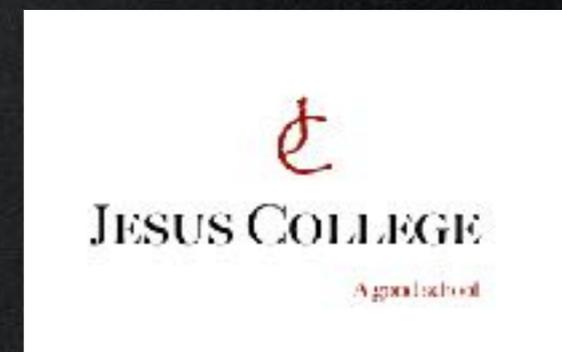
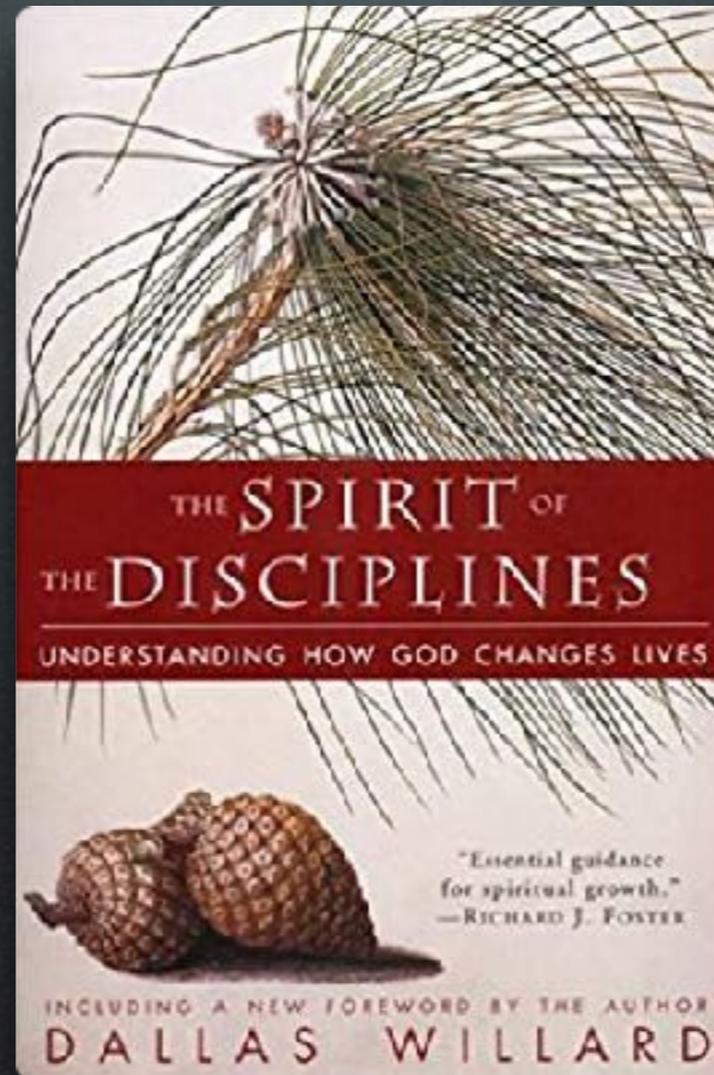
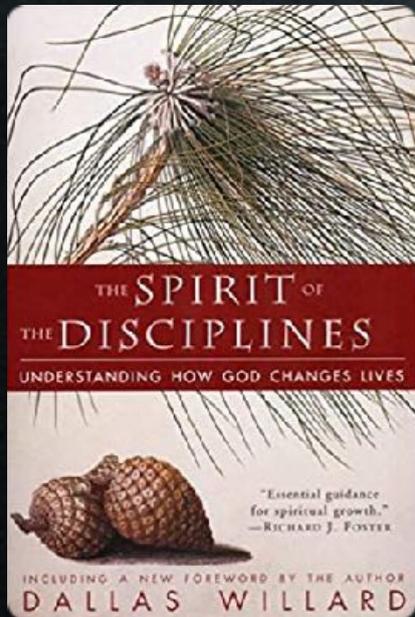


WELCOME to an eleven week Course sponsored by
Dallas Willard Ministries & Jesus College



The Spirit of the Disciplines
Session 10 - *“Is Poverty Spiritual?”*
Book Chapter 10





Session 9 Review

The chief sins of our lives will prompt which disciplines we can creatively adapt to our individual lives to set us free from sin as we enter the fullness of Christlikeness.

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



Should We Be Poor? (193-194)

Haunted by the the more radical thought that their service to God would be better if they were poor...the very possession of surplus goods or money is evil.

—> Can it be right to have more than I need when so many do not have the necessities?

—> Would I not be able to trust God far better and have greater faith, if I had less material goods to rely on?

—> Would I not be freer to serve God if I did not have to take care of my possessions?

“The birds of the air do not sow nor reap, nor gather into barns”. Jesus of Nazareth, Matthew 6:26

That seems to be the true life of faith. (193)

The Spirit of the Disciplines
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Chapter Summary (217-218)
“All Nations Shall Come to Your Light”

Poverty...

- Aggrandized
- Romanticized
- Immaterialized

Christian Stewardship

The Church



I. Poverty Aggrandized



Poverty as utter destitution is not spiritual superiority. (217)

Is true faith living like “the birds of the air”?

If that is true, how can we fail to include poverty in our list of the central disciplines for the spiritual life? There is a very good reason why not. The idealization of poverty is one of the most dangerous illusions of Christians in the contemporary world. (194)

STEWARDSHIP — which requires possessions and includes giving— is the true spiritual discipline in relation to wealth. (194)

FRUGALITY — A discipline and primary virtue for the use of goods not their possession. (194)



Understanding Riches & Poverty

The distinction between the possession and the use of riches but also trusting in riches. (194)

POSSESS riches - the right to say how they will or will not be used.

USE riches - cause them to be consumed or transferred to others in exchange for something we desire.

TRUST riches - to obtain what we treasure most and to love riches and come to serve them. (194-195)

Riches & Poverty — Few are rich, many are poor and weak. The inequality is a reflection of injustice. Wealth can be branded as evil. (195 & 196)

A simple test for prejudice against wealth

Is it better to own a great deal of property and money to give much more away and do much more for God's purposes?

— OR —

Would you necessarily be holier and a better steward of God's grace and goods if you merely rid yourself as quickly as possible of your property and money?

Is the poor person a better person and servant of God merely for having only enough money to get by on?



(198)

“What must I do to inherit eternal life?” The Rich Young Ruler

Luke 18

Jesus' word revealed his true god. He was unwilling to forsake his riches and keep the first commandment by following Him. It is not easy thing for the rich to enter under the rule of God. (200-201)

Riches don't disappear if we abandon them. The fact that we do not possess them does not mean they will be better distributed. To assume the **responsibility** for the right use and guidance of possessions through ownership is far more of a discipline of the spirit than **poverty** itself.

(202)





II. Poverty Romanticized

- 1) *Poverty as non-possession with security of provision* (218)
- 2) *Poverty as simplicity. Poverty is bafflingly complex* (204)

Voluntary poverty is not virtuous because possession is not evil. It does not guarantee freedom for inner servitude to wealth. It is not a superior condition in general. There is nothing holy about not possessing material goods.

(218)

The truly poor know poverty for what it is: crushing deprivation and helplessness. The vow of poverty, on the other hand, allows a person to continue to enjoy the security, provision, and care of a religious order— made available through the wealth of others. (203)

“Jesus was not poor. He was well off enough to have an embezzler as a treasurer. Jesus raised funds. He supported his ministry. He gave to the poor. There is no virtue to be poor, no advantage to be poor. Don’t confuse poverty with frugality. Poverty is not a discipline. Where “vows of poverty” are taken is not poverty. People confuse poverty with “ownership”. Poverty is not a matter of ownership it is a matter of use. It doesn’t matter who owns it if you have the use of it.”

Dallas Willard,
“Teachers of the Nations”, Denver Seminary, 2010
[Session 12 “Disciplines” @ 0:27:20](#)



III. Poverty Immaterialized

Non-possession is not well suited to making provision for others.
(218)

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 grace. (201)

To abandon the goods of this world to the enemies of God is to fail the responsibilities we are given at creation to have dominion, to rule over all life forms above the plants. (Genesis 1:26) (202)

Placing material goods outside of holiness...had the effect of abandoning wealth to Satan and excluding those who control it from the service of God. (203)

IV. Christian Stewardship

Models & Teachers to 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 range 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) [see *The Divine Conspiracy*, Chapter 4]

Kingdom Well-Being (208) (215, 216, 218) — Rich or Poor: No advantage over each other (208) extending Respect and Honor to the poor (209-211)

V. The Church

Leading the way in charitable works, and after that is to exhort and advise all public agencies concerning policies of general welfare.

Its fundamental work is to show how to enter into full participation in the rule of God where they are...to ultimately bring all nations to find a people who can form a world that is the unique dwelling place of The Immortal God. (218-219)



V. The Church (continued)

To LOVE - the act of attention to the poor. (210)

New eyes through the Cross (211) without favoritism (James 2) associating with the poor in low-key and unassuming ways (212-213) to remove the division between the sacred and the secular.

The main cause of uneasiness in the hearts of many well provided Christians today is that inadequate vision of the Kingdom of God that prevails in Christian circles producing an anemic faith. (212).

Wealth extends our body and our reign (215) by a “disciplined grace”. (216)



From within this Kingdom perspective on human worth and well-being emerges a solution to the major social problems of wealth and poverty. That solution consists in a new type of human being, people who have assimilated the character of Christ into all areas of life and society.

Remember, Jesus did not send help. He came among us. He was victorious under our conditions of existence.

(213)



The church's business is to make the right kind of people out of the wrong kind. (212)

The organized Church must become schools of spiritual disciplines where Christians are taught how to own without treasuring. Matthew 6:21

(214)



Q&C

Your Questions & Comments are welcome!

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



Q&A

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

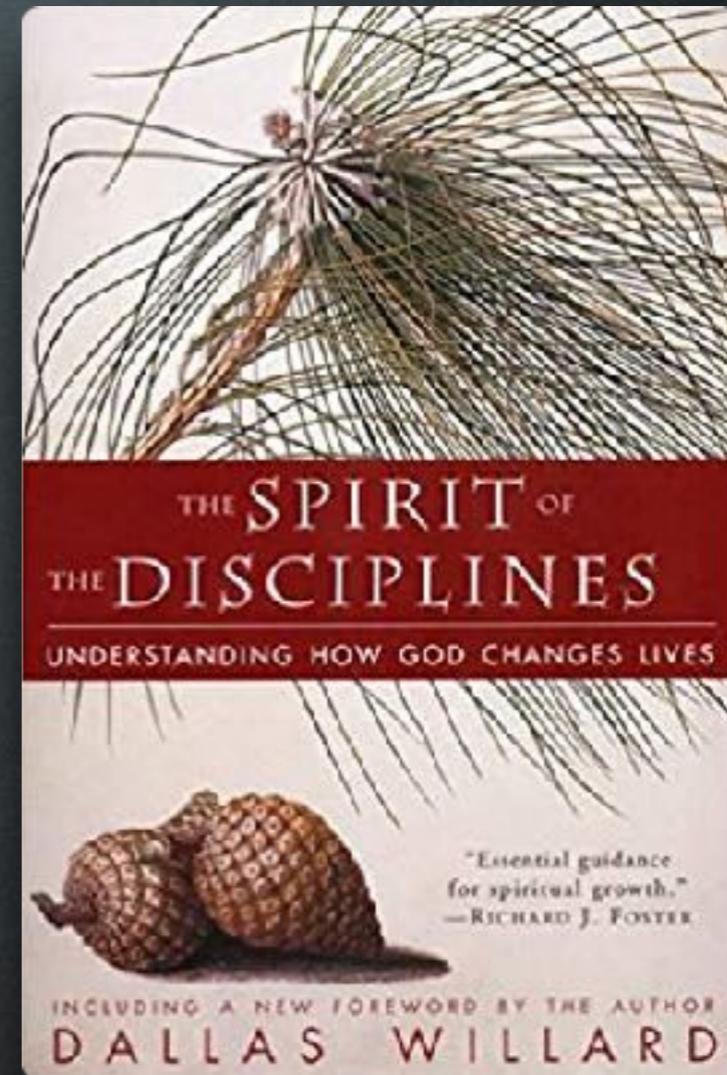
Application

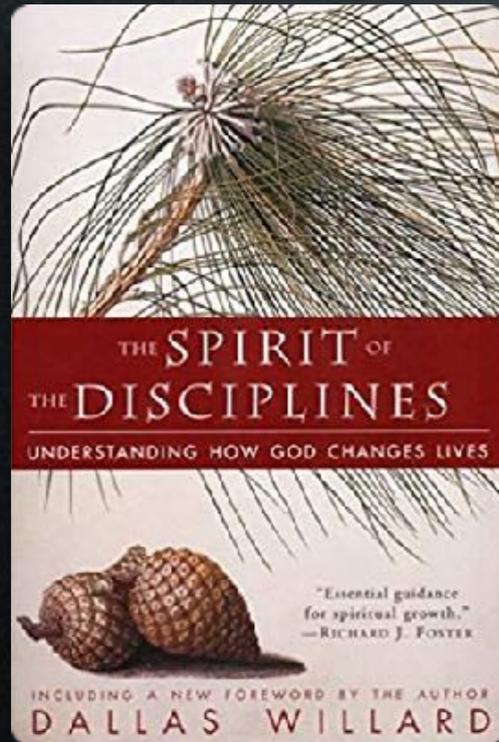
- 1.) Do I consider poverty more spiritual than wealth in my theology and religious culture?
- 2.) How do I see poor people, really see them? What do my attention and action reflect?
- 3.) What stewardship of wealth and generosity has God placed in my reign of influence and how unassuming am I in using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



Session 10 Summary

A spiritual practice of stewardship and frugality is life in the easy yoke with Jesus through disciplined grace in a Kingdom understanding that transforms us from the possession of riches to the use of riches, be it our riches or those of a cheerfully generous follower of Jesus.





Next — Session 11

“The Disciplines and the Power Structures
of This World”
Chapter 11

In Two Weeks

“Spiritual Transformation as a Natural Part of Salvation”

(3) Tuesdays, May 17-31, 2022

30 Minutes weekly for 11 weeks

8 AM - *or* - 4 PM (US Pacific = GMT -7 hours)



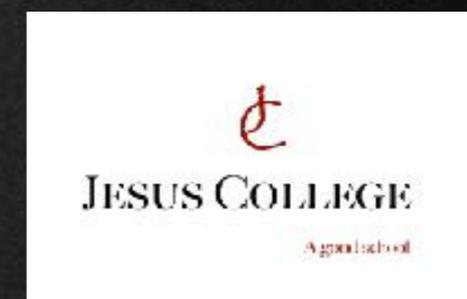
What does it mean to be saved? What is my part in salvation?

In this inspiring 75 minute presentation at Wheaton College, Dallas Willard offers keen insights into salvation as a natural part of spiritual formation. Uniquely, he reads a paper which later became Chapter 26 in *Renewing the Christian Mind*. Dallas' humble brilliance addresses how Christians misunderstand salvation, then he presents rich teaching of grace, true salvation, and spiritual disciplines for Christlike transformation, finishing with a clarion call to follow Jesus today.

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Living in the kingdom now

May a transfusion of faith
from your generous
stewardship extend your
attention to your poor
neighbor in in the next
10,000 minutes.

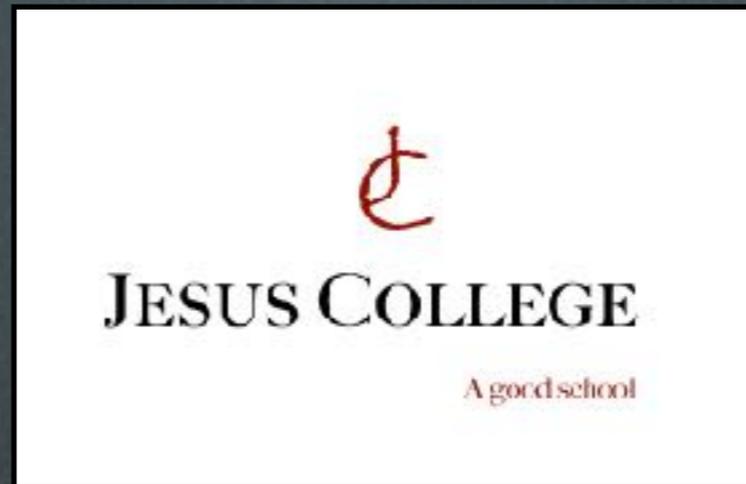
Doug





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