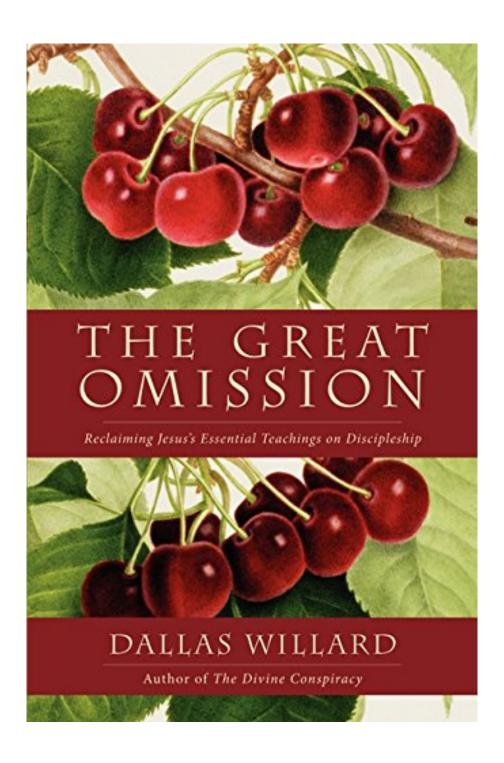


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Jesus's Last Command—Ignored!

The last command Jesus gave the church before he ascended to heaven was the Great Commission, the call for Christians to "make disciples of all the nations." But Christians have responded by making "Christians," not "disciples." This, according to brilliant scholar and renowned Christian thinker Dallas Willard, has been the church's Great Omission.

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Most helpful customer reviews

51 of 51 people found the following review helpful.

DALLAS WILLARD'S REFINED APPROACH TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP By RBSProds

Five Contemplative Stars! This very absorbing book is a compendium of individual writings and speeches on discipleship from 1980 to 2004 by the awesome Christian idealogue and writer, Dr. Dallas Willard. In this book, some deeply acerbic questions are asked, while providing straight answers to those adhering to Christianity. No shortcuts, no easy way out, and no really radical thoughts. He appears to me to be right on target based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, but he's looking deeper than most as he develops his topics in the book.

The book's title references Jesus' "Great Commission" to his disciples just before He ascended to Heaven. Willard feels that for many Christians there has been a "Great Omission" in achieving the true goals of Christianity. He even takes issue with the term "Christian" early on, which he says is mentioned only a few

times in the Bible and originally was a way of differentiating Jews from Jesus' jewish and non-jewish followers. Indeed, Dr. Willard finds a "Great Disparity" (my caps) between the life Christians should be living and the secular life that many actually live, which is also certainly being observed by those who are not Christian and who see no difference between lifestyles of Christians and non-Christians. He urges that we make disciples of ourselves first, before making disciples of the Church and the world.

Dr. Wiliard rationally makes a powerful case for a new Christian discipleship and tells those disciples how to live in this age of confusion and temptation. Spiritual formation, living one's life as if Jesus was in their place, changing our mindset, and the critical role of "grace" leads us to the literally change our feelings. Other too-seldom heard relevant terms like "piety" abound in this book to flesh out Wiliard's concepts. He also gives numerous examples along the way, as well as plain language 'translations' of some verses of the Gospel. He does make lofty claims: like the "one verse in the Bible that is worth more than any college education" (you'll have to read the book to find out which one it is, but it is a powerful verse. The worth of it is up to the reader.)

In the "Books on Spiritual Living", he references books by two disparate but awesomely empathetic sources which have greatly affected Dr. Willard: the consummate "Each One, Teach One" missionary (Dr.) Frank C. Laubach, who worked among indigenous peoples and urged keeping God in mind every minute of our waking hours, and the wonderful mystic nun (Saint) Teresa of Avila whose awesome "The Interior Castle" describes her very close spiritual union with God and how we can do it.

It took great scholarship and courage to compile this book, and to not only challenge general contemporary Christian thought in this modern world, but to lay out a blueprint for how to live our lives amidst secularism and temptation based on Jesus' teachings. The scope of the book is IMPRESSIVE. Some may find this book beyond their understanding; others may find it the first step to even deeper levels of understanding of Christianity, and others may find it the spiritual breakthrough they have long sought. God Bless! Five "Spirit-filled" Stars!!

(Note:

- * This is an 8 1/2 inch by 5 3/4 inch 'small-size' Hardcover book with 233 pages and a highly colorful dustcover.
- * Two related books by Dr. Willard, which may interest some of you are: "The Divine Conspiracy" and the award-winning "Renovation of the Heart".
- * In even approaching this book, one must have a bare minimum of exposure to Christianity in order to understand Dr Willard's concepts and the imperatives coming from the Bible, in general, and from Jesus, specifically.)

85 of 94 people found the following review helpful.

Willard's Omissions

By Keith M. Abolnik

When I first picked up this book I had certain expectations and hope based on the author's long standing reputation. This subject has been a high priority for me as I am most concerned to do all that is possible to engage people in authentic Biblical transformation. This has been the passion and pursuit of many leaders in the Body of Christ. I feel the author has underestimated many of the called of God who have tackled this disparity, who have drawn similar conclusions, and who have indeed laid out plans to genuinely "make disciples," not just converts.

Certainly Mr. Willard communicates his passion and thinking about this subject well. I feel that I most benefitted from his definitions of "spiritual formation," and his presentation of the idea that "Grace is not

opposed to effort, but to earning." The most exciting chapter was his presentation of "Jesus the Logician." This chapter would be great for all believers to strengthen their understanding of Jesus and their appreciation for His participation is every part of their life.

I find it ironic that what the title of this book suggests the author has seemed to have done himself. I feel a few things have been "omitted" by the Mr. Willard.

- 1. He failed to present a model of discipleship. One of Willard's complaints was that he has not yet found a church that has a master plan for accomplishing the call to make disciples. It would seem that since we are all called to this task that the author himself must be discipling people. How does he accomplish this great task? This could have been a significant contribution to the thinking and life of his readers had he presented some kind of solution to the problem discussed. Just emphasizing spiritual formation doesn't cut it.
- 2. A revision to the "Invitation System" needs to be addressed. The church at large has miserably failed in presenting the Gospel when people are simply called to come down front and pray a prayer. Jesus did not do this, He called people to follow Him as disciples from the very beginning. The whole "invitation system" needs to be completely changed to fit the call of the Great Commission. What an important thing to discuss if we are to take the author seriously in making disciples instead of converts.
- 3. The "relational" part of discipleship missing. Discipleship cannot be effectively carried out by programming. The unique relationship between the one who does discipline and the one being discipled is critical to it being authentic. But, this was not addressed.
- 4. Explicit "discipleship" passages missing from the discussion. It would seem appropriate that any real discussion on discipleship should include those passages that are explicitly in disciple language like "bearing the cross, denying your self," and so on.

This may seem like a pretty critical review, however, these are my feelings and expectations, and I (like the author and you I'm sure) am passionate about resolving the disparity and inadequacies in our churches when it comes to our presenting (and living) the life-transforming power of the God's truth. It was my expectation that the author would have made more of a contribution toward this end. I welcome comments from any readers of this review.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

"The Great Omission" is a great addition to your spiritual classics library.

By THowerton

What is the great Omission? Dallas Willard defines it as claiming to be Christ's without being His disciple. It's what Bonhoeffer might call "cheap grace". It's that (particularly western?) attitude that you can have your cake and eat it too (and you won't ever get diabetes or get fat!), or all you have to do to get to heaven is say the right words and God will let you in (>>knock>I believe in Jesus

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