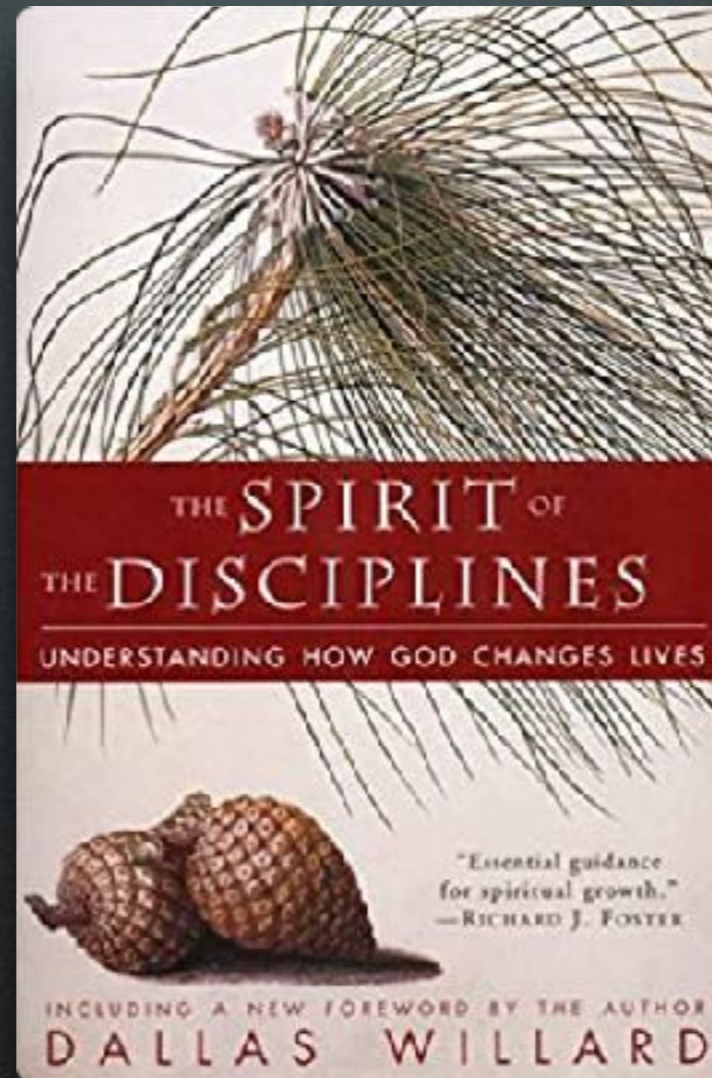


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The Spirit of the Disciplines

Session 2 - *"Making Theology of the Disciplines Practical"* - Chapter 2



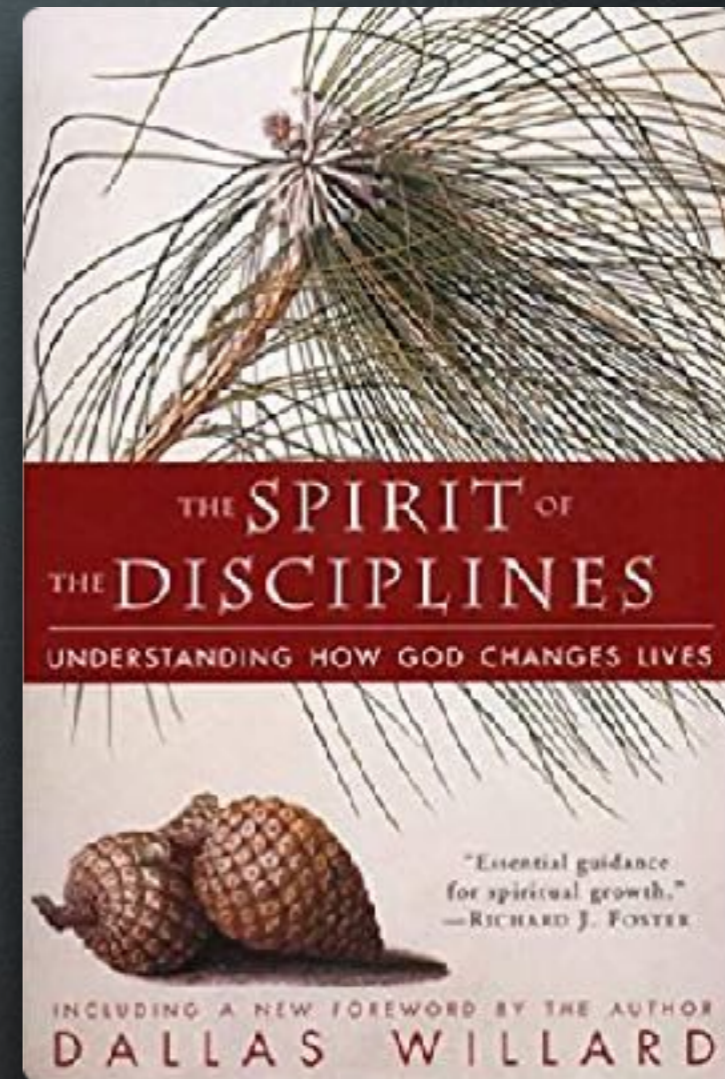
Session 1 Review

For Christianity to succeed, it needs two things:

1.) Take human transformation seriously

2.) Clarify & exemplify realistic methods

The secret of the easy yoke is to choose to live your life the way Jesus lived His life.





“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

The Spirit of the Disciplines

Session 2 - *"Making Theology of the Disciplines Practical"* - Chapter 2

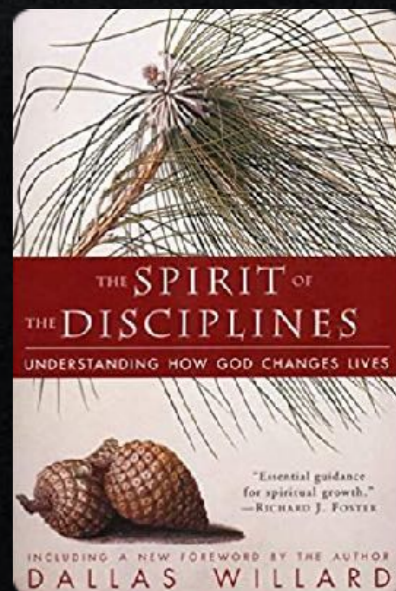
Merely Not Sinning Continuously? 1 John 3:9-10

We believe in our hearts that we should be Christlike*, closely following our Lord. However, few of us, if any, can see this as a real possibility for ourselves or others we know well. (12)

Either I must intend to stop sinning or not intend to stop. There is no third possibility.

This dilemma would be dissolved if we could realistically plan to be like Christ*.

"Tell me precisely how to go about it."
"Here's how." (13)





How do we follow Jesus, not as a pose or a constant grinding effort...but with ease and power He had — flowing from the inner depths, acting with quiet force from the innermost mind and soul of the Christ who has become a real part of us? (14)

The Spirit of the Disciplines

Session 2 - *“Making Theology of the Disciplines Practical”* - Chapter 2

Where is our practical theology today?

Where is the manner in which our actions interact with God to accomplish His ends in human life?

The church's intent:

- 1.) Proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God to all, making disciples from every nation or ethnic group.
- 2.) Developing the character of these disciples into the character of Christ Himself* .

[* - Here's the key focus again: CHRISTLIKENESS]



Are Dallas Willard's observations about practical theology too harsh? Simply make an inquiry on your own.

- * It has not always been successful.
- * Our leaders have not always been sufficiently wise and powerful equipping the saints.
- * Our zeal for evangelism the last three centuries may deflect us from growth in CHRISTLIKENESS*
- after conversion.
- * It is not even taken as a matter of great seriousness by most of our teachers and leaders.
- * The "Great Omission" from the Great Commission.

(15-16)

What is our group's plan for implementing the three phases of the Great Commission?

The church has lost sight of the type of life to,

“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18)

What could be learned from the Bible and the history of the church has generally been passed off as irrelevant or invisible.

A recognized, reasonable, theologically and psychologically sound approach to spiritual growth, to becoming like Christ*, was lost by mid-20th Century.

(16)

What about our 21st century, global Church?

Over the last [60 years] new life was breathed into the age-old practices of spiritual disciplines. (17)

If the steady, longtime faithful devotees to our ministries are not transformed in the substance of their lives to the full range of CHRISTLIKENESS, they are being failed by what we are teaching them.

(18)



The problem is...

...not unwillingness.

The problem is a theological deficiency, a lack in teaching, understanding, and practical direction.

The gospel preached and the instruction and example given these faithful ones simply do not do justice to the nature of human personality, as embodied, incarnate. (18)

By contrast, the secret of the standard, historically proven spiritual disciplines is precisely that they *do* respect and count on the bodily nature of human personality. (19)



Why the Interest Now & Changing Protestantism

II Corinthians 5:17 – “A new creation”

How is today's church the same or different 34 years after Dallas published this book and 44 years after Richard Foster published *Celebration of Discipline*?

*Church Growth Movement — Celebrity Church Leaders — Less
Protesting Protestantism — The Emergent Church — Secular
Science & Technology — De-churched Cultures — Western Civic
Divide — Gospel of Sin-Management or Prosperity Gospel*

Liberals lost religious experience & Conservatives
were about mere mental assent to correct doctrine.

And the Bible and revivals did not bring the faithful
into obvious CHRISTLIKENESS. (22-23)

Taking Faith Seriously

Recall the book's preface:

For Christianity to succeed, it needs two things:

- 1.) Take human transformation seriously*
- 2.) Clarify & exemplify realistic methods*

The disciplines promised to give our lives a form that would serve as a receptacle for the substance of the Christ-life in God's present Kingdom. (24)

**One Problem Still Remains:
The Theological Basis for Spiritual Disciplines**

Grace & Spiritual Disciplines are not integrated.

Spiritual disciplines were too Catholic - confused with meritorious works and penance.

For Protestants - “Cheap grace” did not just refer to salvation but was adopted as the dominant mode.

We misunderstand the function of spiritual disciplines in the full redemption of the human personality.

The disciplines are integral to meaningful life in Christ. They play an essential part in the full and effective presentation of the gospel and the truth about life in God's Kingdom. (25)

We need an informed theology for ORDINARY people.

The key insight - Full participation in the life of God's Kingdom and in the vivid companionship of Christ comes to us only through appropriate exercise in the disciplines for life in the spirit.

There will be a life giving revolution in our personal lives and in our world.

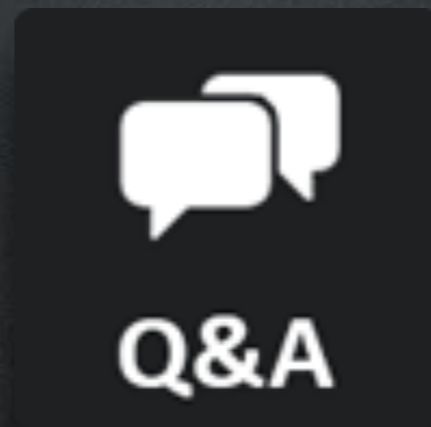
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Q&C

Your Questions & Comments are welcome!

(Use the Q&A on the bottom of your Zoom screen)



Meditation — 1 John 3:1-10

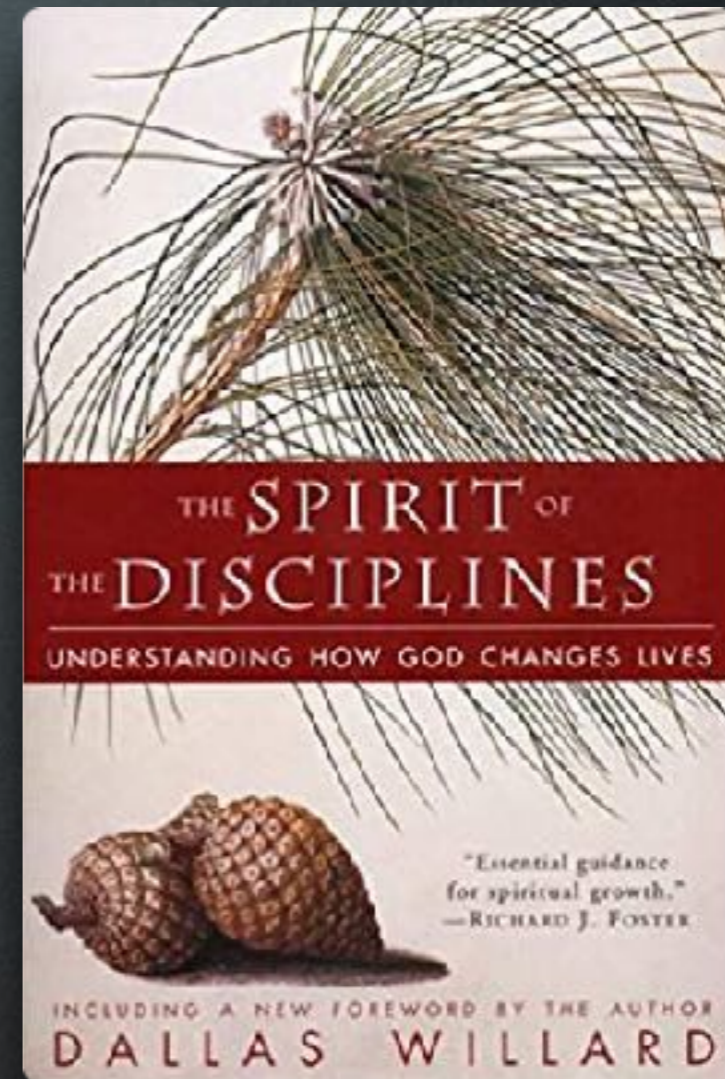
Application

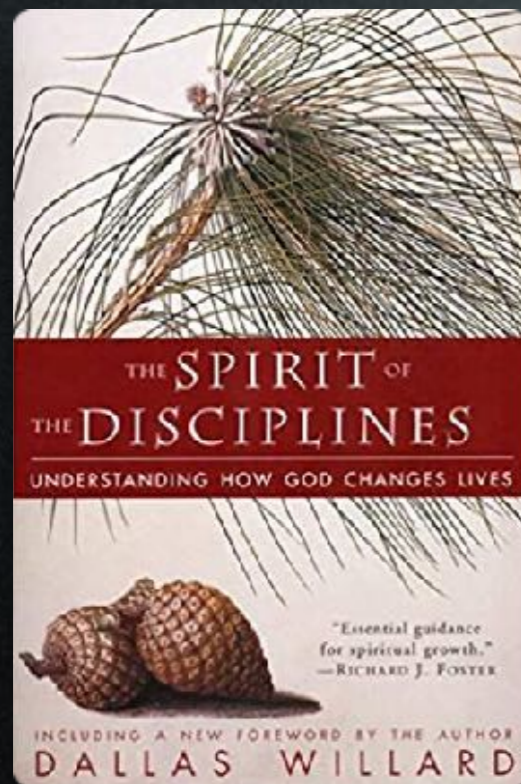
- 1.) How would I describe and verify the seriousness with which I take my faith?
- 2.) What in my theology of Spiritual Disciplines inhibits the way of my progress of Christlikeness?
- 3.) What one discipline and scriptural focus will I practice today to simply follow Jesus?



Session 2 Summary

The practice of spiritual disciplines by grace in ordinary people brings the human personality into the fullness for which we were made.

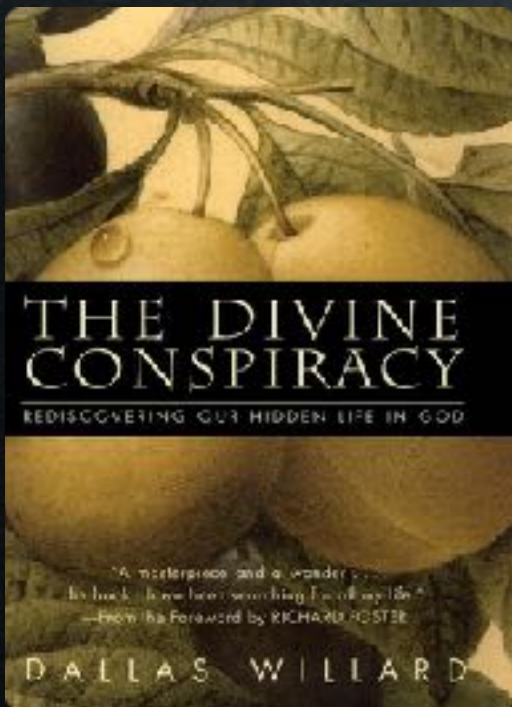




Next — Session 3

“Salvation is a Life” Chapter 3

*When salvation becomes our daily life with God,
not just when our religious life begins.*



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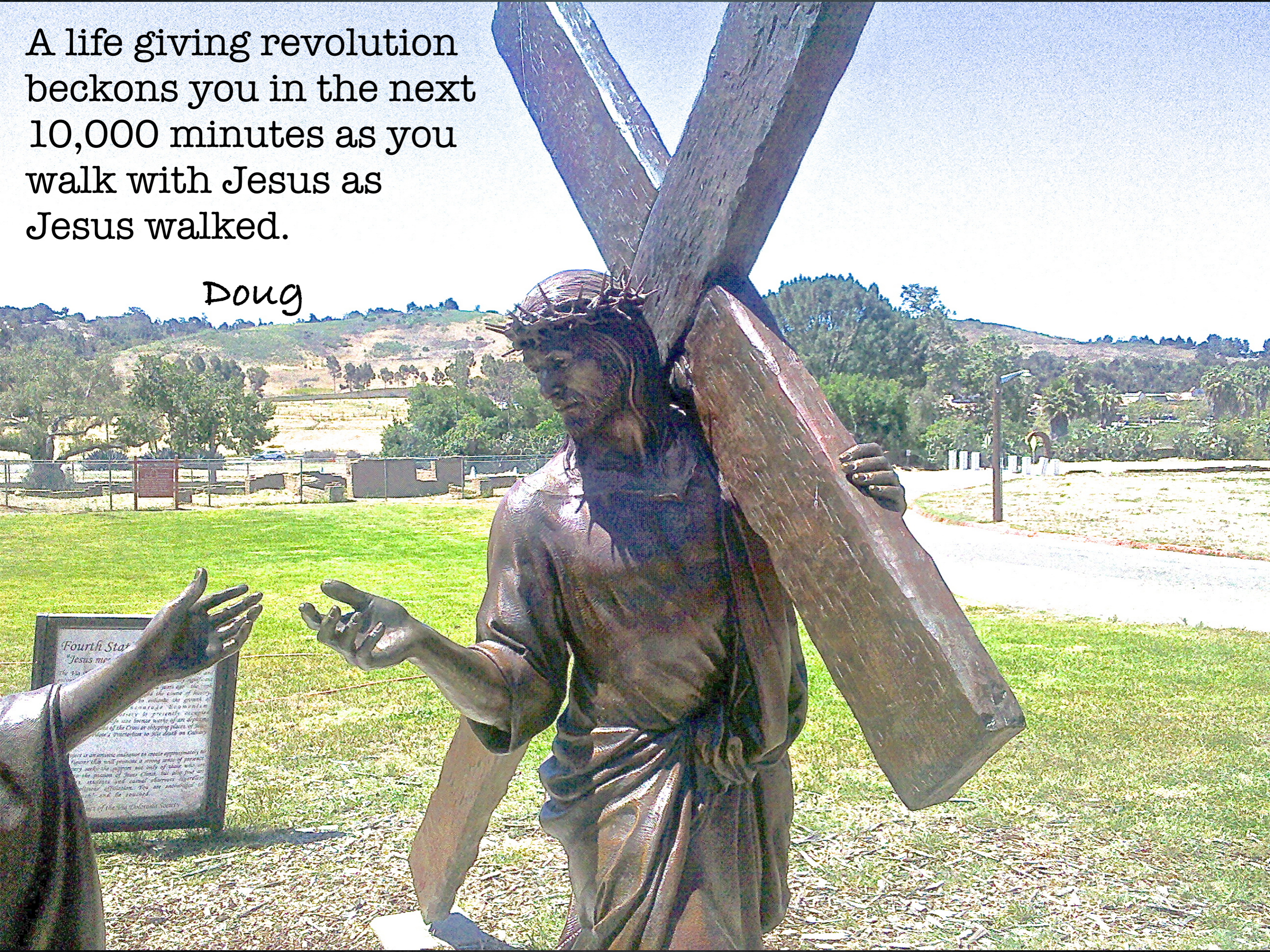
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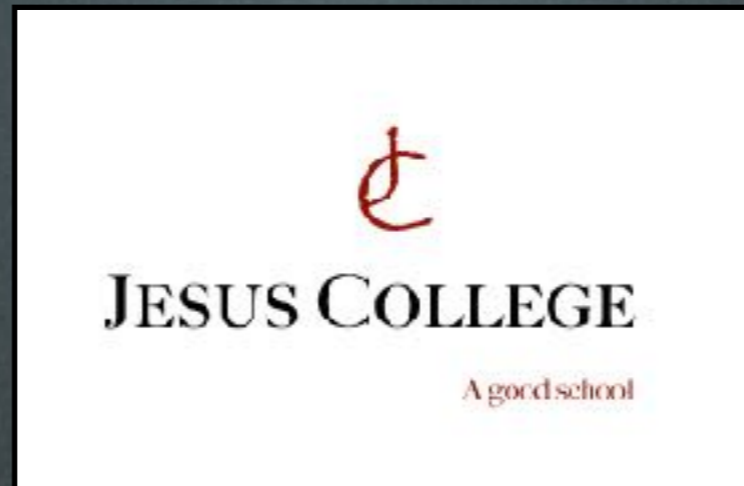
Doug





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