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["The Human Side of Holiness" part 3](#)

[1:11:00-1:14:27]

Q - I was thinking about how a lot **youth ministry** is decision based trying to get kids to make decisions and they are hammered with it. I'm wondering what it should look like, what kind of shift we could make that might be more towards surrender. What could ministers do differently?

A - Well, now you have provoked me. I think, if I may say so, youth ministry is one of the great wastelands and problems. It is partly based upon that fact that young people are not respected. They are not presented with opportunities to think things through, to come to honest convictions. And so, we wind up trying to entertain them, and keep them coming back with the hope they won't get pregnant, or get on drugs or something of that sort. That's often what parents want us to do for their kids in the church.

We have to respect young people much more and allow them to come to decision. There is a time to ask a person, "*Wouldn't you like to decide now to become a disciple of Jesus?*"

There is a time, but that requires discernment to recognize that time and to know when it would be the right thing to help that person make a move. Too often we harass them into decisions, or social pressure or something. And that way they don't become disciples. That's why we have such a high graduation rate from church when kids pass out of high school—when they get on their own and they're not under the pressure.

So I think, really, we need to pay attention to thoughtful teaching, listening with young people especially, the primary form of witnessing is listening, not talking— and being with them and letting them come to what they need to come to in the way of faith and decision and so on. So this is a really important topic. You see, if we think *thee decision* is the thing then we will aim at the decision. And the decision is not the thing, the decision is an outcome.

What we want to do is help people understand. And we can often do much more by asking them a question than we can by asserting something. And communicating to them this idea that they have the kingdom is one of the most helpful things in bringing them to the point to where they can make a decision. They struggle with the idea but they don't have words for it, they don't know how to handle it, they feel guilty about it, and we need to be able to help them understand what it is, and to know that it's a good thing, and understand how to handle it.

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["The Human Side of Holiness" part 3](#)

[45:00] - The will is the executive center of the self. It's the executive center of the self. It is the place where *you*—uniquely *you*—initiate processes, events and brings things into existence. It is the most precious part of you and God respects it. So much so that he will allow people who do not want to be with him to be away from him. He will allow that. He will not override.

That's why one of the hardest things to pray for is a **relative**. For many reasons, but one of the things that we wind up praying for is the overriding of their will, and he doesn't do that. That's why in human affairs, the will is so precious and so sacred. It's because it's the one place that you—and uniquely you—exercise your kingdom in the creation of what is good or what is not good. And then your body is given to you so that your will can gain a wider sway and your environment is meant to fit into that. But at the root of it all is your will.

Q - [52:30] Would our prayer for our **relative** be,
"May the Word of Christ enter..."?

Dallas - Well, you know, the spirit apart from regeneration is seeking, and there are differences, and a person... Now, here we get into some deep theology—double predestination and all that sort of thing. But the person who really doesn't want to have anything to do with God, I think, never turns in faith because God does not assist them. But the rule is, *"If with all your heart you seek me, you will find me,"* Actually, I'll find you. [Deut. 4:29]

Q - [53:16] What if you are **related** to that person who doesn't seem to have any interest in...?

Dallas - Then we should pray—in my practice and my advice is—we want to pray about what comes to their mind, and their body, and the social context, to begin to redirect them. Very often on my prayer for a person in that case is, *"Please, bring someone into their life that can help them."* So we can still pray and although prayer will not overwhelm the will, there are other things that can be done and we should be asking God to do that for them. Now, that's his decision as to whether or not he does that and he knows best about all of that. But for my part I'll keep praying until I find out something better to do. So we should pray for our friends, and our relatives, our lost ones. We should pray that they will hear a word, that they will meet a person, they will have a circumstance of some sort that will bring them to

the end of themselves. Because that's where you actually have to come to the end of yourself. And you will always find God when you come there—that's his address. The end of your rope is where God is to be found.

~ ~ ~

["The Human Side of Holiness" part 3](#)

[55:40]

The surrender of the will now, is crucial. That's really what we're talking about when we talk about making a disciple. Talking about someone who says, *"I give up. I don't have any resources. I trust you. You are my Lord. I am not my lord. You are my Lord."* See, now, that, that's a *huge* moment. And that's what we should pray for and work for as we preach the gospel as we do our best to live as the light of the world where we are is that people would come to see that. And see that their only alternative in life is to put their confidence in Jesus Christ.

Now obviously you've got to have something coming from the mind to do that and this is the point at which we say the will never works on its own. The will requires two things: a thought, and a feeling.

- * Children - And that's why it's so dreadful when you stop to think about what the world is running in the minds of people constantly. Of what **children** and **young people** have to face in the way of feelings and ideas. And they don't have character yet. I mean, some are blessed with it a little earlier than others. They pretty much just have impulsive will, and whatever thoughts or feelings are running through them. And that's a very bad position to be in. That's why, of course, they need an adult world where there is at least some sanity and hopefully some good teaching about God and what God is doing. And of course, they're very receptive to that if it's given to them.

- * The World and Children - But now we live in a world where **children** don't know the Bible stories, they know the comics, and that's what their lives run on. And if you ever watch these things with your **grandchildren**, or your **children**, or whatever you get a picture of what they have that is fed into their minds. And you need to think about the difference between those, and coming up with a mind full of Bible stories. There's not a lot of hope in what they look at constantly and what they hear in school and all of that. So, no. But the point here is your will is locked into a set of ideas and a set of feelings.

~ ~ ~

["The Human Side of Holiness" part 3](#)

[1:04:15]

So now, why is it important for people to hear that God so loved the world? What is that? Those are ideas. What an idea. There is a God, a God of love, and he loved the world so much that he sent his unique Son into the world that people might find life.

Listen folks, that is a big idea And it's so important that our **children** get that idea. And many times it's much later they begin to respond, but the natural response to that verse would be to fill you with joy and gratitude and to make you say, "Such a God as this I will trust with everything I am." But it is tremendously important what is proclaimed, what is said. And that's why we want to be tireless in saying it. Wisely? Yes. There are unwise ways of doing it. Sometimes does more harm than good. And we have to be aware of that. It is a part of the privilege of the child of the Kingdom to proclaim the Kingdom and to use what we know of God to help people understand what it is.

~ ~ ~

["The Human Side of Holiness" part 2](#)

[32:10]

Q - I just had a quick question if you could repeat the part about "[God] is so big..."

A - God is so big that he has to hide in order that we can hide from him. Now, see that was the project, "*Where are you Adam?*" That's a deep, great preaching text and all of that and you have to work whether or not you think God knew where Adam was all along. That's Open Theology territory. But it has deeper implications either way you would go. But, the point is, he was hiding. He was hiding and that's the human enterprise. One reason why we love **children** so much is because they haven't yet learned to hide their souls inside their bodies. Did you know that? They can't do it.

Our little Becky when she was little learned there were such things as jokes but she didn't know how to tell them. And so she would tell something she thought was a joke and just fall on the floor laughing. But, to tell a joke you have to keep the cat *in* the bag. That's hiding, right? You have to know when to let the cat out of the bag. In order to do that you have to be able to manage your body in a certain way. So, timing is crucial.

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Human Side of Holiness Session 5 — [“Love as Life” part 2](#) [21:51]

Q - [21:51] Would you say self-limiting love requires discretion?

Dallas - I say the reason that you don't do something is because you love. And that's self-limiting.

Q - Parents taking care of a **child** in college and not giving them money?

Dallas - Absolutely. That's right. That's exactly right. And actually we know this with **children**. I hope we do. We know that you limit your love by what is good for the child and you have to teach the child that. And if you don't ,they'll never grow up.

~ ~ ~

Human Side of Holiness Session 5 — [“Love as Life” part 2](#) [24:53]

Now, today, the threat is, see, we have a general ideology where moral knowledge has disappeared* and judgments are treated as if to say the word judgment was to say, “Well, it's just your idea” and of course there's a tricky sense in which...[to the student: I haven't forgotten you. I'm going to come back to you, okay?"] There's a sense in which only judges make judgments. So every judgment is a judgment of someone. But that's simply in the nature of what a judgment is—it doesn't mean that it's not right, not well-founded, and so on. So, you live in a communal context and the discussion keeps going and you have the scripture to guide you, and common sense to guide you, and so in that context you make judgments as to what is appropriate in the given circumstances. And, again, we do that more comfortably with **children** but we take a vacation from responsibility for our **kids** as they get older and turn them loose and the **students** come to USC and they are told, “Well, you know, we have some rules about what you do in the dorms, and what you can do in the classroom, but other than that, suit yourself. And out the other end of *that* pipe comes a lot of human disasters. [* See [The Disappearance of Moral Knowledge by Dallas Willard](#)]

~ ~ ~

Human Side of Holiness Session 5 — [“Love as Life” part 2](#) [1:08:20]

So the next major step at the bottom of the page is deciding who your neighbors are. That's really a continuation of what we've been talking about. Your neighbors are people that you have a significant degree of influence over and can actually do things that will help them—not just formalizations of some sort.

So, you have to go through that process, and on the second page, "the decision to have compassion upon those closest to us wherever they are" and that starts with our **family**, our people that we live with, they are our neighbors. So, you have to make a judgment about who are these people and that you need to be guided by the Holy Spirit in that, and you will have that guidance if you're looking for it, and there will be some changes over time as to who is your neighbor and who is not because that's a growing relationship and perhaps they themselves will be in a different place and be in the position of loving *their* neighbors.

The decision to have compassion upon those who closest to us, wherever they are. That's starts with our **family**, the people we live with. They are our neighbors. You have to make a judgment about who are these people. You have to have guidance from the Holy Spirit.

~ ~ ~

"Human Side of Holiness" Session 10: "[Relationship of Mind & Spirit](#) [39:00]

One of the greatest sources of poverty in this world is mis-education.

Most people who are poor go through some school and they are not enabled by that experience because of the way the system is set up by the people who are in the system. It is so complicated. Some of the best Christians I know are trying do something in that system. They always do wonders for the **children** they work with. They are grinding against the system and most of it is harmful agasint the **kids**.

One dimension is "Secularism". It is an absolute is a dead end. "*Whoopee I'm secular.*" What comes next? What does that do for your life - in terms of hope and peace. It does nothing. Little **children** who need hope and peace and love, don't get it. They think, "Who needs this. I'll sell drugs or my body."

~ ~ ~

"Human Side of Holiness" Session 12 - "[Disciplines](#)" [Introduction]

Q - At what age can you start solitude?

Dallas - You need your **children** to have times to play alone. Don't give them a bunch of stuff to occupy them. Let them learn to be with themselves. I think that is one of the most helpful things you can for your child. Generally ,when they are young, love to play alone. Until they are ruined, they enjoy that. They need to play alone and play imaginatively. Leave them alone. Pretty soon their imagination will find them...they will build and grown and no who you are. If they don't they will come to you and say, "I'm bored." Then you've got a real problem. It takes a lot of wisdom to

communicate to them that they are approaching things wrongly if they are bored. They will grow up and not like themselves and have to get stuff to fix their minds.

Q - Imagination as a **child**...the gift of imagination is a tool of spiritual disciplines?

Dallas - Because imagination is what it is, you can't do very much but get out of its way and let it roll on. Children's literature is especially helpful if it is the right sort of thing. We need to encourage it, bring it to the Bible, let **children** be creative with it, as much as they can.

I use imagination, I "image" things. If you are praying for something, you need to have a firm grasp of what it is. Imagination is usually used for something that is not real. That's unfortunate because imagination is used to come to grips with what is real. I don't use it as a trick or a magical thing. It's important to stay out of magic in prayer. You need to very clearly image what you are praying about. Vague prayers rarely accomplish anything because prayer is not a way of manipulating something but a way of working at something with God. In that process, you need to be able to graphically bring before you what you are doing.

~ ~ ~

"Human Side of Holiness" Session 12 - "[Disciplines](#)"

[1:10:00]

Q - We manipulate our sexuality when really we are searching for intimacy. How is intimacy experienced for a single person?

Dallas - With **family**, friends, you have to clear your mind as to what intimacy is - being present with another person in terms of who they are, where they are going, what they are doing - "sharing life" is a phrase for intimacy. You can be sexually involved and not sharing your life with anyone. Can you share your life without being sexually involved. If you get your mind messed up enough you think...

* Jonathan & David - you'll say their homosexuals because you can't interpret it any other way.

* Tenderness of a **Grandparent & Grandchild** with turn into sexual intimacy.

That's a part of the terrible confusion they fall into when they decline from their knowledge of God.

~ ~ ~

"Human Side of Holiness" - Session 16

["Knowledge, Grace, Discipleship"](#)

[16:00]

Beliefs can be true without constituting knowledge.

You pick up beliefs from the people you are with.

Little **children** come to believe most of the things they believe because of the people around them believe. That's a good thing. You would not want them to have to wait until they could know. We arrive at maturity with a set of beliefs that we picked up and then a large part of our responsibility is to sort those out and to find which ones are true and which ones are false. We learn things like, *"It was not true just because my folks believed it."*

~ ~ ~

"Human Side of Holiness" - Session 16

["Knowledge, Grace, Discipleship"](#)

[1:17:00]

Offer a short term course on how to not be "angry".

Limited number - no more than 6-8 people. Need individual attention.

"Following up on Jesus' suggestion that we teach people to do everything He said, we are going to have a course (8 weeks - 3 months). If you take this, you will no longer be unable to not be angry."

The most important application is in the **family**.

~ ~ ~

"Human Side of Holiness" Session 17

["Discipleship in Local Congregation"](#)

[30:30]

Openly expect disciples to learn the things that Jesus taught us to do.

At present there is no such expectation. If someone is doing it, they are considered oddities. In Sunday School, we expect children to do it. We need to maintain it across the board. In education, **children** respond to expectations. If you don't expect them to not learn, they won't learn. We need to have expectations that people would learn in such a way they would automatically do the things Jesus said. That would solve most of the problems we have in the local congregations. All the problems come out of failure at the lower level. If we want to do with those problems, we don't deal with them directly, we deal with the roots that cause that.

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["Streams in the Desert" - Session 3 Q&A](#)

Q - How did I lose the enthusiasm of simple living with Christ in my **youth group** in So CA? [43:15]

A - - [Dallas Willard @ 43:45] You have become a responsible leader. What happens is people will identify you and say, "This leader can help us" and you will fall heir to all their expectations of what you are supposed to do and that will encouraged you to take charge and be responsible to them.

You need to stand in the simplicity of Kingdom living. That's a beautiful thing you can have wherever you are but you will have to find the practices that will bring you back into and that will loosen you up from being a responsible leader. Probably your heart is there already. We can find our way if we decide to be intentional about it. If we are in leadership, we'll have to re-educate everyone to go along with us.

~ ~ ~

["The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" — Session 4](#)

In **High School, kids** hit a moral wilderness or a moral sewer and nothing is taught to them except a brand of secular legalism." [past 1:02:00]

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[The Divine Conspiracy Continued, Chapter 5](#)

RAISING UP HEROES - Jesus is the greatest hero of all. This can and should be debated. (79)

Few **children**, even those from Christian homes, "dress up" like Jesus and go trick-or-treating on Halloween. This must change. Why? Because Jesus is seldom regarded as a heroic individual who with courage and moral integrity chose to live and die for the ultimate good of all humanity. (80)

~ ~ ~

Renovation of the Heart

When the required type of “for-ness” is adequately present, human “Circles of Sufficiency” emerge.

The most fundamental form is that of **Mother and Child.**

(179; 2012 Edition)

These “Circles of Sufficiency”, natural and essential to the human condition and so profoundly beautiful to behold, are always illusory at the merely human level, and even the illusion itself is terribly fragile. To assure an anxious child we may say, “Everything is okay now.” But it never is. In this world it is never true that *everything* is okay, and perhaps it is least true in those very situations where we feel the need to say it.

Every human circle presupposes for its really being okay a larger context or circle that supports it. The mother and child, for example, presuppose the larger family that cares for and sustains them, making it possible for them to be absorbed in one another as they need to be, ignoring all else. These larger circles also depend upon yet larger circles, which, while ever less intimate, are still crucial to make the inner circles possible. That is just how human life is. The togetherness of the mother and child may be drastically affected by economic conditions on the other side of the earth.

Ultimately, every human circle is doomed to dissolution if it is not caught up in the life of the only genuinely self sufficient “Circle of Sufficiency”, that of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For that circle is the only one that is truly and totally self sufficient. And all the broken circles must ultimately find their healing there, if anywhere.

Only when rooted in that divine Trinitarian circle can the broken individuals from the broken circles recover from the wounds received in their circles of origin and find wholeness on their long journey from the womb to the eternal City of God. Of course it was never God's intention that the natural human “Circles of Sufficiency”, of reciprocal rootedness, would be illusory, fragile, and eventually broken; and if they lived in within his kingdom, they would not be. (180)

~ ~ ~

Renovation of the Heart

A **child** who is not adequately received in this world is likely to be incapable of giving and receiving love in decent human relationships for the rest of his

life. He will be perpetually left out, if only in his imagination. And in this matter, imagination can have the force of reality.

But if a **child** is totally received in his early years by his **parents** and **siblings**, he will likely have a rootedness about him that will enable him to withstand most forms of rejection that may come upon a human being. He will carry his solid relationships to and from his family members throughout life, being sustained by them even long after those loved ones are dead. He will receive a steady stream of rest and strength from them." (180-181)

~ ~ ~

Renovation of the Heart

Commandments #6 - Honor Your Father & Mother - "Violation of it disrupts the human soul and makes dysfunctional people as nothing else does." (187)

~ ~ ~

Renovation of the Heart

Our soul is like an inner stream of water, which gives strength, direction, and harmony to every other element of our life. Rooted in the vastness of God and his kingdom, including nature, and all else within us is enlivened and directed by that stream.

A little **child** that has been allowed to develop naturally and as been nurtured in all of the aspects of it's being gives us the best presentation of what a life flooded with a healthy soul looks like. (205)

~ ~ ~

"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" - Session 1

The greatest challenge of the people of Jesus Christ today is to stand in our world as representing knowledge of reality with love and intelligence to show that we have that knowledge by the lives that we lead.

That is the pressure point of the work that we do today.

The basic idea in the first session is this - There is a *Divine Conspiracy* and it will win. It is a conspiracy because God must be hidden that humanity may take the alternatives that presents itself to SELF-WILL and CHARACTER grow out of that [decision].

* **Raising CHILDREN** - at a certain point allowing them to do what they want to learn wrong & right.

Character only develops with freedom. This is a profound spiritual truth about the meaning of human history and what God is doing in the cosmos.

There are a certain amount of dead hens you have to work through before you see what is good and what is right. That's true of individual life and corporate life.

When you look at the contemporary scene - business, military, music, pop culture - that's what's really going on. God is at work far beyond what we call the church. God is just as much involved in business, science, art, etc. I say that because of what I believe about the Kingdom of God.

~ ~ ~

"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" - Session 4

His Riches: Glorious Future of the Individual Human [1:13:25]

Matt. 18:10 - Caring Provision - God assigns angels to attend to each child.

He has individuals to see to it that they are cared for in the Kingdom of God, this side of death or the other. He not only takes care of sparrows, he takes care of **children**. How can this be when you see what happens to them in this world? No matter what happens to them in this world, the goodness of God sees to it that those children continue to exist in conditions that makes them thankful to no matter what happens to them. You have to go beyond death.

~ ~ ~

"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" - Session 5

Make Disciples by ravishing them with the Kingdom

It's amazing how little we hear about Jesus in our churches. Help them understand about the greatness of Jesus and what He is doing. He is often presented in a very narrow perspective. He is just Savior & Judge. Present Christ. Lift Him up in all of His glory and with Him the Kingdom comes because He is a great King.

"The Unfathomable Riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8)

Go to people and ask them, *"How are you doing with your kingdom?"*

Help them be responsible for their lives. Help them understand who Jesus is. Self will is not bad until we exalt it to the top position. We all have a Kingdom that we bring with us to each moment and gathering

* Breakdown of kingdoms in **families**

*"Hearts of Fathers to **Children**"* [37:10]

These are kingdoms that are broken. Then we bring people to Jesus and see life in His Kingdom. That's how we make disciples.

"Look, this is your greatest opportunity in life."

~ ~ ~

"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" - Session 6

The Inversion of the Two Kingdoms

[39:30]

The New Testament calls it "the World".

Early followers disowned the World, the Flesh & the Devil.

[Ephesians 2, I John - Eyes, Flesh & Pride; Eve in the Garden of Eden]

The World - Socially organized flesh superintended by the prince of this world Satan whose primary job is to direct the ideas of this world that people are controlled by a false system of belief. One of the primary components is the way people are ranked.

* "Pecking order of chickens" - ranking who is up and who is down

* **Children** on a playground - heartbreaking to see it. One of the most brutal places in the world is playgrounds in schools. As you grow up, you get hardened to it. This is where contempt comes in because contempt is tied to the rankings.

Jesus is especially conscious of this and how it is tied to theology. How human rankings are identified with God's rankings. Central to Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom is the inversion of Human ideas about rank. God has a different ranking. *"First, last. Last, first."* What human beings regard as good, respectable, decent, to be applauded and the people who wind up in those places as being well off, to be good, to be respected. If you are in those good rankings, that means God is on your side. One of the biggest rankings is wealth & social influence, and the right qualifications.

~ ~ ~

"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" - Session 6

Luke 14:26 - Jesus, *"Hate Your Mother & Father"*

[57:55]

Jesus didn't teach people to hate their **parents**. He was contradicting a generalization that your Mother & Father should determine what you do for life - if you respect & love them, you'll do what they say.

* Zebedee, *"These **children** must hate me. They left me for Jesus."*

Jesus is not teaching anyone to hate anyone. He did realize that the interpretation of loving which meant that you would do what your **PARENTS** said even after you have grown up had to be corrected because PARENTS often misdirect you and you have to have a place to stand in the Kingdom of God to redeem **FAMILY** relations.

~ ~ ~

"The Divine Conspiracy Lectures" - Session 9

BUILDING DISCIPLES in FAMILIES

They need this so badly. Dads need to learn how to do this.

* Dallas, *"I hurt my son badly when he was young. I did not do what I know I needed to do - to be as gracious and kind and patient with him as I should have been."*

Could we teach people to be like that? Could we say...

We teach FATHERS & MOTHERS how to deal with CHILDREN in such a way that they do not become frustrated and angry, that they are not hurt. How we handle the situation between parents & children is one where they are nourished and brought up. Even if they are not obedient, we still manage to live with them, love them and grow with them.

One of the biggest problems in today's families is impatience. Children needs lot of patience and understanding. But if the parents are so worried and hurried, they can't be? Can we say to people,

"We can teach you how to live without hurry. How to keep sabbath. How to be strong, rested and present with your children."

"We teach you how to have love in your heart so that the things said in I Corinthians 13 come out - Love is kind, patient, does not envy..."

~ ~ ~

"The Divine Conspiracy" Lectures - Session 12

PRAYER is "asking". Look at the teachings of Jesus. It's all about asking. Your relationship to God is not all about asking. Have a relationship with God that

is greater than asking. People who don't understand prayer and the kingdom misunderstand asking the Father for our needs. **Children** ask. Dogs ask. * **Children** are not afraid to ask. They also curl up in your lap and say "I love you, Daddy" not to get something they want but just because they love you.

Our relationship to God is much bigger than prayer. But prayer is fundamentally asking and receiving and living in a relationship where that happens. [54:00+]

~ ~ ~

The Allure of Gentleness, Chapter 2

As a teacher at a university, I deal with many, many **students** who had not been encouraged in their churches to be honest with her questions and doubts. When they get to the university, looking more or less like me, who say, you know, these Christians... Hey don't really know how to think and They don't know the truth. The students are not equipped to think about the issues they come up in that environment and they often leave their face. Many churchgoers have been taught not to question what they hear in church and that doubt is a bad thing. But they are missing the great value in doubt—you can stimulate you to keep thanking and asking questions. Look in the Scriptures, and see how much Jesus did by asking questions.

Our culture teaches us to think better person who doubts is essentially smarter than a person who believes. So I tell people,

"If you're going to be a doubter, you need to believe your beliefs and doubt your doubts as well as to doubt your beliefs and believe your doubts."

This is how knowledge grows. (27-28)

~ ~ ~

The Allure of Gentleness, Chapter 4

You have to face this with your **children**. If you had the power to completely control your children, I'm sure you would decide that you should not use that power most of the time. This because you know you would destroy your children. Children must choose. And to choose, they must have some distance, some freedom. Children must be able to do things without being known. And God chooses not to know everything. (65-66)

~ ~ ~

The Allure of Gentleness, Chapter 6

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT (125-127) [and Raising Children]

If you think deeply about it, you'll understand the great value of an environment that provides human beings with choice and the possibility of developing good character or poor character. When we tell children to "make good choices", are we just hoping they will manage to stay out of trouble for the day, or that the "good choices" will become habits & the children will grow into people who naturally do the right thing? A world that permits the development of moral character - one that makes it possible for persons to become the immeasurably precious and even glorious beings that they sometimes do become - is of much greater value than any world that does not. (125-126)

The moral development of personality is possible only in a world of genuine freedom.

* Raising **Children** - They have to choose, to learn, to grow.

To nurture moral perfection, horrendous moral crimes must be permitted by God - though He Himself never approves of, actualizes, or requires them. If children are never permitted to do wrong, they will never become capable of developing a nature or character that resolutely chooses the good. Good persons must live in a world where doing evil is a readily available option. Producing people with character without giving them choice is impossible, because the capacity to choose is a part of character. (126)

~ ~ ~

***The Divine Conspiracy* Ch. 5 CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT**

"Kingdom rightness respects the soul need of human beings to make their judgments and decision solely from what they have concluded is best. It is a vital, a biological need. We do not thrive, nor does our character develop well, when this need is not respected and this thwarts the purpose of God in our creation." (175)

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Life Without Lack, Chapter 3

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

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

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Life Without Lack, Chapter 7

All You Need is Love

(162-164)

As a mother or father, or a grandparent with a grandchild, we are simply to pour ourselves into that child in love. When people love one another like this it creates a self-contained circle within which there is complete sufficiency in human terms. **Children** who are deeply loved and raised within such a circle can endure almost anything. I think this is why Jesus used children to illustrate so many truths, such as *"Assuredly, I say to you, unless you're converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."* Matthew 18:3 (162-163)

The pure, unfiltered love of children is why they have such a redeeming effect on people. (Isaiah 11:6) In the love between a small child and a parent, we come the closest to seeing and experiencing love in its purest form.

People who have grown up in an environment of love, even if it is only human love without a consciousness of God, will always have a tremendous resource that can never be taken away from them. If they have been loved rightly by their family, they have a treasure. Unfortunately, many people who were not loved rightly in their families enter marriage thinking, *now, at last, I'm really going to be loved*, but they soon find out that both they and their spouse are hampered in loving each other. (163)

All of these things direct us to the truth that perfect love is only found in God. Love is a gift from God, who is love. We can not perform for a gift.

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

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Life Without Lack, Chapter 7

The Joy of Loving

(180-182)

One of the greatest things in the world is to love people. It is so much better than hatred or indifference. We were created for love.

Jesus taught what we may call the reciprocity of goodness. (181)

"Judge not and you shall not be judged. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."
Luke 6:37-38

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

Family - **Children** do not always do what we believe they should do. We are wounded by this and tend to feel that they are walking evidence that we have been wrong, that we are not good people. Or the reverse may be true for a child having to deal with a difficult parent.

Begin by asking God to help us delight in them, focus on what is good for them, and celebrate what is valuable within them. Go back in memories, "Lord, help me to remember the good." We must seek to see them, to relate to them, to be with them as it is appropriate and good. Set our mind to be with them, and pay attention to them. Do what is good for them. Look into their eyes, and talk to them and listen to the, serve them, help them, give to them. Enjoy them. Praise God for them. (182)

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The Disappearance of Moral Knowledge, p. 377-380

Is it too much to think that our contemporary disasters such as failures of covenants in **family**, business and government, obesity, addictions, crime, financial chaos, failure of educational system.

If the teachers, students and administrators in our schools were pursuing a life of virtue, how much would that change in our schools?

All of these rest in some significant degree upon the failures of lives and character of some people involved. And those failures rest in some significant degree upon the disappearance of moral knowledge from our society in a sense explained. It would be a mistake to ascribe all of our problems to that disappearance. Not everything can be solved in this world by sincere effort even if it is informed by moral knowledge. There are other problems.

This disappearance has had and is having a very harmful effect on much our life in present and that is the responsibility of our institutions of knowledge to make moral knowledge available in the extent to which that is

possible. Not by teaching rules, not by imposing condemnation or praise, but by the dispassionate analysis and communication of the nature of virtue and vice and character.

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The Great Omission, Chapter 14

Finding the Kingdom of God is seeing and working with His activities in our lives in and around us. The Kingdom of God is God-governing, God-acting. To know God-acting we have to put ourselves into everything we do expecting to interact with God there. The **student** at the university or college can see the hand of God in everything they do. And so can anyone else. (179)

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Renewing the Christian Mind

Chapter 20 - "The Problem of Evil"

1.) Permit a universe that allows for the development of moral character

The moral development of personality is possible only in a world of genuine freedom. To nurture moral perfection, horrendous moral crimes must be permitted by God— Though he himself never approves of them, actualizes them, or requires them. Nurturing moral perfection (within a suitable world) and not allow wrongdoing is impossible. If a **child** is never committed to do wrong, it will never become capable of developing a nature or character that resolutely chases for good. Good persons must live in a world were doing evil is a genuine choice for them. (355)

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Hearing God, Chapter 1

Obviously God must guide us in a way that will develop spontaneity in us. The development of character, rather than direction in this, that, and the other matter, must be the primary purpose of the Father. He will guide us, but he won't override us. That fact should make us use with caution the method of sitting down with a pencil and a blank sheet of paper to write down the instructions dictated by God for the day. Suppose a **parent** would dictate to the **child** minutely everything he is to do during the day. The child would be stunted under that regime. The parent must guide in such a manner, and to the degree, that autonomous character, capable of making right decisions for itself, is produced. God does the same. (35)

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Healing the Heart - Session 1 - "Healing from Brokenness"

Children can escape the brokenness if they are welcomed in the presence of parents who are not themselves at the mercy of brokenness and are able to make a place of love and generosity and beauty for the child. [19:00]

Jesus, "Repent and become like a child or you can't enter the Kingdom of God." (Matthew 18:3)

We need to give a lot of thought to that when we are talking about this kind of transformation.