



WELCOME to a 3 week Course
“Spiritual Formation as a Natural Part of Salvation”
Dallas Willard, Wheaton College, 2009
sponsored by





“SPIRITUAL FORMATION AS A NATURAL PART OF SALVATION**”

Session 1 - “Problems with Spiritual Formation Today”

Video Part 1 - 0:00-20:25

** - pages 301-306

Session 2 - “Christian View of Salvation”

Video Part 2: 20:25 - 49:45

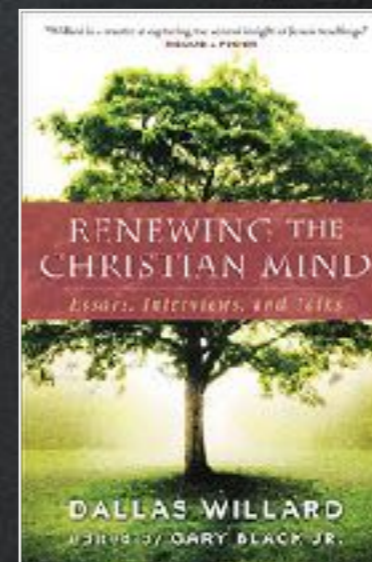
** - pages 306-311

Session 3 - “Grace & Spiritual Disciplines”

Video Part 3: 49:45 - 1:13:00

** - pages 311-318

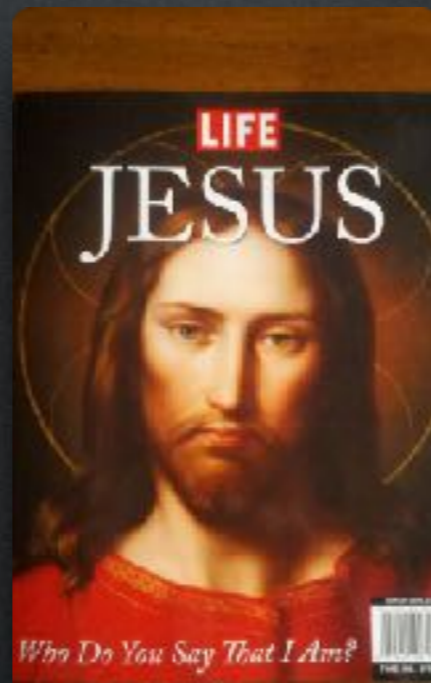
** Published as Chapter 26 —>



Summary of Session 1

The Problem — If salvation is the same thing as justification, forgiveness of sins and assurance of Heaven, we can not come to see spiritual formation as a natural part of salvation.

The Effect — Omission of spiritual formation into Christlikeness as a serious objective in a “mere justification” salvation produces nominal Christians.



“SPIRITUAL FORMATION AS A NATURAL PART OF SALVATION”

Session 2 - “Christian View of Salvation”

[Video Part 2: 20:25 - 49:45](#)



- I. Christian View of Salvation with Spiritual Formation
- II. What is New Life?
- III. Life's Natural Development
- IV. Discipleship - Natural Confidence in Jesus



I. Christian View of Salvation with Spiritual Formation

There is a recognizable view of salvation prominent in scripture and history. Salvation understood as an identifiable status, sometimes associated with a specific event, but not always. There is such a view and it comes in the form of the theological concept of *Regeneration*.

The Main Theological Point - Two things:
Justification and Regeneration

The Problem — Regeneration has almost totally disappeared into Justification...Biblical exegesis is often skewed beyond recognition. *Consider John 3...*



...John 3 is read as a justification passage. It is not about forgiveness of sins, it is about LIFE from above. This is the event of a new type of LIFE entering into the individual human being.

“Do you not recognize this about yourself that Jesus Christ is in you?” II Corinthians 13:5 [This is the “test” of our faith]

If we are going to have a form of being saved that naturally leads to spiritual transformation - that is where we have to start.

A reality that is both theological and psychological.

A real event in the life.

LIFE



“Passing from death to life” in the New Testament

- The Problematic, Disciple-less View — Your name is in the book. You’re going to have eternal life after death, not something that is present now.
- The New Testament View — LIFE is the real and powerful presence in a regenerate individual.

“Death unto life because we love the brethren.

He who does not love abides in death.” 1 John 3:14

If you have a version of salvation that does not include loving your brother, you didn’t get LIFE, you got something else.

The Principle of Kingdom Inclusion = Glorious Life

“He who has the Son has life.” 1 John 5:12

- The Disciple-less View — New birth = Forgiveness
- The New Testament View — Birth from above = LIFE

*“He delivered us from domain of darkness
into the Kingdom of His beloved son.” Colossians 1:13*

To enter the Kingdom is to have the LIFE from above.

“Sharing in the resurrection life of Jesus”, says Paul.

“You have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” Col. 3:3

*“We are now called the children of God but
we don't yet know what we shall be.” 1 John 3:2 — A glorious life!*

*“You are dead in your trespasses and sins but God made us alive
together with Christ.” Eph. 2:5 - Grace brought you to life in Christ.*

Birth from Above

Salvation in the New Testament = “divine life” that enters the human being as a gift of God.

A new psychological reality:
God acting in us and with us.



According to Jesus, eternal life is...

- ...knowledge - an interactive relationship.
- ...not something that begins after death.
- ...something that is present in us now.

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

Grace Re-worked

Grace — God acting in us to accomplish what we can not do on our own.

Regeneration — A new non-human activity becomes a part of our life. Our life is interwoven with His and His amazing grace is interwoven with ours.

We must make it clear we are not just talking something up but referring to the concrete reality of regenerate existence.



II. What is New Life?



Self-initiating
Self-directing
Self-sustaining



A human being in comparison to other living things has a real or possible environment of fantastic proportions that, as yet, have not been revealed.

What God has prepared — 1 Corinthians 2:9

~ OR ~

Dead in sin — Ephesians 2 Romans 8:5-6

~ ~ ~

God alone has life - 1 Tim. 6:13 I Am that I Am - Ex. 3:14

Regeneration

God utilizing various instrumentalities above all Himself, the Holy Spirit, Incarnate Word, and written Word. Through these He imparts His own life to the fallen life of the human being apart from God.

The Self-Initiating, Self-Directing, Self-Sustaining activity of God — LIFE — penetrates the darkened, human soul, and begins to act in it and around it.

*“Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature’s night.
Thine eye infused a quickening ray,
I woke the dungeon flamed with light.
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth and followed thee.”*



Salvation...

...IS NOT a meager, merely human existence here with an account flush with the merits of Christ.

...IS one in which the currents of divine LIFE has begun to pulsate.

Colossians 1:27 - "Christ in you the hope of glory."

Philippians 1:6 - "He who began a good work in you..."

Perseverance of the Savior, not the saints.

When He gets a hold of you, He doesn't turn loose.

1 Peter 1:3 - "Partakers of divine nature"

Colossians 3:3 - "Your life is hid with Christ in God."

III - Life's Natural Development

Two minutes with Dallas...



“Spiritual Formation as a Natural Part of Salvation”

[37:40-39:50]

III. Life's Natural Development

This is the absolutely crucial point for our discussion:

LIFE is poised for a specific order of development. It can be deflected or stunted and still be that kind of life but its natural course is set by the kind of life it is. The same is true with the new life from above that enters the human being however degraded upon regeneration..

The first clear manifestation of heavenly LIFE in the individual is recognition, hearty confidence, that Jesus really is the One. He is the anointed one, He is the Christ, He is Lord. He is not only Master, He is Maestro. He is the Governor of the universe. If you believe that, you are REGENERATE. If you believe that, not if you profess it, but if you believe it.



One of Our Greatest Problems Today

We do not distinguish between profession of belief and believing. When you believe something, you are prepared to act as if it were true.

You can profess to believe things you don't believe. We routinely baptize people on profession of their faith. That has serious complications.



Believe the chair you are sitting in will hold you up.



The first clear manifestation of heavenly life in the individual is recognition, hearty confidence, that Jesus really is the anointed one, Christ the Lord.

That is not primarily a profession. It is a gripping realization of what is the case. It is not possible for the unaided human being to arrive at such a condition like it gripped Peter by divine assistance.

“No one can say Jesus is Lord except by assistance from the Holy Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12:3

Paul was not talking about profession.
Anyone can say the words.

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

You will not only be saved,
you will be off like a rocket.



To CONFESS is to own up to a condition of your soul.

You confess a crime, you don't profess a crime.

To PROFESS is to put forth,

to claim an understanding of something.



*Confidence in Jesus as absolute Maestro of the Universe
is the first indication of regeneration.*

Not a mere credit transfer, not just \$ in your account.

A personal relationship with Jesus Christ with
understanding, confidence, interaction, co-mingling.

Knowledge & Grace go together!

*The natural consequence of this confidence now
is apprenticeship to Jesus in Kingdom living.*

IV. Discipleship — A Natural Confidence in Jesus

Not a “Vampire Christian” who uses what Jesus did.

“I’ll take a bit of your blood, Jesus, to cover my debts, but I will not stay close to you until I have to.” Heaven would be Hell.

Discipleship loosely described — Staying as close to Jesus Christ as possible.

A life with Him...His life with us.

As His disciples, we are learning from Jesus how to live our life here and now in the Kingdom of the Heavens as He would live our life if He were we.

—> Thief on the Cross — Not trying to be righteous

—> Abraham’s confidence in God for a male heir

A Disciple's Natural Confidence in Jesus

A relationship that involves forgiveness of sins is based upon a relationship of newness of life.

The reason why we customarily invert those is something that requires careful thought.

What would lead us to think that forgiveness is first?



A Natural flow from Salvation to Transformation

Obedience to Jesus Christ is not how we earn anything,
it is simply the place where...

The Kingdom of God is in relation to us.
It is where we know it, where we know Him.

Merit is not the issue.

Life is the issue, life beyond merit.





LIFE



GRACE

A Christian View of Salvation is...

A new, glorious, concrete, divine LIFE regenerated in you from above, gifting you with knowledge of an amazing, active GRACE now, not after you die.

Regeneration — “The event of a new type of life entering into the individual human being.”

Salvation — “A divine life that enters the human being as a gift of God.”

Eternal Life — “Knowledge in an interactive relationship with God the Father and Jesus the Son.”

Knowledge (biblically) — “Interactive relationship with what is known.”

Grace — “God acting in us to accomplish what we can not do on our own.”

Life — “A self-initiating, self-directing, self-sustaining activity of some kind and to some degree.”

Discipleship — “Staying as close to Jesus Christ as possible...a natural part of confidence in Jesus as He really is.”

Dallas Willard, “Spiritual Formation as a Natural Part of Salvation”

Summary of Session 2

Salvation begins with regeneration of a heavenly life from above by grace at work in us and with us creating an interactive knowledge of life with God in the apprentice who places his or her confidence in Jesus as Master and Maestro, to be with Him in order to become like Him.



Q&C

Your Questions & Comments are welcome!

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



Q&A

Meditation – Revisit John 3:1-16 thinking
“Regeneration” not “Justification”

Application

VISION – How familiar am I with “Regeneration”?
What does it mean to me?

INTENTION – What blocks believers from
transformation with a “mere forgiveness” and “go
to heaven when I die” reduced gospel?

MEANS – Who is Jesus to me? Is He more than
Savior and Lord? Pray this answer interactively
with Jesus and His words in the gospels.

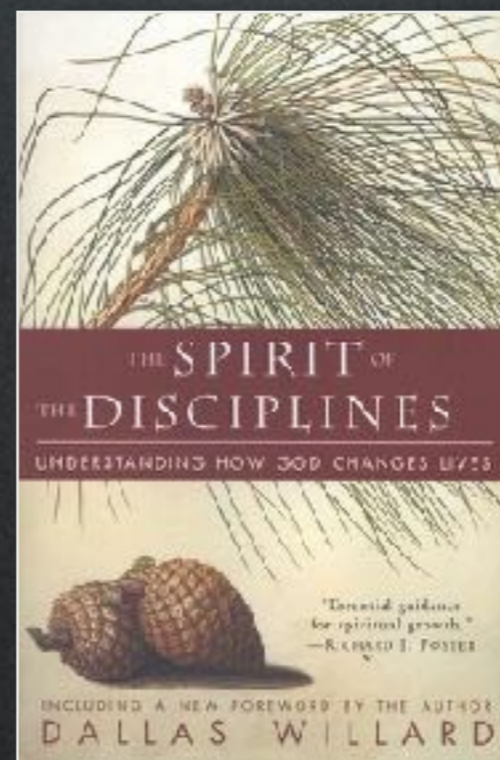


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A Teaching to Complement Session 2

[The Spirit of the Disciplines, Chapter 3 “Salvation is a Life”](#)

Link to a Jesus College course on
The Spirit of the Disciplines, by Dallas Willard, Chapter 3
Session #3 — 30-minute teaching + PDF slides



Next Week — Session 3 of 3

“Grace & Spiritual Disciplines”

49:45 - 1:13:00



“Spiritual Formation as a Natural Part of Salvation”

May you know in your next 10,000 minutes the glorious Kingdom life by grace to be practiced with grace as you place your full confidence in Jesus.

Doug





Apprentice to Master Love — //Nouns
“A Student of the Superior Benefactor”

Apprentice to Master Love — //Verbs
“Training to be proficient in willing the good”

Jesus College Mission - To Empower Apprentices of the Master Teacher Jesus as the One, great truth to live a good life found in Him.

Jesus College Vision - Equipping Trainers—Parents, Pastors, Professionals, Professors, Politicians—to mentor Senior Apprentices who will make Apprentices of Jesus.

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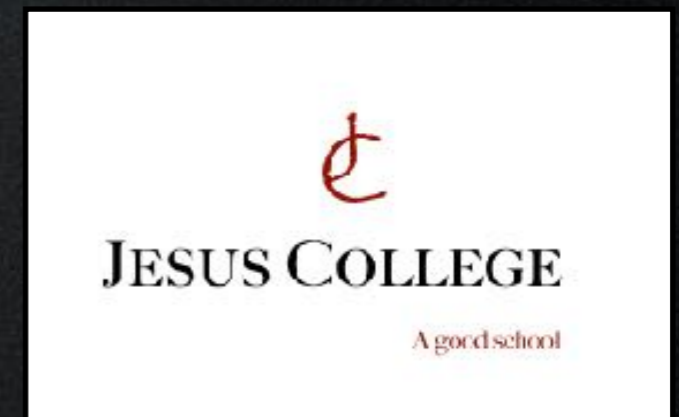
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