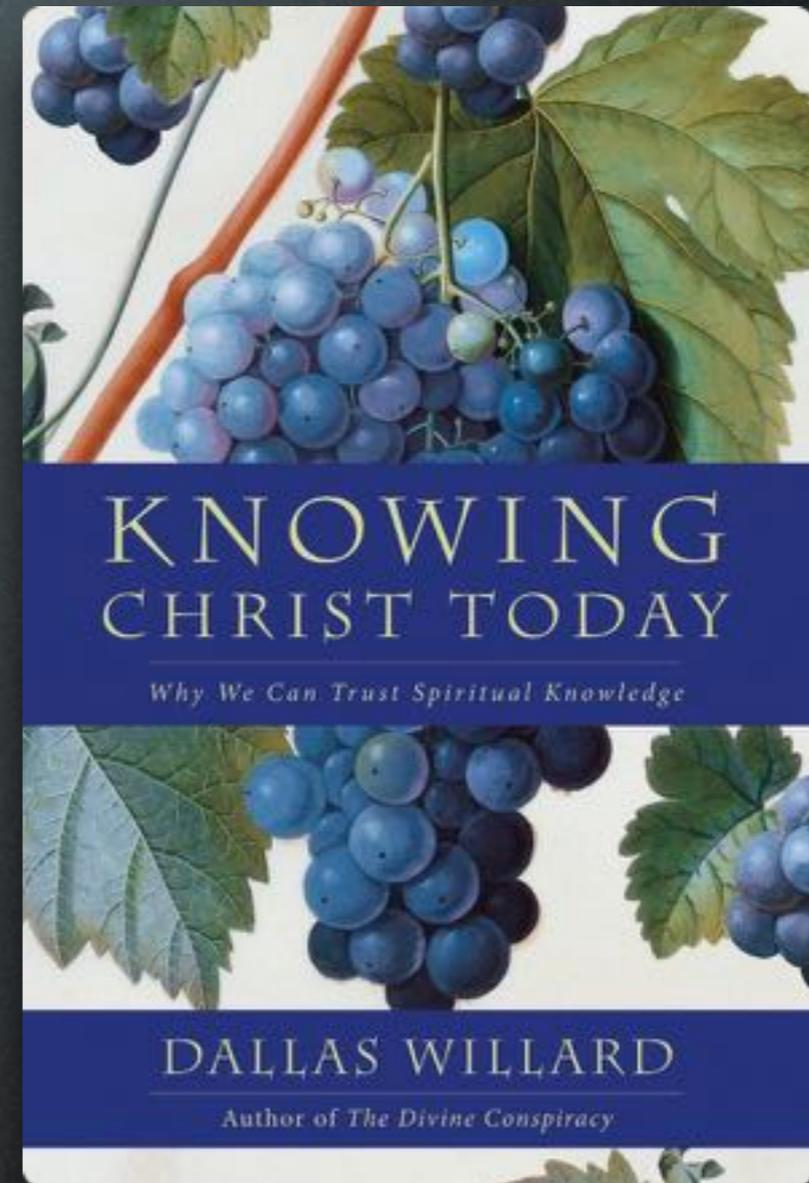


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## Session 5 Review

The established possibility of resurrection, resting upon the openness of the physical universe to a nonphysical source or creator of it all, opens the door to consider fairly the evidence that strongly favors the resurrection of Christ as an actual event and favors His continued presence in this world. (136)

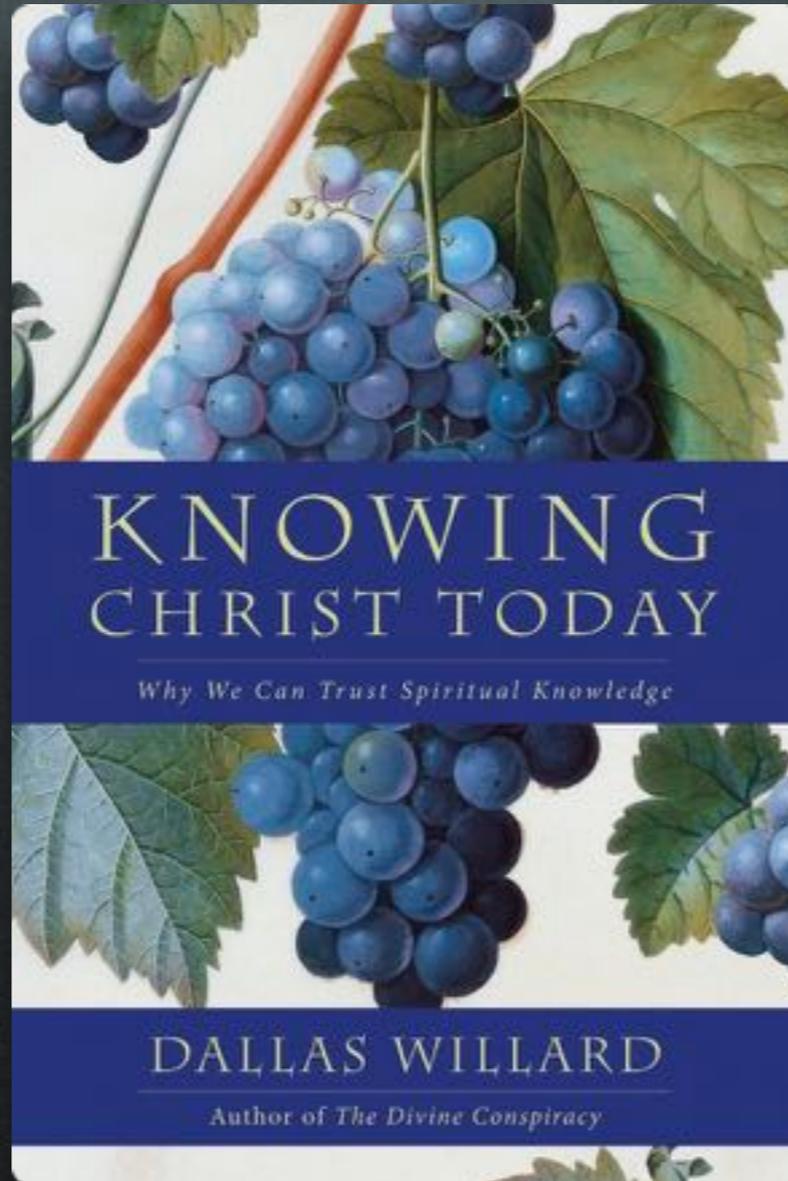


But no one has to know. (117 & 137)

# KNOWING CHRIST TODAY

## Session 6 - “Knowledge of Christ in the Spiritual Life”

### Chapter 6



p.139-167

*The Christ Focus — Practicing humble obedience to Jesus today.*

Matthew 6:33 — “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you.”

## **Chapter 6 Introduction**

Those who really do know Christ in the modern world do so by seeking and entering the Kingdom of God. Everything else we have discussed here is meant to lead up to that. To know Christ in the modern world is to know Him in your world now. To know Him in your world now is to live interactively with Him right where you are in your daily activities. This is the spiritual life in Christ. He is, in fact, you're contemporary, and He is now about His business of moving humanity along toward its destiny in this amazing universe. You don't want to miss out on being a part – your part – of that great project. You want to be sure to take your life into His life, and in that way to find your life to be “eternal” as God intended it. (139)

## **Making the Kingdom of God Available to All**

What Jesus did in his special time on earth long ago was to make the Kingdom of God, which He also referred to as the “Kingdom of the Heavens”, tangibly present among ordinary human beings. And the people of his time were “ordinary”, all right, leading regular human lives. They were just like you and me in that respect. But they had also been prepared as a people, through a long and painful process of historical development, to tangibly receive the Kingdom of God, and to make it accessible to others, even to the whole of humanity

## **Knowledge of God in Jesus by “Acquaintance” not just “Description”**

Truly known — “seen” — like Job & Thomas

This way of Jesus is a way of “firsthand interaction”—knowing by acquaintance—direct awareness of Him and His Kingdom. (142)

John 17:3, “This is eternal life that you may know...”

Matthew 6:33, “Seek first the Kingdom of God...”

## **Spiritual Life: Firsthand Interaction**

*“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you.” Matthew 6:33*

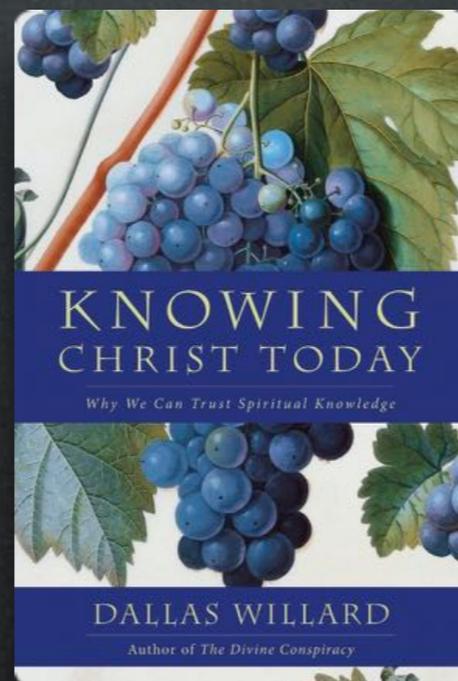
Jesus is the human face on the Kingdom of God.

He makes it concretely accessible.

Now, in the historical rise of the situation we are dealing with in this book, the displacement of Christian knowledge into the domain of mere belief and tradition, the difference between a religion of mere facts, however holy the facts, and a dynamic religion of interactive fellowship with Christ alive played a huge role. Serious and thoughtful people, as well as the careless, were turned away from the Kingdom of God “at hand” because what was presented to them, intentionally or not, as His way of life was understood to be mere belief in facts about Him – almost totally facts of long ago. (143)

## *Flashback to Chapter 5*

We are dealing with this cultural calamity of displacing the central point of Christian knowledge into the domain of mere “faith”, sentiment, traditional ritual, or power.



(132)

## **Knowledge of Interaction with the Kingdom**

It is this contemporary world where we must meet Him and know Him if we are to meet Him and know Him at all. But we certainly can live out those teachings in real life only if we are living in the Kingdom of God with Him. This must be our experiential reality. (143)

But this breakthrough to Jesus faces many obstacles.

Decent persons cannot be Christians.

Religion validates the “carnival of masks”.

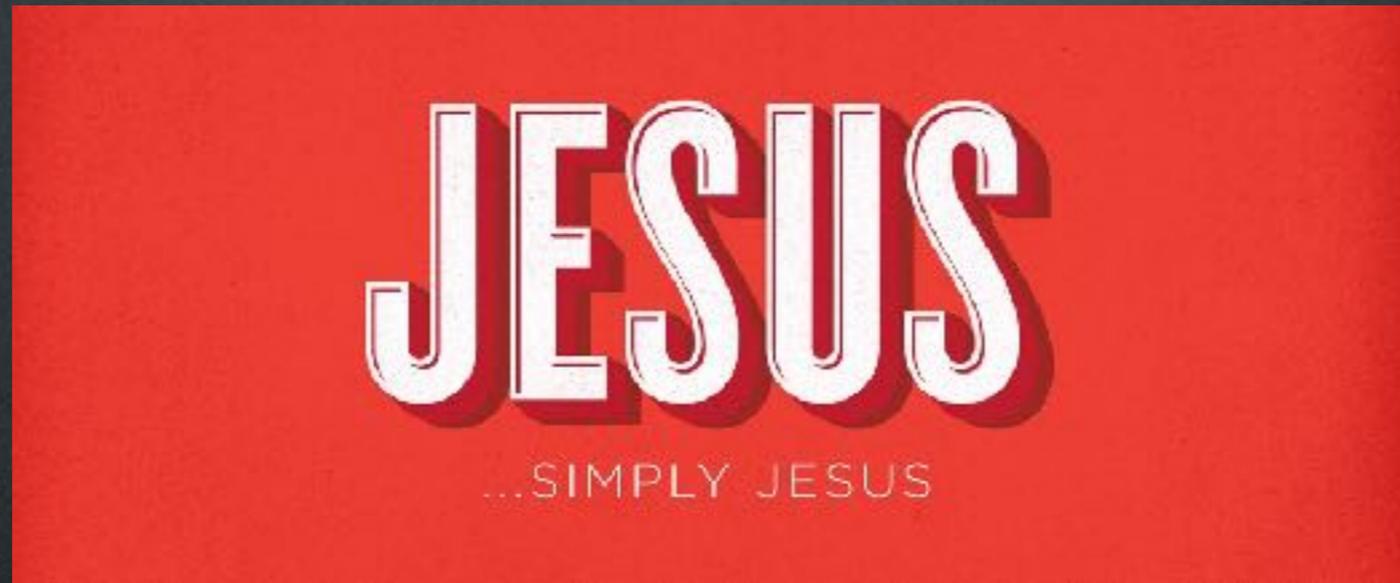
Religious wars, the Crusades, slavery and repression have been sanctioned and sustained by Christians.

And God has allowed that.

How can a “decent” person accept that?

(144-145)

## What is the answer?



*“The revelation of God in Jesus Christ is something very different from religion.”*

Peter Berger

Christ transcends all social visions and all entanglements with religion. He is the light that gives light to everyone who is in the world. (146)

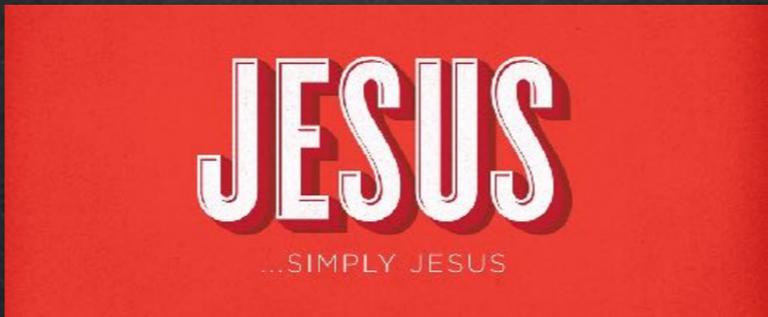
## How are we to think about Jesus' presence today?

- His teachings disrupt human systems
- His crucifixion and resurrection end human systems
- He is simply here among us

The people in the churches also have the option of finding Him, and following Him into his Kingdom, though that may rarely be what they are doing.

To come to know Him, and to clarify who He really is, people have only to stand for what He stood for, as best they can, and to do so by inviting Him to take their life into His life and walk with them.

It is enough to venture on the Kingdom of God and its King.



**JESUS**  
...SIMPLY JESUS

(146-147)

## Past All Barriers

It is possible for religious people, and Christians in particular, to follow Jesus into the Kingdom of God and come to know Christ in the modern world.

All that is necessary...

...Realize they (we) have not arrived if identified as “Christians”, and

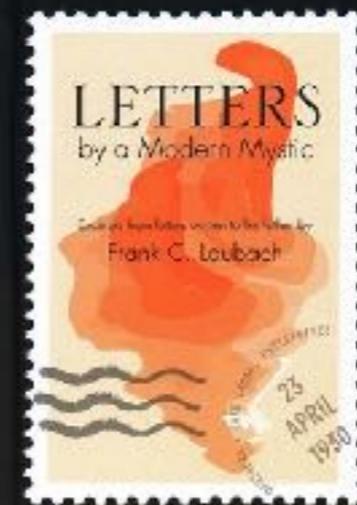
...Be willing to make knowing the Kingdom their (our) first priority. Then their (our) confidence in Jesus – if it really is confidence in Him, not just in something He did, or said – can lead them (us) into increasing knowledge of Him. (148)

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you.” Mt. 6:33

## **A Remarkable Case — Frank Laubach**

*“I resolved, and then re-resolved that I would find God’s will, and I would do that will though every fiber in me said no, and I would win the battle in my thoughts. It was as though some deep artesian well had been struck in my soul... And strength came forth.”*

*“How would it be if I were able to submit myself to God moment by moment?” After four weeks... “I feel simply carried along each hour doing my part in a plan which is far beyond myself. Cooperation with God in the little things. I never have felt it this way before. I need something and turn around to find it there for me. I must work for sure but there is God working along with me.”*



# Practical Steps to Kingdom Living

Two Preliminary Steps:

## 1.) Childlike Humility

Only the humble person will let God be God. (151)

## 2.) Intention to Inward Rightness.

It is the decision and the settled intention, carried into practice, to become good, “righteous”, on the inside – in the hidden dimensions of the self that make up the human character – not just an action or our behavior.

This is what Jesus called going beyond the goodness characteristic of the scribes and the Pharisees. (Mt. 5:20)

It is precisely a matter of being interactively engaged with the Kingdom in your life now.

(152)

*To know Christ in the Kingdom of God, we must abandon ourselves to a total transformation of who we are in the inside, to taking on the character of Christ through living with Him day by day and hour by hour. Only that is trust in Christ.*

(152)

## Obedience Where We Are

Two Substantial Elements:

1.) Constant expectation of [God] in the place where we are, wherever that may be. Your “Kingdom beachhead”

“Get a new thought! The kingdom of heaven is available to you from right where you are!” Matthew 4:17 (paraphrase)

“If you confess with your lips Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9

That is not a thing you say to get you in heaven after death. Is what you do to live in Christ’s Kingdom now. What is saved is our life, and of course we along with it.

## **Obedience Where We Are** (continued)

Two Substantial Elements:

### 2.) Obedience

Now, once you have received God into the place where you are at any, and all times, you are ready, next, to do what pleases God on every occasion. From the human side, once again, it is a matter of deciding to do the things that Jesus said – really, a matter of deciding, by God's grace, to become the kind of person who does what He said. That immediately draws into the context of His action where we know the eternal life flowing in us and around us. This is the spiritual life in Christ. (154)

## **It's All About Agape Love**

So Jesus told us: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." And again: "They who have my commandments and keep them, are those who love me; and those who love me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them... My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

John 14:15-15, 21, 23

"Love God with your all...and your neighbor" Mark 12:29-31

"Love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." 1 John 4:7-8

We know the nature of this life is love...promotion of the goods of human life that come under our influence.

We live to serve. (155)

*The Christ Focus — Humility and the intention of inward transformation, and the practice of Christ's constant presence in progressive overall obedience.*

(156)

## **Spiritual Disciplines in Knowing Christ**

In practice, we will have to learn to lead an ordered life centered on the four things of “the Christ Focus”.

We have to learn to do the things that eliminate distractions and keep our whole being focused upon constant companionship with Christ in our "nows." In this way, the life of a disciple of Jesus — of his student or apprentice in Kingdom living — takes its individualized shape. And to come to Him in faith is to enroll as His disciple. It is constantly go to school under his tutelage. Anything less than that simply misses Him and reveals we do not actually have faith in Him. But as disciples our faith grows as our knowledge grows.



## **Time Tested Spiritual Practices (156-160)**

**SOLITUDE** - Be alone doing nothing for lengthy time.

**SILENCE** - Eliminate noise including our mouth.

Root-reaching practices often producing repentance.  
Ease into them in a gentle and non-heroic manner.

**FELLOWSHIP** - With disciples, living & dead. “Master the Masters”. Church with the Trinity in Jesus’ name.

**PRAYER** - God’s arrangement for safe power sharing.

**GIVING** - Generosity is one essential dimension of love.



## **Time Tested Spiritual Practices**

Growing in the “Christ Focus” through specific practices is absolutely crucial to knowing Christ in the contemporary world. (156)

Spiritual disciplines are things we can do to increase a receptivity to grace. GRACE is God acting in our lives to accomplish what we cannot do on our own. (159)

The “Christ Focus” - obeying from the inside out. (159)

Prayer and giving are the first two concrete ways of venturing on the Kingdom of God and finding its reality. (160)

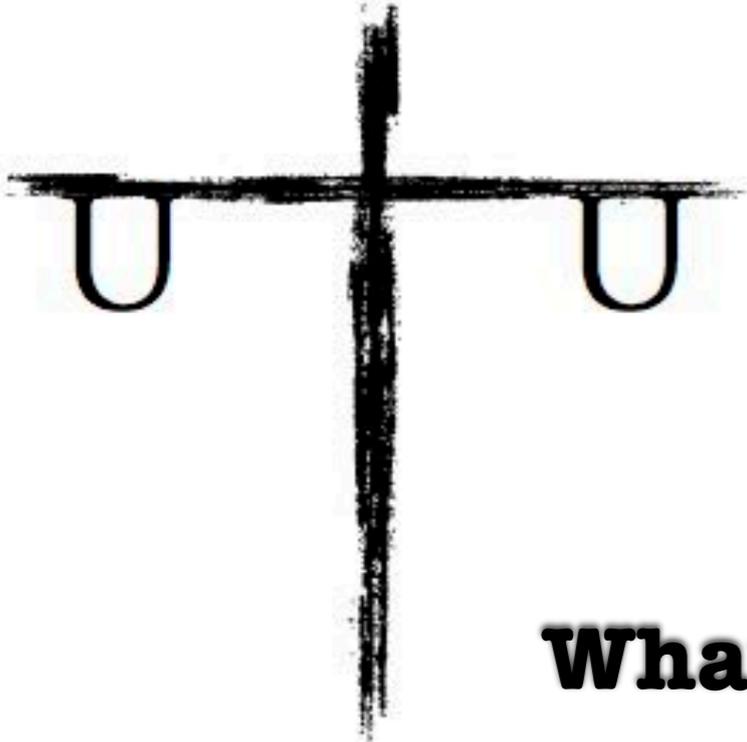


There is no formula to enter the  
interactive life in the Kingdom of God.

There is nothing mysterious about the “with-God life”.

It is a voyage in profound self-discovery.

(161)



**What is it really like? (161-162)**

- Remarkable Change • Hearing God • Easy Yoke Life •

The quality of life in Christ is available for all who will to know, and it clearly falls in the domain of the miraculous. (163)

## **The Critics Continue**

They don't know Christ as a life today.

They do not want their to be a God.

Christians often know no more life with Jesus and His Kingdom than atheists do and do not manifest that life to the public. (165)

As followers of Christ we claim them as friends in the pursuit of knowledge. We must show the reality they deny...and contest their claim. (165)

# Q&C

Your Questions & Comments are welcome!

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



Q&A

80:00 + 10K

## **Meditation** — *John 14:15-16*

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

**VISION** — How visible is Jesus and His Kingdom to me today, now, here?

**INTENTION** — Does “settled intention carried into practice” (152) show in me?

**MEANS** — Which of the five disciplines will I practice intentionally this week?



† Cross Fit

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



## Suggested videos for Course Session 6

**“Knowledge of Christ in Today’s World” \***

Dallas Willard Ministries YouTube Channel



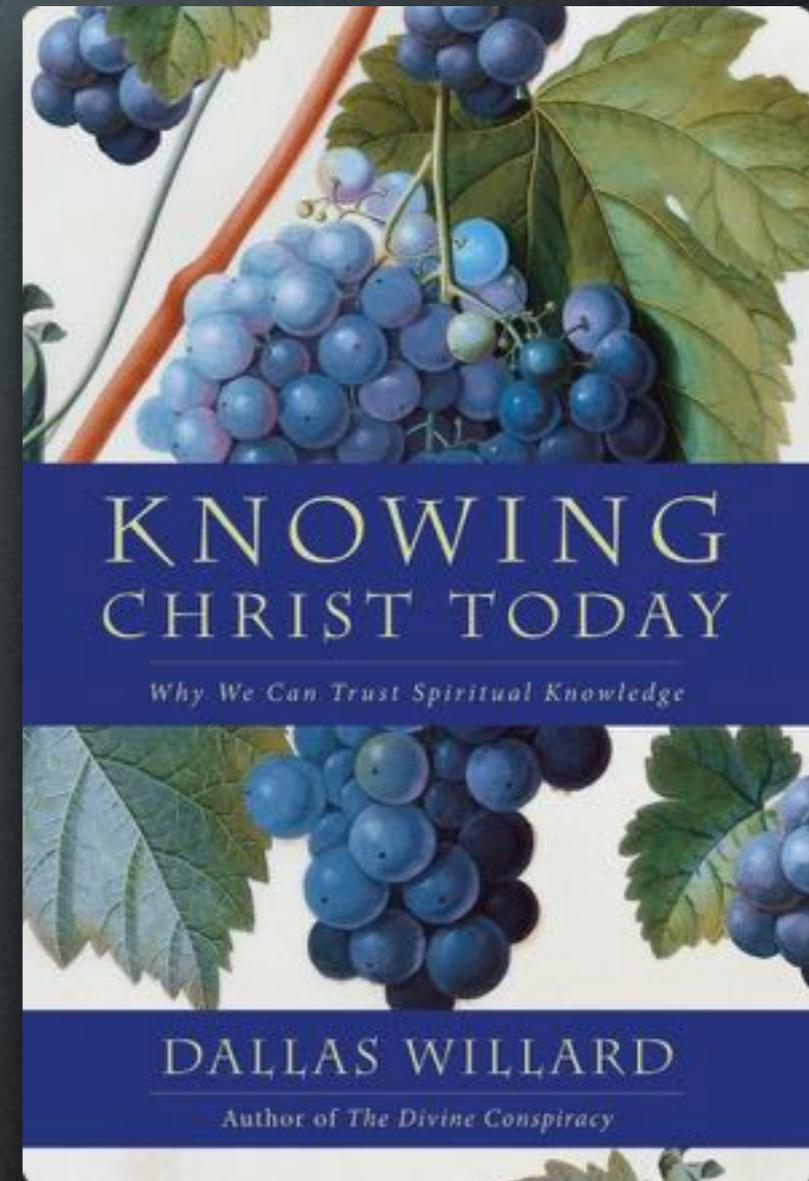
[Video 7 - "Life & Spiritual Life"](#)

\* [Full 8-session video series](#)

*See the course study guide for full transcripts of all (8) video teachings*

## Session 6 Summary

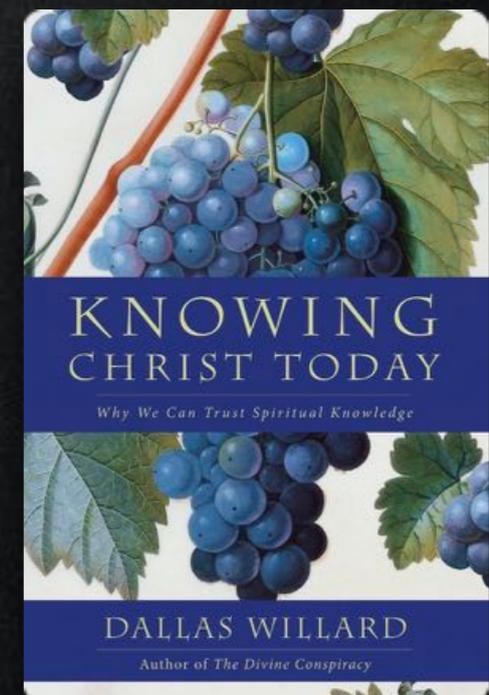
The Christ Focus is learning by grace-filled effort through specific practices to interact with Jesus Christ and His Kingdom in humble, intentional obedience right where we are today, now.



## Next Week — Session 7

“Knowledge of Christ & Christian Pluralism”

Chapter 7 p. 169-191



May your Christ focus be a joyous minute by minute interaction with Jesus in His Kingdom over your next 10,000 minutes.

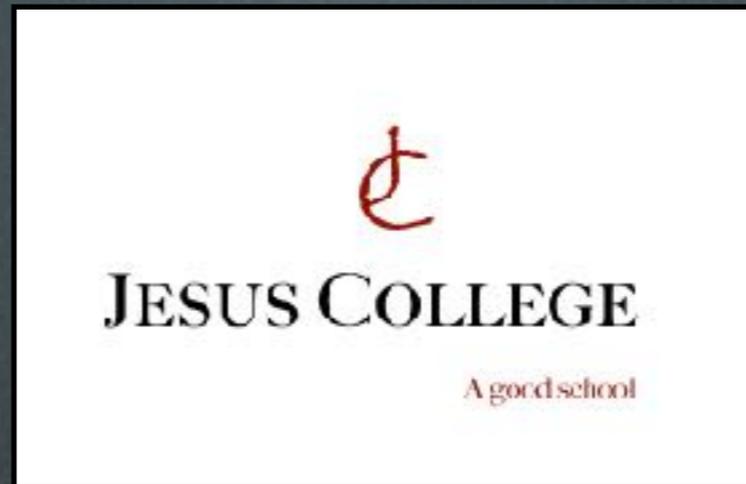
*Doug*



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