

THE PARABOLIC TEACHING ABOUT CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Lesson 3: The Secret Manner of the Kingdom's Working: The Leaven and the Seed

15-Point Chronological Discussion Outline & Worksheet • Dr. Dallas Willard Lecture Series (1983)

1. The Seed as a Spiritual Power to Organize Reality

[Audio ~00:00 – 03:45]

Scripture Focus: Mark 4:26–29; Matthew 13:31–32

Dallas Willard Insight: A seed is a spiritual power that enters soil and naturally draws in raw materials to organize life from within.

Discussion Question: How does defining the Kingdom seed as an organizing spiritual power change our understanding of Christian growth?

My Notes & Answer:

2. The Nature of the Logos / Word of God

[Audio ~03:45 – 07:15]

Scripture Focus: Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 107:20; John 1:1

Dallas Willard Insight: God's Word is a living, active substance that pierces soul and spirit, bringing divine order and healing.

Discussion Question: Why is the Word of God described as a living, active substance rather than mere abstract human concepts?

My Notes & Answer:

3. The Doctrine of Abandonment to the Soil

[Audio ~07:15 – 10:30]

Scripture Focus: Mark 4:27; 1 Corinthians 3:6–7

Dallas Willard Insight: Once the Word is sown, we must abandon it to the ground, trusting God's power rather than forcing spiritual growth.

Discussion Question: What happens when we try to force spiritual growth in others instead of abandoning the seed to God's soil?

My Notes & Answer:

4. Patience and Organic Progression

[Audio ~10:30 – 14:00]

Scripture Focus: Mark 4:28; James 5:7

Dallas Willard Insight: Kingdom growth follows an unhurried, organic progression: first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain.

Discussion Question: Why must Kingdom disciples cultivate long patience as God matures the seed through distinct organic stages?

My Notes & Answer:

5. Salvation as Threefold Transformation

[Audio ~14:00 – 17:30]

Scripture Focus: Romans 5:9–10; Titus 3:5; 1 John 3:8

Dallas Willard Insight: New Testament salvation encompasses three present realities: forgiveness of sins, character transformation, and victory over evil.

Discussion Question: How does viewing salvation as character transformation and victory over evil expand our daily walk with God?

My Notes & Answer:

6. The Spiritual Graft and New Birth

[Audio ~17:30 – 21:00]

Scripture Focus: 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:21

Dallas Willard Insight: New birth works like a horticultural graft, embedding divine life into our natural human personality to produce Kingdom fruit.

Discussion Question: How does the image of a spiritual graft explain how God redeems our unique human personality without destroying it?

My Notes & Answer:

7. The Leaven in the Flour

[Audio ~21:00 – 24:30]

Scripture Focus: Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20–21

Dallas Willard Insight: The Kingdom operates quietly and imperceptibly like leaven hidden in dough, steadily transforming the entire surrounding reality.

Discussion Question: In what ways does the Kingdom work quietly inside our lives like leaven rather than through loud external pressure?

My Notes & Answer:

8. Confidence in the Seed's Inherent Potency

[Audio ~24:30 – 28:00]

Scripture Focus: Isaiah 55:10–11; Mark 4:27

Dallas Willard Insight: Effective ministry relies on the inherent, divine potency of the Word itself rather than human eloquence or clever technique.

Discussion Question: Why should sowers place complete confidence in the inherent power of God's Word rather than human persuasion?

My Notes & Answer:

9. Sowing the Right Word: The Gospel of the Kingdom

[Audio ~28:00 – 31:30]

Scripture Focus: Matthew 4:23; Mark 1:14–15

Dallas Willard Insight: We must sow the true Word—the present availability of God's governance—rather than burdensome legalism or empty religion.

Discussion Question: What is the difference between sowing the full Gospel of the Kingdom and merely sharing religious rules or doctrines?

My Notes & Answer:

10. Respecting Soul Freedom & Avoiding Coercion

[Audio ~31:30 – 35:00]

Scripture Focus: Matthew 23:37; 2 Corinthians 3:17

Dallas Willard Insight: God never forces or manipulates human souls; His Kingdom respects personal choice, inviting loving, unforced allegiance.

Discussion Question: Why does God refuse to use force or emotional manipulation when inviting human beings into His Kingdom?

My Notes & Answer:

11. Word of God vs. Human Willpower

[Audio ~35:00 – 38:30]

Scripture Focus: Romans 7:18–25; Galatians 3:3

Dallas Willard Insight: Direct white-knuckle willpower cannot produce righteousness; transformation occurs indirectly as God's Word reshapes our mind.

Discussion Question: Why does direct willpower fail to change sinful habits, and how does God's Word transform us indirectly?

My Notes & Answer:

12. The Secret Manner vs. Worldly Empire

[Audio ~38:30 – 42:00]

Scripture Focus: John 18:36; Zechariah 4:6

Dallas Willard Insight: Worldly kingdoms advance through political noise, military force, and flashiness, whereas God's Kingdom expands quietly through life.

Discussion Question: How does the quiet, secret expansion of God's Kingdom contrast with the flashy, coercive methods of human empires?

My Notes & Answer:

13. Jesus as the Ultimate Seed of Abraham

[Audio ~42:00 – 45:15]

Scripture Focus: Galatians 3:16; John 12:24

Dallas Willard Insight: Christ Himself is the ultimate Seed planted in human history, organizing the reality of the Church and Kingdom worldwide.

Discussion Question: How does Jesus acting as the divine Seed planted in history bring forth the global fruit of the Kingdom?

My Notes & Answer:

14. Disciples as Co-Laborers and Sowers

[Audio ~45:15 – 47:30]

Scripture Focus: 1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 6:1

Dallas Willard Insight: Believers are called to be peaceful co-laborers with God, faithfully scattering seeds without carrying anxious responsibility for outcomes.

Discussion Question: What freedom do we experience as sowers when we realize we are co-laborers who do not control outcomes?

My Notes & Answer:

15. Daily Practice of Kingdom Seed-Work

[Audio ~47:30 – 50:00]

Scripture Focus: Psalm 16:8; Colossians 3:16

Dallas Willard Insight: Spiritual practice means daily setting the Lord before us, allowing His Word to dwell richly in us and organize our day.

Discussion Question: What practical habits help us set God's Word before us daily so His Kingdom can organize our lives?

My Notes & Answer: