

# Postmodernism & Christian Theology (part 10 disc 2)

By Dallas Willard

Dallas Willard:

We can utilize what is a part of life. This is yesterday JP. This is not ah. Sorry.

Make it increasingly possible for me to utilize what is a part of my life to know the world. It doesn't increasingly shut me off. It increasingly enables me to know. That so for example, you want to understand the Bible you better learn some hermeneutics. And I'm just ah. I think John Mark was [inaudible] he hasn't forgotten that and will go back for [inaudible].

Speaker 1:

I want to [inaudible] your description of accidental and [inaudible].

Dallas Willard:

Where you learn to say, "Poke at"? Where are you from?

Speaker 1:

Ah, West Virginia. Yeah there you go. Um, it's just a cultural construct.

Dallas Willard:

But it's perfectly represents something that isn't it.

Speaker 1:

You describe the accidental property of both sides. It turns out to be sadly very hard to get the "Parker Classics" read back [inaudible], because decorator's had discovered that it is the perfect size and color to look clever on bookshelves inside of perfect homes that they're viewing in Los Angeles. So what should cost me a hundred dollars used would cost me more hundred dollars used because they're in great demand. So let me make, ah as unhappy as this makes me a

post moderate argument about your claim essential property. That is, that it's only contextualize to you what you believe the essential properties to be, namely the contents of the book where as if you're a designer, the essential property in the book is its readiness and the particular compact and needs size and multivolume nature. Those are the three essential properties I think are serious.

Dallas Willard:

Well also, it has to be a book for cultural reasons.

Speaker 1:

Right, Right. Exactly or maybe...

Dallas Willard:

It would only serve as a decoration if it were a book.

Speaker 1:

Right, so it turns out the essential properties are precisely those properties that you described as accidental properties for it to be that book as that book.

Dallas Willard:

Well not as a book, as a decoration.

Speaker 1:

Ah...

Dallas Willard:

See. Like, when I first came here to California, I learned something about this because I had a carpen, a friend who was a ah, ah, contractor. In the church which we attended at the time and he was telling me about how he had built some shelves for a wealthy person and encyclopedias where to go in them, but the architect had drawn them up so that they were an

inch and a half too shallow. The solution was simply saw an inch and a half off the book. And they fit perfectly. [Laughter].

Speaker 1:

Ah that's so sad.

Dallas Willard:

And that actually happened, but one I think feels a certain violation of the essence of the book.

Speaker 1:

Yeah, so you would say in those cases that those are not books...

Dallas Willard:

Right, well, I mean they are books. Actually see, that's an interesting case because the use as decoration depends upon them being books. And by books I don't mean decoration, I mean books. That gets us back to the essence of the thing that a book represents something in terms of its, the properties that it has to do with knowledge or something of that sort creativity so on and without that, I mean, the next thing is of course to get just go get cardboard things that look like, you know.

Now, you're lamenting this not because you can't get cardboard things that look like it, because you want books. Right? And so they've become very expensive because of the silly demand they have on them. So now, this is not the end of discussion John Mark, I know that, but what I'm saying is I think this is the way you work on it. And in fact again oh, Eagleton has some nice stuff in here under the chapter on fallacies as I recall about essence that ah really. Yes on Page 97 and following returns to essentialism and it's pretty nice discussion of essentialism here. And I think he brings up the point precisely that the postmodernists depends on selecting

essences not on denying them generally. That's it and then David and then we better take a littler break.

Speaker 2:

I want to see if there is something else hear. You talked about a receptionist theory [inaudible] substance of conscious which you can utilize a known object then they ought to be [inaudible].

Dallas Willard:

And my experience now is that is necessary for me to know that object, and in fact my very subjective and relativize experience and we give to the postmodernist I can't have any other kind. That's the only kind of experience there is, but that doesn't mean that the object is a creation.

Speaker 2:

So what I would make is implicit in your differentiation there [inaudible] at reception and a much more breaking up and staying closer to the immediate experience, so that it then can be evaluated and meaning added. Whereas representationalists tend to look at it in a more total kind of just take it in. Or, or projected out rather, but after [inaudible] breaking it up so that it can be more petite, oh this perception is different than...

Dallas Willard:

Yes, that's exactly right. And not only so, but you then you're able to get into what differing aspects of the experience actually accomplish for making an object present.

Speaker 2:

So it's like taking it in more immediate experience and then evaluating, working with it...

Dallas Willard:

That's right. That's right. And the precisely in context with bodies appearing and have [inaudible] appeared.

Speaker 2:

It's so interesting because I think a lot of that goes on and therapy. [Inaudible] therapy I do. It's talking [inaudible] needed experience in looking at how they are [inaudible] fresh look at [inaudible].

Dallas Willard:

Absolutely right. And I think in fact any concrete field of work will look, the worker will in fact do this, but that's just how you do it, but they don't just make this assumption that they're creating the object, their refining the experiences of the Object.

Speaker 2:

[Inaudible] look at them all the all material...

Dallas Willard:

And phenomenology. The word phenomenology as, as a useful term refers to looking at cases that it has unfortunately come to join the Ism's or ologies and it often doesn't mean that at all. David?

David:

[Inaudible 7:19- 7:43]

Dallas Willard:

Actually, this is an old term. And if you're interested in looking it up and following its history, it will be very instructive. It ah I could really I think in philosophy its first uses in [inaudible] and it's used to refer precisely to how we in. Are conscious of things outside ourselves by being conscious of what is inside ourselves. And Kantian use also the same idea

procedure here. The crucial difference is this, on the representational model what we're conscious of is inside ourselves. It comes in and now we have representation and we look at the representation instead of utilizing the representation to look at something else.

David:

So you, in this model, in other words, [inaudible] goes further [inaudible] perception goes further and doesn't deny that we are a little bit representation.

Dallas Willard:

We are conscious of our representation.

David:

Basically has hope for his representational [inaudible] with be on him.

Dallas Willard:

And the standard uses again, the idea of reading a book. When you when you read a page you're aware of the page, but you're not looking at it. You're reading it, and in reading it, you are in a peculiar way conscious of, you know, the war of 1812 or whatever the book is about. That's what your conscience of and that is an illustration of how apperception works, but of course there's a lot more to it. Our language, our very physical orientation, our balance, our physical balance. All of these things affect our representations. Being in a strange situation, being at home or being in an unfamiliar situation. All of these things affect how we are conscious of things and what we are conscious of, but they don't make them. And the problem with the representations theory, which by the way of course postmodernism has content. They have attacked representationalism as a poison, but ironically they don't seem to have missed a major part of the boys themselves. JP and then Patricia and then we take a break.

JP:

Todd, there's a distinction of philosophy that may help with that different because the way you put it can be at risk. You said that we ah, we, we, we look at something with the representation [inaudible], but we also look at the representation and ah philosophers would draw a distinction between different. Between seeing and being aware of and I think the idea would be that I see the book by way of, I don't know your previous [inaudible] representation sense experience, but I don't see the representation but I'm aware of it. So, they would use a different term and I'm not it's not, it's not an attempt to be picky but I think the idea is to try to. Actually that distinction allows one to give before one's own [inaudible] different kinds of conscious states to actually draw a distinctions. So I think ah rich a richer vocabulary just by [inaudible] would be a substitute for just one simple look just seeing and then just being aware of and I think [inaudible] said somewhere we we we see books, but we don't see are seeing of books, but we are aware of or seeing of books.

Dallas Willard:

That's an [inaudible] response.

Speakers:

[Inaudible] it's just a claim [inaudible].

Dallas Willard:

It need not be. That's a further issue of how you take those claims. The basic idea is that you are aware of objects on the basis of your awareness of elements in your own experience. For example counting is a lovely illustration. If you're going to count, count the pieces of chalk in a box and thereby apprehend how many pieces there are say 8 pieces. One of the conditions of that is, you have to continue to be aware of what you, the pieces you've already counted. And when you lose your awareness of the counting's of those pieces you have to start over again. That's

there. Most, most acts of thought are extremely complex. For example reading a book. One of the conditions of reading a book is you have some memory of what you've already read. That functions in your understanding as you proceed and if you lose that, you can't read the book. Most, most cognitive acts are very complicated and they require a lot of this sort of back and forth within objects.

Todd Pickett:

But isn't. What, what would postmodern pick up on exactly this metaphor and say, "Whatever they do [inaudible] object doing is inevitably effected, its sense of being inevitably affected by the before and the after and if they don't have the context to put it in. so.

Dallas Willard:

Okay. Now.

Todd Pickett:

Now if I'm counting 1-2-3 that 3 is inevitably affected by the 2 and the 4 that the original context. This is the [inaudible] notion of how of means are [inaudible] with reference to something else on a system, and not single act of the thing [inaudible] always connected to what in its context, what is its order is other things of the system. So, how would you respond to that?

Dallas Willard:

They will certainly say that we having a worked for all this stuff will say to the, "Well, it depends on what you mean by affected."

Todd Pickett:

So, really it all comes down to the same distinction and someone might tack one on and say, "Well, see and aware" it's a very [Laughter].

JP:

[Laughter] Difference of distinction without a difference. [Laughter] Well well it's a distinction when they say it's a very fragile very fragile distinction there.

Dallas Willard:

It gets less fragile as you work with it. Let me, let me just continue to say that if you mean by affected if you mean by affected, do I produce the object then no. If you mean by affected do I make the object present? For example I can't grasp the group of three without being aware of having counted one and two. So then indeed, but you see now what I'm trying to get you to think about is you have the substance of the acts of consciousness here on the one hand and all of the post-modernist points [inaudible]. They are good sound psychological phenomenological sociological points. What they, what does not follow is that the object which is now before my mind, a group of three is something that would not exist if I had not counted in this way. See the crucial distinction is does the object exist and depend upon my counting or does the objects being present to me depend upon my counting. In the latter case, obviously it does. In the former case it doesn't obviously and I would say obviously it doesn't, but that's the point at which I say I've been through the several thousand times and done myself used to thinking this way and of course if anyone wishes to dismiss it on the grounds they can. The important thing is to see that there is a difference and not automatically transfer a difference in experience to a dissident option.