

Beyond Belief

Course Study Guide

"The phrase 'Beyond Belief' is meant to emphasize that we are moving out into real life and all of the things that we hear in our teaching and that stands in our belief can become reality."

Dallas Willard, Beyond Belief Introduction , session 1

Beyond Belief course is a 9-session, weekly webinar featuring Dallas Willard teaching how to live a life encompassing what we read in scripture and hear preached - a life that is beyond belief as a reality in God's Kingdom now.

Key topics from Dallas Willard's [Beyond Belief](#) (videos) include:

Who You Are & Why You Are Here

Getting the Gospel Right

Apprentices of Jesus

Life's Four Most Important Questions

Spiritual Disciplines

Spending One Day with Jesus

Prayer - What it is and How it Works

The course offers wise application, winsome affirmation and weekly accountability to envision and experience intentional, Christlike thought and action to move you beyond beliefs, doctrines, and words to an "abundant life that is life."

[Jesus College](#) — *"Learning from history's greatest teacher how to do what He taught!"*



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Miss or re-watch a session? — If you miss a session, or you want to study more, or would like to teach the material, the recorded sessions and slides (PDF) are posted in the [Jesus College Library](#) in addition to over 500 *free* resources including (22) ready-to-learn courses from Jesus College.

Special thanks to [Dallas Willard Ministries](#) for providing the videos and transcripts. The [\[brackets\]](#) & **bold** disclose Doug Webster's organization, emphasis and cross-references of Dallas Willard's sessions to some of his other teachings.

Your “V-I-M” Participation**

We encourage you to make your experience more than just a free webinar added to your Christian study routine. When you make this course an intentional discipline for spiritual growth—ideally with a partner to better learn, apply, and grow in Christlikeness—you will find the sessions will be a launch pad to rocket your growth into the Kingdom of the Heavens.

Here are a few suggestions to maximize this course.

- 1) WATCH the recommended video before each session shown on page 4 of the study guide. Use each session summary (1-2 pages long) in this study guide (starting on page 5) for notes and studying scriptures.
- 2) INQUIRE - Bring your questions to digest the content and engage other students. Linger longer for the “Q&C” after each 30-minute session.
- 3) COMPLEMENT - Study the suggested related Dallas Willard content.
- 4) PRACTICE - As part of your transformation, put into practice the V-I-M questions for each session during a one hour weekly solo with Jesus learning from Him how to apply the key discovery from each session.
- 5) REFLECT - At the end of the course, type or write a 300 word summary or journal entry recognizing the impact of the study and the vision of how it will, by God’s grace, deepen your growth in Christlikeness.

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

A “V-I-M” teaching by Dallas Willard in “Healing the Heart” - [Video 6B](#) at 04:16

Beyond Belief 2025 Course Schedule

Beyond Belief is from six sessions Dallas Willard taught at a two-day conference in 1998. [Dallas Willard Ministries](#) generously produced and provided for free the six audio-only teachings as 11 videos with quotes, scriptures and pictures in the Dallas Willard Ministries YouTube channel.

The 2025 Beyond Belief course from Jesus College covers Dallas' six teachings in nine course sessions with two sessions - session 3 on July 8 and session 7 on August 5 - combining 2 of the 11 videos for one session each.

2025 Dates	(6) Dallas Sessions	Video # & Topic (with YouTube link)	Video Length
June 24	1A	1 - Who You Are	35:18
July 1	1B	2 - Why You are Here & What's the Problem?	45:18
July 8	2A	3 - Getting the Gospel Right (part 1)	19:12
"	2B	4 - Getting the Gospel Right (part 2)	45:23
July 15	3A	5 - Discipleship - Apprentices of Jesus	23:50
July 22	3B	6 - Who is Really Well Off? The Beatitudes	23:51
July 29	3C	7 - Who is Truly a Good Person?	40:11
August 5	4A	8 - Spiritual Disciplines (part 1)	28:29
"	4B	9 - Spiritual Disciplines (part 2)	20:51
August 12	5	10 - Spending One Day with Jesus	25:44
August 19	6	11 - Prayer - What it is & How it works	53:04

Session 1 — [Who You Are](#) Video 1 [length 35:18]

"Truly, I say unto you, if anyone keeps my word, he shall never see death." John 8:51

Moving Out into Real Life in the Kingdom of God...Beyond Belief

Can I be a Christian without being a disciple of Jesus?

Who You Are as Taught by Jesus

I am never going to die — John 8:51-52; 11:26

If I am a person of faith who has c _____ in Jesus.

Stepping into the full world of God and really begin to live!

What is "Spirit"?

God is spirit. He is c _____ p _____ and w _____ .

So is the human being. Wanting to do good, but ready to do bad.

Un-bodily personal power: thoughts, desires, feelings, habits, character

God - the Father of Spirits

Our spirit - created by God as a wanted child - Matthew 18:10

I am more than a b _____!

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

Meditation — John 8:51-52, "Never taste death."

Application

VISION - Do I see myself in the created image of God?

INTENTION - Do I want to move beyond the physical and mere belief?

MEANS - What child can I recognize and celebrate for a special way of life?

Next Session 2 - [Why You are Here & What's the Problem?](#) Video 2 [45:18]

Session 2 — [Why You are Here & What's the Problem?](#) Video 2 [45:18]

"Keep your heart with all diligence." Proverbs 4:23

The Kingdom of God and Our Kingdoms/Queendoms

The Kingdom of God is the _____ range of His _____ .

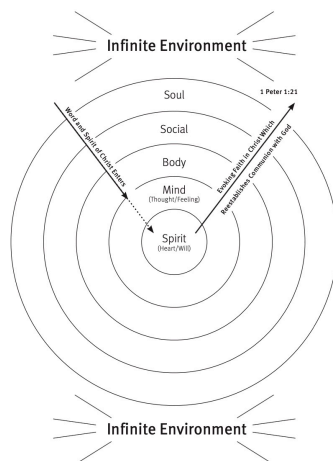
We have one too! It's a covenant creation - to reign with Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:4 states we are a people of g_____. To "glow!"

Indicators of the Visible World

1. The nature of spirit is not pushy.
2. The physical world is dependent on the spirit.
3. The power of beauty is redemptive in the Kingdom of God
4. Self awareness. You are not physical, you are spiritual.
5. Experiencing co-laboring with God by seeking His Kingdom first.

The Six Dimensions of the Whole Person



The Problem of the Lost Soul - Mt. 16:26

We fall away from God and moral knowledge disappears in teaching institutions leaving humankind without the right categories of the person and a concept of sin corrupting the soul. The soul is something we have to take care of from the heart. Proverbs 4:23

Why Are We Here?

The aim of God in placing us in this world is that we should become people that he could _____ to do what we _____ to do.

To become like Jesus fully _____ !

The Dimension and the Training of the Body

First, the body is _____, not _____ .

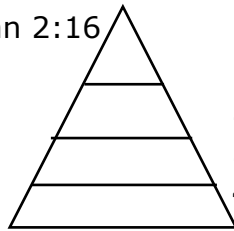
Aspects of the Power & Potential in the Human Body

Wanting to do _____, ready to do _____ ...like Peter (Matthew 26)

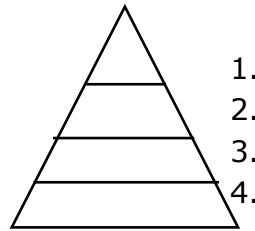
Subordination to God: Proper

Body Governance - I John 2:16

Lust of the Eyes
Lust of the Flesh
The Pride of Life



Improper



Five Dimensions of Eternal Life

- 1.) Faith - C_____ in and R _____ on Jesus
- 2.) Apprenticeship with Jesus as His Disciples
- 3.) Obedience
- 4.) Inner Transformation - Fruit of the Spirit - Galatians 5:22-23
- 5.) Power to accomplish God's work...beyond imagination and belief

Fullness of Life not Religion "Life is here!"

"I came that you may have _____ !" John 10:10

- † Who Am I? - *I am an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.*
- † Why Am I Here? - *To become the person God meant for me to become, so that God can empower me to do what I want to do, as I learn to live and reign with God for eternity.*
- † What's the problem? *Our bodies have been trained in the wrong way with the wrong life.*
- † What's the solution? *Learn to follow Jesus into his practices, and as we do that, we come to the fullness of life, which Jesus Christ intended for all of us.*

Meditation — Colossians 3:1-4

Application

VISION - What will my life look like glorious, "fully alive?"

INTENTION - Have I decided, "*I want to be God's person*"...?

MEANS - Pray Colossians 3:1-4 asking God to reveal "things above".

Next Session 3 — [Getting the Gospel Right \(part 1\)](#) Video 3 [19:12]
[Getting the Gospel Right \(part 2\)](#) Video 4 [45:23]

Session 3 — [Getting the Gospel Right \(part 1\)](#) Video 3 [19:12]
[Getting the Gospel Right \(part 2\)](#) Video 4 [45:23]

A Valuable Review of Dallas' Teaching 1 [Start to 16:45]

What stands out for you in the summary?

Getting the Gospel Right *Does it transform character?*

The Gospel of Jesus - The Available Kingdom of the Heavens Here & Now!

What is... "Repentance"? Mt. 4:17 "Nicodemus' dilemma?" John 3

The Three-fold ministry of Jesus — "P, T & H" Matthew 4:23; 9:35

The Gospel of the Kingdom in Acts 1:3, 8:12, 28:23

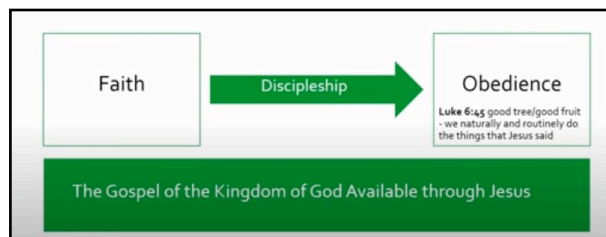
The Gospel of Sin Management from the Left and the Right

Is it more than social j _____ or A _____ theory?

Is s _____ f _____ in the salvation message I know?

Is redemption more than a m _____ system to pay my debt?

**The Discipleship
Bridge**



<— *The Path*

<— *The Foundation*

Finding the Kingdom - Colossians 3:17

Faith — *confidence in Jesus* — integrates a _____ with

r _____ to become the person God i _____ me to be!

"Kingdom" Meditation: Matt. 4:17, 23, 5:2, 5:10, 5:20; 6:10, 6:33; 7:21

Application

VISION - Do I see the gospel as life after death or life today?

INTENTION - How do I qualify and describe my "confidence" in Jesus?

MEANS - As I pray "In Jesus Name" this week, think "power" from Jesus and "representation" of Jesus.

Next Session 4 — [Discipleship - Apprentices of Jesus](#) Video 5 [23:50]

Session 4 — [Discipleship - Apprentices of Jesus](#)

Video 5 [23:50]

Grasping the Kingdom God *"On His shoulders"*

It will be a very different _____ from expected. Daniel 2

Safe in the Kingdom God

Romans 8:28 is the chemistry of the Kingdom for everything in our lives.

Our Part in the Kingdom The Great Inversion *"Mortify the flesh"* Col. 3:5

Hannah's Infertility ~ Moses & Miriam ~ Mary's Magnificat

Becoming Disciples of Jesus

I'm going to _____ from him how to lead my life in the Kingdom of God as he would lead my life if _____ were _____.

And this is not a matter of doing _____ things.

Jesus Teaching the Kingdom *Introducing the next session*

Two Main Questions: *Who is really well off? Who is a good person?*

The good life is Matthew 6:33!

The hunger for _____ is so deep, so radical, that people will go to any length to even sustain the _____ of being a good person.

Meditation: Romans 8:28

Application

VISION - How would I describe the Kingdom of God to a friend?

INTENTION - Do I *really* want to learn from Jesus how to lead my life?
Am I ready to "turn my Kingdom over to the Lord"?

MEANS - What one area of my flesh needs more mortification work?

Next Session 5 — [Who is Really Well Off? The Beatitudes 3B](#) video 6 [23:51]

Session 5 — [Who is Really Well Off? The Beatitudes](#)

Video 6 [23:51]

“Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12) & **The “Woe Be’s”** (Luke 6:20-26)

The Mistake - Jesus citing a c_____ as the basis of the blessing.

A.I. search “*Blessed are the poor in spirit.*” You’ll confirm the mistake.

Jesus as Teacher

The Genius Teacher is not dropping little _____. He goes to the _____.

Contemporary Education Problem - Gathering knowledge with no change.

Parables & Presumptions for Real Life

The Primary Function of the Beatitudes

Proclaim the _____ and _____ of the Kingdom of God: Blessed am I

“Blessed are the _____.” Reflectively fill-in your group(s).

Discipleship Restated

I’m learning to lead my life in the Kingdom of God as he would
lead my life, if he were I.

1st step of blessedness in light of the Kingdom, share His vision of..

Meditation: Read Matthew 5:3-12 with Kingdom blessing eyes and mind

Application

VISION - How does blessedness in the Kingdom change my view of God?
The gospel? Jesus’ mission? Loving your neighbor?

INTENTION - What person or group do I not see through Kingdom eyes?

MEANS - “*He ate with them.*” Who will I share a meal with this week?

Next Session 6 — [Who is Truly a Good Person?](#)

Video 7 [40:11]

Session 6 — [Who is Truly a Good Person?](#)

Video 7 [40:11]

“Unless your righteousness exceeds the scribes and the Pharisees...” Matthew 5:20

Changing their Word View

What are you thinking? Aren't the rich "blessed" and the poor "cursed"?

External Actions of the Religious Matt. 5:20 *"Don't do anything wrong!"*

How do you get to be the _____ of person that the law is,
as the Prophet says, written on your _____?

A Good Heart concerning... Matthew 5:21-48

Anger 21-26 *"Raca!"*

Oaths 33-37 *"Yes be Yes"*

Desire 27-30 *"Looking to..."*

Non-Retaliation 38-42 *"Cheeky"*

Divorce 31-32 *Hard hearts*

Love Enemies 43-48 *"As God's child!"*

Beyond the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees
only exists when living in _____ with the Kingdom of God.

It's not about legalism. It's about having a certain kind of _____ .

*You meet the Kingdom of God at the level of the h _____ to be supplied
with wisdom, strength, and joy to do what Jesus is teaching.*

Meditation "You've heard, but I say..." 6 times to guide our hearts like Him

Application

VISION - Can I see myself living a life *free* of anger and contempt?

INTENTION - When did I last spout "Raca!" or "Fool" before thinking?

MEANS - Pray for 3 people with whom you have tension to see them like
Jesus sees them and bless them with the blessedness of the Kingdom.

Next Session 7 — [Spiritual Disciplines \(part 1\)](#)

Video 8 [28:29]

[Spiritual Disciplines \(part 2\)](#)

Video 9 [20:51]

Session 7 — [Spiritual Disciplines \(part 1\)](#) Video 8 [28:29]
[Spiritual Disciplines \(part 2\)](#) Video 9 [20:51]

“Above all, clothe yourselves with love...” Colossians 3:14

Our Contribution to Spiritual Formation II Peter 1:4-7

I want to be a disciple of Jesus so I will intend it. *"Make every effort"* v. 4

I'm going to _____ my affairs so that will happen.

Becoming a Sermon on the Mount Kind of Person

_____ transformed under the present _____ of God.

Sanctification - "A consciously chosen and sustained relationship with God in Christ in which one is able to do and routinely does what they know to be right before God."

It's not a status, achievement, outward form.

It is a track record, a habituation, a sustained relationship.

Sanctification Processes for Spiritual Formation of Character

1.) New Age 2.) Legalism 3.) Church Functions

4.) Action of Abiding in Christ - watching for the Kingdom at hand

It's how Jesus healed. *"Stretch forth."* *"Pick up and walk."* *"Go!"*

Spiritual Disciplines - *Wisdom not Laws*

A discipline is an activity that enables us to accomplish what we cannot do by direct effort.

Meditation Colossians 3:12-17, *"Clothe yourselves"*



Application

VISION - Do I see myself making every effort to become like Jesus?

INTENTION - I wish... I want to... I intend to! Where am I with Jesus?

MEANS - What 2-3 disciplines are bringing me closer to Jesus right now?

Next Session 8 — [Spending One Day with Jesus](#)

Video 10 [25:44]

Session 8 — [Spending One Day with Jesus](#) video 10 [25:44]

“Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” Mark 6:31

Walking with Jesus in the Minutes of our Day

A habit of redirecting my mind towards God in a day's moments.

Frank Laubach, *The Game with Minutes*

God is with Us *Emmanuel* (not just during Christmas)

The secret of the blessed life without lack is God with us. Psalm 23:1

"We accept your presence. We invite you in. We want you present."

The Preliminaries

- 1.) Faith in the Available Kingdom of God
- 2.) Desire to be with Jesus
- 3.) Decide to be with Jesus
- 4.) Make Arrangements

Seven Steps to Spending a Day with Jesus

Plan the Evening Before - *Rest is an act of _____.*
Arise with Praise to God - *Receptive to God to calm my _____.*
Kneel & Pray - *With His love for my _____, I can love my _____!*
See the World as God Sees It - *_____ my mind to think of God.*
Pass Peace & Joy to Others - *Like living water* - John 7:38
Reflect in Prayer & Thanksgiving - *10 minutes every 2-3 hours*
Review the Day - *Ask for Jesus' _____ on success and failure.*

Remarkable progress in where I want to be in Christ is waiting for me!

Meditation - Colossians 1:9-12, *"Walking in a manner worthy of the Lord"*

Application

VISION - How would an ordinary day in my life with Jesus look different?

INTENTION - Here's where it all shows...*Do I really intend to follow Jesus?*

MEANS - On what date in the next 7 to 10 days will I try this?

Next Session 9 — [Prayer - What it is & How it works](#) Video 11 [53:04]

Session 9 — [Prayer - What it is & How it works](#) Video 11

“Ask and it will be given to you...” Luke 11:9

Prayer - An Enforcing Structure Philippians 4:6

Jesus prayed for Peter. He didn't _____ him. Luke 22:31-32

Contact with the Real World Luke 9:28-29

Resources to live the Golden Rule: *Ask, Seek, Knock* Matthew 7:12

Enlarging Your Boundaries - Prayer of Jabez I Chronicles 4:9-10

Partnering and Depending Upon God with the Power of Prayer

Prayer is so _____ that it can't be left to us.

What is Prayer?

Prayer is talking with God about what we're _____ together.

Look at *The Lord's Prayer*!

A prayer is basically _____ . Including for you!

How Does Prayer Work?

The power of _____ is what moves in prayer!

Persistence: A Neighbor (Luke 11:1-13) and a Widow (Luke 18:1-8)

Why is Prayer Arranged This Way?

Prayer teaches us to _____ the power of the Kingdom of God.

Meditation - Luke 11:1-13, Luke 18:1-8

Application

VISION - What would my life look like if I better knew and practiced prayer?

INTENTION - How much do I truly, desperately want to see God's power?

MEANS - In what area is God asking me to persist more in prayer?

Teaching 1 - Who You Are, Why You're Here, What's the Problem

TRANSCRIPTION of [Who You Are \(1A\)](#) Video 1 [35:18]

[Outline provided by Dallas Willard Ministries](#) (3 pages)

CONFERENCE INTRODUCTION — *Kingdom Life Beyond Belief*

Right....[sound goes low]. Thank you very much! The power went up! I don't know what happened. Jesus didn't have these [sound issues] to deal with! So...

But it's a great privilege to be here. And the theme of the conference that has been settled on is "Beyond Belief". And the phrase "Beyond Belief" is meant to emphasize that we are moving out into real life and all of the things that we hear in our teaching and that stands in our belief can become reality. And my hope is that each of you will understand and see your way more clearly into the mastery of your real life, through confidence in Jesus Christ, and it is real life where we know the Kingdom of God and heart we know an eternal kind of life, and this life is the one that is "Beyond Belief".

Now it's, of course, closely tied to belief. And belief is the route that we take into real life. But somehow, we have developed an understanding of belief and faith, which doesn't necessarily connect with real life. And we'll be talking about some reasons for that. It is now assumed in our culture, that you can be a Christian without being a disciple, that you can be faithful to your church while at a loss as to how to handle your home life and your job and perhaps your emotions and, and even your actions generally. And that's, that's what we want to address when we speak of "Beyond Belief". All of the great words of the Scripture, Job 23:21, *"Equate now thyself with Him and be at peace. And so good shall come unto thee."* The knowledge of God is supposed to come and permeate our whole life. And He can do that. And that's really all that I will talk to you about is how that is possible.

Overview of Dallas' Six Teachings

[2:04]

Session 1 — Who You Are, Why You're Here, What's the Problem -

I will cover a lot of topics which may initially seem a little distant from that, and particularly tonight, I want to talk about our basic nature as spiritual beings; who we are; why we are here; what is the purpose of our existence on earth, and then something about why we have such trouble with it. And primarily as we live our lives, it comes through our body and our social surroundings. And that's the struggle of the flesh with the spirit. And so that's what I want to cover this evening.

Session 2 — Getting the Gospel Right - In the morning, in the first session, I want to talk about getting the gospel right. I want to explain what the gospel that Jesus preached is, the gospel of the kingdom of the heavens, and how it relates to us. And for many years, I didn't understand that I was preaching a gospel different than Jesus was preaching. I didn't understand but I saw that I was getting a very different result from what he was getting. And that began me to... that made me begin to think that perhaps I should reconsider what I was what I was preaching, and try to preach what he preached. And so I'll be talking about in the first hour in the morning.

Session 3 — Apprentices of Jesus: Discipleship - The second hour, I'll be talking about what discipleship is and how it works and trying to make as clear as possible that discipleship to Jesus Christ is the greatest opportunity any human being will ever have on earth, that everything else pales beside it. And that Jesus Christ is right now in Maryland and in California, and everywhere, between and around the world. He's taking students, that's the good news is Jesus is taking students and we can be his students.

Session 4 - Spiritual Disciplines - And in the first hour in the afternoon, I'll be speaking on spiritual disciplines, disciplines for the spiritual life and how we can use those and integrate them into our lives, to make real, the promises of the life in the Kingdom of God.

Session 5 — Spending One Day with Jesus - And then finally, tomorrow afternoon, I will go over how we might spend one day with Jesus. And I don't mean a retreat day, I mean a day doing what you do anyway. Right out there where you live. And my idea is that we can do this for one day. And there is a way of doing it. And I think that will fit in very nicely after after we've discussed the spiritual disciplines and the understanding of discipleship and the nature of the Kingdom of God and the gospel of the Kingdom of God. I think that'll fit in very nicely. And you'll see how that works. And of course, if you can do it for one day, you can probably do it for

two days. And if you can do it for two days, you can probably do it for three days, it actually might get easier as you went along. And so I'll be just talking about very specific plans, that we need to come out of the position that so many people find themselves in, and certainly the world looking at those who profess to be followers of Christ often seem to see, a great gap between ideals and reality. We need to come to the place to where the teachings of Jesus are the simple expression of what we become inwardly.

[Session 6 — Prayer - Dallas does not introduce this topic in his first evening opening session because it appears it was a separate gathering from the other 5 sessions. Here is an introduction from his session 6. (Video 11)

"Now this morning, I wanted to take our time together to talk about prayer. And to try to deal with some of the issues that come up when people try to put it into practice."]

Life in the Easy Yoke of Jesus

[5:15]

Jesus said, a good for... *"good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit."* [Matthew 7:18] It's impossible. And his way is to renew the inside of the person in such a way that when the tests of life come, we simply respond as he would. We discover that that's the easy way to live. The big lie about Jesus's teachings is that they're hard. What's hard is the other way. Think it's hard to love your enemies? Look at what happens when you hate them. And Jesus brings us an easy yoke, and we learn to step into that easy yoke, and learn of him, just like the verse says, *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and you will find rest unto your souls."* [Matthew 11:29] This is a way that actually works, and it solves all of the problems which humanity strives with in vain to solve in other ways. There is no other way, Jesus is the master of human history. He is the one who knows what is best. I approach the Scripture as the best information God has on the most important things for human life.

Dallas' Teaching Approach and Resources

[6:45]

Now I'll be talking informally, for the most part. I've prepared some things for you to read. You have been handed a little article that I wrote some time ago and published. Yes, if you can possibly just read this over, as you have breakfast or something for tomorrow. I won't be referring to it tonight but I will be referring to it some tomorrow. If you could read that over, that would help a lot, because I do tend to dish out a pretty heavy load. And that will help you digest it, I think. And also now we do have a lot of these transparencies that have been copied for you. And we'll be using them as we go along. I will speak informally and I will intend to close each session with

some time for questions and comments. And sometimes I don't quite make it on that but I'm going to try and then we have a special question session set up for in the morning, I think. So please, if you do have questions, I hope you will. And if I succeed at all in communicating with you, I'm sure you will. Please write them down and we'll have time to try to deal with them.

Dallas' Personal Ministry - Also, while while I'm here, I'm here, so don't hesitate to approach. Some of you emailed me and said, "Hey, I hear you're going to be down there. I'm going to come", please introduce yourself. And don't hesitate. I'm here to talk and I'm here to pray and here to hear to be with you, so don't hesitate at all, to approach me if...anytime.

Session 1 - Who you are, and why you're here, what's the problem [8:20]

Now this evening, our topic is who you are, and why you're here and what's wrong? What's the problem? Who you are, why you're here and what's the problem. This is an important topic, folks, it really is. There's a lot of confusion about this. And frankly, the message you get from your culture and your education is diametrically opposed to the truth about yourself. Diametrically opposed. And we cannot understand our lives and we cannot understand what God has called us to, unless we're able to come to a true picture of who we are. Jesus's way of presenting that was in the context of death. And he says things that are just absolutely shocking. And perhaps, if you have your Bibles, you might want to just look at a few passages on that. And first of all, you might want to look at John, the eighth chapter. And we're going to take on a deep metaphysical, if you wish, issue, and we're going to take it on in the words of Jesus and directly as possible, because you know, those kinds of issues you can beat around all of the available bushes and never get anywhere with. And we want to be just as direct as possible.

Jesus Teaching - We're Never Going to Taste Death [9:50]

And here Jesus is teaching. And he's in something of a confrontation with the people who are listening to him. And he says in verse 51 of John 8, *"Truly, truly I say unto you, if anyone keeps my word, he shall never see death."* They shall never see death. Now nearly everyone is planning on seeing death, and in fact that looms large in their minds, and they keep thinking about that. Jesus says you'll never see death.

Verse 52: *"If anyone keeps my words, he will never taste of death."* He'll never experience death. Are you planning on experiencing death? Honestly? You're going to be disappointed! What you're thinking about and what you and I are trained to think about in the world, from the world's point of view as death, is never going to happen to you, if you are a person who has confidence in Jesus Christ.

Faith is Confidence in Jesus

[10:55]

By the way, you will often notice that I use the word confidence instead of faith. That's because confidence is what faith is. And faith has come to mean to many people what you say believe...what you say you believe and wish you did even though you don't. Confidence is where you really believe it.
You have faith in something if you're ready to act as if it were true.

This man here has faith in this chair. Look at him. See? He has faith in that chair. How do you think he'd be sitting there if he didn't have faith in that chair? Very different, right? You got confidence in that chair, haven't you? He doesn't know now whether he should since I ask him. [laughter] I'm sure it's a good chair.

You see, when we have faith in something, we just rest on it. Just rest on it. And when I say confidence in Jesus Christ, I mean that. I mean, we've learned to just rest on it. He's in place, everything is fine, we rest on him. And he said, "Anyone who has confidence in me, will never taste death, never experience death." Now people from this side, look at death and they say, "Oh my, the person died!" And you remember the 11th chapter of John. Lazarus: his sisters looked at him and he looked mighty dead, didn't he? You see from this side, you see something but you don't know what you're looking at. But you don't see the experience of the person who has died. Right? You don't see that. You don't see death. You see a shell. You see something that is left, but you don't see death. And Jesus said, *"He that liveth and believeth on me shall never die."* [John 11:26]

He that liveth and believeth on me shall never die.

Now we can give a lot of other verses. Let me just move on quickly and cite First Timothy... Second Timothy 1:10. It says that Jesus *"destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."* The gospel of the Kingdom of God, the gospel of Jesus, the King and the Kingdom of God, the gospel of the resurrection. He destroyed death. He abolished death. See, those who walk with him will never experience death.

Now why is that important? Well, of course, it's important in its own right. But it's most important, because it reveals who we are now. It reveals who we are now. Do you know the great barrier that hangs over nearly everyone's life is the idea that this life is all of it. Did you know that's true? And, for example, many of you folks who are older, you may be feeling your life is over. Your life has hardly begun. That life that you have, that you identify as your own now is going to continue. It will continue as your life. You will be... have a clarity of consciousness and a realization of reality that you can't even begin to approach now and when you step through the doorway and you go into the full world of God, you then really begin to live.

So, plan on it, folks, plan on it. Now you sing the song, "When we've been there 10,000 years, bright shining as the sun". Don't you sing that song? Do you suppose that could possibly be true? So, you see, you need to be thinking about your life now in terms of that. And you need to understand that God is a God over this world that makes sure that there is nothing good that is ever lost. Never nothing good is ever lost. God sees to it.

Now these are things that you may want to...and you know the only way you can get a hold of an answer is if you've got a question. Solutions do no good if there are no problems. And so you have to live through the problem part in order to get the solution. So see when I say things like that, I know that I am contradicting the ideas that are constantly buzzing around your head and in your in your thinking, and you're told this, that and the other by your world. And so you may want to put down questions and let's have some discussion about what this all means. But this is the simple fact that you are a spiritual being, and that you are never going to cease existing.

What is spirit?

[16:28]

Now your first sheet on your handout deals with what is spirit. Because we are in a world that is set against the spirit. We're in a world that is obsessed with the material. And the spirit is treated as if it were marginal, somewhere else when in fact, it is the center of reality. So let's just look at a few verses here and think about this. What is spirit? And we want above all to understand our own nature. But we start with what is fundamental, and it isn't us, it's God. God is spirit. The ultimate nature of reality, the source of everything is spirit.

Now you all know the Ten Commandments, I hope, and you will remember that the second commandment is designed precisely to keep people from thinking about God, as if he were physical. Can anyone say the second commandment, the second of the Ten Commandments? Yes. *"Thou shalt*

make no graven image", right? [Deuteronomy 5:8] That's the no idols business. Thou shalt make no graven image of anything that is, where? Above the earth, or on the earth or beneath the earth. Now that was supposed to cover all the possibilities, you see. And why is that command there? That command there is because it is absolute death to the soul to misunderstand the nature of God. God is not material. He cannot be imaged by material things. And if we do that, then we distort his meaning and the effect involves that we will come back on ourselves because how we think about God is going to determine how we think about ourselves. What you worship as god invariably determines how you think about yourself and your life. And sometimes that's perhaps not in a religious context, but it becomes religious, when when something becomes ultimate in your life. If that is success, or well being, all of that will come back on you and determine who you are.

God is Spirit

[18:56]

God is spirit. And spirit means primarily that he is creative power, creative will, self determined. What marks the spirit is that it is not dependent on another thing, and God is totally independent. So you have the passage there from Exodus 3, Moses said to God, as God spoke to him from the burning bush, *"Who shall I say, sent me?" And the answer was, "Tell them I AM. I AM, that I AM."* Now I AM that I AM" refers to the fact that this is a being that depends only on itself. And you and I have a little bit of in that...of that in us, it's called freedom of will. And that is actually something that we can turn against God. It has that degree of independence. And the great temptation is to turn that against God. We'll have more to say about that in a moment. But spirit is creative will and God gave you creative will. God's image in you is creative will.

That's why a little child, you have a little child and you send them off to day school or something. And what do they what do they do? They make things, right? A little child wants to make things. Have you ever known a child that didn't? They all want to make things. Then what's the next thing they want to do? They want to give them to you, right? So I have in my desk drawer at home, all sorts of little things that John and Becky made. Do you think I would get rid of those? No, I won't get rid of them. Because I know they expressed the inmost being of these dear little people that came to live with Jane and me. You see, I wouldn't get rid of them.

The Human Being is Creative Will

[20:52]

That's, that's the human being, the human being is creative will. And you were put here and the image of God in you is your creative will. And we were meant to exercise that creative will in union with God. And that's still God's offer and God's call to us and indeed, that's what learning to live in the Kingdom of God amounts to is going back to that relationship which God gave us in the covenant creation in Genesis 1, where he appointed humanity, to increase, to govern the earth, to be fruitful. That's creative will.

Now see, many people today they read that and they say, "oh, this is bad, this is human domination of nature. It's terrible. Look, what man has done to nature." Yes, that's what he does when he is apart from God. God never intended that. So the creative will of man is turned against nature, turned against one another, turned against God. But it's still God's image in human beings.

Do you know of anyone who wants to leave this world without having made a difference? If you do, may I see your hand? I don't see any hands. See, I'm confident of that, because I've asked that of hundreds of congregations and groups, both in universities and in churches and elsewhere. Everyone wants to make a difference. Everyone. That's the image of God. See, that's the spiritual nature of the human being.

Spirit is creative will: it desires to create good.

Another question I ask is always: Is there anyone here who wants to be a bad person? Never. Had one girl once, who said yeah, but she had been listening to Madonna and Madonna has a song about how all good girls are bad. And it was... even that person soon understood. See, people want to do good. They're ready to do bad. That's the problem. And we talk about that at the end of the hour. But they want to do good. That's the mark of God in their, in their soul. See? That's what it means to be a spiritual being. It is to possess that quality in you that aims to bring out of itself creative, good things, and to bless others with them. See, that's a part of it. People want to bless others. The little child wants to give the thing they made to the one they love.

And what do you find when people are old and ready to leave the world? They want to do the same thing. Isn't that right? A few of them may have been hurt so bad that they don't know how to deal with that. But nearly everyone when they go out, they want to bless people, isn't that right? The dying wish to bless people, they wish to give, they wish to leave something good behind, That's spirit. That's the nature of God.

Spirit is Un-bodily, Personal Power

[24:20]

Now spirit is basically un-bodily, personal power. Please look at that definition, if you will with me for a moment: spirit is un-bodily, personal power. All of the language there is important.

- Un-bodily. That is to say it is not derived from the physical. Now of course, that's at work in you all the time: there's not a one of you here tonight that came here because of the laws of physics. Did you know that? You're here because of ideas, of thoughts, of feelings of choices. That's what brought you here. It's power.

- Power is anything that does work. Here, your body is here tonight. But the laws of physics didn't bring you here. Now they had something to do with it. But if it had just been left up to the laws of physics, you wouldn't be here. And if it's left up to the laws of physics, you won't go anywhere. You will just sit there. You see, it's your thoughts, it's your emotions, it's your choices, it's your will, that moves you that brings the laws of physics into play, and begins to move you. Now we will talk more about that in a moment about the structure of the human self. But you see, spirit is un-bodily, personal power.

- Personal. It's not impersonal. You see we have a lot of people today, spirituality is experiencing a revival, you may know all over the place: there's Heinz 57 varieties of spirituality. And a lot of it is impersonal. You know, the force be with you and all that sort of thing. And, and there's even a lot of research into prayer like Larry Dossey has a book called *Healing Words*. When you begin to get into it, you realize this is a sort of metaphysical self manipulation that has nothing to do with anything other than impersonal forces. And, of course, the universe is much bigger than the physical in many, many ways.

And when Jesus comes, and his tradition of teaching out of the Old Testament, we're dealing with a personal God, a personal God: someone who is made up of thoughts and feelings and choices. And, of course, there's a depth to God that we will never understand, but primarily, that's what it means. And so, as I say here, made up of thoughts, desires, feelings, evaluations, character, and these are powerful things. And the teaching of Jesus is that they are the MOST powerful things in the universe. How did God create? Speaking. "In the beginning was the word." [John 1:1] A word is personal. It's a person who speaks. Creation is by word. God, out of His infinite being, produced matter, produced a physical universe, with the laws that govern that physical universe, out of a personal act.

You produce things out of personal acts all the time. That's again the nature of human life: creative will. You do work, you produce, you're a person. And because you're a person that comes out of your thoughts, and your intentions, and your willings, and those are the most important things in your whole life.

That's where redemption really begins to move. That's where we begin to really come home, is when we realize the source of our life is in our heart, and we begin to change the heart by the grace of God. We open our heart to Jesus Christ, we say yes to Him in the depths of our being. We begin to say we really do want to be a different kind of person. That's what repentance is. Repentance comes at the point where you say, *"I really do want to be a different kind of person. I'm prepared to take the steps that are required to do that."*

That comes out of the center of the being.

God - the Father of Spirits

[28:40]

God, of course, is Father of spirits. He is the God of the spirits of all flesh. We ourselves are not physical beings, primarily because God uniquely creates a spiritual part of each one of us. When we are... when we come into existence, we come into existence with a body. But, our physical parents do not create our spirit: God creates our spirit. There are no unwanted children with God. They're all wanted. And every one of them God has a place for. And no matter what happens to them, after they come into existence, they are in God's hands. Every one of them. One of the most profound verses in all of the Bible is in Matthew 18 (v. 10), where Jesus says about little children, *"Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."*

See, this is a world filled of spiritual being. It is so great, it is so massive, and yet we are allowed to live in avoidance of it for a very important reason, God allows us to avoid it, for a while. The reality of the spiritual is all around us. It's all within us. And, yet, human beings remain busy trying to treat everything as physical.

So for example, we need to say what I say here on the sheet, you are not your brain. Because today, you're taught you are your brain, right? And many Christians think they are their brain. You're not your brain. The life you know to be your own, by your experience, has some relationship to your brain. Your brain is a relatively interesting piece of meat. But you are not your brain. And if you search your brain... if I wanted to get to know you, the last thing I should do is open up your head and look in your brain. I would

never find you there, I would never find one of your thoughts, none of your intentions, none of your habits, none of your emotions, I would never find them there. None of your memories. That's because they're not there.

God Inhabiting Space

[31:20]

And God inhabits space like we inhabit our bodies. You can't localize him in space, any more than you can localize yourself and your body. But you are there. If I pinch your toe, you feel it and you can speak to me. And if I want to meet you, then I come where your body is, and you manifest your presence to me. Or you may decide not to. See that's one of the things we do with our bodies is we hide in them. As we grow up, we learn how to hide in our bodies. Sometimes we hide so well, we can't even find ourselves and have to go pay someone \$150 an hour to help them find us. Then we're not for sure when we find us, whether that's us. Because we've spent so much time evading, and that's really the basic nature of the kind of difficulties that grow so deeply, that we become mentally ill is that we evade and split off and deceive ourselves and consequently we are lost. We don't even know who we are: our identity is lost.

You are an Unceasing Spiritual Being

[32:40]

Now then, if you look at the second sheet, then just as a summary on the next sheet over, this is a summary of who you are. You are a never ceasing spiritual being. A never ceasing spiritual being. You are never going to go out of existence. There's nothing you can do about it. See, the world has got it the other way around. You are going to go out of existence. And why don't you have your brain frozen so they can keep you until they can revive some... you know that story cryonics. All the crazy things people think about. No, the situation is this: you are never going to go out of existence. Never. You are an unceasing spiritual being. You're not going to go out of existence because God has plans for you. And he is invested in you. And he loves you. So your only option is to not love him and then you can avoid him, perhaps for eternity, but you will never stop existing. That's one of the things we need to think and think seriously about. We will never stop.

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

You are spiritual in substance.

You are never ceasing in duration.

You are ruling, creative governance in destiny.

That is your purpose.

It is to learn to rule and live with Christ and with God forever and forever.

I've included here a little quotation from CS Lewis. You may be familiar with it.

"There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures aren't civilizations, these are mortal. And their life is to ours as is the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit. Immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. Next to the blessed sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses."

And then the statement from Teilhard de Chardin,

*"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience,
we are spiritual beings having a human experience."*

~ ~ ~ End of 1A = Video 1 @ 35:18 ~ ~ ~

Dallas Willard related resources

- 1.) ["The Reality of Spirit Visible and Invisible,"](#) session 6 of the Denver Seminary Spiritual Formation Course on Dallas Willard Ministries YouTube channel.
- 2.) 30-minute session - [Reality of Spirit](#) (A/V) and [Slide Presentation](#) (PDF) on this Dallas teaching from Jesus College's 17-session course ["The Human Side of Holiness"](#).

Teaching 1 - Who You Are, Why You're Here, What's the Problem (continued)

TRANSCRIPTION [Why You are Here, What's the Problem \(1B\)](#) Video 2 [45:18]

[Outline provided by Dallas Willard Ministries \(4 pages\)](#)

And then the statement from Teilhard de Chardin,
*"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience,
we are spiritual beings having a human experience."*

The Kingdom of God

So now our life as a spiritual being is completed only by living in and from the Kingdom of God. We have much to say about the Kingdom of God tomorrow. But let me just say at this point, the kingdom of God is the effective range of his will. The Kingdom of God is where what is done is what God wants done. That's the kingdom of God.

Now you have a kingdom. God made you to have a kingdom again, that's his image in you. For example, if I were to walk over to this lady and take her purse and start going through it, how do you think she would feel? Violated. Why violated? Because I have invaded her kingdom...queendom. Okay? You see, every person has one. Every person has one. It begins from your body, it moves out. That is a part of your nature as God created you as a spiritual being. You have a kingdom. And if you take that away, you destroy you. Because that is what you are at the center of your being. And many of you have had your kingdoms violated. Some people have had them brutally violated, so much so that they no longer have walls to their self. And that's one thing that child abuse does is it breaks the walls of the self. And it's a terrible thing, that's why Jesus said what he did in Matthew 18 about harming children.

You have a kingdom. God has a kingdom. My kingdom is completed by bringing it into the kingdom of God. That's the only way it can be completed. A spiritual being, I am meant to live rooted in God. Faith in Jesus Christ is meant to bring me back to that. It is by trusting Jesus Christ who brings us into the rule of God and through our discipleship to him enables us to fulfill the covenant creation of Genesis for eternity.

Now some people have the idea, you know, you're gonna die and then you're gonna go off here to this kind of fog bank. You know, and you're gonna lie around in there forever. Just forget it. Not gonna be like that. God has created this great universe as a display of his spiritual being. And you are a

part of the display. You and I will stand through eternity and in the whole universe, as a testimony to the greatness and goodness of God.

Read Ephesians 3:10.

[So that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.]

That's what... that's, that's our calling. But we're not gonna do that I think by sitting in a trophy case. Kind of stuffed, spiritual trophy. We will do that by reigning with Him. Reigning with Him forever and ever. Reigning means exercising creative will with God in this universe.

See, matter, the destiny of matter is to reveal the nature of spirit. That means God. That's meant to be happening in us now. The highest manifestation of the nature of matter, yet explained and expressed in human history is the transfiguration of Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration and his resurrection body. That's the highest manifestation of the nature of matter.

Moses got close. Remember Moses when he went up on the mountain and stayed with God when they came back down they had to put a lampshade over his head just so they could talk to him because he was glowing.

Think about how much glory there is in the Scripture. *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of the Father, set your affections on things above not on things on the earth, for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall you also appear with him, glorious."* That's Colossians 3:4. [v. 1-4 are quoted] You may want to look at it. For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. See, we are a people of glory. And of course the first part of the word glory is glow, isn't it? You ever hear old preachers say "glowry". You hear that? They got it right. "Glowry." So our life is fulfilled when we come into contact with that.

Indicators of the Visible World

[5:57]

Now the next page in your notes "Indicators of the visible world". I don't want to spend a lot of time on. If it were a philosophy course, I'd have spent more time on that than anything else, of course. But I'm assuming here that it will be of help to you to just sort of indicate some of this.

1.) Because you see, The nature of the spirit is that it does not push itself. now your spirit, do you like to show up where you're not wanted? No, you don't want to show up where you're not wanted. Why is that? Your spirit. In fact, where you really like to show up is where you really are wanted, isn't

that right? And so the prophet says, "If you seek me with all your heart, you will surely find me." [Jeremiah 29:13]

*"Great Caesar's bust is on the shelf,
And I don't feel so well myself."*

[["On the Vanity of Earthly Greatness"](#) poem by Arthur Guiterman]

That's corruption.

2.) The dependent nature of the physical world well, a lot could be said: great events and people are occasions when the Spirit of God shows up in history.

3.) The power of beauty, beauty is manifest goodness and beauty as a witness to another world, a world in which there's God, that's why we love it so much. And that's why people who lose their faith in God often wind up worshiping beauty. And that's very common in high cultures: they lose their faith in God, they wind up worshiping beauty. Of course, beauty, while it is good, and a testimony to God, is non redemptive. In the Kingdom of God it is a great redemptive force.

4.) Self awareness. You're just simply aware of yourself, when you're aware of yourself, you're aware of the spiritual. Now you're not aware of God unless He is living in you. But that's the possibility. On the other hand, you may just be aware of the spiritual nature of your own being. You are spiritual, that is a witness to the spiritual.

This, by the way, is where our education system and our culture works so strongly against the spiritual understanding, the right understanding of the gospel and human life, because it insists that you're not spiritual, you're physical. And indeed, in our time, spirituality is increasingly interpreted as some sort of natural manifestation.

We just lived through Earth Day, for example. And while that's basically not a bad idea, still, you find many people worshipping the earth. And some of us were driving over here the other day and saw this bumper sticker, "The earth is your mother." Not my mother! I know who my mother was, and it isn't the earth. And so that tendency to interpret the spirit naturally comes to a head in the self understanding of the human being in the academic context which dominates our world. The ideas that dominate our world now come out of the academic context. The universities stand as the authority centers in our culture.

5.) And then finally, the experience of co-working with God. This is the, this is for the... for the Christian, this is one of the most immediate and tangible

ways of knowing the reality of the Spirit. Paul says in Romans 8, *"As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God."* [v. 14] See he's talking about living a life in which there's something moving in you that is not of the physical realm: The Spirit of God. Paul says, "You're the temple, your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." He's not just whistling Dixie, when he says that, you know. He means something.

Now go back and say 'what is spirit?', you see, and fill it in the way I've put it. And you realize there is now moving in you something that is not of you. That's the reality of God. Then you begin to see it moving around you, you see. When Jesus brings us into the Kingdom of God, then we begin to minister from that kingdom, out of the reality of the Kingdom of God, we begin to see things happen, that are not in our power. See, that's co-laboring with God. That's a testimony to the reality of the spirit. That's why those who really walk in confidence in Jesus Christ know they have a life, which will never end is because they're already involved in it. It's already intermingled with what they do. And the invitation to, *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then all of these things will be added"*, [Matthew 6:33] see, that's just an invitation to take that into everything we do by making first.

Seeking the Kingdom of God First

[11:22]

How do you seek the Kingdom of God? Well, you look at what God is doing, and you get involved with it. First of all, of course, in the person of Christ, but also far beyond what we would identify as his work in the fields of science, and business, and medicine, and education, and the church, and all of the things that go on in human life. We look to see what is God doing. And then we identify with that. And we begin to walk in the yoke of Jesus in those places, you see, and co-laboring with God is a primary way in which we come to know the reality of the spiritual.

Review: Who? & Why?

[12:10]

Well turn your page one time, one. This is the... this is the most messy page! And and now we really have got to begin to move over to the other side of our talk and finish up here. Let me just say that... sum up:

~ Who are we? We are unceasing spiritual beings with an eternal destiny in God's universe.

~ Why are we here? We are here to become the person God wanted us to be. That's what our life is about. And we're given a body. And we're given a social context. We are here to become the person God wanted us to be.

The Six Dimensions of the Whole Person

[12:55]

[Heart, Mind (Thoughts & Feelings), Body, Social Context, and Soul]

And He made us with many aspects and if you look at this messy little diagram now here for a moment.

[Diagram: *Renovation of the Heart*, p. 34, 2021 edition; p. 38, 2002 ed.]

[This teaching was four years before *Renovation of the Heart*.]

I have tried to use the circles to indicate the more and more inclusive parts of the self. Please notice at the bottom, the unit of analysis is the person: one person in many aspects, parts and abilities. You are not your soul, you're not your heart, you're not your body, you're not your emotions, you are you. And you have all of these abilities.

The Functioning of the Whole Person [13:27] - And at the center of your life, is your **spirit**, which is your **heart** or **will**. That's the center of your being. I call this the executive center of the self. Now when you come into existence, you don't have much of one. You don't have much of a **will**. You've got a little bit, but not much. Mostly what moves you as a tiny baby is out here in the domain of your **body**, and your **mind** - your thoughts and your feelings, and that begins to move you. But as you grow, you develop a capacity to will and you develop a character. And that governs your life through your **mind** and your **thought** and your **feelings**. And basically what you do is you turn more and more of your life over to your **body** and your **social context** to run.

~ The Problem with Our Beings [14:23] - Now think about that, because that is a key to understanding our problem. Our problem is going to be that we are spiritual beings with this destiny, but we don't live like it. And in particular, we fall away from God, and our moral direction, our personal direction falls into confusion. And you only have to look around you in the newspapers and in life today to see how incredibly confused it is.

~ The Disappearance of Moral Knowledge [14:55] - See, there's not a single thing in your culture today that can be taught as moral truth and a student graded on it. Not a single thing. And I work with this stuff all the time in universities and elsewhere, and I put that challenge to audiences all the time. It's always true. You could never grade a student on whether or not it was right to lie to your mother. If you graded them, and they said, even they

said it's true and you thought it was false, you graded it off or graded it up, you grade them on something like that, if they go talk to the dean, the dean will say, "Now Now Now professor, we don't want to force our opinions on our students". And if the dean doesn't say that, a judge soon would. See, that's our system. We are in total confusion about this.

So you in your homes, you try to teach your children what's right and wrong. They go out in the world, they learn that was just mama's ideas. And we're in total confusion on this and the **social** realm and the **bodily** realm come to dominate life. And that is primarily where sin comes to dwell and soaks into the whole person, of course, the heart gives it permission, because it turns away from God.

~ The Soul Described [16:27] And then the **soul** is the part of the self that runs the whole person. I've given you a statement about the soul on the next page. It is the principle of unity, interrelating all of our feelings, sensations, evaluations, representations, concepts, beliefs, conations, willings, character, including those that involve our body, and the social context. That's your soul.

And to have a lost soul is to have a soul that is out of touch with God, and out of touch with reality, and the whole person is out of control. That's a lost soul. The person doesn't know where they're going, or how they're going to get there. They're lost. "What shall it profit a man", Jesus said, "if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" [Matthew 16:26] Among other things, if he does gain the whole world and lose his soul, he won't know what to do with the world he's gained. And aren't we surrounded by people very close to that? I mean, we have a lot of people in our culture who have pretty well gained the world. How many of them would you change souls with? Think about it. The [Howard Hugheses](#) and people like that are perhaps a kind of an extreme, but it's a tough price to pay.

Now the soul makes one life out of the many elements, and it is a substance in the classical sense of being enduring through time and change with its own qualities and powers and so on. It has causal powers. It is a spiritual substance. Your soul is a part of you. You have a part of you that is a soul. And if it wasn't for that, nothing else would work. And many times the things that go wrong with our bodies are soul things, not physical things. That... I don't, I mean, I could spend a lot of time talking about that, illustrating it, but I, I just have to leave that at that because it's really true, especially in the area of mental illness.

As really Freud, he wasn't wrong about everything, wrong about a lot of things, but he understood this stuff about the soul. He didn't know what to do with it. But he knew that it was there. He knew there was something called the soul, and he tried to atomize it and, and went wrong in a lot of ways, but he followed the wisdom of the ages. Because that wisdom of Freud comes all the way down from the Bible, and Plato. There is a soul.

~ The Loss of the Soul and Self in Today's Culture [19:13] - Now you see, the normal person today does not believe there's a soul, out in the culture, there is no place for the understanding of the soul. That's why our understanding of human life is in such a mess. All of our professions are in crisis over the issue of the knowledge of the human self. They're all in crisis: education, law, medicine itself. And we're just blindly struggling along. Because you see, we have set ourselves to understand the human self in ways that are inapplicable. We're trying to understand the human self, without the categories that would actually deal with it. And these are primarily the spiritual, and the soul-ish - the psychological in the sense of the soul-ish.

~ The Absence of Understanding Sin [20:10] - And we have no place for the understanding of sin. Paul, and the biblical writers, and many writers since, have understood that you have to have the concept of sin to understand society. And that's one reason... you know, imagine a farmer trying to farm without recognizing that there are weeds. That's the situation we're in.

We cannot recognize the things that are governing human life because we don't have the right categories.

~ Why is this important? [20:48] You say, why am I talking to you about this? Why not save this for philosophy courses? Because this is the heart of your understanding of your own life and faith. If we're going to come to the place to where we can gently, strongly, intelligently walk in the ways of the kingdom of Christ, we have I have to understand this.

Why? Because the soul is something we have to take care of.

And the center... right in the center of your **soul**, is your **heart**. Proverbs 3:24, I think it is, 4:23 [Proverbs 4:23], you can find it, *"Keep your heart with all diligence. For out of it flows, your life."* Your life comes out of that center, see, we are the ones, we have to take charge of that.

~ The Problem of Passivity in Believers [21:45] - And one of the greatest problems that we have now in evangelical and conservative circles, which

really are much broader now than a lot of people who even go to church. You have a lot of people in this country today who believe essentially evangelical conservative truth, but they're alienated from the church. Because many times they've gone to church, and it's left them empty and irrelevant and, and so they've wandered off, you see, so you have a huge segment of our culture. And many people they believe, oh, God loves them, they believe that salvation is by grace through faith, they believe that but they never go to church. And those people are often caught in the same trap as many people who do go to church, namely, they believe that whatever's going to be done is going to be done to them. They're going to be passive. We Southern Baptists not only believe you're saved by grace we believe you're paralyzed by it. And so you just come and be passive.

Why are We Here?

[22:52]

And that's... but it won't happen that way. You see, we have to understand this little diagram, in order to know where we must take hold of our life, by grace, indeed, through faith in Jesus Christ, and begin to change into His likeness.

The aim of God in placing us in this world is that we should become people that he could empower to do what we want to do.

I'm gonna say it again. Because it's likely to meet some mental resistance, and that's fine. You know, I don't... I'm not here to just say, you know, "believe this". I want you to think about it because things like this only make a difference if they come from the inside. I'll say that again. Okay, I've said who we are.

Why are we here? We're here to become the person God meant us to be.

Who is the person God meant us to be?

A person that He could empower to do what we want to do.

Now you say, I'm going to have to have a good deal of work on my 'wanter' before I can, that can happen, right? That's right. That's exactly right. But let me ask you: You have children? Wouldn't it be your greatest joy, to enable them to do what they want to do? That's what we want isn't it?

[St. Irenaeus](#), (125-202 A.D.) the great old Christian in Southern France in the earliest, earliest century said, "the glory of God is a human being who is fully alive." The glory of God is a human being who is fully alive.

Jesus Fully Alive Making Us Fully Alive

[24:44]

Now the only one we've seen like that yet is Jesus. I mean, he was fully alive. You want to describe Jesus? He was a human fully alive. That's what he was. He was God's unique Son, and in Him, they went together, they fitted together. The glory of God is a human being fully alive. That's what you and I are called to. And that means, very simply, God wants to bring us to the point to where our 'wanters' would be so well aligned with his, that anything we want to do, we would have the power to do from Him. Now until that happens, He, in His mercy, prevents us from having the power.

And I have prayed all of my life that God would never give me more power than my character could bear. Sometimes God does that because He has something that He needs to do. And if you want to see how that works, read the story of Samson. [Judges 16] Samson is paradigmatic in biblical terms of the person who had more power than his character could stand. But God had a need, and I'm sure God can take care of Samson. God had a need, and it was in that particular time that Samson was given more power than he could stand.

Do you know that that happens today all the time? I constantly have to deal with people who were converted under someone who has, as we say, "has fallen." And they often say, "what are we to do?" You know, they're very confused. Now they shouldn't be, but they are because often they have been led to believe that somehow being converted by this man went into the depths of their souls. And of course it didn't. God used that man. Isn't it wonderful that God doesn't limit himself to using people who are perfect? But there's a balance there. And I've always prayed that God would never give me more power than my character could stand. You see, Newton's third law, "to every action, there's an equal and opposite reaction", applies in the spiritual realm. If you exercise power, the power is going to come against you. And that's where we have to have the character.

The Dimension of the Body

[27:30]

Now just finally this evening, let's look at our body and its role. Because we need first of all, to understand something very important about our body, it is good. Our body is not bad. It's good. And God has given it to us for a specific purpose, and that purpose is so that we could act and have a life that is even at variance with His. God gives us the power to act contrary to His will. If He didn't, we wouldn't do it, right? Right.

I mean, it's only because God gives us the power to tell a lie that we tell a lie. Right? I mean, suppose every time we started the lie, we got lock jaw. You think God could arrange that? Sure. Sure. But He would never get honest people that way. You'd never get honest people. He has to allow people to lie, if they choose, in order to get honest people.

So how can they do that? You see your body and my body, our body is our little power pack that God has given us to live from. A body is, in general, potential energy, isn't it? It's potential energy. And in that energy, we are even able to defy God. And that is necessary in order that we should become a person, and it is necessary specifically for us to become the particular person that we shall be for eternity. That's the role of the body. And it's important then that the body be the sort of thing that we can live with and in and our body has a life of its own, you see.

For example, when you learn to speak a language, you're basically training your body to speak, so you won't have to think about it. Or if you learn to drive a car, you're dangerous for a while, because you have to think about it. And, interestingly enough, you're safer when you don't have to think about it. And our body is meant to bear the out workings of our character and our choices so that we automatically do the things that need to be done. Bicycle riding, roller skating, conversation. See, it's all like that. Our body takes over.

Now the problem is that our body has come to be inhabited with what is wrong. And so now we go back to my earlier statement: people want to do good, but they're ready to do evil. [[Video 1A](#) @ 23:07] And where is that readiness? It's primarily in their bodies. Now the flesh is not inherently bad. But when the flesh has been formed by the wrong things, then it automatically does what is wrong. And that is why people remain locked into their habits that keep them from God.

Now that's true of you and me. Okay? All of the good resolves that you might have, the desires you might have to obey Christ and so on, I want to tell you simply you can do those things. God will enable you to do them, but in order for you to do that, then you have to train your body, you have to learn how to live in the social context in such a way that you will do those things.

Peter's Denial - Matthew 26:31-35

[31:16]

Let's take a well known illustration now from the scriptures, and that is the case of Peter. You look on the next page, 'Peter's Denial'. I mean, the

teaching here is so deep because Jesus told Peter and the other disciples what was going to happen. Now I'm assuming you all know these stories pretty well. But you remember that Jesus did tell Peter, "you're going to deny me" and Peter said, "I'm not going to deny you". And Jesus said "before you deny me three times the cock will crow", or the cock will... How does that work? Do I know the story?! That's the next question [Dallas chuckles and the group laughs].

"Before the cock will crow, you will deny me three times". [v. 34] And Peter said, "No". Do you think Peter meant not to deny him? Yes, he did. And Jesus was trying to help him because you know, you tell the person what's going to happen, you might say, well, they will guard against it. But this is a lesson for all of us and a deep lesson, of course, for Peter. Peter, in the social context, a little girl said, "you're one of them". "Oh, no, no, no." Now you might think at that point, he would have said, "what Jesus said was going to happen is happening". But he didn't. Where did that come from? That came from his body. You see, his body was ready to deny Jesus. His body did not consult his intentions, and say, "shall we now deny him"? He told them, they all would run, when they came to get "oh, no, we'll not run, we'll die for you!" And when they came, the legs took off and took the rest of the person with them. That's how the body works.

The Body's Design by God

[33:30]

Now first of all, that's not a bad arrangement. That's a God- given arrangement. We could not live unless our bodies were capable of having that kind of life on their own. Our problem is that our bodies have been trained in the wrong way, it's got the wrong life. Flesh, which is... flesh is nothing but the natural abilities of human beings. And those are good, but they're meant to be subordinate to God. And our flesh has become inhabited with what is wrong. And so it's so easy to lie under pressure.

Lying to People as Trained in our Bodies

[34:13]

I remember I had to go through a period of time when I had the discipline of returning to people I lied to to tell them I lied to them. Do you think that helped me? I'll tell you it helped me. You know the story of the little girl in Sunday school, asked what a lie is, replies, "It is an abomination to God, and a very present help in time of trouble!" [Laughter]. We all know that, right? And for every one of us here, you know, it would be a serious matter to say "Now I am never going to lie again". And it's something of a comfort to say, "I can't do that, it's hopeless". Because then, of course, you can keep that

door open. But suppose you wanted to learn how to not do it. Could you do it? Yes, you could, you see.

But the trouble is that we are so trained, I'm just amazed at how people assume that I will lie. I'd go to travel agents and, I had recently had... my sister died some time back and I was talking to the travel agent and some airlines, you know, give special rates to the immediate family to fly back to the funeral. And there was one of our family that was not immediate family and we wanted them to go and she just assumed that the thing to do was say that they are members of the immediate family. Several hundred dollars at issue, right? I mean, normal people seem to struggle over that and many Christians struggle. That comes from their body. That comes from the way they've been taught to live in their world. And that's the way the body works.

Proper and Improper Subordination to God

[36:15]

~ Proper Subordination - Well, I want to have a few moments for questions. So let me just rush on here and look at the next two pages. One has the proper subordination and the improper, on the next page there. This is how God intended for us to line up.

1st - We should line up with God at the top

2nd - Human spirit next, this would be related to God, the word of the gospel now for us who are redeemed that has come in and brought us back here.

3rd - And then our soul would be directed by our human spirit under God.

4th - And our body would be directed by our soul.

~ Improper Subordination - Now the improper subordination is, of course, the one that normally dominates, the body is first. And, folks, I mean, I don't mean to be mean, but you just compare how much time you spend taking care of your body as compared to how much time you spend taking care of your spirit and soul you might be surprised. You see the body is first. That's why death is treated as an ultimate in human life, because the body is first.

Jesus said, *"Don't pay attention to those who can destroy the body."*

[Matthew 10:28] He was very cavalier about all this, you know? He said, don't worry about that. See, he knew what I'm talking to you about tonight. He understood all of this. It was clear to him. And so, you know... The guy hanging next to him on the cross. Jesus is so generous, isn't he? And the guy hanging there looking at him says, "Lord, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." And he just says, "Okay, today you will be with me in

Paradise." He didn't say, "well, let's see, how's your theology? You got it, you got it, right? You pass the test?" No, no. "Today you will be with me in paradise." And paradise is no slouch. It's a good place, it's not a foggy place, it's a clear place it's a good place to be. The generosity of Jesus, you see, because he had all of this lined up straight.

~ And we don't have, we put the body first, and we're in real trouble.

~ Then our soul next. I wish I had time to talk more at length about these. But I hope you get the idea of the soul next, our whole being, and then our spirit, our will comes under the soul, under the body. And then God is our butler. That's called idolatry.

So you can see how things are out of kilter. Before redemption our body, not God, is running or ruining our lives. The body is governed by the three great things in the world: the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. [I John 2:16] And take that tomorrow and go watch people, and see if that is not true: The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life.

Five Dimensions of Eternal Life

[39:38]

Now I don't want to leave you with that note, I want to leave you with the final page there the next page, and we'll just not do the last one,
Five Dimensions of our Eternal Kind of Life.

1.) Faith - You see, we are meant to enter now into faith or reliance on Christ. We are not called upon to be perfect. We are we can bring our sins and we can bring all that we are to Christ, and He accepts us. That's what it means that God loves us. That's what it means that Christ died for us. That Christ died for us, He accepts me. The greatest thing I can pray for any of my children or loved ones is that they would sense the acceptance of Jesus. That's the greatest thing I can pray for, is that they would know that Jesus Christ loves them, that God loves them through Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ has come to bring them to God and that He accepts them. See, Jesus came, he said, "I did not come into the world to condemn the world but that the world might be saved". [John 3:17] And so we come in faith.

2.) Disciples (Apprentices) of Jesus - And then on the basis of that faith, we naturally become disciples of Jesus. We continue in his Word, we learn how to practice, that leads to obedience. Obedience is not first, it comes as a result of faith and discipleship.

3.) Obedience - Strangely enough, obedience does come kind of jerky but it comes before inner transformation is complete. But that is, finally, the root of obedience.

4.) Inner Transformation - The fruit of the Spirit [Galatians 5:22-23] - love, joy, peace, long suffering, that's what we're looking for, folks. We are wanting the inner being to be renewed, so that love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, kindness, meekness, faith... Paul says, wryly, he says, "There is no law against them", in Galatians 5, "no law against them." [v. 23]

5.) Power - As that comes, power comes with it. Power comes to accomplish the work of God in ways that we cannot on our own. [The power of grace.] We need that, you see, we need that in our, in our churches, in our communities, in our life, we need to see the power of God flowing because neither the individual nor the community is meant to live on its own power.

As we were meant to live, rooted in God, and God gave us the creation covenant, and set us on this earth and made it beautiful and good, a good God, who looked at His good earth and said, "That's good, that's really good". [Genesis 1:10] I like that verse. He looked at it and says, "That's good! That's good". And he put us on here to live in righteousness and joy before Him and to act in the power that He has, and that He wants to share with us. See, all of that can be restored, it will be restored eventually.

The issue is simply...

How are we going to live with it now?

How are we going to go to the future?

And, of course, many people are going to decide, "I don't want to be that way. I don't want to be God's person." And that's their decision. Not His decision. It's their decision.

But those who, "yes, I want to be God's person", faith in Jesus Christ leads through these steps, they're not wholly distinct, and once the faith of Christ is imparted to us, then we become active in steps 2-5, and we learn to follow Jesus into his practices, and as we do that, we come to the fullness of life, which Jesus Christ intended for all of us.

Fullness of Life not Religion *"Life is here!"* [43:45]

Now just this final comment. That fullness of life is not a religious thing. It's not a religious thing, it's a life thing. Jesus didn't come and say, "I have come to bring you religion, and that more abundantly". He said, "I have come to bring life". [John 10:10] It's a life thing.

See, the world has it all wrong about life, and its heart-sickening and crushing to see how people are destroyed by the wisdom of the ungodly. Life is here. And when I speak about this, I'm speaking about what you do in your job, in your life, dealing with your body, with your family, with your community, with work to be done, with all of the things. You see, you and I can learn to deal with every bit of that in the power of God, every bit of it.

That's who we are.
That's why we're here.
That's what's the problem.
And that's the solution.

Closing Prayer

[45:02]

Lord, give us wisdom and grace to understand these words now. And help us to work on them in such a way that they will become as real as you are in fact.

In Jesus name, Amen.

~ ~ ~ End of 1B = Video 2 @ 45:19 ~ ~ ~

Dallas Willard related resources

1.) Renovation of the Heart (13 sessions) - "The Six Dimensions of the Whole Person"

["Spiritual Formation & Thought Life"](#) Video 6 [01:00-11:04]

["Spiritual Formation & Feelings"](#) Video 7 [01:00-10:15]

["Transforming the Will"](#) Video 8 [01:00-0:09:30]

["Transforming the Body"](#) Video 9 [01:00-10:40]

["Transforming Our Social Dimension"](#) Video 10 [01:00-10:30]

["Transforming The Soul"](#) Video 11 [01:00-10:30]

Source - conversatio.org/renovationoftheheart

~ ~

The Human Side of Holiness, 17-session teaching

2.) ["The Human System Six Dimensions"](#) session 3 [39:50-50:30]

3.) [Who are You and Why are You Here?](#) session 7 [6:30=12:20]

The 17-session course from Jesus College --> [The Human Side of Holiness](#)

Teaching 2 - Getting the Good News Right

TRANSCRIPTION of [Getting the Gospel Right \(2A\)](#) Video 3 [19:12]

[Outline provided by Dallas Willard Ministries \(2A\)](#) (2 pages)

Introduction and Review of Teaching 1

Who You are, Why You are Here and What's the Problem

I hope we can carry on with the teaching and that it will be a blessing to you. Just a few reminders about what we said last night. Last night we talked about who you are, and why you are here, and what's the problem.

~ Who You Are - Unceasing Spiritual Beings

And just to remind us, *'We are unceasing spiritual beings with an eternal destiny in God's universe.'* That's who we are. And I wanted to just give you some verses in Ephesians on that I referred to last night, and didn't spend any time on them, and I'm not going to spend any time on that today, but I want to read them to you. And now as my background is a Baptist, we thought Ephesians began at Ephesians 2:8: *"For by grace you have been saved through faith."* And then one day I discovered there was something before that: *"and the marvelous richness of God's mercy;"* and verse four of Ephesians 2, *"even when you were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved, and raised us up with Him and seated us with him in heavenly places"* -- notice that that is past tense: 'seated'; and the heavenly places are not away off somewhere, they're right here. We'll say more about that later. *"In Jesus Christ."* And notice this verse, here's the 'in order to:' *"in order that in the ages to come"* -- Now ages refers to a plural, that's a plural, so there are periods, long periods of time, different ones out ahead of us, through which we will be progressing -- and in all of those ages, *"he might show the surpassing richness of his grace, in kindness towards us, in Christ Jesus."* I like to put that just saying the English of which is that everyone might know who God is, they might know who he is. The self-revelation of God in Christ continues through Christ's people for ages.

Show to whom? Look at verse 10, of chapter three: *"in order that the manifold wisdom of God might be made known through the church, to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places."* You see, we're just ... when people wonder whether or not there's life somewhere else, you know, you just think, 'Why don't they try reading the book on the subject?' I mean, the universe is full of life, it's full of life. And show to whom? Show to the

other beings which fill the universe, creations of God, that they all might know, by looking at the ecclesia, the church, the manifold wisdom of God, you see.

~ *Why You are Here - Training to Reign with Christ* [3:40]

And then another verse that I just referred to last evening, which is Revelation 22:5: *"And there shall no longer be any night, and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp, nor the light of the sun, because the Lord shall illumine them, and they shall reign forever and ever, through the ages of the ages."*

Now some of you may already be a little tired thinking about that. Think, 'How are we going to go on like that?' Well, we're not going to go on in our present condition where we are in fact mainly dependent upon this body for our energy. There won't be any health food stores then. The source of energy will be different, and our bodies will run on a different principle. So you will not know weariness, and you will not know the burden that we carry in our finite existence where we are operating from our body. We can begin to know the strength of God that we will live by, we can begin to know that even Now and that is a part of what we are learning here as we are 'training to reign' with Christ Jesus, you see.

~ *Developing the Character Welcomed in God's World* [5:15]

Now that's what we're here for: we're here to develop the character to live in God's world, and to reign with him forever and ever. And some people are not developing that character, and they're trying to be God themselves. They don't want God to be God, they want to be God. And they will not humble themselves and receive the gift of grace in Christ Jesus, and so they're developing a character which will make them eternal misfits in God's world. And that's a serious thing to think about. We need to remember that when we're dealing with one another, and with others outside the church, and with our loved ones, we want to remember that there is a destiny, and it's a serious thing. You see, you don't hear much preaching about hell or much about heaven today. And partly it's because it has become incomprehensible, and people get balled up in questions like, you know, 'In hell, well, are there rotisseries in hell?' Something like that. And, you know, just don't worry about the furniture, just just understand there is the destiny. And this is a serious, serious issue. And the life that comes in Jesus Christ is the way to a character that will be welcomed in God's world, and will feel right at home in letting God be God. And we'll be able to move into the larger scene and become eternally what God wants them to be, what God made them to be. That's the nature of the human self.

~ *Recognizing the Greatness of the Soul Under God* [7:10]

So, Now then the quotation from C.S. Lewis last night. [[Video 1A](#) @ 34:28]

["There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures aren't civilizations, these are mortal. And their life is to ours as is the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit. Immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. Next to the blessed sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses."]

I hope you've had time to meditate about that if you hadn't seen it -- because you see, we really are dealing ... when we deal with one another, this is something big. And it's not ... you can't tell it by looking at the body. Right? I know some little women that pray for me with my wife -- she has a group that pray for me -- and I'll tell you, these little women, they have souls that are so big, and they are going to be giants in the next world. And this is what we want to get into that today because this is Jesus's teaching about 'the first shall be last and the last shall be first.' And the folks that look big in this world probably aren't going to be that big in the next world. And we make judgments about this that are misleading. And in the church, we often elevate people that shouldn't be elevated ... well, we shouldn't be in the business of elevating people anyway. It just should be ... we just should leave that alone. That's God's business. We should not make distinctions. We should accept what ... and this is New Testament teaching. I don't have time to go into it today, but you understand, I trust. We simply don't make those distinctions. We recognize the greatness of the soul under God, and we stand in awe of it.

And once you do that, you'll never be troubled with gossiping again. You'll never be troubled ... you'll never be troubled with mean-spirited judgment and criticism again. You will be free to speak what needs to be spoken, but it will be done in a way that's entirely different, and all meanness will go out of your life, and out of your fellowship, because you will know whom you are dealing with. And you will understand in yourself that same being, and you will learn to respect and love yourself, and to take your place as a finite being under God. And one thing you'll stop doing is making yourself miserable over how you failed and all the work you didn't get done. Because God put us in a world where other people are supposed to do things, and one of the things that causes us most trouble is we start trying to do what other people are supposed to be doing. We have to be real careful about that.

~ *What's the Problem? The Body Trained by Sin* [9:42]

Well then just to review, what's the problem? The problem is that we have been given a body—and God gave it to us as an integral part of our

personality and it's a wonderful good thing—and by and large, even in the worst cases, it works pretty well, but it is also inhabited by sin. "Sin lives in our members." [Romans 7:23] And I just give you a word here from Galatians ... Galatians 5:16 and following. This is a passage everyone should memorize to the end of that chapter. *"I say to you walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh."* You want to understand that 'the flesh' has its desires. That's not to say that the flesh is different from the person; the person is a whole, and the flesh is a part of that whole. The flesh has its desires, and verse 17, *"The flesh sets its desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."* The things you really intend to do, you don't do them.

And the teaching last night dwelt upon this fact that our actions are, by and large, ready to go in our body, and the problem is, since our body is designed to act immediately—you know, we have to act immediately, and it's built by God that way—when it is formed in things that are wrong, it does that immediately. And then, before you think about it, you have done what you didn't want to do. Is there anyone here ever had that experience? I've had that experience. Before I think about it, I've done what I didn't want to do. And then I have to decide what I'm going to do about it.

Now of course, the way to deal with it is to stop then, confess it to others if need be, to God certainly, find out why you did it. Now we're going to be talking about this in detail - learn how we can come to act immediately in other ways. And as I said last evening, what we want to do is to go from the position that Jesus and Paul both analyzed so thoroughly, where the spirit is willing -- the heart, the inside, the mind, maybe even out into dimensions of the soul, very likely parts of our bodily and social behavior, *"the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."* [Matthew 26:41]

What does it mean, 'The flesh is weak?' It simply means that we are still in our embodied condition ready to do what is wrong. And we tried to illustrate this with the disciples, and with Peter. [Video 1 (part 2) @ 31:16] It's a very common sort of thing. That is the problem, and of course ... Now this means not that there's something wrong with our flesh, apart from the whole person; I say again, the whole person is what we're talking about. And we have the option of receiving the word of the gospel, a new life, that gives us a new place to stand, and not just repenting of our sins over and over and over and over, but finding out how we can do differently. And by the grace of God, putting that into action in such a way that instead of the readiesses to do wrong, Now there inhabits our body readiesses to do right.

That wonderful woman that is discussed at the end of the book of Proverbs, you remember one of the phrases there is, *"the law of kindness is in her tongue."* [Proverbs 31:26] The law of kindness is in her tongue. That's where you want the law of kindness: you want it in her tongue, not in her head, but in her tongue. Not in her mind, not even in her spirit, you want it in her tongue. Of course, the only way it can be in her tongue is if it is in her spirit, and she has come to subject her whole personality to kindness, so that now she is a kind person.

Now see, we all know people who mean to be kind, but they can't because they've got a different law in their tongue, or perhaps in their eyebrows, or their shoulders. You know, body language really does say it. And when we are not permeated by the law of kindness, no matter how much we want to be kind, we will be mean. It's just that simple.

And so now that's what we need to talk about, folks, is how to deal with all of that. And we want to understand, as we approach this Now that all of the wonderful things that we read in the scripture -- in Paul's great prayers for his people; in 1 Corinthians 13, the love chapter; in Matthew 5, Jesus's teachings about *"the righteousness beyond the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees"* [Matthew 5:20] — all of that is for us. It's for us.

And now you say, 'Well, do you mean we're going to be perfect?' It'll probably be a few months before you have to worry about that. And I suspect, no matter how far you go, you could you still find room for improvement. But you know, there's a long way between perfection and where most of us are living. There's a lot of room there for improvement, you know, without becoming worried about perfection. And it won't threaten God, no matter how much better we get. He will be very comfortable with that, I assure you. And so let's just remember that these words are for us. And I'm tempted to take time to just look at some of them, but I think I'd better not. I think perhaps you know them well. If you just remember 1 Corinthians 13, or Matthew 5 ... and we will be looking at Matthew 5 later on in the day.

The Hopeless Futility of Life Apart from God [16:45]

Now then this morning... Well, I wanted to just read you a few words of comparison. These are from the philosopher by the name of Arthur Schopenhauer. And compare this now to the vision that I've been giving you. Here's what Arthur says,

"It is really incredible how meaningless and insignificant, when seen from without, and how dull and senseless when felt from within, is the course of life of the majority of men. It is weary longing and worrying; a dream-like

staggering through the ages from life to death, accompanied by a series of trivial thoughts. They're like clockwork that is wound up and goes without knowing why. Every time a man is begotten and born, the clock of human life has wound up anew to repeat once more the same old tune that has already been played innumerable times. Movement by movement, measure by measure, with insignificant variations. Every individual, every human apparition, and its course of life, is only one more short dream in the endless spirit of nature; of the persistent will to live. The whole will to life in all of its intensity, with its many deep sorrows, and finally with a bitter death, long feared, and finally made manifest."

Now actually, that is the vision that possesses most of the popular arts today. And if you've listened to music, and if you can understand the words, you'll find that this is what it's saying. The hopelessness of life lived with just the individual person the center of focus. And Schopenhauer, and other philosophers, have long known this, of course.

But, often we don't recognize the futility of life apart from life in God, and we need to recognize it, and we need to see it for what it is, because that's a part of what keeps us locked into this losing battle with our flesh when we're apart from God.

~ ~ ~ End of 2A = Video 3 @ 19:12 ~ ~ ~

Teaching 2 - Getting the Good News Right (continued)

TRANSCRIPTION of [Getting the Gospel Right \(2B\)](#) Video 4 [45:23]

[Outline provided by Dallas Willard Ministries \(2B\)](#) (3 pages)

Introduction - *Getting the Gospel Right*

But now let me just turn now to the topic for this first hour, and that is 'Getting the Gospel Right' — getting the good news right; the gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

~ The Gospel through John Wesley - And on your page I have prefaced the notes this morning with a quote from John Wesley. Wesley preached a gospel that revolutionized people's lives, and he preached the availability of Christ to the individual, and he preached it in such a way that it was a whole life gospel; every bit of the life was welcomed into the power of God and into the Kingdom of God.

And a man who was depressed and unhappy came to him and said, "I understand you have good news for people." And this is his reply:

"I do preach to as many as desire to hear every night and morning." And he did. "You ask what I would do with them? I would make them virtuous and happy, easy in themselves, and useful to others. Whither would I lead them to heaven, to God the judge, the lover of all, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. What religion do I preach? I preach the religion of love, the law of kindness brought to light in the Gospel. What is it good for? It is good to make those who receive it enjoy God in themselves; to make them like God, lovers of all, contented in their lives, and crying out at their death in calm assurance, 'Oh grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God who gives me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ.'"

God bless old John Wesley, he had such a marvelous way of putting things. But you will notice that his way of putting it, the gospel he preached was directed at the transformation of human character in life; the total transformation of human character in life. And the Wesleyans — John Wesley and those who followed him, and worked with him — created a marvelous movement of the power of God across the earth, and in some places that still carries on.

Jesus' Gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens¹ [2:30]

That's what we need to capture, is a gospel which will do this. And Jesus preached a gospel which would do it. And the gospel of Jesus preached is contained in capsule form in the simple words that you find in Matthew

4:17: "Repent, for the Kingdom of the Heavens is now available." Repent, for the Kingdom of the Heavens is now available. The Jews knew what the 'Kingdom of the Heavens' was. It was the Kingdom of God. They called it the 'Kingdom of the Heavens' because they experienced it around them in space. Now this is one of those points I more or less have to just throw out and let you work with it, but I encourage you to go back and read your Old Testament and see where the covenant people experienced God. And you will find that they experienced him right here around them in space.

Now there were three heavens in the Jewish structure, seven on some of them, but three, basically.

1.) The heaven of the clouds and the birds, and that's the atmosphere that we live in and breathe, and that one comes all the way down to your ankles.

2.) And the second one was the heaven of the stars, and that, of course, is above the atmosphere. They didn't know how above it was, but they knew that it was above, that there was a second place, and that's where the stars were.

3.) Then third, there was "the heaven of the angels", that's what it was called. It was the heaven of the angels; it was the heaven of the throne of God. This is the third heaven that Paul says, you remember, "I knew a man who was caught up in the third heavens, whether in the body or not, I know not." And he saw things that it is not legal to say.

Now those are the heavens, folks, and the Kingdom of the Heavens. By the way, Matthew is the one that uses this phrase, he uses it almost exclusively, he does use the phrase Kingdom of God sometimes, and they are interchangeable, but they do not mean the same thing. And this is something that there's a lot of confusion about and you'll hear explanations like, 'they didn't want to say God, so they would say heavens,' and that's okay.

~ The Kingdom of Heaven Right Here¹

[5:05]

But let's understand that that phrase 'The Kingdom of the Heavens' brought home the content of the Jewish experience with God. And that experience was you experienced God as right here, right now. He's always available. He is directly present to the person who lives in a covenant relationship with him. And you go back and read all of it, you read the passage, you know, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, his ear is open to their cry." [Psalm 34:15] Right, and again, I don't have time to do that, but I'm hoping you're familiar enough with all of this that you can sort of plug in the blanks, go back and take your concordances and study it out.

Now the Kingdom of the Heavens was not something that came into existence with Jesus. You will hear people say that Jesus brought the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven. And the suggestion often is that it was about to come into existence, and unfortunately it didn't make it because the Jews rejected it. But the Kingdom of God is 'from everlasting to everlasting.' [Daniel 4:3] Jesus did not bring the kingdom into existence, and when we pray, 'Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done,' [Matthew 6:10] we're not praying for it to come into existence. It has been in existence ever since there was a God, which is a long time ago, and will continue to be in existence as long as there is a God, which is a long time in that direction. The Kingdom of God has never been in any trouble. It's not threatened. Humanity can't do a thing about it. It's never in danger. It has always existed. It is unshakable. The Kingdom of God is simply the range of God's effective will. It's what God is doing. And when we say, '*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,*' [Matthew 6:33] that's saying, 'seek what God is doing, seek to be involved in what God is doing, and have his kind of goodness righteousness.' And everything else will be taken care of, you see, because you're caught up in that kingdom.

So, '*Repent for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand*' means that it is now accessible in a new way. Now that has a definite reference to an old way that it was accessible, and the old way that it was accessible is called, in the Bible, 'The law and the prophets.' And it was identified with the social organization of religion that existed in Jesus's time in the nation of Israel. And God had made the Kingdom of the Heavens available through the people of Israel, through the Abrahamic covenant, through the Mosaic law. And he meant for that to make it available to the whole earth. It was never meant to be simply a Jewish thing. It was for all nations of the earth. Read the Abrahamic covenant: 'In these shall all nations of the earth be blessed.' [Genesis 12:3] And we know that that's going to come to pass, that it will not be frustrated, it will not fail, it will happen. It will come through Jesus. It will come through his people, the covenant people on earth. For the message Now is that the Kingdom of the Heavens is available in a new way: it's available through confidence in Jesus Christ. Through confidence in Jesus Christ, you are brought into the Kingdom of the Heavens.

See, that's the 'new birth.' You remember the new birth? [John 3] Nicodemus came and said to Jesus -- he was trying to pay him a compliment -- he said, "We know that you're a man come from God, because no man can do these works unless God sent him." And Jesus hit him right in the face. He proceeded to show him he didn't have the foggiest idea what he was talking about. Because he said, you know, you cannot see ... he had claimed to see the Kingdom of God. Do you understand that? He

had just claimed to see the Kingdom of God. And now than Jesus says, *"I'm telling you the truth, Nicodemus, that unless you've been born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."* [v. 3] And that threw Nicodemus totally off, and showed that he didn't know what he was talking about, because he immediately started saying, *"How can a person re-enter his mother's womb and be born again?"* [v. 4] And then Jesus gives him a teaching about the Kingdom of God. And again, *"Unless you are born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of God."* [v. 8] Jesus puts it the second time around.

~ The Kingdom of God Present in Jesus [10:21]

Do you understand how that discussion proceeded there? See, that's all about the Kingdom of God, entering the kingdom of God, seeing the kingdom of God. Now that Kingdom was present in Jesus. Jesus brought the Kingdom among human beings in a way that it had never been before. And the primary difference was, very simply, in order to now enter the Kingdom of God, all you had to do was love and trust Jesus. That's it. That's the gospel: trust Jesus Christ, put your confidence in him, believe in him.

Don't believe something about him, believe in him, trust him.

Don't trust some arrangement he may have made, trust him.

You see, and there's a huge difference there and we're gonna have to spend a little time on that.

~ Repentance: Think About Your Thinking [11:16]

Jesus came proclaiming the availability of the Kingdom of God. And then repent, you see, is the word 'metanoeite,' and it means 'think about your thinking.' That doesn't mean get down on the floor and beat your head on the ground. You may do that once you start thinking about your thinking, that may be the appropriate way to respond. But that's not primarily what it's about. Primarily, it's a way of saying 'consider now this fact that that the Kingdom of God is available in the person of Jesus Christ.' And he never argued with people, he just manifested the Kingdom. He just manifested, he proclaimed it, he taught it, he just gave it forth. And people said, *"This man doesn't speak like the Scribes and the Pharisees, he speaks with authority."* [Matthew 7:29] See, he spoke in such a way that people realized they were in the presence of the reality he was talking about. And that's the way when we want to speak, folks. We want to speak from that reality, we want to stand in it, and it will generate all kinds of currents around us. But fundamentally, we simply stand in that Kingdom, and we proclaim it and we manifest it, and we let its reality bear witness to itself. And Jesus is saying to people, repent, think about your thinking, in the light of this new fact

that now you can live in the Kingdom of the Heavens, through confidence in Jesus Christ. Change your plans. What are you relying on? What are you counting on? Reconsider it in the light of the availability of Christ. So...

The Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of God, is the central message that Jesus brings.

~ The Three-fold Kingdom Ministry of Jesus - Matthew 4 [13:13]

And if you look at Matthew 4 for just a moment, you'll see a very typical kind of statement here. Verse 23: *"Jesus was going about in all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom,"* -- (this is Matthew 4:23) *"and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people."* You see, he proclaimed -- **proclaiming** his like announcing; 'gospel graffiti,' if you wish, just putting it up, put it up, put it up -- the kingdom of God. And John had opened the way with exactly that same message. And then **teaching**, explaining, and you know that much of the Gospels is given over to Jesus's explanations about the Kingdom of God. And then healing. Those three ministries.

Now you will see that that continues on as the Gospels move along, but essentially it's the same type of ministry everywhere you go. Go to Matthew 9:35, *"Jesus was going about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom, healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness."*

That's what he did. **Healing** is a natural manifestation of the presence of the Kingdom. It should be present, and will be present, where the message is proclaimed and lived. And we get in trouble with healing today because we don't accept it as a natural part of the ministry of the local church. And so then, God has to sometimes called people out that look and act rather strange to do it, and I often think I'd probably look rather strange too if I had to do what they do. But God wants to bless his people, and so the manifestation of the Kingdom moves along.

A lovely passage here in Luke 4 ... Luke 4:43: well, this is a period where Jesus has been ministering and it says in verse 42, *"He departed and went out to a lonely place. And the multitudes were searching for him and came to him and tried to keep him from going away from them. And he said to them, 'I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.'"* [v. 43]

What was the purpose he was sent for? Could you tell me? To preach the Kingdom of God. That was Jesus's gospel. Now if you want Jesus's results,

preach Jesus's gospel. And I want to say bluntly and flatly, and I never want to offend anyone, but I have to say what I feel I should say.

[16:18] The reason for the weakened condition of the church is we do not preach the gospel Jesus preached. We preach something else. And if you preach something else, you get a different result. You cannot substitute anything for this message.

The Gospel of the Kingdom in the Book of Acts² [16:50]

Now there's a feeling somehow that there is a substitution that goes on in the book of Acts, and in the letters. I don't have time to go through fully all of it, but just take a moment, let's look at the book of Acts, just a couple of passages. Look first in the first chapter and you see here what Jesus kept talking about after his resurrection. So Luke starts out here, right at the opening, and notice verse three: *"To these he also presented himself alive after his suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of 40 days, and speaking of the things concerning the Kingdom of God."* [Acts 1:3] Now what did happen was that the apostles realized as they went along, that the message of the Kingdom of God is the same as the message of Jesus, who is, after all, the King.

~ *In the Name of Jesus* - Look at chapter eight of Acts. This is Philip. Philip is running another campaign in Samaria, where there had been a great work done, as you remember. And the power of God is there present, he preaches, and the same kind of manifestations that were around Jesus in his ministry are now going on in the name of Jesus. You work in the name of Jesus. You do things on behalf of Jesus. That's what it is to work in the name of Jesus is you do it on his behalf. You do it with his power. If you do something in someone else's name, you are acting on their behalf. And the name of Jesus was powerful. And again, here, if you studied the first part, especially the book of Acts, you'll see what a tremendous power it had. But as you'll notice in verse 12, *"When they had believed Philip preaching the good news about the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus."* Preaching the good news about the Kingdom of God. Was Philip preaching anything different than Jesus preached? No. But he now understood that the way the people of Jesus worked was through his name. So Jesus now continues to be present through his people who work in his name. Just meditate a moment on that phrase, 'Preaching the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.' That was the good news. The good news was the name of Jesus in the context of the Kingdom.

Now on your sheet I've given you more verses, but I want to just go to one final one here in Acts, and ask you please to, as it is convenient, to study all

of those verses. Paul finally arrives in Rome, and you will see in chapter 28, he meets with the Jewish people and Christians there, and verse 23, *"When they had set a day for him, they came to him and his lodging in large numbers, and he was explaining to them solemnly, testifying about..."* the what? He preached the Kingdom of God, didn't he? That was what Paul preached -- *"and persuading them concerning Jesus."* See, those go together. To preach Jesus adequately is to preach the Kingdom of God, and to preach the Kingdom of God adequately is to preach Jesus. They go together. And then finally right at the end of the book of Acts, *"Paul stayed two full years in his own rented quarters, and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus."* See, those go together.

If you preach Jesus adequately, you preach the Kingdom of God. If you preach the Kingdom adequately, you preach Jesus. They come together, there's no way you can separate them.

The Liberal Gospel of Sin Management³ - Social Liberation [21:05]

Now why is that important for us to talk about? If you look at the next page in your notes, you'll see a page here called, 'Conservative Sin Management Gospel.' We have two gospels that are dominant in our, our world today. There are actually three, but I don't want to fool with the third one because I don't think it's as important, and I don't have time anyway.

The two that are dominant are the liberal gospel of liberation, and the liberal gospel of liberation comes against what they call 'structural evils.' It is not something that we can disregard. It is rooted in the prophetic strain of Old Testament and New Testament teaching. But it unfortunately is focused only on the correction of structural evils. And so things like racism, and poverty, and the social issues are very important for this gospel as they initially understood it. It has now kind of degenerated. We used to call it 'the social gospel.' Now it's not even a social gospel, it's a little hard to describe it. But, it basically it comes up in favor of the liberation of desire: what people want, they should have; people should not be denied what they want. And the forms of oppression that are present in our world, our ways of crushing people, and keeping them from having the things they want. And often what they want is good. For example, racial equality is a good thing, and it's right at the heart of Jesus's teachings. Poverty is often caused by evil sources, and those need to be dealt with. All of the things that you're familiar with, I'm sure.

~ Remove Jesus, Lose Morality - Now that is what I call a 'gospel of sin management,' because the gospel has to do with the management of sins:

'get rid of these social evils.' And the idea is that Jesus himself was in favor of this, and that if you're a Christian, you're in favor of getting rid of it, and that's all there is to it. So Jesus is taken out of the picture as a person. You will rarely find much attention paid to Jesus as a person in the context of the liberal gospel. They're focused on correcting ills that exist in society, and very often they have no attention at all even to personal morality. And when you begin to raise issues of personal morality, you'll suddenly find yourself quite unwelcome in these contexts. All morality is public. See that is where we have come in our country today: social issues exhaust morality. And personal morality is not a serious issue. And I see this over and over and over and over again. And professional ethics, for example, is often held up as ethics, and then you begin to probe into professional ethics and you find they're not ethics at all. They are rules on how to stay out of trouble with the law, your fellow practitioners, and your clients. But they say nothing about how to be a good person. If you try to tell -- as I do, I do a lot of work in the context of professional ethics and lecturing and so on. If you try to bring up the issue of being a good person, they look at you like your head is on backwards. "What's this got to do with being a good person? What does being good person have to do with being a good doctor, a good lawyer?" And frankly, I get in some circles where even a good minister, especially in the left wing. "Being a good person, what's this got to do with anything?" Well, of course, you might say, "That's what God is most interested in, and that's what's most central to human life."

But see, the feature of gospels of sin management is they always omit Christ as teacher ⁴ and ruler in the heart. They put him somewhere else.

Conservative Gospel of Sin Management³ - Sins & Heaven [25:21]

The one I put here on the page, because I think this is the one that we most need to think about, has to do with the conservative sin management gospel, and if you just look at this diagram, I think we can quickly cover a lot that we need to say. You have over on the left-hand side here 'faith,' believing the right things about Jesus, and that secures heaven after death. That is presented as the conservative version of the gospel. If you listen to many people who present the gospel in conservative circles, you will find that they actually are presenting a theory of atonement as the whole gospel. And you will find that they have absorbed everything into justification, and totally forgotten about regeneration. The doctrine of regeneration gets shrunk down into the doctrine of justification, and the whole issue then becomes the forgiveness of sins. Now please understand me, I am not saying that that's unimportant, I'm not saying that that's not essential: that is absolutely essential. It has to be dealt with. But the

forgiveness of sins is not the gospel that Jesus preached. It is not the gospel that brought the church into existence.

And I'm hoping that you are thinking this now as you look at these verses that we've looked at... [\[gap in the recording\]](#)

~ Absence of Growth in Christlikeness - ...for remaining stuck where they were. Because I had them sitting out there on the highway of life with their hood up waiting for the heavenly AAA to come and take them home. But their engine wasn't running. And so they struggled with their failures. They reconciled themselves to never growing. And if anyone seemed to grow, they were looked upon as freaks. It might happen, but you couldn't count on it. And there was no regular way that you could actually teach people how to grow in Christ-likeness. Because the whole essential message was merely how to have your sins forgiven. And that was turned, not to confidence in Jesus, but to confidence in an arrangement that God made through his death. And it left the person of Jesus out. Now of course, the idea was he ought to be in, but what was not realized, and what is often not realized is, you've already preached a gospel which leaves him out. You have preached a gospel which says,

"All that is necessary is that he died and that you believe that in his death, he paid for your sins, and if you believe that, then God will transfer merit from his account to your account in the bank of Heaven. And when you show up at the gate of heaven, they will not be able to find any reason to keep you out because it will have all been paid for."

Now I walk gingerly here, because I know how not only this, but many things that I say are so easily misunderstood. But I have had to reconcile myself to the fact that the only sure way of not being misunderstood is to say nothing of any significance. We just have to accept misunderstanding and not get pathetic about it, you know? We just have to say that's a part of living together. I heard a man the other day define 'community' as 'constant forgiveness.' It's just constant forgiveness. And so I don't ... I'm more ... see, I want you to take ahold of these things, and not necessarily agree with me, but think this through.

Spiritual Formation as a Natural Part of Salvation⁵ [29:55]

We have to come to a gospel that naturally leads to transformation. Naturally leads! We now have a gospel on both right and left that does not. It does not, and it is so pathetic. And given my sort of work, I will go in and out both the far left wing and the far right wing, and I'm glad, and I feel comfortable in all of it. I don't ... I'm not ... I'm not at all ... I want to love the people there and do the best I can. And all I have to say is, there is no

message of personal transformation. There's often a hope. There's a hunger. Lord knows there's a hunger, and that's one of the most encouraging things about our time, is the swelling hunger of the people in our churches, and especially in our conservative and evangelical churches, for something that would just bring them where they know they ought to be, and get them out of this position of *"the flesh warring against the Spirit, and the Spirit warring against the flesh, though the things that you would do, you cannot do."* [Galatians 5:17] We don't have to live in that position. God never intended that we live in that position.

~ Victory over Sin - God intended that ... you know, we used to have something called 'victory.' I don't know if you talk about that much around here, but there is victory over this stuff. But it comes in God's appointed way, and God's appointed way is to recognize that redemption is life in the Kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ. And if we present Jesus Christ as the full person, now you see, so that we know we're really trusting him, and not some bright idea he had about social reform, or even some action that he did of giving his life for our sins. Both of those are essential. You can't leave those out. And no matter how sincerely you believe in Jesus's death for your sins, that will not solve the problem of social injustices which you have to deal with. And you have to deal with them because that falls in the area of love, and God is concerned about them, they have to be solved. See, we've become mistrustful of love.

~ False Love Replaced by Justice in an Angry World [32:24] I was so struck some months ago there was a colloquium at Harvard Divinity School where they were actually instituting a chair of evangelical theology, would you believe. And I was one of the speakers, and I spoke about love. And at the luncheon afterwards, one of the older faculty, Now retired, a well known man, expressed his uneasiness about love. He said, "Now you know, this love, what we really want is justice. What we really want is justice." You see, he had come ... and that's the atmosphere of much of our country. They mistrust love. They think love is a show. They think it's hypocrisy. They hear all the people who say their hearts are full of love, and can still discriminate against others, and have contempt for them. And of course, that wasn't love in the first place. And then they swing over to justice. And Now we're an angry, angry nation. We're eaten up with anger. Anger is ruling this country. These kids that shoot other kids. Do you know the basic truth about them? They are angry. And now the commentators that get on the tube, they stand there and say, "We just don't understand why these children would do this." These children are angry. Look at any of them, they're angry. And some of them are so full of contempt.

And these are the things I'm going to be talking about this in the next hour. Jesus hits this head on. This is the place you come to deal with social issues. You change the dynamics of the individual life. But where is the gospel that gives us that?

See that's what I'm talking to you about in this hour, is a gospel that naturally ... see, in this gospel there's no real connection. If you go back to your sheet there a moment. What about discipleship? "Well, it's nice, but it's not necessary." Right? You will make the cut if you've never become a disciple, right? You just believe the right things. God will examine your mind and check that off.

He believes the right things.

He believes Jesus died for his sins. ✓ Check that off, let him in.

Personally, I don't believe it's going to be like that at all, but it's going to be a lot more like a family reunion, you know, when you have part of your family that's been away, and you love them, then here they come ... you don't 'check them off.' You hug them. You say, "Here's _____!" [Insert name!] Right? That's the way it's going to be.

Ordinary life, work, play family community ... well, one is supposed to be Christlike, or at least do the right thing, but it's not necessary. And maybe not possible. A lot of people have the idea that it's not possible. That the things that Jesus taught, and then said at the end of his sermon [Matthew 7:24-27], *"The wise man built his house on the rock,"* and we have the little children sing the song in Sunday school, *"The rain came down and the floods came up,"* and what was the wise man that built his house on the rock, or the person who heard what he said and said, "Gee, that's wonderful." Or, "Isn't that a beautiful ideal?" Is that what Jesus said? No, he said, "The wise man is the one who hears what I say" -- and he's referring back to his teachings -- "and does it."

~ Confidence in the Kingdom of God [36:15] Jesus's gospel of Kingdom life from above, now then you have faith, and faith is confidence in Jesus and his present Kingdom. We really do count on it, we have come to know it. The word of the gospel has called us out, and we've put our feet on the path and found it to be real. And when we talk about Jesus being risen, we're not speculating because we've been with him. And that naturally leads to seeing my whole life as the place of redemption — interactive relationship. Redemption is interactive relationship. Sanctification is interactive relationship. And we must talk about that in the next hour too. Discipleship as learning from him how to lead my life as if he were I.

~ The Bridge of Discipleship from Faith to Obedience [37:14] Now see, the gospel preached leads to a faith which naturally leads to that. You see, that's the natural progression and connection. If you preach another gospel, there will be no connection. And that's what we suffer from today in our most faithful folks, is that the connection is just not there. We have faith over here, and we have obedience over here, and no bridge to get us from here to here. And that bridge is discipleship. But that bridge rests upon the foundation of the gospel of the Kingdom of God, available through Jesus Christ.



Where Do We Find the Kingdom?

[37:58]

Now just quickly, you have the next page, 'Where do we find the kingdom?' I want to come back and talk about the place of discipleship later, but all things, and all things of daily life, whatever you do, speaking or acting, this is Colossians 3:17. That's my next favorite verse after the Great Commission! *"Whatever you do, speaking or acting, do all on behalf of Master Jesus, thus expressing your thankfulness to God through Him."* Isn't that a wonderful thing? Everything you do. This isn't an extra job, you know. It isn't, 'You're going to do everything you're doing now and then you do this too.' This is the way you do everything. And you learn that, and as you ... see, this is the person now ... this is not the person who is still caught in this struggle of the flesh and the spirit in such a way that they cannot do what they intend. This is a person who can do what they intend. They have grown to the place. Because it's so easy to misunderstand, I always have to inject this over and over. You know, this is not something we do on our own; this is a gift of grace, it's just that we're not passive. See, we have to understand that grace is not opposed to effort. It's not opposed to effort. It's opposed to earning. Earning is an attitude, effort is an action.

So now we bring that down to our family, our playmates and neighbors -- and if you don't have any playmates, you should get some. We don't

outgrow playmates, we need them badly. Your job and the redemptive community, Now is not your life. It is central, but it is not your life. It fits and maintains your life, you see.

~ Living the Great Commission [Matthew 28:18-20] [40:03] And the gospel, then, of the Kingdom is to make you a student of Jesus, surround you in the Trinitarian reality, and "teach you how to do all things whatsoever I have commanded you." [v. 20] See, that teaching is another promise, now that the teaching of Jesus can become an integral part of our lives all the way from the inside of our spirit and heart, all the way out through our body, and our social setting. [Six dimensions of the whole person]

The Role of Faith

[40:33]

Now then, the role of faith is very different from the common presentation. I want you to just look briefly here at the ideas about faith. And remember I said last night, faith is confidence. [[Video 1](#) @ 10:55] Faith is confidence. Some people think of, actually present faith as a meritorious deed. And sometimes this even seeps out into our congregations, and young people pick it up and they learn that if they express doubts, they will get in trouble. And that should never be. We should welcome the doubts of all. Jesus did, and we should too. [["Doubt", The Allure of Gentleness, Willard, 27-28](#)]

1.) But first of all, many people think faith is a merit; a meritorious action, and it's not. Many people actually present faith as a saving work, if you know what I mean. And it's not, it's a gift of God. It comes to us to help us.

2.) Secondly, people think that faith helps us cope; it's good for our psyche. And you'll hear that often presented, 'positive thinking' gospels are fundamentally this sort of view. And is it good for our psyche? You bet it is; it is good for your psyche. It's good for your whole person to have confidence, and to live in it. But unfortunately, you may have confidence in something that is false. And then ... I often define reality is what you run into when you're wrong, and it's quite unrelenting.

3.) The real function of faith, now folks, is number three: it integrates our action with reality. That's the role of faith. And especially when we come to faith in Christ, when we really have confidence in him, then we integrate our lives into his life. We do that by relying on him. You can rely on Jesus. You can count on him. And if you count on him, what will happen is, you will know him in his full reality, and you will know the Kingdom of God, and you will learn how to act in the name of Jesus, and how to live in that. And that will become a natural expression of your life, because your confidence in him has integrated you with him.

~ The Power of Life in Believing Doctrines [43:10] I list things like the virgin birth here, and so on, the Bible is the sufficient Word of God ... that isn't meritorious; you don't get points for believing that, you get to live if you believe that. If you believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, you're in a different world from a person who doesn't believe that. You believe that the Bible is God's sufficient Word to us, you're in a different world. That's why Paul says, *"if in your heart, you believe in the Lord Jesus, and you confess him with your mouth, you shall be saved."* [Romans 10:9] Or you ... you will be off like a rocket. If you believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, that he's the Lord, you will never see another day like the ones you saw before. That's the role of faith.

Now we're going to need to ... I actually got the notes kind of telescoped into one another, and so the rest of what you have in your hand, if you would just sort of turn that over, we're going to start there in the in the next hour.

But I want to leave you just with that picture, now you see. You have faith in Jesus, the Lord, the King of the universe, the master, the King of the kings of the earth, you have faith in Him; you have faith in the present reality of His Kingdom, and you walk in that faith, and that naturally takes up your whole life now. And you have heard a gospel that puts you -- who you are -- in position before God to become the person that he intended you to be.

Closing Prayer

[44:57]

Lord, give us grace to hear your word, and to find those things that are true and acceptable and right, and to bring them into our lives, to welcome them, to walk in them, to see the manifestation of your Kingdom, throughout our being and all around us.

In Jesus's name. Amen.

~ ~ ~ End of 2B = Video 4 @ 45:22 ~ ~ ~

FOOTNOTES - Dallas Willard related resources

- 1 - *The Divine Conspiracy*, "Entering the Eternal Kind of Life Now", chapter 1
- 2 - The Book of Acts, [Jesus College 4-session course](#) featuring Dallas Willard & NT Wright
- 3 - *The Divine Conspiracy*, "Gospels of Sin Management", chapter 2
- 4 - *The Divine Conspiracy*, "The Case of the Missing Teacher", p.55-58, 134-135, 315-316
- 5 - Dallas Willard's "[Spiritual Formation as a Natural Part of Salvation](#)" at Wheaton College in 2009 (115,000+ views) was so important to present the gospel of the Kingdom of God clearly, Dallas uncharacteristically read his presentation. A three-session [Jesus College course](#) unpacks Willard's teaching as foundational knowledge every follower of Jesus must understand to experience a transformative gospel path to Christlikeness.

Dallas Willard "Beyond Belief" Teaching 3

TRANSCRIPTION of [Apprentices of Jesus](#) 3A, Video 5 [23:50]

[Outline provided by Dallas Willard Ministries \(3A\)](#) (3 pages)

Grasping the Kingdom God

People have a hard time grasping the Kingdom of God, have a hard time thinking about it. I think that's one reason why it's so easily slips over into the political idea. And certainly that was true for Jesus's own followers, they couldn't get it out of their head that the Kingdom of God was the kingdom of Israel. And so in that last passage there, or in that passage that I read from Acts 1 where Jesus is preaching the Kingdom, they are still thinking, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" [Acts 1:6] And they think only in terms of a political organization, and that is not the Kingdom of God. If you want to see the clearest presentation of the Kingdom of God, it is in Daniel 2. In Daniel 2 you have the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. And the image was an image of human government. And you remember that story I trust. And in that dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw a rock, cut out without hands, a rock cut out without hands. And it grew and increased and crushed the image of human governments and filled the whole earth. See that is the Kingdom of God. And it in fact, will displace all human governments, but not with a another human government. It will displace them, it will move them out, but it is not another human government. And that's part of the problem with people who want to understand the Millennium as the Kingdom of God. The millennium is a time when Christ will reign on the earth. And "all government will be", as the Prophet says, "upon his shoulders. The government will be upon His shoulders. But, I'll tell you, he is not going to have what we would recognize as a human government. That government will be very different from anything that we know of. It will be much more effective. And for the first time, you will have what all the politicians talk about, namely, good government, a good government. And then, of course, you get the Ayatollah Khomeini version of theocracy. And that's what people have in mind. And of course, if you take if you undertake to govern through human means for God, you wind up logically with the Ayatollah. And that's a dreadful thing to think about. But the Kingdom of God is God's effective will.

Safe in the Kingdom of God

[3:00]

Now Jesus comes and he proclaims it, and he proclaims it in such a way as to make us realize that if we step in to the Kingdom of God, then this world is a perfectly safe place for us to be. And there is nothing that will happen to us in this world that cannot be brought to, that will not be brought to good by God. That's a good thing to know. And the testimony of the resurrection of Christ, and His triumph over death, is to stand before the world as a witness that death is not an ultimate power. And all of the things we dread, and the ordinary person is full of dread, it grips the heart and the stomach, the body - all the deficiencies we feel, we feel so deficient and defeated, all of that - we step out from under it, and into the Kingdom of God. And we accept our place in that Kingdom, with the realization that all is well. All is well. "All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purposes." [Romans 8:28] Now all doesn't leave anything out. And there's some pretty bitter pills included in that and it doesn't say everything is good by itself. It says all things work together for good, not work independently for good. Let's see that's the chemistry of the Kingdom is to take everything that comes into our lives. So now as we contemplate the things that are, that are scary and causes pain, whether they're past or present, we suffer, we still suffer. But we never suffer without hope because our confidence is in a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, it is the Kingdom of God. And we don't just have that as a blind hope we have that as an experiential hope. That is a hope that we have on the basis of our actual experience with the Kingdom of God working in our lives. And see, we've taken our kingdom and the kingdom is the range of our effective will, and we have brought it to Jesus, and we have said, "Now I turn over my kingdom to you." And they say, welcome, you can go in business with us Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We will teach you. You can run on our resources. You can be a part of our family, and we're going to go on forever. See, so that's the faith then we rest in.

Our Part Working in the Kingdom of God

[6:16]

Now when we when we do that, we immediately realize that Now we have work to do. We're not left in a passive condition. But and we're not immediately transformed and rewired. It isn't like taking an old piece of

machinery and rewiring it. It's now that we have life in ourselves, we have peace with God, and we are given the power to become students and disciples of Jesus in such a way that all that is in us of the old world will gradually be renewed. And that process, of course, is the process of becoming a disciple. It will turn us upside down.

~ The Great Inversion [7:07] And if you look at your notes where we left off, I have a handwritten page there - "The great inversion," the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of men are opposite to one another, they, what is up in one is down in the other and what is down in one is up in the other. Let me just take you to a wonderful passage on this in First Samuel. This is Hannah's prayer. And Hannah was down. She was in one of the worst positions that a woman could be in, she was not, she could not bear a child. And in her time at least, that was, that was a terrible thing. And her, her rivals with her husband, ceaselessly irritated her. Verse six of First Samuel one, her rival would provoke her bitterly to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb. So Hannah, in the, in the depths of her depression, goes to the tabernacle of the Lord. And she is weeping so bitterly that Eli thinks she's drunk. You'll see that in verses 10 and 11. And verse 14, "How long will you make yourself drunk?" Eli says to her, because she's sitting there praying, and her lips are moving, and she's in agony of soul. And Hannah says, "No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit. Don't consider your maidservant a worthless woman. I've spoken out of my great concern and provocation." And Eli says, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your petition." And so he does. now I'd like you to just look at chapter two a moment. This is Hannah's prayer. And it's the prayer of one who has been lifted up in the Kingdom of God. It says in verse three,

"Boast no more so very proudly. Don't let your arrogance come out of your mouth. The bows of the mighty are shattered." See, that's the ones who are up were the mighty, now they're down.

"The feeble are girded with strength." They were down, now they're up.

"Those who were full..." the ones who are up, "Now have to hire themselves out to get food," they're down.

"Those who were hungry," those who were down, cease being hungry.

"The barren," those who were down, "give birth," they're up.

"Those who have many children," those who are up, "languish," they're down.

And he goes on to, she goes on to elaborate that now I wanted you just to look at the little of the details of that.

But now you remember the song of Moses and Miriam after the crossing of the Red Sea, [Exodus 15:1-8] "the horse and the rider is thrown in the sea." The horse and the rider was sort of the latest armaments. They were powerful, like ICBMs, or whatever it is you want to think about. And they've been thrown in the sea, and these poor people who didn't have any horses and riders, they're now victorious.

And, of course, one of the great, greatest of all of these is the Magnificat of Mary, isn't it? [Luke 1:46-55] You remember what she says in response to the angel? When the angel had given her the announcement, and in Luke, you have a beautiful expression of this down up thing. The reversals of life are what we now have to integrate into our own being. And that's, that takes some doing. And it's partly up to us. The language of Paul is "put off the old person and put on the new person." Also, he uses the word mortification, "If ye through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live," Romans 8:13. Or Colossians 3, we were quoting from that the other day, and after he gets done saying, "then you shall you also appear with him in glory," then he says, "mortify, therefore, your members upon the earth." And he goes on to talk about fornication uncleanness, wicked desires inordinate affections and the mess that's inside, you mortify, what does mortified mean? That means to kill off, doesn't it, it means to kill off to let it die. We have a thing called a mortgage. And it's from the basic, from the same terms. A mortgage is something you kill off by degrees" "Mort gauge" - you kill it off by degrees. And so now there's a process for us it is to be done in the power of the Spirit. *"If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live."*

Becoming Disciples of Jesus

[12:50]

So as becoming disciples, and we'll have some more handouts on this later on after lunch, but becoming a disciple is a matter now of having looked at Jesus, and said, "I am going to learn from him how to lead my life in the Kingdom of God." I'm going to learn from him how to lead my life in the

Kingdom of God as he would lead my life if he were I. I want to just pause over that a moment because it's extremely important for us to have clarity about basic concepts. Because each of... you and I have to decide whether or not we are disciples or not. We're not talking about someone else, we're talking about me. And the direction that Jesus gave us as His people was to go to all kinds of people and make disciples.

So, now to test the formulation, I throw back to you:

How would you know if you were a disciple?

And how would you know if you were, if you had made a disciple?

You know, if you have... if your job is to make sandwiches, you better know what a sandwich is, right? That way you will know when you've got one made. And if our job is to make disciples, then we should know what a disciple is. So let me go over that again, and, and we will look at some we'll looking at some passages on this too. But, basically, the idea is this, as this: I'm a disciple of Jesus. That means I am learning from him how to lead my life, not his life. See, that's one of the things that often confuses us. It says if we're learning to be like Him, to lead his life, but no, we're learning how to lead our lives in the Kingdom of God, in the Kingdom of the heavens, as he would lead my life If he were I.

So, now that brings us right back to where we were talking about finding the kingdom in the last hour. [\[Video 4 @ 37:58\]](#)

What I need to learn from Jesus is how to love my wife.

I need to learn from Jesus, how to love my children and care for them.

I need to learn how to love my neighbors, the one with the barking dog, the one who's always parking his car in the wrong place.

I need to learn how to love.

I need to learn from Jesus, how to run a course for my students.

I need to learn how to do my research and my publications.

That's all I need to learn that from Jesus. And as his disciple, that's what I'm doing.

~ Being a Disciple is not Religious Things [16:25] - Now he's given us a general framework. And we're going to turn that to that in a moment. But see, we want to make sure that we understand that being a disciple is not

just a matter of learning to do religious things. Things that are identified as religious things. Because that is not what will put us in mastery of our life under Jesus Christ. And it's apt to actually misguide us and make us focus our efforts on specifically religious things, and many of them are wonderful, good things. I don't mean to suggest anything else. It's just that your life is not what is commonly thought of as religion. And sometimes we can focus our efforts on religious things and have awful turmoil going on emotionally, and in other aspects of our lives, and never bring those two together. And then sometimes we even start compensating for the awful mess we're in over here by pushing harder on the religious things. And it just makes everything worse.

Whereas what we need to do is to understand that, I mean, God is interested in our failures. If we want to receive God into our life, the primary place we go is where we're failing. Not where we're succeeding, but where we're failing. And we bring that before the cross and mercy of Jesus and his Father, and we invite him to take over there. That's discipleship.

Now if we have heard the message of the kingdom of the heavens, I think then we're ready for discipleship. Because we've heard a message about whole life, whole persons. We've heard a message that reaches out to our businesses and our ambitions as career people, as the people concerned about our government or whatever that may be. And we've heard a message which says, "The Good News of the Gospel is relevant to all of that." It's relevant to all of that.

So I've been speaking with some of you about the things you're interested in. I know Susanna is involved with issues about government and education and all sorts of things like that. And others of you are involved in businesses, and Mike is telling me about his work with his accounting firm and all of that. That's the place that we want to see the Kingdom of God. That's the place we expect it to come.

Jesus Teaching the Kingdom

[19:23]

Two Main Questions: Who is really well off? Who is a good person?

now

~ Question #1 [20:15] The first question is who is really well off? Who is really well off? And you will, I'm sure, understand by Now his answer to that is a person who is alive in the Kingdom of God. And in the Sermon on the Mount, he's teaching about that. And he teaches about it in many ways. And of course, that great verse that we quote, Matthew 6:33, *"Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything else will be added."* That is the good life. Now when you, when you are challenged, in your conversations in your workplaces, and so on with the question, what is the good life? Be sure to answer with that verse. And ask the other people if they've got anything going that can give what that verse promises. Life in the Kingdom, being alive in the kingdom, people are truly well off if they are alive in the Kingdom of God. That's true wellbeing. Now when you read any thinker, pre Christian, post Christian, whatever, you'll see that they have to answer that question, if you listen to your local talk show host, you'll see that they're working on that question. And often, they have lots of things to say that make utterly no sense at all, but you know, those of us who talk a lot are usually not stopped by ignorance. Right? So they just carry on.

And, but that's what they talk about, who's really well off? And Jesus addresses that in his teaching in Matthew 5 - The Beatitudes. The point of the Beatitudes is to give an inversion of the people that the world think is truly bad off. And to say in the Kingdom of God, they are blessed. We're going to talk more about that in a moment.

Question #2 [22:20] But I want to just go ahead and say the second question that Jesus addresses is, who is a truly good person? Who is a truly good person? Now people want to be well off. I am convinced that they want more than that to be a good person. You try it out. See whether people get mad quicker if you question their well being or their goodness. Got any guesses which will win? You question their goodness, you're in the fire. The hunger for integrity is so deep, so radical, that people will go to

any length to even sustain the appearance of being a good person. And Jesus addresses that question. He addresses it in Matthew 5:20 and 21 and following, He says, "Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will not be able to enter the kingdom of the heavens." And we want to talk about that in a moment.

[cut from the video] ...and spend some time on this and then that's going to lead us on to talking about spiritual disciplines after lunch.

~ ~ ~ End of 3A = Video 5 @ 23:50 ~ ~ ~

Dallas Willard related resources

- † *The Divine Conspiracy*
 - "How to Be & Become a Disciple", Chapter 8, p. 281-291
 - "Become a Disciple", Chapter 8, p. 291-299
- † Videos
 - [Discipleship at Work](#)
 - [The Divine Conspiracy lecture #5 - 24:25-38:05](#)

Dallas Willard "Beyond Belief" Teaching 3 (continued)

TRANSCRIPTION of [Who is Really Well Off? The Beatitudes](#) 3B, video 6 [23:51]

[Outline provided by Dallas Willard Ministries \(3B\)](#) (3 pages)

See *The Divine Conspiracy*, "The Puzzle of the Beatitudes", chapter 4

The Beatitudes

"Blessed are the poor in spirit." But, let's go back Now to the Beatitudes. I've given you a picture this is a guy here. You all know what the Special Olympics are. Well, this little fellow has just finished the race in the Special Olympics. And I want to tell you that when Jesus talks about the poor in spirit, this is the sort of person he's talking about. That'll be a shock to you. And you know, I've as I've said before, I'm not trying to push my views on you. I want to get you to think about it. I'm, I've been wrong once or twice in life, my wife says I have. I used to work with a man said he was wrong once, he thought he had made a mistake. I don't think I'm wrong about this. I think this is right. I think you if you see the teachings of Jesus, you'll see that he is picking out people who simply have nothing going for them spiritually. Nothing. These are people who are poverty stricken in spiritual things. They have no spiritual goods. They may have no education. They may not know how to pray in public, read the Bible. They feel totally out of it. But those people who have no spiritual goods are precisely blessed. Why? Because they have no spiritual goods, read the verse.

The Mistake and Truth about the Beatitudes [1:53]

This is the deepest mistake about the Beatitudes. People read them as if Jesus is citing a condition which is the basis of their blessing. You understand what I'm saying? Now read the verse. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, because they are poor in spirit." That's not what it says, does it? "Blessed are the poor in spirit because theirs is the kingdom of the heavens." The Kingdom of Heavens. God doesn't say that everyone who's poor in spirit has the kingdom of the heavens. It says that anyone who is poverty stricken spiritually, and has the kingdom of the heavens is blessed. They're blessed. Now this whole list of teachings is about blessing in the Kingdom of Heaven. It begins with, "for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven"

and ends with, "theirs is the kingdom." In between, "blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." And I know people who read that as saying, "Well, it's because they're mourning that they're comforted." No, they're comforted in the Kingdom of Heaven. And all of the things that you see there are, that's a list of things that are not thought among men to be blessed.

"Blessed are the merciful." What does the world think of merciful people? Generally speaking, they're weak. Right? The lights are on but nobody's home. That sort of thing. naive, stupid, be taken advantage of. Do they think they're blessed? No, they don't. You see this as a list of people that are regarded as stupid, weak, to be taken advantage of.

"Blessed are the meek." I don't know people who think that meek folk are blessed. The human order puts all of these people down. The Kingdom of God puts them up. Now they're not up because of that condition. If you go that way, then you're going to fall into legalism on this, and you will teach that this is a list of how-to's.

Luke 6 - The "Wo Be's"

[4:35]

And then when you read over in Luke 6, you will read the "Woe Be's" and you're going to be in trouble on that one then because you will have to stop laughing. And of course that's been tried hasn't ever seen I've read a book called *The Name of the Rose* or see a novel name of *The Name of the Rose*? That whole novel is about a teaching that it was wrong to laugh. Where do you think that came from?

Look at these "Woe Be's" here in Luke 6.

"Woe to you who are rich." Uh-oh, we're in trouble already aren't we. Nearly all of you are rich, okay, in human scale, so you're in trouble.

"Woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full." In other words, that will be what you have, if you trust in your riches. That'll be it, and there'll be no more comfort.

"Woe to you who are well fed." Well, we'd better skip lunch.

"Woe to you who laugh; for you shall mourn and weep." Jesus said it didn't he? Shouldn't we all stop laughing?

The Genius Teacher Jesus

[6:20]

See, you have to you have to when you read Jesus, you have to remember that this is the brightest man that ever lived on earth, the most capable and creative teacher that ever lived, and don't make a simpleton of him. That's what many people do when they try to read him as if he just went along dropping these little laws, you know? And Now then you have to keep them. And we're going to look at them meaning of the righteousness of scribes and the Pharisees in a moment. But Jesus's teaching always goes beyond laws. They go to the heart. They never stop with action. They go to the heart. They go to the center of the being. And that's why faith, hope, and love are the crux of it. Faith, hope and love are not actions. They're states of persons, they're whole life, conditions - faith, hope and love. That's where Jesus's teachings reach. "Woe, to you when all men speak well of you." Look at the "blesseds" here. "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God." And so people read that and say, well, just the poor are already blessed. Right? Anyone who is poor is blessed. Isn't that what the verse says?

How Jesus Teaches vs. Modern Education

[7:57]

Now let me just say a word to you about how Jesus teaches. Because you cannot understand Jesus's teachings unless you understand how he teaches. We teach in a different way. We teach, we say, Now here's the subject matter, we start at the top, we go down the page, and we fill in all the blanks. And people put it in their notebooks, and walk off exactly the same as the way they came. And perhaps they will tuck that away in case they ever have to pass a test on it. That kind of knowledge is not regarded in scriptural context, or indeed the classical context, or I would say, in the human context, as worth much of anything. I mean, you have to think about a culture with a failing educational system that has a game called Trivial Pursuit, don't you? Don't you have to think about that? Why not

"Important Pursuit." See we're dying in trivia. And it goes along with the loss of a sense of what education really is.

Jesus, and all of the great teachers know that you teach to change people's lives. You teach to change people's lives. Now we've even got our educational setup where you're not supposed to change people's lives, right? It's a marvelous system, when you sit down and you think about how it all fits together. You're just supposed to teach them stuff and let them remain the same as they are. Because that would be messing with their values. And, of course, what they're dying on is their values. And the reason they can't learn algebra is because of their values, but you still can't mess with their values.

~ Jesus Teaching in the Context of Life [9:57] So, Jesus teaches in the context of your life. Jesus teaches with the things you believe without even thinking about it. And he catches you sailing along here in your belief. Now for example, in his day, one belief was if you were rich, that meant God blessed you. So here you are sailing along in your belief. You're just going down the path of life, and all of a sudden, Jesus just lets the air out of your balloon. And he says, "Blessed are the poor. Woe to you who are rich." Now if you hear that you see, you don't have to say, "wait a minute, let me write that down." Or you don't have to say, "was my recorder on when he said that?" Because you're not gonna forget that. He has hit you in the guts of your life. He's hit you where you live. And you don't have to try to remember that because it has stuck in your life. And Jesus's teachings are like that.

He goes to dinner with a man who has filled his house with wealthy neighbors and relatives. And what does he say to him? He says, "When you have a dinner, don't invite your relatives and your wealthy neighbors." Now do you think he had let me write this down so I can remember it when he's gone? No, he was stuck. That's how Jesus teaches when you read him, remember that? He teaches with the power of a logic which gets right down into the heart of your assumptions about where you live, and will not let you go. And you watch the reaction to Jesus and His teaching you see that that's true. That's how he taught. And that's why people remembered it. And of course, their minds weren't cluttered up with Seinfeld [American TV

show], and all that junk anyway. But they remembered it. And it changed their lives, their lives begin to change.

~ Jesus Teaching Parables & Presumptions [12:15] He tells them parables. And you go into that story humming in your head and give figures. And that would just sit there and work on you. And, and you know, he tells you a parable, and you can't very well say, "That's not so." Or, "I reject it!" because it's just a parable. So, the meaning works on you. Now when you do that, and you watch the teachings of Jesus, you want to remember that's how he works. He doesn't work by giving you sort of engineering generalization so you can steer a safe course through life. And his generalizations are often not generalizations at all, they are inversions. They invert the presumptions upon which we're living. We have a presumption about who is blessed and who is not and Jesus comes along and reverses our presumptions. I see that's a part of the great inversion. The great inversion is primarily the inversion of the order of the kingdom of man and the Kingdom of God. And we looked at that a bit. [Teaching 3A, [Video 5](#) @ 7:07] But see Now you want to remember when you read his teachings, what he's doing is not generalizing when he speaks of particular acts, but reversing a presumption.

"Given to him that ask of thee." [Matthew 5:42] What is the presumption in that regard? Can any...Now don't answer quickly. Just think about it. What is the presumption? Someone comes up to you and ask you for something. The human presumption is, you will say, "Why?" And if there's not a good reason that you appreciate, you won't give. And Jesus is teaching that that presumption has to be suspended in the Kingdom of God.

Must you always give everything to anyone who asks you for anything? And I see those who read Jesus wrongly back away from his teachings because they assume that what he's saying is, "every time anyone asks you for anything, you'll give it to them." Isn't that right? Isn't that why people say this will ruin my life. Must be for another age. And so Jesus's teachings are distanced, because they are read as if he were giving general laws, when what he's doing is reversing the presumptions.

Sometimes, people will ask you for something, and you will just give it to them. In fact, it's not a bad general practice, but you can immediately see that if you turn it into a law, first of all, you could give it to him and hate him, couldn't you? You think he's teaching that? He's teaching you to give it to him and resent them because they asked you for something knowing that you would have to give it to them because you are a Christian. I knew of a man once who would only do business with non Christians because he said, "I can sue them." And he had it in his mind that he couldn't sue another Christian. Hey, listen, we're way up on that one, aren't we? But see, that's the kind of silly legalism that we fall into.

The Primary Function of Jesus Teaching the Beatitudes [15:54]

Jesus' teachings are designed to reverse the presumptions that prevail in the kingdom of humanity apart from God, and to bring us into another kingdom, in which a different kind of order prevails. And the Beatitudes, the primary function of the Beatitudes is to proclaim the reality and nature of the Kingdom of God. What the Beatitudes say is, there is no one, no matter how far down on the human scale, that cannot be blessed. No one if they will receive the kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ. No one.

And see, when we get the spirit (of the kingdoms)... of the Beatitudes, then we don't just repeat the Beatitudes. We apply them to those around us and to ourselves, we apply them to ourselves. To whom can you go and say, "Blessed!" Blessed are the _____. Could I ask you to just write one word down on your pad,

"Blessed are the _____, for their's is the Kingdom of God."

Who would it be? Who is thought to be most hopeless? In human terms, write it down. For their's is the Kingdom of God. They're not blessed because of that condition. See many people will take this verse, especially in theological and academic context, they'll take the verse on the poor, and say, "you have to be poor, or you will go to hell. God doesn't love you. You have to be poor." When the point is that being poor does not keep you from being blessed. But you see, the other side of it is it doesn't guarantee you being blessed. A lot of folks who take this interpretation don't know what poverty is. I'd like to introduce them to a little poverty. You see, we have

whole groups that take vows of poverty. But they rarely ever know poverty as people who genuinely are poor know it. Because they're only formally poor. They're formally poor, but they're not materially poor. They still have the use of abundant goods. To be poor merely in the sense that I don't own things in the legal sense doesn't mean that I am poor in the sense that people who really are poor are poor.

So we find all kinds of ways of working around these teachings, when the simple sense of them is who is well off? Who is well off anyone who lives in the Kingdom of God. Case in point, the people who are poverty stricken spiritually, case in point, people who are wracked with grief. That's what mourning means. And if you've experienced grief, that's mourning. And to go to someone who is in grief, the kind of grief that is wringing them out from the head to their feet, and say, "Blessed are you in the Kingdom of God" is to preach the gospel of the kingdom.

"Blessed are the aged in our culture." What's the status of the aged or the old, are they thought to be blessed? Not normally. "Blessed are the thin." That fits better, doesn't it? Unless perhaps, they're anorexic.

Blessedness in Light of the Kingdom of God

[20:00]

So this is what Jesus is teaching us Now. And becoming his disciple in this area is to learn to see blessedness in the light of the Kingdom of God. It is to learn to take that vision and bring it down to human life and begin to deal with others in the light of his vision of the "blesseds" and the "woe be's". And what a wonderfully liberating thing it is. You are able to embrace people out all kinds, bless them, love them, receive from them.

And see, we had to take it to that all the things we struggle with. I mean, blessed are... Okay Now can we mention race? "Blessed are the white." How does that fit? "Woe be are the white?" How does that fit? "Blessed are the black"? "Woe be are the black." How's that go? See, I run I'm running through that because I know as I say it, you're you're feeling all this stuff in you. You see, and what you're feeling there is the reality of our life. And the vision of the Kingdom is the only thing that can rectify all of this. There isn't anything else. Human rights will never do it, but we need human

rights. Social protest will never do it though sometimes there is a place for social protest, and all of the divisions of the "blesseds" and the "woe be's" around those.

I want to tell you that you can come to the place to where you step forth in your life with all of that gone, just simply gone. And that is the way that Jesus himself lived and that's the way He comes to us. See Jesus was often in trouble because he would never have made the liberation theologians happy. He didn't, he didn't mind whether a person was rich or poor. He couldn't satisfy anybody because they all wanted him to party up with them, you know. And so he was always, he, he'd have a good time with them. And then all of a sudden, he'd be all here with these other people he wasn't supposed to have a good time with them. And, you know, that wonderful verse in Luke where it says, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." [Luke 15:2] Eats with them. Eats with them! Major Yuck. Eats with them. See, he eats with them.

Let's see that is Jesus's practice of the Kingdom of God. And until we see that, we're not ready to go on to the next stage and talk about who is a really good person. Because the barriers in our heart and life that are obstructed by our sense of who is well off and who isn't will not enable us to love people in the way that Jesus teaches.

Discipleship Described as Life in the Kingdom [23:08]

So, discipleship, as a disciple of Jesus, remember, I'm learning to lead my life in the Kingdom of God as he would lead my life if he were I. And the first major step is to share his vision of people, and to understand that the distinctions of up and down and in and out that human beings make are totally irrelevant to our approach to life in the Kingdom.

~ ~ ~ End of 3B = Video 6 @ 23:51 ~ ~ ~

Dallas related resources

- 1.) *The Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard, "Puzzle of the Beatitudes", chapter 4, p. 111-121
- 2.) "The Divine Conspiracy" #6 - [Kingdom Salvation](#) "Beatitudes & 'Woe-Be's" [49:35-1:10:34]
-- A 21 minute teaching with [full transcript](#) for Beyond Belief's third teaching (3A, 3B, 3C).
- 3.) The Divine Conspiracy #7 - [Kingdom Goodness in the Whole Self](#)
"Blessedness in the Beatitudes - Mt. 5" [30:45 - 36:15]

Dallas Willard "Beyond Belief" Teaching 3 (continued)

TRANSCRIPTION of [Who is Truly a Good Person?](#) 3C video 7 [40:10]

[Outline provided by Dallas Willard Ministries \(3C\)](#) (4 pages)

Abolishing Life Order as They Knew It Matthew 5:17-20

Well, once we've got that in place, we're apt to have a sense that this is this has changed things all together. We're asked to feel our sense of righteousness threatened. Do you know that's true? Because, you know, we tie our sense of righteousness to being able to decide who's in, who's out who's up, who's down. Now if you look at Matthew 5, you go on there down on verse 17. So you'll see that people that Jesus says to, to the people listening, he says, "*Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law and the Prophets.*" Now I ask you, why do you think he said that? He said that because that's what they were thinking. Right? Why were they thinking that? They were thinking that because he had just upset their little applecart about who is blessed and who is not. And they were thinking, "this just totally destroys the law and the prophets." Why? Because the law and the prophets, as they had been taught, said, "the poor are cursed, and so on down the line - and said, "the rich are blessed." Those with good reputations are blessed, and so on. So see, it sounded to them as if he were abolishing the order of life that they knew.

And, of course, that's a very dangerous kind of thing to do, isn't it? And more harm comes from that sort of revolutionary talk than all we've learned that in the 20th century. The 20th century, by far, more millions of people have been killed by their own governments, in order to bring to pass "*la revolucion*," you know, have that, have the revolution than have all of the past history of mankind by far. So the old saying, the more things change, the more they are the same applies, especially when we come to these matters of what human beings recognized as revolutions.

The Good Law

[2:45]

And Jesus says, "Do not think...don't think it." And Now then he goes back and takes them into a re-understanding of what the law and the prophets

are, of the law and the prophets are. The law and the prophets do indeed tell us what is good and right. Jesus, when he said to the man who came to him and said, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said, "What does it say in the law?", and the man who rattled it off. And Jesus says "Thus do and thou shalt live, if you do it." [Luke 10:28] He didn't think for a moment the guy did it. But his point was, if you do it, you live, that's good. The law is good. The law is a good thing. It is a manifestation of God's grace, we desperately need the law. And we should present the Ten Commandments to the world as God's best advice on how to lead a basically decent existence. And we should never back away from it. Now if it's shot, if the if human existence is shot, you need something more. And still, you will not find better instructions on how to lead a basically decent existence than the Ten Commandments, if you can do them, if you can live in them. Redemption has to be supplied because people cannot and do not live in them. But that doesn't withdraw the fact that they are good.

Righteousness Beyond Scribes & Pharisees Matthew 5:20 [4:20]

And Jesus is saying, in this passage in Matthew 5 Now the law is not to be destroyed, it is good it is to be fulfilled, and you read down that passage, you'll see it won't be done away with until every bit of it is fulfilled. The problem is, how do you do it?

How do you get to be the kind of person that the law is, as the Prophet says, written on your heart?

How do you get to be the kind of person who naturally does the deeds of the law? Now Jesus's response to that question is contained in Matthew 5:20. Please look at that with me a moment Now. And we're going to switch over from the first question. The question is, who's a really good person, as a disciple, I have to study that and learn that and let that become a part of my mind and heart and life, or possess my mind and heart and life. Who was a really good person? Now then we're looking at the question. I'm sorry, we were looking at the question who has the really good life? Now we look at the question, Who is the really good person? And Jesus's answer to that is going to be in terms of entering the Kingdom of Heaven again, look at 5:20, *"Truly, I'm telling you that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven."*

See, he's talking Now about righteousness - "dikaiosune", [Greek (def.)] "goodness", "really good person." Unless you go beyond the goodness of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will not come in touch with the Kingdom of Heaven, you will not be able to be a really good person.

Now what is the righteousness of the scribe and the Pharisee? All of the verses that follow in Matthew 5 down to the end our ways of spelling this out, but we can say it very simply. And I put it here on your sheet.

To go beyond the goodness of the scribes and the Pharisees means, "To go into the realm beyond particular acts external or internal." It the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees was defined by external actions, usually, but sometimes internal ones. But in any case, they were acts. They were actions, specific actions. And the scribe and the Pharisee assumes that the task is to get control of actions. The vision of the scribe and the Pharisee above all, their vision of righteousness is - don't do anything wrong. Don't do anything wrong. And just control your actions, and if you can succeed and not doing anything wrong, you're home safe.

A Good Heart Concerning Anger Matthew 5:21-26 [7:28]

So when you look at Matthew 5, we start out with murder, right? (v. 21) Killing. The old teaching, does indeed say, "Thou shalt not kill." So, the Pharisee thinks if they haven't killed anyone, they are a good person. In that dimension, they're a good person. The next section is about desire. (v. 27-30) The Pharisee thinks if they have not committed adultery, they are a good person in that area. Now listen to what Jesus says. The old law says, "Thou shalt not commit murder", verse 21. "And whoever commits murder is liable to the court, is subject to judgment." Whoever commits murder. "But I say to you, that everyone who is angry...", and if you like the easy version, you can read, "angry without cause with his brother is subject to judgment." Same language as murder. Everyone who's angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court, whoever says to his brother, "Raca!" - that's a term of contempt - shall be guilty before the Supreme Court. And whoever shall say, "You fool!", shall be guilty enough to go into the fire of Gehenna. Hell.

Well, so how do we understand this? When I was a child, my grandmother would not let me call my playmates "fools." And I saw that quickly, I'd say, "Well, I won't call them that, then I'll just think it." So I was a little legalist. Children are very legalistic, right, they really get going on this. I wasn't bothered by "Raca!", because I didn't know that term. That's a term that many people think comes from the noise you make when you clear your throat to spit. It's an Aramaic term. Contempt. But I had plenty of contempt, and I had names to express it. We use terms of contempt all the time. Many of them are rather tame, twit, twerk, dork, terms like that. Those are terms of contempt. And little children, children pile them on one another. School grounds are rife with contempt. And see Jesus is getting at attitudes. Now is he saying, "Well, be careful, don't say that word." No, he's not saying that. Let's deepen it. "Fool", of course, is a very strong term biblically. Fool is actually, we couldn't say the English equivalent in church. It's real bad, it's real violent, it's said on freeways, and places like that. It's a combination of anger and contempt. Really, I mean, the fool in biblical language is a really bad person.

Now then, watch how he goes further with this. He says, "Therefore, you're presenting your offering at the altar." [v. 23] Note that "therefore." The "therefore" refers back to the condition of heart that would not call people fools, would not be angry at them. And some of you are worried about saving anger here, and we'll need to talk about it a little bit. Because anger in our culture is thought to be sort of righteous. And indeed, anger in itself is not a sin. So we need to worry a little bit about that. But he goes on, "if you're presenting your offering at your altar, you have this condition of heart. You present your gift at your altar and remember, your brother has something against you. Leave your offering there before the altar and go your way, be reconciled to your brother, then come and present your offering." [v. 23-24] Now the offering here is not like Sunday service. An offering was perhaps something that you might make once a year or maybe even less frequently. It was a very solemn occasion. And the rule was that you never interrupted an offering unless there was some ceremonial point that was overriding what you were doing, and it had to be corrected so that the offering would, as it were, work right. And what Jesus is saying here is something very radical. He is uttering the prophetic statement that you never allow ritual matters to interfere with moral matters. And the moral

matter here is there is a rift between you and your brother. And a rift between you and your brother is so important that...when this comes to you, you're in the midst of this important event, you immediately suspended and walk off to take care of it.

Do you see the picture? I mean, this is talking about a tenderness of heart. Now remember, we started off with not killing. You started off with people saying I'm a good person because I didn't kill anybody. Do you see how we've progressed here Now? We're moving towards a kind of tenderness of heart that will characterize the righteousness beyond the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees which can only exist because we are living in union with the Kingdom of God.

~ In a Court of Law - Let's just finish the progression because this is Jesus's deepest teaching on morality. And he says, "Leave your offering, then make friends with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way." [v. 24-25] Now we're in a situation where there's not just a difference, but there's a threat or actuality of a legal proceeding, someone is suing somebody. And you had to put yourself in that situation and feel all of the turmoil and the threat and the anger and disappointment and all of that. And Jesus is saying, "Now when you're in that situation with someone, and you're on the way to court with them, work it out. Work it out."

"If you don't he may deliver you to the judge and the judge to the officer and be thrown into prison. And truly I shall, you shall not come out of there until you paid up the last cent." [v. 25-26]

See, that's the kingdom of man. And you step into that kingdom, and you go through the mills, and you do all the grinding, that all of us are very familiar with in legal proceedings. In the other way, you're walking in the Kingdom, and walking in the Kingdom has all sorts of possibilities of resolution which leave open constructive developments of loving relationships between people who are going to court on a legal manner.

Now you know, I know many people who read this, like the man I just referred to, and they say that says you should not go to court. It doesn't say that. It tells you how to go to court. Have you ever stood in the courtroom and watched the opponents? It's a hard thing to watch. You feel tangible hatred and anger going between the groups. Sometimes there are

things that have to be resolved by going to court. Most of them could be resolved without it, but they won't be. And sometimes to resolve a matter requires more than you can give, or you should give. There are some issues, there are some times when you should stand. But when that time comes, Jesus says make sure you are standing in the Kingdom of God. Make sure that you're standing in love and faithfulness to the well being and the rightness and the goodness of everyone involved in that situation. And make sure that your faith is in God.

I knew another man in South Africa and he was in business with a Christian partner and they got in trouble with one another, and he thought that God required of him that he give in. But he also thought that if he gave in, God would bail him out. He gave in and the other man ruined him. And so guess who he's mad at Now? He's mad at God.

~ Not Living with God in Legalism [17:31] What leads there? Legalism. Legalism - the idea that you can trade with God on laws. God is not interested in living with us on that basis, and he wants to bring us to the point to where we don't live with others on that basis. Law may be involved with God. It's good, I said. Law may involve with others, but we never define righteousness in those terms.

Now can I ask you, don't you see how it would be important to be a disciple of Jesus to learn how to do this? But imagine what it would be like to live a life free of anger and contempt, of attacking other people, and trying to squeeze justice out of them. And Jesus invites us to come into the Kingdom of God and live there with him. And sometimes it is a matter we'll just give in, Paul, you remember the Corinthians says, "Why are you going to court with one another? Why don't you let yourself be defrauded?" [I Corinthians 6:7] You remember that language? Why don't you let yourself be defrauded? Or ask the witness the most insignificant member of the church to decide the issue and take what they say? You remember that? And someone who's not living the Kingdom of God says, "How can I let myself be defrauded? I'm running my life. I have to master the situation." See that's the attitude of the person who lives outside the Kingdom of God. They are in charge of their life. They have defined blessedness. They are in charge of blessedness. They have to make it work. The person who lives in

the Kingdom of God simply lays it down. And if there is a time when they must stand for what is right, they do so but they never do so in hostility and anger. They never do so wishing to see harm done to people. They do so in a spirit of giving, because they know they stand in the hand of God.

That's what this teaching is about. It's not about suing people. It's not about leaving things and going to take care of something. It's not about not calling people fools. It's about having a certain kind of heart. It's about being a certain kind of person. And you know, you can not call people fools and still hate him, you can give in to him and still hate him. You could go, you could interrupt your service, and go try to work something out with people as a piece of legalism. You see how the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees always fails because it remains at the level of human control. And it always fails. And that's why Jesus said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." [Matthew 16:6] If you remain at the level of actions you're trying to control, you will always fail. And when you fail, since you've defined righteousness at that level, you will try to hide it. That's hypocrisy.

Living with Jesus in the Kingdom

[21:03]

On the other hand, if you step back to the level of living in a relationship with Jesus Christ, that allows you to count on him to be your blessedness, and your guide and your strengthener, and to accomplish what has to be done, for God's glory in your life, if you learn how to do that. (And this afternoon, we'll talk more about the particulars of learning how to do that.) Then you're going to be freed up. And if you do make a mistake, you will not have to hide it, you will not become a person who's leading a life that is not out in the open. And Jesus had strong words to say about that, "Everything that is done, he said, In the dark will be brought into the open." [Luke 8:17] So we have to be ready to live on that basis and live there Now. And we will not become hypocritical. If there is something wrong, we will be able to go to our fellowship and our pastors and our friends, and we will be able to find help to make it right. And because we live in a relationship with a person living in the Kingdom, not in a world where we're managing everything by our legalism just because we're free to do that.

Living in the Presence of the Cross

[22:18]

And the meaning of the cross in Christian experience then becomes vital and powerful, because that cross is where we stand and we accept the fact that we are sinners. And we accept the fact that our sins are paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ as he poured out his soul unto death. We accept that and we simply step off the legalistic basis that is stepping beyond the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees.

Now I have just a few moments and I want to say something about the rest of this chapter because Jesus's teachings are normally misunderstood because we don't think of them as orderly. We just sort of think of them as a list that someone threw together. But, I want to just ask you a question Now: Suppose anger and contempt were withdrawn from human life, how much evil do you think would be left? If you can imagine it, imagine it. There are around 25,000 people murdered every year in the United States. How many of those do you think would be murdered if it were not for anger and contempt? Not many, not many.

A Good Heart Concerning Desire Matthew 5:27-28 [23:40]

Now let's move on to the next area, which is sexual desire that Jesus touches on. But when we go there, let's remember we've already dealt with anger and contempt. Now think a moment. If anger and contempt were withdrawn from the area of sexuality, how much difficulty do you think there would be in the area of sexuality? There would still be some, but a lot less. A lot less. And, of course, Jesus is not just teaching about sexuality. He's teaching in general about obsessive desire or desire that is cultivated, and is welcomed into our hearts. He's dealing with people who were who were saying, "I am right sexually, because I have not committed adultery." And, you know, his teaching in return is, "I say to you," verse 28, "that everyone who looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his, in his heart." Now that phrase, "looking to lust" is it's important to keep that all in there and some of your translations may say we went through a period where a lot of them said and wrongly - "who looks and lusts." But the grammar is clear. It is looking for the purpose of lusting. So preposition, "pros" in the dative case. And it's very clear, and

your old King James, and many of the more recent versions get it right. This is talking about a person who is in love with lusting. And what Jesus is saying here is the inner condition of the heart says that a person is not right who cultivates and develops lusting, and uses other people for that purpose. The inner condition of the heart is what matters here too, just as it did in the previous case.

Now this idea that we're just not to do anything wrong, in this area is a failing strategy just like everywhere. See, when Jesus goes after anger and contempt, he pulls the plug on murder. What Jesus does is he starts with the level of the heart where evil can be stopped. And he takes care of that. Instead of trying to stop it down here, where it can't be stopped. Jesus understands that the object is not to avoid sinning. It goes much deeper. And the strategy for avoiding sinning is to stay out of temptation. Don't be the kind of person who will either be in the place of temptation or seeking to be tempted, to be tempted. Because many, many of our social areas take temptation to be kind of like real life. That's why sexuality plays such a large role in advertising goods. You use these feelings to sell things, to make things look enticing by transference. Or, you use anger to promote a political agenda of some sort. And Jesus knew that when you did that there was literally hell to pay.

So instead of doing that, what you do is you back up and you learn how to change the inside so that you are not the kind of person who would use another person to excite lust, or who would use another person as the object of contempt and anger. Then when you do that, everything else takes care of itself.

~ Hand Cutting Humor [28:22] Jesus has a little humor in this passage because he's talking to people who believe that sin is in their actions. And so he says to them in here in verse 29, *"If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you, for it is better for you that one of your parts perish than that the whole of your body be thrown in hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, throw it from you, for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be cast in hell."* [v. 29-30] Do you think he's recommending this? No, he's not recommending it. This is what in logic is called "a reductio ad

absurdum." He's talking to people who believe that the object is not to do anything wrong. Now if that's the object, then you cut off anything that is required for you to do what is wrong, and you can't do anything wrong, and you roll into heaven and mutilated stump.

Now do you think Jesus is teaching that? No, he's teaching just the opposite. When he says "if your eye makes you stumble", his assumption is your eye doesn't do it. If your hand, his assumption is your hand doesn't do it. You do it. You do it. And even if as we were talking last evening, our body is ready to move on its own, the person is still responsible. It's the person who's responsible. And, if you cut off the hand and the eye and so on, your heart may still be full of anger and lust and resentment and rebellion against God. And just the fact that you didn't do anything wrong because you cut off your members doesn't mean anything about your rightness.

Once again, you have to understand that Jesus is the most brilliant man that ever lived on earth, and He is teaching, and he teaches in the best way possible.

A Good Heart Concerning Divorce Matthew 5:31-32 [30:45]

Now then let's just go on down the list quickly because we must conclude. Suppose we've gotten rid of anger and contempt, and Now suppose we've gotten rid of cultivated lusting. Do you think life would be recognizable at that point? And then what's going to happen to issues of divorce? Jesus never said that divorce was never permissible. But he never thought it was a good thing. And he recognized the Mosaic provision that in some cases, divorce is better than the alternatives. But he also recognized that when especially in the context he's addressing here, when a man divorces a woman, he ruins her life. She really had only three alternatives. One, she could become a prostitute, she could become a drudge in one of her relatives homes, if she would have it, if they would have it. Or, she might be able to find another man who would take her in, but it would always be on bad conditions.

But, how many divorces do you think we would have to deal with if we were done with anger and contempt and cultivated lusting? How many? There might still be a few. And I don't want to go into that deeply, but I think that life being what it is in this world, there would still be a few, but there would be almost none. And nearly every one, I mean, imagine people living in the spirit described here of the man who, on the way to the court works it out. A woman living in that spirit. Will people who are not dominated by their desire. So many divorces occur today because a man or a woman gets carried away by their desires. They become obsessive and locked in on them, they begin to feel sorry for themselves. They begin to say this person does not satisfy me and so forth and so on. And then that gets into the mix of anger and contempt. And it's just all hopeless after a while within the natural.

A Good Heart Concerning Oaths Matthew 5:33-37 [33:16]

And then go on to the next one about swearing. Now swearing isn't cussing. Swearing is using song and dance language to get people to do what you want. That's what that is, swearing is not cursing. It's not even filthy language. It's using language that invokes something powerful God, of course, or heaven or the city of Jerusalem, or your head, even people people swear by their heads. I don't know how that helps, but they do. An old American swearing is, "I'll bet the devil my head, that car will run another 50,000 miles." You know, and that's what Jesus was talking about, so don't do that. See, this is verbal bullying. It's verbal manipulation. And isn't it interesting that Jesus would take that up right after divorce. But that's so much a part of our business life. How much advertising is actually doing what Jesus said not to? "Just let your Yes be a Yes, and your no be a No." Let it stand. Give it over to God, let him have his way. Don't try to manipulate people.

Now you say I can't do that well, but suppose you have already gotten rid of anger, contempt, cultivated lusting, and you're living in a happy family. Going to be a lot easier, isn't it? And it'll certainly help the family. Because you know, we all know about those families where the father rules by an iron lung. And that's not a good way to do it. So we lay all that down, Now then you go on.

A Good Heart Concerning Retaliation Matthew 5:38-42 [35:10]

Then you come to the part - And just finishing up, just note the ones that we all know so well.

"You've heard it said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for tooth.' I say don't resist those who are evil. Whoever slaps you in the right cheek, turn the other. Anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, give him your coat also whether he needs it or not. And whoever will force you to go a mile, go two." [5:38-42]

How are those usually read? They're read as impossible legalisms. But Now remember, we've already dealt with who is really well off. Who's blessed, we've got that straight. We've dealt with anger and contempt. We've dealt with cultivated lusting, and all the sickness that comes out of that. We did that we've dealt with unhappiness between mates. We've dealt with verbal manipulation. Hey, you get down here, you're already a different person, you understand? You're a different person. Now that doesn't mean that you're going to Now enforce these as simple legalisms. But it means you're going to be ready for whatever comes and able to do whatever is right. With reference to these things. You will love your enemies, you can love them. You can remain vulnerable when you have been taken advantage of. That doesn't mean that you don't know what has happened, and that you can't base your future action on the basis of your knowledge of what has already happened. But, it does mean you will not try to become invulnerable. You will not isolate yourself. Why? Because you're living in the Kingdom of God. Going the second mile, that too. Even the third mile, you won't go do a legalism there. You won't say Jesus said, "Second mile and you're dead." Right? I mean, it may be that there's a third mile, maybe I don't say it is if this is an expression of the kind of people that live in the Kingdom of God.

And I'm going to have to quit leave it there, I think.

[Dallas to the director.] Is that right? Am I...oh, I got a few more minutes.

Living in the Kingdom of the Heavens

[37:35]

Well, let me just make sure you understand Now that what we've done here. We have spoken about the Kingdom of God, the invitation to live in the Kingdom of God by faith in Jesus. And we have said that in order to do that we have to share his vision of who is well off and who is a really good person. And then we've looked at his basic teaching on these two points. Who is well off and learning that is a big job. You can't just say okay, I got it. Because your whole being is permeated by a system of values that says, "No!" Your body language, your spoken language, the feelings that are imprinted all over your social reality, your interactions. It's already out there. And for example, dealing with people who are in poverty or who have AIDS or whatever it may be, you see, that's right there in the social context. That is something that has to be mastered. And we go through all the stages of awkwardness, of kind of pretending that something is going on that isn't, but we can come through to the genuineness of "Blessed are the _____ , (you fill in the blank), "...for theirs is the Kingdom of God."

A Good Heart of the Father's Love Matthew 5:43-48 [39:02]

And then in that vision, move on to a transformed heart that is able to do and what Jesus comes up at the end of the passage here is just love, love as your Father in heaven loved. See, that's real righteousness. That's real goodness. And in it, we are living in interaction with the Kingdom of the Heavens. The scribe and the Pharisee can't get there because they are living at the action, the level of explicit action, not at the level of the heart. You meet the Kingdom of God at the level of the heart, and there you are supplied with the wisdom, the strength, the joy that enables you actually to do the kinds of things that Jesus is talking about. And when you do them you don't do them lugubriously, sadly, unhappily, resentfully. You do them joyously. You do them with gratitude to God that you can do that. Thank you.

~ ~ ~ End of 3C = Video 7 @ 40:10 ~ ~ ~

+ Dallas writing and video resources to complement 3C (video 7)

- ~ *The Divine Conspiracy*, "The Rightness of the Kingdom Heart", chapter 5, p. 129-185
- ~ "The Divine Conspiracy Lecture #4 - [Kingdom of God](#) [link]
"Master of the Moral Life: Evil, Anger" [54:10-1:06:55]
- ~ The Divine Conspiracy #7 - [Kingdom Goodness in the Whole Self](#)
"Question #3 - Who is a really good person?" [10:25-25:25]

Dallas Willard "Beyond Belief" Teaching 4

TRANSCRIPTION of [Spiritual Disciplines 4A](#) video 8 [28:28]

[Outline provided by Dallas Willard Ministries \(4A\)](#) (3 pages)

We've come to the point now where we want to talk about practical steps to be taken to enter into the teachings of Jesus, and make them a part of our lives in the way that God intended them to be, not as external legalisms, but rather as expressions of the kind of person that we have become. So that all of these issues of anger, and sexuality and so on, are simply handled easily on the basis of the redemptive work that God has set forth in our spirits.

My Intention as a Disciple of Jesus

If you look at the set that starts out - As Jesus' disciple I am... (this is just summary), as Jesus' disciple, I am learning from him how to lead my life as he would lead my life if he were I. This is my consciously chosen aim to learn this, and I am constantly arranging and rearranging my affairs to reach this goal. When we have a major intention in life, whatever it may be, then we bring all of our subordinate steps into line with that intention. So Now if I really do intend to be Jesus' disciple, I really do intend to learn the things that he has taught about blessedness, about righteousness, then I devote myself to it. I devote myself to it. This is important to say, because we underestimate the significance of intention. It's one thing to wish for something, it's another thing to want it, it's the third thing to intend it. And we have to go through those stages. We have to hear and perhaps that provokes sort of a wish, "Well, that would be nice." And then perhaps we realized this is something we really want. And, but that isn't intention. Intention comes at the point of where we decide that we are going to bring this into reality.

Spiritual Formation

[2:20]

Now the language that is often used today is spiritual formation. And on the next couple of couple of three pages, you'll see something about spiritual formation. I've included since I found I was going to be able to hand out copies, I thought I'd give you something a little thicker than the transparencies. And this is a sheet that I use to emphasize your part in spiritual formation. And I've referred here to II Peter 1:4-7, which tells us to "add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to your knowledge, self

control, to your self control, perseverance, to perseverance, godliness, to godliness, family kindness, or phileo love. And then to that, agape.” It's interesting, when you read your scriptures, you will notice many, many times they just pile these things up. Sometimes they are progressive like this one. And if you study the progressiveness, that's a rich study in its own right. You'll find a section like that in Romans 5, also. But, the important thing is to get the multidimensionality of the life which Christ gives us. And you see here, one of the best lineups - faith, virtue, knowledge, and so. And, one of the things you will notice in every one of them is that agape love is presented as the capstone. That's true in Matthew 5, we didn't have time to do all that work there, but if you study that, you'll see agape love is the capstone. You start out with not being angry and killing people and you wind up with agape love. That's true of Romans 5, that progression there. It's true here. And Colossians 3. “Above all”, Paul says, After listing these things, he says, I think it's verse 14, “put on agape love which is the bond of perfectness, the bond of perfection.” In other words, this is what pulls it all together, and gives it a unity and completeness. So that's what you see here.

Our Contribution to Spiritual Formation

[4:40]

Now notice here that this is something for us to do. Does that mean that God leaves us alone with it? Of course not. But, the issue of passivity and activity is the deepest, unsolved mystery in the understanding of spiritual growth today. Activity and passivity. See, in a personal relationship, you'd never have just activity and passivity. You have activity and passivity on both sides. That's the way it works. Doesn't matter what it is, any personal relationship you have. Anytime you reduce it to all activity on one side, and all passivity on the other, you destroy the personal relationship. And so the relationship of our redemption is one in which the gift of God comes to us through the word of the gospel, and we are brought to life. And there is an element of passivity in that. But as soon as that word takes root in us, and the Spirit begins to move, then we are active. And then the Word comes to us take off, put off the old person, put on the new and so on, or in this passage, add to your faith, virtue, add to your virtue, knowledge and so on.

Now then, I just look quickly at the bottom of that second page there, because this is our contribution to spiritual formation.

~ First of all, is to want it. And we need to look back at that list and say, Do I really want that? Or is this something I want? That it may be that we haven't understood it well enough to want it. So sometimes teaching is needed. Sometimes ministry is needed from others, prayer is needed, the ministry of the Body of Christ, the group that you worship in and serve in, others in your community that you know, so all kinds of things may be needed to help us with that. But we have to come to the point where we want it and we need to be honest about that. Do we want it or do we not? If we want it, God will give it to us. It's there for us.

~ And the next step then is to intend it. Do we intend to do that? An intention is, comes in degrees, comes more or less wavering and fixed, and we have to come to the place where we stably intend it. We intend to be people who have added to our faith, virtue and so on. And people's response, sometimes they don't know anything about it. Sometimes they have a little information, sometimes they desire, they kind of like to be it. And then there is the person who decides, yes, this will be it. That's the person who steps into discipleship and says, "I'm going to have this. I'm going to... I'm going to learn it from Jesus Christ. And I'm going to arrange my affairs so that will happen." And all of us then have to become honest about this and recognize where we stand, not fault-finding and guilt heaping, and all that sort of thing, but just recognize where we stand. Is this what our life is about? That's a nice informal way of putting it. Is this what our life is about? Or is it about something else? If it isn't? Well, all right, then perhaps we could take steps to learn more about it and possibly come to the place to where we would say I respond to this teaching of the Scripture. And this is what my life is about. My life is about becoming this kind of person. And when you make that decision, it will certainly be one that is assisted by the Holy Spirit. God will accompany it with His grace, and we will not go it alone. And then we step into discipleship.

Discipleship in My Job

[8:44]

The place of discipleship, as we've been talked about it a little before on the next page, is home, work and play. I am learning to do all in the kingdom of God. I can't stress too strongly how important our job is in discipleship. If we're not able to bring our job into our discipleship, we are automatically excluding a major portion of our life, perhaps the major portion of our life,

from learning to live in the kingdom of God. So whatever my job may be, I have to see that as something Jesus could be doing. I need to imagine that. I need to think that through. If it's a young mother raising their children in the family or someone who's engaged in the arts or I spoke to someone today from Johns Hopkins, who is in physiology, I think he said, whatever it may be, wherever you are. We have a farmer here, came up from Virginia to visit, glad to see him. Farming can be done in the Kingdom of God. See, if you don't, if you're not able to include that you just automatically exclude more most of your waking hours from your discipleship. So we take our job.

Now what does that mean? That means I learned how to do that job as Jesus would do it, I learned how to do that job in the power of the Kingdom of God. Now that means a lot of things. One, it means, I simply don't cooperate with evil. And I just hear story after story from people and I know from my own work in the University of Southern California, you are constantly called on to cooperate with evil. And you just learn how not to do it. You don't make a big fuss about it unnecessarily. And there may be a time for that but you just don't. You just don't do it, you don't cooperate with it. Everything from salacious stuff, to character assassination, to cheating the university, and so on, you know, you just don't do it. You just stand differently. And that will, that will mark you out. You will be noticed. But that's good. That's good. You know, and that's an opportunity to let people.

Now the other end of that is, we ought to see the hand of God making a difference miraculously in what we're accomplishing at our work. See, our life is not just avoiding sin, and as we grow, in more and more is not just avoiding sin. When we started off it seems like that's a lot of it. But as we grow increasingly, the good we are involved in, makes sin appear like the slop it is. Who needs it, right? So, I don't have to spend my time resisting slop. And, when I'm caught up in what is good, then I'm seeing the prosperity of God's Kingdom in the good that I do.

An Example from Dallas' Life

[12:05]

And in my own case, that often means that I go into a committee meeting where it looks like someone's going to have their head taken off. And I've seen lives practically saved. When faculty, for example, had their minds made up that they were not going to accept a student's work. I remember one case in particular. And it was good work, it was not bad work, and in

fact, it's since been published as a wonderful book by Temple University Press. It's excellent. But, these two faculty members who were on this graduate committee with me, I was the person's chair. It didn't say the right things. And in particular, it was just too deeply immersed in this whole issue of showing that God was not responsible for evil in the world. And, Now that was the case where I simply, I knew what was coming down, and so I prayed, and I just took God with me into that room. And I didn't say a lot. I just watched and waited. And all of a sudden, after about an hour and a half, I sensed that things had shifted. And what came out of that was the right decision for this young man. He also was able to have enough peace of spirit to just let God work. And these two other faculty members came around. And it came out right. Now I know that was a miracle. I know that was a miracle. And it's not attributable to me. It's attributable to God. But I had to go in there expecting. See, I could have gone in there and said, I could have really chewed them out. I could have said things like, "I hired you here." You know? That would have been terrible. I mean, even if they had agreed to do it, the man, the young man would have borne the stigma of it the rest of his life. As it is, he's doing wonderfully well. They both love him and are proud of him because he comes back with his publications and sends them all out. And they feel like their life is justified.

So, now all I'm saying is simply this folks really, as a disciple, we take our work, whatever it may be, and we make that the place where we look for the hand of God, and we learn how to do that. Just very simple. Very simple but tremendously important point.

Becoming a Sermon on the Mount Kind of Person [15:08]

Now on the next page, we've more or less covered that we haven't done all of it. But this is simply an outline of the Sermon on the Mount, especially the section there in chapter 5, goes a little beyond that. Maybe I could just call your attention to the last paragraph on that page.

The commands of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are invitations to be a certain type of person or person who, through faith and discipleship in him, has become inwardly transformed, so that his behaviors flow naturally, supernaturally, of course, from who they now are, as his mature brothers and sisters under the present rule of God.

Can you identify that? Does that look good to you? It does to me, it really looks good. To me, it says this is where I want to be. I want to be living there, I want to know the reality of that. I want to be that kind of person. And when we are that kind of person, then God brings to pass the good things that are described in the sermon.

Sanctification

[16:14]

And then that gives us a picture of sanctification on the next page. Sanctification is a consciously chosen and sustained relationship with God in Christ in which one is able to do and routinely does what they know to be right before God. Okay, Now where have we gotten? Remember, we started last night talking about the problem of not being able to do the things that you intend to do, or doing the things you don't intend to do. [["The Problem with Our Beings", 1B, Video 2 @ 14:23; "What's the Problem? The Body Trained by Sin", 2A , video 3 @ 9:42\]](#) And that is the that is the situation of the person, even though they have this immortal soul, and are an unceasing spiritual being, they're still caught in a world that leaves them in bondage, and they're not able to do the things that they know that they should do. Now then, in sanctification, you have as a disciple come to the point to where you're actually able to do the things that you know to do. I hope that looks good to you also. Moral, religious, even prudential things that we know to be right, our relationship with Christ enables us simply to do that, routinely. See, we know that we have made great progress when we don't have to think about certain kinds of things.

These are people who don't. I mean, again, I'm just amazed at this. A young man, my acquaintance, recently bought a car. The man who sold it to him thought he was trying to befriend him and said, Well, Now you know, I can say I sold this to you for \$500 instead of \$4,000, and you can save a lot on your taxes. This young man who is a Christian was thinking about it. What's there to think about? You remember Jesus was in one of those situations, a man with a withered hand and he said, "Is it right to heal on the Sabbath?" This is one of those few places in which it says Jesus got mad. They had to think about it.

Are you old enough to remember Jack Benny? Right. You know, his jokes about the robber, "Your money or your life!" He stands there, and the guy says, "Your money or your life." He says, "I'm thinking." See, what we have

to think about is a deep indication of who we are inside. And what we want to come to his point where we don't have to think about things like this. We don't have to think about whether or not I'm going to save a lot of money on taxes if I lie to the DMV that I bought the car for a certain price. We just don't think about it. And that's the natural outflow. I'm walking with Christ and so all of these things come along.

Now sanctification is not an experience. It's not a status, not something you attain and then you got it. It's not an outward form. It does become a track record and it does become a habituation. That's a constantly sustained relationship, and this is the outcome of spiritual formation.

Approaches to Spiritual Formation

[19:48]

Now then, quickly on to the next page approaches to spiritual formation. By formation, we understand the formation of the inner self, so that the righteousness of Christ is extended throughout the whole life. It's Spiritual Formation. And again, I say this is what many people used to call spiritual growth. But, you know, the language changes, and I'm sure you hear this language Now - spiritual formation, and is taking the place of discipleship, partly because discipleship itself lost a good bit of its content, I think. But what we're talking about is the formation of the spirit - how do you form that inward person, so that the whole life comes under the righteousness of Christ?

And there are a number of different approaches to spiritual formation, I want to go over them briefly.

1.) New Age. New Age thought - the route to spiritual formation is what they call enlightenment. And they're aiming at a set of mental and physical disciplines in such a way that you come to a state of enlightenment. And enlightenment is basically where you perceive that you are not distinct from everything else, and you lose all of your desires. New Age thought is basically inspired by Hindu and Buddhist thinking, and the curse is desire, and the aim is to get rid of it. And for the Buddhist way, the way you get rid of it, is by realizing that you are not a distinct being. You realize that you are identical with everything else. That ought to do it.

2.) Then there's legalism - train force people to do things. And we've talked a good bit about that. And I call attention to it here just to say, Now

surely, we recognize that we will not do it, you can legalize, train people to do things until forever, and it will not change, it will not necessarily change what they are on the inside. On the other hand, certainly one must do differently. There's no doubt about that.

3.) Thirdly, you have the attitude... the path of church services, passive consumer approach. And here we look for revival. We look for baptism, the Spirit. We look for consuming services of teaching, preaching and sacrament. They come down a little bit different and different communions. But basically, that's the idea. And you if you don't hear it explicitly said, you will pick it up from what is said in many situations. The idea is what what changes you spiritually and forms your spirit are the services of the church. Now are they important? Absolutely, they are. But we know on the other hand, that people can attend church services endlessly and not be changed inwardly. And my own background was one which was big on revivals, and I know what they are, and I lived through them and had part in them and, they're very powerful. But on the other hand, I have to honestly say, looking back that many times, there was great revival, people were, I believe, converted in an important sense of the word, and I expect to see them in heaven when I get there. But it didn't do much for their spiritual growth. And I've seen people who have experienced what is called baptism in the spirit has just made them worse.

And so, and also the use of the gifts of the Spirit. They don't do much for character formation. They're vital to the church, we should expect them, we should be thankful for them. God gives them to the church for the benefit of the church. But very often, they do not mature the person who exercises them. And they're just in that regard, they're just like revivals. They're obviously, obviously, the presence of God but they don't change.

Change Occurs with Action

[23:42]

Now what does change, what changes is action continuing in the word of Jesus. Now this is John 8:31 & 32. John 8:31 & 32. "If you continue in My word" - "meno" (Greek) - "abide, live in, walk in" my word. It's not a nonstop Bible study, though that might help. But, "if you continue in my word, then you are my disciples indeed." You see, because you're out here putting His Word into practice, you're an apprentice. Tells you, he gives you

His word of some of the things we've been talking about, and you put them into practice.

For example, suppose you actually decide to turn the other cheek. Not in a legalistic sense, but in the way that I've described remaining vulnerable and open and in touch with people when they hurt you and making it possible for them to hurt you again. Suppose you actually do that. How does that work? Now if you put that word of Jesus into practice, you will be watching for the manifestation of the kingdom in conjunction with that and you will learn how to do that in a good and fruitful way for yourself and for others. "If you continue in My word, you are my disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Free from what? Do you realize that in that context, the freedom that is being discussed is freedom from sin? You will see sin for what it is and you will move out of it. So, that's spiritual formation. Remember character can only be formed by action. Suppose you had a friend who walked up and said, "my neighbor is learning Spanish for me." What would you say to them? Would you say, "Hmm, I expect you soon to be able to speak Spanish well"?

See, the development of your soul and speaking Spanish or English, is soul stuff. It's embedded in your body and your social context. Because it's the development of your soul in the sense that I've tried to describe it. Soul stuff only develops by action. You have to go into action if your character is going to change and God cannot impart that to you without you acting.

Jesus Engaging Action When He Heals Others [26:46]

Take your scriptures, your gospel sometimes, or for that matter, Book of Acts or your whole Bible. Look at the Gospels and see how Jesus heals people. He rarely ever heals people without asking them to do what they cannot do. The man with the withered hand. "Stretch forth your hand." "Well, don't you see it's withered?" The man on the palate. "Take up your bed and walk." "Why do you think they carried me in here?" Ten lepers. "Go to the priest and tell them that you're healed." But we're not healed. It was as they went, that they were healed. Now I want to take you right back to where we began. You are in your essence, creative will. Creative will is formed into character only by action. And that is why spiritual formation is carried out by action.

~ ~ ~ End of 4A = Video 8 @ 28:28 ~ ~ ~

Dallas Willard "Beyond Belief" Teaching 4

TRANSCRIPTION of [Spiritual Disciplines 4B](#) video 9 [20:50]

[Outline provided by Dallas Willard Ministries \(4B\)](#) (3 pages)

Now your next page has spiritual disciplines on it, and we want to talk briefly about them. And spiritual disciplines come into place when we realize that we cannot do what we're trying to do. And we want to take steps to be able to do that because we know that God has told us to take steps. We know also we can't do it on our own, but we know we don't have to do it on our own. If we act, he will act with us. But Now we are trying to do the things that we need to do to enable us to do what we cannot do by direct effort. That's the key problem here. Really I have to say to you in this section is to explain that to you.

So, what do you do when you'd want to turn the other cheek but you can't. You just can't. Maybe you've already smacked him before you thought about it as we've been talking about. Or, maybe you've just, you haven't done that, but you just simply can't bring yourself to remain vulnerable because of your pain or you're just can't see how to do it. I mean, this is a complicated situation. You know, when you're down in the middle of the mess, there never are clear principles that really solve your problem. I mean, you may know the clear principles, but how they apply are often troublesome. And that's a part I believe of God's plan for us that we would know how to trust Him and walk with Him and not just try to boil this down to a set of rules.

So what do you do when you can't do what Jesus said? The general rule Now is don't "try try again". "Trying trying again" does not work well. In fact, it rarely works. And we say, "If at first you don't succeed, try try again," right? You may just confirm your bad habits. If you do that you will discourage yourself. So, the actual rule that you want to follow is, if at first you don't succeed, find out why you didn't succeed, and then try again.

I was talking to someone who works in a jet laboratory out in California about this. He said, "Well, you're sure right, if we have one explosion, we don't just try, try again. We find out what went wrong before we try again." That's... this is really true. What went wrong? And in order to do

this, we need to be indirect, and we need to take Jesus as our example and follow him into his practices, and not just keep trying to do what he said. And these practices really are what we have come to learn through the history of the church to regard as disciplines with spiritual life.

Discipline Defined

[3:37]

The second paragraph on that page, I tried to tell you in general, what a discipline is.

A discipline is an activity that enables us to accomplish what we cannot do by direct effort.

That's true of all disciplines. Whether it's speaking Spanish, playing piano, almost anything you can mention is learn is learned in this way. Most things worth doing cannot be achieved by direct effort. We have to train ourselves for them. This conflicts with a lot of our ideas about the Christian life, it troubles many people's teaching of grace, because they think it's somehow inconsistent with grace. I think wiser Christians have thought in terms of means to grace. That's an old Methodist phrase means to grace. And, so it doesn't set grace aside, but it recognizes that you must do something to receive grace. Again, that passivity-activity thing. A gift has to be received. Otherwise, it isn't a gift. It's an imposition.

So the question is - what can we do to receive the grace of God? To then return to the things that we intend to do that Christ has taught and shown us and be able to do them? Well, let's be simple and illustrative. I've given you two lists of disciplines here, and I won't have time to talk about them at any length, maybe one or two if we have time.

Δ3 Disciplines of Disengagement (Retreat)

solitude, silence, fasting, frugality,
chastity, secrecy, sacrifice, watching

Δ3 Disciplines of Engagement (Advance)

prayer, study, meditation, memorization, worship,
celebration, service, fellowship, confession, submission,
simplicity, obedience, generosity, giving, guidance, pilgrimage

These are practices that are standard, fairly standard recognized by everyone has things that one might do in order to put themselves in a position to do what they cannot do by direct effort.

But let's just be illustrative. For example, in the little article that I handed out. I hope you all got one and maybe had a chance to read it about looking like Jesus. I'm not responsible for the artwork, by the way, I don't know where that stuff came from. But, and I don't think it's Jesus, and it's certainly not me.

Living without Hurry

[5:46]

But I talked about for example, hurry. Now hurry is a burden to the human soul. It's a crushing burden. And my grandmother used to tell me that idleness was the devil's workshop, but I tell you I found a more fruitful workshop than idleness and that is hurry. I've tucked in towards the back of here, a little sheet that I use in workshops about how to get the urgent off your back. But, if you are in a hurry, you are going to find it very difficult to walk in the Kingdom with Christ. If you're in a hurry, and you will find it very difficult to be loving to people, to be kind. You will be, pretty certainly, you will carry some degree of anger with you. You rarely find the person in a hurry who is not at least mildly angry and on the verge of seriously angry. And that's because you see, hurry always comes out of a sense that we have more to do than we can get done. And we're trying to do something we can't do and it frustrates our will. And then we're prepared to cut all sorts of corners, get angry, blame people, justify things that we wouldn't think of trying to justify and other circumstances and so on. And so I encourage people to try to learn to live without hurry. Now it isn't hairsplitting to say that you can act quickly and not be in a hurry. Hurry is an attitude. And hurry always has this element of being strangled and choked and repressed, by having to do things you cannot get done. And you need to think deeply about the theology that lies back of hurry, because the theology that lies back of here is accusatory of God. It is essentially saying God is holding me responsible for more than I can do. And we have to break the grip of that.

The way to break the grip of hurry is solitude. If you learn to practice solitude and silence, you will break the grip of hurry. Because hurry is a habit. That's all it is. And you don't have to live in a hurry. And I say, once

again, I encourage you, to come to the place to where you never hurry. And when you're tempted to hurry, just release it to God. And here's the word of the prophet Isaiah,

"They that believe shall not make haste." [Isaiah 28:16 KJV]

"They that believe, shall not make haste." I've given you the references to that on the sheet back here, and you can look that up.

The Discipline of Solitude to Cure Hurry

[9:20]

What is solitude? Well, solitude is breaking the relationships that govern us and drive us and jerk us around and hold us to expectations and so on. Just stepping out of those, stepping out of those relationships, and going to where you are alone. Go to a place where you're alone, and you leave your work home. And it's hard to start practicing solitude at home because all your work is there. So that's one reason why you need to get away. And you have to find all sorts of things like oh, this is just self indulgence, and all that sort of thing. And you're lazy, or you'd be working, and you have all that stuff. And you're making a deep choice Now about the character of your spiritual life. Busyness is an ego thing. Hurry is an ego thing. You know, it really is. Don't bother me, I'm busy. You're probably the very person that should be bothered. But that's what we say. "He's an, she's very important. I mean, don't bother her. She's busy." And so, Now we all know that there's an element of truth in that there's something important in it. But solitude is where we choose to step out of the entanglements of ordinary life and come to the place to where we can be driven by what is between us and God and what is in our heart. And that means that we lay down all of the assignments. You don't, when you go into solitude, don't take work with you. Don't take things that you have in mind to do. You go into solitude, and please forgive me, you go into solitude to do nothing. To do nothing. And since I have so little time, let me just tell you, that I encourage also people to have times every week when they do nothing. I don't mean 15 minutes. I'm talking three hours. Now you'll immediately say to me, "I don't have time for that." Well, the deepest challenge to our faith is in terms of our time. The deepest challenge to what we believe is important is in terms of our time.

If you believe it is important for you to be able to calmly and strongly live in the Kingdom that Jesus has opened to you, then you will believe you have time to do what is necessary to enable you to do that. [12:09]

This is why solitude is, I believe, the fundamental spiritual discipline whenever you get ready to really follow Christ into his teachings as his disciple.

Practicing Disciplines as Wisdom not Laws [12:45]

Most everyone, though I certainly don't make laws about this or say, because you know, none of the disciplines are laws, disciplines are wisdom, they're not laws, they're not laws of righteousness. But, when you are ready to follow Christ into these things, and go back, or when you want it, and when you intend it, and you signed up as his apprentice, then your next step is to do whatever is necessary to bring it to pass. And I'm suggesting to you that the disciplines for the spiritual life are precisely the things that will do that. There's no formula, there's no mechanism. This is a personal walk with the Lord. There are all sorts of things that we could talk about, about how to use them and how not to use them. You don't want to ever start feeling righteous because you do them or unrighteous because you don't do them. When you get in trouble with them, you don't push them, you back out and you learn how to do them better. For example, if you go into solitude, and you begin to feel a little crazy, back out. Silence - the same way. It disorients you, disorients you. It's supposed to in a sense, disorient you. That's in a sense, the whole point. But if it begins to be something that's too hard for you to take, and you begin pushing yourself, stop.

There's a very important rule about spiritual disciplines - never be a hero. Never be a hero. And with reference to the disciplines of abstinence on the left hand of your page there, those are especially important, never be a hero. Don't get ego attached to it.

I don't know how many times I have friends who have set long fasts for themselves, and towards the end, something came up where it was reasonable and right for them to break their fast. Aunt Virginia came in from Indianapolis. And so, what are you going to do, sit there and fast while you feed Aunt Virginia? Well, the the Desert Fathers and Mothers

worked out a long time ago that it's much more important to be hospitable than it is to keep your fast going. You can always start another fast. And I think this happens often because God knows they could not have stood to have finished that fast. Been too hard on their ego. So he let some break it, leads them into the breaking of it. And the disciplines are activities that you exploratorily approach. You say, what is in this for me? And you learn how to carry through with them in a way that are good for you.

~ Solitude, silence, fasting.

~ Frugality, which is really dispensing with things that are an indulgence to your senses and your ego.

~ Chastity refraining from sexual thoughts, deeds and actions for a period of time.

You see all of these again, there's nothing wrong with sex. There's nothing wrong with solitude... I'm sorry, ...with being with people. There's nothing wrong with talking. There's nothing wrong with food. That isn't the point.

~ Secrecy. A very important discipline that Jesus teaches in Matthew 6. Secrecy is a teaching about how we do things before the Lord. We don't do them before man to be seen of them. And all of these areas, again, there's nothing wrong with someone knowing your good works, but if you're if you're dependent on praise, then that needs to be broken. And secrecy enables you to do that. In secrecy you do good deeds without letting people know who did them. And you practice standing before the Lord.

The Golden Triangle of Spiritual Transformation

[16:56]



Now just finally, for this segment, if you look at the next page after this, you have a little diagram here. I call this "Golden Triangle of Spiritual Transformation". And you'll see that this puts plan disciplines in a three angles, procedure. And this, this brings together all of the elements that will give you a plan for spiritual formation, and then you will be able to carry out your part in spiritual formation.

The Top - The Spirit - You'll see at the top, it's the work of the Spirit, the new birth, the fruit of the Spirit. I could mention other aspects of the Spirit. That's crucial, isn't it?

Ordinary Events - The left hand corner over here ordinary events of life, this is where we are disciples is in the ordinary events of life. These are sometimes called trials and temptations. James says, "Let these trials have their way. Count it all joy when you fall into all kinds of temptations and trials." Why? Because you're going to see the Kingdom of God. Now you may not succeed with that too well, if you don't have a plan discipline, regular activities result in your life. You know, at this point in my life, folks, I'm not, I can't, I can't "bologna" you [confuse or trick or flatter]. I don't have anything to gain from that. And I will tell you this works. I just want to read a letter that came to me over the email here at home and I never, I don't know this guy "from kingdom come", as they say. Here's what he says,

Dear Dallas, six months ago, when I read the preface to The Spirit of the Disciplines, I saw my life as it could be. And that night I prayed with tears. 'Lord, this is the life I've always wanted to live. Please let me, please let what this guy is claiming be true.' Recently, a very close friend, one who knows the darkest, secret sides of me invited me to a restaurant to have dinner with him. And during the meal. He said, "John, do you know who you are, you are the master of change." And then he went on to speak encouragingly about how aware he was of the fact that I had suddenly, (Dallas - "and I do love this sentence"), I suddenly had the power to shed all specific sin patterns that had been defeating me for over 16 years. My new identity testifies that what you claimed in the book is in fact true.

What did I claim in the book?, Simply, what I've told you just in these few minutes about spiritual disciplines. They work, they are proven. It's not a question of, "will they work?" They've been proven for generation after generation after generation. They will work for you. It doesn't require that you have complete information about them. If you will simply take the little information I've given you here and begin to put them into practice, you will find their power. They are self verifying. And on the other hand, no matter how much anyone talks at you about them, without putting into practice, they will mean nothing. But if you'll put them into practice, you will find, and the reason they work is because Christ meets you in them. You give the time to him. And it just works.

Closing Comments

[20:28]

So, I encourage you to think around that now and as you look back over the main units, we've completed now the main units of what I have to say to you, we will talk in the very last half hour or so about a specific plan for one day. But now we want to back up and have a little question time and see where you want to go further.

~ ~ ~ End of 4B = Video 8 @ 20:50 ~ ~ ~

Dallas Willard related resources

† *The Spirit of the Disciplines* by Dallas Willard, "Main Spiritual Life Disciplines", chapter 9

- 1.) The Divine Conspiracy Lecture #8 - [The Process of Transformation - Grace](#)
- "Spiritual Disciplines" [26:00 - 35:38]
- 2.) The Divine Conspiracy #11 [Kingdom Living](#) - Spiritual Disciplines & Change [1:00:50 - 1:07:50]
The [full transcript](#) of all 12 lectures of "The Divine Conspiracy" series (271 pages)
- 3.) ["Spiritual Disciplines"](#) at Gordon Conwell #3 of 3 (video link + 8 pages of transcript)

Session 4 Q&A* — 14 Questions answered by Dallas [35 minutes]

Q1 - How you might respond to "Blessed is the baby born with HIV, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"?

Q2 - Your comment, "nothing good is ever lost." What does that really mean, especially in light of the reality of so much suffering?

Q3 - Explain the subordinate diagram.

Q4 - What would you say is the most effective way to show people that they are spiritual beings?

Q5 - Comment on your statement, "one of the best ways in a sense to witness is to get people talking about themselves."

Q6 - If we are trained to sin, who was responsible for training? Eve?

Q7 - If our spirits / person will last forever, when did it first exist? Did our spirits exist before our physical bodies?

Q8 - Could you repeat the meaning of "effort versus earning"?

Q9 - What is the role of the community and family in the practice of the disciplines?

Q10 - The dilemma of flesh equals sexuality against the spirit - How do we break out of that?

Q11 - Are we good or evil? How do you deal with the doctrine of original sin in that context? [Dallas addresses 'matter' as good.]

Q12 - Are people, because now we are children of Adam, are we inherently good, inherently evil? [Dallas address sin and worth.]

Q13 - How would you characterize our place in terms of the development or degradation of our culture? How do we respond?

Q14 - What does three hours of solitude look like?

[* The Q&A session after Dallas' 4th teaching is not in the video but the transcript from Dallas Willard Ministries is included in the Jesus College study guide. Enjoy!]

Q1 - Dr. Willard, I thought, a good question, to kind of start off our time, someone took up the challenge that you laid out to complete the Beatitudes. "Blessed are the (blank) for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And this is how they filled in the blank. And I'd be curious how you might respond. "Blessed is the baby born with HIV, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Dallas Willard's Answer

This is one of the kinds of cases that bother people I think the most. And you have to understand that in the kingdom of heaven, that baby will be received, and will have a life for which it will be not only thankful, but abundantly joyful. It may not be this side of what we call death, but every baby is received in the kingdom of God. And the blessing is certainly not in the condition. But you can count on it for the baby, that it is blessed for it is the kingdom of God. And I think Jesus had a special concern for this. I think that's why he spoke about it so directly in Matthew 18, and elsewhere about the care for little children. And the kingdom of God has all of the provisions to make that little child's life a good thing, and it will be done.

Q2 - And I think that would maybe apply to the next question a number of people and especially some of the questions in here, there was there's been a lot of painful incidences in people's lives. And I think your comment that and I may be misquoting it, "nothing good is ever lost." What does that really mean, especially in light of the reality of so much suffering?

Dallas Willard's Answer

I think you're addressing the issue of suffering. And what you have to say to that is that all that seems to be lost through suffering, will be restored. And that in the long view, it will be clear that God has taken for those who love Him, and are fitted into his purposes that God has taken everything that has happened to that person, and has made it into a whole, which is good. And so even the things that from the viewpoint of our current life, are if have taken alone are bad and are there are losses when you see them in the larger picture. And you do want to remember how much longer your life when you pass through into God's full world is than the one you're living now. And in that full picture, my faith is based on the scripture, that there will not be a single thing that is not restored and redeemed. And sometimes that begins even in this life and you hear many people who can testify even

within this life that the awful things that have happened to them have begun to be woven into a larger whole in which they are now prepared to say that really nothing good was lost. Most things will require the afterlife to secure that. But it even begins this side of the veil.

So when you talked about my dog dying, what? What did you mean by that? I mean, I know, I know what that was a trivial thing or no, it is, I, I don't like a flower is a beautiful thing. Or a bird. Or your dog is pretty beautiful. Yeah, it's pretty good. Yeah. And these, these are good things in the sense that they are a part of our life. But it doesn't mean that when I say nothing good is ever lost, I'm referring to the personal dimension, the individual's life. If you, if you take good in the sense that it applies to flowers, and birds, and so on, obviously, they die. I don't think they live for eternity. And so they pass away. But their goodness is within a cycle that God has appointed, and that is fulfilled in it's time, the death is not an evil. Now you lost the dog, and I lost the dog. I've gone through this myself, and I'm sorrowful over it and yet, that part of my life is still retained. And you still enjoy that dog, as I do too. Your life is going on for eternity.

Q3 - Well, we'll be obviously switching gears in these questions because they came at random in response. So don't necessarily look for a logical correlation between the questions that I'm asking. This question, I think goes back to Friday night's discussion when we were looking at the subordinate diagram.

Dallas Willard's Answer

The diagram is one where we started with God on top and went down on the proper subordination. And then the body on top of it down on the other, if you remember. Satan actually is the one that organizes and sustains the improper subordination. Satan is the one who has an argument with God and who cannot do anything about God. But he can do something about God's favorite project on Earth. And that is the calling out of this community of redeemed people that we've talked about. So he concentrates his energies on that. And he's been doing that ever since human history. As far as we know it from the revealed content is concerned. So he's very busy about it. I know. And, by the way, the main way that Satan works is through ideas. He knows that if he control ideas, he can control everything else in human history. So he works very hard on the idea side, brute force is very rare. And

anything more than just the manipulation of ideas is, is not where he concentrates his energy. So for example, today, he concentrates his energies in the areas where ideas are made and governed. And these are in our professions, in our universities. And the ideas that are governing there are the primary obstacle to the sort of stuff that I've been talking about in these hours, and the sort of teaching the scriptures, and the idea that you might be an unceasing spiritual being or a spiritual being at all, that's very contrary to the idea system that governs our world today. Satan works on that idea system. And that's why I have to come and challenge people very directly about it. Because that's where the pressure is. The idea of intellectual respectability is a primary place that Satan maintains his hold on human life. Very important, very important. Satan has a huge role in it. And it's just one of the many things that I can't talk about selecting topics for a few hours.

Q4 - This is maybe a follow up in some ways, as we think about you know, our ability to try to communicate this to the outside world. Someone asked this question. What would you say is the most effective way to show people that they are spiritual beings?

Dallas Willard's Answer

Well, you, you pretty well have to take them on an individual basis because this isn't just a matter of some kind of proof. But rather, it's a matter of convincing them, helping them see. Sometimes you can talk to them about their children, if they have children. And, and that's helpful, because you pose the alternatives to being a spiritual being. And let them try to deal with them honestly. In philosophy, technically, which I do my work in and write in, the next to the last thing on the list that I gave out last night, which is talking about the knowledge of the cell. That is the primary place, I think one should begin. The other primary place is precisely on the origin of creation. Trying to help people see that it is absolutely essential that they're be a non-physical source of physical reality. That's an old argument has gone through many forms, it has had to be updated, that it is as powerful today as it has ever been. And it is very powerful indeed, if you work it out, in appropriate detail. I think in terms of people just suddenly having a vision of the non physical nature of reality, often they are things like large events in human life or realizing the nature of their children or something of this sort. But from the philosophical point of view, it's nearly always from the analysis

of the introspective, if you wish, the analysis of human experience, which is not physical, and the analysis of the origin of creation, those two things.

Q5 - I've heard you say in other settings, that one of the best ways in a sense to witness is to get people talking about themselves.

Dallas Willard's Answer

That's right, and that in doing that, they begin to reveal their spiritual nature. And as they reflect their hopes and dreams and hurts, that's right. And that helps them begin to see that they are spiritual beings. That's absolutely right. And depending on the level of sophistication and commitment they may have to materialism, you can really help people come to own up to the fact that they do not experience themselves as a physical being, you simply don't do it, you experience your body. But even your experience of your body is not physical. It is non physical, your experience of your body as distinct from your body. It's impossible to do this. It's like people in the universities today, and in culture generally they often believe there's no such thing as human freedom. But of course, they can't act except under the assumption of it. You must assume that you're free in order to act. Now the task is to get people to the point where they can accept the intuitive presence of their own nature. And this kind of, not necessarily trying to run over them with argument, but just get them to talk and reflect is probably the best way of doing it. Now of course, if they step into the kingdom of God through faith in Christ and have the experience of God, then that changes things. But if they're not there, then you can't refer to that.

Q6 - Here's another question from last night when you were talking about that we are trained to sin. Someone said, if we are trained to sin, who was responsible for training, Eve? And they make a point of saying that this was not meant to be humorous?

Dallas Willard's Answer

No, no and in Eve's case she wasn't trained to sin at the point. You can sin without being trained to sin. Eve made a very conscious deliberate choice you see. Eve's case is very different from Peter's case that we're talking about. Peter was all set up for this. Eve was not. Eve was approached by Satan. And by the way, he didn't hit her with a stick. He hit her with an idea.

Has God really said? And he got her to thinking, God are you considering. So she moved into this not in the way that people who have been raised in a world of sin, go to their activities. She went into it very consciously, very thoughtfully. She made an explicit decision and followed through with it. So it is a different kind of case. Now on the other hand, you see she didn't do this on her own. She's had some help. But it was still her choice in a way that the person who is already trained to, given the right response to what is wrong, that wasn't the Eve's case. And she was not acting in that way. So you have to remember, when I spoke about the body being trained to sin, that's not a full account of sin. I'm trying to deal with the presence of sin in our lives, at the level where before we think we have done what is wrong. That is like all of the bodily actions, men, most of which are good. But that's, that's not a full account of sin. I'm addressing the particular issue here, of why we are trapped before we can think. And in that case, we need to deal with that in a different way than the sort of Eve cases.

Q7 - Here's a question that says right on the top that five people want to know this question. So this must be an important one. If our spirits / person will last forever, when did it first exist? And I think they have a little bit here that says, Did our spirits exist before our physical bodies? And did God complete our person by combining our spirits with our body by using our soul as the integrator while in the womb? I'm sure I read that correctly.

Dallas Willard's Answer

I think I get the point that it is an important question. And really, there's a long and traditional answer among Christians about this. And the idea is that at the moment, that the physical organism that we would say, the unification of the sperm and the ovum, at that moment, the person spiritual side of the person is created. Some people will locate it later. But my own view is that the spiritual side of the person is created at the moment that the ovum and the sperm come together to form a physical organism. That's basically the views of St. Thomas Aquinas, though he didn't know all about this stuff that we know about today. But on just general principles, because he wanted to say that at that moment, there is a human being. And a human being requires a spiritual side. I think this is what it means in the book of Hebrews, where it refers to us to God as the Father of spirits, among other things, it's referring to the fact that we receive our spiritual nature from God at the

time, we began to exist physically, that at least is my view. I don't think it's the sort of thing that one could part company with people over. But I certainly do want to avoid the idea that we exist, there is a view that all souls have existed since the first moment of creation. And God just sort of adds them to the bodies as we go along. I don't think that that's warranted, either in terms of the scripture or philosophical thinking.

Q8 - The last written question was just that I selected anyway, was just could you repeat the meaning of "effort versus earning"?

Dallas Willard's Answer

Yes, I said, grace is opposed not to effort, but to earning. And the difference between effort and earning it's a lot like the difference between hurry and acting quickly. It's a difference of attitude. Effort is action. And we must act. I once heard an old preacher say that I can tell you how much you all you have to do to go to hell is to do nothing. Just do nothing. And we Baptist, often, we will preach to you for an hour about how you can do nothing to be saved, and then given an invitation for 30 minutes telling you what to do to be saved. So it's confusing you see, and the way you straightened all of this out. And once you get it clear, then the verses like work out your own salvation with fear and trembling type, put off the old person put on the new, abide in me, branch abides in the vine, but that is an active verse that's not passive, you have to abide in Him. And once you understand that your action is quite appropriate to grace. It's just when you begin to look at your action and say, I have earned something. I deserve something. And that's true. Also the spiritual disciplines you never get into that you never say well I fasted 40 days so God should answer my prayer. See that's the difference is that an effort is action, earning is attitude and earning is the attitude that by my actions, I now deserve something. And we don't deal with God on that basis. And he doesn't, thank God, he doesn't deal with us on that basis. We don't, it's, it isn't wanted, it isn't profitable, it isn't good in any respect. And God simply does not tolerate it. If you go to him and say I deserve something, he may say, let me talk to you about what you deserve. End of conversation.

Dallas Warmly Welcoming Personal Conversation - If you had a question and it's not addressed, and you really feel you want to talk to me

about it, I will stay here until after we quit at four o'clock. So please feel free.

Q9 - Professor Willard, can you discuss the role of the community in the practice of the disciplines and also the rule the role of the family in the practice of the disciplines?

Dallas Willard's Answer

Well, very briefly, its very great. And if you, I didn't have time to go with the list that I use, but you can't have an appropriate list of spiritual disciplines without involving the community; fellowship, confession, submission, service, worship, all of these have at least a very important part in case of fellowship, but obviously a total part with the community. So maybe I can take that occasion just to say you never just practice one or two disciplines, you practice a group, they are self correcting. So if you fast a lot, make sure you can celebrate. If you're in solitude, a lot, be in service, be in fellowship activities, and so on. So you have to be sure and do that.

~ Spiritual Disciplines and the Family - Now the other point about the family is tremendously important. First of all, introduce your children to the spiritual disciplines, they will love them, they will learn them and they will probably outdistance you very quickly, they will note you they will just be at home in them. When you practice disciplines always involve your mate of course, obvious things like don't show up at five o'clock and say, "I've decided to pass this evening for dinner." But not so obvious things, how may I help you have a day of solitude. Young mothers need days of solitude. And this again, your fellowship comes in here. Perhaps folks who have retired could have a way of helping young mothers have a day of Solitude by taking care of children or whatever. So that's, it's tremendously important. And I did a terrible thing in my earlier years because I was raised on the idea that I was the preacher and the man of the house and I was to carry on bravely with all my stuff, and just sort of let my dear wife Jane make out the best she could. Oh, it's wonder God didn't strike me dead. I mean, really, I deserve it. So you know, it's but that was just the dumb way that I had been raised and that's all I knew. So, now I know much better and my cultivation of her spiritual life is more important than the cultivation of my own. Fortunately, she feels the same way about me. But you really grow together in your marriages, with your parents, your family, however, that may be

when you practice these together. And blessed use of silence also can be made with children and mates. And you have to be careful about it because also silence is used to punish. Alright, so you have to have teaching and learning about all of this and practice with it but you this has to be in the mix. And when he does and has a glorious result

Q10 - Dr Willard, for 1,600 years the church has labored with the whole Augustinian dilemma of flesh equals sexuality against the spirit, whether it's the Catholic Church, and I think it spilled over into evangelical and fundamental churches and we have labored, I think with the whole Greek view that the body is inherently bad or evil. And as much as I struggle with this myself, and I still maintain that struggle. How do we, it almost seems like we need a blinding flash of illumination to break, break out of that, what seemingly seems to be an inevitable and almost impossible struggle to break free from the Augustinian doctrine that's bewilders to so long.

Dallas Willard's Answer

That's right. I do think we need to base our, I could wish for the flash of illumination to and, and it does come to some people. But normally it doesn't. And there are several layers of this. For example, our Bible translations often do not do justice. And the you know, the New International Version, translates "sarx" as "fallen nature". And what an incredible expression of the what you're just talking about. But we need to do our biblical work carefully. And when we do that, I think it's very clear that flesh is not evil, but good. "His Spirit will be about poured out upon all flesh." "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God", and so on. So our biblical work is important.

I think a major part of what troubles us here is that in current human life, sexuality, and fleshly desires generally, including food, and so on, are so mixed in with the manipulation of human beings. That it is hard to escape the feeling that somehow we're being tricked and deceived by the flesh itself. And of course we aren't, that's not what's doing it at all. It's the sin that has come to inhabit flesh. I think that the best remedy that we can have to this is to see flesh in its radiant glory, including the sexuality appropriate between men and women, and to see it as the beautiful thing it is when it's inhabited by the Spirit of Christ. And, you know, we often get a glimpse of this at a wedding, for example. Or sometimes when we have a

celebration of an anniversary, or something of that sort. But, and it used to be done in the arts, in novels, and paintings. And the arts used to do that, unfortunately, the arts are pretty much gone over the hill now in this regard. That's a story in itself. But I do think the positive emphasis and, and training people, that their body is to come on the side of their spirit, and to be a support of spirituality. And this business of glowing that I mentioned, humorously last evening is not a joke. We can be radiant, our bodies can be radiant with the beauty of Christ, and that can extend to all of the aspects of the body, as is appropriate. So I think to accentuate the positive is the key. And I believe that the exercise of the spiritual disciplines are the way to do that.

Q11 - You have been talking a lot about the ideas of matter, kind of taking off of what you just said about the body in a good/evil thing. It seems in modern philosophies, there's a raging controversy about man is basically good or basically evil, and that comes up a lot in conversation, certainly with unchurched people and the desire it appears for the human heart is to perceive man as basically good. So that we can kind of rise above and have some hope, but obviously with sin, it seems like we have the problem, as you come in discussing it. How do you deal with the doctrine of original sin in that context? Is that is seen as the platform for passing along this difficulty we have?

Dallas Willard's Answer

Yes. My reasoning is very simple. Matter is good because God made it. Matters is good because God made it. Matter antedates original sin. Original and not so original sin, of course, now inhabits the body, but the body can be redeemed. It may well be that in some deeper sense, or sin now affects the whole material cosmos. And I'm tempted to believe that especially when you get to studying things like genetics and so on. So it may well be that it has infected matter at a deeper level. Still, I would say matter itself is not evil, even if it does have some things that are wrong with it because of sin. And then I won't I look for the future purification of matter, so that there will be nothing evil in it at all. Matter is a glorious project, you only have to look at the Hubble pictures to see that. It's breathtaking. It's wonderful, it's beautiful. If you need to look on that large scale, and if you look at your grandchildren, probably you think it's beautiful anyway. But it's it's a

wonderful thing. And as I said last evening, the highest manifestation of the vocation of matter is the body of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, that shows what matter is supposed to be like, and, and all of flesh shall come together in that kind of unity under the kingdom of God. But I think you just need to say matter is good because God made it and he wouldn't make anything bad.

Q12 - Dr. Willard, the follow up that a number of people asked in there, though was, what about original sin? Are people, because now we are children of Adam, are we inherently good, inherently evil?

Dallas Willard's Answer

I would separate the issue of original sin from inherently good or inherently evil. I would say we are inherently good. But we are all sinful. And it is I think it is inconceivable that anyone could come into the human world as it now exists and not sin. But that's different from inherently good. So you have to think about the question - Why are we worth redeeming? And I believe that God gave His Son for the world, because he believes in humanity. He believes in humanity. And it's a good thing he does, because probably very few people have ever really managed it, honestly. But he's realistic about it. And he knows what must be done. And he's taken the steps for the redemption of humanity. Do distinguish the question: is the human being inherently evil, bad, worthless? See, that often gets in there. And if you have something that is inherently evil, that seems to be a cut below worthless. That's a different question from whether or not we are afflicted by sin in such a way that we cannot escape it. I think we are afflicted by sin in such a way that we cannot escape it apart from redemption. But I think that the only reason that is the tragedy, it is, is because human beings are inherently good and valuable. And God made them so and they will never cease being that.

Q13 - Dr. Willard, I just was wondering if you would characterize for us the state of overall state of affairs in America. It is considered that we've moved now into what's called a postmodern environment. I'm asking from the context of maybe a call to action, if that's in any way appropriate to the body of Christ. But I'm curious how you would characterize our place in terms of the development or degradation of our culture? Today, where are we from your perspective? And how must we as a body respond today?

Dallas Willard's Answer

Well, I think from the viewpoint of the average citizen, we're not as bad as it looks. From the viewpoint of the people who influence the media, the culture and so on. We're probably worse than it looks. I find a tremendous amount of good people, solid morals in ordinary people, and a lot of good solid Christian faith. But what I find is that these people are beaten to death by the people who have the microphones. No, no problem intended here. Sorry. The ones that get on Sunday morning shows and talk about as if they knew what was happening. And the public television and all this sort of thing you see, it's just distressing. I don't know, if you saw this PBS thing "From Jesus to Christ". Did you see that? Oh, what a tragedy. I mean, it isn't even an honest piece of work. It's simply the mouthing of scholarly prejudices about this whole topic. So I guess I have a mixed thought about it. I do sense, however, that there is growing resistance to post modernist sort of stuff. Post modernism is basically the idea that there's no universal truth, that reality is a construct. And this includes, of course, values and God. And if we don't like the way they are, we can reconstruct. And deconstruction is always a codeword for reconstruction. Because the idea is - if you can deconstruct it, it was constructed in the first place, so you can deconstruct and reconstruct it in another way. And that's whatever whatever it may be. If it's history of its logic, if it's gender differences, or racial issues, or whatever, it's just a matter of putting some kind of construction on and then sustaining it in front of the microphones. Because, what really matters for these people is power or cultural power, and that comes in terms of who can seize and influence the media, the legislatures and the centers of research and learning. So, on the one hand, I'm discouraged because I think that the people who have the explicit influence, they all almost just lost their minds. And some cases, I guess, I would say they have. But on the other hand, I do see a growing wave of resistance, and especially in young people coming into the universities and graduate schools now who realize that you can't live with this, that there's got to be something different. I'm also encouraged to see a lot of Christians rising up. And beginning to say, we won't stand by and take this, we're going to have our say, in this and we have something that is good and solid, it's tested with time. And we're going to offer it to the people of this country and hopefully the world.

Q14 - Could you talk a little bit about what does three hours of solitude look like?

Dallas Willard's Answer

Yes, I would. Thank you, I'm glad to have a chance to talk about that. Because really, in order to get the general framework out, I don't do justice to the particular issues.

~ First of all, you would want to find a place where you could really be alone, it should be a place where you're comfortable. A part of the what I said about not being a hero is to don't despise finding a comfortable place to be in solitude. If you can, and it's comfortable outdoors is good, in a room that is pleasant and quiet would also be good.

~ And what I would recommend is that you probably begin with something like a walk if possible, in solitude some people can do that on the beach, or in the woods or just around their yard. So some time outside, to just be quiet and gather yourself.

~ When you enter it, you're going to be jerking from the need to do this and it will take you a while to get over that. You just accept that and find ways of perhaps occupying your body or your mind in a way that will gradually calm you down. Look at things, looking at things is good. Take time to look at them. I find the ducks are good to look at. They are, they really are. I think it's because there's, you look at them and you think this is the most gratuitous animal on the face of the earth. There's no reason for a duck. And yet, here they are. And they're just paddling around and splashing around and all that sort of thing. And that's good to have a dog with you if it's a sensible dog. Animals are good for solitude, they really are. You may notice that in Mark, I love that statement in Mark because it says, "Jesus went out into the wilderness as he was there with Satan, and the wild beasts, and the angels ministered unto him." [Mark 1:13] What a wonderful combination. One of them we could do without, but if we've got the, if we've got the others, we're in good shape. So I would just find a very quiet place.

~ You need to take care of the telephone where it won't bother you. You need to have arrangements made for your obligations so you won't feel like you're being irresponsible. And then I would simply look at things slowly, leisurely, and allow the weight of the world to drop off of me. If you have a

little quiet music that you might have with you, that's good to. Don't have any loud music. And I think not any standard sort of hymns and things of that sort, but just something calm and quiet.

~ That would allow you to be focusing, centering primarily on yourself, because that's what you come to in solitude is an awareness of yourself. You discover that, you discover the substantiality of your soul in solitude. That's one reason why you give up. You don't hurry so much and also solitude cures loneliness. If you are loneliness and you practice solitude, you will never be lonely again. Because you will discover yourself and that God is with you in solitude.

~ And in a three hour session, I would recommend a 30 minute nap.

~ ~ ~ End of Q & A with Dallas after Teaching #4 [not on video 9] ~ ~ ~

Dallas Willard "Beyond Belief" Teaching 5

TRANSCRIPTION of [Spending One Day with Jesus](#) video 10 [25:44]

[Outline provided by Dallas Willard Ministries \(3 pages\)](#)

Introduction

You may have noted that I included the "12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous". I do that because it's such an excellent illustration of what a discipline is. And it is a very powerful program, as you know, it isn't necessarily spiritual, and it isn't necessarily Christian. But still, I want to try to convey the idea of the discipline as such, and it's one of the very best ways I think we have of doing that.

Walking with Jesus in the Minutes of our Day

Now, my idea here is, in the just the last few minutes together, is to talk about how one might approach one day in a very special attitude and practice that would help us just get used to the idea of walking with Jesus through the moments and hours of the day. I want to recommend if you have never seen Frank Laubach's *The Game with Minutes*. It's just a little pamphlet... *The Game with Minutes*, Frank Laubach. That you try to find that and read it with this sort of program. Frank Laubach, was a Presbyterian missionary in the Philippines. And he learned how to walk moment by moment with Jesus. He learned how to redirect his mind towards God, once a minute, and he learned that he could have a habit of doing that. And I won't begin to try to explain what happened to Frank Laubach. But I challenge you to find out. You will be thrilled with just that exercise.

God with Us - A Life without Lack

[1:53]

But if you will, please take the sheets there and let's go over this. The secret of the blessed life is God with us. God with us is life without lack. And perhaps if some of you are uneasy with the idea that nothing good is lost, I will certainly affirm a slightly weaker version of it, that if you live a life with God, whatever is lost will not be missed. And because of the abundance that God brings into our life, you may notice that when when Job finally has his encounter with God, you remember towards the end of the book of Job, God comes and meets Job. And God does not answer a single one of Job's questions. And he doesn't seem to care any longer. He doesn't answer a

single one of his questions. But Job sees God. And the secret really is the presence of God with us. Now I've listed a whole bunch of set of passages there, and I'm not going to go with them. I leave them to you to look at but these are the great with you passages, some of the great with you passages in the Bible.

God with Us passages — [Genesis 28:15](#), [Deuteronomy 31:6](#); [Deuteronomy 31:8](#), [Psalm 23](#), [Isaiah 41:10](#), [Isaiah 43:2](#), [Zephaniah 3:17](#), [Matthew 28:19-20](#), [John 14:16](#), [Romans 8:38-39](#), [Hebrews 13:5-6](#), [Revelation 21:1-27](#)

And what we want to do is come to the place to where we walk through our days with God, if it's here, that's fine. If it's there, what doesn't matter.

But now, if God is going to be with us, our lives will be extremely different. And once again, we have to go back to that issue of do we really want it to be different? Many of us I think, at least for much of our lives, we feel that we kind of like to take a little vacation from God now and then shall we say, you know. We'd sort of like to just have our lives to ourselves, and God is too intrusive. And it's like that joke about where does a 300 pound gorilla sit on an airplane, you know? Well, anywhere he wants. And to live in a universe with an infinite God is different. And if you're going to have that God in your life, your life is going to be different. And so then we have to settle it that this is something that we really would like to have and we have to settle it also that it's not something we can presume on. It's like the manna in the Old Testament one day at a time. So, we accept the presence of God. We invite Him into our lives. We say we want you to be present in everything that we do. In all of our relationships before us, behind us, beside us, around us, above us below us, to paraphrase paraphrase the little prayer of St. Patrick. We want God to be all around us, then we have to invite.

The Preliminaries

[5:00]

And so now if we do want that, then here are some things we can do. And I've distinguished preliminaries here at the bottom of the first page. From the steps we might take preliminaries:

1.) Faith in the Available Kingdom of God - Faith in Jesus's gospel of the availability of Heavens rule now, so we have to have heard the message. And if the only message that we have heard is the other gospels that we

talked about earlier today, then we will not have the faith for living one day with Jesus.

2.) Desire to be with Jesus - Desire, no faking it, we've also talked about this, that the Spirit is a kind of being that wants to be wanted, that does not intrude, does not push itself. So it must be something that we not only understand, but that we really do desire. And it helps if we have gone nuts about Jesus, as I say, here at the bottom of the first page. We're not prepared just to put up with him even though we don't like him. We're convinced that we really do like him, we love Him, we want to have his fellowship with us. There isn't anything that we would be uncomfortable with him having with having him around, and if there is we'd like for him to remove that.

3.) Decide to be with Jesus - And then finally, at the top of the second page is the decision. Again, decision is fundamental. This is the point where intention takes hold. You will not drift into a life of constant companionship with Jesus.

4.) Make Arrangements - So those are the preliminaries now, and then you must make arrangements. That's another part of the preliminaries. You set up things so that it can be done. And this means deciding to plan and implement these following steps.

Plan the Evening Before

[6:54]

So I've given you a bunch of steps here now. And what I'm suggesting is that you, if you want to do this, that you seriously think of just implementing these steps. And the first thing is to recognize that the day really begins in the evening, the biblical day begins in the evening. As you know, if you have Jewish friends now, for example, you know, that Shabbat begins at sundown, right? Doesn't begin in the morning. And this is a very deep wisdom that is built into the biblical record and tradition. And all you have to do about it is, I think, just consider how what happens when you get up in the morning to realize you should have begun the night before. So, we begin our day at sundown, the early evening, we might call it. This is God's appointment of the end of our labor. We have a harder time that with that now that we have electric lights, and electric lights are really significant for our practice of spirituality. They disturb the natural units of time. And our

bodies are not built for that and our souls aren't built for it. And so we may have to decide there are certain things that we are not going to do. For example, a brightly lit house in the evening might give way to a wiser use of lights and possibly some amount of no lights to prepare us for rest. Even those who study sleep will tell you that if you want to go to sleep, don't sit by a bright light before you go to bed. And so again, this issue of light and darkness is tied deeply to who we are biologically. But now think of it like this: in darkness we gather. That's the human way for centuries. We gather, we recollect, we praise, we dream. In the security that God has given us in our home, we rest. Rest is an act of faith. That's especially true today. Few people today get the rest God has appointed for their natures. And one of the things we need to do if we're going to spend a day with God is to make sure that we get rest. We should resolve household conflicts as appropriate. That old phrase, the old song, "nothing between my soul and my Savior." That should be nothing between us and the other members of our household. And then, as you decide... as you retire, decide now that you will meet with God, first thing when you awake, and then go over in your mind what you're going to do with God when you awake.

Arise with Praise to God

[10:00]

If you approach the evening in that way, then you're going to awaken in a receptive mood to God. And that will be crucial for walking through the day with God. You awaken in a receptive mood. If you go to bed too late, you watch too much news, you don't talk with your loved ones, and you're not in harmony with them, that's going to follow you through the night. And it'll be with you, when you wake up in the morning, very likely, it will make a difference in your dreams. You know, when you sleep, you're not dead. Your life goes on. Your dreams are important. And many people don't realize that the tone of their day is set by the dreams that they've had. And they don't even remember the dream sometimes, but the tone is there. And if they're living a harassed life, you can bet those dreams will be harassed dreams. You see, we need to take these measures to calm our souls, and bring us to the point to where we can as I say on point two at the bottom of page two - Arise with praise to God. That is the natural way to rise is with praise to God. And that's crucial for your day.

Now at this point, you may need to go back and practice some other disciplines. You may need to fill your mind with the Word of God. Scripture memorization. Knowledge of hymns or songs. We fill our minds with good things. And then when we arise, we use those good words to pour forth our praise to God, our thankfulness to God.

Kneel and Pray

[12:07]

If you can go along for a short time and bow and pray, I would do it. You may not be able to do that. And if you can't, that's that. You live under realistic conditions. And you don't want to get into legalism on this. I say it again. But now try it. Okay, you say, "Well does it? Oh, it doesn't make any difference whether I kneel to pray." Just try it. Just try it and consider the difference that it's made. If you can find a quiet place where you can simply kneel before the Lord and pray. And as you pray, you give that day up to him. You give everything you're concerned about. You give your children, your loved ones, you give your job. You simply turn it all to him and you confess that you cannot manage your day. Confess your dependence upon him. Ask him to remove all fear and fill you, please note this, with his love for your life and all that enters it. See you want to move from praise to genuine love for your life. Do you love your life? Does the love of God come through you to everything you deal with in your life? See, that's what you want. This is how you will carry Christ through the day. And so you if you have specific concerns, call those out. Leave them before the Lord. I'll say a little bit about this. Talk about prayer tomorrow. Prayer is not the same thing as worrying. Did you know? So, pray, and pray means you call out to God. You address God and you tell him what you're hoping for. Now that's important because then you'll want to watch how that works through the day. As you go through the day you'll want to see where the hand of God moves. And don't be don't worry about this now. Many people can't pray because they're afraid nothing will happen. Did you know that? Don't worry about it, just pray. Just pray. Nothing happens? Keep on praying. Say, why do that? Cause you don't have anything better to do. You don't have anything better to do, just pray, and then watch for the hand of God.

See the World as God Sees It

[14:45]

Now then point three - settle your mind into the God's eye view of your world, and what is transpiring around you. I love the Psalm 33:13-22. It's a

description of how the world looks to God. And if you will put that in your mind. And then you look at the world as if you were seeing it through God's eyes. And you keep that point of view of God in your mind. And you can develop that habit. And I mentioned here Frank Laubach's experience because this was what he learned to do. And I wish I had time to tell you about Frank Laubach, but I hope it makes you mad, and you go out and get his stuff and read it. Because it's just absolutely wonderful. So now here we train our mind. And the way Frank Laubach did that was to bring a phrase of the Lord's Prayer, or an image of the cross, or simply a thought of the Father, who is overall, just to bring that... something like that into his mind once every minute. I found when I tried to do this, that I that it was too strenuous to begin with. And so I substituted, to start with, I substituted, making sure that every time I changed my focus, like if I was grading a paper when I went on to the next paper, if I was interviewing a student, when I went on to next student, or if I was lecturing in class, when I went on the next point, to just take a very brief moment and say, "Father, I receive you" or "guide me in the next moments. Let your blessing be upon this next student or on this next paper." And you can just train yourself to do that, and then you will have the habit. And it will work that way. And you will have God constantly before you and you will sustain this God's eye view. So then you can invite Jesus into each new situation and relationship as you move through the day and that way, because you'll be thinking about this, and you'll just be inviting him in.

I presented this at a college recently and the chaplain who's one of the most wonderful Christian men I know. He walked out of the chapel practicing this. And I met him in the afternoon, he said, "the whole world was transformed." He said, "the sky looked different. Everything felt different." And you know, he'd just started trying it. And it's always a little jerky when you start trying these things. But the effect is so astonishing. And I encourage you to just experiment with that.

Pass Peace & Joy to Others

[17:30]

Now then come to five here it begins to look a little spooky. But I want to assure you this is reality. When you have done this and now you're feeling the flow of God in your life and in you around the world, then you need to start to will the peace and joy which you are experiencing to pass from you

like living water to those who are engaged with. It doesn't matter that they don't know what's happening. You don't have to tell them but I will guarantee you they will know something is happening. And they may come back to you and start hanging around you. And try because you see they're going to experience the benediction of God's presence in you on them. You remember Jesus spoke about "those that believe on me" in John 7 [v.38], "from their belly shall flow rivers of living water." This is we need to believe that. Jesus was not just speaking pretty words. And you can know the reality of this. If you will receive this then you begin to will it. How do you will it well, you can speak it silently. Or you can just assume that it is going.

Now you say, "where'd you get that Willard? You're the most unbiblical person I've ever seen in my life." You study your gospels and see how this works. You remember when Jesus sent out his disciples he told them when they enter into a house then let your benediction of peace pass upon the house. If it returns to you, receive it and leave. Otherwise let it rest. [Matthew 10:12-13] You have the power to speak the presence of God into the lives of other people if you are living in that presence yourself. You can do that. And the peace and joy of what your experience will pass from you. Sometimes it may be by a benediction or good speaking, sometimes in complete silence. Now see that's a part of going through your day with God.

Reflect in Prayer & Thanksgiving

[19:43]

Now, I recommend that every two or three hours, you might take 10 minutes to lift a fully concentrated heart and mind to God in thanksgiving and petition. You can find this time. It's there in your day. You can find it 10, 15 minutes. Now this is on top of what old saints used to call ejaculatory prayer, which is prayer you just every now and then you just lift a little prayer to God. Take 5 or 10 minutes and just go sit in a quiet place and lift your heart to God say "Thank You, Lord, for this day, thank you for being with me. Thank you because of the blessing which I've seen going to other people." And it doesn't matter whether you are in the gym exercising, or whatever it is, you can do this. And you lift your heart and mind to God in thanksgiving and petition, alone if possible, sometimes by looking at the beauty of a flower or the sky or listening to beautiful music, that may help. This is not the same as solitude. So don't confuse that. You will have lapses.

And if you have lapses, don't berate yourself. Just thank Jesus for being a good friend and resume the course of your activities.

Don't fuss over your failures. He doesn't. You have better things to do.

Review the Day

[21:15]

Now, on the final page, at the end of the day, take 15 minutes to review the day. And by the way, this is not a part now of what you're doing to start the day in the evening. But at the end of the day, take 15 minutes to review the day. Give thanks for the successes. Try to understand any failures that did occur, why they occurred. Ask Jesus for guidance in continuing the project. And if you will do this, and I recommend this instead of at evening, late afternoon. Separate this from your preparation for the next day. And if you aren't going to try this consecutive days, that's not so important. But if you're going to do it consecutive days, I would recommend that you separate this reviewing part from the planning part that is listed on under Roman numeral I on page two.

It's Okay to Succeed

[22:28]

Now remember that it's okay to succeed. Remember, God isn't just for sin. He would have a place in our life if we had never sinned. Have you ever thought that? If we had never sinned, God would still have a place in our life. And so he wants us to succeed. "*The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.*" [Romans 14:17] Note also that the above arrangements are for ordinary workdays. I'm not talking about retreats here. I'm talking about ordinary workdays and how to manage those. Days of special devotion are different and should be handled differently.

Now what I can tell you from experience and with assurance is that, if you will do this, and especially if you put this in the framework of a practice of disciplines and all the other things we've talked about in the way of the gospel, and so on, you will experience a tremendous progress toward where you want to be for Christ. I think some of you know this already by experience. But if you haven't put this kind of thing into practice, it's simply there waiting for you to do, and if you do it, you will see remarkable progress to where you want to be in Christ. And all of the good things that Jesus offers us and that Paul prays for, well, they're just common, ordinary

realities in the lives of those who walk with Christ. And, I'll close with this prayer call.

"For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you. (This is Colossians 1, verse 9 and following.) 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, so that you may 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, strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience, joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light." Colossians 1:9-12

Closing Prayer

[25:14]

Precious Lord Jesus, Dear Heavenly Father, we give these hours now that we have spent together to you for the profiting of our souls. Won't you please, in your power and wisdom, give each individual in this room what they need to love you with the fullness of their being? In Jesus name we pray it, amen.

~ ~ ~ End of 5 = Video 10 @ 25:43 ~ ~ ~

Dallas Willard related resources

Life Without Lack by Dallas Willard, chapter 8, "All the Days of My Life"

The Divine Conspiracy, "What Jesus Knew: A God Bathed World", chapter 3, pages 66-91

Teaching 6 - Prayer: What is it and How does it work?

TRANSCRIPTION of [Prayer: What and How](#) Video 11 [53:03]

[Outline provided by Dallas Willard Ministries](#) (4 pages)

Introduction

Now, this morning, I wanted to take our time together to talk about prayer. And to try to deal with some of the issues that come up when people try to put it into practice. The teaching I heard once from a man was anyone who wants to learn how to pray, has to do three things, pray, pray, and pray. And that's true. But the trouble is, of course, doing that. And many folks actually just kind of give up after a while. And, and often that's because it doesn't make basic sense to them. And really, that's what I want to do this morning is just try to make basic sense about the whole idea of prayer for you, and put it in a context where you will feel so comfortable with it, that you will be able to just go away and live in it.

Prayer - An Enforcing Structure

And I want to begin by quoting Philippians 4:6 to you. Some of you will have memorized that. And this is such a wonderful expression of what the life of prayer is like. And you remember that in Philippians 4:6 Paul says simply, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything with prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God that passes understanding..." You won't be able to understand why you have the peace you have." That's okay, you got it.

"...the peace of God that passes understanding will keep your hearts and minds will set a guard about your hearts"... and minds literally by Christ Jesus. See. So prayer is a kind of enforcing structure. Think of it like the steel they put into concrete to reinforce it. And prayer is something that should shoot through our whole lives, and just permeate everything we do. And we can learn how to do that. And when we do then we will be anxious for nothing. Right? So if you want to get rid of anxiety, I'll tell you, this is the way you can do that. It's not the only reason for prayer, but it's a good enough reason for praying.

Prayer - Jesus Praying for Peter Luke 22:31-32 [2:26]

Now to start us out, I'd like to ask you to just look at several little passages in first in the Gospel of Luke the 22nd chapter, verse 31, and 32. And here we see Jesus dealing with Simon and Simon is going to deny the Lord and the others are going to run and Jesus is saying to him, "Satan has demanded to sift you like wheat." Do any of you know what sifting means? You know what a sieve is a kind of grate that you put things through and you separate them, don't you? That's the function of a of one of these sorts of contraptions is to separate things out. And Satan is going to put you through it, Jesus says, and notice what Jesus then does. He says in verse 32, "...but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail." And I'd ask you to note and we will come back to this, that Jesus prayed for Peter. And you might think how strange that he would pray for him. Why didn't he just fix him? And keep that thought in your mind, because we want to come back to that in a moment. He had confidence in his prayer. "That your faith may not fail and you when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." Keep that one in mind, if you will.

Prayer - Contact with the Real World Luke 9:28-29 [4:02]

And then let me add to it. Luke 9, verse 28, and 29. Some eight days after we read here, after Jesus had been teaching about the Kingdom of God, and had said, "there are some here that will not taste death until they see the Kingdom of God." Eight days later, some of them actually saw the Kingdom of God. And it came to pass that he along with Peter and John and James went up to the mountain to pray. Jesus was praying constantly, it seems, or very often and he prayed with his people. And note that while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and his clothing became white, and gleaming. When you pray, you place yourself in contact with the real world, and when you come in contact with the real world, you're going to look different. Have you looked at people's faces as they pray? Now, of course, Jesus was perhaps farther up and farther in than most of us will be. But as he prayed, he became rooted, grounded, deepened in the reality of God. He became immersed in a system of reality. And it changed his appearance. I hope you'll think about that as we go along now.

It will change your appearance. And also it gives you a basis for changing your actions.

Prayer - Resources to Live the Golden Rule Matthew 7:12 [6:05]

Look at Matthew 7 for a moment. Look at Matthew 7:12. This is the summary of the great commandments of all the Bible. "Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them for this is the Law and the Prophets." I'll give you time to get there because this is a very crucial teaching. Therefore, however you want people to treat you so treat them for this as the law and the prophets. How many of you know that if you're going to do that, you're going to need a few resources? Is that true? Yes. If you're going to treat people as you would like to be treated, you're going to need some resources. Well notice that the first word in verse 12 is therefore and therefore refers us back to the basis for what is said after the word occurs, doesn't it? Now what is the basis? Verse 7, "Ask and it shall be given to you, seek and you shall find, knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened."

Now, this is a glimpse into the reality of the universe, the deepest reality of the universe. This is a law that is more fundamental than the law of gravity, or electromagnetism, or the weak and strong force in the atom. This is a law that is more fundamental than those laws. "What man is there among you when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone?" You can be sure no one said "Oh, I would!", can't you? If your child asked you for a biscuit would you give him a rock? How do you feel inside when you hear that? You resist it don't you say that would be awful? Or if your son asks for a fish will he give him a snake? Dad, I'd like a goldfish in my room. Oh well here have a rattlesnake. You think that's likely to happen? No, I don't think so.

Now look at how he words this next verse, verse 11. "If you then being ornery... evil." Now, you know, if you say evil, a lot of people will get out of that one won't say they will say, "I'm not evil." So try ornery. "...know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask him?" How much more? Then the "therefore." Therefore. Now, you have the resources. Now you're set free.

You're welcome into the Kingdom of God and you're dealing with a God like this. Therefore.

The Prayer of Jabez I Chronicles 4:9-10

[9:50]

Well, before we start the teaching, let's look at Jabez. Do you know Jabez? if you know, Jabez you're a good Bible student. In First Chronicles 4, we have a list of who was the father of whom and whom was the father of that and so forth and so on. And right in the middle of all of that, verses 9 through 10, we have a little hiatus here. All of a sudden, a name leaps out at us. First Chronicles, 4:9, "and Jabez was more honorable than his brothers." Now, Jabez actually means sorrowful or painful. That was his name. His mother gave him that name. Apparently, she had perhaps a difficult time in labor, because I bore him with pain, or maybe he was a pain after he got here. But, you know, this fellow had something of a handicap, didn't he? I mean, "Where is painful? Painful come here." Got a name like that? Well, maybe that's what drove him to prayer. Notice verse 10, Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh, that thou would bless me indeed." You notice he didn't say bless the missionaries. Bless me. "Bless me indeed and enlarge my influence my border, my kingdom, and that your hand might be with me." That's a crucial biblical phrase, the hand of God with me. "That you would keep me from harm, that it may not pain me." Isn't that interesting? His name got into his prayer. What does the last line say? "And God granted him what he requested."

Which of you? If your son asked him for a loaf? You'll give him a stone.

Acting Without and With Prayer

[12:25]

You know, a lot of people have real problems with prayer. Because they don't understand the heart of God. And the typical problems that come up are problems like well, doesn't God already know what I want and what I need? Doesn't God (orient or) already intend to do for me the things that are good. And we have a view of God that often actually keeps us from praying. The teachings of Jesus and the Bible about prayer are designed to help us get past that. The God of the Bible is a God that is presented through his son Jesus on earth as a God who relates to us in a personal way, and helps us

understand that what we pray for, what we ask what we want, what we need, is something that we need to consciously take up with him. And there is a large system of influence that we can exercise without prayer. But then there is a large system of influence that we cannot exercise without prayer.

And so let's begin with that idea. The Christian philosopher and thinker, Pascal has the words, "God has dignified man with causality." Causality. That is to say, He has given us the power to do things. And when we think about the causality that we exercise, we're apt to think about it first of all, just in terms of work. And that's right. Because there is a causality that God has entirely put under our own care. And if you have a weed in your flowerbed, it will be better not to pray about the weed. What would you do with the weed, pull it. That's in your power. And there are many things like that. They're in your power. And you should directly do what you know to do. God has given you that discretion. But there are many things that you want to influence and can influence but they must not be left in your power.

Suppose your sister is a drug addict. And if you have that, you're apt to want to just fix it, right, wouldn't that be nice. You just go to your sister and you fix her. But that's not in your power. That's not like the weed. Now you're dealing with something different. You're dealing with human souls. You're dealing with a larger context of people. You're dealing with community. You're dealing with eternity. That's not in your power. Isn't it interesting.

The Power of Prayer not Left to Us Alone

[15:48]

Now go back to our first verse in my in Luke 22. When Jesus was dealing with Peter, he didn't just fix him. And wouldn't you think that he could have done that? I feel certain he could. I feel certain he could have given Peter lock jaw perhaps selectively at the right moment. But he didn't. He said, "I prayed for you, Peter." Now by praying for Peter, he took Peter into a larger realm that is subject to God. And Jesus in His incarnation accepted his limitations. And things that he might have had the power to fix. Instead of doing that, he left it up to God. He turned it over to God. He worked through a system where the ultimate wisdom and power of God would be left to bring it out where it should be brought out. You know, one of the things you learn in human life is that fixing people doesn't take you very far. Have you

learned that? That's because of our nature under God. And what we are and what we become in our life has to come from the inside. And when you fix people, normally, it doesn't last very long. When they are changed from the inside, it lasts for a lifetime. They really changed. And we have to remember that when we're dealing with people.

Now, you see, prayer is a kind of causation. You can bring things about through prayer. But prayer is so powerful that it can't be left to us. You see. Just imagine if everyone got what they prayed for. You don't have to think twice about that one do you? Not everyone gets what they pray for. And we're thankful for it. Sometimes we are wounded and we hurt over it and we wonder why and all of that. But if you back up and think about it, you're gonna say "Thank God you don't answer everyone's prayer the way they want it answered." Well, half of them would cancel out the other half if you did wouldn't they.

CS Lewis uses the figure of a child that goes off to boarding school, college or whatever you know. And when they move into the dorm, the head of the dorm might say to them, "Now, here are the rules, and you can do these things, and you don't need to ask, as long as you as long as you follow the rules, you're in good shape see." Now that's like pulling the weed in your flowerbed. You don't need to go into a long action and pray and say, Now Lord, if it be thy will, I'm going to pull this weed. Now, you've been given dominion over weeds, you can do what you want to with weeds, as long as it's only the weeds that are involved, do anything you want to see that's like the rules. They don't pray over that. You pull the weed.

But in the case of a lost friend, or a family member that's in trouble with drugs or something like that, it's a different story. Things have to be worked out. The inside of the person needs to be brought around. Sometimes I need to change when I'm praying. There's a process involved. Sometimes that process involves stuff out in the heavenlies that we don't even know anything about. That's why Jesus prayed for Peter and didn't fix him. When you put your sugar in your coffee, you have to wait till it dissolves, don't you, before you drink your coffee? There's process involved with people that's more important than ever. There's process involved.

So when we pray, we are tying into a larger system of causality that it isn't that prayer is weak, prayer is so strong that it can't be placed entirely in our hands. When we pray, we're involving powers that go through time and space, with the speed of the mind faster than the speed of light. We're dealing with powers that are so great that solar systems and suns and galaxies are at its disposal. Now, would you like your neighbor to have that at their disposal without any, without any cautionary little someone got? No, no, I don't want it at my disposal. It's too big. I want it there. And I'd like to have access to it. But I don't want to run it. You see. And although I might want my sister or my loved one to be saved, to be recovered from drugs or whatever, I know that in that thing that's too big for me. I can't just go into that and do what I think is right. And that's why God says to the person who comes into his Kingdom, like the child that goes to the boarding school, "Well, there's some things you can do and you just do them. But, now there are other things." Like suppose the child says "I'd like to have a party on Friday night." Maybe. That's not in the rulebook. That's not like pulling the weed because that affects a lot of people. A lot of things are at issue. And so the headmaster might well say, as CS Lewis says, "If you want to do that, you come to my office, and we'll have a chat. And then we will see." Right? You understand what I'm saying? That's what prayer is. Prayer is God inviting us to come to his office, have a chat, and then we'll see. Does he want us to come? Yes, he wants us to come. Will he answer our prayer will he give us what we want? Very often he will. Sometimes he may not. And when he does not I may be sure that it is better that he does not. I can be sure of that. Better for me, better for everyone else involved.

Now I wanted to just get that in front of you to see that explains why Jesus did not fix Peter, that explains why you and I are not, even in prayer, just left to "Zoom!", you know, calling down fire. It's a nice trick every two millennia or so. But if you do that every day at your house, you'll be visited. The fire people will come to see you and they will talk to you about this. See, we have to stay off the large things like that. It's so touching to see Peter, James and John, you'll remember when a few people didn't cooperate with Jesus said, "Well, Master would, would you like us to call down fire from heaven?" Like somehow they couldn't leave it to him to do it when it was appropriate.

What is Prayer?

[24:34]

What is prayer? Let's be simple and direct about it. Prayer is talking with God about what we're doing together. Prayer is talking with God. Now, I don't have time to talk about all of that, but let me just say it's also listening to God. About what we're doing together. Prayer is a conversational thing. But a lot of folks are uneasy with this. And they think that somehow we shouldn't pray about things that involve us particularly, they think it's a kind of egoism. But if you look at the prayers of Jesus, you look at the prayers of the Bible, you'll see that they're basically requests, and their requests about things that we and God are doing together.

Look at the Lord's Prayer. You start out with the form of address. And that's important in prayer, by the way, and what distinguishes prayer from worrying is that when you're praying, you're talking to somebody. And many people don't know the difference there. And when you pray you address someone. Right? I mean, that's polite, isn't it? And God expects us to address him. He's not like these people that are sitting around their machines. You remember the movie "Contact?" People looking for extraterrestrial intelligence. And so they're, they're sitting up there with a screen, they're seeing all these blips and hearing all these noises. And they're trying to figure out if someone is talking to them. Right?

God isn't sitting there, looking at a screen and trying to figure out if someone is talking to him. If you want to speak to God, you address him. Our Father who art in heaven. Oh, they're talking to me. And then you go into the request, "Hallowed be thy name", the most important request of all, you say that's just about God, no, it's about you. You're involved in this with God, "hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done. On earth as it is in heaven." That's me. That's me. I'm praying for kingdom of God to be realized in my life in the way that it is in heaven. And then you go on to the more homely request that you're all familiar with.

Asking in Prayer for Your Life

[26:58]

A prayer is basically asking, basically asking. That's not to say there's no place for praise, or thanksgiving and so on. There's plenty of place for that.

But you see, there are many people who think that somehow if you're asking that's a lower form of prayer, that only children and savages ask God for things. And those of us who are, shall we say, more elevated, we just sort of commune. Commune. I'm communing. And, and it would be somehow beneath God's relationship for us to just ask him for something.

I had a lovely couple that I was traveling from a conference ground to the airport in Durban in South Africa with them and we were just traveling along and chatting about things and having a good time. And they got around finally to their son having a bit of trouble with his business that he gone into and they'd invested with him. And so I said innocently, I said, "How are you praying about this?" And they replied, "Oh, we're not praying about this" Well, I said, "why not?" Well, that would be selfish. They hadn't read about Jabez, "Bless me! Help me!" See, we have a teaching that's very harmful. And that is you ought to pray about certain things, whether you care about anything or not, you know, like, maybe you ought to pray for the missionaries that you don't even know but you ought to pray for? Well, that's true. But you'll never get there if you don't start with the things that you're really concerned about. If you start by praying for the things you're really concerned about, and these will be things about you. And that's perfectly all right. If you start with those things, you'll get around to the people you're not interested in, but you ought to pray about. But if you start with the ones that you're not interested in, you will never get anywhere, you will simply die on the vine. You start with the things that you are concerned about. When I'm flying, I pray about the plane I'm on. What about all the other planes? Well, I pray about for them too, especially if they're close.

You see, God has put us in charge of our lives under him. Other people's teeth may need brushing, but I brush mine. I'm supposed to brush mine. I am supposed to pray about my life. It's the things that God and I are doing together that I pray about. I talk with God about those. Now, as I do that, the horizon grows. But that's the center. And that is God's appointed way. And I really want you to understand that. Some people say, "Well, maybe I'm praying about the wrong thing." The answer to that is keep praying. Keep praying. If you're worried about whether you have the wrong motives, you're praying for wrong things, just keep praying. Ask the Lord to teach you. He'll teach you. But we pray from the center of our life, which is where

we are. We speak to God about the things that concern us. And we are responsible to do that. See, that dear couple, they thought they were being so noble. Because they were not praying for their son. Now if they'd ever said it to themselves in that way. They might have heard it. That's not noble. There's something crazy there something has gone wrong in their thinking. But they had been taught that you know, you want to not be selfish. And that's true. But praying for yourself is not necessarily selfish. And in fact, it's the best way to get drawn beyond selfishness. Because you remember, praying is what God and I are doing together. We pray about things together, we work together. And as we pray, the sphere of influence extends. I love that little phrase in Jabez, "extend my borders." Extend my kingdom extend my influence. You see that God has put us here to learn how to be present for him and allow the power of God to flow right down where we are.

And if we begin where we are, and we follow the rule, pray for what you are really concerned about and stay with it. Then the Kingdom of God will move into us. And we will really very quickly begin to move out beyond anything we've ever known. And we will begin to genuinely love and care about people that we previously had no concern about. That's how your borders will be extended in Jabez's words.

How Does Prayer Work?

[32:56]

Now how does it work? Why does prayer work? What is the force at work here? And very simply, it is the power of asking. The power of asking is what moves in prayer. And Jesus gives us some illustrations of this. In passages I haven't referred to yet, but and I don't have time to read them. But I hope you will know the stories. In Luke 11 there's a story about a man who comes to his neighbor at night, and the neighbor is already in bed and the children are in bed and the door is locked. And this man is standing out there saying, "a friend has come to me in his journey. I don't have anything to feed him, would you please give me some bread."

And that goes along with this story in Luke 18 about the widow. And a widow was the weakest person in society in Jesus's time. They had no one to represent them, there was no husband no son, in this case, as it was in many cases. And Jesus very purposefully juxtaposes this weakest person in

society with an unjust judge, a crooked judge. He may have been under the thumb of the mafia or something, or maybe he was on the make or something of that sort, or he may have just had bad digestion and was always griping at people and laying it on the line. And in this case, too just like the men with the visitor, the woman comes with a request.

Now, what is remarkable about both of these cases, Jesus is illustrating something about how prayer works. And what is remarkable is that in both cases, you have a person who simply stands with their request. They don't go away. The fellow that wants bread, just keep standing there. The man inside says, I can't get up and give you bread, the door's locked, the children are asleep. And you know what it's like to get children asleep. And if you wake them up, you got another problem. And so he says, Don't bother me. And the unjust judge. He's a tough sort of guy, you know, a kind of a Kojak sort of person who's I don't care anything about men, nor God, right. This little woman keeps coming, keeps coming. "Avenge me of my adversary", the old version says. See to it that I get justice in this situation.

Now, in both cases, what is operative is simply the power of asking continued over time. The power of asking continued over time. And you say, "Well, why why not just once?" And I've, I've even heard people teach that you should never ask for the same thing in prayer twice. Because if you ask a second time, that means you didn't believe it the first time. As if God couldn't figure that out, without you asking again. And see, these were serious people because they thought prayer was a kind of trick, you know, where you just hold your mouth, right and get that said right, and bang! it's done. It's never like that. It's never like that.

Prayer is a Three Term Relationship: God, You, Others [36:38]

Prayer is a part of a process. It is most times, it's a three term relationship. And it presupposes that you're going to stay involved with the situation you're praying about while you stay involved with God. And oftentimes, it involves us. I once, when I was praying for my son, and not seeing any change, the Lord said to me, why don't you stop being angry with him? And I did. And he immediately began to change.

You see, the process sometimes involves us, sometimes it involves others. And that's why you can't step into a church situation, for example, or a family situation and just fix it. I know sometimes we wish we could. But it's not like pulling weeds. It's dealing with souls. It's dealing with things that reach all the way into eternity, sometimes reach a way back. And it's because of the nature of that request that we can't be turned loose in that area with the power of God to just make things happen the way we want to. But there is great power. And if we stay in that relationship, God will respond. In the case of the unjust judge, the unjust judge. And there's a point about it being unjust. See, Jesus is talking about a person who is not sort of a tender hearted, wimpy kind of person. This is a tough guy. But that unjust judge finally says, look in Luke 18 and you'll see, "unless this woman wears me out with her much coming, I'm going to do what she says." And the fellow with the bread, he looks out the window half an hour later, and the guy still standing there. What are you gonna do? How much can you take? Though he gets up and stomps to the door, and unlocks it and wakes up the kids and said, I've told you so and gives him the bread. Now, is God like that? No, not quite. But on the other hand, don't write that off. Don't write that off. That's a part of what it means to live in a universe where the ultimate reality is a personal community of people. You live in a Trinitarian universe. Universe is not ultimately made up of quarks and strings and molecules and atoms and things of that sort. Not at all. That's why the law of request which Jesus gives you in these teachings is more fundamental, as I said, than the law of gravity. The reason there is gravity is because of that community, not the other way around. And Jesus is teaching us about why prayer works.

Why does prayer work? Because asking, and giving is a fundamental law of the universe. I know people who will cross the street to avoid coming in contact with the eye of someone who is begging. Why? Because of the power of asking, they're not going to get close enough that they could be overwhelmed by it. Or perhaps they don't, they just don't want to be pulled by it. They don't want to feel that tug, you know. So they just try to avoid course, they feel it anyway, even though they're on the other side of the street. That's the way asking works.

Why is Prayer Arranged This Way?

[40:50]

Well, we're running out of time, let me just turn to another topic or two. And I think it's so important to just ask the question, why is there an arrangement like this? Why do we have this arrange? Don't you often wonder about that? I mean, why would there be this arrangement of prayer? And this is where all that reasoning comes back in like, well, doesn't God know everything already? Isn't he already gonna do what's good? And the answer's no, he isn't. So let me just say again, now, look, there are good things which God is not going to do if you don't ask him. And there are bad things which God is not going to prevent, if you don't ask him.

Now, what's that all about? Well, let me ask you this. If you had a child, and you knew what to do for them, you knew what was good for them. You just did it. The child never needed to say, I need this. I want that. What do you think that would do to the child? It would destroy them. There wouldn't be any child there after a while. Of course, thank goodness, they don't need to be told. They let you know. That's one of the good things about the child is they say what they want, and they say it again. Right. And that's why Jesus uses them among other things to illustrate prayer.

You have to ask for what you want, don't you? And you say, Well, what kind of game is this? God already knows. Look, you know, I don't want to upset your theology too much, but if God decides he doesn't want to know something, he can not do it. His omnipotence is not the victim of his omniscience. In other words, He is powerful enough, if he doesn't want to know something, he can not know it. Now, I'm going to leave you to meditate on things like when God walked into the garden and said, Adam, where art thou? Did he know where he was? And now you zealous to protect the dignity of God might say, of course. But are you sure you're protecting his dignity? Suppose that he left it to Adam where he was, and said, I don't want to know where Adam is, until Adam tells me where he is. You think he could do that? Well try it out. I know it's hard on one's theological categories. But it may well be that God doesn't know everything. Perhaps he only could know everything. But he knows enough to know that there are some things He'd better not know. I ask you as a parent, do you know everything you could know about your children? I hope you don't. Now, you

see you go back to this issue, what kind of universe? We live in a personal universe. God can know and will know everything that he believes it is appropriate for him to know. He's not limited. Self limitation is not limitation. If there are some things he could do that he decides not to do, that's his business, don't worry about it.

So, don't be so sure when you go to God and ask Him for something he already knows what you need. And certainly don't think he's already going to do what he's going to do. Because if you believe that you are going to choke your prayer life down to where it will be a meaningless ritual, and it will not grow, and it will not mean anything. And that's why the teachings of Jesus are so important.

Prayer Grows Us to Be who God Intended Us to Become [45:18]

And now we want to just draw it together very simply and say the reason there is an arrangement, such as prayer, is that so you and I can grow to become the people that God intended us to become. You grow by exercising your power in action. A child learns to drive a car when you let them drive a car. What's interesting is, when you let them drive a car, they don't know how to drive a car, do they? But they learn, and they learn by acting. And that's how we learn generally. And that's how things are in the kingdom of God. And that's why there's an arrangement called prayer. Prayer allows us safely to act beyond any power that we have in ourselves. Prayer allows us to step into the Kingdom of God and begin to move with that power that is beyond us, and to do it safely, because it is God who's in control.

Now, of course, prayer is also for accomplishing good things. And we don't mean to detract from that in the least. But the general arrangement of prayer is for the benefit of the children of God so that they can begin to learn to reign with him here and now and exercise the power of God here and now safely with him. Now, your destiny as you will read in Revelation 22:5 is to reign with Him forever and ever. So you can begin thinking about what that's going to be like. But it's going to mean that you learn how to use the power of God and that's what prayer is actually about. It's learning to use the power of God to accomplish things that are far beyond any possibility that you have in yourself and to use it safely.

I hope that you will be able to begin to experiment with this and make it a part of your life. That you will begin to understand that everything that you do as a child of God is by his invitation in his Kingdom. And no matter what you're doing, you would then invoke the presence of God and ask for his blessing and where you know what to ask for, or think you do, feel free to ask for that too. And then watch to see the hand of God in your life. Don't worry about the heroic stuff. There are heroic prayers. But most people are not heroic prayers. The Reese Howells and Praying Hyde's, and all of the others. There are people who have a special vocation of praying. I can tell you that there will be people like that in this congregation, but there will not be many of them. And that most of us are meant to pray as we go in the midst of our work. There will be seasons of more intensive prayer. But the main thing that we are called to do is to bathe our whole life in prayer. And I can tell you that though you may not see fire fall from heaven, when you look back, you will see a sequence of miracles. When you look back, you will see very few of them when you're praying. Because that is a process. Sometimes you'll see that. But when you look back, you will see God's hand in your life changing, controlling governing, oft times you have to look hard.

Someone was asking about the Holocaust a while ago. And I asked them: How many holocausts would have happened if God hadn't stopped them? That's harder to answer, isn't it. But I suggest a great deal more than did happen. And you see, that's the larger scene. And we will at some point, be able to see all of that. For now we see our lives. And we're invited to bring our life into the Kingdom of God, and to live there in a conversation relationship, in which we simply come before the Lord and say what we want, and keep that request there. And sometimes it's a long time. Because again, the issues may be very vast, very great. And the changes will depend upon other people sometimes. But we stay there with their..., like the man standing by the door, like the widow standing before the judge.

And when you become discouraged, remember, you don't have anything better to do. You remember that? If there's something to be done, some weeds to be pulled as it were, then you should do that. But when it comes to these big things, you have nothing better to do than stand before the Lord with your request. And in the 18th chapter of Luke after the story about the

unjust judge, Jesus says, "and will not the God of the earth answer quickly those who call on him night and day?" And then Jesus knowing human life says, "But when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" Because we would like it to work quickly. We'd like it to be like putting money in the Coke machine. You put the money in, you may have to kick it once or twice, but the Coke comes out. It doesn't work that way because it is a process of personal growth and development involving vast scenes that are under God's eye and he knows how to bring a Peter through the sifting. He knows how to bring you through what you're going through. But you must never become passive and you must never be silent. You must continue to stand there with your request and your prayers.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything with prayer and supplication. let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God that passes understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Will you say it with me now?

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything with prayer and supplication. let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God that passes understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

God bless you. Thank you very much.

~ ~ ~ End of 6 = Video 11 @ 53:03 ~ ~ ~

Dallas Willard related resources on Prayer

Hearing God

The Divine Conspiracy, chapter 7, p. 239-269 (hardback)

"[The Role of Faith in Prayer](#)" Dallas at Renovaré, Azusa Pacific University, 2007

Questions & Comments with Dallas

[Not on the video and the question is not listed]

Well, consider Paul's case. I mean, the classic illustration of this is Paul. He asked three times that something be removed from his life. And precisely along the lines you're mentioning it, God said, "My strength is sufficient for you. My strength is made perfect in weakness." And he demonstrated that to Paul. You should ask that. I thank you for saying that. Because you know in prayer, you want to just be forthright and honest. And if you ask for something, and it's not given, don't hesitate to say, "Why not?" And don't hesitate to ask for the strength and the joy that would go with not having the thing you've asked for. Be very childlike. Be very childlike. And just be open and honest. And God will meet you in it and God will talk to you. You know, in Paul's case, he didn't just be silent. That's something people often miss. In Paul's case, he spoke to him. And you can expect that.

(22) Courses & More Resources from Jesus College

[The Divine Conspiracy](#) - (2) courses

The Divine Conspiracy - In-depth, extended study of the book (31 sessions)

"The Divine Conspiracy - An Overview" highlighting key principles (6 sessions)

[Renovation of the Heart](#) - (2) courses on the book & a Dallas teaching series

Renovation of the Heart - Whole Life Spiritual Transformation book (13 sessions)

"Healing the Heart and Life by Walking with Jesus Daily" video (12 sessions)

[Courses on Dallas' Books](#) - (7) courses

The Spirit of the Disciplines - Understanding How God Changes Lives (11 sessions)

Hearing God - Developing a Conversational Relationship with God (10 sessions)

The Scandal of the Kingdom - The Parables of Jesus (15 sessions)

The Allure of Gentleness - Apologetics in the Manner of Jesus (7 sessions)

Knowing Christ Today - Knowledge of Jesus for Daily Life (8 sessions)

Life Without Lack - Living the 23rd Psalm (9 sessions)

Becoming Dallas Willard - biography (9 sessions)

[Courses on Dallas Speaking](#) - (11) courses from (12) teaching series by Dallas

"The Human Side of Holiness" - 5 days at Denver Seminary (17 sessions)

"For Such a Time as This" - 3 teachings on Ministry Leadership (6 sessions)

"Jesus Worldview" - 2 Dallas teachings (3 sessions)

"The Genius of Jesus" - 2 teachings at Ohio State University (4 sessions)

"Nietzsche vs. Jesus" - 2 sessions based on Dallas' Veritas Forum, Stanford, 2002

"The Problem of Evil" - 3 sessions focused on 3 chapters from Dallas' books

"Spiritual Formation & Salvation" - 1 teaching at Wheaton College (3 sessions)

"Jesus, Dallas & NT - The Gospel" - 3 sessions including NT Wright's teachings

"Jesus, Dallas & NT: The Book of Acts" - 4 sessions including NT Wright's teachings

"Jesus, Dallas & NT - Romans 8" - 3 sessions based on teaching by Dallas & NT Wright

"Advent with Dallas Willard" - 3 sessions on a sermon and devotionals by Dallas

[Speaking Sessions](#) - 52 Dallas Willard resources featuring 117 teaching sessions with 800+ pages of notes (general Dallas speaking *not* Jesus College courses).

Master's in the Master Spiritual Transformation Training

The Jesus College Master's in the Master is a biblical, realistic, practical method to foster "Christlikeness" in ordinary people who take their transformation seriously. *This is not an accredited degree but we don't know of a curricula from which you can gain both knowledge and character of Jesus.* The Master's in the Master offers a Jesus centered, wisdom guided, community* engaged, mentor** supported, daily life integrated, spiritual growth plan.

CURRICULUM — The Master's is built on (15) courses varying in length from 3 to 31 sessions per course based on the books and teachings of Dallas Willard. Choose from a syllabus of (22) courses {on the previous page} ready-to-watch today in the JesusCollege.com library. Some courses will be offered again "live" throughout the year.

CALENDAR & TIME - The Master's is an individually paced time frame based on when you start and how often you participate in "live" courses or watch recordings of the sessions. We use the word "cohort" but there is not a set group - "no freshman class" - nor pre-set time to commence or complete your Master's. This is an independent study and growth training effort. We estimate for serious participation 3+ hours per week over a timespan equal to the 3+ years Jesus walked with His disciples. *3+ hours weekly for 3+ years.* Again, this is your preferred pace NOT according to a Jesus College calendar or semester syllabus.

COMMUNITY* — We seek to facilitate connection with our students to engage and enjoy rich diversity of the Jesus College student body of Christ from 60 countries.

COST — The Master's in the Master training is offered for FREE by Jesus College. Additional personal coaching, church consulting and training, teaching or preaching at your location or virtual venue are available from Jesus College at pre-determined costs between the two parties. Financial donations are also welcomed for those who want to help further the impact of Jesus College.

COMMENTS from Jesus College Students:

- Tony from England, "In brief, these courses have changed my view on discipleship. I feel myself a new creation."
- Pastor Oladipo from Sierra Leone, "I've participated in all the courses except one. It has impacted my ministry strongly because we are fine tuning our church to become a church who really does what Jesus said. The whole experience has been personally transforming for me personally and in my ministry. In time we can become the example of the kind of church Dallas has said he has never seen."
- Judy from Virginia, "I'm definitely interested and I've loved everything you have offered. Everything! The idea of experiencing this with other people face-to-face is very appealing to me."
- Don from Canada, "This Jesus College vision is on the leading edge for the future of the Christian community."

For information on the courses, a plan worksheet for your custom Master's V-I-M, or a personal consult with **Doug Webster to discuss your desired spiritual training and growth, email us — info@JesusCollege.com

Jesus College Postscript

Thank you and God bless you for venturing further up, further in the Kingdom Among Us. We trust you received a fresh hearing of Jesus through the mind and soul of a humble follower of Jesus in Dallas Willard alongside a cadre of the crucifixion of friends from around the world. May your quietly transforming, conversational friendship with God immersed in the Trinitarian community be pervaded with joy, relaxed with shalom, and filled with agape, as you become the kind of apprentice of Jesus who willfully seeks the good of God, others and yourself.

The free study guide was prepared by Jesus College. We welcome your comments, suggestions and ideas on how we might better help you strengthen your apprenticeship with Jesus in the With-God life with the soul, sole, and eternal goal of Christlikeness. info@JesusCollege.com

Donor support empowers Jesus College to offer this course for FREE through our global, non-profit ministry to the Jesus College student body of Christ.

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