

Spirit of the Disciplines Series

"Sermon on the Mount"

Dallas Willard - Gordon Conwell 2 of 3

Scribe's Comments - *The session was typed from the YouTube (audio only) with good-faith effort but it is not verbatim. The [brackets] & **bold** offer commentary and also cross-references to other Dallas Willard teachings.*



[["Spirit of the Disciplines" Series audio links](#)]

- 1.) ["Changed Lives - Is it real?"](#)
- 2.) ["The Sermon on the Mount"](#)
- 3.) ["Spiritual Disciplines"](#)

Theme - A picture of life in the Kingdom as an Apprentice of Jesus

Pre-Introduction - "A Summary of Dallas' first three books"

Completing the series = *The Divine Conspiracy* added to *Hearing God & Spirit of the Disciplines*

- *Hearing God (In Search of Guidance)*

I try to explain the intimate quality of life that belongs to those who have learned to walk with Jesus Christ.

- *The Spirit of the Disciplines*

The relationship [above] is not automatic among Christians. This book is an attempt to explain how by utilizing these practices we can actually, effectively, fully enter into this walk with Christ.

- *The Divine Conspiracy*

In a systematic way, this book should have been written first.

I present - "Discipleship to Jesus as the heart of the Gospel
...an interpretation of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God."

Discipleship is not assumed to be a part of Christian life.

That's why it has become a para-church ministry. You call in experts.

Basically an interpretation of the Kingdom of God

Ch 5-7 The Sermon on the Mount - Kingdom Proclamation & Teaching

Ch 8-9 Discipleship

Ch 9 Curriculum for Christlikeness

- How would you teach someone to be a disciple of Jesus?

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"The Sermon on the Mount" (Length = 37:00) [5:35]

[Other Dallas Willard teachings on the "Sermon on the Mount"
"Discipleship & Sermon on the Mount", Wheaton College, 2001
"The Divine Conspiracy" Lecture 10 & 11, Fellows Institute, 2007]

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

[See ["Life's Four Big Questions" on Jesus College](#)]

1.) Who is really well off?

The gospel of the Kingdom addressed in the Beatitudes
People who are the last

2.) Who is a good person?

[8:30]

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

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

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

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

Is keeping the law important? You bet it is

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

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

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

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

How do you do it?

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

* Jesus healing the man with the withered hand.

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

What was most revealing? They had to think about.

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

- * You visited me in prison. *"When did we do that?"*
- * Not letting your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Your right hand just does it and you don't have to think about it
- * Good Samaritan - *"He took pity on him."* He had compassion. What did the others do? They thought about it
- * Jack Benny joke - "You're \$ or your life." "I'm thinking."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Matthew 5:21ff

[19:00]

"Thou shall not kill...I say don't be angry."

Is anger a sin? No but it's right next door.

* **Anger** is like a headache. It's there for a reason. It has a God-given function. Jesus got angry. Yes, I can trust Jesus with a lot of things that I don't trust myself with. You don't have to be angry to live. People are often shocked that God doesn't have to be mean to run the Universe.

I'm not talking about suppressing anger. I'm talking about not being angry.

He moves on to **Contempt**. What is He doing? He's moving on the pathway toward a condition of heart from which very naturally there is no problem with murder.

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"You fool!"

* "My grandmother would not let me call my friends "Fool!" So I just thought it.

"Children are natural legalists."

I won't say it, I'll just think it.

Probably didn't impress God but it impressed Grandma.

Jesus on Law Suits

[23:45]

He didn't say not go to Law, He talked about how you do it.

Be ready to give in. Be willing let the other to have room you don't think he should, to settle out of court.

Are these Laws? No, they are illustrations of a Kingdom heart.

Lives free from contempt, lust. Not just that I didn't commit adultery, I think about them in a different way.

Jesus is the smartest man who ever lived and He is now talking about the most important things human beings need to understand. [27:05]

When He takes up who is a really good person, he starts here and builds on it.

Legalism is crazy. "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." The leaven is hypocrisy. They are trying to do it the wrong way. They are tying bananas to an orange tree.

"Good tree can not bring forth bad fruit." You fix the inside of the tree.

Pay back, grudges, fairness, love enemies, bless those who curse.

Love your enemies. Why? That's the good thing to do. Give in to your enemies? No, whether you give in or not, you love them.

* Punishing a child when not angry. "What, punish him in cold blood?"

We can't do what is right unless we are angry. People teach if you are not angry, you can not stand for justice.

We will never break out of it unless we understand what Jesus is teaching here. We can't stand on the basis of justice. What we need is pity.

"Blessed are the merciful."

The basic structure of the heart of life from which the deeds of the heart naturally flow.

We are not talking about perfection.

"Christians aren't perfect only forgiven."

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They aren't perfect but there is a great deal than only being forgiven.

The disciplines come in when we set out to do them.

How does one practice the disciplines?

1.) Decide to live as Jesus student. Obey His teaching. [35:45]

2.) Learn how to do that. (?)

3.) Learn why you failed.

When you set out to do the teachings of Jesus, you will invariably fail.

* *"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."*

No, that's not it.

If at first you don't succeed, find out why you failed and try again.

* Blow up a rocket. Find out why before you launch the next rocket.

Would you like to live your life free of contempt? You can do it!

Free of lusting? You can do that!

This is all possible.

[38:40]

Today very few people believe it is possible.

If we don't believe it is possible, we won't try it.

If we don't try it, we won't learn how to do it.

If we don't do that, it won't be possible.

Then we'll say, "See I was right."

But loving your enemies is a better way to live than hating them.

Turning the other cheek is a better way to live than blowing them away.

Everything Jesus said is the best way to live.

Having faith in Jesus Christ? It does not mean just believing that He paid for our sins. It means He was right about everything including He paid for our sins. That's what the early Christians thought of Jesus. They had a very high view of Him.

When you understand Jesus is the smartest person who ever lived, you will look at everything differently.

How would Jesus do it? Find out how and then do it.

I can't do it. You can't but do it anyways.

You are meant to grow into this magnificent spiritual being. You can only do what you can not do and God will bail you out.

~ ~ ~ **End of Teaching** ~ ~ ~

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~ ~ ~ Q & A

[42:30]

Q - Seems like a simple format we complicate

A - [43:10] I don't begin with the disciplines, I begin with the Gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens. That's why Jesus begins with "Who is really well off?"

The crucial moment is the moment of intending to do it.

You become a disciple when you become ravished with the Kingdom of God and say, "I have to have this."

* Pearl of Great Price - Sold everything and bought it.

That's what simplifies it when we see this is it.

We present this in our churches, our Sunday School classes and our **families** and they say, "This is it!" What complicates things is that we live in a culture including our religious culture where this is foreign.

Q - [45:20] - Inaudible

A - [45:35] Suppose you decide to be sweet and reasonable with people in your office. Some are pretty exasperating. How are you going to manage to do that? You're going to have to be in a special state of mind. You're not going to be able to do it by just saying, "*I have to watch myself.*" That's the method that always fails.

If you blow up, you have to ask yourself, "*why did I not succeed?*"

Between you and your Lord you seek for that reason. Sometimes its obvious.

You in a hurry or too tired or you really don't like them.

Once you identify those you have to deal with those.

Hurry is a major problem for most Christians as it is for all people.

You have to find out, "why I am in a hurry?" Do I intend to live in a hurry? What is hurry? Is hurry the same as acting quickly? It isn't

Weariness - how much rest am I getting?

Am I honoring the Lord by resting enough?

You fix those in reliance on the Spirit. This is not something you'll do on your own. You don't have to do them on your own. This will probably direct you into some disciplines like solitude and silence. Remember, you don't have to do this by formula. You are learning this in a personal walk with the Lord.

Q - [48:40] How do handle a marriage where one spouse does not support trying to live the right way in the Lord?

A - [50:20] Communication and take time to find out the roots of the disagreement.

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1.) Remain a loving friend of this person and you'll need the resources to do that.

2.) Make every effort to make sure to not let anger and the will to have my way govern the way. Often the person is getting a certain response out of you. You might see if you can change your response. When someone slaps you, you remain vulnerable and you don't slap back. That changes back. Slapping back includes stabbing their heart with your tongue. See if they might change in such a way and the dynamics shift and realize it is no longer profitable to do it that way.

Take the Spirit of Jesus and you'll see how they work.

Q - [52:15] What is it about having to think about our response?

A - [52:50] We're running into our usual way of acting.

* Not wanting a man to be healed on the sabbath. They had to think about that. They should not have to think about that.

~ ~ ~ **Recording Ends Abruptly @ 53:23** ~ ~ ~

Information & resources about Dallas Willard Ministries — dwillard.org

Links to over 50 Willard Resources with A/V & + 1000 pages of notes:

JesusCollege.com

[Dallas Willard Writing & Courses](#)

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