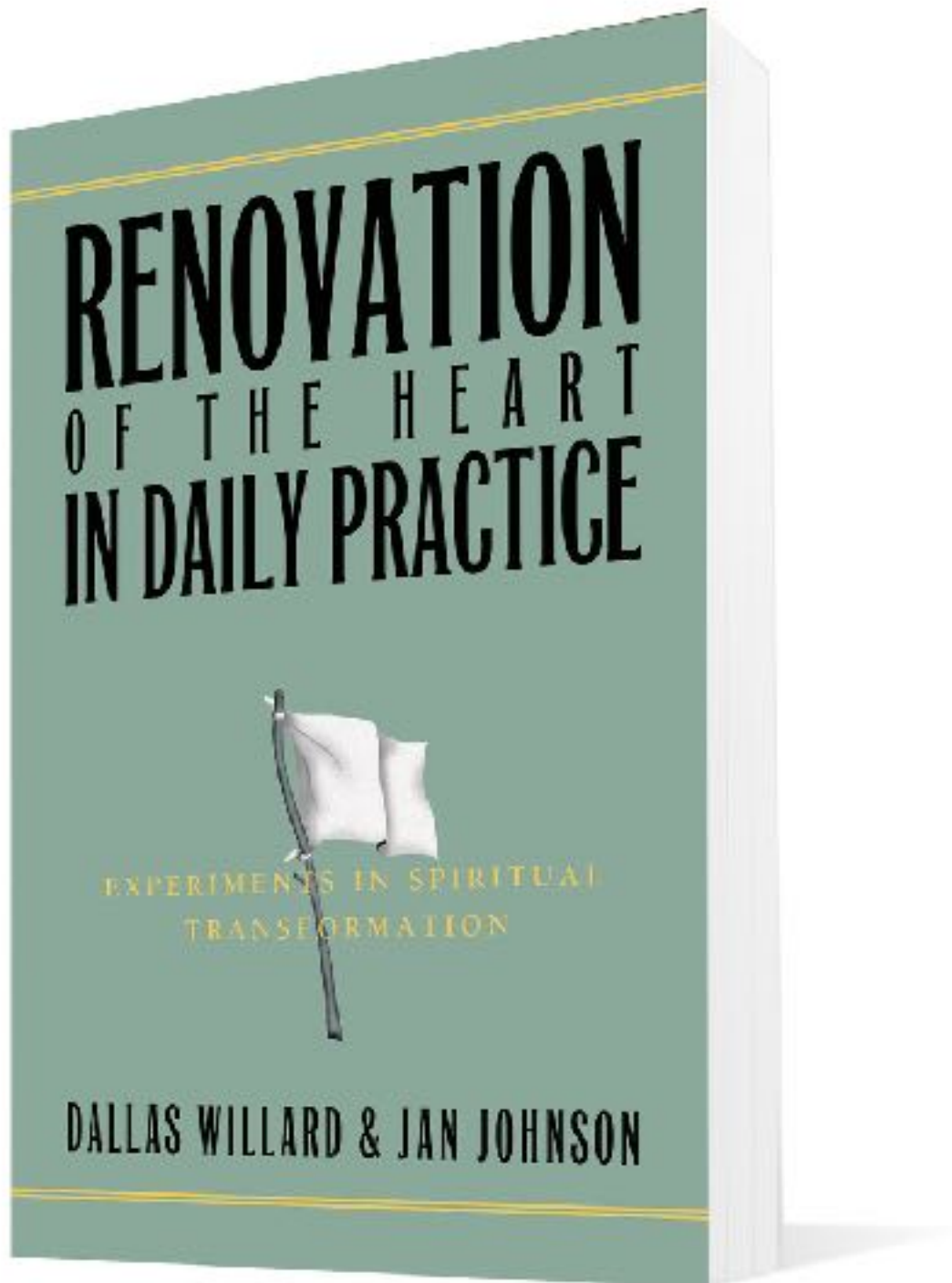


RENOVATION OF THE HEART IN DAILY PRACTICE

by Dallas Willard & Jan Johnson



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Session Chapters & Themes

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1	1-5	"Kingdom Living"page 5-7
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3	10-13	"Ruined & Restored Life"page 9
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**Scribe's Comments - The "Summary" sections are best effort to describe each chapter's theme. Additional Dallas Willard teachings are suggested to complement this book.*

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OVERVIEW of a *Renovated Heart*



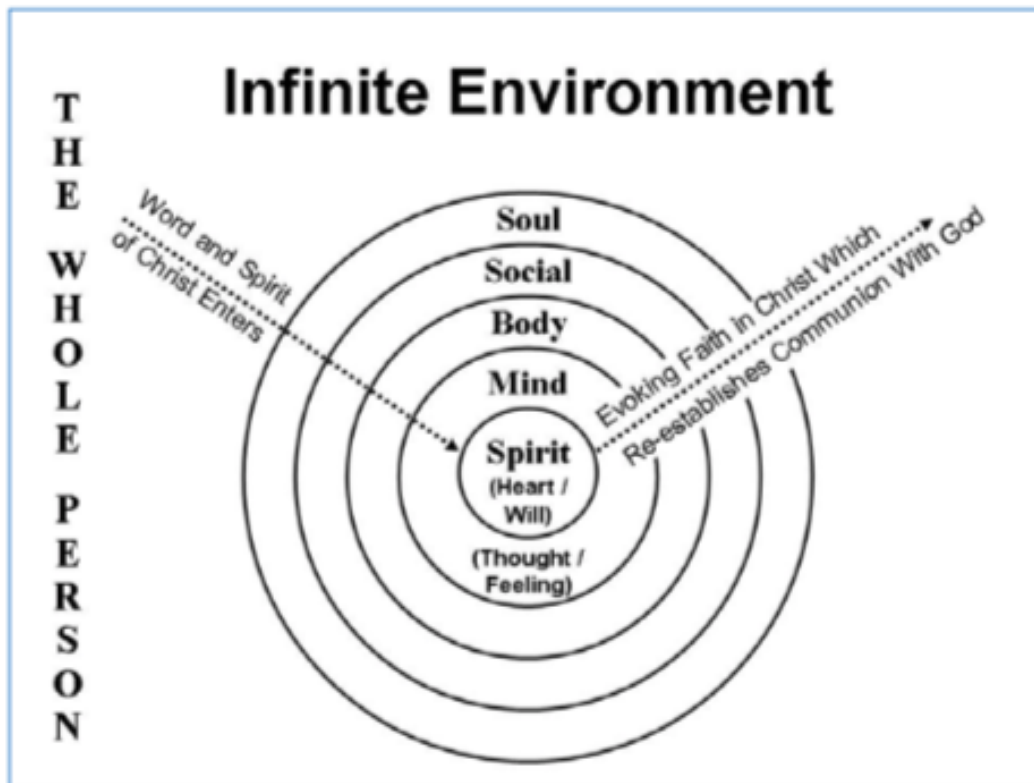
Dallas Willard, "[Love God & Neighbor from the Whole Person](#)"
"Transformed Mind" (part 3) [Run time = 04:20 from 10:40-15:00]

~ **The VISION:** Mark 12:28-31

28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' **31** The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

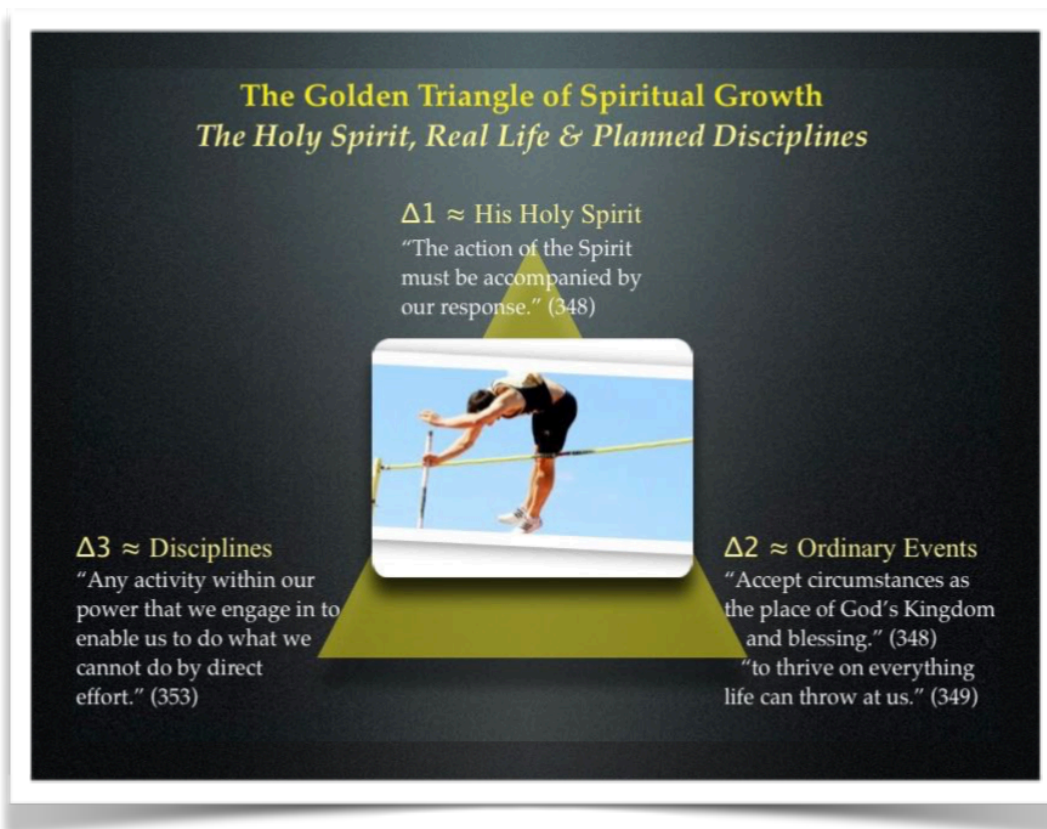
~ **The GOAL:** The "Whole Person" *Renovation of the Heart* p. 38



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~ **The PROCESS:** Golden Triangle *The Divine Conspiracy*, p.348-353



~ **The TOOLS:** Spiritual Disciplines *The Divine Conspiracy*, p.353-373

$\Delta 3$ **Disciplines of Disengagement** (Retreat)

solitude, silence, fasting, frugality,
chastity, secrecy, sacrifice, watching

$\Delta 3$ **Disciplines of Engagement** (Advance)

prayer, study, meditation, memorization, worship,
celebration, service, fellowship, confession, submission,
simplicity, obedience, generosity, giving, guidance, pilgrimage

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Session 1 - Chapters 1-5 "Kingdom Living"

~ ~ ~

Chapter 1 - "Kingdom Possibilities"

When we open ourselves to New Testament writings and absorb our minds and hearts...we get the impression we are looking into another world and another life. It is a divine word and a divine life. Leaping out of the pages are amazing promises to those who give their life to this new world through their confidence in Jesus Christ. (9)



The White Flag (10)
"Nobody's perfect"

Today's Experiment Scriptures Focus (10-11)



~ ~ ~

Chapter 2 - "No Unsolvable Puzzle"

Surely the life God holds out to us in Jesus was not meant to be an unsolvable puzzle! But this is my observation—for all our good intentions and strenuous methods, we do not approach and receive that divine life in the right way. (12)

Spiritual formation in Christ is an orderly process. (13)

Today's Experiment (13)

*Consider your vision and plan for the formation of your soul.
Immerse yourself in the words of the New Testament.*



~ ~ ~

Chapter 3 - "Change Me on the Inside"

The revolution of Jesus is one of character, which proceeds by changing people on the inside through an ongoing personal relationship to God in Christ and to one another. (15)

Spiritual formation for the Christian refers to the Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self becomes like the inner being of Christ himself. Christian spiritual formation is focused entirely on Jesus. Obedience is an essential outcome of Christian spiritual formation. (15)

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If Christ's people genuinely enter Christ's way of the heart, they will find a sure path toward becoming the person they were meant to be: thoroughly good and godly persons yet purged of arrogance, insensitivity, and self-sufficiency. Christian assemblies will become what they have been in many periods of the past and what the world desperately calls for today, incomparable schools of life – life that is eternally in quality now, as well as unending in quantity. (16)

Today's Experiment



What sort of heart would you like to have? (16)

~ ~ ~

Chapter 4 - "Trying to Be Good"

Christlikeness in the inner being is not a human attainment. It is, finally, a gift of grace. Spiritual formation is the way of rest for the weary in overloaded, of the easy yoke and light burden, of cleaning inside of the cup and dish, of the good tree that cannot bear bad fruit. (18-19)



The White Flag (19)

When we tried hard and fail, we berate ourselves and spend tremendous energy on guilt and hopelessness instead of letting ourselves be drawn into the divine life by becoming fascinated with the great example of Jesus in the Gospels.

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~ ~ ~

Chapter 5 - "Who We Are, Not How We Act"

The primary learning in spiritual formation is not about how to act, just as the primary wrongness or problem in human life is not what we do. Profound transformation there is the only thing they can definitively conquer outward evil. (21)

Taking love itself – God’s kind of love– into the depths of our being through the way of spiritual formation will by contrast, enable us to act lovingly to an extent that we'll be surprising even to us at first. (21-22)

Spiritual formation is the way of those learning as disciples or apprentices of Jesus to “do all things I’ve commanded you” within the context of “I have been given say over everything in heaven and earth” and “Look, I’m with you every minute’. Matthew 28:18-20 (22)



Today's Experiment

Focus on just one loving think Jesus did and picture His face as He did it. Maybe even put your self in the place of the person Jesus love for a moment and absorb that love. (22)

If you choose to do any of these things [spiritual disciplines], do them slowly with the intention of exploring the way God loves in the midst of them. Let that vision of God's love be God’s gift to you today. (23)

~ ~ ~

Summary of Chapters 1-5

The Kingdom life, the divine life, is possible for you and me today!

It is not a puzzle.

It requires a plan for the process that changes us on the inside to be more like Jesus on the inside.

It is not trying harder to act different.

It is learning as an apprentice to do what Jesus taught us to do.

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Session 2 - Chapters 6-9 "The Heart of Me"

~ ~ ~

Chapter 6 - "The Heart of Me" = "A Well-Kept Heart"

The human heart is the executive center of the human life. (24)

The ideal is for the whole person to do only what the heart directs.

Spiritual formation in Christ is the process leading to that ideal. (25)

~ ~ ~

Chapter 7 - "Interplay of Will, Thoughts & Feelings"

If one's life is to be organized at all, it must be organized by the will (or heart or spirit). It can be pulled together from the inside only.

The exercise of the will = Freedom and Creativity.

Temptation is the thought plus the inclination to sin. Without the inner yes, there is no sin..To choose one must have some object or concept before the mind and some feelings for or against it...The person with a well-kept heart is a person who is prepared for and capable of responding to the *situations of life* in ways that are good and right. (27-28)

~ ~ ~

Chapter 8 - "The Loudest Voice within Me"

As our choices settle into character traits, they are farmed out to our body. Matthew 26:41 - "*The spirit is but the flesh is weak.*"

The body dictates to our soul which dictates to the mind and feelings, into our spirit, and back to God.

The life from above flows the opposite way- from God to the spirit (will), to our mind and feelings, to our soul, and then to our body and its social context. (30)

The will, tiny power that it is, is very largely at the mercy of the forces playing upon it from the larger self and beyond. (31)

~ ~ ~

Chapter 9 - "Possessing the Land"

Grace means we are to be - and God enables us to be - active to a degree we have never been before. (32) II Corinthians 9:8

Today's Experiment (25) Speak wisdom to yourself - Psalm 16:7-9



Summary of Chapters 6-9

A well kept heart is trained by the grace of God to do what is good & right.

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Session 3 - Chapters 10-13 "*Radical Evil in the Ruined Soul*"

~ ~ ~

Chapter 10 - "*Ruined Souls*" = *Un-Christlike Christians*

"*There is no fear of God before their eyes.*" (Romans 3:18)

The path of spiritual formation lies through the illumination that we have ruined souls. (35)

~ ~ ~

Chapter 11 - "*God Being God*"

Biblical knowledge is experiential involvement. (37) (John 17:3)

God being God offends human pride. (37)

If we are not living the great drama of goodness in God's kingdom, sensuality through the body is all there is left.

The drive for self-gratification...(37) "Why?" becomes "Why not?" (38)

~ ~ ~

Chapter 12 - "*The Soul's Lostness*"

To be lost means to be self-obsessed. Self-idolatry. (40)

Wanting God to be God is very different from wanting God to help us. (41)

~ ~ ~

Chapter 13 - "*Wanting that Different Kind of Life*"

The ruined soul must be willing to recognize its own ruin before it can discover how to enter a different path...an eternal kind of life...the life of God Himself...a new reality. (43)

Brokenness = wounds not the evil within (43)

Without ruin recognition, there is no clear path to transformation. (44)

Today's Experiment

- * Find a kind, genuine, humble person and ask,
*Why isn't it important for you to be the center of attention?
What advice do you have for me?* (36)
- * Pray scripture by Luther's "Four Golden Strands" (38)



~ ~ ~

Summary of Chapters 10-13

I am a one of unclean lips. Only upon recognizing my lostness can I find the path to transformation into the Jesus kind of life.

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Session 4 - Chapters 14-16 "*Death to Self*"



Dallas Willard, "*Human Side of Holiness*" Denver Seminary, 3/17
["Spiritual Formation"](#) [Run Time = 09:20 from 35:30-44:50]

TEXTS: Matthew 16:25-26; John 12:24-25; Galatians 2:20

~ ~ ~

Chapter 14 - "*Foundation for Spiritual Formation*"

A shift toward self denial is needed to reorder the six dimensions of the human self subordination to God.

...a settled condition of life in the Kingdom of God.

Christian spiritual formation rests on this indispensable foundation of death to self and cannot proceed except in so far as that foundation is being firmly laid and sustained.

We must simply lose our lives – those ruined lives about which most people complain so much anyway. Our survival cannot be the ultimate point of reference in a world. We must not treat ourselves as God.

It is the love of God, admiration and confidence in His greatness and goodness, and the regular experience of His care that free us from the burden of looking out for ourselves. (46)



The White Flag (47)

Growing disciples of Jesus are to die to self promotion.

~ ~ ~

Chapter 15 - "*What Death to Self Looks Like*"

As a personality becomes re-organized around God and His eternal life, self-denial becomes a settled disposition. Look to specific motions of God's grace to guide and strengthen us in this life. We will need a wise and constant use of disciplines for the spiritual life.

When we are dead to self we will not be surprised or offended at not getting what we want.

Apprentices of Jesus know Romans 8:28. They do not have to look out for themselves because they are not in charge of their lives, rather, God is. (49)

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The White Flag (50) - "Death to Self" Disciplines

Service ~ Silence ~ Prayer ~ Meditation

...retrain us - such as not giving advice unless asked.

I'm content to hang out with Jesus all day long. Whatever He's up to, I want to tagalong. (51)

* Watchman Nee - *"Praise the Lord, I am dead!"* (65)

~ ~ ~

Chapter 16 - *"Standing for the Right Without Egotism"*

"If a grain of wheat dies, it bears much fruit." John 12:24-25

Apprentices of Jesus become disturbed about many things and passionately desire many things, but not getting their way does not disturb them. To accept with confidence in God that we do not have to get our own way releases us from the great pressure that anger, un-forgiveness, and the "need" to retaliate impose upon our lives. (52)

We have laid down the burden of having our own way.

...self denial based on the confidence and experience of God's all-sufficient presence in our lives. (53)



The White Flag (53)

I found that death to self occurs in small steps. Every day I volunteer for small deaths to self, and I experienced a little more of that fruit - filled eternal kind of life from above - right here and now on this planet.

Today's Experiment (53)

Reflect on situations that bring out the worst sort of self-promotion in you.



~ ~ ~

Summary of Chapters 14-16

"Death to self" - having my own way - is the foundational way by which we come to experience eternal life in God, His goodness, greatness and love.

Grace filled spiritual disciplines are the voluntary means by which Apprentices of Jesus practices daily death to self.

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Session 5 - Chapters 17-20 "The V-I-M Plan"



Dallas Willard, "Human Side of Holiness", Denver Seminary, 12/17
["Three Paths of Christian Progress"](#) [Run time 0:00-13:10]

- 1.) Try Harder
- 2.) Live in Brokenness
- 3.) Spiritual Formation Discipline

~ ~ ~

Chapter 17 - "What is Our Plan?"

If we are to be spiritually formed in Christ, we must understand and implement the general pattern and all effective efforts toward personal transformation must follow – appropriate vision, intention and means. If this VIM pattern is not put in place properly and held there, Christ simply will not be formed in us. (55–56)

~ ~ ~

Chapter 18 - "VIM: Vision of Life in the Kingdom"

The vision that underlies spiritual transformation into Christlikeness is, then, the vision of life now and forever in the range of God's effective will, that is, partaking of the divine nature through a birth "from above" and participating by our actions in what God is doing now in our lifetime on Earth. (II Peter 1:4, I John 3:1-2 (57)

Today's Experiment (58)

What do you learn about the kingdom of God – its nature, powers in character – from what Jesus did and said?



~ ~ ~

Chapter 19 - "VIM: Intention"

The problem of spiritual transformation among those who identify themselves as Christians today is not that it is impossible or that means to it or not available. Rather, the problem is that it is not intended. People do not see the value of transformation and decide to carry through with it. They do not decide to do the things that Jesus did and said. This is largely due to the fact that they have not been given a vision of life in God's kingdom so that such a decision and intention would make sense.

Jesus makes it possible for us to intend to live in the kingdom as He did. We can actually decide to do it. (60)

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The White Flag (61)

Now that I see who I really am, what am I to do next?

Today's Experiment (61)

Reflect upon what has blocked your intentions towards spiritual formation.



~ ~ ~

Chapter 20 - "*VIM: Means*"

The vision and solid intention to obey Christ will naturally lead us to seek out and apply them means to that end.

When not on the spot, I can retrain my thinking by study and meditation on Christ himself and on the teachings and scripture about God, His world, and my life – especially the teaches of Jesus in the Gospels, further elaborated by an understanding of the remainder of the Bible.

I can consciously practice explicitly self sacrificial actions in other less demanding situations. (63)

Today's Experiment (64)

What disciplines, if any, do you find yourself drawn to?
How might practicing some of these disciplines enhance your vision of the kingdom of God?



~ ~ ~

Summary of Chapters 17-20

Life like Jesus in His Kingdom is available to us when we desire it and seek to practice the ways Jesus lived - the disciplines - as means of being with Jesus and like Jesus.

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Session 6 - Chapters 21-26 *"The Mind Part 1 -Thought Life"*



Dallas Willard, *"Human Side of Holiness"*, Denver Seminary, 15/17
["How to Practice the Disciplines"](#) [Run Time 0:00-5:30]

- 1.) Decide to be His disciple
- 2.) Begin to obey His teaching
- 3.) Fail...then observe why you failed
- 4.) By reliance on the Spirit, remove the cause of the failure

~ ~ ~

Chapter 21 - *"Our First Freedom"*

The ultimate freedom we have as human beings is the power to select what we will allow our minds to dwell upon. (66) Ideas ~ Images ~ Information

Our thought life is achieved by the ministry of the Spirit in the midst of our necessary and well directed efforts. (67)

Today's Experiment (67) Observe where you put your mind.



~ ~ ~

Chapter 22 - *"Ideas: From Dark to Light"*

Changing those governing ideas is one of most difficult and painful things in life. Such change rarely happens...(68) Jesus confronted and undermined an idea system and its culture, which in turn killed him. (69)



The White Flag (69)

Governing Ideas - In my pursuit these ideas, I am not trusting that the Lord is my shepherd and that God provides everything I need – including the reputation I deserve. We simply don't realize what our core ideas are.

Today's Experiment (69) - Engage in some exploratory, listening prayer about your core ideas. Ask God to help you with your first step of discerning what core ideas now govern your thinking.



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~ ~ ~

Chapter 23 - "Images: Ideas Pictured"

The single most important thing in our mind is our idea of God and the images associated with it. (71) The process of spiritual formation in Christ is one of progressively replacing those destructive images and ideas with the images and ideas that filled the mind of Jesus himself. (72)

Today's Experiment (72)

What really comes to mind when you think of God?
Finish the sentence – *God is the kind of being who...*



~ ~ ~

Chapter 24 - "Information and the Ability to Think"

After God has implanted new life from above in us by Word and Spirit, we must take the initiative in progressively retaking the whole of our thought life for God's kingdom. Spiritual formation requires thinking. (74) We must seek the Lord by devoting our powers of thinking to understanding the facts and information of the gospel. (75)

Today's Experiment (75)

"Set your mind on things above." Colossians 3:1-4



~ ~ ~

Chapter 25 - "Crucial Role of Good Thinking"

The prospering of God's cause on Earth depends upon his people thinking well. (77) To think of God as He is, one cannot but lapse into worship, and worship is the single most powerful force in completing and sustaining restoration and the whole person. Worship is the overall character of the renovated thought life & the only safe place for a human to stand. (78)

~ ~ ~

Chapter 26 - "God's Thoughts in You"

The most obvious thing we can do is draw certain key portions of Scripture into our mind and make them part of the permanent fixtures of thought. This is the primary discipline for the thought life. (80)



The White Flag (81)

Three Keys to Memorizing:

Repetition ~ Concentration ~ Understanding

~ ~ ~

Summary of Chapters 21-26

The first move back from ruin is to think about God.

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Session 7 - Chapters 27-32 "The Mind Part 2 - Feelings"

~ ~ ~

Chapter 27 - "Mastered by Feelings"

Feelings live in the front row of our lives like unruly children clamoring for attention. No one can succeed in mastering feelings who tries to take them head-on and resist or redirect them by willpower in the moment of choice.

Persons in their heart of hearts believe that their feelings must be satisfied. They have long chosen the strategy of resisting their feelings instead of changing or replacing them. This creates a ruined person who makes himself God in his world. By contrast, the person new happily let's God be God excepts that feelings do not have to be fulfilled.

Achieving this new vision of oneself requires openness to radical change, careful instruction, and abundant supplies of divine grace. But with this new vision, they now see themselves as ones being transformed to characterize the inner being of Jesus Christ. (83)

[Thoughts: "Being" transformed to "Being" like Christ.]

Too long for the identity of a mirror apprentice of Jesus is the starting point from which a new identity emerges.

Today's Experiment - (85) Asking God to give you a glimpse of what it would look like to be renewed in knowledge in the image of your creator.



~ ~ ~

Chapter 28 - "Hidden Dynamic of Feelings" - James 4:1-2; 3:16

The need is not just to remove the conflict but also to address underlying feelings...settled conditions that live beneath feelings.

Feelings can be successfully reasoned with and corrected by reality only in those who have the habit and are given the grace of listening to reason even when they are expressing violent feelings or are in the grip of them. Strong feelings may blot out all else for those who have not been trained to identify, be critical of, and have some distance from their own feelings. A wise person will carefully keep the pathway open to the house of reason and go there regularly to listen. (86-87)

It's important to listen carefully to our thought patterns regarding certain people and observe how we speak to and about them. (87)

Today's Experiment - (87) Reflect on what might be a common underlying condition for you.



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~ ~ ~

Chapter 29 - "The Power of the Mood"

People are overwhelmed with decisions and can make those decisions only on the basis of feelings. People cannot distinguish between their feelings and their will, and they confuse feelings with reasons. Relaxed self-control which is the steady capacity to direct yourself to accomplish...

What you have chosen or decided to do and become even though you don't feel like it. Ideas and images foster and sustain feelings.

We do not try first to root out those destructive feelings, but they are eliminated as we make the first move – going toward love, joy and peace, based on faith and hope in God. (88)



The White Flag (89)

What ideas & images am I giving airtime to?

Consider a feeling that plagues you – one you wish you did not have. Set aside a time to ponder this before God. Ask God to reveal to you the ideas and images you have chosen to maintain. Ask God what feelings might replace these. Consider what ideas and images would foster that replacement feeling.

~ ~ ~

Chapter 30 - "Feelings of the Spiritual Transformed Person"

Hope – Faith– Love Desire – Lust – Pride – Fear

* Napoleon – little dictators

~ ~ ~

Chapter 31 - "A Person of Joy & Peace"

Joy is a pervasive sense of well-being that is deeper and broader than any pleasure.

Peace is the assurance that things will turn out well.

When others do not extend the grace and mercy I need, I have to draw on the abundance of it in God. Romans 8:34

The secret to this peace, as great apprentices of Jesus have long known, is being abandoned to God. Isaiah 26.3

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~ ~ ~

Chapter 32 - "Next Steps Toward Love, Joy & Peace"

"Death to Self" – This is the vision in our VIM pattern, but we must also intend this in all we are and do. Our thought life will be focused upon God, and so our walk with Jesus will show us the details of the means required to bring it to pass. (96)

For many, coming to honest terms with our feelings will be a huge task.

Today's Experiment - (97-98)



We identify destructive feelings and abandon them and then go back to drenching ourselves further in God's love, joy and peace passing them onto others by God's empowering grace. (97)

Ask the Spirit to...

...**REVEAL** the underlying settled conditions that keep these destructive feelings active.

...**REVEAL** to you ideas, images, bits of information that nurture these feelings that you keep in front of your mind.

...**REPLACE** destructive conditions and feelings with settled conditions of love, joy & peace that will dwell in you. (97-98)

~ ~ ~

Summary of Chapters 27-32 - *Destructive feelings can be replaced with love, joy & peace through faith and hope in God.*

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Session 8 - Chapters 33-36 "The Will"

~ ~ ~

Chapter 33 - "Changing the Character"

In order to change, i must come to possess thoughts and feelings that enable me to choose to change those former thoughts and feelings.

What does a will or heart look like that has been transformed into Christlikeness? It is characterized by single-minded joyous devotion to God and His will, to what God wants for us, and to service to Him and to others because of Him. This outcome of Christian spiritual formation becomes our character it governs the responses of every dimension of our being. (99-100)



The White Flag (100)

Character is what I feel or do without thinking.

~ ~ ~

Chapter 34 - "The Splintered Will"

Our will is what comes from nothing else but us. The wills primary exercise in humans is the power to select what we think about and how intently we focus on it...Character develops from will.

Though God reveals His will to us, He chooses not to override our self-conflicted will, allowing the consequences of our choices. (102)

Today's Experiment - (103)



Identify the issues you are sick and tired of muddling over. Tell Jesus your fears about such a death to self. Ask Him to show you how your life would actually be easier if you just gave up on all these things, how love and joy and peace would be at your right hand.

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~ ~ ~

Chapter 35 - "The Vivid and Eternal Drama of God"

Surrender —> Abandonment —> Contentment: Gratitude & Joy
—> Participation in Divine Drama (104) Romans 5:17

Today's Experiment (106)



Perhaps what is needed is to simply believe this progression is possible, to believe that you can participate in the divine drama of accomplishing God's will in our world in some way.

~ ~ ~

Chapter 36 - "How Disciplines Help"

As the will is surrendered, we come to grips with our fallen character, which positions every element of our being against God. We must move out of this entanglement to single-minded focus upon doing the will of God in everything, distracted by nothing.

Disciplines make room for the Word and the Spirit to work in us. They permit destructive feelings to be perceived and dealt with. Your mind will really talk to you when you deny fulfillment of your desires. (107)



The White Flag (108)

Disciplines create space for the retraining of our thoughts, feelings and will. We see ourselves as we really are, and the games of duplicity are over.

Today's Experiment (109)



What sort of discipline has God been nudging you toward?

The way God may suggest you practice it might look very different from how someone else practices it. Ask God what He has in mind your next step.

~ ~ ~

Summary of Chapters 33-36 - *My surrendered will leaves behind the drama of my entangled thoughts & emotions and launches me into the dynamic drama of God's Kingdom at work.*

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Session 9 - Chapters 37-40 "*The Body*"



Dallas Willard, "*Human Nature*", Ohio State

["Dimensions of the Self"](#)

[Run time = 15:05 from 26:00-41:05]

~ ~ ~

Chapter 37 - "*The Body's Role in Spiritual Formation*"

The body lies at the center of the spiritual life. Therefore, my body is the primary place of my dominion, my responsibility. Most of what is called character, good or bad, in normal human life consistent with what our bodies are or are not "at the ready" to do in specific situations. These "readinesses" govern our responses and are seen by observing people who then determine how to react to us. (110)



The White Flag (111)

Who we really are inside is communicated by our manner – what our body is ready to do at any minute. Our body speaks volumes about us.

Today's Experiment (111)

Speak to God about the ways you've trained your body.
Admit the underlying settled attitudes that your body favors.



~ ~ ~

Chapter 38 - "*Retraining the Body*"

Spiritual transformation (def.) into Christlikeness is the process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it takes on the character of the inner being of Jesus himself. The result is that the outer life of the individual increasingly becomes a natural expression of the inner reality of Jesus and his teachings. Doing what he said and did increasingly becomes a part of who we are.

But for this to happen, our body must be increasingly poised to do what is good and to refrain from what is evil. The inclinations to wrongdoing that inhabit our bodies parts must be eliminated. Then the body becomes the primary ally in Christlikeness.

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The proper retraining in nurturing of the body is essential to Christlikeness. When our heart (will, spirit) comes to new life in God, the old "programs" still run, primarily in the body. Romans 7:18 (113)



The White Flag (114)

While we guard our heart and readjust it as needed, we also need to confront the body in its regimented habits.

Today's Experiment (114)

Perhaps you could try the humble stance of putting your hands behind your back.



~ ~ ~

Chapter 39 - *"Releasing the Body to God"*

Our powers of thought and imagination and judgment are deeply rooted in our body. We must actually release our body to God. This needs to be a definite action, renewed as appropriate, perhaps on a yearly basis. But you will not drift into this position before God, and you will not stay there without decisive action. (116)



The White Flag (117)

If your desire is to retrain your body,
you need to employ your body in the exercise.

Today's Experiment (117)

As you read the Gospels, notice Jesus bodily positions.



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Chapter 40 - "Misuses of the Body"



No longer idolize your body. For most people, their body governs their life. Do not misuse your body, especially as a source of sensual gratification or domination or manipulation of others. (118)

Today's Experiment (119)

If you had just one change of clothes,
how hard would that be for you?

Consider why aging seems so negative in our culture. Talk to God about how important (or unimportant) outward looks are to you. Ask God to show you how important it is to you that wisdom (sometimes) comes with age. (119)

~ ~ ~

Chapter 41 - "Sabbath Moments"

The body must be properly cherished and cared for, not as our master, but as a servant of God. Our body is to be regarded as holy because it is owned and inhabited by God. So we give it proper nourishment, exercise, and rest. (120) Psalm 127:2

The practical center of proper care for the body is Sabbath.

We can trust him with our lives in our world and can take her own hands off them.

The body must be weaned away from its tendencies to take control, to run the world, to achieve and produce, to attain gratification. (120)

Rest is one primary mark of the condition of the Sabbath in the body, as unrest as a primary mark of its absence. Our first step might well be to start getting enough sleep. Sleep is a good first use of solitude and silence. It is also a good indicator of how thoroughly we trust in God. (120-121)

Today's Experiment (121)



Consider what your next step is in advancing a sabbath practice.

~ ~ ~

Summary of Chapters 37-41 - *The body is central, vital and pivotal in the formation of our character to become more like that of our Lord Jesus.*

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Session 10 - Chapters 42-46 "The Social Dimension"

~ ~ ~

Chapter 42 - "Formation is not Private"

Spiritual formation, good or bad, is always profoundly social. Relationships must be transformed if we are to be transformed. Jesus gave a sure mark of the outcome of spiritual formation: We become people who love one another. (John 13:35) This love is not unspecified: "*Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another*" (v. 34). The "love" in question here is identified as *what we do in Christ, as He has done for us*. This love makes us ready to "*lay down our lives for one another.*" (I John 3:16)

Failure to love others as Jesus loves us chokes off the flow of the eternal kind of life that our whole human system cries out for.

Such love is possible because of what God is: love. God is love and sustains love for us from His basic reality as love, which dictates His Trinitarian nature. God is in Himself a sweet society of love where three persons complete a social matrix. Not only does one each one love and receive love, but each has a shared love for another, the third person. The nature of personality is inherently communal, and only the Trinity does justice to what personality is.

This sort of love is meant to happen routinely among God's people. (122)



The White Flag (123)

Such love, however, involves an openhanded death. (I John 3:16) We will have to die to ourselves. (Colossians 3:3-4, Philippians 3:11)

Today's Experiment (123)

Consider how you need to let yourself down as on an altar in order to nourish others. What does laying down your life involve? Perhaps desires, thoughts, and habits, such as interrupting or insisting on your own way? What disciplines is God calling you to?



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Chapter 43 - "Reciprocal Rootedness in Others"

["Circles of Sufficiency", *Renovation of the Heart*, p. 179-180]

Those spiritually formed in Christ likeness find the natural condition of life to be one of reciprocal relatedness in others. Stable, healthy living requires the assurance of others being for us. If this assurance of others being for us is not there, we are but walking wounded. Our lives will be more or less in shambles until we die. Dealing with the spiritual formation of our social dimension begins with this *woundedness*.

Lack of nourishment from deep connections with others means spiritual starvation in our every dimension.

Those spiritually formed in Christlikeness find the natural condition of life to be one of reciprocal rootedness in others. (124)

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. (124)

But if a child is totally received in his early years by his parents and siblings [and grandparents] 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." (125)



The White Flag (125)

We go to God for nurture. Now and then, God may use that other person to nurture us, but we receive it as from God.

The Lord really is our Shepherd – even in relationships.

~ ~ ~

Chapter 44 - "How Lovelessness Works"

Sin in our social dimension takes two forms of lovelessness: assault (attack) and withdrawal (distancing). If spiritual formation in Christ is to succeed, the power of assault and withdrawal must be broken so they are eliminated as *indwelling realities* or as *postures* we take toward others.

Spiritual formation in Christ will mean becoming persons who would not and therefore do not assault others.

Withdrawal also wounds. The tongue can assault by withdrawal, by not speaking.

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As assault withdrawal are eliminated, the social area of our lives become what God intended: a play of constant mutual blessing. (127)



The White Flag (128)

What if I were to pray for a person each time I criticize that person to someone else or even only in my mind?

Today's Experiment (128)



Pretend you've been hired as a detective angel to watch yourself and analyze your usual methods of attacking withdrawal. What is the root of the perceive need to attack or withdraw? Picture yourself in Psalm 23:5 - you sit at a table uniquely prepared for you. Sitting across from you is an enemy or two (people who make life difficult) poised for a attack or withdrawal as their form of attack. Now picture God anointing your head with oil - signifying your special usefulness to him. Notice how you're cup is always full so that you feel secure and you never look inadequate to that enemy. If you can do it, try to grin in blessing at your enemy instead attacking.

~ ~ ~

Chapter 45 - *"Letting Go of Attack and Withdrawal"*

[[Profound assessment, diagnosis and prescription for human life.](#)]

Especially in our families and friendships, we must identify how attack and withdrawal defeat love. We can break away from these tendencies by learning a calm but firm noncooperation with those poisonous elements and by making initiatives of goodwill and blessing in the midst of such attacks.

Attack and withdrawal can render persons incapable of a positive marriage-giving oneself to another person, supporting this person for good in his or her life in every way possible. (Ephesians 5:22-33) It is not these persons' fault. In this world, how could they know how to do this? In modern life, individual desire has come to be the standard and rule of everything. How are we to serve one another if desire is the standard and if what we desire can be acquired for many others besides ourselves?

The spiritual malformation of children is an inevitable result. Their souls, bodies and minds absorb the assault and withdrawal of their parents, who are constantly engaged with their children. They are soon attacked and frozen out, too. Their only hope of survival is to maintain a constant posture of withdrawal.

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Such children grow up to be malfunctioning souls in their workplace, professions, citizenship and leadership. Many of them try to rectify the situation by working for solutions to the human problems, such as education or diversity or tolerance. These things are good, but they do not come close to the root of the human problem. Ignorance, prejudice or intolerance draw upon the still deeper-lying soul structures of assault and withdrawal, which feed those negative influences.

So to heal the open sore of social existence, congregations of apprentices to Jesus must return to the transcendent power of Christ in which they stand. They must drain the assault and withdrawal, the attacks and coldness, from the individual men and women who form families under their ministry of Jesus and his kingdom. (130–131)



The White Flag (131)

Our hope for change comes are participating in a life from above, which connects us to that invisible spiritual realm and its powers (John 3:8)

How? *"Through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness."* 2 Peter 1:3

Today's (132)

See how Jesus embodied this calm but firm noncooperation for those who attacked him? He did not take things personally but addresses the specific issue.



~ ~ ~

Chapter 46 - *"Steps Toward Genuine Love"*

- 1.) For individuals to come to see themselves as whole, as God Himself sees them. This vision of wholeness in God draws the poison from our relationships with others and enables us to go forward with sincere forgiveness and blessing toward them.
- 2.) Abandonment of all defensiveness. Abandonment of practices of self-justification, evasiveness and deceit, as well as manipulation. We do not hide and we do not follow strategies for "looking good".
- 3.) Love among Christians that is genuine (Romans 12:9)

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4.) Extend ourselves and blessing in redemption to all those lives we touch. Without the burden of defending ourselves, we can act from the resources of our new life from above and devote our lives to the service of others. (133)

Today's Experiment (135)



Imagine yourself as a part of a group of disciples of Jesus who made this list, (Romans 12:9-21) their shared intension and actually lived it out. To what group is God calling you to be such a group member today?

~ ~ ~

Summary of Chapters 42-46 - *Spiritual formation in Christ is profoundly social centered on genuine love of others in the way Jesus loves through our effort to abandon attack and withdrawal.*

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Session 11 - Chapters 47-51 "The Soul"



Dallas Willard, "Formation in the Academy" U of WI I/V Staff, 1/3
["Spiritual Formation Defined"](#) [Run Time = 11:45 from 34:45-46:30]

~ ~ ~

Chapter 47 - "Integrating Dimensions of the Self"

In the person with a well-kept heart, the soul is properly ordered under God in harmony with reality. The outcome is a person who is capable of responding to the situations of life in ways that are good and right, such is the person in Psalm 1. (136)

The soul manifests amazing capacities for recovery when it finds it's home in God and receives his grace. 137)



The White Flag (137)

What would it take to be like a fruit bearing, un-withering tree planted by streams of water? What is needed for you to prosper naturally?

~ ~ ~

Chapter 48 - "The Depths of Our Being"

Our soul is like an inner stream of water, which gives strength, direction, and harmony to every other element of our lives.

To refer to someone soul is to say something about the ultimate depths of his being. (139)



The White Flag (140)

"How is it with your soul?" John Wesley

That reflection requires not so much concentration but a quieting of self so that the souls condition can be discerned.

Today's Experiment (141)
Five "Soul" Questions



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Chapter 49 - "The Cries of the Soul"

In spiritual transformation, it is necessary to take the soul seriously and deal with it regularly and intelligently, to be mindful of it.

We as individuals must own our own souls and take responsibility before God for them.

Once we clearly acknowledge the soul, we can learn to hear it's cries. (142)

His [Jesus] own greatness of soul made meekness and loneliness the natural way for Him to be. Being in His yoke is not a matter of taking on an additional labor to crush us all the more, but a matter of learning how to use His strength to bear our load and His. We will find His yoke and easy one and His burden a light one because, in learning from Him, we have found rest for our souls. Rest for our souls is resting in God. (142-143)

Today's Experiment (143)

Eleven "Soul" Images in Psalms



~ ~ ~

Chapter 50 - "Abandoning Outcomes"

As we take on Jesus' yoke, we abandon outcomes to God, accepting we do not have the wherewithal to make life come out right.

Humility is the framework within which all virtue lives. (I Peter 5:6-7) Humility which involves losing our self-sufficiency, is a secret of soul rest because it does not presume to secure outcomes.

On the other hand, pride is the root of disobedience. We think we are "big enough" to take our lives into our own hands, and so we disobey what we know to be right. This distances us from God and forces us to live on our own. Soul rest becomes impossible.

To allow lust (or strong desires) to govern our lives is to exalt our will over God's.

That is why Paul called "covetousness" idolatry. (Ephesians 5:5, Colossians 3:5) We have become the idol and we are prepared to sacrifice the well-being and possessions of others to our self interest.

When living in the cradle of humility, we understand that God has a plan for our lives that goes far beyond anything we can work out. We simply rest in His life as He gives it to us. (145-146)

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The White Flag (146)

Our teenage daughter left home and for three years lived either on the streets or with various people who took her in. I trusted God. I asked God for those things [safe return], but I didn't trust in those results. God could be my comfort and strength without my telling God what to do.

Today's Experiment (146)



What expectations are you holding onto?

Can you still trust God even if X never happens?

~ ~ ~

Chapter 51 - *"The Sweetness of the Law"*

Efforts at spiritual formation in Christlikeness must reverse the process of distancing the soul from God and bring it back into union with Him. *The law of God can help us do that.*

The presence of the Spirit and of grace is not meant to set the Law aside but to enable conformity to it from an inwardly transformed personality.
(148)

One whose aim is anything less than obedience to the law of God in the Spirit and power of Jesus we'll never have a soul at rest in God and will never advance significantly in spiritual transformation into Christlikeness.
(149)

~ ~ ~

Summary of Chapters 47-51 - *A well rested soul leads the one who abandons all outcomes into God's hands and practices the precepts of the Law of God - God's way not my way.*

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Session 12 - Chapters 52-55 "*Children of Light*"



Dallas Willard, "*Spirit of the Disciplines*" Gordon Conwell 1/3
["The Picture of The Whole Person"](#) [Run Time 12:50 = 33:20-46:10]

~ ~ ~

Chapter 52 - "*Children of Light*" (151)

"Children of the light" will be empowered by God in eternity to do what they want, as free creative agents. Spiritual formation in Christlikeness during our lives here on Earth is a constant movement towards this eternal appointment.

Here and now, the children of light are remarkably different, not in the things they do or don't do, though their behavior, too, is different and distinctive. Children of the light differ on the "inside" of their life.

"Thought Life" - They love to dwell upon God's greatness and loveliness as brought to light in Jesus Christ.

"Feelings" - They love other people. They love their own life and who they are. They're thankful for their life even though it may contain many difficulties.

~ ~ ~

Chapter 53 - "*What Children of Light are Like*"

"Will" - They really care very little about getting their own way.

"Body" - Their body is constantly poised to do what is right and good without thinking. They avoid paths of temptation. Their body is even different. They're rested and playful any bodily strength that is from God.

"Social relations" - They are completely transparent. Because they walk in goodness, they achieve real contact with others, especially other apprentices of Jesus. 153

"Soul" - All of the above is not just at the surface. It is deep & effortless. It flows.

When found to be wrong, they will never defend it. They're thankful to be found out. When accused of being in the wrong when they are not, they will

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not defend themselves but will say only as much as is required to prevent misunderstanding of the good. The meaning of being justified by grace alone has penetrated to every part of their being.

This is the outcome of spiritual formation in Christlikeness.



The White Flag (154)

Children of light are easy to deal with. They've given up a preoccupation with forming opinions about others. Their transparency keeps me from wondering what their hidden agenda might have been because they simply don't have one. With children of light, everything is given to the care of God.

There is no agenda behind their humor.

The road to becoming such a person – a child of light – involves abandoning everything to God: what others think of us, what others harmful motives might be, fears about what others might do to us, hopes for getting ahead. We come to truly believe that God “knows what he's doing and He'll keep on doing it.” (I Peter 4:19 MSG)

~ ~ ~

Chapter 54 - *“Progression of Spiritual Growth”* II Peter 1:3-11



The White Flag

As all of our dimensions are trained by the Spirit through spiritual disciplines, we can increasingly connect with God throughout the day. It isn't about us. (157)

We're not performing—we're just tagging along behind Jesus, copying His fascinating way of being. (158)

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Chapter 55 - "To Be Children of Light Now"

The highest ethical teaching the world has ever been given was rejected by the intellectual leaders of humanity in favor of teachings that opened the way to forms of human behavior more degraded than any of the world has seen to that point.

This is partly due to the failure of those who have professed Christ to stand throughout the Earth as the manifest children of light. (159)

We are beyond the point where mere talk – no matter how sound – can make impression. Demonstration is required. We must live what we talk, even in places where we cannot talk what we live.

The call of Christ today is to be His apprentices, to live in the power of God, learning to do all He said to do, leading others into apprenticeship to Him, and teaching them how to do everything He said. (160)

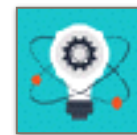


The White Flag (160)

As Christians live an increasingly "ghetto-ized" [get a wise] lifestyle...We are forgetting that we can live what we talk even in places where we cannot talk what we live.

We can be children of salt and light who don't think of ourselves first, who aren't trapped by the unloving comments our tongues make before we think. We can be transparent people who lead an organization without manipulating and managing people. When accused, we can avoid defending ourselves and say only what is needed for clarity.

Today's Experiment (161)



Pray that God will give you opportunities to demonstrate the genuine, radiant love of God in simple, common ways.

~ ~ ~

Summary of Chapters 52-55 - *Children of Light live from the inside out, living what we talk and talking what we live, having abandoned all things and self to God, being formed into Christ-like-ness.*

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Session 13 - Chapters 56-60 "*Spiritual Formation in the Local Congregation*"



Dallas Willard, "*Core Value*"

["Four Levels of Discipleship"](#)

[Run time = 7:30 from 26:00 - 33:30]

["Vessel & Treasure"](#)

[Run time = 5:15 from 39:00 - 44:15]

...Willard, "*Spiritual Formation*", Bethel (2/5)

["Apprenticeship"](#)

[Run Time = 6:25 from 36:45-47:10]

~ ~ ~

Chapter 56 - "*The Distracted Church*"

Churches that caused children of light to emerge and mature have turned their efforts under God toward making spiritual formation in Christlikeness their primary goal. The reason most congregations fail to routinely produce children of light is distraction. Such matters or "vessels" that are mistaken for the "treasure". (2 Corinthians 4.7)

Often there is much good associated with these vessels, but we mistake them for the treasure: the real presence of Jesus Christ in our midst, living with increasing in fullness in every essential dimension of the personality of the individual devoted to him as Savior and teacher. (162)

~ ~ ~

Chapter 57 - "*The Costs of Non-Discipleship*"

A fundamental mistake of the conservative side of much of the Western church is that its basic goal is to get people into heaven rather than to get heaven into people. This creates groups of people who may be ready to die but clearly are not ready to live. They become Christian without being Christlike.

The way to get as many people into heaven as you can is to get heaven into his many people as you can – That is to follow the path of genuine spiritual formation or full throttle discipleship to Jesus Christ.

When we are counting results, we need to remember the many people (surrounded by churches) who will not be in heaven because they have never, to their knowledge, seeing the reality of Christ in a living human being. (164-165)

Today's Experiment (166)

What would it look like to speak the truth with great love?



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Chapter 58 - "God's Plan for Spiritual Formation" (167-169)

- 1.) Making disciples – apprentices of Jesus
- 2.) Immersing the apprentices at all levels of growth in the Trinitarian presence. This is the single major component of the prospering of the local congregations: the healing and teaching God in their midst.
- 3.) Transforming disciples inwardly in such a way that doing the words and deeds of Christ is not the focus but is the natural outcome or side effect.



The White Flag (168)

Jesus is the one who disciples people. Discipleship is about relationship, so the process will be different for everyone.

~ ~ ~

Chapter 59 - "Stage One: Making Apprentices"

Stage One - Apprentices are those who have trusted Jesus with their whole life, so far as they understand it. They want to learn everything Jesus has to teach them about life in the Kingdom of God and are constantly with Him to learn to be like Him. (170)

1st - LEARNING to understand and do the things Jesus gave a specific commandments and teachings about.

2nd - LEARNING how Jesus would lead our lives if He were in our place.

The process of spiritual formation in Christlikeness is a process through which all the dimensions of our lives are transformed as they increasingly take on the character of our Teacher. (171)



The White Flag (171)

Perhaps even more challenging is how apprentices are learning to lead their everyday lives if He were they.

Today's Experiment (172)

How would Jesus lead my life if He were me?



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Chapter 60 - "Arranging for Transformation"

Stage Two - IMMERSING the apprentices into the Trinitarian presence. God's intent is to be present among His people, and heal them, teach them, and provide for them. A local congregation of disciples of Jesus should be a place for divine life and power is manifestly present to glorify God and meet the needs repentant human beings.

God is the primary agent in the gather. From the only point of view that matters God's, no human knows how the service went. Minister does not need techniques but needs only speak Christ's word from Christ's character, standing within the manifest presence of God. (173)

Stage Three - INTENDING and arranging for the inner transformation of the disciples, what Jesus described as teaching disciples to do all He commanded. The doing of what He commanded is not the focus of our activities at this point; rather, it is the natural outcome or side effect. The focus is inner transformation of the essential aspects of the human personality that we have been studying. This should be the local congregation's constant preoccupation. (173)

Run training programs designed to develop specific points of the character of Christ as given in the New Testament. Put the whole weight of the staff and the congregation towards this effort.

All of the other details of church activities will matter little, one way or the other, so long as all are organized around God's plan for spiritual formation in the local congregation. (174)



The White Flag (174)

Jesus becomes the center of attention as all began wondering,
How would Jesus lived his life if he were in my shoes?

~ ~ ~

Summary of Chapters 56-60 — *Spiritual formation in Christlikeness is the intentional goal of the gathered friends of Jesus, people who are with Jesus to be like Jesus. We make disciples, immerse them in God's presence and teach them how to live how Jesus would live our lives if He were we.*

~ ~ ~

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Postlude - Chapter 61

~ ~ ~

Chapter 61 - "Moving Forward"

The path of renovation of the heart is one in which the revitalized "will" takes grace-provided measures to change the content of the thought life, the dominant feeling tones, what the body is ready to do, the prevailing social atmosphere, and the deep currents of the soul. These are all to be progressively transformed toward the character they each have in Jesus Christ. (176)

Now is the time for specific planning. Are there areas where our will is not abandoned to God's will or where old segments of fallen character remain unchallenged? (176)

Spiritual formation in Christlikeness is the sure outcome of well directed activities that are under the spiritual supervision of Christ and are sustained by all of the instrumentalities of His grace. (177)

This aching world is waiting for the people explicitly identified with Christ to be, through and through, the people He intends them to be. (177)

Today's Experiment (177-178)

[[Good summary of applying transformation to areas of the Self](#)]



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Retreating - (179-182)

—> **Seven Guidelines for a Personal Retreat** (179-181)

- Don't be surprised if you feel lost when you get settled in.
- Don't be a martyr.
- Bring a journal. If journaling intimidates you, call it scribbling.
- Schedule yourself loosely.
- Address feelings of resistance.
- Break up your retreat time into sessions.
- Between sessions, do something that doesn't require concentration.

—> **Nine Areas of "Specialized Focus for the Retreat"** (181-182)

- V-I-M - Devotions 17-20
- Ruined life & Restored life - Devotions 10-13
- Healing the Damaged Emotions - Devotions 27-32
- Healing Thought Life - Devotions 21-26
- Transforming the Will - Devotions 33-36
- Transforming the Body - Devotions 37-41
- Transforming the Social Dimension - Devotions 42-46
- Transforming the Soul - Devotions 47-51
- Transforming the Body of Christ - Devotions 56-61
 - As children of Light - Devotions 52-55

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Summaries of Each Session

(Combination of Willard quotes & Webster paraphrase)

Summary of Chapters 1-5

The Kingdom life, the divine life, is possible for you and me today!

It is not a puzzle.

It requires a plan for the process that changes us on the inside to be more like Jesus on the inside.

It is not trying harder to act different.

It is learning as an apprentice to do what Jesus taught us to do.

Summary of Chapters 6-9

A well kept heart is trained by the grace of God to do what is good & right.

Summary of Chapters 10-13

I am a one of unclean lips. Only upon recognizing my lostness can I find the path to transformation into the Jesus kind of life.

Summary of Chapters 14-16

"Death to self" - having my own way - is the foundational way by which we come to experience eternal life in God, His goodness, greatness and love.

Grace filled spiritual disciplines are the voluntary means by which Apprentices of Jesus practices daily death to self.

Summary of Chapters 17-20

Life like Jesus in His Kingdom is available to us when we desire it and seek to practice the ways Jesus lived - the disciplines - as means of being with Jesus and like Jesus.

Summary of Chapters 21-26

The first move back from ruin is to think about God.

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Summary of Chapters 27-32

Destructive feelings can be replaced with love, joy & peace through faith and hope in God.

Summary of Chapters 33-36

My surrendered will leaves behind the drama of my entangled thoughts & emotions and launches me into the dynamic drama of God's Kingdom at work.

Summary of Chapters 37-41

The body is central, vital and pivotal in the formation of our character to become more like that of our Lord Jesus.

Summary of Chapters 42-46

Spiritual formation in Christ is profoundly social centered on genuine love of others in the way Jesus loves through our effort to abandon attack and withdrawal

Summary of Chapters 47-51

A well rested soul leads the one who abandons all outcomes into God's hands and practices the precepts of the Law of God - God's way not my way.

Summary of Chapters 52-55

Children of Light live from the inside out, living what we talk and talking what we live, having abandoned all things and self to God, being formed into Christ-like-ness.

Summary of Chapters 56-60

Spiritual formation in Christlikeness is the intentional goal of the gathered friends of Jesus, people who are with Jesus to be like Jesus. We make disciples, immerse them in God's presence and teach them how to live how Jesus would live our lives if He were we.