

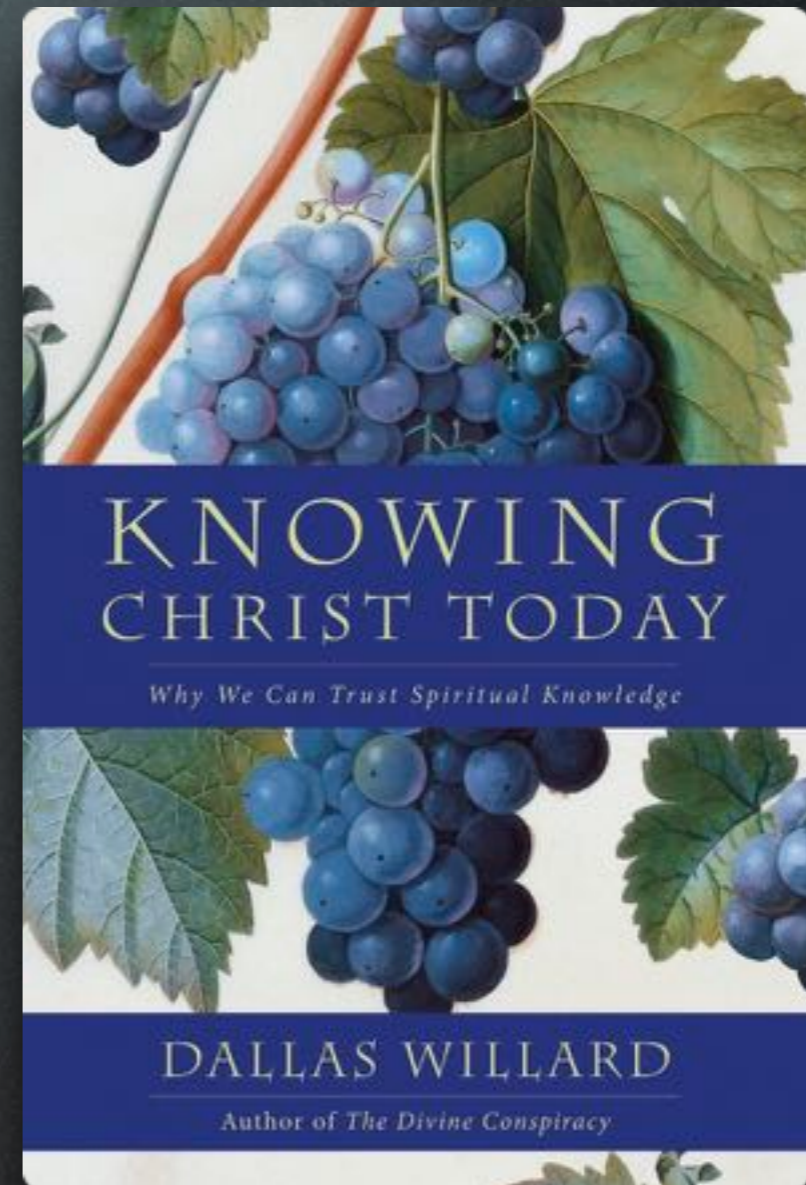
WELCOME to an 8 week Course sponsored by
Dallas Willard Ministries & Jesus College



Session 3 Review

We can no longer expect our teaching institutions to teach the next generation how to be good people living good lives.

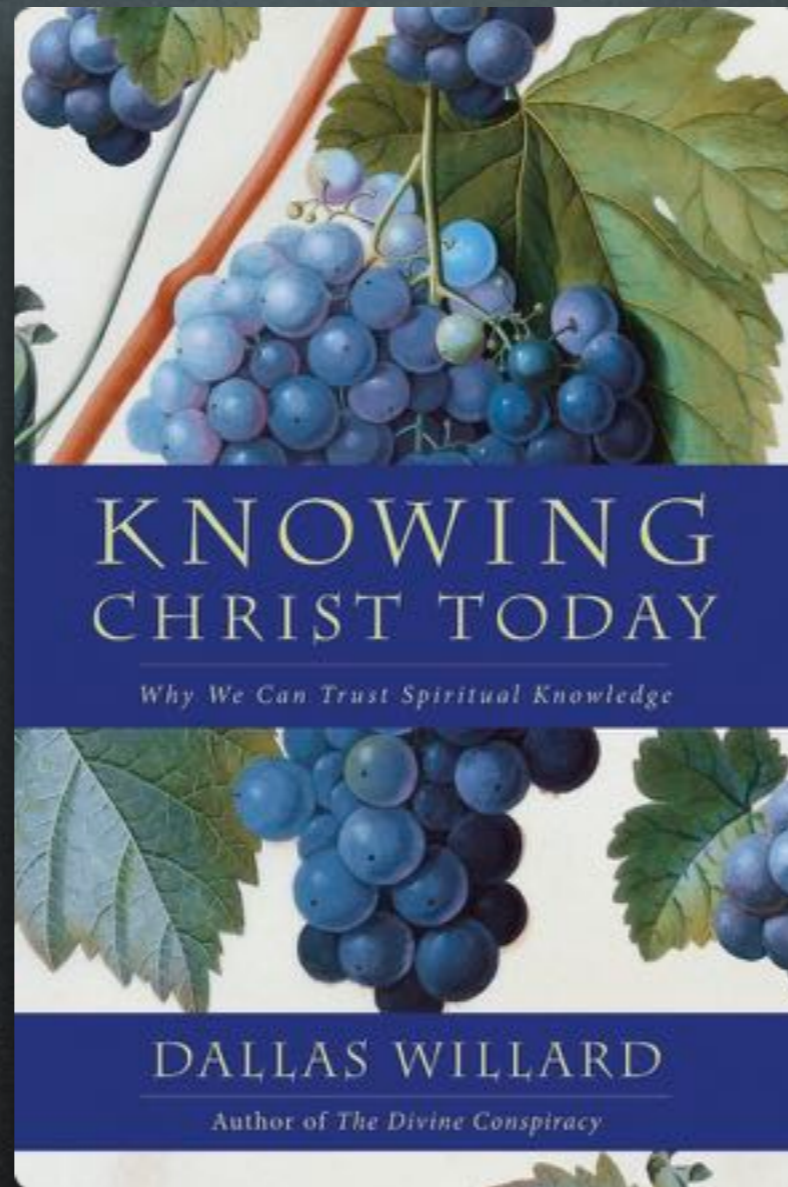
Our experience of the love of God in Jesus shown to our neighbor within effectual contact reveals our knowledge of an interactive relationship with God and His Kingdom of love.



KNOWING CHRIST TODAY

Session 4 - Can We Know That God Exists?

Chapter 4



p. 95-116

Knowledge of God is what Christ is primarily about.

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“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” John 14:9

“He is the image of the invisible God” Colossians 1:15

“All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Luke 10:22

“And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” John 17:3

If there is no God, or if knowledge of God is impossible, what is left of “Christ” is really nothing at all— or worse still, it is a huge deception.



Such is the God of the biblical tradition and the God whom Jesus taught us to call “Father”. In a manner unique to Jesus among all teachers of the earth, He tells us that we can, right now, right where we are, rely upon the “Kingdom” of this God—upon His rule, reign, or governance—and that we will then, by experience, find that “Kingdom” to have the character of a loving family in its most ideal form. (96)



Pray this way, “Our Father, who art in the heavens...”

If there is such a God as this, it obviously has tremendous implications for “worldview” issues and for individual lives—it makes a huge difference in how we can and should live. (97)

The human reactions:

+ Peace and joy in the idea that such a God cares for us... that we are safe in His hands.

– Others will bitterly resent it and find fault on how He is doing his “job” and will rebel. (98)

The Biblical Vision of God (96-98)

Can such a Creator God be known to exist?

There's nothing about the realm of nature that renders this God impossible, improbable, or implausible.

Impressions of God's Existence

1.) Creation – “His eternal power and divine nature are seen through the things He has made.” Romans 1:19-20

2.) Experience

“HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THINGS SO WONDERFUL, AND WHICH CARRY SUCH MARKS OF CONTRIVANCE, SHOULD COME TO POWER SPONTANEOUSLY WITHOUT DESIGN?”

EPICETUS, BOOK 1, CH. 16

The Reasoning for the Existence of God

First, there was a beginning of the physical universe.

It was not and then it was. (101)

How do we know?

Everything arises out of something (101) not physical but something “spiritual” (non-physical power). (102)

* “Causal Closure” Argument – Every physical event has a physical cause or others will arise.

It is a “closed” system.

To except the view that there was nothing, and then there was the physical universe in the incipient stage of its development, is certainly to reject the causal closure of the physical universe. Then we do have something physical with no physical cause – the physical universe.

If the entire universe could originate from nothing, then surely a cup of tea could originate from nothing.

Attempted Evasions for the Existence of God

The Nirvana Story — Spiritual without Jesus or God

The physical universe is “spiritual” — sufficient unto itself, not requiring a cause.

Problems

- The physical universe does have a beginning.
- Assigns divine attributes to the physical universe.
- This “gives up the game” of opposing a Creator.

Benefit — To propose a self-starting universe avoids responsibility to a living God. (103)

They usually wind up not explaining the physical universe at all, but explaining it away in one sense or another as not being “real”. Such theories are purely ad hoc attempts to avoid “traditional” religion while remaining “spiritual”. (104)

The Causal Series of the Physical Universe Must Have a First Member

A cause or source that is not a physical condition or event lives at the origin of the causal order that is the physical world. (105)

Try to imagine a...

- * First domino falling without a self-subsistent force.
- * Photocopy for which there is no original.
- * Stack of books without a bottom book.
- * Chain hanging from links with no topmost link.



A Preliminary Summary

For those who will invest due diligence and not refuse to think matters out...

The logical implication is at least one self-existent, and therefore, non-physical, state of being or entity radically different from those that make up the physical or “natural” world.

It is demonstrably absurd that there should be a self-sufficient physical universe. (107)

Philosophical debates dig deeply into how we must think about our life in our world and have serious implications for how we are to live and act. How one is to live responsibly, given what can be known to be true.

(107-108)

What Have We Gained?

We have achieved a great deal and it opens the way for us to go forward. Those who reject the existence of God, or the possibility of knowledge of Him now have a haunted universe on their hands.

The above argument shows conclusively that there is something more than the physical or natural universe, something of very impressive proportions.

Atheism in the contemporary world draws most of its motivation from a desire to *tame* or to *naturalize* reality. All hope for that is now lost, and it looks like the “natural” realm is also ripe for invasion by something that is not it. **Atheists** can never again feel at ease in the universe that supplements the physical realm in the way required by the argument we have just gone through. (109)

There is Something More (110-113)

1st – The source is powerful.

2nd – The non-physical source is more than the system that caused the physical world to exist.

3rd – The creator must think.

4th – The thoughtful, willful creator is intelligent.

* For example, birthday cakes and airplanes come from thoughts and actions of human beings.

Could the order in the natural world that is not of human intellect happen without any intellect?

A non-human intellect is the best explanation.

Are there any alternatives?

None that seem remotely plausible. (112)



What about Evolution? (113-114)

- It requires an elaborate order or design *before* it can occur. It presupposes a vast scale of life...of order.
- It is not a cosmic absolute, a self-sufficient, self-explanatory being that explains all else.
In fact, it explains very little.
- It certainly did not evolve into being.
- It is an “order” that requires explanation.

Given the line of argument in this chapter, evolution itself would count in favor of the existence of God, as indeed many have insisted.



Summary of Results (114-115)

- There exists a very great nonphysical being that is the source of the universe.
- This being has “will” and “intellect”.
- This being is an “intelligent author”.

Our simple and straight forward argument does not give us the loving Father God Jesus spoke of, but it does give us a magnificent “Creator”, through not yet a personal presence in human history and in individual lives.

Do not underestimate the importance of what we have gained. The entire cognitive landscape has changed and with it real possibilities of knowledge of such a personal presence.

Q&C

Your Questions & Comments are welcome!

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



Q&A

80:00 + 10K

Meditation — *Genesis 1:1-27*

Application for Knowing Christ in Your Next 10,000
Minutes → V-I-M*

VISION — How has this study opened my vision of the
existence of a Creator?

INTENTION — How seriously will I engage diligent thinking
to know God exists?

MEANS — Read Dallas Willard's, *The Allure of Gentleness*,
chapter 4, "Faith & Reason"



† Cross Fit

* - For more on V-I-M, see Dallas Willard's *Renovation of the Heart*, chapter 5



“Knowledge of Christ in Today’s World”

Dallas Willard Ministries YouTube Channel

Suggested video for Course Session 4
[Video 2 "Knowledge of God Today"](#)

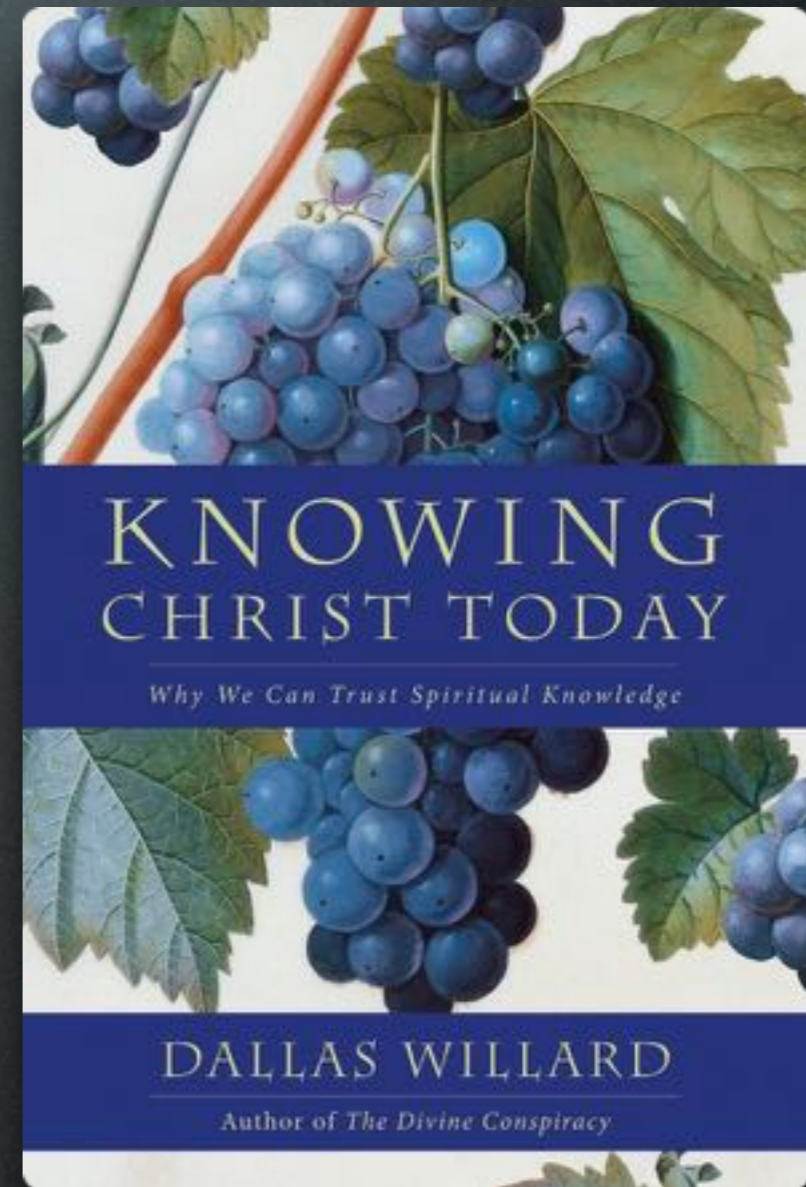


[Full 8-session video series](#)

See the course study guide for full transcripts of these video teachings

Session 4 Summary

We can know that an intelligent creator thoughtfully willed the physical universe into existence thereby confirming the words of the Apostles Creed, “I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth” as knowledge of truth.



“We turn to consider the possibility of knowledge of the miraculous, and the invention of God the creator in the affairs of human beings.” (115)

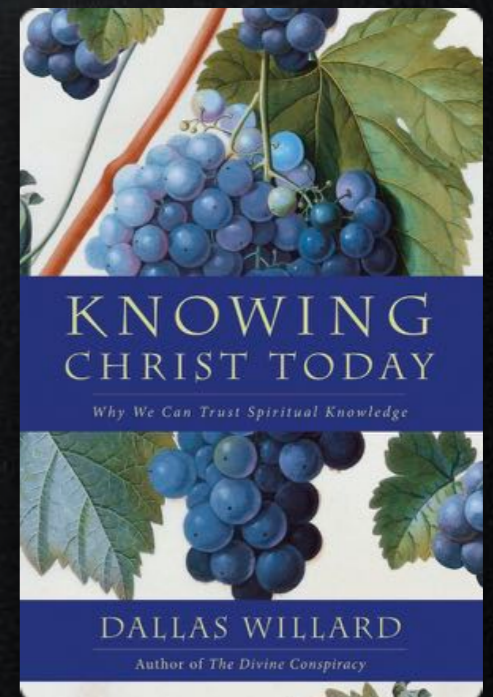
Next Week — Session 5

“The Miraculous, and Christ’s Presence
in Our World”

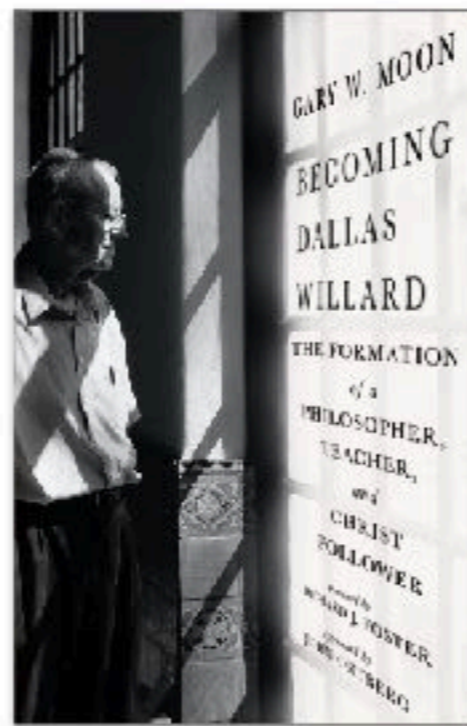
Chapter 5 p. 117-138



Special guest Nick Vasiliades
Educator & Ministry Leader



**An Inspiring
Story**



**Starts
Next
Week**

BECOMING DALLAS WILLARD

Biography by Gary W. Moon

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May Jesus strengthen your
confidence in His Father's
existence to compel you to seek
His Kingdom on the physical earth
as it is in the spiritual heavens,

Doug



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