

Week 42

10/13/11

James: Thank all of you! Hey, you're great. Come join us sometime. We normally tape on Tuesday evenings. Check with us and find out who our guests are.

We have got Dallas Willard with us. I'm James Robison and this is Betty. Dallas Willard is a professor at the University of Southern California. He's taught and lectured in several other universities. He comes from the same background I come from, what we call old fundamental Baptist background. I don't mean old like it is old but like we got the old heritage of a fundamentalist background.

I love what he said. He's dedicated one of the books, maybe this one to the Giants, I believe this one to Lee Roberson, to John Rice. I knew these men. Read my letter at John Rice's funeral. They didn't read a lot of Southern Baptist letters at the Fundamental Baptist funerals but they loved me. They printed my messages in the *Sword of the Lord*.

Dallas Willard comes from that same background. He is an academic. He teaches in these great universities, and the University of Southern Cal in the philosophy and psychology department. But he wrote a book that I consider as important and I've told you the two most important books I've read apart from the Bible is *Money, Greed, and God* by Jay Richards.

Jay and I are writing a book right now; it will be out early next year. It is called *Indivisible*. If the enemy can divide, he conquers. Jesus prayed for unity, our founders understood what that meant that, that we have lost the value of, and Jay and I are trying to capture that for you. This is a book every -- I think every person who believes in the importance of faith, family, and freedom, including a free market, that's healthy, not greed-driven, greed-vulnerable but also responsible, demanding responsibility, so we're trying to help you.

But the two most important books, *Money, Greed, and God*, I've read and *The Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard.

Dallas is here. I want you to welcome him back to *LIFE Today*. He's been here with us this week.

Dallas, good to see you. Can I ask you, you say you prayed for me for 40 years, you kind of followed me, you watched me on television, you and Jane, a lot. Am I -- do I seem to be grasping at some of what you're trying to deliver?

Dallas: Yes! I think you are.

James: Is it working in me at all where it is obvious to anybody except maybe...

Dallas: I would put it this way, someone who had observed you much earlier and observe you now would wonder about your identity.

[Laughter]

James: I hope I lost it in Christ. I hope I didn't just lose my mind.

Dallas: It is a definite gain. It is a gain.

James: Did you like me? Did you like the first James?

Dallas: I thought you set the world on fire.

James: How do you explain what is going on in me? Because it's been a process; it wasn't like everything was instant. You know I told you in one of our conversations, I like instant fix. I like instant deliverance. I don't like this process and the disciplines and all that. You said the processes, the progressive change is oftentimes far more meaningful in character development than what we call this instant fix.

Dallas: That's right. Human beings both individually and in groups over history only change slowly.

James: In a meaningful way.

Dallas: Well, in a meaningful way in the sense of deep change. It is also true in going in the wrong direction, like where we are today in our society, let's say not just North American but European, that is a process that has taken 75-80 years.

James: This process away from God; a process away from what we would call sound, unshakeable, foundational principles. We're moving away from it. It is almost into what -- it looks like a system of insanity as well as instability and insecurity.

Dallas: I think it's true but then you ask yourself, why do not people recognize that progression? And that's because over the generations an understanding of what is right and good has changed so that for example, now, there is no vision of good and evil or right and wrong that is teachable in higher education or lower education for that matter.

James: Everything is relative.

Dallas: Everything is relative in the profound sense that there really isn't a body of knowledge about what is good and evil and right and wrong that can be taught to people. That is a change -- you go back even right after the Second World War people would have thought you were crazy if you said that. But over the generations of change it goes downhill.

James: The things we accept as normal 50 years ago would have been off the charts. We would have said this is the most despicable and irrational but this is not even within the realm of sanity. You can't -- you're out of your ever-loving mind. And yet now it is absolutely fashionable.

Dallas: Absolutely right. That's the way it goes and fashionable is the word because now it is under social control of approval and disapproval and that institutes itself in education and in the church, unfortunately, as well as government and so on.

But now individuals change slowly too and so for example, if you come to a genuine experience of Christ, that's not going to change you automatically. Christmas Evans, an old well -- evangelist once said, "When I was drunkard I got in a fight and knocked my eye out. And when the Lord saved me he didn't give me back my eye." And the truth of the matter is, when you get saved that's the beginning of a process. That's one reason why it is called "a birth," a birth into the kingdom of the heavens so life initiates itself and now then we have a part in what happens after that.

Many people have trouble with that because they misunderstand grace and they think grace makes you passive but the only way you grow is, of course, by the grace of God but by intelligent engagement of your own activities. And you've gone through a lot of that in your life and you have changed not just because grace fell on you but because you did some things to receive grace that has led to a transformation of the whole person.

James: Well, I began to apply the grace that was in me to specific areas of my life and I really don't think I have arrived. I still feel like I'm on a journey.

Our friend John Wimber used to say, "The goal... the journey is the goal." I feel like I'm not looking at some target like I'm going to reach this place, I'm pursuing a person. I'm trying to live in the shadow of this shepherd and walk with him and finding that he enables me to walk through the challenges. I have not found that everything that ever distracts or let's say ever attracts me suddenly is totally gone necessarily.

I will say why is that disturbing? Let's just take really -- let's be real honest without being critical. I don't want anybody to think I'm being critical but our appetites, even in our -- our poor people are obese. The people in poverty are obese. They're certainly not starving because they're big. So the point is something is wrong with our appetite control. It is not being critical but I see a lot of people hurting their health.

Well, this natural -- I find that the natural appetites or attractions seem to require the greatest infusion of supernatural enabling to deal with them. Does that make sense?

Dallas: No, that's right! That's why one needs to train themselves. Like for example, the function of fasting is to teach you how to be sweet and kind when you don't get what you want.

[Laughter]

James: My, my! A lot of church people never heard that sermon.

Dallas: I'm afraid not.

James: Some, if you get their place in the pew or their parking place or you don't let them off the parking lot, you could have a riot.

Dallas: That's where training comes in. Now you see, you have changed a lot over the years in your desires.

Now I, for example, when I was young, I used to like -- I had a BB gun and I used to like to shoot out street lights. But I no longer have any inclination.

[Laughter]

Now it is a helpful illustration.

James: That's deliverance!

Dallas: It's a helpful illustration when you see what's working there. See, I think differently about street lights now, and my desires are different. So I didn't get out of that by, "Oh, I just -- I won't shoot out that street light!"

[Laughter]

Now, you know that's how it works in growth in Christ. I look at what he taught and I say, "The reason he taught me that is because it is a really good thing -- a really good thing." So now, I didn't think that at first but then I said, "Teach me, Lord." And over a period of time, and I don't mean 50 years, you learn quickly. And you learn how to do this by transforming the mind and the body, submitting to the body.

James: The Word of God, and being, I think around people who are serious about God.

I wrote a Tweet the other day that I feel like came from reading *The Divine Conspiracy* and just some of the things you've said and that is when it comes to temptation, temptation will not walk away from us, we must by choice walk away from it. It seems that by choice you quit shooting the street lights. Now you don't care anything about shooting the street lights and the whole neighborhood is glad. The thing is that really, you still begin that process of choice by walking away.

The natural is not necessarily easy to say "no" to, that Paul talked about this struggle within that is going on and this is where I -- if I hear you correctly and if I understand what the message of *The Divine Conspiracy*, he is inviting us in to this awareness of who he is and he is king, where the awareness of it -- I call it spiritual gravity -- the weight of his presence, I don't have to think about oxygen, I just get up and [breathing] it is here, I take it in and I get the full benefits of it. If we could become as aware because the spiritual realm is invisible, it effects everything visible, but if we just become aware of the weight of his presence is here, breathe it in, take it in, it seems to me like I have a keener awareness of appropriate responses from the king's perspective. Is that at all grasping what you're saying?

Dallas: And a part of the dynamics of this James, are temptation itself becomes uninteresting.

James: A lot of people would like to know that's really a fact.

Dallas: Well, you have --

James: I mean you just take food. You know, chocolate cake is all good stuff and all that. Jane, did y'all ever eat chocolate cake or anything around there? The stuff will talk to you, Jane, I don't know if you know that but it will talk. Maybe you and Dallas don't hear it anymore. But these things are strong. Do you hear what I'm saying?

Dallas: No, I know but you -- that's just your habits. That's just your habits.

James: Dad gum, it's a good habit.

Dallas: That's why we have to come to see that it is not a good habit. It is not a good habit.

James: So what would make it not a good habit when it tastes so good?

Dallas: Well, it will hurt you.

James: Oh, it will hurt you. Who says?

Dallas: The doctor says.

[Laughter]

Betty: So we still have to make the choice of what is right.

Dallas: Not just make the choice about whether I will eat the chocolate cake now but what kind of attitude do I have toward chocolate cake? See? We're apt to say dumb things like we love chocolate cake. You don't love chocolate cake, you want to eat it.

[Laughter]

Betty: I like that.

Dallas: That's actually very different from loving it. When you love...

[Laughter]

James: Why is it so much easier for Betty to say "no" to these things like that than it seems to be for me? What's the deal with her? What's the deal?

Dallas: I would estimate and since I don't know you --

James: Go ahead and tell us what you really think.

Dallas: No, she has decided that that's the way it is going to be. She is not going to be --

Betty: It's true.

Dallas: She is not going to be governed by that.

James: She has.

Dallas: Now you have in spiritual growth you have three things: Vision, intention, and means. You have to see the goodness of not being the victim of chocolate cake. That's a good thing. You have to decide you will not be the victim of that. And then you have to take the means by which you implement that intention to enjoy the vision and the means might be things like simply staying away from it or more generally learning that you don't have to have what you want to eat.

James: I want that true in every area of my life where it is a concern to you because you love me so much. I want that for you. It is the reason that -- James and Betty don't need to be sitting here -- ask Betty, she doesn't need to be sitting here. She says, "You take me kicking and screaming to the studio every time I go." She doesn't look like she is kicking and screaming. She says, "I don't want to talk. I want to go home. I want to be home. I like to be alone. I like to be with you, with family."

We don't need what we do. You need what we do. I love you. You say, "You don't even see me. If you saw me you wouldn't like me." Well, I would want the kind of love coming from me to you that if you saw something in me that you were really hurt by you would say, "I sure love you James, I want to be part of your healing process." See, I want that for you.

I can't fix everything that ails you. I can't touch all the poor and heal the brokenhearted -- I can't but he can! And he starts by working in you. And this is really what I just saw so clearly, so beautifully in *The Devine Conspiracy*, that's why I asked Dallas to come

and talking to him, he's been a blessing to me. We're sitting here because he loves you, not because we need something to do. We love you. And we will freely ask you to join us loving others because you really begin to live life -- I've said it many times, it's catchy but it is true, you live life fully when you express life freely. You just love to release the river, whatever little river you have, you think, however unimportant this little widow's mite is, Jesus said, "Just yield who you are, what you are, what you have to me and watch what happens."

That's really the kingdom now, isn't it, Dallas? That's the kingdom of heaven and the presence of God now and it is what I want for you. We want it for all of you.

You see the line there, paid for by love, people watching who just love people say, "I'll pay that 800 call for people who need somebody to pray with them." Well, you call. We just love you.

I encourage you to get *The Divine Conspiracy*. I'll tell you what, Dallas has been with us this week. We'll be glad to send it to you. It is quite a big book. It's great. We'll send it to you. Here's what we're asking you to do, I don't apologize for this, help us touch someone with love today.

Would you say thanks to Dallas Willard for coming, for writing *The Divine Conspiracy*, for writing *Hearing God*, the *Spirit of the Disciplines*, all the books that Dallas has written?

Do you have a web site if people want to know all the things that you have, Dallas? Where would they go?

Dallas: DWillard.org.

James: All right, so they can find other materials and things and where you're going to speak and so forth.

Dallas: And everything on there is free.

James: That's awesome! Well, we usually don't usually do that. We say get involved. I'm not near as generous as you. I'm growing in his kingdom life. But really and truly, can I thank you for not scolding me.

I had one lady say she found my epitaph in the Bible.

I said, "Really?"

She said, "Yes. It's in Luke."

I said, "What does it say?"

She said, "And the beggar died." She said, "That's what they need to put on your tombstone."

Well, I'll always plead the cause of the widows, the orphans and the suffering. And thank you for not scolding me. As a matter of fact, you all encourage me because you tell me, "We like to help rescue people."

Would you help us rescue some precious people from being sold into sex trafficking? Would you help us? I want you to watch this. I want you to listen to God's heart through missionaries and through co-laborers. Listen closely.

Begin video clip:

Jeanne: This is Peeya. She is so beautiful. I hate to see her get kidnapped and taken by human traffickers but that's happening all around the world.

>> Many of these little girls are sold into this slave trade, sexual prostitution.

>> If something doesn't happen to rescue this little girl off the street then when she gets just a little bit older, somebody will take her and exploit her.

>> I'm hearing, I'm saying, why should this little precious innocent girl be violated we don't know tomorrow, a week from now, a year from now? I can't even -- it is unthinkable. You know what is devastating is that it is possible. Let's get these kids off the street. They're asking me why I'm crying. It is for them... God's children. I just need a break.

[Sobbing]

End of clip

In the studio:

James: You know we've watched the missionaries and our workers that go at our request all over the world to see the things firsthand that Betty and I have seen and that they can bring another perspective.

And, Betty, I wouldn't be able to watch this just like Kathy couldn't. So many times it was just easy to go away and weep and then say, "I don't want to see it anymore." Betty and I were never able to go away and not want to see it because we knew we could change it -- love could change it -- and it does.

Betty, the missionaries that are there in the midst of that suffering, whether it is in India or whether it's on the streets where children have been left, abandoned or whether it is in Thailand or other countries of the world, some we don't even mention because we would endanger the missionaries, but we're able to take those children who have been abandoned and give them a home and give them a future and get many of them out of the trafficking because they want out. And the missionaries are so wise in their dealings that we're able to do it.

And all they need -- and this is the amazing thing -- in order to do it they just need our support. And what we try to do is we find somebody that is doing it in an effective way and undergird them, we don't try to go in and duplicate something. We find where God's enabling and gifting and we call it the anointing or touch of God, the divine enabling to do something and the love to do it and then we undergird them so they can stay at the work. And our viewers have been able to do that.

Betty, I couldn't look, as Kathy was, if I didn't know we could change it. And when I say "we" that would include the viewers because that's the only way we can give those children a future hope is with somebody helping us do it.

Betty: That's right. James, I guess the thing that really touched me as I was watching was when that little girl said, "I cry myself to sleep." Why does she do that? Because there is no one there to comfort her and give her hope and help her come out of the life that she was forced into. We can be the ones that can reach out and make the difference in the lives of these precious children James. Most of them never had a choice of their life but we can help bring them out if we will care, if we will give them hope through our caring and sharing.

I hope you will join with us and let's be able to comfort them when they weep and let them know that they can soon have a smile because someone cares.

James: Or because someone like you cared we've been able to join together and build

incredible *LIFE* Centers like the one in Thailand. It is one of the most beautiful facilities I've ever seen. And the most beautiful part of it is the children learning -- they learn to speak English, they learn how to study, they learn how to do crafts, they learn how to make a future. Some of them have gone on and some of them have gone on into universities and have actually graduated and become teachers themselves over the last years.

We've been working with these people like this for nearly 20 years. We've joined with Mark Rutland who is now the president of Oral Roberts University in helping him in the House of Grace. So we've been involved for a long time but the great Thailand center is incredible. We're renting facilities in all the other areas. Some, like we said, we can't name that community because we could jeopardize the safety of the mission workers.

But what it takes in order to rescue a child, or rescue someone out of that is an average of \$128. So what we want to ask you to do is would you help us rescue a life? \$1280, we can rescue ten. I'm really asking you if you can do that. I'll be honest with you, we really need people to step up and say, "You know what? I've been blessed. I'm blessed to bless. We'll help you rescue ten or more."

We want to send the beautiful "Heart of the Father" bronze as a great art piece and collectible; great artists gifted to bless you to say thank you for helping others. We're going to send *The Butterfly Effect* by Andy Andrews that is an incredible bestselling book, talks about the importance of one person, even a butterfly. You're important!

Would you dial that number and take your bankcard, please? Use it like a check; that's how you should always use it. But please right now make the best gift you can. Go online, LifeToday.org and make the gift God puts on your heart. Would you do that?

If you want to write a check make it to *LIFE* but call us and tell us you're mailing it. We need to hear from you this week. It's real important. I need to hear from everyone wherever you are; would you do something to help? Would you rescue life? Thank you for sharing God's love!

Begin video clip:

Announcer: Human trafficking... it's hard to believe it is happening! But at this very moment innocent children, many very young are being sold and forced into sexual slavery and exploited in every way imaginable and someone must save them!

With your support of mission rescue life you can help rescue more than 5,000 children from the horrors of the sex trade in parts of Thailand, India, Cambodia and other targeted nations. Together we can reach vulnerable families and children by providing much needed food and relief. We can rescue those already ensnared by offering them a way out and we can restore their hearts, minds and bodies to enable them to enjoy life as God intended.

Your gift today of only \$128 will help rescue a child and change their life forever. And with gifts of \$64 or \$32 we will combine your gifts with others to help rescue one more child from the shame and pain of this lifestyle.

As our way of saying thank you, please request "*The Butterfly Effect*," how your life matters. The story of this book reveals how you were specially created by God to make a difference and have the power to change the world.

As a special challenge, please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1280 to help rescue ten children. With your gift be sure to request "Heart of the Father," our beautiful new bronze sculpture that demonstrates God's fatherly love for us as his children.

Call, write, or make your gift online today!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: I do want to remind you of *The Butterfly Effect*, Andy Andrews. It is great. It is how God can use even a butterfly, literally to start waves of healing in motion or storm power. It is amazing the influence.

The Divine Conspiracy, Dallas Willard, it is one of the most important books; I say it is one of the two most important I've read in the last years. And I'd like to send it to you if you'll simply help us rescue life.

Join Betty and me again saying a real sincere thanks to Dallas Willard.

Dallas, thank you so much! God bless you.

Jane, God bless you. We love you. Thank you for praying for me, for Dallas, for Betty and all we do.

Thank all of you for watching *LIFE Today* and for helping us share life every day.

Announcer: Next week, the founding pastor of LifeChurch.TV, a pacesetting, multi-campus church that is leveraging technology to change the world shares his passion.