

Volume 2, Day 25: Behavior Management Systems

Dallas Willard called our religious systems, Sin Management Systems. It's all about getting people to stop sinning and living for God and working hard to do that. And yet that kind of behavioral conformity doesn't work very well. As a matter of fact, all other religions teach behavioral conformity and good character as the means to access God! You can shame people with sin and they'll try harder. You can put them in accountability groups and they'll try harder. But transformation only comes inside the work of Jesus. It's not something we do from within ourselves. And it is not about Christ strengthening us to do for the kingdom. "When we are weak, then He is strong. It is the Spirit of Christ alone that can do all things."

As long as we're focused on our sin, we're going to feel a sense of shame and a sense of unworthiness. This will not allow us to engage God in the way the cross allows us to engage Him. Sin doesn't count anymore. What counts is the invitation to come and know Him intimately and live in His life. Or to put it another way, it is letting Him live His own life in us today! Walking in the light, as John talks about it in his letter, is not about getting everything right. Walking in the light is not perfection. Walking in the light is I just being honest with God about me and bringing the reality of my stuff to God. I admit my failures, confusion and prideful pursuits. I bring those things into the light inside the relationship because God loves me.

Sin is basically this, sin is what we do when we don't think God loves us, and therefore we've got to grab for ourselves what God is not giving us.