

**Divine Conspiracy Book Study**  
Discussion Questions – Jun 22, 2009

**Chapter Two – Gospels of Sin Management**

*The Invitation Diminished*

1. “Christians aren’t perfect, just forgiven” (p. 35-36) What is useful and true about this pithy statement? Is our faith all about being “just forgiven”? Does this view of the Christian life encourage or discourage us to pursue behavior changes?

*Bar-code Faith*

2. In your faith tradition, what act or actions serve as a mandatory bar code, assuring that you will be admitted to heaven when you die because God will “scan” you and credit your account? (Church attendance, praying a prayer, being baptized, speaking in tongues, etc.) (p. 37)
3. Are there ongoing acts or actions that you think are expected of *yourself* to demonstrate that your bar code is still in place?

*Would God Really Do It That Way?*

4. Would God really set up some system where his central concern is to get people to heaven, but “bypasses the awesome needs of present human life and leaves human character untouched?...[leaving us] temporarily marooned with no help in our kind of world, with our kinds of problems: psychological, emotional, social, and global?” (p. 38) What are ones assumptions about God if one answers “yes” or “no” to this question?
5. Recall Jesus ministry as recorded in the gospels. Did his life and ministry “bypass the awesome needs” of the human condition then? Any reason to think Jesus would not have done the same thing if he came to earth today?

*Gospels of Sin Management*

6. Willard suggests we should consider the possibility that Christians are “indistinguishable from the world” not in spite of what we teach and how we teach, but precisely because of it (p. 40). Summarize the gospel on the Right (p. 42) and on the Left (p. 50).

7. Why is the Right/Left dichotomy an inadequate understanding of the gospel? (see, p. 49 “The sensed irrelevance...”, and p. 53.) Which side do you tend to lean?

### **Toward Integration of Life and Faith**

#### *The Case of the Missing Teacher*

8. Why has Jesus as ‘teacher’ disappeared and what are the consequences of this?
9. What would it mean for you to undertake to have Jesus be your teacher in all of life? What do you believe God wants most from you at this time?

#### *The Centrality of the Pulpit*

10. “If gospels of sin management are preached, they are what Christians will believe. And those in the wider world who reject those gospels will believe that what they have rejected is the gospel of Jesus Christ himself—when, in fact, they haven’t yet heard it (p. 58).” What are people rejecting if they aren’t rejecting Christ?
11. In order to prevent human beings from shriveling and dying on the plains of life, “we must develop a straightforward presentation, in word and life, of the reality of life now under God’s rule, through reliance upon the word and person of Jesus. In this way we can naturally become his students or apprentices. *We can learn from him how to live our lives as he would live them if he were we.* We can enter his eternal kind of life now.” (p. 58)
12. What areas of your life do you need to learn how Jesus would live it? Do you really believe Jesus has/is the answer? How is this the good news (gospel) of Jesus’ reign (kingdom)?