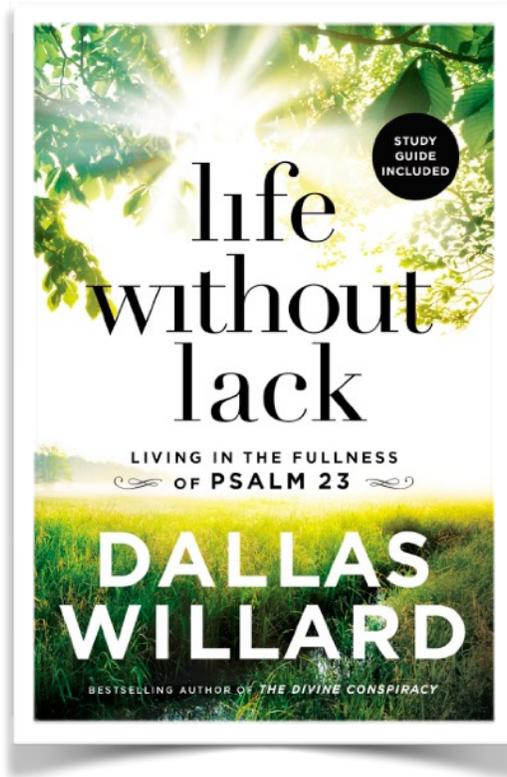


Life Without Lack ~ Study Guide

Dallas Willard



You're invited on a life changing 10 week journey through the 23rd Psalm shepherded by Dallas Willard through his most pastoral book, *Life Without Lack*.

In the Preface, Larry Burtoft writes,

"[Dallas'] experience with Jesus had convinced him that the 23rd Psalm was not merely a pretty poem with charming sentiments but an accurate description of the kind of life that is available to anyone who will allow God to be their Shepherd." (xi)

The *Life Without Lack* Study Guide offers Handouts (two pages for each chapter) including questions to prompt living without lack in the week to follow, three special *Life Without Lack* Prayers, 58 pages of Book Quotes, plus Apprenticeship concepts to inspire shepherding the next generation well before it's too late.

~ ~ ~

"The experience of a life without lack depends first and foremost upon the presence of God in our lives, because the source of this life is God Himself."

Dallas Willard, *Life Without Lack*, p. 1



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GROUP STUDY SCHEDULE

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1	Introduction	XIII-XXII
2	Chapter 1 - God in Himself (part 1) The Glorious Shepherd	1-23
3	Chapter 2 - God in Himself (part 2) Living Mindful of our Magnificent God	24-48
4	Chapter 3 - Why There Are People on the Earth	49-66
5	Chapter 4 - Why Such Lack and Evil?	67-93
6	Chapter 5 - Trust in God: The Key to Life	94-123
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8	Chapter 7 - Sufficiency Completed in Love (part 1)	157-171
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10	Chapter 8 - All the Days of My Life	186-213

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STUDY GUIDE HANDOUTS DIRECTORY

(Two pages per session)

<u>Session</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Study Guide Pages</u>
1	Introduction (book p. xiii - xxii)	<i>No Handout</i>
2	Chapter 1 - God in Himself (part 1) (book p. 1-23) The Glorious Shepherd	4
3	Chapter 2 - God in Himself (part 2) (24-48) Living Mindful of our Magnificent God	6
4	Chapter 3 - Why There Are People on the Earth (49-66)	8
5	Chapter 4 - Why Such Lack and Evil? (67-93)	10
6	Chapter 5 - Trust in God: The Key to Life (94-123)	12
7	Chapter 6 - Trust Completed in Death to Self (124-156)	14
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GROUP HANDOUT – Chapter 1 - “God in Himself” Part 1 (p. 1-23)

The experience of a life without lack depends first and foremost upon the presence of God in our lives, because the source of this life is God Himself. (1)

The Most Important Thing About You (2-3)

The ultimate freedom we have as individuals is the power to select what we will allow or require our minds to dwell upon and think about. (3)

The Transforming Power of Ideas Ephesians 6:12

We have the ability and responsibility to keep God in our minds, and those who do will make steady progress toward Him, for He will respond by making Himself known to us. Our ideas form the belief system upon which we base our actions and decisions, and these in turn determine the trajectory of our lives.

...Replacing them with the idea system embodied & taught by Jesus. (3)

“Death to Self” [see Chapter 6] (Matt. 10:37–39, Mark 8:34–37, Luke 17:33)

The Poison of Self-Obsession & The Antidote to Bad Ideas About God

Imprisoned in self consciousness...a “world of hurt”. (4)

The gospel...was about the Kingdom of God – God's immediate availability, His “with-us-ness” that makes a life without lack possible. (John 10:10) (6)

“The futility of the mind.” (Ephesians 4:17–19)

Taste and See the Lord is Good (7-8)

“Can't God just move in on us in touch us or do something to us?”

We are not talking about what He can do; we are talking about what we need to do.

Our Minds: The Key to Our Lives (7-8)

We bring the reality of God into our lives by making contact with him through our minds... there is nothing mysterious here. Of all reality, spirit is the most basic.

The Knowledge of God as a Human Responsibility (8-9)

Romans 1:18-21 - An ultimate, invisible, personal power.

A Really, Really Big God (10)

1.) God is an invisible being with great power and dominion over everything he created. Genesis 11; John 1:1; Romans 1:20; 1st Timothy 1:17

2.) God is personal. Yes personality. He thinks. He wills. He feels. He values. Jeremiah 8:21, 9:24; John 14:9; Ephesians 1:4-5

A God of Energy (10-12)

Energy is the basic reality. You are *like* God. God has made you so you have energy at your disposal, by these you're able to exercise your will.

* Jesus feeding 5000 (Mark 6:32–44)

* Jesus in the Wilderness (Matthew 4:4)

God, a glorious, self-sustaining, eternal being, is both the source of everything that exists and is totally self-sufficient...Incomprehensible, everlasting, unceasing, and never will be exhausted. That being is God!

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Three Ways to See God's Power & Personality

#1 - God's Nature in Fire & Cloud (12-13)

"Our God is a consuming fire."

(Hebrews 12:29, Matthew 3:11, Exodus 14:19-20, 24-25)

Envisioning the Invisible (13-15)

- Faith born out of experience is the means by which the mind contacts reality.

* Biblical Creation

* Fasting - "*I have food to eat of which you do not know...*" (John 4)

Fasting is feasting upon God.

What God Can Do, You Can Do...Sort Of (15-16)

* Baking a cake - Genesis 1:26-27

* Pregnancy - "*You're going to make a person!*"

#2 - God's Greatness Seen in History (16-17)

God is revealed as a spiritual, invisible power that is present and moves in the lives of human beings. (Deuteronomy 4:32-36) (17)

#3 - What's in a Name? (17-19)

~ Elohim ~ Yahweh ~ Adonai ~ El Shaddai ~ "*I Am that I Am*" (John 5:26)

Immaterial, intelligent, free personal being, of perfect goodness, wisdom, and power, who made the universe and continues to sustain it, as well as to govern and direct it in His providence. (18)

—> That is the being the life without lack relies. Such a life is guaranteed for those whose minds are set upon this God in faith. (19)

Three Glimpses of God's Grandeur (19-21)

1 - Nehemiah 9:6 - An everlasting, eternal party

2 - The book of Job - what was going on before the earth was created

3 - The Lords Prayer: "*Our Father...Hallowed be thy name.*"

God's Ample Supply (21-22) Philippians 4:10-13

King David - "*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*"

Paul - "*Not that I speak in regard to need.*"

A Vision of Glory (22-23)

* Jesus at the Wedding in Cana: God is not worried that He is going to run out...

In Your Next 10,000 Minutes...

Where is your thinking stuck in self-obsession?

How will you practice thinking about your really, really big God?

Fast; Worship; Read the scriptures in Chapter 1; Celebrate Creation

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GROUP HANDOUT – Chapter 2 - “God in Himself” Part 2 (p. 24-48)

The secret to a life without lack is rooted in our knowledge of God. (24)
“Yahweh is my Shepherd” - self-subsistent, eternal being. (25)

What You Don't See is More Important Than What You Do See (26-28)

The single most important thing to remember about God is His total unlikeness in His being from anything we can see. (26)

The important point here is that you have in yourself the Romans 1:20 experience of the invisible originating the visible. (27)

A Big No-No: Confusing Anything with God (28-30)

2nd Commandment: “You shall not make for yourself a carved image.” (Exodus 20:4)

3rd Commandment: “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.”

Idol - To degrade God to the level of a created being.

A Long Education in the Same Direction (30-31)

At what point do we finally come to the place where we can use God's name without doing so “in vain”? After we have come to know Jesus Christ. (30) John 17:5-6

Come to Think of it, There's Nothing to Fear (32-33)

My objective here is to help you think about God, and to do so correctly in accord with the truth about the kind of being God is. I'm also asking you to think about yourself what kind of being you are. I want to help you think through things as they come to a correct understanding of matters this will lead you, together with the Lord, into actions based on this truth. You can live completely without fear. (32)

—> What do you fear?

If you will take the time required to come to know and trust God as He is, and ask the Lord to give light to your mind, you can come to a place of perfect peace and fearlessness. This is precisely what the Shepherd Psalm is talking about.

I Am the Good Shepherd - Jesus Christ is Yahweh (33-34) Eph. 3:8; John 10:17-18

At the center of these riches is Christ Himself that being of complete self-sufficiency we have been focusing upon. He is the Shepherd Lord of the 23rd Psalm, Yahweh in the flesh!

He was completely and totally without fear. Why? (33-34)

Who Jesus Is (34-35)

To see how a life without fear is possible, you need to look deeper into who Jesus is.

- The deep end of the theological pool - the nature of God as triune: God's infinite, loving personality to be multiple in itself and in its creative activity. This is why God created the heavens and populated them - to develop love.

God is personality. He treats other personalities and, out of the plenitude of His being, He loves them. (34) I Corinthians 13; Ephesians 3:19; I John 4:18

At the center of so many of our difficulties is fear.

What is the answer to all our fears? Love.

The love that comes out of plenitude - out of the fullness of God's sufficiency.

To fear is to be tormented.

But to love perfectly – and to know it – is to be free of fears torment. (34-35)

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Let `er Rip (35-38)

Hebrews 11:35-38

Because of the nature of God and His kingdom...*"Let the worst happen, and God and I will go on together in the abundance of His being."* (36)

Jesus is a manifestation of that glorious reality.

* The Insignificance of Bethlehem - "The last first and the first last" and is primarily a declaration of the limitless kingdom of God.

John 17:24 - The life that the Son knew before His incarnation...glimpses that were meant to provide us with a vision of a life without lack. (37-38)

Glimpses of Glory and Self-Sufficiency (38-40)

God's power is meant to be at the disposal of human beings. (38)

* The Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36) The greatness and grandeur of his kingdom (40)

Entering in Through the New Covenant (40-41)

"Jesus the mediator of the new covenant" (Hebrews 12:18-24)

In the new covenant that Jesus initiated, we are given a foretaste of this reality.

... the overwhelming abundance of this world in which God exists at the very center, in which He calls us to draw from so we may know a way of life without lack. (41)

Coming to Grips with the Ineffable* God (41-45)

* (def.) *"too great or extreme to be described in words"*

Exodus 19; 24:18; 34:28 - If you're thinking this is weird, you're right. (42)

The 2nd Commandment - *"Not make for yourself an idol"*

God is so other that He is literally out of this world. (42)

* Israelites in the wilderness - manna from heaven (Deuteronomy 8:2-3)

"Hidden manna" Revelation 2:17 *"I am the living bread"* (John 6:51)

"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life." (v. 53-55)

From Glory to Glory (45-46)

Jesus was talking about being transformed into a completely new reality, a world of complete sufficiency, where all our needs are supplied by God. 2 Co. 3:18; Romans 12:2

The key to a life without lack, that we would have the mind of Christ - our Shepherd, who knew first hand the complete and perfect sufficiency of our magnificent God. (46)

In your next 10,000 Minutes...

What are you afraid of?

What do you "think" to know a glorious, magnificent God?

Do you want to take the time this week to know this "Being" better?

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GROUP HANDOUT – Chapter 3 - “Why There Are People on Earth” (p. 49-66)

Have you ever wondered why there are people on Earth? Psalm 8:1-8

“Why am I in the world?” (49)

“What good is man?” (50)

A World of Good (51-53)

All these creations are good. Being is itself good.

If you weigh all the pain and the suffering against all the joy and the strength you find in human life, it is still good. (52)

What are Human Beings? (53-54)

1.) What did God create when He created human beings?

2.) What is especially good about them? (53)

Beyond Belief (54-56)

It is hard for people to believe that they are spirit-infused beings with such power, privilege, and responsibility. You may feel like you are very far from being in the business of governing the earth. We have accepted an image of the world has imposed on us that is in direct opposition to Jesus’ teaching and hinders us from stepping into the dignity of the sons and daughters of God. (54)

Here's my point: just as we have a tremendously difficult time conceiving of or imagining what God is like, so we have tremendously difficult time imagining what people are really like. (55) Matthew 16:26 - *What is your soul worth?*

Where Our Greatness Lies (56-57)

What is it that makes human beings so precious? It is this: they are capable of being faithful to God and committed to the promotion of good in the world. (56)

The potential of men and women to give up their lives for the glory of God and for the good that God has created is precisely what makes human life great. (57)

Let Your Good Works Shine (57-59)

The obviously well-kept secret of the “ordinary” is that it is made to be a receptacle of the divine, a place where the life of God flows. (58)

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The Importance of Our Work (59-61)

Work is... (59)

- ...a special type of causation to which goodness and blessing can be promoted.
- ... the expanding of energy to produce good in various forms in ways.
- ... the total amount of lasting good that you will accomplish in your lifetime.

Here's a truth you must never forget: He is more interested in the person you are becoming than in your work, or your ministry, or your job. And the surest way to realize the full potential of your God-designed self is to live in eternity while you're in time, conscious of the loving gaze of your all-sufficient Shepherd, in whose care nothing of the good you do is lost. It is stored up in your own self and in the lives of others you have touched. (61)

The Challenge of Personal Relationships (61-62)

Our most intimate personal relationships...the primary area of human failure.

- * Adam & Eve and their kids

What Sin Begins (62-64)

Marriage - Relationship between the man and the woman: mistrust, anger and disappointment became the standard quality of human life. (62)

Even among those of us who have experienced the grace of God it is rare to find any man and woman who are bound together in marriage who are truly trustful in every respect, and confident, pleased, and satisfied with each other. Rather, there is a constant testing that goes on, and it is a very serious problem.

It is rare to find a marriage relationship that truly has the grace of God in it to such an extent that both people are completely at home and confident, never in doubt, and full of love, and concern for each other. (63)

Portrait of a Healed Relationship (64-65) Ephesians 5:22-29

Paul is saying here that we are to give ourselves up.

The Glorious Potential of the Human Race (65-66)

There is nothing that makes God happier than human beings, redeemed by the grace of God, devoting their lives — the moments and hours of their days — to the good of others and of creation, to the glory of God. (66)

In my next 10,000 minutes...

- ~ Where does my marriage or relationship(s) need more of God's grace?
What doubt, anger, mistrust or competition fuels my marriage "lack"?
Where am I "busy protecting myself?" (63)
- ~ Do I think I am destined to govern the Earth? (54, 57)
- ~ What is my "work"? How much is "job", "family" or "position"?

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GROUP HANDOUT – Chapter 4 - “Why Such Lack and Evil?” (p. 67-93)

For most of us, the thought of a life without lack is unimaginable because we live in a world so obviously full of lack – lack of kindness, fairness, and compassion, all of which are more precious because they seem so rare. (67)

The secret to a life without lack is faith in God and God’s full capacity and willingness to meet all our needs – and more. But what is faith? It is simply an understanding of how things are, wedded to a commitment to live one’s life in light of that understanding. (68)

Satan: The Early Years (69-71) Ephesians 2:2
“the prince of the power of the air”...to Persuade ~ Tempt ~ Deceive (71)

In God’s Crosshairs (72-74) John 3:8; Matthew 1:20-21; Hebrews 2:14
To destroy sin is to destroy the works of the devil. Satan is God’s primary target for he is the one who bears the primary responsibility for all that is wrong with the world. (72)
Jesus came to destroy death - Hebrews 2:14
“Wiles of the Devil” (Ephesians 6:10-11) not the wiles of your neighbor (73)
To walk in the way of Jesus & know the life without lack = devil is real and at work. (74)

Satan’s Three Weapons of Temptation (74-77) I John 2:15-16
1.) Lust of the Flesh 2.) Lust of the Eyes 3.) Pride of Life
The word lust is probably better “desire” (76)

Tempted in All Ways Like Us (77-79) [Chart - p. 78]
Satan’s way of dealing with people is to catch them up in these three patterns and then make them think they are doing what they want to do. (78)

Masters of Justification (79-80) Genesis 4:9 - Cain
Foolishness if we stop to think...Satan counts on our not stopping to think. (79)

Fearing Our Desires (80-81) Psalm 23:3 - *Right paths*
Satan uses not only our desires to deceive us but also our fears. Fear that we will not get what we desire can provide the motivation for actions that caused so many of our problems. Compare the three sources of temptation...with the things we fear, you will find it nearly all our fears are grounded in our desires. (80)
If we are to experience a life without lack...we must by the grace of God, deal with these fears – or we will be in bondage to Satan...both in terms of fear and the temptation to meet our needs in a way that is not right before God, which reveals our lack of faith in Him and lack of trust in His all sufficient care & strength. (80-81)

Thoughts of the Heart (81-82) Genesis 6:5-7 - Noah
When God looks at human wickedness, He is not looking exclusively at our actions, but our minds and hearts, our thoughts and intentions: 1) our heart is the source of our actions in life, but more important here, 2) our thoughts are where Satan applies his trade...images, through ideas, through feelings and fears. (81-82)
Human beings not forced to do evil or good. Choose one course is better than another

Of First Concern (82-83) I Samuel 3:9 - Samuel
The heart is our point of contact with God’s unlimited capacity to protect and provide, which flows to those who choose to keep their minds fixed on Him.
Proverbs 4:23 Romans 1:28 Psalm 119:11
“Speak, Lord, for Your servants hears.”
If you are not entertaining God’s truth, you will be entertaining Satan’s lies. (83)

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A Lesson from the Victorious One (83-84) John 14:30

Jesus responded with the Word of God...Satan was aware only Jesus could break his grip on the human world, devoted as it is to power and deceit, and only Jesus could deliver human beings from the mire of sin and evil in which they floundered. He knew Jesus to be the only truly radical person to enter human history, for He would refuse to use evil to defeat evil. He would set alight a new order that does not employ the devices evil persons use to try to secure themselves and get their way. (84)

The Battle Plan in the Garden (84-86) John 12:32

The Trinity's winning strategy to break down the rule of Satan...Jesus stands quietly at the center of the contemporary world, as He Himself predicted. (85-86)

Christ's death and resurrection demonstrated to His followers and other observers that what Jesus said about the Kingdom and its availability was and is true. Knowledge of the presence and the unfailing availability of God to those who trust Him...

Jesus basic idea...this world is a perfectly good and safe place...if they have placed their lives in hands of Jesus and His Father. (86)

If at First You Don't Succeed... (86-87)

Jesus victory over Satan...Satan knew he had been defeated and his attention now was to be focused on those who believed in Jesus...his effort to defeat Jesus' followers. (86)

A Whirling World of Ideas (88-89) Ephesians 4:14

The primary means Satan uses to keep the evil pot boiling are the ideas that govern society's individuals...about what is good and what is right and how things should be done.

* The American Way - Do what they want to do whenever they want to do it. (88-89)

The Vision Dims (89-91) John 5:44

The desire to look good and be wise. (90) * USC - *"Truth shall make you free."*

Truth does exist, but it does not come easily, if at all, to those trapped by Satan's deceptions about what is desirable. (90) Looking Good vs. Knowing Good. (91)

Destroying the Citadel of Satan (91-93)

Satan's constant assault is aimed at our belief in God's goodness & power, that God will supply all our needs, and that we can trust God to be sufficient in all ways. When our minds are on God, and our thoughts are formed by our knowledge of God, such sufficiency will flow to us. Satan's main task is to keep our minds elsewhere, anywhere but on God. (91)

Ephesians 4:17-18 II Corinthians 10:4-5 II Timothy 2:24-25

A world in "the snare of the devil" is also a world that God loves, into which he sent Jesus. Only the gospel of Christ can take back what Satan controls and reclaim the mind & heart of every human being held captive. This involves coming to think about God as Jesus thought about Him, and to trust God as Jesus trusted Him - moving from having faith *IN* Jesus to having the faith *OF* Jesus. To do so is to know the life without lack. (92)

In my next 10,000 minutes...

~ How well do I know and recognized the "wiles of the devil", his "snare"?

~ Why do I want to look good?

What is my motivation?

What am I willing to do to accomplish it? (LWL p. 80)

~ How will I take every thought captive in obedience to Jesus & think about God like Jesus thinks about God?

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GROUP HANDOUT — Chapter 5 - "*Trust in God: The Key to Life*" (p. 94-123)

~ Triangle of Sufficiency ~

When *Faith, Death to Self & Love* are alive in you, you will find that Hope & Joy pervade your entire life as a natural result. Each one is a gift from God, and our privilege and calling is to become *the kind of people* who can receive these gifts and work with God to develop them as we learn to live a *Life Without Lack*.

—> Faith = Trust = the key that unlocks our readiness to receive God's sufficiency in our lives. (94)

Just Enough Faith

(95-96)

Jeremiah 29:3

A great part of faith lies in the intensity with which we want something. The nature of faith involves love and the desire for good. (96)

The Power of Words

Remember the cry of this desperate father (Mark 9:22) and follow his example in words and action, you will know that all sufficient love and power of God. (96)

Clearing Up the Confusion About Faith (97-99)

Faith is not a mystery. We experience it day in and day out.

Faith is simply reliance upon something in both *Attitude & Action*. (97)

You cannot live without faith. Faith is tied to the future. Faith has the elements of *Desire & Vision*. The element of *Vision* comes from our contact with reality or words about reality, which in turn brings about a certain *Attitude & Action*. (99)

"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17)

The Three Faiths of Job

(99-101)

Faith is a gift from God. (100) God is more concerned with who you are becoming than what you can accomplish with your faith. He desires that you become *the kind of person* who can joyfully and easily receive an abundance of *Faith & Power* - the gift of great faith from God, who knows when, what kind, and how much to give us. (101)

Propriety (101-103) **Desperation** (105-106) **Sufficiency** (107-110)

Run with Perseverance

(106-107)

Psalms 46:1-2

A life without lack is all about knowing the unlimited sufficiency of God in the moment of need...And in trusting, you will know God...when you have nowhere else to turn except to God, and you turn to Him, your faith of desperation will meet the fullness of God, and you will taste the life without lack as you discover the depths of the faith of sufficiency. (107)

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." (Job 13:15)

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In Your Presence is Fullness of Joy (110-112)

Job hung in there and his faith of desperation carried him.

God showed up and Job said, *"I've heard about you, but now I've seen you."*

1.) *"I repent."* Job stopped pressing his case with God. He stopped trying to get God to make everything right. Having seen God, he let go of desperation. He saw that whatever needed to be taken care of would be taken care of. Job saw the greatness of God, and in that vision he was able to rest in the all-sufficiency of Yahweh.

2.) Live in Clear View of the Cross † (112)

Trusting in the greatness of His Father...casts a transformative light on or own sufferings...not many things will bother us, or even matter at all.

3.) Faith of Sufficiency = Take our minds off of ourselves and place them on God.

* Jacob - *"God has dealt graciously with me, and I have enough."*

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

Now It's Your Turn (116-118) John 14:23

1.) Seek God and be prepared to go with Him. (117) Ask Him to reveal Himself to you and give you the faith of sufficiency that knows no bounds. (116)

2.) Complain - Even if you have strong faith, you may complain to God. (118)

The Social Context of Faith (118-120)

Mark 2:1-12 Paralyzed Man - When faith moves, it moves in groups. (119)

Ask, Seek, Knock...but Don't Pretend (120-121)

As we experience more of the reality of God: our faith grows according to our vision. As our vision grows, our will – our ability to decisively act – grows, and we become increasingly capable of choosing and doing good. (120)

Increase Our Faith (121-123) (Hebrews 11:1)

If you want faith, ask God for it. When you ask, be willing to let Him take you through what is necessary to prepare you for it. (121)

You know you believe. No faking or forcing is necessary. You simply believe it. You also know when you do not believe. Please do not try to believe anything. (123)

In the 10,000 minutes...

~ In what situations is my faith "Propriety"? "Desperation"? "Sufficiency"?

~ What act of trust will I practice this week while asking for a great gift of faith?

a.) Hearing His Word b.) Seeing His work c.) Experiencing the Kingdom of God

~ Am I ready to pray this *Faith of Sufficiency* prayer?

"Lord, give me faith. I'm ready for it. Take me through whatever I need for it."

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GROUP HANDOUT Chapter 6 - "Trust Completed in Death to Self" (p. 124-156)

It is essential to realize we are dealing with "death to self" not "death of self". (124)

You were not put here on Earth to get rid of yourself. You were put here to be a self, to live fully as a self. The worth of the self — your self — is inestimable, and God's intent for you is that you become a fully realized self as you make the grace-fueled movement from the old self to the new. (125) Colossians 3:9-10 Matthew 16:24-26

Jesus and Death to Self John 12:23-26 - Jesus' Life on the Cross

"If it dies" it produces much grain...not just to lose life but to give life. (126)

"For the joy set before Him, He endured the Cross." Hebrews 12:2

If we miss this truth and fail to incorporate it into our own experience, we will miss the route to life without lack. The Cross, the Resurrection & His glorious present ministry ...the liberating truth of the death-to-self teaching. (127)

Job's Death to His "Proper" Self - Job saw the grandeur and greatness of God...his new understanding of reality. "Now my eyes have seen you." Job 42:5-6

Paul and Death to Self (128-129)

II Corinthians 4:7-10, 16-18; 5:14-15; Galatians 4:14-25

Fleshing out "the Flesh" (129-130)

The Flesh (def.) Natural powers of the human being based in the human body — capabilities, wants and desires unaided by divine assistance or guidance. (129)

To live in the flesh is to live with un-crucified affections and desires. When we are living apart from God we make our desires ultimate. (130)

Desire and Spirit [and Love] (130-131) Matthew 5:21-30

Desire (def.) - The impulse to possess or experience something.

Spirit [human will] - To consider alternatives and God prompts us to have an interest in what is better and best. It takes a broad view of the possibilities, not just "desire" and its object. That's where choice comes in. The conflict between the flesh and the human spirit is the conflict between desire — what I want — and the will for what is best. It is, in fact, the conflict between desire and "love", for love is always directed toward what is good, and not at simply having my desires satisfied. Love is the will-to-good of its object. (131)

Our Willy-Nilly Wills (132-133) John 5:39-43

Flesh - confidence in our "will power". The basic nature of sin is to trust oneself.

An individual can have only a very small amount of faith until he has come to a very clear resolution of the place of his desires, his glory, or his power to dominate.

The Insatiable and Its Satisfaction (134-135) James 3:13-16

If we are going to live a life of abundance sufficiency, we must be focused and intentional in standing against these dreadful roots of the self life. Until we have done that, we will be incapable of entering by faith into the life God longs to give us. (134)

Pure Wisdom (135-136)

These beautiful qualities [James 3:17-18] are marks of persons we have learned in their heart of hearts the great freedom of death to self, and out of their peaceful lives comes everything that is right and good. (136)

Playing by the Rules (137-138)

When we try to make rules for dying to the flesh, we are likely to miss the core problem, which is not our behavior but what is in our hearts. (137)

Putting things in the place of God is the central issue. (138)

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Another Day in the Life of the World...and the Un-Crucified Self (138-142)

Our desires are the roots of the self life in all of us. And until we, in conjunction with the grace of God, have made an intentional decision not to allow our desires to be the center of our lives, we can never have the kind of faith that will lead us to the life of abundant sufficiency in God. (140)

Self-Control and Other-Control (142)

But death to self includes our desires about any whom we love. (142)

Crucified with Christ (142-144) Luke 9:23-25

Our task is to understand what death to self is and understand that we cannot live in the Shepherd Psalm – a life without lack in the Kingdom of God – until we have accepted it, recognized it, and said, *"Lord, give this gift to me."* (143)

Roots of Bitterness and Other Obstacles (144-145)

We can receive the things we do not want – or we give up the things we do want – if we have decided, by the grace of God, that we can trust God to take care of us. (145)

Death to Self and Life's Inevitabilities (146-148)

If we get ourselves out of the way, and focus our attention upon the God of our sufficiency, and we, too, can be singing songs of victory. (148)

Death to Self as Reality and Appearance (148-149)

When you become a Psalm 23 person, people will notice. (149)

Don't Mistake Me for a Doormat (149-151)

Jesus was no doormat; he was simply dead to self, fully alive to God. (150)

Whatever Happened to Self-Worth (151-152)

Dying to self does not exclude having a proper sense of self-worth, including the need to feel recognize and valued. (151)

Following Jesus on the Path to Death to Self (153-154)

Humility is the beautiful condition of people who have learned to surrender their desires, their glory, and their power. *"Lord, I give it up. It's all yours."*

I Surrender All (154-156)

One of the main reasons we have such little faith is we have not lived thru the process of abandonment and come to the place where God can trust us with great faith. (155)

In the next 10,000 minutes...

~ What part of me - my self - is most alive, least dead, in this season of my life that I need to seek the grace of God to surrender?

~ Where am I "hung up on honor from others, reputation, appearing well" (133) or "desires, reputation, glory, have my way" (143) that is blocking my trust in God?

~ Am I willing and ready to pray over this (these) area(s)...
"Lord, I give it up. It's all yours" as a prayer & practice this week?

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GROUP HANDOUT – Chapter 7 - "Sufficiency Completed in Love" pt. 1 (157-171)

Triangle of Sufficiency - Faith (trust), Death to Self & Agape Love support our Psalm 23 life.

Each is a precious gift of God, who, in His graciousness, gives them to us enables us to receive them in ever increasing abundance. (157)

From Faith...to Death...to Love (158-159)

Trust in God & Death to Self open up the floodgates for God's Agape Love to flow into us.

Faith...

...willing to see God as He is before God can further reveal Himself to us and give us more Faith.

...this attitude of life requires more and more Death to Self as we go along.

Death to Self...

...is submitting all your desires to God.

...means in God's hands, we are content for Him to take charge of outcomes.

...becomes the natural daily way with the more Faith in God.

...is the Cross - a new way of living in confident fullness in God and His goodness.

...is abandonment to God in Faith. (158)

...is practiced through spiritual disciplines such as fasting.

"Lord, you're quite sufficient for me." Matthew 6 - Treasure God not goods

Then Comes Love (159-162)

Faith [Trust] has drawn us and nearer to God and positioned us to receive His blessings. Death to Self has made our life a willing receptacle for Him, and now Agape Love flows into us like a river and out into a desperately thirsty world, completing the triangle to fulfill all that is needed for a Life Without Lack. (159)

God is love...is not an explanation of who God is; that's an explanation of what love is. (159)

"Oh how He loves you and me..."

Luke 6:27-38

John 13:31-35

Romans 12:9-10

Romans 13:8-10

I John 4:11-21

I Corinthians 13:4-7

All You Need is Love (162-164)

"Circle of Sufficiency" (*Renovation of the Heart* term) - Love between a small child and a parent comes closest to seeing and experiencing love in its purest form.

All of these things direct us to the truth that perfect love is only found in God.

Love is a gift from God, who is love. We can not perform for a gift. (163)

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

He First Loved Us (164-165)

The relational nature of Christ reflects the love of God...what it is like and that it is for us.

Romans 5:8, *"He demonstrated His love for us..."*

Luke 6:35, *"Love your enemies, do good to them...as Children of the Most High"*

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Acting in Love or Just Acting?

(165-166)

Most people know that love is not just about the things we do. Love is an attitude of the heart. We know we can act in a loving way without really loving. (165)

Service to others is one of the easiest ways to begin loving someone. (166)

Delight in those who have just cursed us, hurt us, taken something we value and scorned us and look down upon us? It is hard to do – very hard. This is where we often give up on love.

Paul knew that when we think like this we are working at the wrong level. We should not try to love that person; we should train to be the kind of person who would love them. Only then can the ideal of love pass into a real possibility and practice. Our aim under love is not to be loving to this or that person, or in this or that kind of situation, but to be a person possessed by love as an overall character of life. Our response to the specific occasions when we are to act flow out of our overall character. I do not come to my enemies and then try to love them; I come to them as a loving person.

* A good tree bearing good fruit. (166)

What is Love?

(166-169)

[A biblical, profound, insightful, inspired and inspiring teaching on love & human nature.]

Agape Love... (according to Jesus & Paul)

(167)

- 1.) Is in people whose lives are already marked by certain qualities of the whole self, chief of which are Faith in our all-sufficient God & joyful embracing of Death to Self.
- 2.) Involves an orientation of the whole self toward what is good and right.
- 3.) Has amazing, supernatural power for good as it indwells the individual.

Agape Love is...

...not action; it is a source of action.

...a condition out of which actions of a certain type emerge.

...not an abstract ideal impossible to realize in our day-to-day lives.

...an overall condition of real people...in the real world...poised to promote well-being.

...an overall disposition...that does justice to the New Testament teaching.

...a coherent idea that can be aimed at in practice & implemented.

...meant to be lived.

...God.

Deeper than the fact that God loves us is this: He is love. He wills nothing but what is good. That is His identity, and it explains why He loves individuals even when He is not pleased with them or loved by them in return. (168) Ephesians 5:1-2

An Anatomy of Love

(169-171)

"Disposition of Agape Love" I Timothy 1:5

- Not by direct effort; by training of Spiritual Disciplines

"Renovation of the Heart"

(170)

~ The Will, Mind (Thoughts & Feelings), Body, Social Relations and the Soul

In the next 10,000 minutes...

~ Why does God love me? What does His love mean to me? What does His love do to me?

~ How does love interface with my will? How does my will work with my whole self?

~ What will I practice to develop the "condition" (source) of God's love [i.e. God] in me?

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GROUP HANDOUT — Chapter 7 - "*Sufficiency Completed in Love*" pt. 2 (171-185)

CLASSROOM — Agape Love Teaching

* *A good tree bears good fruit and the sweet aroma of the fruit blossom.*

~ **LOVE DEFINED** — poised...a source...condition...disposition...an idea to live. (168)

We are called and enabled to love as God loves by becoming like God as loving persons.
Ephesians 5:1-2, "*Love as God loves you...walk in the way of love*"

Achieve the DISPOSITION of AGAPE love... NOT by direct effort, but by TRAINING:
Attending to and putting into place the CONDITIONS out of which it arises.

—> Regular practice of the spiritual disciplines comes strong into play.
The goal is not to be people who do loving things but to become
the "*kind of people*" who naturally, joyfully, and easily love. (169)

—> We "pursue love" by advancing our faith & dying to self through...
Appropriate training & practice.
The love we receive from God takes care of the rest.

~ **LOVE WILLED** — A condition of the "will", embodied in the fundamental dimensions of
the human personality, guiding them for serving the good.

—> Love is not something you choose to do, it is what you become - a loving person.

—> Your WILL...
...your capacity to bring things and events and processes into existence.
...the control center of the self: the "heart" or the human spirit.
...direct all aspects of the self.

When love pervades our WILL, all these other dimensions:
MIND (thoughts, images, feelings, desires, emotions), BODY, SOCIAL, SOUL
...work in harmony with and in service to the Kingdom of God, and your life becomes a
testimony to the God who meets your every need. ["sufficient"] (170)

** "Will" + "Won't" = "Want" as in "*I shall not want*"
Training your will to "won't" what you want until you want what He wills

Psalm 23:5 — *An honored guest at the feast...with my enemies*
Having been served, he is free to serve.

Jesus, of course, is our master and model in this regard. (171)
John 13 – Washing the disciples feet. "*Do as I have done to you.*" (v. 16)

The Brand New Old Commandment (174-175)

World religious leaders - None of these leaders were willing to die for their disciples.
Jesus was the only one living in the realm of agape love.

If we do not choose to become as loving as Jesus, we will never know a life without lack.

Such a life is realized through love filling our lives. Faith is only completed in love,
because our faith [trust] is in a God of love – no other. The more this faith [trust] grows in
us, the more we will experience the carefree joy of Christ's love. (175)

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CROSS FIT — Agape Love Training — How to Love Somebody (But Not Everybody)

Decide: 1) We want to love people 2) Who we are going to love 3) How we are going to do it
- We are not called to love everybody, we love somebody — our “neighbor”. (176)

Finding that Special Somebody to Love (177-179)

1.) Which “somebody”?

“Love our enemies” (Matthew 5:44) - a promise to lift hatred & enmity

“Forgive” (Mark 11:25) - a promise to lift un-forgiveness

It will take Time, Training & Grace

We fail because it does not work the way we thought it would. (177)

2.) Love One Person for One Week (178)

Caring for them starts with deciding to love them.

Ask God to show you something in them that is good and be thankful for that.

What can you do to help them? Use your resources & abilities to serve them.

Love Means Being Able to Say No (179-180)

At times saying no may be the most loving thing to do.

Effective loving requires deep maturity.

The Joy of Loving Luke 6:37-38 (180-182)

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

Love Means Getting to Say, “I Forgive You” (182-184)

“Love will cover a multitude of sins.” (I Peter 4:8)

Jesus said that unless you forgive, you will not be forgiven.

Forgiveness does not... (183)

...require reconciliation. It is two sided; both must be willing.

...require you to forget. It lets people off the hook and frees us to love them.

...mean you stop hurting.

Once we make the choice to forgive, we will need God’s help - Colossians 3:13

A Dynamic Life Without Lack (184-185)

Faith—>Death to Self—>Agape Love = Triangle of sufficiency - the heart of life without lack.

Faith feeds death to self, death to self feeds love, love feeds faith, and on it gloriously goes. When these are fundamental realities in your life, you are exactly where David was when he said, “*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*”

You are prepared to take the absence of something from your life as sufficient proof that you do not need it. Not because you're trying to make it happen, but because it simply happens to those who know the all-sufficiency of God. This is not something you can make happen, but God can...and will. The ultimate freedom that comes to the one whose life is characterized by faith, death to self, and love is the assurance that you have everything you need in God. (185)

In the next 10K minutes, what Agape Training will I practice to be more poised?

~ What Somebody will I choose to love?

~ Is forgiveness involved?

~ Is saying “No” a part?

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GROUP HANDOUT – Chapter 8 - “*All the Days of My Life*” (p. 186-213)

The emphasis throughout the Shepherd’s Psalm is the fact that God is with us. The life without lack flows out of our relationship with Him. Our challenge is to stay with Him in the increasing belief that God truly desires to be with us. (186-187)

The With-God Life Hebrews 13:5-6 Matthew 28:18-20

Road Trip with Jesus! “*Jesus, take the wheel!*”

FIRST - Packing Preliminaries (188-192)

1.) Do I really want this?

Am I really enthralled with Jesus or only prepared to put up with Him? (189)

2.) The right-now me

Fact 1: It’s OK to be me wherever I go - *Living the Beatitude*

Fact 2: The right-now work I do is valuable

On the basis of hearing this message and trusting it to be true, you come to understand that it is good that you are alive; your life is good, it is good that you are who you are, and it is good that you do the work you do. (191)

3.) Decide not Drift

SECOND - Previewing the Day Ahead (192-197)

—> *Imagine what your day would look like with Jesus at your side.* (192)

~ Strength to Please

~ Joy & Confidence

~ Loving Neighbors

~ “Tag, Jesus is It!”

~ Super-Assistant

~ Speaking & Hearing God

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THIRD - Planning the Day

(197-213)

—> *You cannot spend a day with Jesus unless you intend to do so.* (197)

~ Preparing the Night Before: - Recollect - Praise - Dream - Confess - Prepare -

~ Resting in Faith - Ps. 23:2, "*Green pastures*" I Peter 5:7, "Cast your cares on Him "

~ Rising

- Praise

- Petition

- Planning "7x7" - Seven Times a Day for Seven Days

- - Honing Holy Habits "*Tag! Wait, Am I it or will I tag Jesus?*"

~ Pursuing the Day

- Take a "God's-Eye View" and Bless People - "*Bene-diction*"

~ Reflecting Grace-Drenched - Before dinner

- Honest Debrief - "*I am the person who did that.*" (209)

- Thanksgiving - The abundant life Jesus promised. John 10:10; Romans 14:17

Preparing for the Next Day...and a New Life (211-213)

Life in the presence of the all sufficient Shepherd whose voice calls us to walk often through the gate into God's presence. It is the life for what you were created. You will make tremendous progress in experiencing the Psalm 23 life that Christ came to provide. You'll see remarkable growth, and all the good things Jesus desires to give us – a rich life of joy and power, abundant in supernatural results, with a constant, clear vision of your never ending life in God's world and an abiding sense of your work day by day – will become the common, yet extraordinary, realities in your life. (213)

Colossians 1:9-12

In the next 10,000 minutes, how will I spend a day with Jesus?

~ Am I really enthralled with Jesus or only prepared to put up with Him?

Is He my Savior, but not really my friend & teacher, mentor & coach?

~ Which of the Six "Things to Come" most capture me right now?

~ What practical suggestion(s) for the Five parts of the day will I try this week:

Sundown ~ Rest ~ Morning Preparation ~ Day's Focus ~ Reflection

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Opening Prayer ¹

by Dallas Willard

Lord Jesus Christ,
We are so thankful to you that you have said,
“Fear not, little flock,
For it is your father’s good pleasure
To give you the kingdom.” ²

We are thankful for the ease with which you walked upon this earth,
the generosity and kindness you showed to people,
the devotion with which you cared for those
who were out of the way and in trouble,
the extent to which you even loved your enemies
and laid down your life for them.

We are so thankful to believe that this is a life for us,
a LIFE WITHOUT LACK, a life of SUFFICIENCY.
It’s so clear in you, the SUFFICIENCY of your Father
and the fullness of life that was poured through you,
and we’re so thankful that you have promised that same love,
that same life, that same joy, that same power for us.

Lord, slip up on us today.
Get past our defenses, our worries, our concerns.
Gently open our souls, and speak your Word into them.
We believe you want to do it,
And we wait for you to do it now.

In your name, amen.

~~~

1 - *Life Without Lack*, p. xiii

2 - Luke 12:32

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***A Prayer for the Battle of the Mind*** <sup>1</sup>

by Dallas Willard

Lord, minister to me by your Spirit.  
Come into my heart and mind,  
and release me from all inward tension and anxiety.  
Hold before my mind the truth that I have nothing to fear from Satan  
For you have defeated him;  
all I must do is fill my life and my mind with you.

Remind me often, especially in the midst of difficulty,  
that you, who are in me  
are greater than he who is in the world.

Help me to carry this truth with me  
as I contemplate the awesome reality of the spiritual battle taking place,  
a battle that, perhaps in our time, is moving perceptively closer to its climax.

Give me the vision of who you are:  
Our Father who art in heaven,  
The Shepherd in whose presence there is no lack,  
so I may have the confidence and power to love and to live as Jesus lived.

In his name, amen.

~ ~ ~

1 - *Life Without Lack*, p. 93

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### **Closing Prayer <sup>1</sup>**

by Dallas Willard

Gracious Lord,

Help us to see and understand—with the eyes of faith and the mind you have given us—your magnificent, glorious, self-sufficient being, and the greatness of your Kingdom into which we are invited. May we grasp the deep significance of the words, “In Him we live and move and have our being,” and know that in the safest of places – in you – there simply is no lack.

Open our eyes to the high privilege of being created in your image. Convince us that nothing makes you happier than seeing those redeemed by your grace devoting their days to the good of other people in your creation. Win over our timid and doubting hearts with that conviction that we are your greatest treasure in all creation.

Give us sober yet fearless awareness of Satan's ploys and deceptions. Strengthen our hearts in the knowledge that we have nothing to fear, for you have defeated him. We are so glad to know that greater are you who are in us than he that is in the world. May our hearts carry that message as we contemplate the awesome reality of the spiritual battle around us.

Tender Father, you have taught us so clearly that faith - trust - is essential to a life without lack. We confess that while we believe in you, we need to believe more fully, more deeply, more constantly. In His life, death, and resurrection Jesus showed us that you are completely and utterly trustworthy, and even in the shadow of death there is nothing to fear, for you are with us.

Bring us to the place of peace where we no longer feel a need to defend ourselves, or to worry about who's going to take care of us, or to get our way, or to make sure things turn out right. Lord, free us through the knowledge that because you are with us, working in our lives, we have everything we need.

And now, with the truth of who you are deeply engraved in our hearts, give us the confidence and power to love all who are in our lives just as we are being loved by you – freely, fully, joyfully. Let your Spirit move in our minds and hearts so we believe ever more fully that because you are our all-sufficient Shepherd, we shall never want.

We asked all this because we would have it no other way, Amen.

~ ~ ~

1 - *Life Without Lack*, p. 214-215

# ***Life Without Lack ~ Study Guide***

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## **BOOK QUOTES**

### **Preface by Larry Burtoft**

...The possibility of a life in which I was never in need. Of anything.

...the offer to a LIFE WITHOUT LACK...This offer was delivered by a messenger who knew well of what He spoke.

Here was one who exuded peace, patience, and the freedom from self-absorption that is the hallmark of the truly unworried, the unconcerned, the carefree. Carefree, but not without care for others. Indeed, His freedom from any sense of personal threat was the other side of His freedom, to show the compassion, openness, and kindness that anyone who knew him received.

In a word, contentment. (IX)

His experience with Jesus had convinced him that the 23rd Psalm was not merely a pretty poem with charming sentiments but an accurate description of the kind of life that is available to anyone who will allow God to be their Shepherd. (XI)

In many ways, Dallas was a genius of theological jazz, often breaking out with insightful, free-associating “riffs” that are not easily or directly transferrable to the printed page. (XI)

Next to the reality of God, which is the substance and source of a Life Without Lack, there is nothing more important to the experience of that life than keeping our minds on God as much as possible.

Dallas believed it was possible to keep our minds constantly on God and that this was the heart and soul of spiritual formation in the Kingdom of God. (XII)

**~ ~ ~ End of Preface ~ ~ ~**

## **Life Without Lack ~ Study Guide**

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### **BOOK QUOTES: Introduction**

“Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

One of our greatest needs today is for people to *really* see and *really* believe the things they already profess to see and believe. (XV)

### **Meditate on It Day and Night**

Memorization is an essential element of a LIFE WITHOUT LACK. It is a primary way we fill our minds with the Word of God and have our thoughts formed by Gods’ thoughts. Memorizing scripture is even more important than a daily diet time. Memorization enables us to keep God and His truth constantly before our minds, allowing His Word and wisdom to help us. (XVI)

### **The Nature of our Shepherd**

A LIFE WITHOUT LACK is one that carries no fear of evil. (XVIII)

The central truth of this book is that the complete SUFFICIENCY of the LIFE WITHOUT LACK is based upon the presence of God, and He is most clearly and fully present to us in Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us. (XIX)

The central truth of this book is that the complete SUFFICIENCY of the LIFE WITHOUT LACK is based upon the presence of God, and He is most clearly and fully present to us in Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us. (XIX)

This is a description of the eternal life available to us now in the Kingdom of the Heavens; the abundant with-God life that comes from following the Shepherd where we dwell and abide with God in the fullness of His life - a life in which all the promises of Christ’s gospel are realized. Because of this we have no reason to be anxious (Phil. 4:6-7); the world is a perfectly safe place for us to be. (XX)

### **The Abundance of Abundance**

A LIFE WITHOUT LACK is a life in which one is completely satisfied and sustained, no matter what happens. *No matter what happens!* It’s not merely a matter of gritting your teeth and hanging on. it is a matter of real provisions directly from God to you. (XXI)

~ ~ ~ **End of Introduction** ~ ~ ~

## **Life Without Lack ~ Study Guide**

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### **BOOK QUOTES: Chapter 1 - God in Himself - Part 1 (1-23)**

*The Glorious, Self-Sustaining, Eternal Being of the Shepherd*

The experience of a LIFE WITHOUT LACK depends first and foremost upon the presence of God in our lives, because the source of this life is God Himself. In His goodness, God has arranged things so we are able to use our minds to understand and enter His glorious and plentiful Kingdom. (1)

#### **The Most Important Thing About You** (2-3)

Your mind! Not your brain, but your mind. You are, more than anything else, your mind.

The body is important, but the mind is all-important. And the most important thing about your mind is what it is fixed upon.

It is through our minds we make the most effective contact with reality. (2)

The ultimate freedom we have as individuals is the power to select what we will allow or require our minds to dwell upon and think about. By think we mean all the ways in which we are aware of things, including our memories, perceptions, and beliefs. The focus of your thoughts significantly affects everything else that happens in your life and evokes the feelings that frame your world and motivate your actions. (3)

#### **The Transforming Power of Ideas**

We have the ability and responsibility to keep God in our minds, and those who do will make steady progress toward Him, for He will respond by making Himself known to us.

Our ideas form the belief system upon which we base our actions and decisions, and these in turn determine the trajectory of our lives. Living a LIFE WITHOUT LACK involves recognizing the idea systems that govern the present age and its respective cultures - as well as those that constitute life away from God - and replacing them with the idea system that was embodied and taught by Jesus Christ. (3)

Ephesians 6:12 - *"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*

These high level powers and forces are spiritual agencies that work with the idea systems of this world. These evils systems have been used to dominate humanity through fear and self-obsession, so the uppermost thing filling our minds is likely to be our selves. That is why Jesus' teachings emphasize the importance of "Death to Self"\*\*, giving up your life and not seeking to save yourself. Matthew 10:37-39, Mark 8:34-37, Luke 17:33 (3-4) [\*\* - see Chapter 6]

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### **The Poison of Self-Obsession**

Imprisoned in self consciousness. Literally a "world of hurt".

So we live in a world of people trying to be their own saviors.

The resulting anger & desperation leads to the many ways we attack one another. (4)

### **The Antidote to Bad Ideas About God** [[The Gospel of the Kingdom](#)]

That is why the preaching of the gospel of Jesus is absolutely fundamental. We preach and teach His gospel to let people know the good news about God and to allow them to think rightly about God. The preaching of the gospel will bring the mind to dwell intelligently upon God as He is presented in His Word, which will have the effect of causing us to love God passionately - in a way that brings us to think of God steadily. Thus He will always be before our minds.

When we fill our minds with the gospel, it must be in its fullness as Jesus presented and embodied it. We shouldn't reduce the saving work of Christ to His death on the cross or we will miss the fullness of God as He is in Himself and as He provides for us and all His creation.

The gospel that Jesus Himself proclaimed, manifested and taught was more than His death for the forgiveness for sins, as important as that is. It was about the Kingdom of God - God's immediate availability, His "with-us-ness" that makes a LIFE WITHOUT LACK possible. John 10:10 (6)

[See *The Divine Conspiracy*]

*"The futility of their mind...alienated from the life of God...blindness of their heart..."*  
Ephesians 4:17-19

~ ~ ~

When it comes to experiencing the SUFFICIENCY of God, we are not talking about what God can do, we are talking about what we need to do. And what we need to do is to turn our minds to God. (6)

### **Taste and See the Lord is Good** (7-8)

*"Can't God just move in on us in touch us or do something to us?"*

Yes He can do that, and He does that on many occasions. But when it comes to experiencing the SUFFICIENCY of God, we are not talking about what God can do, we are talking about what we need to do. And what we need to do is to turn our minds to God. (6)

Our minds are often darkened, blind to the truth. We have no graspable conception of God - no realistic idea what God is actually like.

\* Nicodemus - "Rulers of Israel" today no more experience of God and His kingdom than Nicodemus and simply have nothing helpful to offer.

For all practical purposes, God might as well not exist. (7)

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### **Our Minds: The Key to Our Lives (7-8)**

I interact with all the sources of power in the universe through my mind.

- \* Hunting by bow & arrow in Africa
- \* Electricity

We bring the reality of God into our lives by making contact with him through our minds... there is nothing mysterious here. This is why the mind and what we turn our minds to, is the key to our lives.

Of all reality, spirit is the most basic.

This means that we need to take the necessary time to think carefully and diligently about these things. So I ask you to hold on, and may the Lord give you both patience and insight as we engage in a deeper analysis of what God is like. (8)

### **The Knowledge of God as a Human Responsibility (8-9)**

Romans 1:18-21

What % believe in God? What kind of a god do they believe in?  
An ultimate, invisible, personal power.

### **A Really, Really Big God (10)**

We can know God by paying attention to the things He made.

Two fundamentally things:

1.) God is an invisible being with great power and dominion over everything He created. Genesis 11; John 1:1; Romans 1:20; 1st Timothy 1:17

2.) God is personal. Yes personality. He thinks. He wills. He feels. He values. Jeremiah 8:21, 9:24; John 14:9; Ephesians 1:4-5

### **A God of Energy (10-12)**

Energy is the basic reality.

What does this have to do with God and His ability to care for us? Just this: God is energy. Mind is energy. Your mind is energy.

You are *like* God. God has made you so you have energy at your disposal, by these you're able to exercise your will.

- \* Jesus feeding 5000 with 5 loaves & 2 fishes. (Mark 6:32-44).

God's exceedingly ample power to meet our needs even though we have very little. So He took the very little any multiplied it.

- \* Jesus in the Wilderness (Matthew 4:4)

What is the difference between the bread and the word that comes from the mouth of God? Simply put, one off them is matter any other His energy.

We must understand this: *God is energy in the form that is so incomprehensible to us because it is so great!*

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But here's a clue to help our comprehension: every time we look at a piece of matter, what we see is stuff that is not self-SUFFICIENT.

This is what Paul says that when you think clearly and carefully about the things that are created, you are led directly to God, a glorious, self-sustaining, eternal being. This points to a being who is both the source of everything that exists and is totally self-SUFFICIENT. (12)

[See *The Allure of Gentleness*, Chapter 4]

...Incomprehensible, everlasting, unceasing, and never will be exhausted.  
That being is God!

### **God's Nature in...**

- 1) Nature
- 2) History
- 3) His Name

#### **1.) God's Nature Shown in Fire & Cloud (12-13)**

"Our God is a consuming fire."  
(Hebrews 12:29, Matthew 3:11, Exodus 14:19-20, 24-25)

#### **Envisioning the Invisible (13-15)**

We use our understanding of creation to see what cannot be seen with our eyes.  
(Hebrews 11:1)

#### **Faith - Faith, born out of experience, is the means by which the mind contacts reality. (14)**

\* Biblical Creation - the biblical doctrine is that all creation came out of the person of God Himself, He spoke and created matter. God speaking is a form of energy that became matter. [\* Pete Buttigeg - "Life only at breath"]

\* - John 4 - *"I have food to eat of which you do not know. My food is to do the will of him who sent me."*

C.S. Lewis, *"In God there is not hunger that needs to be filled, only plenteousness that desires to give."*

Faith that interacts with God draws directly from God and the power that is in the Word of God. (14)

When we make contact with God, a flow of energy comes to us. That energy is directly the source from which Jesus worked, and we can know it by our experience. Jesus taught us that when we fast we are not to look miserable. Jesus understood that when we fast before God we are nourished directly by the Word of God, whether spoken or written.

*Fasting is feasting upon God.*

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—> The availability of this energy is the absolute source of absolute SUFFICIENCY.  
(15)

### **What God Can Do, You Can Do...Sort Of** (15-16)

\* Baking a cake - you have enough energy to create matter, but only the sense of putting it in a different form. You were put here to have dominion over the earth. God gave your body to supply you with an extra amount of power in addition to the power in your mind. Your body is your own personal power pack that allows you to exercise your willed actions. God desires that each of us would use our bodies and our minds to rule the earth, together with one another in love. (Genesis 1:26-27)

When God created us in His image, He created us with the power to act and to create. That is the image of God in man and woman. That power includes the ability to create other persons.

\* Pregnancy - "You're going to make a person!"

Making persons is one of humankind's greatest creative acts. And, of course, we act in a way similar to God in that. How do babies come to us? When we are having a baby, and when we are raising a child, we are making a person. We are exercising the creative part of the image of God in us. (16)

### **2.) God's Greatness Seen in History** (16-17)

God is revealed as a spiritual, invisible power that is present and moves in the lives of human beings. (Deuteronomy 4:32-36) (17)

### **3.) God's Nature in His Name - "What's in a Name?"** (17-19)

Elohim - God's creative and governing power

Yahweh - A self-subsistent eternal being

Adonai - a personal, possessive sense

El Shaddai - the almighty God, all abundant

\* Moses (Exodus 3) - What is your name?

"I Am that I Am" - A statement of the nature of God as being - , self sufficing, all powerful, self-determined. "My being sustains my being."

*"As the Father has life in Himself, so He is granted the Son to have life in Himself."* (John 5:26)

**God is an immaterial, intelligent, and free personal being, of perfect goodness, wisdom, and power, who made the universe and continues to sustain it, as well as to govern and direct it in His providence.** (18)

It is important to embrace that gods moral absolutes as loving, beneficent, and generous flow out of the plenitude of His being.

The purpose of this book -I'm pleading with you here to take upon yourself the task of making these realities about God part of your mind, to understand that God is a

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certain kind of being; that He existed before the creation of the earth in all His plentitude.

Even more fundamental, there is a constant communion among the great persons of the Trinity itself...the most attractive, thrilling, vibrant personal company you can imagine, and multiply that by a factor of infinity, and you've begun to get a glimpse of what God is doing, where He is, what He was doing before the foundation of the earth, what He will be doing forever.

—> That is the being the LIFE WITHOUT LACK relies. Such a life is guaranteed for those whose minds are set upon this God in faith. (19)

### **Three Glimpses of God's Grandeur (19-21)**

1.) Nehemiah 9:6 - there is an everlasting, eternal party that we cannot even begin to imagine. God is beginning to show it to us.

2.) The book of Job - a description of what was going on before the earth was created – God existing throughout eternity, the self-SUFFICIENCY of God to Himself, this being in such a grand proportions and such infinite complexity, and all His created beings with Him.

God's greatness in Himself goes far beyond anything we can imagine.

3.) - The Lords Prayer:

*"Our Father who art in heaven...Hallowed be thy name."*

~ ~ ~

[The book of Job] - a description of what was going on before the earth was created – God existing throughout eternity, the self-SUFFICIENCY of God to Himself, this being in such a grand proportions and such infinite complexity, and all His created beings with Him. (20)

You're praying that God would be known for who He is. That His name would be cherished in love. Why? Because once you begin to have an impression who God truly is, everything else fades into insignificance.

When the bountiful SUFFICIENCY of God in Himself in the glorious realm of His Kingdom are continually brought before the mind, it puts everything else in its proper place and opens us up to a life in which we find God more than capable supplying everything we need. (20–21)

### **God's Ample Supply**

(21-22)

Philippians 4:10-13

Paul was talking about what He learned through His experiences with the all-SUFFICIENT provision of God: to be content, at ease, free of anxiety.

(Philippians 4:10-11)

King David - *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."*

Paul - *"Not that I speak in regard to need."*

They both knew the provision of God became for them a LIFE WITHOUT LACK.

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\* Paul - Prison, shipwrecks, many lessons in many different circumstances that taught in the deep truths of SUFFICIENCY. (Phil. 4:12-13)

What did Paul David and Paul share that gave them both this confidence?

Proclaim they both knew Jesus who proclaimed,

*"I am the good Shepherd."* (John 10:11)

*"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."* (Phil. 4:19)

### **A Vision of Glory** (22-23)

\* Jesus at the Wedding in Cana - The wine was a glimpse into the reality that Jesus was from another place - a beautiful place that shines with glorious splendor - the very presence of God. A place that, because of the infinite resources of God, knows no lack whatsoever.

Jesus's glory had obviously been manifested to His mother earlier in His life. That's what she knew who to go to when they ran out of wine. Knowing that Jesus was working out of the abundance of God's riches is glory, she told the servants, *"Do whatever He tells you."* (John 2:5)

God is not worried that He is going to run out of something. God is beyond rich. He is overflowing with everything that is good and everything we need. God loves to give. God loves to forgive. God loves to just gush forth with His goodness. (John 4:14) Nothing so delights him as giving to anyone and everyone who will receive. (23)

*"For God so loved the World He gave His only begotten Son."* (John 3:16)

**~ ~ ~ End of Chapter 1 ~ ~ ~**

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### **BOOK QUOTES: Chapter 2 - God in Himself, Part 2 (24-48)**

*"Living in Mindfulness of Our Magnificent God"*

*"Glimpses of Glory" - "Grandeur of the Kingdom"*

As I have said, the secret to a LIFE WITHOUT LACK is rooted in our knowledge of God. (24)

Your primary contact with God is through your mind, what you do with your mind is the most important choice you have to make. Wherever your mind goes, the rest your life goes with it.

What we place our minds on brings that reality into our lives. The problem is so severe that when Jesus came He essentially said to people, "Forget everything you think you know about God, and I'm going to tell you what He's really like."

"Yahweh is my shepherd" - self-subsistent, eternal being. (25)

### **What You Don't See is More Important Than What You Do See**

(26-28)

The single most important thing to remember about God is His total unlikeness in His being from anything we can see. (26)

Being made in God's image means, among other things, that you are also an eternal being and you can create. But, unlike God, you're not self subsistent; you're dependent upon God for your being. (26-27)

Your will is the source of the visible things they come to be as result of your choices.

The important point here is that you have in yourself the Romans 1:20 experience of the invisible originating divisible. That is why, when you look around at the things that are visible, you can know two things they share in common. First, they came into existence and, sooner or later, will pass out of existence. Second, each of them was created from invisible source.

If I had to pull this altogether one phrase, I would say it is the experience of free will. By making you in His image, God is giving you, and your will, the power of originated of action, the power to create and to bring things into existence. (27)

### **A Big No-No: Confusing Anything with God (28-30)**

The 10 Commandments

2nd Commandment: "You shall not make for yourself a carved image." (Exodus 20:4)

3rd Commandment: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."

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Using it "in vain" is to degrade God to the level of a created being. This is what you have an idol. (28-29)

### **A Long Education in the Same Direction (30-31)**

At what point do we finally come to the place where we can use God's name without doing so "in vain"? After we have come to know Jesus Christ. Only after that point are we fully capable of using His name right. (30)

John 17:5-6 – *"And now, O father, glorify me together with yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was. I have manifested your name to the ones whom you have given me out of this world."*

That is to say, *"I have shown these people what your name really means."*

God's name is an expression of His nature, from everything we can glean from Jesus His entire life – His teachings, His healing ministry, how He treated people, and how He prayed – the only conclusion we can draw is that God is a being who is perfectly glorious and perfectly safe.

There is absolutely nothing that God lacks. We must understand this, because the overflowing SUFFICIENCY that we will experience when Yahweh is our Shepherd lies in the all SUFFICIENCY of the Shepherd Himself.

What we need, God has in infinite supply.

To take the name of God in vain, then, is simply to speak or think or imagine God is being less than He actually is. Those who take time to increasingly come to know and trust God as He truly is, are laying the sure foundation of a LIFE WITHOUT LACK. (31)

### **Come to Think of it, There's Nothing to Fear (32-33)**

My objective here is to help you think about God, and to do so correctly in accord with the truth about the kind of being God is. I'm also asking you to think about yourself what kind of being you are. I want to help you think through things and come to a correct understanding of matters this will lead you, together with the Lord, into actions based on this truth.

You can live completely without fear. God is the kind of being who, if you will place yourself in His hands in trust, will ensure that nothing can ever happen to you that will make you say, "I'm afraid!" or "I don't have enough." (32)

What do you fear?

If you will take the time required to come to know and trust God as He is, asking the Lord to give light to your mind, you can come to a place of perfect peace and fearlessness. Because God is with you you can live without fear. This is precisely what the Shepherd Psalm is talking about.

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If you are frightened or afraid, there is no use feeling guilty about it. What you need to do is fix your mind upon God and ask Him to fill your mind with Himself. And as your mind is transformed, your whole personality will be transformed, including your body and your feelings. The transformation of the self away from a life of fear and insufficiency takes place if we fix our minds upon God is He truly is. (33)

### **I Am the Good Shepherd - Jesus Christ is Yahweh (33-34)**

*"The unsearchable riches of Christ"* (Ephesians 3:8)

At the center of these riches is Christ Himself that being of complete self-SUFFICIENCY we have been focusing upon. He is the Shepherd Lord of the 23rd Psalm, Yahweh in the flesh! (John 10:17-18)

This is why Jesus, in complete confidence, could lay down His life. He was completely and totally without fear. Why? Because He understood His relationship with His Father. Jesus is the first person who ever fully lived Psalm 23:1 – *"The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want."* His union with his Father was such that he never knew lack or fear. The Father was Jesus' shepherd, just as Jesus is ours. As Jesus knew no fear, so can we. (33-34)

### **Who Jesus Is (34-35)**

To better understand this, and to see how a life without fear is possible, you need to look deeper into who Jesus is. We might as well jump into the deep end of the theological pool and think briefly about the nature of God as triune. Why the Trinity? Simply put, it is the nature of God's infinite, loving personality to be multiple in itself and in its creative activity.

This is why God created the heavens and populated them.

His desire to create human beings as another dimension of the opportunity to develop love.

God is personality. He treats other personalities and, out of the plentitude of His being, He loves them. (34)

**I Corinthians 13** – Paul is not primarily giving instructions on how Christians should live, but describing what God is like. First and foremost, these words describe God's love, a love that is the fruit of God's absolute self-SUFFICIENCY. The key to loving like this is to be *"filled with all the fullness of God"* (Ephesians 3:19.) God can love like this because of who He is, and if we are to love like this we need to be fully immersed in who He is.

At the center of so many of our difficulties is fear. There're so many things that frighten us. What is the answer to all our fears? Love. The love that comes out of plentitude - out of the fullness of God's SUFFICIENCY.

I John 4:18, *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear."*

To fear is to be tormented. But to love perfectly – and to know it – is to be free of fears torment. (34-35)

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### **Let 'er Rip (35-38) Hebrews 11:35-38**

"Let 'er rip! Let 'er rip!" The only way any of us could say that and mean it is by knowing that we are not in control, but we are grounded in the SUFFICIENCY of God the shepherd. (35)

Because of the nature of God and His kingdom, all His created beings and everyone who trusts in Him are in a position to say,

*"Let the worst happen! Let the worst happen, and God and I will go on together in the abundance of His being."* (36)

What about Jesus in all of this? We have spoken of the SUFFICIENCY of God, that God is all around us, God is love, that God is a social God who creates persons and a Kingdom and sustains them. Jesus is a manifestation of that glorious reality. (37)

\* The relative insignificance of Bethlehem - This is in keeping with Jesus is teaching about the last being first and the first being last and is primarily a declaration of the limitless kingdom of God. This is why Jesus can pronounce as blessed those were the religious outsiders...poor, hungry, mourn, persecuted. It is because, in spite of their circumstances, they're living in vital communion with the Shepherd in His Kingdom, and they know no lack.

This is made clear in John 17:24, where Jesus prayed:

*"Father, I desire that they also whom you gave me may be with me where I am, and they may behold my glory which you have given me; for you loved me before the foundation of the world."* (37)

When did the Father love the Son? "Before the foundation of the world." When you put verses like this with Micah 5:2, you begin to get a clear picture of the greatness of God and in His Kingdom. There are God (Father, Son, and Spirit, all in their SUFFICIENCY) and His created beings, enjoying the glory – the full and wonders greatness – of the kingdom of God. That is the life that the Son knew before His incarnation. And when He came, although He laid some of His glory aside, He was still able to give us some stunning glimpses of it, glimpses that were meant to provide us with a vision of a LIFE WITHOUT LACK. (37-38)

### **Glimpses of Glory and Self-SUFFICIENCY(38-40)**

God's power is meant to be at the disposal of human beings. This is what we see in the life and ministry of Jesus, and a good deal of his training of the disciples was intended to show how this is done. Intended to establish the same confidence in his disciples. (38)

The Transfiguration (Luke 9:28–36)

Peter, James, and John were given a glorious glimpse of the reality of God and of His kingdom. He became visible to them.

What transpired that day was the revelation of the glory of the kingdom of God. (39)

The greatness and grandeur of his kingdom (40)

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### **Entering in Through the New Covenant (40-41)**

*"Jesus the mediator of the new covenant"* (Hebrews 12:18-24)

It is where we stand, with God at the center, surrounded by all his perfect and perfected beings, those who have come to know God through Jesus, the lamb of God, whose blood does not call out for judgment and condemnation, but for mercy, forgiveness, and the fullness of the grace of God!

In the new covenant that Jesus initiated, we are given a foretaste of this reality... the overwhelming abundance of this world in which God exists at the very center, in which He calls us to draw from so we may know a way of LIFE WITHOUT LACK. (41)

### **Coming to Grips with the Ineffable\* God (41-45)**

\* (def.) *"too great or extreme to be described in words"*

Exodus 19, 24:18, 34:28 – Moses before God

If you're thinking this is weird, you're right. There actually is a direct relationship between weird things and holy things. From Moses' shining face to Jesus glowing on the mountain. It's supernatural, out of this world. That is what holy is, something wholly otherworldly. (42)

The 2nd Commandment - *"Not make for yourself an idol"*

God is so other that He is literally out of this world and should never be identified with any physical thing in this world. It is this total otherness, this holiness, this weirdness that makes most people not want to get close to God. They want to have just enough of God to make their little train chug on down the track, something to fix them up, a cosmic aspirin to help them get on with their own business. (42)

While we may talk fervently about how we want to be close to the Lord, he does not take us seriously because it's only talk. We often don't really mean it. That may be because we have not had the magnificence and grandeur of the glorious reality of God's being brought to our attention. God is not something to be toyed around with. He will not fit into our plans. But we can't fit into His, and they are glorious plans indeed. (42-43)

\* Israelites in the wilderness - manna from heaven

*"And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart... that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord."* (Deuteronomy 8:2-3) (43)

This was a litmus test of their hearts, to gauge whether they did, in fact, want nothing more than the God who would rescue them. They didn't. It is the same with us. We're going to be living on weird stuff if we draw near to God.

"Hidden manna" Revelation 2:17 (44)

*"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."* (John 6:51) *"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life."* (v. 53-55) (44-45)

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### **From Glory to Glory (45-46)**

There is no denying it: this is highly unusual behavior. But Jesus was talking about being transformed into a completely new reality, a world of complete SUFFICIENCY, where all our needs are supplied by God.

If you go to work tomorrow and declare, "I don't need anything", people will probably think you are weird. That's one of the things that people can use to manage you. But if you go there complaining, griping, groaning, even cursing God, making it known just how much you lack, they will say, "Yes!" They're likely to call you're really good person, the salt of the earth, because complaining is the way of this world.

I am not saying that it is always wrong to complain; each of us needs to work this out in our own way.

**I am saying that there is a life in which there is no lack. Jesus is the example that prove this claim to be true. The good news is that, by His grace, it is a life for each of us can move into by faith. If, by faith, you can now declare, "I have no lack," you will increasingly experienced the Shepherd's SUFFICIENCY in your life. (45-46)**

II Corinthians 3:18

**The more we place our minds on God's greatness and self-SUFFICIENCY, the more we will be transformed from one degree to another. And because our faces are "unveiled" (that is, they have had the lampshades removed), others will see a difference; we will radiate generosity, peace, and contentment.** And the reverse is also true; as we associate with others whose faces are "unveiled" and who are growing in their experience of God's SUFFICIENCY, their glory enlightens us, encouraging us in our own journeys of faith in the Shepherd. It becomes a matter of one person reminding another of the full SUFFICIENCY of God. (46)

Notice the word "reminding" in the sentence above. It should really be written re-minding, because in the first two chapters we have been talking about getting new minds. Minds that are "on God". In 2nd Corinthians 3:18, Paul wrote that we are being transformed into the image of Christ. "Metamorphosis" - changing from caterpillar to butterfly. We are talking about the form of our minds. They are meant to be God-formed rather than world-formed.

Romans 12:2 - *"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind"*.

**This is the key to a LIFE WITHOUT LACK, that we would have the mind of Christ – our Shepherd, who knew first hand the complete and perfect SUFFICIENCY of our magnificent God. (46)**

### **A Brief Meditation (47-48)**

In chapter 1, we dwelt on the attributes of God—that completely self-SUFFICIENT, eternal being who makes coveted promises with individual human beings. David new those promises and walked in them, having seen the hand of God in his own life. He experienced firsthand the lavish SUFFICIENCY of God in such a way that it simply didn't matter what else happened. Nothing could rob him of the full provision

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he found in the active and conversational relationship in which he lived with God. Absolutely nothing. (47)

This Psalm reflects David's personal relationship with God, and it is with in this kind relationship that a LIFE WITHOUT LACK is known. You can have that kind of relationship in life, as fully as it can be imagined. That is the reason for this book. And from the human side, the LIFE WITHOUT LACK is simply a matter of having one's mind fully and constantly fixed upon God as He is, confident that He will provide everything that we need.

This Psalm reflects the nature of God, and how the radiant SUFFICIENCY of the Shepherd provides the LIFE WITHOUT LACK. God is an ineffable reality so much greater than anything we ordinarily see around us come to deal with in human life; he simply is no comparison. We are blessed to live in a world where there is a fully self-SUFFICIENT, generous God who wants to provide what is best for us and loves us more than we could ever imagine. (47-48)

**~ ~ ~ End of Chapter 2 ~ ~ ~**

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### **BOOK QUOTES: Chapter 3 - Why There Are People on Earth (49-66)**

#### **Psalm 8:1-8**

- 1** Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!  
You have set your glory in the heavens.
- 2** Through the praise of children and infants  
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,  
to silence the foe and the avenger.
- 3** When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
- 4** what is mankind that you are mindful of them,  
human beings that you care for them?
- 5** You have made them a little lower than the angels  
and crowned them with glory and honor.
- 6** You made them rulers over the works of your hands;  
you put everything under their[g] feet:
- 7** all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild,
- 8** the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea,  
all that swim the paths of the seas.

~ ~ ~

#### **Introduction**

Have you ever wondered why there are people on Earth?

“Why am I in the world?” (49)

What good is man? (50)

#### **A World of Good (51-53)**

The “good” of Creation

All these creations are good. Being is itself good.

But, if you weigh all the pain and the suffering against all the joy and the strength you find in human life, it is still good. (52)

**Genesis 1:26-27** - God put human beings in charge of the Earth. (52)

*“Be fruitful and multiply...have dominion.”*

1.) What did God create when He created human beings?

2.) What is especially good about them? (53)

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### **What are Human Beings? (53-54)**

We were created to have a special relationship with God and to do our work in that relationship. We were to work in a power that was not our own. It is a pretty big job to have dominion over the earth. Period. (53)

Genesis 2 – “a garden eastward in Eden”; “in union with God” (v. 8)

“the breath of life” (v. 7) is not the stuff around us that we breathe in and out. God does not literally breathe; He does not have lungs. But He is spirit, and He infused the special creation with spirit. That's what makes human beings unique; what gives us our special value. This is what makes each of us unique, in this uniqueness allows us to relate to God and participate in His governing of the earth. (54)

### **Beyond Belief (54-56)**

It is hard for people to believe that they are spirit-infused beings with such power, privilege, and responsibility. You may feel like you are very far from being in the business of governing the earth. We have accepted an image of the world that has imposed on us that is in direct opposition to Jesus' teaching and hinders us from stepping into the dignity of the sons and daughters of God. Every human being is a special creation spirit, living in the hands of God.

But what happens? A child comes into the world and is treated as anything but a precious, wonderful creation. One of the hardest things for us to do— and this is true even for Christians—is to keep this preciousness and wonder in our minds as we approach every human being we deal with. To be sure, people do not always look or act like they are very precious.

...even a little child can be perceived as a great threat and danger to us.

(54-55)

Here's my point: just as we have a tremendously difficult time conceiving of or imagining what God is like, so we have tremendously difficult time imagining what people are really like.

Psalm 8:4 - we must be something much greater than what we appeared to be.

Matthew 16:26 - “for what will it profit a them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?”

You are the one Jesus was talking about. You're the only one who can decide what your soul is worth— What you are worth – and trade it in for something you deem more valuable. So I ask you, what would you trade for your soul? How much are you worth? You are the only one who can decide this and exchange yourself for anything. (56)

### **Where Our Greatness Lies (56-57)**

What is it that makes human beings so precious? It is this: they are capable of being faithful to God and committed to the promotion of good in the world. They

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are capable of giving their lives for these things, even to the point of dying for them. "No one has greater love than this," Jesus said, "to lay down his life for one's friends". (John 15:13)

Romans 5:8

Matthew 5:16 - to shine, doing good works in glorifying God- And it is an active process as we live out our lives in the world before God in such a way that people see the goodness of our lives and acknowledge God as the source of that goodness. (56)

Life is made even more valuable because of the sacrifices made by those who give themselves up to God and for God, and for every good thing God has made. That is what God put us here for. That is why we treasure faithfulness, loyalty, and heroism in people.

The potential of men and women to give up their lives for the glory of God and for the good that God has created is precisely what makes human life great.

Human life is a process of transition and transformation. We have the potential to create something incredibly precious and good, and God is going to bring it to pass. He is going to create a community of loving, creative, intelligent, loyal, faithful, and powerful human beings, and they're going to rule the earth. It is going to come to pass. If you want to be a part of that, just get on board. (57)

### **Let Your Good Works Shine (57-59)**

We are put here on earth and we are given bodies so we can work on bringing more good into existence.

God is an actor. He is one who acts, one who creates. His essence is not just seen in thought, but also in intelligent action that creates good. This is our calling as well, though any more limited way. (57)

God has insured us a special place and purpose, giving us tasks that He specifically wants us to accomplish in our time and our place. To this end, God has also intended – the independent power by which we can choose to give ourselves to Him, even, as I said, to the point of death.

The challenge for us in the creation of good is usually not some big religious issue as we commonly think of it, but in the ordinary stuff of life – our day day to day living in our families, at work, at play.

The obviously well-kept secret of the "ordinary" is that it is made to be a receptacle of the divine, a place where the life of God flows. (58)

Our challenge is the fill our hours, minutes, and actions from day today with the appropriate amount of love for God's creation and creating, and then work to produce more of the good He has put in this world. This is every persons calling. (59)

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### **The Importance of Our Work (59-61)**

If we do not work, our lives are wasted because God designed work as a fundamental structure of love in the kingdom of God – something that is meant to bring people together in loving community for mutual benefit and support. What's more, work is a good thing, and it is a natural disposition of human beings early childhood on.

Work is...

...a special type of causation to which goodness and blessing can be promoted.

... the expanding of energy to produce good in various forms in ways. (59)

... the total amount of lasting good that you will accomplish in your lifetime. This might include your job, but for many of us, our families will be the largest part of the lasting good we produce.

Your "job" is what you get paid to do, and it might or might not contribute to lasting good.

A "position" is where you have recognition and get paid whether you do anything or not. Additionally, many people base their identity on their work in their job – that is, they think they are what they do. (60)

The real challenge to every persons face is that we do everything to the glory of God, even in the smallest action of our days. And this will certainly entail that we do not sacrifice our families to our ministry or jobs. (61)

Here's a truth you must never forget: He is more interested in the person you are becoming than in your work, or your ministry, or your job. And the surest way to realize the full potential of your God-designed self is to live in eternity while you're in time, conscious of the loving gaze of your all-SUFFICIENT Shepherd, in whose care nothing of the good you do is lost. It is stored up in your own self and in the lives of others you have touched. (61)

### **The Challenge of Personal Relationships (61-62)**

Our most intimate personal relationships...the primary area of human failure.

\* Adam & Eve - seed of doubt to take action that was contrary to His will, to provide for herself, and to try to survive.

Immediately they hid when God came to find them. (61)

"Nakedness" refers to human vulnerability. Before the Fall, Adam had a glow of light like the one that encompassed Moses on Sinai and Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. (62)

### **What Sin Begins (62-64)**

\* Abel & Cain - mistrust and anger led to murder (Genesis 4:1-15)

Marriage - Relationship between the man and the woman: mistrust, anger and disappointment became the standard quality of human life.

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Even among those of us who have experienced the grace of God it is rare to find any man and woman who are bound together in marriage who are truly trustful in every respect, and confident, pleased, and satisfied with each other. Rather, there is a constant testing that goes on, and it is a very serious problem.

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

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

The apostle Paul believed that the grace of God, as it came in Jesus Christ, was SUFFICIENT to heal the relationship between men & women. Yet it was still necessary for him to teach about it; the healing does not happen automatically without effort on both parts. (63-64)

### **Portrait of a Healed Relationship (64-65)**

Ephesians 5:22-29

Paul is saying here that we are to give ourselves up.

Aspects of doubt and mistrust about ourselves lead us into the games we play in love relationships as we try to get the other person to prove their love.

Parallel between Marriage & the Church

The husband is to this of the wife in this same way, that she would be glorious, and that he would help her to be glorious. The wife, too, would think in the same way. (65)

### **The Glorious Potential of the Human Race (65-66)**

People exist to love as Jesus loved. Indeed, the aim of God in human history is the creation of an all-inclusive community of loving persons with Himself at the center of that community - as its prime sustainer and most glorious inhabitant. (65)

We are made for love.

The greatest thing God will be showing off in eternity is this society of redeemed persons.

Ephesians 3:8, "*the Unsearchable riches of Christ*"

There is nothing that makes God happier than human beings, redeemed by the grace of God, devoting their lives—the moments and hours of their days—to the good of others and of creation, to the glory of God. (66)

~ ~ ~ End of Chapter 3 ~ ~ ~

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### **BOOK QUOTES: Chapter 4 - Why Such Lack and Evil?**

(67-93)

For most of us, the thought of a LIFE WITHOUT LACK is unimaginable because we live in a world so obviously full of lack – lack of kindness, fairness, and compassion, all of which are more precious because they seem so rare. (67)

The secret to a LIFE WITHOUT LACK is faith in God and God's full capacity and willingness to meet all our needs – and more. But what is faith? It is simply an understanding of how things are, wedded to a commitment to live one's life in light of that understanding. (68)

#### **Satan: The Early Years (69-71)**

*"the prince of the power of the air"* Ephesians 2:2

*"the prince of this world"* John

*"You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor"* Ezekiel 28:17

[Satan's] way...to persuade, and to tempt, and to deceive humanity. (71)

#### **In God's Crosshairs (72-74)**

*"the Son of Man might destroy the works of the devil."* John 3:8

*"...to save His people from their sins."* Matthew 1:20-21

...to destroy sin...is to destroy the works of the devil. (72)

Satan is God's primary target for he is the one who bears the primary responsibility for all that is wrong with the world.

Well, we do bear SUFFICIENT responsibility, for we make choices and we bear the consequences as we live with the mess that is human history. But the reality of the world makes it impossible to place the full blame on human ingenuity or action. (72)

*"He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."* Hebrews 2:14

There is one principal agent of evil in the universe, Satan, and his intent is to thwart God's purposes by manipulating the minds of human beings. That is his intent and he has been quite effective at achieving it.

*"the wiles of the devil"* Ephesians 6:10-11

Notice he does not say "the wiles of your neighbor" (73)

*"spiritual hosts of wickedness"* Ephesians 6:12

If we are to succeed in walking in the way of Jesus and knowing the LIFE WITHOUT LACK, it is essential that we understand and believe the devil is real and at work. (74)

#### **Satan's Three Weapons of Temptation (74-77)**

*"sons of disobedience"* Ephesians 2:2 - under the influence of Satan (75)

*"A liar and Father of lies"* John 8:44

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I John 2:15-16

- 1.) Lust of the Flesh
  - 2.) Lust of the Eyes
  - 3.) Pride of Life
- a better word for "lust" is "desire" (76)

\* Eve

- 1.) Good for Food
- 2.) Pleasant to the Eyes
- 3.) desirable to make one wise

Appearance of being good the is at the center o temptation's power. (76)

### **Tempted in All Ways Like Us** (77-79)

- 1.) Hunger Pangs
- 2.) Leaping off the pinnacle
- 3.) Worship Satan in exchange for becoming king of the world.

- Notice how Jesus' temptations align with both those of Eve in the garden and John's threefold description of "the world" (the Satanic system of life). (77)  
[Chart - p. 78]

Temptation always comes in those three forms. Satan's way of dealing with people is to catch them up in these three patterns and then make them think they are doing what they want to do. He causes them to obsess over the immediate things they want, and he assures them that all will be well. (78)

As you admire some wonderful thing, Satan comes along to provide you with an armload of reasonable explanations of why you are justified in having it, and how it would be quite alright after all, moral qualms aside. (79)

### **Masters of Justification** (79-80)

\* Cain - Genesis 4:9 - excuses and evasions

The foolishness of it all is obvious if we stop to think about it. But Satan counts on our not stopping to think about it. Satan hooks us by deceiving us and leading us into all these foolish ways of thinking about our desires: to dominate others, to look good, to enjoy what our body cries out for. These become preeminent in our minds, the driving force in our behavior, and the source of so much of the evil in the world. (79)

Why do we want to look good?

What is our motivation?

What are we willing to do to accomplish it? (80)

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### **Fearing Our Desires (80-81)**

Satan uses not only our desires to deceive us but also our fears. Fear that we will not get what we desire can provide the motivation for actions that caused so many of our problems. When you compare the three sources of temptation – desires of the flesh, desires of our eyes, and the pride of life – with the things we fear, you will find it nearly all our fears are grounded in our desires. (80)

Depending upon our circumstances, we are frightened that our needs for physical things will not be met. But truth be told, most of us would rather die of starvation than look bad. And we are also afraid of what other people will do to us... Given the world in which we live, these are not unfounded fears.

If we are to experience a LIFE WITHOUT LACK as we go out into the world every day, we must by the grace of God, deal with these fears – or we will be in bondage to Satan. We will be bound both in terms of fear and the temptation to meet our needs in a way that is not right before God, which reveals our lack of faith in Him and lack of trust in His all SUFFICIENT care and strength. (80-81)

### **Thoughts of the Heart (81-82)**

Noah - Genesis 6:5-7

*"the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."*

When God looks at human wickedness, He is not looking exclusively at our actions, but our minds and hearts, our thoughts and intentions. God looks on the heart for two reasons: 1) our heart is the source of our actions in life, but more important here, 2) our thoughts are where Satan applies his trade. He governs through images, through ideas, through feelings and fears. From this complex arena of our minds and hearts come most of our actions, so this is the arena where Satan focuses his work. (81-82)

Human beings cannot be forced to do evil. They cannot be forced to do good either. They must choose to do evil or good.

How do they choose? By being persuaded that one course of action is better than another. So Satan works upon the heart through the mind, as he did with Eve, and as he will with us today. (82)

### **Of First Concern (82-83)**

Proverbs 4:23, *"keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life."*

The heart is our point of contact with God's unlimited capacity to protect and provide, which flows to those who choose to keep their minds fixed on Him.

Romans 1:28, *"not retain God in their the knowledge"*

- Deciding to fill our minds with God is how we keep our hearts.

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Psalm 119:11, *"I have hid thy word in my heart that I might not sin against thee."*

The Prophet Samuel - *"Speak, Lord, for Your servants hear."* I Samuel 3:9

*"Lord, speak to me, I am listening. I want to hear your voice."*

If you don't do something like this, you don't have the option of having a neutral mind. Your thoughts can not be empty. If you are not entertaining God's truth, you will be entertaining Satan's lies. (83)

\* Days of Noah - *"every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* Genesis 6:5

Now contrast that with Jesus.

### **A Lesson from the Victorious One (83-84)**

Jesus responded with the Word of God.

Satan was aware only Jesus could break his grip on the human world, devoted as it is to power and deceit, and only Jesus could deliver human beings from the mire of sin and evil in which they floundered. He knew Jesus to be the only truly radical person to enter human history, for He would refuse to use evil to defeat evil. He would set alight a new order that does not employ the devices evil persons use to try to secure themselves and get their way. (84)

John 14:30, *"the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me."*

### **The Battle Plan in the Garden**

(84-86)

How Satan wanted to find something in Him. He wanted to be able to get inside Jesus' mind in the same way he got inside Eve's mind. That is what the Garden of Gethsemane was about: it was the final struggle between Satan and Jesus. (84)

Jesus was invincible but the victory was not without a great struggle.

He was not trying to avoid the Cross. He was overcoming Satan.

John 12:32, *"When I am lifted up from the earth [in crucifixion], I will draw all people to myself."*

We need to see clearly the profound wisdom of his chosen path toward his goal. This was the Trinity's winning strategy to break down the rule of Satan, and with its accomplishment, Jesus stands quietly at the center of the contemporary world, as He Himself predicted. (85-86)

The events of Christ's death and resurrection demonstrated to His followers and other observers that what Jesus said about the Kingdom and its availability was and is true. Knowledge of the presence and the unfailing availability of God to those who trust Him led Jesus to say all the beautiful things that we wistfully acknowledge but hardly believe to be true: all those things about birds and flowers being in the care of God, and about how we need never be anxious or afraid, no matter what comes, even crucifixion.

Jesus basic idea about this world- with all its evil, pushed the limits in what He went through going toward and nailed upon the Cross - is that this world is a

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perfectly good and safe place for anyone to be no matter the circumstances, if they have placed their lives in hands of Jesus and His Father. In such a world we never have to do what we know to be wrong, and we never need be afraid. Jesus practiced what He preached, even as He was tortured and killed. And multitudes of His followers have chosen to do the same. (86)

### **If at First You Don't Succeed...** (86-87)

Jesus victory over Satan in the garden...

Satan knew he had been defeated and his attention now was to be focused on those who believed in Jesus. For millennia this has been his primary engagement - his effort to defeat Jesus' followers. (86)

The Millennium - Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10

### **A Whirling World of Ideas** (88-89)

The primary means Satan uses to keep the evil pot boiling are the ideas that govern society's individuals. Of central importance are the ideas about what is good and what is right and how things should be done.

Ideas are subtle things. As with the motion of the earth, which occurs without us noticing it, we are normally unaware of the ideas that are moving us.

*"Tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the coming craftiness of deceitful plotting"*

Ephesians 4:14

Satan governs nations by the way people understand themselves. One example is found in the United States, where we talk about "the American Way" of life. There is certainly something good in that, and in the foundational principles upon which the country was built. But by the time it gets presented on television, in newspapers, and through other media, or even sometimes in our churches, it has been turned into something tremendously destructive. For example, most Americans think that they ought to be able to do what they want to do whenever they want to do it. This understanding of freedom is often identified with the American way of life. That is as crude and straightforward a statement of Satan's as you will ever find. If there is anything you want not to do, it is to do what you want to do whenever you want to do it.

Of course, there is true value to freedom, and our country was in large measure founded by people who understood how essential and costly freedom is to the moral development of genuinely good persons. They had no way of understanding by the 21st-century it would be transformed from the freedom to pursue virtue into a freedom from moral restraint. The pursuit of happiness, and the security of life and liberty, as the Founding Fathers understood it, are very good things and very much the reflection of ideals that express the Kingdom of God. But those ideals have been perverted overtime. (88-89)

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### **The Vision Dims**

(89-91)

Such perversion is not unusual. All good ideas– true ideas– that have been in the stream of human history for a while become perverted. Why? Precisely because Satan is at work on them, distorting their meaning. It is no different with the church. (89)

Take any church you wish and compare its founding culture with what it has become. The mission or missions that have been set foot begin a subtle divergence from the vision that gripped the founder, and before too long the institution and its mission has become the vision. (89-90)

Why does this happen? Why the decay? Why do good churches go bad? It happens because someone in control of ideas is pursuing this results primarily through the desire to look good and the desire to be wise. After all, it is important that our preachers are known to be wise and looked good. So we sent them off to schools where they get wise and come back looking good.

It is no less true of our secular institutions. The pursuit of knowledge in universities has now come to the place that if you talk seriously about truth and righteousness with faculty members of leading universities, you will be laughed at. If they do not laugh, they will smile condescendingly at your quaint moral naïveté.

\* USC Mudd Hall of Philosophy – *"Truth shall make you free."*

But universities no longer engrave words of any significance on the walls of the new buildings; they simply display the names of the millionaire donors who pay for the buildings. (90)

Truth does exist, but it does not come easily, if at all, to those trapped by Satan's deceptions about what is desirable. A society can lose the truth it once possessed simply by no longer desiring truth above reputation, pleasure, and power.

Jesus - John 5:44, *"How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?"*

When looking good takes precedence over knowing the good, Satan wins the battle, if not the war. (91)

### **Destroying the Citadel of Satan**

(91-93)

To know the enemy and his strategy is half the battle. Satan is our chief enemy, and his primary target is our knowledge of and trust in God. Satan's constant assault is aimed at our belief in God's goodness and power, that God will supply all our needs, and that we can trust God to be SUFFICIENT in all ways. When our minds are on God, and our thoughts are formed by our knowledge of God, such SUFFICIENCY will flow to us. Thus Satan's main task is to keep our minds elsewhere, anywhere but on God.

Sadly, and tragically, we make this task relatively easy for him. Unknowingly we are the devils playground. He takes our thoughts, he takes our feelings, he manipulates us through the ideas that dominate our society.

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**17** This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, **18** having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Ephesians 4:17-18 (NKJV)

**4** For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, **5** casting down arguments and every high\* thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

[\* - "pride of life"]

II Corinthians 10:4-5 (NKJV)

Strongholds. Arguments. High things exalting themselves against the knowledge of God. This is the citadel of Satan.

**24** The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, **25** with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, **26** and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will." II Timothy 2:24 - 26

So we occupy a world in "the snare of the devil". It is also a world that, nevertheless, God loves, into which he sent Jesus. Only the gospel of Christ can take back what Satan controls and can reclaim the mind and heart of every human being held captive by his deceit. It is indeed a battle of hearts and minds, and you cannot overcome the citadel of false beliefs and images and feelings - the very things that rob us of knowing the LIFE WITHOUT LACK - except by the power of God. This power comes to those who have been trained to keep their minds on God - II Corinthians 10:5 - "*Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*". This involves coming to think about God as Jesus thought about Him, and to trust God as Jesus trusted Him - moving from having faith in Jesus to having the faith of Jesus. To do so is to know the LIFE WITHOUT LACK. (92)

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### **A Prayer for the Battle of the Mind**

Lord, minister to me by your Spirit.  
Come into my heart and mind,  
and release me from all inward tension and anxiety.

Hold before my mind the truth that I have nothing to fear from Satan  
For you have defeated him;  
all I must do is fill my life and my mind with you.

Remind me often, especially in the midst of difficulty,  
that you who are in me  
are greater than he who is in the world.

Help me to carry this truth with me  
as I contemplate the awesome reality of the spiritual battle taking place,  
a battle that, perhaps in our time, is moving perceptively closer to its climax.

Give me the vision of who you are:  
Our Father who art in heaven,  
The Shepherd in whose presence there is no lack,  
so I may have the confidence and power to love and to live as Jesus lived.

In His name, Amen.

Dallas Willard, *LIFE WITHOUT LACK*, p. 93

**~ ~ ~ End of Chapter 4 ~ ~ ~**

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### **BOOK QUOTES: Chapter 5 - Trust in God - The Key to Life** (94-123)

Faith – trust – is the key that unlocks our readiness to receive God’s SUFFICIENCY in our lives. (94)

When faith, death to self, and love are alive in you, you will find that hope and joy pervade your entire life as a natural result. Each one is a gift from God, and our privilege and calling is to become the kind of people who can receive these gifts and work with God to develop them as we learn to live a LIFE WITHOUT LACK. (94)

#### **Just Enough Faith** (95-96) Jeremiah 29:3

A great part of faith lies in the intensity with which we want something.  
The nature of faith involves love and the desire for good. (96)

#### **The Power of Words** Mark 9:22, *"I believe! Help my unbelief"*

All relationships in Kingdoms work by words, and the first act of faith is to speak. If you have enough faith to speak it, you may have enough faith to do it. That's why praise is so important. Praise the Lord in every situation: speak it out even if it is a struggle because things are so bad.

So if you will remember the cry of this desperate father [Mark 9:22] and follow his example in words and action, you will know that all SUFFICIENT love and power of God. (96)

#### **Clearing Up the Confusion About Faith** (97-99) Romans 10:17

Faith is not a mystery. We experience it day in and day out. In its most basic aspect, Faith is simply reliance upon something in both attitude and action. (97)

Attitude can be understood as continuing posture we have in life, our basic way of being in the world. It is here, in our fundamental posture toward life, where the real spiritual goods are needed most of all. From Jesus' perspective, the person who merely acts righteously falls in the category of being pharisaical or legalistically righteous. The righteousness of the Kingdom of God, however, is righteousness of the heart. (Mark 7:6) It is an attitude and therefore an aspect of faith.

You cannot escape faith. There's no way to get through life without faith because you have a future. You make plans for your future, and making plans involves having confidence – faith – that things will be a certain way and what you desire will come to be. The only way you can deal with your future is by some kind of faith. It may not be faith in God, but it is still faith.

Now faith has two main parts: one is vision and one is desire, or will. Vision is seeing reality as it is, or in the case of the future, as it could be for us. Desire is wanting reality to be as it is, or as we hope it could be. To have the faith necessary to live into our hoped for future is to trust with the Psalmist that, *"goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."* (Psalm 23:6) (98)

Being "under conviction" - to act in ways that are in accord with desire but not vision. We might say this is an example of bad faith, but is an active faith nonetheless. 99)

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Vision or perception of reality upon which we base our faith may often come to us by means of a spoken or written word.

\* Advertisers...create an attitude of faith in your heart.

*"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."* (Romans 10:17)

In summary, you cannot live without faith. Faith is tied to the future. Faith has the elements of desire and vision. The element of vision comes from our contact with reality or words about reality, which in turn brings about a certain attitude and action. (99)

### **The Three Faiths of Job** (99-101)

Faith is a gift from God. (100)

God is more concerned with who you are becoming than what you can accomplish with your faith. He desires that you become the kind of person who can joyfully and easily receive an abundance of faith and power - the gift of great faith from God, who knows when, what kind, and how much to give us. (101)

### **The Faith of Propriety** (101-103)

The faith of propriety - concern about the benefits that come from serving God.

Satan is the prince of the power of the air. (Ephesians 2:2) He presides over the thought patterns, the social organization, forces of human society, trying to move them in opposition to God. (102)

Pharisees have the faith of propriety, believing that if you get it just right, all will go well. The faith of propriety is intent on living life, as we say, "religiously". Job got out there and did it just right, and the Lord was pleased with that and blessed him for it. (103)

### **Death of propriety** (103-105)

Job did not sin, but we soon learn that he also did not have peace in his faith. His faith, as sincere and genuine and good as it was, was mixed with great fear. Why? Because he was trusting in his own propriety rather than trusting in God.

Job never gave up on propriety, and that's good. There's nothing wrong with wanting to do the right thing. But there are problems with propriety, not only because we tend to make bad choices and bring difficulties upon ourselves, but because things can go badly even when we do everything right. Sometimes God even allows those bad things to happen because he has something better for us, just like to get something better for Job. (104)

### **The Faith of Desperation** (105-106)

I am confident that when God called Job to Satan's attention in the first place, God knew what was in Job's heart. But Job did not know what was in his own heart. That kind of knowledge only comes from experience. God knew Job had faith, and it

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was now maturing from the faith of propriety to the faith of desperation. Like the faith of propriety, the faith of desperation is a wonderful thing.

"*Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.*" (Job 13:15) Not everyone is able to do that. There're a lot of people who say, "Well, if God's not going to give me the goodies, I'm not going to trust Him!"

Not everyone handles setbacks like Job did. He held on, clamped down his teeth, and said, "*Whatever comes, I will trust him.*" The word trust is very important. I am glad Job did not say, "*I will faith Him.*" The word faith is a real problem in our time. It has become "respectable". (105) [ "Let `er rip!" (p. 35) ]

Trust is sloppy. It's out there on the street, in the field of battle Trust is where Satan and God are struggling for the soul of man! But faith...faith is quite nice, isn't it? Very prim and decent - proper even. (106)

### **Run with Perseverance** (106-107) Psalm 46:1-2

Desperate faith is all about trusting God when the shaking starts and everything starts to crumble around you.

What remains is the Kingdom of God that cannot be moved, and by trust, and trust alone, we enter it. (106)

Often God allows us to reach the point of desperation so we can learn how to trust. Is a hard lesson, but an essential one. The LIFE WITHOUT LACK is known by those who have learned how to trust God in the moment of their need. *In the moment of need.* Not before the moment of need, not after the moment of need, when the storm has passed, but in the moment of need. For it is in that moment, when everything else is gone, that you know the reality of God. That moment may be a blood-stained one, as with the faithful martyrs of Hebrews 11 or the stoning of Stephen from Acts 7, but it will also be a God-drenched one.

**A LIFE WITHOUT LACK is all about knowing the unlimited SUFFICIENCY of God in the moment of need.**

**And in trusting, you will know God...when you have nowhere else to turn except to God, and you turn to Him, your faith of desperation will meet the fullness of God, and you will taste the LIFE WITHOUT LACK, as you discover the depths of the faith of SUFFICIENCY.** (107)

### **The Faith of SUFFICIENCY** (107-110)

"Deliver us from evil" - Sometimes God does not deliver us immediately. (108)

"The the Lord God answered Job out of the whirlwind." (Job 38:1)

Job stayed right there. Although he was silent, he did not flee from God, for God had granted him his deep seism.

If you want to talk to God and you pursue that desire, God will grant you that talk. It is likely to be a humbling, enlightening, and faith deepening experience as it was for Job. (110)

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### **In Your Presence is Fullness of Joy** (110-112)

We must live through what Job lived through and become as desperate as Job was. What made the difference for Job was that he hung in there and his faith of desperation carried him to the point where God showed up and Job could say, *"I have heard about you, but now I've seen you."* It was an undeniable experience of God, and it changed his life. His vision of God was now so great that he realized that what had happened to him did not matter. That is the deep faith of SUFFICIENCY.

In that new place of faith in God Job said, *"I repent."* How did he repent? He stopped pressing his case with God. He stopped trying to get God to make everything right. Having seen God, he let go of desperation. He saw that whatever needed to be taken care of would be taken care of. Job saw the greatness of God, and in that vision he was able to rest in the all-SUFFICIENCY of Yahweh.

That is why we need to live in clear view of the Cross. When we look at what Christ did for us on the Cross and keep that at the center of our vision, there are not many things that will bother us, or even matter at all. When we realize that Christ went willingly to the Cross on our behalf, trusting in the greatness of His Father, it casts a transformative light on our own sufferings. That's what Job saw. Job beheld the greatness of God. (112)

### **Lessons on the Road from Desperation to SUFFICIENCY** (112-115)

One of the fundamental changes that takes place as we move from the faith of desperation to the faith of SUFFICIENCY is that we take our minds off of ourselves and place them on God.

We cannot truly see ourselves until we seek God, but as long as our eyes are fixed on ourselves, we cannot see God. We must focus on God if we are to know the SUFFICIENCY of God. Desperation can help in this regard.

Faith requires vision, and a fuller faith requires a fuller vision. (113)

Jacob, fearful of what his brother might do, had refused to let go of God until he blessed him. It was an act of desperate faith; it comes in the end of his schemes, and all he could do was to trust God (note the attitude) by asking God for blessing (note the action). God, knowing that some fundamental change had taken place in Jacob, gave him a new name and the requested blessing.

We can be certain that Jacob's face and move from desperation to SUFFICIENCY.

*"Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough."* (Genesis 33:10-11)

Behold the heartfelt confession of the faith of SUFFICIENCY:

*"God has dealt graciously with me, and I have enough."*

The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. (115)

### **Now It's Your Turn** (116-118) (John 14:23)

All of us can come to trust God as Job did.

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Job, Jacob and the Syro-Phoenician woman did not arrive at their relentless faith in God's all-SUFFICIENCY simply by trying to trust in the greatness of God. It was the result of two things: they sought the Lord and the Lord showed up.

It is the same with you and me. You show not try to do this on your own. Seek the Lord and wait for Him to show up. Set time aside to devote yourself in prayer and other spiritual disciplines that will strengthen your faith and prepare you to receive from him. Listen for God when you pray. Watch for Him and wait for Him throughout the day. If the Lord does not show up when and how you think He should, yo must not be upset with Him or with yourself. Just keep seeking. When we begin to seek the Lord, some things must change - some outside of us and some inside of us - before we can bear the vision of God. These changes can take time, and God, in His mercy, gives them time.

John 14:23, *"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; my Father will love him, and We will come to him and make our home with him."*

Seek the Lord. Ask Him to reveal Himself to you and give you the faith of SUFFICIENCY that knows no bounds. (116)

We all have certain expectations and ideas about God and what it would be like for Him to show up. This is what Jesus was getting at when He asked His disciples, "Who do men say I am?" When they gave their various answers, He then put the light on them. "Who do you say that I am?" (Mark 8:27, 29) He asks the same question of us, and does so in revealing Himself in ways we do not expect. Who do you think He is? God will not try to fit within your expectations but He will reveal something precious to you.

If you want to have a deeper, more trusting faith, seek God and be prepared to go with Him. He will bring you into a faith of SUFFICIENCY as He reveals Himself uniquely to you. No more of this, "I heard about it with my ears." That is where faith begins, but not where it ends. (117)

Faith based on what we hear or read is central and necessary; the beginning of faith does come by hearing. But God wants to lead you on to the point where you can say, *"Now I've seen it with m own eyes and it's all clear."* It's clear because you are convinced that all will be well, and you shall not want. This kind of faith comes from spending time in the presence of God. It does not have to be whirlwind. Indeed we most clearly see God in the face of Jesus Christ. As Jesus told Phillip, *"He who has seen me has seen the father."* (John 14:9) Do you know what Philip just said to him? *"Lord, show us the Father, and it is SUFFICIENT for us."* (v. 8) SUFFICIENT. I would much rather have Jesus that a whirlwind, but if it takes a whirlwind, let it be a whirlwind. The important thing is to be in the presence of God, for that is the birthplace of the LIFE WITHOUT LACK. (117-118)

We must beware of pretense. It is crucial that we do what we can to avoid acting as if everything is fine, When in fact we are suffering. Faith and complaining are not mutually exclusive. When bad things happen, you can do that too. If you doubt this, just read the Psalms! Tell it to God! Let them hear from you. He is not insecure, He is not worried. It will not upset Him to hear you complain. It is one of the ways that we seek God. *"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him"*, and hang on, we will grow into the faith of SUFFICIENCY. (Job 13:15) (118 and 105)

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### **The Social Context of Faith** (118-120) Mark 2:1-12 Paralyzed Man

When faith begins to move, it moves on groups. So an important part of our growth in faith involves the people with whom we associate. (119)

### **Ask, Seek, Knock...but Don't Pretend** (120-121)

It is a continual progression as we experience more of that reality of God: our faith grows according to our vision. In turn, as our vision grows, our will – our ability to decisively act – grows, and we become increasingly capable of choosing and doing good. We must never forget that faith is a gift. Like any gift, faith must be received. It must be wanted. God very rarely just dumps it on people who do not want it.

There is a distorted teaching about the gift of grace in which grace is just randomly poured out on whomever God chooses, regardless of the receptacle. (120)

The truth of God's grace is that we never merit the good that is done to us. Grace is opposed to earning, but it is not opposed to effort, because effort is action and earning his attitude. That point is important. You cannot do justice to the teachings of scripture unless you understand that if you do not arise and go after God's blessing, God will rarely just give it to you...If we want to work with God, we must determine what is normal for him in dealing with people and set our expectations realistically. When we aim for the unusual and glorious things that can happen, that could damage our faith. We must take the faith we have, act on it, and grow toward the face of SUFFICIENCY. (121)

### **Increase Our Faith** (121-123) (Hebrews 11:1)

If you want faith, ask God for it. And when you ask God, be willing to let Him take you through what is necessary to prepare you for it.

Take this opportunity to join with the psalmist in saying, "*Examine me, O Lord, and prove me. Try my mind and my heart.*" (Psalm 26:2)

Job never regretted it. Job wanted God; he wanted to trust God. He persevered and came out trusting.

Because faith is a gift given by God as we are read, it comes to us without any kind of strain, or hype, or exaggeration. We simply know beyond a doubt, that "*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.*" We are not trying to impress anyone, most of all not ourselves. We just believe. (121)

Faith is the gift that is yours for the asking. Striving or pretending is not the way to faith. Remember, faith is the "substance of things hoped for" (Hebrews 11:1) When you have faith that you will have something you are hoping for, it is because God has reared that confidence in your heart, and he is going to bring it to pass in partnership with you. God is running the show and we can rest in that knowledge. The problem comes when we believe we are to be able to have faith simply because we want to have faith. It is not possible. What is possible is asking, seeking, knocking...Then waiting on God. (122-123)

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It is also possible – and necessary – be honest with ourselves with others. When we do not believe something, we should not act as if we do. Acknowledge your doubts openly and honestly and wait until faith comes. Seek God and ask Him to give you the gift of faith. Faith is something you can identify yourself. You know when you believe something, such as your belief in the sun coming up tomorrow, or your belief in the chair you're sitting in, or your belief in the loyalty of a close friend. You know you believe it. No faking or forcing is necessary. You simply believe it. You also know when you do not believe. Please, do not try to believe anything. Simply say to God,

*"Lord, give me faith. I'm ready for it. Take me through whatever I need for it."*  
That is the way forward to the faith of SUFFICIENCY. (123)

**~ ~ ~ End of Chapter 5 ~ ~ ~**

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### **BOOK QUOTES: Chapter 6 - Trust Completed in Death to Self (124-156)**

Our experience of God's sufficiency maybe new to you. First we will look at how the very important concept of death to self directs us toward a life without lack. (12)

It is essential to realize we are dealing with "death to self" not "death of self". (124)

You were not put here on Earth to get rid of yourself. You were put here to be a self, to to live fully as a self. The worth of the self — your self — is inestimable, and God's intent for you is that you become a fully realized self as you make the grace-fueled movement from the old self to the new. (125) Col. 3:9-10; Mt. 16:24-26

#### **Jesus and Death to Self** John 12:23-26 - His life on the Cross

*"If it dies"* it produces much grain...not just to lose life but to give life. (126)

*"For the joy set before Him, He endured the Cross."* Hebrews 12:2

If we miss this truth and fail to incorporate it into our own experience, we will miss the route to life without lack.

\* Job - A glimpse of what Job saw...the grandeur and greatness of God...his new understanding of reality. *"Now my eyes have seen you."* Job 42:5-6

The human life is very complex, and the fact that someone trusts God at one level does not mean they have fully surrendered their life to Him.

The Cross, Resurrection & His glorious present ministry  
...the liberating truth of the death-to-self teaching. (127)

#### **Paul and Death to Self** (128-129)

II Corinthians 4:7-10, 16-18; 5:14-15; Galatians 4:14-25

#### **Fleshing out "the Flesh"** (129-130)

The flesh (def.) Natural powers of the human being based in the human body — capabilities, wants and desires unaided by divine assistance or guidance. (129)

To live in the flesh is to live with un-crucified affections and desires. When we are living apart from God we make our desires ultimate. (130)

#### **Desire and Spirit [and Love]** (130-131) Matthew 5:21-30

Desire (def.) - The impulse to possess or experience something.

Desire is a fine thing...but terrible masters. (130)

Spirit [human will] - To consider alternatives and God prompts us to have an interest in what is better and best. It takes a broad view of the possibilities, not just "desire" and its object. That's where choice comes in. The conflict between the flesh and the human spirit is the conflict between desire — what I want — and the will for what is best. It is, in fact, the conflict between desire and "love", for love is always directed toward what is good, and not at simply having my desires satisfied. Love is the will-to-good of its object. (131)

#### **Our Willy-Nilly Wills** (132-133)

Flesh - confidence in our "will power". The basic nature of sin is to trust oneself.

Living "in the flesh" = Our abilities are the only things we know to trust, living with them as ultimates.

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As long as our desires are paramount in our lives, we cannot have faith in God.

Faith - a gift from God - while what I want is my ultimate concern...I will use my faith to get what I want...to glorify myself...to dominate others.

That is why God does not give us significantly more faith until we have come to terms with death to self. An individual can have only a very small amount of faith until he has come to a very clear resolution of the place of his desires, his glory, or his power to dominate. Until these are settled, he is not going to have much faith. (132)

*"You are not willing to come to me that you may have life...you do not have the love of God within you."* John 5:39-43

As long as people are hung up on honor from other people - reputation, appearing well - they cannot truly believe and trust God. The connection between faith and death to self - or conversely, the failure to have both faith and death to self - is one we must come to terms with or we simply cannot enter into a life without lack. (133)

### **The Insatiable and Its Satisfaction**

(134-135)

*Human desire is infinite by its nature; it cannot be satisfied.*

You must take your stand against it because it cannot satisfy you.

Matthew 16:24, *"Unless you lose your life...you can not follow me."*

If we are going to live a life of abundance sufficiency, we must be focused and intentional in standing against these dreadful roots of the self life. Until we have done that, we will be incapable of entering by faith into the life God longs to give us.

Desire is infinite partly because we were made by God, made for God, made to need God, and made to run on God. We can be satisfied only by the one who is infinite, eternal, and able to supply all our needs; we are only at home in God. When we fall away from God, the desire for the infinite remains, but it is displaced upon things that will certainly lead to destruction. (134)

*"I tell you before hand, just as I also told you in times past, does your practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."* Galatians 5:19-21

James 3:13-16, *"Where envy and self seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there."*

### **Pure Wisdom**

(135-136)

Where there is envy and self-seeking, the old self with its practices and habits is still alive, insisting on having its own way. Colossians 3:9 (135)

*"But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for[a] those who make peace."*

James 3:17-18

What a list! These beautiful qualities are marks of persons we have learned in their heart of hearts the great freedom of death to self, and out of their peaceful

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lives comes everything that is right and good. They are ready to simply stand for truth, to speak what they see to be right in a peaceable, pure, gentle way, and to let it rest with that. As a result of that, God gives them a life of beauty and power that is obvious to others. I assure you, he does. (136)

### **Playing by the Rules**

(137-138)

One of the interesting– and most common– things you'll see when you become like this is that people struggle to believe you are real... purity shocks people.

*"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"*  
Jeremiah 17:9

Of course the answer is, God can know it. Not only that, but God can make the condition of our own hearts known to us, and he can give us new parts marked by the wisdom from above. The requirement on our part is to die to self.

What's that will involve in your own life is a matter only you can decide. No one can spell this out for you or test you out on it.

When we try to make rules for dying to the flesh, we are likely to miss the core problem, which is not our behavior but what is in our hearts. (137)

Again, there is nothing inherently wrong with wanting things or with having things, but we should attempt to receive whatever God wishes to give us so we might use it to his glory.

What is wrong is when not getting what we want propels us into a state of bitterness, irritation, impatience, and anger, and we depend upon our own tricks and devices, our confidence in our own power, to get the things we want. The right thing would be simply releasing it all and saying,

*"Alright. God knows. I'm living in His world. You can give me what he wants. I will not put these things in place of God."*

Putting things in the place of God is the central issue. (138)

**Covetousness** = Idolatry: He wants things to such a degree that he is dominated by those wants. He wants things that others have, resents them for having those things, and desires to take them. Simply desiring to have a house is not covetous– It's desiring to have someone else's house. The covetous idolater is prepared to see other people suffer in order to have his own way.

A covetous person is an idolater precisely because he has put his desires, rather than God, in the ultimate place in his life. Right or wrong, there is no limit to what he will do to get what he wants. That is always the mark of the person and whom the flesh is alive – who has not died to self. (138)

### **Another Day in the Life of the World...and the Un-Crucified Self** (138-142)

Ephesians 4: 17–19, *"in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts, being past feeling..."*

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One of the effects of "being passed feeling" is that the normal restraints upon our desires are cast off. "deceitful lusts" (4:22)

Why do people do things they do? They have decided that they must have their way. That anger is transformed into the hunger for revenge, and soon a body lies dead on street. All because someone didn't get what he wanted. These people are caught in a system where what they want – and what they're willing to do to people who do not give them what they want – is the focal point of their lives. (139–140)

Our desires are the roots of the self life in all of us. And until we, in conjunction with the grace of God, have made an intentional decision not to allow our desires to be the center of our lives, we can never have the kind of faith that will lead us to the life of abundant sufficiency in God.

This is what Jesus was teaching when he said, "*If you try to save your life, you'll lose it*". Luke 17:33 Why will you lose it? Because you will miss out on the provision of God. Choose death to self, however, and you'll have it. Think again of Job. Did he miss out on God's provision? He certainly went through a hard time, but he came out far ahead where he had been. In the end Job tasted the lush provision of God's sufficiency. (140)

When the self has been put to death – that is, when our wants have been placed in the proper relationship to God – it is not a matter of mere "grin and bear it" existence. That is not what the Shepherd Psalm tells us. It speaks not of lack, but of abundance, a cup overflowing with sufficiency for those are willing to let loose of all the lies about what we need and what we can achieve on our own. (141)

This is difficult for those depend on themselves in their own abilities and are unwilling to let go of themselves and trust God. Such of the truly miserable. Such as those who lose their souls in pursuit of the things that are set before them by the inclinations that are in the world – the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Jesus made it clear that pursue these things in reliance upon ourselves is the surest way to lose our souls.

Only when we are prepared to let go of the things that tempt us to keep in life under our own control are we prepared to give up our lives – even to the point of death. Jesus was very clear about that. "I've taught you how to love one another. Real love is when a person is prepared to lay down their life for their friends." (John 15:12–13 paraphrase). That is the ultimate self-denial, to be sure. But those who walk in the kingdom of God, and know his sufficiency are ready to give and forget without limitation. (141-142)

### **Self-Control and Other-Control** (142)

One of the greatest temptations that we have at this level of the self life is trying to keep her loved ones under control. Jesus understood this and warned us. Luke 14:26) Too often our love for family members is domination in disguise. We learn this from our elders, many of whom have tried to control us since childhood.

But death to self includes our desires about any whom we love. We must put those desires on the Cross as well as take her hands off them. This does not mean we don't seek to do good and loving things that we can for them; it simply means we do not confuse their well-being with our own sense of self worth. (142)

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### **Crucified with Christ**

(142-144) Luke 9:23-25

Deny yourself and follow Christ, or deny Christ and follow yourself those are the options. If we are going to follow Christ and gain our real life, we must take up our own cross. That he is, we must experience our own crucifixion.

The crucifixion of the self is a cooperative affair between us and the Lord. We cannot die to self without the help of God's grace for only God can satisfy our ultimate desire, and only God can convince our hearts that, we die to self, you will raise us up. Death to self means releasing all our desires, our reputation, our glory, and having our way with other people. Everything. A dead person does not continue to have just a little life left in him. So, when it comes to our death to self, we have to say,

*"Lord, give it to me. I will take it. I will lay it all down for you."*

Our task is to understand what death to self is and understand that we cannot live in the Shepard Psalm – a life without lack in the Kingdom of God – until we have accepted it, recognized it, and said, *"Lord, give this gift to me."* (143)

Christ was not crucified so that we wouldn't have to be. He was crucified so we could be crucified with him. In death to self you're crucified with Christ. (Galatians 2:20) (143)

### **Roots of Bitterness and Other Obstacles**

(144-145)

You're likely to face some struggles after taking a stand like this.

One good way to check our motives when doing something for the Lord this to see how sweet and patient we can remain when it does not go the way we wanted to. If we believe we are acting out of love towards someone, but we become angry if the other person does not reciprocate, that indicates there is something beyond love motivating us. "I die daily." I Corinthians 15:31

Even though we cannot do it alone, dying to self is still something we do. It is an act we intentionally performed. Romans 6:1-14, Colossians 3:1-5

*"a root of bitterness"* Hebrews 12:15

People in ministry - they must have peace, purity, patience, and the other fruit produced by following Jesus. They must have a willingness to see others praise, while they were overlooked. It must die to the idea that what they want has any importance at all.

When we give up the smaller, everyday things we are training for times when greater sacrifice is required. Abraham. Job. That is, shall we receive the things we want and not the things we don't want? We can receive the things we do not want – or we give up the things we do want – if we have decided, by the grace of God, that we can trust God to take care of us. (145)

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### **Death to Self and Life's Inevitabilities (146-148)**

What about pain, failure, sickness, helplessness, or injury by others? Unfortunately, most Christians today have not been trained in how to meet these inevitable realities of life.

Instead we need to engage in honest and thoughtful prayer, letting God know what we are going through, listening for his calming assurance that all will be well, then acting and trust against the lack or threat while praising God as we move forward with our lives. (146)

\* Jehoshaphat (146-147) First, he was honest about his fear. Next, he set himself to seek the Lord"; that is, he purposed in his heart to see God's help. Then he acted to, proclaiming a national fast, enlisting the help of others, and directing them to seek the Lord as well. (2 Chronicles 20)

That is how to respond to life's difficulties and disappointments in the suffering that can – and most likely will – come to us. If we get ourselves out of the way, and focus our attention upon the God of our sufficiency, and we, too, can be singing songs of victory.

With full throated confidence, we can shout out with Paul Romans 8:31, 35, 37 – 39. (148)

### **Death to Self as Reality and Appearance (148-149)**

When you become a Psalm 23 person, people will notice.

As we do, it will not be long before people begin to identify us as joyful, peaceful, composed people free from anxiety and animosity and in the grip of a deep happiness that comes to the person who's been liberated from the domination of desire. What may appear to others to be self-hatred is, in fact, the only way to become our true selves. (149)

### **Don't Mistake Me for a Doormat (149-151)**

\* Moses - Number 12:3 - Humblest man on earth - hardly a doormat to Pharaoh.

When we live in the Shepherd's sufficiency and die to ourselves, we become the most firmly established people in the world. Here, Jesus, as always, is our example. (150)

His Crucifixion - Jesus stood silent, like a rock, before Pilate. John 19:11

"The Good Shepherd...I lay it down Myself." John 10:11, 17-18

Jesus was no doormat; he was simply dead to self, fully alive to God. Dignity Real dignity-comes to the person who, by the grace of God, has embraced death to self. Such people are the only ones who can stand up to other selves, which of course, includes serving them in ways that are good and right. Death to self gives us the place to stand in real dignity, in the yoke of Jesus, and not cooperate with the efforts of other people to live out their fleshly fantasies, whatever they may be. (150-151)

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### **Whatever Happened to Self-Worth (151-152)**

Dying to self does not exclude having a proper sense of self-worth, including the need to feel recognized and valued. Recognition from others is a good and proper thing. But it must not be what controls our lives. It must not become the goal of our existence. If we find that our need for recognition is consuming our thoughts that source is, of course, God's love for us. Apart from that, nothing fills the void that is left in our hearts. The knowledge that Jesus Christ died for us is the foundation of our self-worth.

That is probably not news to you...Which is precisely why we may need to work on personalizing it. "*Jesus died for me!*" We must take time with this in prayer and meditate on passages about God's love for us. (151)

*"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace."*

Numbers 6:24-26

Yet we must be aware of misunderstanding or misapplying this truth. Recognition by others is important, and, in fact, it is a good check on our pride, for one sign of pride is to disregard entirely what others say about us. I'm supposed to listen to you. I need to know what you think about what I'm doing. That is part of what it means to be a member of the church and at peace with others. Hebrews 12:14

Professional Ministry - in humility, every Christian leader is subject to the people to whom he or she ministers. This is, after all, what ministry is, professional or not - being subject to the needs of other people. But if we become dependent upon their opinions, we have ruined any chance actually helping them, is now our primary concern is to gain their approval. (152)

Family - to keep me ripe heart we must remember that the face of God shining upon us in gracious approval is the basis of our value. We see this exemplified within the family. Child who lives under the shining face of a mother and father has no problem of self-worth. But when the faces of the parents turn away withdraw, they become troubled. God does not withdraw his affection in approval from us. Indeed, "*nothing is able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" Romans 8:38-39 [page. 148]

### **Following Jesus on the Path to Death to Self (153-154)**

Humility is the beautiful condition of people who have learned to surrender their desires, their glory, and their power. Such people are in the process of becoming who they were meant to be in God's kingdom by giving up the life of the self. It is an essential quality for anyone who desires to live a life without lack as Jesus himself did. (153)

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*"Humility is the path to death, because in death he gives the highest proof of its perfection. Humility is the blossom of which death to self is the perfect fruit. Jesus humbled himself unto death, and open the path in which we too must walk."*

Andrew Murray, Humility [see p. 223, *Life Without Lack*]

The Lords Prayer, *"Yours is the kingdom. Yours is the power. Yours is the glory."* (Matthew 6:13) When we pray this we are saying, *"Lord, I give it up. It's all yours."* We are then able to walk in humility as Jesus himself walked.

King David - I Chronicles 29:10-11

Jesus - Matthew 11:28-30

Yokes are used to break in a horse or an ox, to train them. When you harness a trained horse with one that is not trained, they don't need to pull the plow around the field very many times before the untrained horse learns what to do. Is the same with us. When we put ourselves in the yoke of Jesus, we are learning that posture of a life beyond death that brings forth much fruit. (154)

**I Surrender All** (154-156)

*"Do with me what you will."* Until we experience and abandonment of this kind, Faith simply cannot be given to us safely.

One of the main reasons we have such little faith is we have not lived through the process of abandonment and come to the place where God can trust us with great faith. Once we have abandoned our lives to God, we are ready to receive the gift of faith that will enable us to love others well. That kind of love we receive when we walk in the humility that comes from having died to ourselves... That will be the fulfillment of love in the life without lack in the Kingdom of God. (155)

**~ ~ ~ End of Chapter 6 ~ ~ ~**

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### **BOOK QUOTES: Chapter 7 - SUFFICIENCY Completed in Love (157-185)**

Faith (trust), and death to self, and Agape love support our Psalm 23 life as a triangle of sufficiency. Each is a precious gift of God, who, in His graciousness, gives them to us enables us to receive them in ever increasing abundance. (157)

John 15:16 - "I chose you"

John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world, He gave His only Son..."

#### **From Faith to Death to Love (158-159)**

Trust in God and death to self open up the floodgates for God's agape love to flow into us.

Faith - we must be willing to see God as He is before God can further reveal Himself to us and give us more faith...this attitude of life requires more and more death to self as we go along.

Death to self is submitting all your desires to God. It means that, in God's hands, we are content for Him to take charge of outcomes.

The more faith we have in God, the more death to self becomes the natural daily way for us. The Cross...is a new way of living in confident fullness in God and His goodness.

Death to self is abandonment to God in faith. (158)

We can practice through spiritual disciplines such as fasting, which can help us stay sweet and strong when we do not get what we want. If we can surely give up Twinkies, and peanuts, and steak, and things of that sort for a while, this'll bring us to the place where we can say, "*Lord, you're quite sufficient for me.*" This is how we do our part to practice surrendering to God. This is very serious business. Serious enough to be included in the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus teaches about surrendering our own desires and laying down our efforts to secure ourselves by storing up treasures on earth. (Matthew 6). He did not say, "Don't have treasures." He said, "Don't make this your god." (159)

#### **Then Comes Love (159-162)**

Faith has drawn us and nearer to God and positioned us to receive His blessings. Death to self has made our life a willing receptacle for Him, and now agape love flows into us like a river and out into a desperately thirsty world, completing the triangle to fulfill all that is needed for a life without lack. (159)

God is love — and that is not an explanation of who God is;  
that's an explanation of what love is. (159)

Luke 6:27-38

John 13:31-35

Romans 12:9-10

Romans 13:8-10

I John 4:11-21

I Corinthians 13:4-7

#### **All You Need is Love (162-164)**

As a mother or father, or a grandparent with a grandchild, we are simply to pour ourselves into that child in love. When people love one another like this it creates a

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self-contained circle within which there is complete sufficiency in human terms. Children who are deeply loved and raised within such a circle can endure almost anything. I think this is why Jesus used children to illustrate so many truths, such as *"Assuredly, I say to you, unless you're converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."* Matthew 18:3 (162-163)

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

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

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

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

### **He First Loved Us**

(164-165)

The relational nature of Christ reflects the love of God, showing us what it is like and that it is for us. Romans 5:8; Luke 6:35

### **Acting in Love or Just Acting?**

(165-166)

Most people know that love is not just about the things we do. Love is an attitude of the heart. We know we can act in a loving way without really loving. (165)

Service to others is one of the easiest ways to begin loving someone. (166)

Delight in those who have just cursed us, or who have hurt us, who have taken something we value and scorned us and look down upon us? It is hard to do – very hard. This is where we often give up on love.

Paul knew that when we think like this we are working at the wrong level. We should not try to love that person; we should train to be the kind of person who would love them. Only then can the ideal of love pass into a real possibility and practice. Our aim under love is not to be loving to this or that person, or in this or that kind of situation, but to be a person possessed by love as an overall character of life. Our response to the specific occasions when we are to act flow out of our overall character. I do not come to my enemies and then try to love them; I come to them as a loving person. The good tree bearing good fruit. (166)

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### **What is Love?**

(166-169)

[This is a most insightful, biblical, profound, inspiring teaching on love & human nature.]

Love (defined) - "*Acting intentionally, in sympathetic response to others, (including God), to promote overall well-being.*" Thomas Oord, *The Science of Love*

Importantly, this definition distinguishes love from desire and locates it in the will leaving room for desire and feeling to play an appropriate role in love without making them the heart of the matter.

Desire in feelings or more matters of impulse then have considering and choosing the best alternative. They're their concern with their own satisfaction, not with what is better and possibly best. If a choice is made with a vision broad enough and clarified by love, it will find what is good and right. If choice is surrender to God, United with his will, it will be able to do what is best.

Jesus & Paul's definition of love: (167)

- 1.) Love arises in people whose lives are already marked by certain qualities of the whole self, chief of which are faith in our all sufficient God and joyful embracing of death to self.
- 2.) Love involves an orientation of the whole self toward what is good and right.
- 3.) Love has amazing, supernatural power for good as it indwells the individual.

These are essential characteristics of agape love as Paul and the New Testament present it. Notice here that love is not action; it is a source of action. Love is a condition out of which actions of a certain type emerge.

Love is not an abstract ideal impossible to realize in our day-to-day lives. It is an overall condition of real people, living in the real world, who are poised to promote the well-being of those within the range of influence. Such people are ready to act in ways that bring about good. Only such an understanding of agape love as an overall disposition does justice to the New Testament teaching about love and gives us a coherent idea of love that can be aimed at in practice and implemented. After all, love was meant to be lived.

Such love is holistic. Its orientation is toward life as a whole. It dwells on good where ever it may be found and supports it in action. Love is nourished by the good and the right and the beautiful.

Philippians 4:8, "*Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*"

Remember, deeper than the fact that God loves us is this: He is love. He wills nothing but what is good. That is His identity, and it explains why He loves individuals even when He is not pleased with them or loved by them in return. (168)

Ephesians 5:1-2, "**1** Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children **2** and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

We are called and enabled to love as God loves by becoming like God as loving persons. (169)

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### **An Anatomy of Love**

(169-171)

When we understand that love is an overall disposition to bring about good, we can better understand some of Paul's statement in I Timothy 1:5.

We do not achieve the disposition of agape love by direct effort, but by training: attending to and putting into place the conditions out of which it arises. This is where the regular practice of the spiritual disciplines comes strong into play. Once again, the goal is not to be people who do loving things but to become the kind of people who naturally, joyfully, and easily love.

The law is not the source of righteousness, but it is always the way of righteousness. It guides people into actions that conform to what is good and right. Love seeks the same result let from the innermost place from which our actions come. John 7:38, Luke 6:45, Jeremiah 31:33

If we take care of the source of our action- the heart - action will take care of itself. (169)

I Corinthians 13 - Paul is not issuing commands, he is describing love itself.

So we "pursue love" by advancing our faith and dying to self through appropriate training and practice, and the love we receive from God takes care of the rest. These virtues arise from the overall disposition of love, because love, by its very nature, seeks what is good and right before God.

[Renovation of the Heart theme - the "whole person willed to the good (love)"]

Love then is a condition of the will, embodied in the fundamental dimensions of the human personality, guiding them for the purpose of serving the good. In the deepest sense, love is not something you choose to do, it is what you become - a loving person. Your will is your capacity to bring things and events and processes into existence. It is the control center of the self: the "heart" or the human spirit. It is meant to direct all aspects of the self. When love pervades your will, all these other dimensions - your mind (with its thoughts, images and feelings, desires and emotions), your body, your social relationships, indeed your whole soul - work in harmony with and in service to the Kingdom of God, and your life becomes a testimony to the God who meets your every need. (170)

### **The Heart of a Servant**

(171-174)

One of the hallmarks of those who live a life without lack is the freedom to serve others. From Jesus's perspective, there's no greater calling than to be a servant. And whatever our place in life, as love fills and flows through us we will be engaged in caring for the welfare of others. The Shepherd Psalm portrays this as it poetically describes the abundance of God's provision in the language of a feast at which the psalmist is an honored guest. "You prepare a table before me..." (23:5) including "a cup that is overflowing". Surprise guests are in the room - "in the presence of my enemies" (v. 5) inviting them in to Shepherd's sufficiency.

Having been served, he is free to serve.

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I imagine if David, lacking nothing, and realizing that he certainly does not deserve this kind of divine accommodation, stops and serves his enemies, offering him food and drink and inviting them into the fellowship of the Shepherd's sufficiency. Jesus, of course, is our master and model in this regard.

John 13 – Washing the disciples feet. (171)

### **The Brand New Old Commandment**

(174-175)

The newness of the commandment lies in the kind of love Jesus was demonstrating, a love flowing freely and easily from His God-rooted resources. When we love like this it is not the result of human effort, but of the radical with-God-ness we have in him. It is a gift of God.

Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius...never loved his disciples the way Jesus did. Some people, in an attempt to prove the superiority of Christ, focus on the fact that only He rose from the dead. That is true. But deeper still, the very character of Jesus stands out in how He related to His followers. None of this other leaders we willing to die for their disciples. Jesus was the only one living in the realm of agape love.

With the academic world there are those, like the late John Hick, who seek to grade world religions by comparing their power to transform and fulfill human personality. On this basis, every religion in the world flunks except Christianity. Only Jesus passed that test. Only Jesus enables His followers to live a life of selfless, joyful, anxiety-free, loving service on behalf of others. Having said that, the sad truth is that our churches today do not preach this as the message of the gospel. They have not offered this matchless life to people. They have not asked,

*"Would you actually like to live like this?"*

*"Would you like to be possessed by this kind of love?"*

You can. God will give it to you, and when He does, these things that Jesus and Paul say bout love will be realized in your life, not because you did it, but because you welcomed love in and let it take possession of you.

While it is good to remember love saves us, it is equally true that love is meant to enter our lives, our bodies, and our hearts. We are to be temples of the Holy Spirit, sacred space in which God dwells. He is the Spirit of love who desires to reside within us and empower us to love as He loves. When the gospel of Jesus Christ is fully proclaimed, it includes offering this kind of life to people. The opportunity to love people — all people — like Jesus does must be clearly presented, and then we must decide if that is something we want. If we truly want love like that, God will give it to us. But if we do not choose to become as loving as Jesus, we will never know a life without lack. For such a life is realized through love filling our lives. Faith is only completed in love, because our faith is in a God of love — no other. The more this faith grows in us, the more we will experience the carefree joy of Christ's love. (175)

### **How to Love Somebody (But Not Everybody)** (176-177)

We must decide we want to love people. We must decide who we are going to love and how we are going to do it.

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- We are not called to love everybody.
- You love somebody — our “neighbor” — not everybody. (176)

### **Finding that Special Somebody to Love** (177-179)

1.) The question is, which “somebody”?

You will like do better if you begin with people who are not your closest friends and family. God desires to heal our souls, and then we are better able to love the people He brings into our lives.

“*Love our enemies*” (Matthew 5:44) - a promise to lift hatred & enmity.

“*Forgive*” (Mark 11:25) - a promise to lift un-forgiveness.

But it will take - Time, Training & Grace.

Usually we fail because it does not work the way we thought it would. (177)

2.) Focus on 1 person for 1 week (178)

Caring for them starting with deciding to love them.

Ask God to show you something in them that is good and be thankful for that.

What can you do to help them? Use your resources & abilities to serve them.

### **Love Means Being Able to Say No** (179-180)

At times saying no may be the most loving thing to do.

“*Well, you don't really love me.*” “*I really do, that's what I can't do as you ask.*”

We must be very firm trusting God to be at work...having a firm place to stand.

Effective loving requires deep maturity. The only thing that can guide us well is faith in God, a genuine concern for the well-being of others, and an unwillingness to do or cooperate with what is wrong. (180)

### **The Joy of Loving** (180-182)

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

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

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

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

Family - Children do not always do what we believe they should do. We are wounded by this and tend to feel that they are walking evidence that we have been wrong, that we are not good people. Or the reverse may be true for a child having to deal with a difficult parent.

Begin by asking God to help us delight in them, focus on what is good for them, and celebrate what is valuable within them. Go back in memories, “Lord, help me to remember the good.” We must seek to see them, to relate to them, to be with them

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as it is appropriate and good. Set our mind to be with them, and pay attention to them. Do what is good for them. Look into their eyes, and talk to them and listen to them, serve them, help them, give to them. Enjoy them. Praise God for them. (182)

### **Love Means Getting to Say, "I Forgive You" (182-184)**

"Love will cover a multitude of sins." (I Peter 4:8) Love can redeem.

We can be set free from bondage to our enemies. The person who has the most power over your life is the person you have not forgiven. That person holds a part of you in bondage. To forgive is to regain your self.

This is why Jesus said that unless you forgive, you will not be forgiven. You cannot receive forgiveness if you do not give forgiveness, because you will never understand the heart of God unless you see that mercy should govern all our relationships to one another.

### **Three Forgiveness Errors (183)**

- 1.) Forgiveness does not require reconciliation. It is two sided; both willing.
- 2.) Forgiveness does not require you to forget. Forgiveness lets people off the hook and frees us to love them.
- 3.) Forgiveness does not mean you stop hurting. It is the choice to not punish or seek revenge. It is not — it cannot be — the choice to stop hurting. Forgiveness can come long before the healing is complete.

Once we make the choice to forgive, we will need God's help.

- God's supply of forgiveness (Colossians 3:13)
  - Choose not to punish the one who hurt us. Ask God to help us be aware of when we start to entertain the idea of punishment or revenge.
  - \* Temptation - - announces itself beforehand giving you a choice.

Call our for God's help to find the way of escape. (I Corinthians 10:13)

To forgive is to love is to be set free...and to know deep joy.

### **A Dynamic Life Without Lack (184-185)**

Faith. Death to self. Agape love. I have described these as the three points of the triangle of sufficiency at the heart of the life without lack. (184)

Faith feeds death to self, death to self feeds love, love feeds faith, and on it gloriously goes.

When these are fundamental realities in your life, you are exactly where David was when he said, *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."*

You are prepared to take the absence of something from your life as sufficient proof that you do not need it. Not because you're trying to make it happen, but because it simply happens to those who know the all-sufficiency of God. This is not something you can make happen, but God can...and will. The ultimate freedom that comes to the one whose life is characterized by faith, death to self, and love is the assurance that you have everything you need in God. (185)

~ ~ ~ **End of Chapter 7** ~ ~ ~

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### **BOOK QUOTES: Chapter 8 - All the Days of My Life (186-213)**

The emphasis throughout the Shepherd's Psalm is the fact that God is with us. The life without lack flows out of our relationship with Him. Our challenge is to stay with Him in the increasing belief that God truly desires to be with us. (186-187)

Hebrews 13:5-6

The freedom from the frantic desire to have is grounded in God's promise to never leave us. Whatever we have or do not have makes no difference because we are with the one who will provide everything we need, and this allows us to be content.

The only caveat is that God's promise is made to those who trust Him; who desire to be with Him and to be about His business. (187)

Great Commission - Matthew 28:19-20

We are given a clue here that Jesus' promises to us are for the road.

Every person is invited by Jesus to be with Jesus.

If we are with Him, everything is taken care of. (188)

### **SECTION ONE: Preliminaries for Going on the Road Trip with Jesus**

1.) Determine your Desire. "*Do I really want this?*"

God reveals Himself, but in a way that allows Him to be hidden to all but those who resolutely seek Him.

Do you really want to experience extraordinary days in the presence of Jesus? You need to be honest with yourself about this. Many regard Jesus as necessary but not desirable: necessary for salvation, but not desirable as a friend and teacher.

*Am I really enthralled with Jesus or only prepared to put up with Him?*

You must not attempt to fake it. God already knows your answer, and the level of your desire for Jesus to be with you has no bearing on how much He loves you. (189)

2.) The Right Now You (190-191)

Fact 1: It is okay to be who you are wherever you go. (190)

God accepts us as we are wherever we are, so that we can then accept ourselves. We must begin with who we are now. You — the right-now-you — are the person Jesus desires to be with.

The Beatitudes - the not-okay ones. The secret to this blessed life is God being with them in the here-and-now for their real lives.

Fact 2: What is true about you as a person is also true about your work. (191)

Your work is valuable. Whatever you do, it is good in God's Kingdom.

The main thing that will ruin any possibility of staying with Jesus throughout one full day is the feeling that it is not okay to be who you are or to do the work you are doing. If that is your view of life, the opportunity to be with Jesus will be cut off before it starts.

Your "okay-ness" comes from the heart of Jesus' message.

Do your work, "*As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.*" (Jn 20:21)

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On the basis of hearing this message and trusting it to be true, you come to understand that it is good that you are alive; your life is good, it is good that you are who you are, and it is good that you do the work you do.

### 3.) Decide Not to Drift (191-192)

You can not drift into constant companionship with Jesus. You must make the decision to have Jesus with you.

- \* Deciding to go on vacation to Hawaii - tickets, lodging, clothing, etc.  
...do a few things that might be embarrassing if Jesus was sitting beside you.  
Are you willing to work this out with Him?

## **SECTION TWO: Preview of Things to Come (192-197)**

Imagine what your day would look like with Jesus at your side.

### ~ Strength to Please (192-193)

You may imagine that being with Jesus means that you would never do anything wrong. That would be nice but it is not required.

"Look the other way now so I can do this."

He is not going to hang around where He is not wanted.

Spending the day with Jesus is not the same thing as never making a mistake...never doing anything that would disappoint Him.

We must learn how to deal with the tension by applying His grace when we fail. But in a day with Him, we can expect to be receiving His strength to do those things that will please Him, and avoid those things that bring Him pain. (193)

We really can become people who naturally obey His commandments. I Jn. 3:22 (194)

### ~ Joy and Confidence (194-195)

Jesus was full of joy and He means for us to be full as well.

John 15:11; 16:24; 17:13

Joy brings with it confidence. It is, in fact, mainly a matter of confidence.

Joy is a pervasive sense of well-being that claims your entire body and soul.

Joy comes naturally when we are confident about who we are and what we are doing. To be with Jesus is to have both.

### ~ Loving Thy Neighbor (195)

To be with Jesus is to be with others — to be fully present to them. If you go through a day with Jesus you'll discover a fresh awareness of those around you...to see people with new eyes.

### ~ Tag — He's It! (195-196)

Jesus is "It!" and you're "Not It!"

It's not up to you to make everything happen now. Yoked to Jesus, allow Him to carry most of the load. Your mind will be clearer; you will be working with strength and peace in your heart.

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### ~ Your Own Personal Super-Assistant (196)

The Spirit assisted, God-with life...Things happen you can not explain.  
...accomplish far more that you could have on your own.  
...in keeping with the Kingdom of God.

### ~ Speaking and Hearing (196-197)

During your time with Jesus there will be lots of communication. A day shared with Jesus is a day of continuous conversation. We will learn to hear His voice.  
[Footnote reference: *Hearing God* book]

## **SECTION THREE: The Plan**

(197-213)

You cannot spend a day with Jesus unless you intend to do so.

### ~ The Day Begins...at Sundown. (198-199)

At the end of the day: recollect, praise, dream, confess & prepare for tomorrow.

### ~ Rest in Faith (199-200)

Rest is an act of faith.

Spiritual practices such as Sabbath, rest, solitude, and silences are essentially, "*casting all your cares upon Him.*" I Peter 5:7 (see p. 203)

One of our primary temptations is to not get enough rest. This is one reason we have so much addiction and abuse. You're not meant to live in a constant state of fatigue. Tiredness is a spiritual problem...robbing you of the energy needed to pursue God. Our ability to sleep is a sign of faith in God.

Psalm 23:2, "Lie down in green pastures" and rest in God, putting our minds at ease because our hearts are at peace.

Make the necessary arrangements to get the rest you need, planning to begin your morning with Jesus on the foundation of a quiet evening and a good night's sleep. Then, as you retire to bed, commit to meet with God first thing when you wake. Psalm 4:8

## **The Day Dawns: Rising with Praise, Petition and Planning (201-207)**

— Praise: "Thank you, God, for this new day. Thank you for the new beginning."

Seek seclusion; kneel for 5-10 minutes and welcome the presence of Jesus.  
Give the day up to God. \* "The Opening Door" Celtic prayer (202)

— Petition: "*Cast your cares upon Him, for He cares for you.*" I Peter 5:7

This can also be a time of confession, and what you ask for the strength to deal with the failures you experienced day by day. Ask in particular for the faith, death to self, and love that make the Shepherd's sufficiency your own. Remember, these are marks of Jesus himself. To be within is to become like him. Let him know that you want to be infected! Pray, "Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace!" It is truly an expression of the heart of Jesus. (203)

Transform your normal activities into opportunities for common with your Lord.

— Planning: When Will I See You Again? (204-206)

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Psalm 119:164, "Seven times a day I praise you, because of your righteous judgments."

Imagine what it would be like if you met with Jesus 7 times a day, and 7 days through the week; you would likely grow quite accustomed to His company.

You must plan those times to turn your mind to God.

The most important thing about you is your mind and the most important thing about your mind is what it is fixed upon. So the object is to always have your mind fixed upon the Lord.

Romans 1:28 - "*retain God in your knowledge*"

Colossians 3:2, "*set your mind on thing above, not on things on the Earth.*"

\* Frank Laubach

Suggestion — 10 minutes every 2 to 3 hours

"Honing Holy Habits" (206-207)

Habits of turning your mind to God. Set specific times, then keep to it.

\* An emergency is like getting tagged, "You're it!" You are instantly on the spot. The time training off the spot, practicing God's presence, will allow you to discern whether to refuse to be "it" and then act with trust in God. Emergencies are opportunities to bring God into the realities of your own life. (207)

In all of this you are expressing your dependence upon God...you are going to rely upon Him to realize His presence with you as the day proceeds.

### **The Day Unfolds**

(207-208)

Invite Jesus into each new situation.

Watch for Him to accomplish God's loving purposes...and give thanks

Develop the habit of seeing the world through God's eyes. (Psalm 33:13)

\* "God's-Eye View"

As you engage others, ask Jesus to bless them. *Bene-diction* - Good speaking.

Everything in your day, every person, every activity, every interruption

...is an opportunity for you and Jesus to bless them.

No matter what you are doing, try to remember to bless it.

See this as resting under the government of God. [Kingdom Living]

### **The Day Concludes...with Grace Drenched Reflection(209)**

Late afternoon, before dinner, take 15 minutes in quiet solitude to review and examine the day. This is a time to be with Jesus so the way of you can look back over your day to see what happened., to give thanks for the successes, and to try to understand any failures that may have occurred.

If you failed...don't give up. Think about what went wrong, and ask the Lord to help you understand and do better tomorrow. He is more interested in this project than you are because He has a clearer vision of what is good for you.

It is essential that you are well grounded in the grace-drenched message of God's acceptance of us. There is no room for —because there is no possibility of — self-righteousness here. God in love accepts us as we are, because He cannot

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accept us for the way we aren't. There is great freedom in this — the freedom to become God's vision for you.

When I look back...I hurt friends and relatives. But that is who I am. I am the person who did that. You are the person who has done the things you have done. It is a great help if we can accept that and just be honest about who we are. (209)

We still need to understand how we are the kind of people who can do those things that are wrong.

Of course, we are not only asking to be forgiven, we are asking for guidance and wisdom and strength to respond differently tomorrow. If a lapse occurred on how we planned to take special times with Jesus during the day, we do not berate ourselves or fuss over our failures. Jesus doesn't. We have better things to do, like taking Him for being such good friend, and making plans to resume our course with Him tomorrow.

Include identifying the things in your life that you believe trouble Jesus. Make a list.

"...like when I wondered if people were noticing how good I was today."

Pride and managing our outward image is the basic stuff of which many of our problems consist.

Include Thanksgiving. The abundant life that Jesus promises in John 10:10 is far more than the forgiveness of sin. As Paul put it, "Life in the kingdom of God is marked by "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Romans 14:17) (210)

### **A New Day Begins, and a New Life** (211-213)

I assure you that not many days will pass before you begin to understand the sweetness of walking with Jesus in the sufficiency of the good Shepherd. Remember that these are ordinary days we've been describing. (211)

\* *A Little Gate to God* - poem by Walter Rauschenbusch

What Rauschenbusch describes here is nothing other than life in the presence of the all sufficient Shepherd whose voice calls us to walk often through the gate into God's presence. It is the life for what you were created. You will make tremendous progress in experiencing the Psalm 23 life that Christ came to provide. You'll see remarkable growth, and all the good things Jesus desires to give us – a rich life of joy and power, abundant in supernatural results, with a constant, clear vision of your never ending life in God's world and an abiding sense of your work day by day – will become the common, yet extraordinary, realities in your life. (213)

*9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. Colossians 1:9-12*

In other words, may you know increasingly, by joyful experience, a life abundant in rest, provision, and blessing - a life without lack. (213)

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### **Closing Prayer (214-215)**

Gracious Lord,

Help us to see and understand—with the eyes of faith and the mind you have given us—your magnificent, glorious, self-sufficient being, and the greatness of your Kingdom into which we are invited. May we grasp the deep significance of the words, "In him we live and move and have our being," and know that in the safest of places – in you – there simply is no lack.

Open our eyes to the high privilege of being created in your image. Convince us that nothing makes you happier than seeing those redeemed by your grace devoting their days to the good of other people in your creation. Win over our timid and doubting hearts with that conviction that we are your greatest treasure in all creation.

Give us sober yet fearless awareness of Satan's ploys and deceits. Strengthen our hearts in the knowledge that we have nothing to fear, for you have defeated him. We are so glad to know that greater are you who are in us than he that is in the world. May our hearts carry that message as we contemplate the awesome reality of the spiritual battle around us.

Tender Father, you have taught us so clearly that faith - trust - is essential to a life without lack. We confess that while we believe in you, we need to believe more fully, more deeply, more constantly. In His life, death, and resurrection Jesus showed us that you are completely and utterly trustworthy, and even in the shadow of death there is nothing to fear, for you are with us.

Bring us to the place of peace where we no longer feel a need to defend ourselves, or to worry about who's going to take care of us, or to get our way, or to make sure things turn out right. Lord, free us through the knowledge that because you are with us, working in our lives, we have everything we need.

And now, with the truth of who you are deeply engraved in our hearts, give us the confidence and power to love all who are in our lives just as we are being loved by you – freely, fully, joyfully. Let your Spirit move in our minds and hearts so we believe ever more fully that because you are our all-SUFFICIENT Shepherd, we shall never want.

We asked all this because we would have it no other way, Amen.

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**The Apprenticeship** - *A framework for training the next generation.*

Inspired by *Life Without Lack*, p. 38

**Teaching Youth** the "Jesus System" to avoid "Satan's System" primarily in what they think will achieve a good life as a good person based on the key question:

*What is reality?*

- Mind, heart, intentions...filled with Thoughts, Ideas, Images
- Family impact through a new system
- Body changes; Poise; Drive

**Progression of an Apprenticeship** — *About* —> *With* —> *Like* —> *Be*

Think - Trust - Surrender (Die to Self) - Love (Sacrifice of Self)

- Think About Jesus - II Corinthians 10:5 - *LWOL* p. 92
- Be with Jesus - *LWOL* p. 83-84, 188, 203; 195  
Immanuel; Acts 4:13 - *LWOL* p. XIX, XX  
"Receptacle of the Divine" *LWOL* p. 58
- Think Like Jesus *LWOL* p. 2-4, 30-31, 46  
How Jesus thought of His Father and the World - *LWOL* p. 33
- Become Jesus  
Love - Agape - *LWOL* p. 34-35, 65-66; Chapter 7 - p. 157-185  
From faith "in" Jesus to faith "of" Jesus - *LWOL* p. 92  
"Fear no evil" - *LWOL* p. 32-33, 35, 80, 86, 92

Joshua 1:8 - "Free will adolescence"

I Samuel 2:26 & Luke 2:52 - "Wisdom & Stature"

Proverbs 3:1-3 then v. 4 then vv. 5-6 - Trusting God not Self Understanding

### **Parents**

- \* Hannah's Heart & Prayer
- \* Mary - Luke 2:19 & 51 - *LWOL* p. 24  
"On the heart - *LWOL* p. 82 through the mind - remind = re-remember"
- \* Be Eli to Samuel - *LWOL* p. 83 - Teaching youth to hear God in their minds to guide their hearts like Jesus - John 14:30

We choose what we think & do. Develop young people's choosers.

\* Tragically, a young man lost his mind. It took guns & law to stop him. On February 14, 2018, Nikolas Cruz, a 19-year-old expelled student, opened fire with a semi-automatic rifle at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, killing 17 people and injuring 17 others.

Lay down your life or lay down your friends lives

Death to self or death to others

*How are we reaching & teaching the next generation to follow the Shepherd?*

~ ~ ~ **End of Life Without Lack Book Quotes & Study Guide** ~ ~ ~

For information & resources about Dallas Willard Ministries — [dwillard.org](http://dwillard.org).

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For a "Willard Teaching Toolbox" with dozens of teachings with A/V links & transcribed notes  
— [JesusCollege.com](http://JesusCollege.com)