for me!" And then we go to others and say, "That's for you, too." And perhaps a way, good way to do that might be to say to them, "you can be the light of the world."

Perhaps we need to say that to our children. Maybe we need to say that to ourselves and to one another. You can be the light of the world and then spell that out in terms of the life that was the light of men. And then fit all of the other things we do in education, professional training, growth, having a family, into that picture. That's discipleship. It's learning to live in the Kingdom of God. And then, as we go through the world, it's interesting how Jesus put that, "as you go". And that's just assuming you're going to be going through the world, you're going to be going. As you go, this would be a natural side effect of going. Is that that infectious life would be percolating up in us, and people would see that. What is that?

You know, so interesting, one of the verses that is used about witnessing is "be always ready to give an answer to anyone who asked concerning the kind of faith that is in you." [I Peter 3:15] And the context of that is where people are suffering. They're suffering and they're hopeful, joyful, able to do the things that are right. And so people say, "What's it with you?" And that's the kind of question that we want to elicit, "What's it with you?" So the person who testifies to Christ is not, oh, well, isn't the local Christian nag. You know, they're a conduit of a different kind of life that's coming through. And then people say, "Well, I see how you're living your life." And they hear how you talk, and they hear how you respond to things. And you respond with hope, and with truth, and with righteousness, and you do it easily. So, then they say, "Well, I want what you have."

Let me say this to you, the problem of the people of Christ is never that we don't have enough people. Never. If that were the problem, we'd never gotten off the ground in the first place. It's never that we don't have enough money. Never that we don't have enough influence. And I say that because we started right at the bottom. That's where we started. And without violence, without money, without influence, without overwhelming numbers, Christianity became, even today, the single greatest religion in world history. So, I'll say that again, see, the problem is never that we don't have enough people. And the rest of the sentence is...the problem is with the kind of people we have. Then, of course, I'm talking about me now talk about me, and you worry about you. The kind of people we have. The kind of people that stepped forward in the way of Christ were the kind of people that did not need a public relations department to make them visible. That's what Jesus said, he said, you know, "a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid". [Matthew 5:14] And it also doesn't talk about itself much. It's just there. Dwight Moody used to say

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that a candle or a bell doesn't have to make an announcement that is going to shine or ring. It just shines. We have to believe in the life we're living like that. And to believe that's it, that it's all true, that it works, that it's accessible to everyone, and that it's the best thing on earth. And that's the way it is.

So we go out and we make disciples, apprentices. I use the word apprentice often because it does have this aspect of application to it and what we're learning, as I've been emphasizing over and over, is not just what the right answers are. What we're learning is how to live, and that's what the whole world wants to know.

Second - Baptizing them in the Name of the Trinity

[14:00]

So, we make disciples. We submerge them in the Trinitarian reality. Now, I want to recall to you that Jesus said, *"Where there two or two or three are gathered..."* So, two is enough. *"...two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst."* That's what it means to baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It does not just mean get them wet while you say, *"In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."* See, when when Bible talks of names, biblical talk of names, it's always what is called Semantic Realism. That is, the object comes with the name. And that's why you don't want to take the name of God in vain is because His name is inseparable from Him. And we're learning to act in the name of Jesus. One of the things that will stand out to you if you sit down Sunday and just read the whole book of acts through it one sitting, you can take a coffee break or two if you want, but just try to read it through and that's the only thing you're doing until you get from the beginning. One thing's gonna strike you is how important acting in His name is. It's extremely important that it'd be clear to you that that's what they were learning in the book of Acts. And the reason for that was they were acting in In a kingdom, and in a kingdom, you work through the name of the head of the kingdom. That's what gives you authority and power. Now, that may seem a little scary to you, but think about it. We are given the opportunity of living and acting in the name of Jesus, and that draws the resources of the Kingdom to bear. When you when you go down the street and you see a policeman at an intersection, that policeman is acting in the name, and that means the authority and the power of, well, I suppose the city that you're in, or if it's a state police, California, right? So they're not just a person standing there waving their arms.

Now, that's a great difference. And what we're learning to do now as the people of Christ is we're learning to act in the Kingdom of God. We're learning to act in the power and on the authority just like that policeman. Very important to understand that. And when we come together in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that is saying, we are counting on the presence of the Trinity to be there. That's what we're doing. And we make disciples and then we don't just leave them lying on the sidewalk, we bring them into a fellowship may be small. Two is pretty small.

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It may be small, but we bring them into a fellowship in which what is going on is the presence of the Trinity. And I want to suggest to you that's what it means to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You need disciples to do that. Because that's where the Trinity is manifests itself among disciples. But the disciples can't live without that.

See, all of our congregations are Christian—Christ's congregations—only insofar as they submit to the reality of the Trinity in their midst. Father, Son, Holy Spirit are there. They are acting there. Now, so much that we've said has had to do with life and action, and so on. The Trinity is active. God isn't an immobile sort of thing. God is active, a kind of activity that's beyond ordinary personality. It's a community and community is what you have in the presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. See in the presence of that all of the defenses and the attempts to be proud or manipulative, you can lay all that down. You can just be just be there. Then you do what needs to be done. But you do it expecting God to act with you. And that is what Jesus is talking about here.

Third - Teaching Them to do What I Taught

[19:30]

So, "All power, I've been given say over everything and heaven and earth. As you go wherever you're going, make disciples and surround them in the Trinitarian reality, and then teach them to do everything that I said."

And that's the final part of the job description. Now, we're talking here about what do we do as people who have identified with Christ? This is what we do. This is how we live. And as that happens, then a building is grown up. I give you here Ephesians 2:21-22.

"In Jesus Christ, the whole building being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God."

See, that's that Trinitarian reality. And you're a dwelling place for them,

"...in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places."

Now, this think about that wording for a moment. In order that the manifold wisdom of God might be known to the rulers that crucified Jesus because they didn't know that He was the Lord of Glory. We used that passage earlier. [[Session 3 @ 18:30](#)] So these people are ignorant are going to come to understand the manifold wisdom of God by observing the people of God. And that's going to go up not just beyond what we would recognize as human organizations, but to the whole spiritual order of the universe.

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Difference Between Christian & Disciple (Dallas' outline #1) [21:07]

Okay, so now what we have to do here is to talk a little bit about the difference between Christian and disciple. And we have to recognize that we have a form of Christianity that does not include discipleship and come to grips with that. Because that's our situation today. It's one where it is an accepted reality that you can be a Christian without being a disciple of Jesus. That's just, that's a part of the furniture. And we have to just recognize that it is there. And in the midst of that, then we have to speak a word of life and express a life that will call people out into discipleship. Let me put it this way — that the primary field of evangelism today is the Christian church. The primary field of evangelism today is the Christian church. And what we're evangelizing for is discipleship. You see, that's not really strange. If you look back, you will remember that the first place that Jesus went, the first place that Paul went was the synagogue. Why? Because that's where people are really interested. The people who are in the churches are there because they have a concern, an interest. And even if they aren't disciples. Maybe they haven't heard. Many times they haven't. Many times today you will meet Christians who have never been given an opportunity to become a disciple. And it isn't because they're somehow resistant or whatever. There may be some of those, but what I find everywhere I go is people want to hear it. They want to hear about it. And it really doesn't matter what the context is sometimes even outside of a Christian context, people want to hear about discipleship. You say something about the church? "Well, I don't know about that." See, one of the standard lines now in our culture is, "Well, I'm very spiritual, but of course, I'm not religious." Or, "I'm very spiritual, but of course, I don't go to church." And that's part of the problem that we have to deal with. We have to distinguish being churchy from being spiritual. And to say, okay, spiritual is what we're interested in." That's what this is all about. We want to know Christ not the church.

Establish Kingdom Beachheads not Start Churches [23:45]

Now, maybe it'll help to say this—that when Jesus gave these words to His followers, He didn't tell them to go start churches. Not a word in here about that. And my favorite way, right or wrong of putting what He did send them to do was He sent them out to establish beach heads of the Kingdom of God. He sent them out to establish beachheads. You know what a beachhead is? You know, it's like, well, a beachhead is like if you're an army and you're coming on shore, a beachhead is a piece of the beach that you capture to establish a basis of operation. I sometimes forget how old I am. When I was a kid, beachhead was all over the place because we're in the Second World War. But, you know, it's just as well, I guess. But, you know, that's what He sent them out to do. And how did they do it? Well, that's where the "*I have been given say*" came in. They just went. And the main story

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that we have of all of this is what happened in roughly Asia Minor and Europe as they came to be known, we have that part of the story because that pertains mainly to our world and that was a big part of the story. But these people just went out and did it. And then, in fact, what we call churches were a spin off of that because where they established beachheads with the Kingdom of God, then churches, as people drawn out of the world and formed into a peculiar kind of group, then they became real and obvious, and that's good.

Now, then their task would be to extend the beachhead to take the territory. And thank goodness, that's what happened in many cases. Let's see, one of the things that happened is with the success of Christianity, it became turned in on itself, and more concerned about self perpetuation of the organization than about the extension of the Kingdom. And you know, what, we're still living there. That point about go to all kinds of people and make disciples. We're still in. We're not done with that yet. And it isn't just like other places, it's here within our culture, because, you know, we now live in a culture that's so complicated, that there are many, many people that have never even heard anything about this. They know, they think a church is a building on the corner. If you ask most people, what is the church? They'll say, "Well, it's a building." It isn't a building. It's the people. And these people are infiltrating the whole world, and this is going to go on until people one day realize the solution to human problems is not a human solution. It is learning to live in the Kingdom of God.

Now, when you go Christmas, you know, and you go, you do your sing along Messiah, you sing the words,

*"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God
and of His Christ, and He will reign forever, forever and ever."*

And right after that is where you say hallelujah. Right? Three times. That's what the hallelujah in the hallelujah chorus is about. It's about the Kingdom of God, and it's about coming into the world.

Now, then that's what we're about. That's what the people of Christ are about. They're about bringing the Kingdom of God progressively into human reality. Oh, you don't need to worry about doing it on your own. You see, we went through this period where people were talking as if somehow they could just do it. Better education and better sanitation would bring in the Kingdom of God. The rot is much deeper and the the evil that has to be overcome is much more serious. I mean, that is serious. Sanitation does more to preserve human health and well being than most of the other things that we do. Just simple sanitation. We're so used to it in this country, that we don't know what it's like when it's not there. But you go back three generations, people normally lost half of their children or more before they grew up. And sometimes we'd lose every one of them. 6, 8, 12. I can't even think

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of what that would be like. But that was reality. Say, that good work, that's a part of God's work. But it's only a part of it. And we're not going to do this by ourselves. So when we're not talking about "Bringing in the Kingdom" as it used to be said. But, we are talking about us extending the Kingdom through our own lives and our own communities through the knowledge of Christ.

The Importance of Discipleship in the Community

[29:25]

So, this disciple apprenticeship relationship that we have to Jesus is the core of what we do as the people of Christ now. It is what our people in our communities most need. We should have the clear understanding that what is happening in our community of redemption is the most important thing that's happening in our community. I want to say that again, because you know, in our time, so much that is identified with the Christian faith has been pushed aside for reasons we've been talking about. And now a church, often, is almost treated like some odd sort of organization. You know, now people don't want churches to come into their communities. So now if you're going to get into community, you sort of have to be there before the community grows up. Because, if the community grows up, they're going to be coming after you with the city council or with whatever to keep you out. As if somehow "The Simpsons" and "Friends" [American TV shows] and whatever else would fill the gap of need for understanding of how to live. And how you're going to learn how to live? That's the standing question. Who is going to teach how to live, if the people of Christ don't do it?

The Places of Discipleship: Home & Work (Dallas' outline #4)

[30:55]

So, that's what we're thinking about here is bringing apprenticeship to Jesus into the level of ordinary life. Putting the places of discipleship right down where we live. The place of discipleship is where I am. For me right now is here. For you is here. For me, the place of discipleship is my home. It's my community. Recently, it has been my local mechanics. I've been having a little car trouble if some of you were in on that. But that's the place of my discipleship. That's not...I don't take a vacation from it.

Work is the most important part of our discipleship because that's where we spend most of our time. I don't know what your work may be, but whatever it is, that's the primary place of your discipleship. And your home is right in there with it. So that's where we learn, it's important to have the concept of place right. Because we all live in a place and if we don't understand, for example, that work is the primary place of our discipleship, we've just taken about one-third at least or more of our lives and put it outside the place of discipleship. And, you know, we have to be, we have to really understand the message of the Kingdom to do that, right, or we wind up trying to do something religious at work. That's the way we used to talk about it

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in other years was to take faith into the workplace. And, you know, it would have been more appropriate to say take the workplace in to faith. That would have been more appropriate, but we didn't understand how that work because our history had made the segregations, and so we had our secular life, so called, and then you had the religious thing you did. And discipleship says, "no, no, it's all sacred." It's just not churchy. Some of it's churchy. And that's good. The church has a role in this. You see, our churches, our congregations, should be places where we foster this life and we help people understand what you do when you're not there. You may have heard of a church had a wonderful way of ending it says, "Now our service begins" at the end of the church service. Well, actually, that's...it's all the service, it's all living in the Kingdom of God. And we're learning how to do that.

Three Dimensions of Discipleship (Dallas' outline #5) [33:38]

I put down here on your notes, the three dimensions of discipleship, and we need to distinguish them and understand them.

1.) Obedience to His Commands [33:48]

One area is just learning to obey Christ in what he said, Now, here's where our churches can do a lot for us. I mean, if we taught that. I mean, suppose now that you were to go from here, and you were to say, we're going to have a four week seminar on, "How to bless people that curse you" at your church, your congregation, two or three people, that'll be enough. You'll need it. And so we're going to do that. That would be fitting into the first dimension of discipleship which is just learning to do what Jesus said and what he did. And now you understand from what we've already said that that's not a matter of just learning how to do the thing, but it'd becoming the kind of person who would naturally do that. That's the secret of keeping the law is not to try to keep the law. That was the mistake of the Pharisees and the scribes. They tried to keep the law. So, don't kill. Okay, I won't kill. And it doesn't work. Because you have to deal with what is inside you become the kind of person who wouldn't think of it. There's a sign at Heathrow Airport that says, "Don't Even Think of Parking Here." See that's where we want to be. We want to be...there's some things we just don't even think about and that's the inner transformation. And we come out with obedience to Christ.

2.) Doing What He Wants in All Areas of Life not Commanded [35:10]

The secondly thing that I mentioned, he's doing what he wants on in all areas of life not covered by commands. That means how we would run our business, how we would manage our career, "our career", [Dallas description of his own career], or whatever it is we have, and we would be learning from him. And see, you have to remember that our relationship with Him, our eternal life, is an interactive

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relationship. And this, I don't know if it will test your faith or not. But what this really means is that we are in a conversational relationship with him. So that we can, when we need to know things, ask and he would always tell us because sometimes He wants us to figure it out on ourselves or wants us to do what we want to do. But there are many times in which he will give us explicit direction in what we should do about things that are not contained in the scripture. And we need to learn how to do that. And that would mean things like learning how to run our business, to take care of our profession, perhaps how to deal with our children, or with our mates, and our neighbors. That's another dimension of discipleship.

3.) Learning to Act in His Power by Prayer

[36:38]

The third thing I list here is learning to act in His power. I've said a great deal about this over the course of the last few hours. But this is the main function of prayer. The main function of prayer is teaching us how to act in His power. When you pray, you are living in a relationship to God in which He acts with you. Then he accomplishes things through your action. Praying is actually acting. Praying is not like putting in your order. You know? It isn't like that. Prayer is engagement with the real world. Think about what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration for just a moment. You remember that on the Mount of Transfiguration, it says, "As He prayed, He was transformed." His countenance was white and his clothing as white as lightning. And this is really a preview of the resurrection body of Christ and of the true glory of Jesus. We see as He entered into that relationship, power began to manifest itself. Glory is basically glowing. That's what the first three letters of the words is, isn't it. G-L-O. Glory? Do you ever hear an old preacher say "Glory!?" Well, they've they're putting the emphasis in the right place.

You ever wonder why Adam and Eve didn't need clothing before they sinned? Well, I mean, just try these things out. I'm not giving you inspired words at this point. But try it out. They glowed. They didn't need clothing. Can you see a light bulb when it's on? You just see the light. Moses, when he spent time with God, came down and they had to put a lampshade over his head so they can talk to him. Remember that? See, think about that. Now, it's important to take these things.

Jesus when He, someone put it that He began to glow because in prayer, He began to enter the real world. That's what will happen. As we do that, you see, we begin very small, learning to use and live in the power of God. See, prayer is like a training course in. I like to use the phrase, "training for reigning". That's what prayer is. It's like, you know, the extra wheels on your son or daughter's little bicycle. I forget what you call them. [Someone says, "training wheels."] That's it. Very good. Prayers, a lot like that now grows and it becomes very powerful. But that's where we start. It's training. And we want to be ready to step into situations where good needs to be done and to bathe that in prayer and to hold it in prayer.

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And as we go along, we learn how that works. I don't think anyone can tell you very much about how it works, but you will learn as you go. And you will experience the difference that is happening as you learn to be a channel of the power of God in specific situations.

CS Lewis has this interesting discussion of prayer where he says the reason why God has to have a veto power in prayer is not because prayer is so weak, but because it's so powerful. It's so powerful that He can't turn it loose to us. He has to. He uses a figure about taking a child to a boarding school and the headmaster, that's what they have you ever had in England. The headmaster saying to the young man, now there are certain things you can do according to rule, you can do this. And that because it's laid out in the rules. And there are other things like maybe building a tree house in the tree out front, you can't do that, according to rule. You have to come and talk to me about it. So when you have something like that, you come and talk to me about it, and we'll see. That's prayer is talking to God about things we're doing together. That's what it is. Prayer is talking about. See, the person who doesn't know what to say in prayer is probably not doing anything with God, or hasn't heard that that's what it's about, you're talking about what we're doing together. And we're working on what should be done, and we're listening, and we're learning. And that's a major part of what goes into our discipleship.

Then individuals and groups that come out of that context, they began to be trustable with the power of God. They can be trusted. Remember what I said a little while back, "God's intention for each of us is that we should grow to the point to where He can empower us to do what we want." [[Session 2 @ 46:30](#)] And that's where discipleship is going. And that's why power is so important. And, of course, human beings are hungry for power, but they don't have the character for it. And yet, when you read Paul, you see over and over how he talks about power, power. You can almost say Paul is power mad. Take Ephesians and read it and see how much he says about power and where that power is and what that power can do, and so on.

Good News for Leaders of Society, Government & Business [Dallas' #6] [42:58]

That's what God has in mind for us and that is what discipleship is leading. We're leading. And, you know, if we understand that, then we can preach gospel good news to leaders of society because the person who needs the power of God the greatest is not the person who's living in a box in the alley. It's the man or woman who is the head of a bank or a business. They're the ones who need it. See, we have this wrong. We think all the Gospels for the down and out. No, no, it's for the up and in. The up and in need it more than the down and out because they're

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responsible for more. And they need to understand that they can take everything that they're responsible for into the Kingdom of God. And they can learn to act with God there. And that's how they get beyond "business is business". That's how they get beyond that. No, no, I understand business is more than business. Yes, it's business but it's not just business. God's business. God is in business. God is right there. Business was his idea. That's the way He set things up.

And so once we begin to understand this, then as we go and make disciples, we will be sure to include the people who, from the human point of view, look as if they don't need it. Because we will understand that the human point of view is not God's point of view. And that's the great challenge for learning to live in the Kingdom of God is to get those inversions right. And to you know how often Jesus said many times, "*the first shall be last and the last shall be first*". And that's those two kingdoms. The first in the Kingdom of God may well be the last in the kingdom of man, the first in the kingdom of man may well be last in the Kingdom of God. And so His teaching - the teaching of the Kingdom, the parables, are all such beautiful expressions of this reality. And we can bring that with confidence because we have learned as disciples how to live there, and then we can, as we go, make others.

The Mission of Christ's People on Earth

[45:05]

So, just to draw this together, we can say that the mission of Christ's people on Earth is to carry through with the Great Commission. And the way we might do that is simply put it into practice in our church policies, in our local congregational policies. [Dallas pauses and exhales.]

That's the challenge. And we need to recognize that most of our churches are not here for that purpose. Now, when I say churches, I mean, the groups around the buildings on the corner. And this is a sad thing that we have to say. They are not here to do what Jesus said. It's not because they're mean, or they're rebellious, or anything of the sort. They just drift into where they are. And then for example, in many churches you go to, you will immediately realize their main concern is self perpetuation. They want to survive and they want to be successful as churches. And they have made the mistake which Jesus points out for individuals when he says, "*He that would save his life will lose it. But he that would lose his life for my sake in the gospels, will find it.*" That's true. That's true of churches. That's true of para-church organizations, as we call them. But the human tendency is always to get obsessed with what we do. And normally, the world in general is not much interested in that. And so then we find that we are not attracting others to the life that is flowing there. And then we become concerned - will we survive? And if you've ever been in a situation where you've watched a church die, as we say, you know, all of the kinds of confusion that comes in people's mind. There should be no thought if a church is not bringing the life that attracts people, why shouldn't it die?

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Probably will anyway. So you see, because the center of attraction is the life that is in Christ.

Now in our time, I want to really hammer the one of the main themes of the discussion. See, in our time, the church has been set aside. We talk about mainline churches. There's nothing really like that now. The main line doesn't run through the churches in our culture. Now we know that it should, and that it could, and it wouldn't be good if he did. That the ordinary minister, for example, faces a great challenge to just be respected in his community and to be regarded as someone who has essential knowledge for life. You see, if the communities that tried to keep the church from building a building in that area understood that that building represented life as it should be and could be under God, and that it isn't available anywhere else, there'd be a different story. But that's precisely the problem. That's the problem is they don't. Now, we have to express the gospel of Jesus Christ in such a way that they come to understand that and that begins with us. Is that our confidence? When we deal with the world generally, do we have a reality that we're living in, and that we can express in an intelligible way and relate it to human concerns, including all the other stuff that goes on around us in the way of education and business?

Well, we do. And if we take the themes that have come out as we've gone over the fundamental principles of life in the Kingdom of God, of the reality of the spiritual world, and so on, and keep them before us, then we will live in a different way, and we live on the basis of knowledge. We will be stable. We will be consistent, not unstable because, instead of mere commitment, we will be have belief that is grounded in knowledge. And that will enable us without any kind of faking or bullying or anything of the sort to just be the people of Christ in the world where we stand.

An Eternal Future [Dallas' outline #8]

[50:05]

And we have the future ahead of us. We sing the song, "*When we've been there. 10,000 years bright shining as the sun.*" Actually, that's quite biblical. 10,000 years is hardly a beginning. So, each of us we need to think concretely about what am I going to be doing 400 years from now? 10,000 years from now? What does forever look like? And, am I really up to that? And do I really believe it in a way that I can go to my neighbor and live a life that shows that? And perhaps I can say something to them that would help them find their way into the life, which they see in me.

The future of the universe is a glorious one. It's not going to go out of business. The One who brought it into existence can produce about anything you can imagine. If you like streets of gold, there's no problem with that. Anyone who can make this universe can produce enough gold to make streets if that's what you like.

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We lack imagination about the future. And we restrict ourselves to what we have seen in the human order and that chokes our faith. But, what we must understand is that what we are told in the person of Christ and in the scriptures is bedrock knowledge about real life. And as we experience it, and think it through, we can come to that assurance that will then allow us to go forth, as Paul says, holding forth the word of life to a world that is desperate and dying without it.

It's still true what the old song says, "[Rescue the Perishing](#)". Care for the dying in such a beautiful area as this, that's still true. It's true all over the world — Calcutta, London, New York City, Huntington Beach. It's true everywhere.

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying.
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save.

The great question still is, "What do you think of Christ?" And we can grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ in the world as it now stands because there has nothing been found out that has changed all of this, and the human need and the human possibility is the same today as it has [always](#) been.

Well, let's close with prayer.

[53:10]

Blessed glorious God, blessed Trinity. We ask that you would be our instructor and that you would take the things that we have discussed and center them in our minds and give us the grace to reach for them with our inquiries and questions and put them to the test of real life so that we will know the reality of Christ and His Kingdom in our life and in our world today. Please honor your name and the good of human beings in this world by answering that prayer. Amen.

~ ~ ~ End of Session 8 @ 53:55 ~ ~ ~

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For information on the courses, a plan worksheet for your custom Master's V-I-M, or a personal consult** with Doug Webster to discuss your desired spiritual training and growth, email us — info@JesusCollege.com.

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Jesus College Postscript

Thank you and God bless you for venturing into a life that is really life with Jesus as your Master and Maestro. We trust you have had a fresh hearing of Jesus through the minds and souls of a humble follower of Jesus in Dallas Willard alongside a cadre of the crucifixion of friends from around the world. May your quietly transforming, conversational friendship with Jesus immersed in the Trinitarian community be pervaded with joy and relaxed with shalom, as you willfully seek agape for the good of God, others & yourself.

For more resources to enhance your apprenticeship with Jesus...

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The Study Guide was prepared with love, diligence and enthusiasm by Doug Webster of Jesus College. We welcome your comments, suggestions and ideas on how we might better help you actually do the things Jesus commanded in your pursuit of Christlikeness.

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