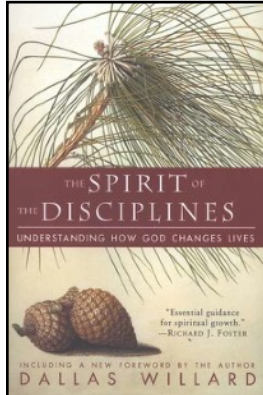


The SPIRIT of the DISCIPLINES Study Guide



- *Does God change lives? If yes, how?*
- *Is your transforming, conversational friendship with Jesus changing you?*

Learn from our Master Teacher Jesus through our Senior Apprentice Dallas Willard realistic methods of transformation into the abundant With-God life springing from the practice of grace-based spiritual disciplines. The course offers wise application, winsome affirmation and weekly accountability to envision and experience intentional, Christlike thought and action.

This free course is the 28th webinar offered by [Jesus College](#) engaging over 2650 participants in 56 countries. We trust the Holy Spirit will bring biblical and insightful teachings through Dallas Willard to guide us closer to our one, central purpose — Christlikeness.

The course offers interactive teaching by Doug Webster with power point presentation and open Q&A. You have the option to stay for extended, open conversation after each session. This study guide provides additional video links and materials. To celebrate, we offer a completion certificate.

You will be joined by fellow apprentices of Jesus from around the world forming an encouraging, supportive community of inspiration and accountability each week.

Jesus College — *“Learning from history’s greatest teacher how to do what He taught”*



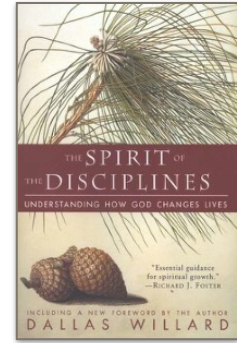
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Three Suggested “V-I-M”** Participation Levels

Your “V-I-M”** Participation

We encourage you to make your course experience more than just a free webinar added to your Christian study routine. An intentional discipline for spiritual growth—ideally with a partner—to better learn, apply, and grow in Christlikeness, will provide a launch pad from the sessions.



Here are a few suggestions to maximize this course.

- 1) READ the designated section before each session. Capture notes in your book or electronically, reread the scriptures referenced, then review your notes again before the session.
- 2) INQUIRE - Bring questions to digest the content and engage the presenters & other students. Linger longer for the “Q&C” after each session.
- 3) VIEW - Complement reading with teachings from Dallas Willard at Gordon Conwell College, “[The Spirit of the Disciplines](#)” and “[Spiritual Disciplines](#)” through video links and content notes in the [Jesus College Library](#). You will also find 17 other ready-to-learn courses, hundreds of resources, and over 5500 pages of guides, slides, notes, and links to audio/video resources of Dallas Willard teachings. You will find a growing library of more teachings on the [Dallas Willard Ministries YouTube channel](#).
- 4) RETREAT - As part of your practice, invest one hour weekly on a solo with Jesus discussing with Him your key discovery from the 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 can, by God’s grace, form your spiritual growth in Christlikeness.

** V-I-M = *Vision-Intention-Means* — Dallas calls VIM 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

The Spirit of the Disciplines

2024 Session Dates & Reading Schedule

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SESSION</u>	<u>BOOK SECTION</u>	<u>CHAPTER & SESSION TITLE</u>
April 2	Session 1	Chapter 1	The Secret of the Easy Yoke
April 9	Session 2	Chapter 2	Practical Theology of Disciplines
April 16	Session 3	Chapter 3	Salvation Is a Life
April 23	Session 4	Chapter 4	“Little Less Than a God”
April 30	Session 5	Chapter 5	The Nature of Life
May 7	Session 6	Chapter 6	Spiritual Life: A Body’s Fulfillment
May 14	Session 7	Chapter 7	St. Paul: Psychology of Redemption
May 21	Session 8	Chapter 8	History & Meaning of Disciplines
May 28	Session 9	Chapter 9	Main Spiritual Life Disciplines
June 4	Session 10	Chapter 10	Is Poverty Spiritual?
June 11	Session 11	Chapter 11	Disciplines & World’s Power

If you miss a session, want to study more, or teach others the material, recorded sessions + slides are posted in the [Jesus College Library](#) with many free Dallas Willard resources including 17 other Dallas Willard courses from Jesus College.

The Preface - “The Modern Age of Revolution”

For Christianity to succeed, it needs two things:

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

The Book Outline

I. Chapters 1-3 — Clarify the nature of spiritual life itself, to show how it is the fulfillment of the human body and how our body is a primary resource for the spiritual life.

II. Chapters 4-8 — A perspective on the idea of “spiritual discipline,” and why the disciplines became for all practical purposes lost to us in Western Christianity.

III. Chapters 9-10 — The major groups of disciplines relevant today.

IV. Chapter 11 — A widespread transformation of character, through wisely disciplined discipleship to Christ, can transform our world - how it can disarm the structural evils that have always dominated humankind and now threaten to destroy the earth.

Key Phrases in the Preface

“We can become like Christ by doing one thing... _____” (p. ix)

“My ultimate aim is to change... _____” (p. xi)

“The Spirit of the Disciplines is nothing but... _____” (p. xii)

Local Assemblies as Children of the Light

“Our local assemblies must become academies of life as it was meant to be. From such places there can go forth a people equipped in character and power to judge or guide the earth.” (xii & 247)

Reading The SPIRIT of the DISCIPLINES

How many times can you find “Grace,” “Kingdom of God,” & “Christlike” in the book? A form of “mere” is used at least 50 times. (See p. 19 of The Study Guide for 20 “mere” quotes.)

How does your “merely” following Jesus compare to “Mere Christianity”?

How do you read effectively? What is your method, your plan, your approach?

How can you retain more what you read making the act of reading this book a spiritual discipline?

Is your goal to understand the author’s intent or finish the book with a few good ideas?

It has been said with Dallas Willard like a CS Lewis, you don’t read Dallas, you receive his work.

Session 1 - The Secret of the Easy Yoke

Book Chapter 1

What is the Secret of the Easy Yoke? (pages 1-3)

The Cost of Discipleship and the Cost of Non-Discipleship - Proverbs 13:15

A Mere Wish? A Mere Idea? (*see the Study Guide for 20 “mere(ly)” quotes*)

Idolizing an Expert (3-4)

The Difficulty of “On the Spot” training (5,9)

The Art of Living (Plato) (4)

Grace not infused but exercised in godly living

Living as Jesus Lived “Taking the Easy Yoke of Christ” (5-9)

Growing up Yeshua — 18 years between the Passover trip and His public ministry

No “Short Cut to Sainthood” - M. Scott Peck (7)

Not “WWJD” but “Christlikeness” — Matthew 6:33 & the Sermon on the Mount

Is Such a Life Possible? (10)

“The secret of the easy yoke is simple. It is _____, _____, _____

Session 1 Meditation & Application

Matthew 11:29-30

1. How does “On the Spot” trying differ from “Off the Spot” training?
2. What is the Secret of the Easy Yoke? (p. 5, 8, 9, 10)
3. What does “Christlikeness” mean to me?

Session 2 - Making Theology of the Disciplines Practical

Book Chapter 2

Merely Not Sinning? (11-13) I John 3:9-10

Either I must _____ or _____. There is no 3rd possibility. (13)

How do we follow Jesus, not as a Pose or a constant Grinding Effort? (14)

Where is Our Practical Theology Today? (14-18) Ephesians 4:12

The Problem is... (18) Romans 12:1

Why the Interest Now & The Changing Protestant Church (19-24) II Corinthians 5:17

How is today's church the same or different 34 years after Dallas published this book?

Liberal & Conservative Christians - mere mental assent to correct doctrine.

Taking Faith Seriously (24)

What do the disciplines promise to give our lives?

One Problem Still Remains — The Theological Basis for Spiritual Disciplines (25-26)

An informed theology for _____ people. (26)

The key insight - participation with Christ in the Kingdom comes only through... (26)

Meditation & Application I John 3:1-10

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 3 - Salvation is a Life

Book Chapter 3

“[In this section of the book] Willard reveals his clearest, most summative thinking, command of scripture, and logical consistency.” Gary Black, Jr., *The Theology of Dallas Willard*, p. 78-79

Religious Life or Daily Life? (28-30)

Looking closely at the great acts of Jesus and the practices that characterize them.

The focal point of the human personality and body to life in the easy yoke. (29)

Faith Removed from Daily Life (30-32)

Our _____ selves alive in the Kingdom of God (31)

More than Mere Forgiveness, Salvation as Life (32-34) (“mere forgiveness” - 35, 37, 41)

A radical re-thinking of the Christian concept of salvation (32)

Grace in salvation embodied in human _____ with Jesus in His easy yoke (33)

The Cross and the Indestructible Life it Reveals (34-36)

Mere vicarious suffering mistaken for God’s redemptive action (36)

The Resurrection & the Friends of Jesus (36-38) Colossians 1:13

Substituting _____ - redemption/regeneration - with mere forgiveness, atonement (37)

Faith & Works (38-40) Philippians 3:20; Colossians 1:13

- 1.) The presence of new power within
- 2.) Transformation of character and personality
- 3.) Extra-human power over evil

The Vile Human Body (40-42) Romans 10:17

Salvation as a life is something we live in the body of a personality ruling for God

Meditation & Application **Mark 1:35**

1. What do I think my body is good for? And bad for?
2. Is my view of “Salvation” more than mere forgiveness? Why or why not?
3. What spiritual habit will I practice today to grace my body into Christlikeness?

Session 4 - “Little Less Than a God”

Book Chapter 4

“[Chapters 4-6] are devoted to an explanation, from the biblical viewpoint, of who we are and what spiritual life is.” (42)

Why are we here? *“Greatness & Dustiness”*

What “salvation” is depends upon what is being saved. What is the _____ and loss? (45)

The Biblical Perspective

Psalm 8:4-5 “A little less than a god”

Genesis 1:26 — *Imago Dei* (48, 49, 50, 51, 53) - “likeness”

- 1.) Govern the earth using P _____ C _____ V _____ A _____
- 2.) To live right with God & Others and _____ the earth with God

The Human Body as part of the Imago Dei - “Dust & Divinity” (52-55)

The potential power of “matter” — our bodies — comported by our c _____

The “flesh” - the natural physical substance of a person

In the fall in Eden, the power to rule over the earth with God was lost

“We are a little less than God only because our life is of such a nature that it can draw upon the _____ . (55)

Meditation & Application

Genesis 1:26-28 & Revelation 22:5

1. How does chapter three’s discussion of “salvation” influence my understanding of what is “saved”?
2. What does it mean for me to train now to rule with God for all eternity?
3. What does the “imago Dei” reveal to me? How does it impact my self-image and self-esteem?

Session 5 - The Nature of Life

Book Chapter 5

“The sayings of Jesus — not ethereal truth for religious people. Instead, mere observations about how life actually works. They say nothing about what we ought to do. They simply state how things are.”

To abandon ourselves to what lies beyond us — *Life: Inner power to live “beyond”* (56)

Governing at a great cost of blood and money without acceptable solution apart from a global return to the government of God - living under God among others in cooperation to fulfill our nature. (56-57)

“The amazing nature of life itself”

Life — The Power to Relate & Assimilate

Life: The ability to contact and selectively take in to support its own _____. (57)

Assimilating True Life

Eating, drinking, breathing, assimilating true life...not saying things we don't mean to get along. (59)

Individuality & Life

Not dehumanizing one person as _____, rather unrestrained like children, puppies, pandas (60)

Internal Complexity Growth

“To Him who has shall be given” Jesus Mark 4:25

Range of Human Life *Tools & Relationships* I John 3:2, *“We shall be like Him”*

Our astonishing power to use what is _____ ourselves...power begets more power (61)

Life Deformed *Evil from Spiritual Starvation* *“They do not know what they are doing.”*

Human Sin - equally terrifying phenomenon, a sad and depleted condition Eph. 2:1 (62-63)

What is Spirit?

Un-_____ personal _____ - like gravity (Sir Isaac Newton) - ordered personal power in God

The missing nutriment? *The relation to the spiritual Kingdom of God* (65) *“Tree of Life”*

Spiritual Life & Disciplines The Gospel of the Kingdom of God - New powers of cooperation

Method with No Quick Fix — The Bible & practices in cooperation with Grace...*little by little*

Meditation & Application The Life of Peter - Matthew 26, John 21, Acts 1-2

1. Take a few minutes to consider what, and better yet, who gives you life?
2. What is/are the missing nutriment(s) in my spiritual life?
3. What about the life of Peter do I find most inspiring? Relatable? Insightful for my life?

Session 6 - Spiritual Life: The Body's Fulfillment

Book Chapter 6

The spiritual and the bodily are by no means opposed in human life — they are complementary. (75)
How? Interaction of our powers as bodily beings with God and His Kingdom. I Cor. 6:13 (76)

The Spiritual & Biological Together in Psychology

The physical human frame as created was designed for interaction with the spiritual realm and that this interaction can be resumed at the _____ of God...through the disciplines for the spiritual life. (77)

True Spirituality *Leading our lives before God, open, adventurous and reflective*

Alive to God in our embodied, socialized totality. (78)
...at play for “*spirituality is not a pious pose*” (L. S. Chafer) (79)

The Centrality of the Shadow Side

What Christians are missing is the wholesome liveliness springing from a balanced vitality within the freedom of God's loving rule. (80)

Temptation — Overcoming will be _____ if we are basically _____ in our lives. (81)

We are the Same as Our Body?

We do not have knowledge or experience that is free from involvement with our bodies. (82)
Personality is inseparable from the body. We are not mere physical mechanisms. (84)

The Body as a Battlefield

The body has a life of its own - body systems, food, sleep, sex to the point of mental illness.
In the full redemption of life by Christ, the embodied human personality is _____ and made _____ whole. (85)
After conversion - at peace with God, then a battle of spirit vs. flesh - tendencies long lived.
Through spiritual disciplines, the ways of God's _____ replace habits of sin embedded in our bodies. (86)

In Praise of the Flesh: A Stepping Stone to God and an Incorruptible Body (87-89)

Specific range of powers, potentially evil or righteous, from terrestrial to celestial - Phil. 3:21
“*Putting on incorruption*” I Corinthians 15:54; I Peter 1:4, Philippians 3:11

Sowing to the Spirit

Specific life _____ to spiritual growth or decay - “*yielding our members to holiness*” Rom. 6:19

Flesh — Not “Fallen” Human Nature *Adam & Eve before the Fall; Jesus post Resurrection*

Spiritual Disciplines in Full Redemption

God in regeneration renews our original capacity for divine interaction. Our body's substance is only transformed by daily _____ - spiritual disciplines to shape the embodied self. II Peter 1:2-11 (92)

Meditation and Application **I Peter 1:3-4**

1. What is my view of my flesh? How does my view of God interact with my body?
2. What is the role of spiritual disciplines in shaping my flesh?
3. What flesh molding discipline will I practice this week to shape one of my body's tendencies?

Session 7 - St. Paul’s Psychology of Redemption — The Example

Book Chapter 7

“We exercise unto godliness” I Timothy 4:7 = Life in the easy yoke of Jesus Christ

Paul, The Enigma Presented & Resolved

“Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ.” I Corinthians 11:1

We are blind to the information that should guide us to “grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (II Peter 3:18) Talk of following Jesus, or Paul’s example, is emptied of practical meaning.

Disciplines in Jesus, Paul & the Early Church: Solitude, Fasting, Prayer & Serving Others

Paul followed Jesus by living as He lived. Activities that would train his whole personality to depend upon the risen Christ as Christ trained Himself to depend upon the Father. (106)

The Obstacle for Our Real Life Change

We talk ourselves out of the practices of Jesus & Paul as attitude or theological points (107-108)

Making Paul & Jesus Real to Modern Thinking - Dr. Paul, Psychologist Rom. 6-8; Col. 2-3; Gal. 2,3,5

The “School of Self-Denial” — To “die daily” (I. Cor. 15:30) is a real event in concrete existence

Today’s Failure: Inability to prove _____ guidance how to live like Jesus. (110)

Redemption - Progressive, real human & divine actions transforming _____ & _____ (111)

New Life in Christ - the whole _____ person in the social context (111)

Spirituality & Habit

Our body and its members are to be transformed into servants of God through the _____ of habits of sin by habits of righteousness. (114)

Holy Habits...How do we “Yield our members to righteousness”?

Stage 1: Baptized into Christ

Stage 2: “Reckon” a New Attitude

Stage 3: Submitting Our Members to Righteousness

Preparing the Body for Power to Live as Jesus Lived

Another Failure — _____ to the life of power Jesus & Paul knew so well (125)

Paul the Philosopher

As a result of Paul’s experience with Christ’s Kingdom, Paul recaptured the ancient, prophetic vision of the world being governed by the people of God — governing through the light and power resident in them as God’s earthly dwelling place. (127)

Meditation and Application Romans 6:1-14

1. Honestly, do I believe and live the actions & events of Jesus and Paul to know God’s power?
2. What does Stage 3 “Submitting my members” mean to me today, daily, now?
3. What spiritual discipline - Solitude, Fasting, Prayer, Serving - will I do this week to imitate Paul?

Session 8 - History and the Meaning of the Disciplines

Book Chapter 8

The “Good Life” Now

A right to do what they want, to pursue happiness, to feel good, to lead a productive life - self-contentment and material well being. (130)

Threshold of _____ to Christ — *“To hate one’s own life.”* (Luke 14:26) (131)

Rejection of Spiritual Disciplines

Protestantism refuted Christian salvation requiring disciplines for the spiritual life. (133)

Justification by faith *“struck at the root of monkery and mortification”*. (133)

Misunderstanding of Spiritual Disciplines

Fear, hatred of the material world, or manipulate or impress God & others. Self-flagellation. (134)

Jesus & Judaism — The “Sensible Ascetic” - Master of Life in the spirit.

When we look at Jesus - the disciplines have no value in themselves. The aim of the spiritual life — effective and full enjoyment of active _____ of God and humankind in all the daily rounds of normal existence. *“Practice what you are not good at.”* (138)

The History and Advance of Monasticism

Nothing has done more harm to sensible asceticism than monasticism. (139)

As the Roman Empire stumbled toward its end, people hungry for God took to the Egyptian desert as a refuge in which to find holiness and union with God. (140)

“Taking pains about taking pains” - a variety of _____. (144)

The Protestant Reaction against Spiritual Disciplines

The obsession with _____ and _____ of _____ as the only essential issue for the Christian’s concern simply would not permit the monastic system of Christianity to develop a pattern of spiritual disciplines that was biblical as well as psychological and spiritually sound. (145)

New life in Christ was replaced by forgiveness of sins for monks & Protestants. (147)

Monks — _____ sin or _____ forgiveness - *“out”* to not be *“of”*, not *“in”* the world.

Protestants — _____ disciplines as essential to new life in Christ.

What is our _____ in salvation? - We have not developed a coherent view. (148)

A New Look at Classical Asceticism & Spiritual Disciplines (148-151)

“Watch and pray.” (Mt. 26:41) Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119; Psalm 1

Suitable Means to Valuable Ends. (149)

To effectively lay hold of the _____ of _____ (134, 150)

What can we do? *“Taking appropriate measures”* (153) for *“unconscious readiness”* (154)

Activities of mind and body with our embodied personality

Meditation and Application

Matthew 24:36-46

1. How has my faith tradition and theology shaped my view of “spiritual disciplines”?
2. What is my part in salvation? Can I even ask that question without triggering theology alarms?
3. What am I not good at in emulating the life of Jesus? What disciplines can change this?

Session 9 - Some Main Disciplines for the Spiritual Life

Book Chapter 9

A Discipline for the Spiritual Life is...

_____ with the _____ of the Kingdom (157)

The Disciplines

Abstinence (160-175)

Engagement (176-190)

Solitude (160-162)

Study (176-177)

Silence (163-165)

Worship (177-179)

Fasting (166-168)

Celebration (179-181)

Frugality (168-170)

Service (181-184)

Chastity (170-172)

Prayer (184-186)

Secrecy (172-174)

Fellowship (186-187)

Sacrifice (174-175)

Confession (187-189)

Submission (189-190)

Are These Discipline Adequate? (190-191)

Which disciplines must be central to our lives will be determined by...

To help us receive the full _____ and become the _____ of
_____ that should emerge in the following of Him. (191)

Meditation and Application

II Peter 1:2-11

1. How do I assess the level of poise” in my life? (157) How does it reveal what Matthew 6:33 means?
2. What is/are my chief sin(s) that come(s) in the way of my relationship with God? See I Peter 2:11
3. What do I see in me when I look at the suggested 15 disciplines? Which one will I practice this week?

Session 10 - Is Poverty Spiritual?

Book Chapter 10

Should We Be Poor? Service to God would be better if _____. Money is _____. (193)

“All Nations Shall Come to Your Light” (217-218) [Chapter Summary with Quotes]

Poverty Aggrandized — Poverty as utter destitution is not spiritual _____. (217)

~ *The idealization of poverty is one of the most...* (195)

~ *A simple test: Own a great deal to give much more away or rid yourself of your money?* (198)

Poverty Romanticized — Poverty as non-possession with security of provision. (218)

~ Voluntary poverty is not _____. (218)

Poverty Im-materialized — Non-possession is not well suited to making provision for others

~ *Being poor is a one of the POOR ways to help the poor.* (198)

~ *Poverty itself is no recommendation to God and no means of* _____. (201)

Christian Stewardship - Models & Teachers embody and communicate the gospel of God’s government and prepare those in the “secular” areas as caretakers of the world’s good. (218)

~ *Our possessions vastly extend the _____ over which God rules through our faith.* (202)

~ *Jesus’ Teaching* — *Jesus refutes, from the vantage point of the Kingdom, human generalizations about who is certainly unblessable and who certainly “has it made.”* (208)

~ *Kingdom Well-Being* (208, 215, 216, 218) — *Rich or Poor: No _____ over each other* (208) extending *Respect & Honor to the Poor* (209-211)

The Church — Leading the way through charity, exhorting and advising public agencies. Show how to enter into full participation in the rule of God where they are to bring all nations to find a people who can form a world that is the unique dwelling place of The Immortal God. (218-219)

~ *Overarching biblical command - _____*. *The first act of love - _____*. (210)

~ *“New Eyes through the Cross”* (211) *without favoritism (James 2) associating with the poor in low-key and unassuming ways* (212-213) *and uniting the sacred and the secular.* (213-214)

~ *An inadequate vision of the Kingdom of God in Christian circles producing anemic faith.* (212)

~ *Kingdom perspective on human worth and well-being is the solution to the social problems of wealth and poverty in a new type of human being with the _____ of Christ into all areas of life.* (213)

~ *Wealth extends our _____ and our reign* (215) *by a “ _____ grace”.* (216)

Meditation and Application **Matthew 6:25-34, Philippians 4:11-13**

1. Do I consider poverty more spiritual than wealth in my theology and religious culture?
2. How do I see poor people, really see them? What does my attention and action reflect?
3. What stewardship of wealth and generosity has God placed in my reign of influence and how unassuming am I in using it for His Kingdom advance and the well-being of the poor?

Session 11 - The Disciplines and the Power Structures of the World

Book Chapter 11

I. The Problem of Radical Evil (Extremism)

• **The Premise** — Faith has failed because believers are not disciples who live like Jesus — Matthew 6:33 — the true practicality, the only path to justice, peace & prosperity. (221) *Realities of the human heart.*

• **The Presence of Evil** — *Why the mere immensity of human evil?*

The persistence of evil rests upon the general drift of human life in which we all share. It rides upon a motion so vast, so pervasive and ponderous that, like the motion of the planet earth, it is almost impossible to detect. Imagine a TV series called “Miami Virtue” instead of “Miami Vice”? We are drawn to evil, excited by it. Yet, interestingly enough, we seem surprised when it becomes a reality. (224-225)

• **Readiness to do Evil** — *Highly flammable ever-present readiness* (225)

Our “Why?” in the face of evil, then signals a lack of insight - willing or unwilling - into the forces that inhabit the normal human personality and thereby move or condition the usual course of human events. Above all, it shows a failure to understand that the immediate support of the evils universally deplored lies in **the simple readiness of “decent” individuals to harm others or allow harm to come to others when the conditions are “right.”** (225)

This systematic readiness that pervades the personality of normal, decent human beings is fallen human nature. To understand this is the **FIRST LEVEL*** of understanding the “why” of the evil people do. We have then sown the wind and will reap the whirlwind. [* - LEVELS are added in the notes]

This, if in our lives we are not protected by a hearty confidence in God’s never failing and effective care for us, these “readinesses” for various kinds of wrongdoing will be constantly provoked into action by threatening circumstances.

Once we see what people are prepared to do, the wonder ceases to be that they occasionally do gross evils and becomes that they do not do them more often. We become deeply thankful that something is restraining us, keeping us from fully doing what lies in our hearts. (226-227)

“Vessel of wrath” Romans 9:22 “Children of wrath” Ephesians 2:8

“All Hell breaks loose” if we are not protected by God’s care for us.

• **The Longing to Change** — Repentance from the “exceeding sinfulness of sin” (Romans 7:14)

We must then, change from within. And that is what most of us truly want...to really be different.
~ Peter was overwhelmed by the “otherness” of Jesus. (Luke 5:1-11) (227-228)

• **The Troubled Sea**

What individuals are ready to do, [1st LEVEL] what sits in them ready to burst forth, goes far to explain why people do the ghastly things they do. They are set to do them. There is a “real presence” of evil scarcely beneath the surface of every human action and transaction. But this still does not go far enough. The magnitude of evil in human deeds is also a result of the institutional structures or common practices. This is our “system”. [Introduce the SECOND LEVEL - human system.]

But none of this would continue to happen if the Ten Commandments and the two great principles of love of God and neighbor were generally observed. (229)

I. The Problem of Radical Evil (continued)

• Truth Alone Crushes Evil

The vast forces [1st LEVEL] in the sea of humanity that make possible large-scale evil are generated as individuals pool their wickedness [2nd LEVEL] in joint action or joint inaction that is very soon far beyond their own control, beyond anyone’s control. At this point the righteous are powerless to halt the process. (230-231)

• The Effect of Righteous Individuals

But the righteous can stop the wave before it starts, if they are stable in their righteousness, empowered by God, and distributed throughout society appropriately. The impersonal power structures [2nd LEVEL] in the world are, though independent of any one person’s will and experience, nevertheless dependent for their force upon the general readiness [1st LEVEL] of normal people to do evil. (231)

• Are Mass Evils Based on Ideology?

“Ideological obsession” does not really touch on the operative factors in mass evil. Ideology alone would never prove capable of energizing the machines of evil. It is a fact that by far the largest part of evil done under ideological banners draws upon long-cultivated resentments or hatreds. (232)

• The Practical Problem of Transformation — *How to transform us?*

From the practical point of view, then, the radical problems concerning the power structures of this world [2nd LEVEL] is how to transform normal human character away from its usual high level of readiness [1st LEVEL] to disregard God and harm others for the sake of our fear, pride, lust, greed, envy, and indifference. How can individual human beings [1st LEVEL] be brought to a place where the social structures [2nd LEVEL] no longer expect them to do things that are wrong?

Individual change is the answer. (232-233)

• The Illusion of Our Age - Staying the Same

The tyrants, satanic forces, [Introduces the THIRD LEVEL - Satan’s system] and oppressive practices of this world play upon our “merely decent” lives as a master organist dominates his or her instrument but is wholly powerless without it. (234)

II. The Solution of Radical Treatment — *Presenting the world with a new humanity*

• Is the Church Now Meeting the Need?

Generally speaking the church does not seem to be doing well in meeting the need at present. In first world countries, Christians simply do not advance very far into the health and strength of Christ. (235)

The greatest question it now faces is whether it can really present the world with a new humanity or whether it is only attractive for the moment because it seems to support certain traditional values that comfort a people bewildered and frightened about the future. (236)

II. The Solution of Radical Treatment *(continued)*

- **Radical Disease Requires Radical Treatment** — 236-237 *This is a KEY section of the book!*

The single most striking thing about the Kingdom of God Jesus invites us to enter [Introduce the KINGDOM LEVEL] is that in it there can be utter confidence in God’s care and provision.

The Beatitudes are categories of the un-blessables according to common human appraisal. Blessedness is available in each case because of relationship to God in His Kingdom. What He expressed in His gospel was his vision and his faith.

It is in His faith alone that we can find a basis from which the evil in human character and life can be dislodged. We have one realistic hope for dealing with the world’s problems. And that is the person and gospel of Jesus Christ [KINGDOM LEVEL] living here and now, in people who are His by total identification found through the spiritual disciplines.

Why? This faith and discipline yields a new humanity [1st LEVEL] one for which, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” or “Our Father who art in Heaven” does not express a resolve, a hope or a commitment, but a vision [KINGDOM LEVEL] in whose firm grip Jesus’ people live with abandon.

- **From Radical Faith to Radical Discipline**

Starting from this radical faith, such individuals are capable of undertaking a course of life that will transform their character [1st LEVEL] and make them capable of bearing the wisdom and power of God throughout human society [2nd LEVEL]. This is the future event we should keep in mind when learned people tell us that personal virtue [1st LEVEL] is not an answer to social ills [2nd LEVEL]. (237-238)

- **Restructuring for Christ’s Reign** — *How can this come to pass?*

The coming rule of God [KINGDOM LEVEL] is to be a government [2nd LEVEL] by grace and truth mediated through personalities mature in Christ [1st LEVEL]. It will not be by force, but by the power of truth presented in overwhelming love. (238)

The real presence of Christ as a world-governing force [2nd LEVEL] will come solely as His called out people [1st LEVEL] occupy their stations in the holiness and power characteristic of Him, as they demonstrate to the world the way to live that is best in every respect. (239)

- **From Moses’ 3-Level System to Jesus’ System** — Matthew 3:2 & 4:17, “Kingdom of God at hand”

Justice can not prevail until there are enough people properly equipped with Christ’s character and power [1st LEVEL], in something like the Mosaic distribution throughout society [2nd LEVEL], who cooperatively and under God constantly see to it that the good is secured and that the right is done.

Is this possible? I don’t believe it’s a mere dream or a desperate delusion, once we understand how the disciplines mesh with grace, on the one hand, and embodied human personality on the other. (241)

“The kingdom of heaven is now available, turn to it!”

Now all humankind is invited to live in a family, made possible by Our Father in Heaven, whom we address in prayer. When the gospel of this family Kingdom [2nd LEVEL] has been adequately presented in the lives of Christ’s people [1st LEVEL], the end of human history as we are familiar with it will occur for humankind will fall under the effectual leadership of those who stand in the Kingdom and upon the Earth as judges. (243) [KINGDOM LEVEL in 1st LEVEL ruling 2nd LEVEL]

II. The Solution of Radical Treatment (*continued*)

• **Christ’s Way Not Yet Tried** — “Disciplined discipleship”: As a response to this world’s problems, the gospel of the Kingdom will never make sense except as it is incarnated - “fleshed out” - in ordinary human beings [KINGDOM @ 1st LEVEL] in all ordinary conditions of human life. (243-244)

• **Knocking on the Door of the Church** - *Jesus outside the Church*

Although it is God’s power and presence that will bring health and peace to the Earth, that does not mean that we are mere spectators. Our part is to understand the way God works with humanity to extend His Kingdom in the affairs of humankind, and to act on the basis of that understanding. The key to understanding our part is the realization that God only moves forward with His redemptive plan [KINGDOM LEVEL] through people who are prepared [1st LEVEL] to receive freely and cooperate with Him in the next step. (244)

• **Christian Leaders Responsible for the Future of the World**

The responsibility for the condition of the world in years or centuries to come rests upon the leaders and teachers of the Christian church. They have Christ’s Kingdom to live in and offer to all. (245)

The Prevailing Problem - They have failed to make disciples. They have failed even to intend to teach people to do all that Christ would have us do. They have failed to seek His power to the ends He specified, and they have not developed the character [1st LEVEL] needed to bear His power safely throughout the social order [2nd LEVEL], or even within the church itself. Ministers pay far too much attention to people who do not come to services. The contemporary imperative — big, Big, always BIG, and *BIGGER STILL!* (246)

The local assembly, for its part, can then become an academy where people throng from the surrounding community to learn how to live. It will be a school of life (for a disciple is but a pupil, a student) where all aspects of that life seen in the New Testament records are practiced and mastered under those who have themselves mastered them through practice. (247)

• **The Prophetic Vision - “Communities of Justice and Peace”**

The details of Christ’s coming reign consist in the reorganization of society [2nd LEVEL] on the model of the “judges” around those who assume loving responsibility for their neighbors with that fully developed character [1st LEVEL] and power of Jesus Christ to which the ministry of the Kingdom of God has brought them [KINGDOM LEVEL], under the real, personal presence of Christ on Earth. (248)

The power structures of this present world [2nd LEVEL], which permit, even encourage the crushing waves of evil to roll over humanity, will be dissolved. They will be replaced by other structures [KINGDOM LEVEL at 2nd LEVEL] anchored in the redeemed personalities [1st LEVEL] distributed throughout society, stabilizing whatever evil may remain in the human heart so that it cannot build to the mass phenomena now seen. In most Western countries, and especially in the Americas, those who now have membership in our Christian churches would be far more than enough in number to receive the reign of Christ. Their leaders have only to bring them to the fullness of life which Christ has provided. (249)

The Solution — “Redeemed personalities distributed throughout society.”

Meditation and Application

John 14:21-32

1. What will I do with this final chapter? How much do I *want* to follow Jesus or stay the same?
2. What 5 people (Level 2 Judge) am I discipling to disciple 10 to Christlikeness? Am I a Level 3 Judge?
3. What spiritual discipline(s) practice(s) today will strengthen my character to learn how to cooperate with the Kingdom of God at work “outside” the church in us in the church?
4. Read and re-read p. 237 “Radical Treatment” — One realistic hope: The person and gospel of Jesus

Epilogue — *Follow Jesus. Love finds a way to obey. Don’t be distracted by what others are doing.*

Twenty “Mere” or “Merely” quotes

- * Mere Leaders - “The world can no longer be left to **mere** diplomats, politicians and business leaders. They have done the best they could, no doubt. But this is an age for spiritual heroes - a time for men and women to be heroic in faith and in spiritual character and power.” (SD, xvii)
- * Mere Wish - “The words of Jesus in Matthew 11:29-30 present an alternative to the desolation of life lived apart from God. Yet, in all honesty, most Christians probably find both Jesus’ statement and its reiteration by the author of I John 5:3 to be more an expression of a hope or even a **mere** wish than a statement about the substance of their lives. To many, Jesus’ words are frankly bewildering.” (SD, 2)
- * Mere Ideal - “Many Christians cannot even believe he actually intended for us to carry them out. What is the result? His teachings are treated as a **mere** ideal, one that we may better ourselves by aiming for but know we are bound to fall glaringly short of.” (SD, 2)
- * Mere Mental Assent - “Most conservatives by the early seventies generally accepted that being a Christian had nothing essentially to do with actually following or being like Jesus. It was readily admitted that most Christians did not really follow him and were not really like him. ‘Christians aren’t perfect, just forgiven’ became a popular bumper sticker. The only absolute requirement for being a Christian was that one believe the proper things about Jesus. The doctrinal struggle of many centuries had transformed saving faith into **mere** mental assent to correct doctrine. (SD 22-23)
- * Mere Want - “We’ve all heard of ‘cheap grace’. But ‘cheap grace’ as a concept didn’t just come **merely** from our wanting to have God’s mercy and bounty at bargain basement prices. I believe that the misunderstanding of the spiritual disciplines’ place in life has been responsible for Protestantism’s adopting, ‘cheap grace’ as the dominant mode of its recent existence.” (SD, 25)
- * Mere Forgiveness - “The concept that has restricted the Christian idea of salvation to **mere** forgiveness of sins. Yet it is so much more. Salvation as conceived today is far removed from what it was in the beginning of Christianity and only by correcting it can God’s grace in salvation be returned to the concrete, embodied existence of our human personalities walking with Jesus in his easy yoke.” (SD, 33)
- * Mere Forgiveness (continued) “The ‘hands on’ viewpoint was replaced with another. The church’s understanding of salvation then slowly narrowed down to a **mere** forgiveness leading to heaven beyond this life. And Christ’s death came to be regarded as only the merit supplying means to that forgiveness, not as the point where his life was most fully displayed and triumphant, forever breaking the power of sin over concrete human existence.” (SD, 36-37)

- * Mere Standing - “How can this vile, dangerous thing [the body] possibly be of benefit in realizing our deliverance? The answer, of course, is that it cannot if we take it **merely** to be what we find it to be in this world set against God. And certainly it does not contain in itself alone the resources of redemption. But still, I must insist that it was not made to be what we find it to be in its alienation from God. The human body was made to be the vehicle of human personality ruling the earth for God and through His power.” (SD, 42)
- * Mere Governance - “Governance by a person, whether over other people or animals, is at its best when the outcome is harmony, understanding, and love, and at its best then the governed experience that ‘rule’ as **merely** doing what they would want to do anyway.” (SD, 50)
- * Mere Instruments - “The astonishing human power to use what is beyond ourselves is one of the main clues to who and what we are...we extend our powers over the earth and its inhabitants to a degree both awe-inspiring and terrifying, promising to heal the agony of human history or threatening utterly to destroy the planet. The more power we get, the more power we can get - for good or evil! We not only make ‘tools’ to extend our power and life, but we also live in relationships of such vast and pervasive effect on ourselves and the cosmos as to far transcend the category of **mere** instrumentality. Those relationships enter into the very substance of our life. They are the most powerful of our cultural and social relations and structures—the artistic, the commercial the scientific, and the military—and they are the ones seen in action in the major phases of human society and history.” (SD, 61)
- * Mere Philosophy - “It is extremely important for us to realize that what we are discussing here is not **mere** matter of fine philosophical speculation or psychological theory. It deeply concerns Christian practice and its effects upon others.” (SD, 80)
- * Mere Flesh - “It is now time to put in a good word for flesh. ‘Flesh’ in its biblical usage seldom means the **mere** physical substance that makes up the parts of the body. The term is sometimes used as the equivalent of ‘meat’. But flesh is generally spoken of in the Bible as something active, a specific power or range of powers that is embodied in a body of a specific type, able or likely to do only certain kinds of things.” (SD, 86-87)
- * Mere Natural - The body we are commanded to ‘put off’ could not be the **mere** natural body of our fleshly existence, since we cannot put it off - short of suicide. So far as we can tell, the first human beings had fleshly bodies before they sinned, and hence the flesh is not the same thing as fallen human nature.” (SD, 90-91)
- * Mere Attitude or Arrangement - “Our age fails to understand that Paul’s teachings about salvation are unavoidably psychological but note the less theological because of that. This has turned his most brilliant and profound passages - Romans 6-8, Colossians 2-3, Galatians 2,3,5 - into a quagmire of theological speculation or into vaguely inspiring exhortation with no power of practical

guidance. We are then forced to try capturing Paul’s thoughts and experience in abstract theological ideas **merely** about God’s attitude toward us or about some arrangement God has made in heaven.” (SD, 113)

- * Mere Mechanical - “The condition of life in God that we seek is not to be thought of as a **merely** mechanical result. It is a widespread fallacy that careful and thorough preparation precludes freedom, spontaneity, and personal interaction. In fact the very person best prepared for any situation is the one who experiences the greatest freedom and spontaneity in it. The spiritual life is a life of interaction with a person God, and it is pure delusion to suppose that it can be carried on sloppily. The will to do His will can only be carried into reality as we take measures to be ready and able to meet and draw upon Him in our actions.” (SD, 152-153)
- * Mere Abstract (not) - “The level of this deadly “readiness’ to do evil in all of its forms is variable from individual to individual, but it is very high in almost everyone. It is no **mere** abstract possibility but a genuine tendency, constantly at work.” (226)
- * Merely Decent Lives - “The tyrants, satanic forces, and oppressive practices of this world play upon our ‘**merely** decent’ lives as a master organist dominates his or her instrument but is wholly powerless without it.” (234)
- * Mere Poetry (not) - “But in our distorted judgment about the nature of life, we have tried to turn the Beatitudes into **mere** poetry, rather than treating them as realistic announcements about how things are.” (236)
- * Merely Testifies - “I believe that the coming rule of God is to be a government by grace and truth mediated through personalities mature in Christ. It will not be by force, but by the power of truth presented in overwhelming love. Our inability to conceive of it other than by force **merely** testifies to our obsession with human means for controlling other people.” (238)
- * Mere Progressive Advance - “But both human nature and the biblical record suggest to me that the coming government of God, which will displace the power structures of the present world, will not come by any **mere** progressive advancement of humankind in general. A distinct reentry of the person of Christ into world history is required to complete the world.” (238)
- * Mere Dream - “Justice can not prevail until there are enough people properly equipped with Christ’s character and power, in something like the Mosaic distribution throughout society, who cooperatively and under God constantly see to it that the good is secured and that the right is done. Is this possible? I don’t believe it’s a **mere** dream or a desperate delusion, once we understand how the disciplines mesh with grace, on the one hand, and embodied human personality on the other.” (241)

More Courses & Resources from Jesus College

“The Spirit of the Disciplines” course is the 28th webinar course offered by Jesus College engaging more than 2650 participants from 56 countries! The courses are available in the expanding [Jesus College Library](#) with over 435 free resources to enhance your Christlikeness including (18) complete, ready-to-learn courses.

[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](#) - (1) course on the book (13 sessions)

Renovation of the Heart - Whole Life Spiritual Transformation

[Courses on Dallas' Books](#) - (6) courses

The Spirit of the Disciplines - Understanding How God Changes Lives (11 sessions)

Hearing God - Developing a Conversational Relationship with God (10 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](#) - (9) courses from (9) 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)

“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

“Advent with Dallas Willard” - 3 sessions on a sermon and devotionals by Dallas

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“Master’s in the Master” Spiritual Transformation Training

The Jesus College “Master's in the Master” is a clear, realistic, practical method to foster “Christlikeness” in ordinary people who take transformation seriously. *This is not an accredited degree.* The Master’s offers you 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 (18) 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 are seeking the platforms to facilitate connection with other students to engage and enjoy rich diversity of Jesus’ friends from 48 countries involved in Jesus College.

COST — The “Master’s” 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:

- Cath from Australia, “I had another look at the website link - WOW! Amazing syllabus and I’m excited about the 3 years walk with Jesus.”
- Tony from England, “In brief, these courses have changed my view on discipleship. I feel myself a new creation.”
- Pastor Oladipo from Lagos, Nigeria, “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.

For more resources to strengthen your life in the easy yoke with Jesus through Dallas Willard’s wise, warm, winsome teaching:

[Dallas Willard Ministries](#)

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The study guide was prepared by Doug Webster of Jesus College. We welcome your comments, suggestions and ideas on how we might better help you strengthen your conversational apprenticeship with Jesus in the With-God life.

info@JesusCollege.com



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