

FYISpring12

SPIRITUALITY AND REALITY TODAY

FIRST YEAR COLLEGE SEMINAR

FSEM 180
Section 34659
WPH 203
Thursday 2-3:50PM

Dallas Willard, Instructor
Office 205D MHP
Email dwillard@usc.edu
Home phone 818-716-0652

Spirituality and Reality Today: “Spirituality” in many forms has recently pushed itself forward as a major concern of the contemporary mind and as a significant influence on life. While it makes strong claims concerning what we ought to do, what the good life is, and who is a good or bad person, it frequently runs counter to *traditional* morality and religion.

Our object in this course is to achieve clarity on what this is all about. Some basic questions: What is “spirituality”? Who is a “spiritual” person today? Indeed, What is spirit? Does spirituality have anything to do with God or gods. What about spirituality and sports? Spirituality and business? (Just google them—or any “spirituality and...”—to see what a big deal they are.) We will briefly look at “spirituality” in major religions, but mainly to secure a contrast of religious spiritualities with the more free-standing, free-flowing “spirituality” of individuals now common. We shall consider how a spirituality mainly functions (or claims to function) to provide energy (“power”) and identity to meet a felt need in contemporary life. Spirituality promises to fit the individual into a “larger context” where *meaning* is experienced. But is there, after all, such a thing as “spirit”—is “spirituality” something real—and how is it known? Or is it just a popular fantasy called forth by wide spread alienation and loneliness in today’s mass society? No doubt it is a “brain thing”? “Mindfulness” is one current preoccupation in many quarters, and we will want to look at its relationships to “Spirituality.” Also, the reception of Harry Potter and of the Vampire flicks is useful to think about in connection with “Spirituality.” Student interests may determine much of what gets taken up in our sessions.

The only book we read in the course is *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*, by Bron Taylor. There will be a few short handouts. Our focus will not be on criticizing spiritualities, though that is not ruled out for the participants. We want to understand, and sometimes comparison is helpful to that end.

The time “in class” will be focused on student explorations, participation, and a couple of presentations, depending on the size of the group. Very little lecturing. We will not meet every week, and a complete schedule of meetings will be provided the third meeting, when we have a sense of the group and their interests.

The course is a 2-unit Credit/No Credit course. To get “Credit” the student must participate in discussions, showing awareness of any readings assigned, must have no more than 2 unexcused absences, and provide one 30 minute in class presentation, assigning any background material at the previous meeting, and leading the ensuing discussion. Topics will be chosen by the student in consultation with the Instructor.

Meetings:

Jan. 12. Discussion of the course and the topic or topics. Getting to know one another. Something about your interest in the topic of Spirituality and Reality.

Assignment for next time: Visit a Barnes and Noble or comparable book store and spend one hour examining the books in the “Spirituality” (or similar) section. Take some notes on differences between the spiritualities observed. Spend one hour on the internet looking at “Spirituality and ...” Take a few notes on your observations and thoughts, to be shared at the next meeting (Jan. 19).

Jan. 19. No meeting

Jan. 26. Discussion of what you learned from the assignment given on the 12th. Some reflections on Spirituality and Religions. Can you have one without the other and how would that work. Do you know of specific cases/people who separate them? What difference does such a separation make? Can an atheist be spiritual? Is there a secular spirituality?

Assignment for next time (2/2): Chapters 1-3 of *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*. Again, take notes for use in discussions at the next meeting, February 2.

SCHEDULE FOR THE REMAINING MEETINGS OF THE COURSE WILL BE
PROVIDED BY FEBRUARY 2

FSEM 180
1/12/20012

Spirituality is a very broad term that in the current social context refers to accessing *resources for life* that are not *physical* in any straightforward sense, which might refer to something dealt with by the science of Physics or to something that is perceptible by sense perception. These “resources” might just be attitudes to be assumed (“mindfulness,” grasping your unity with everything, etc.), or some deeper realities of the self, or of a spiritual realm separate from the individual (God, religion). Various practices for accessing the “resources” are involved in spiritualities of the various kinds.

On the internet one finds many combinations of spirituality and aspects of life. For example, “spirituality and work,” “spirituality and sports,” “spirituality and family,” etc. Also spiritualities of various kinds such as Jewish, Christian, Hindu, American, Chinese, etc. will show up.

For next time (Jan 26), select a “Spirituality and _____” that is of special interest to you, do some internet or other research, make some notes, and come and share your findings with the group. You might observe some of the spiritualities on the campus.

Also, visit a book store where there is a spirituality or “New Age” section and spend an hour or so thumbing through the offerings. Share your observations with the group on the 26th.

We want to get some good sense of what is actually going on around us with reference to spirituality and reality.

FSEM 180: **SPIRITUALITY AND REALITY TODAY**
1/26/20012

SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS FOR SPRING 2012

Jan. 12---Introduction to the seminar. What we will be doing and formal requirements. (See handouts) Initial discussion of what a spirituality is and the marks of a “spiritual” person. Is “spirituality” always a good thing? In what sense “spirituality” goes beyond the “physical” (what is studied in physics and what is sense-perceptible). Spirituality as a resource for living better. Topics for independent research during the next two weeks.

Jan. 19---No meeting this week. Cultural research on “spirituality” and “spiritualities.”

Jan. 26---Discussion of student findings from bookstore sections on “Spirituality” (usually under the headings of “New Age” or “Self-help”), and from internet research on “Spirituality and Work,” “Spirituality and Family,” “Spirituality and Religion,” “Spirituality and” (etc. etc.) Perhaps also findings from conversations with others.

Discussion of the “reality” side of the topic “Spirituality and Reality Today.”

The book, *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*, handed out.

Feb. 2---Discussion of the “Preface” and Chapters One and Two of *Dark Green Religion*. See my handout on chapter summaries for especially important points to notice. You may also wish to call up the book on Amazon and read the “reviews” made available there. We pretty certainly will not be able to finish these chapters in this session. Please note how the “Abrahamic” religions (Jewish, Christian, Islamic) are distinguished from religion as described here. (Check the index under “Abrahamic.”)

Feb. 9---We will need to finish topics for our last session, but try to read and prepare Chapters Three and Four for discussion. Especially note the role of “profound and unusual feelings” (feelings of reverence, respect, and “unity with”) in the emergence and support of “dark green religion.” How is “the spiritual” known? The contribution of DGR to “radical environmentalism,” and conversely.

Feb. 16---No meeting this week.

Feb. 23---Chapters Five and Six of *Dark Green Religion*. The emergence and importance of “Surfing Spirituality,” and the importance of media (“nature” documentaries, videos) and theme parks (Disney in both) in “globalization” of nature spirituality.

Mar. 1---Just skim Chapters Seven and Eight, if you wish, but read Chapter Nine (the “Conclusion”) with care and prepare some remarks on the overall project. “Nature

Spirituality” is unabashedly presented in this book as a RELIGION. What is the project of **redemption** that it proposes to carry out (see p. 222), and, in your estimation, does it (realistically) have the resources to succeed with the project? [You might enjoy reading the Thoreau excerpts in the “Appendix” (pp. 227ff).]

**

Mar. 8---No meeting this week.

MARCH 10-18 IS SPRING BREAK!

During the period March 2-22, please be working on your 30-minute class presentation, and how you might want the discussion to go in the following 30 minutes.

Hopefully by March 2 you will have a topic within the range of SPIRITUALITY AND REALITY TODAY that is burning in your mind and soul (“guts,” even?).

I (DW) will be totally available to help you develop your presentation, suggest sources, and just talk with you. I would like to schedule meetings with individuals on March 1 and 5, if you are ready, and on 21 and 22. But I will try to meet your schedule. Of course, we can meet well before then to discuss anything you wish.

**

Mar. 22---This will be a day to review what we have done, and to take up topics (suggested by students) that may have been omitted or not sufficiently attended to, but seem very important. Possibly one student presentation.

Mar. 29---Two student presentations with discussion.

Apr. 5---Two student presentations with discussion.

Apr. 12---No meeting this week.

Apr. 19---Two student presentations with discussion.

Apr. 26---Two student presentations with discussion.

A final summary session may be arranged if desired by the students.

FSEM 180
2/2/12

Our main focus today is on the opening chapters of *Dark Green Religion*, but---

(1). Any hangovers from our last session?

Thought of any additional “spiritualities”?

Or points of comparison?

If I can find suitable “representatives,” ***which*** “spiritualities” would you like to have a session with?

Can “spiritualities” be evaluated/ranked?

The issue of “reality” or “what is actually the case.”

The issue of “moral superiority.”

“Political correctness” and truth.

(2). Brief comment on “mindfulness.”

(3). Possible points of discussion in opening pages of *Dark Green Religion*:---

Characterizing *religion*---xii, 2d-3

Religion always involves something “more” that “ordinary” reality,

And ways of thinking and acting that brings the “more” into human life.

Question: What will be the “more” of DGR? Stay tuned.

Spirituality and religion. Pp. 3-4, Taylor’s aim: last ¶ on p. 4

“Nature Religion.” P. 5

Opposed to “Abrahamic” religions.

Quote from Frazer, 6d

Key ideas of DGR found in Rousseau. 9c-d

“Green religion” and “Dark Green Religion” distinguished. 10b

Christianity’s “anthropocentrism and irreverence toward nature.” 11b

IN CHAPTER 2:

The characterization of DGR under 3 points: 1st ¶ of page 13.

“*Bricolage*” (14b), “mystical or intuitive knowledge that is beyond the reach of scientific method.” 14c

The “Four Types of Dark Green Religion.” Pp. 15-16 are among the few most important pages in the book.

Especially as regards the “more” of DGR!!!

NOTE NOW THE EMERGENCE OF ETHICS IN THE DISCUSSIONS.
Especially on the “naturalistic fallacy.” 16b.

“Interspecies communication.” 19ff
And rituals of oneness. 21b “Spiritual Animism”

“Naturalistic Animism” and Darwin. 22c-23b

Eyes and interspecies communication. 25

Jane Goodall and “spiritual experience.” 28b-c, 29b-31.
(Summary in 1st full ¶ on 31.)

NOTE HOW CERTAIN “EXPERIENCES” LEAD TO “DARK GREEN”
INTERPRETATIONS. Claims based upon experiences.

Ethics from the land. (Aldo Leopold) 31c
Description of what is *right*. 31d

Critique of “Abrahamic” religion. P. 32.

The “Gaia theory.” 35d
Gaian Naturalism. 36b

Vaclav Havel. The dominant authority of science (38b-c) “offers no moral
guidance.” Gaia as offering “something to fill this moral void.” 38c

Could “ethical holism” (Gaian spirituality) lead to violation of human rights? 39-
40. “Ecofascism”? 39d

FOR NEXT WEEK TRY TO READ THROUGH CHAPTERS 3 AND 4, WITH
SPECIAL ATTENTION TO FEELINGS AS SUPPORT FOR REVERENCE, RESPECT
AND UNITY WITH NATURE.

FSEM 180
2/9/12

Note that we do not meet on the 16th of February.

Which of the “spiritualities” listed time before last should we invite for a presentation?

Today our main concern will be with chapter 3 of *Dark Green Religion*, but we want to begin by returning to a couple of topics we have only touched on.

Mindfulness—note that mindfulness concerns non-physical powers to change/improve. Thus a certain kinship with “spiritualities.” Origin mainly Buddhism.

Evaluating “spiritualities.” Should not spiritualities be evaluate/ranked as you would do with any teaching/practice: in terms of the truth of its claims and the effectiveness of its practices toward recognized goods, moral or other wise?

Contemporary resistance to this: it cannot or should not be done?

The issue of “tolerance” in academic/intellectual settings. In life. What is the issue?

A couple of points about ethics from last time.

Ethics from the land. Leopold, p. 31c-d

Vaclav Havel’s point about the moral void left if we have only science. 38b-c.

Now some points in chapter 3: DGR and the background of American Thought.

(1). The set up for the chapter. 42

The “holy trinity.” 42d

(2). The supposed European/American hostility toward nature 43. Not sacred. 44d-45a

Contrasted with the (alleged) native American attitude. 43d-44a.

(3). Change for Americans came only after changes in Europe.

Burke, 45, and Rousseau 46c-47

Note the importance of the “epistemological.” 45d, 47a,d, 49, 54, 64a, 88, etc.

“Knowledge” is necessary for “authority.”

(4). Emerson’s basic points. 49b

The effects of “nature.” 49d

The meaning of “transcendentalism” and some objections to Emerson as DGR. 50b-c

(5). Eight 'themes' in Thoreau. 51-54.
And issues in interpretation of him as DGR 54-56.

(6). The experience and statements of John Muir. 62-64
"Love and healing from nature. 67d-68

(7). The point of this discussion of Emerson, Thoreau, and Muir. 70

NOTE THAT TAYLOR DOES NOT TRY TO SHOW THAT DGR IS **TRUE**, BUT ONLY THAT IT IS **INFLUENTIAL** AND BECOMING MORE SO.

(8). What "radical environmentalism" is: Making the well-being of the environment an ultimate value, justifying disrupting actions including violence. 72-73

(9). Its many sources. Mid. 77

(10). Its "Apocalyptic" nature, and hope. 84-85.
And "interconnectedness" again. 100-101

(11). "Abrahamic" opposition. 101.

WE WILL NOT BE MEETING AGAIN UNTIL FEB. 23. PLEASE GIVE A READ TO CHAPTER 4 OF *DGR*, AND WRITE OUT A FEW PAGES OF YOUR THOUGHTS ON "SURFING SPIRITUALITY."

FSEM 180

Feb. 23, 2012

I have not been able (yet) to find anyone to talk to us about Islamic Spirituality or Judaism. We have found someone to talk about Sikhism, Mr. Angad Singh. He will come on March 29th.

It has occurred to me that, after the powerful rejection of “Abrahamic Spirituality” by Taylor in DARK GREEN RELIGION, there should be a response from the point of view of that (almost standard) “Western” type of spirituality. So I will make a presentation on behalf of *mainstream*, historic Christian spirituality on March 22. (We have no meeting scheduled on March 8, and March 12-16 is Spring break.)

After that (except for March 29) I would like for the remainder of our meetings to be devoted to student presentations on some relevant topic of individual choice, along with whatever else of interest we may work in. You may recall that one of the very light requirements of the course is a 30 minute in-class presentation.

Here’s what I have in mind for a “presentation.” Each person would select a topic of special interest or concern to them. They would develop an expository or argumentative discussion of the topic—for example, it might be “A Critical Look at So-called Surfing Spirituality,” “If Nature is Sacred, How Is It Worshipped?” “‘Spirituality’ Is Bunk,” or “How I Have Experienced Spirituality,” etc. I suggest that each one develop a one-page outline of topics or questions to be discussed, and make their presentation from that. (About 20 minutes, I think) Then class discussion for 10 or 15 minutes, led by the presenter. I would like to work with each person in developing the content of their presentation. (We could meet, say, on M or W before the presentation.) If an individual wishes to write out their remarks and just read them, that too would be fine. We will make copies for everyone. **We would need to line up dates no later than March 22.** So please be thinking about your presentation.

*

There are a few points about “Radical Environmentalism” (last time) we need to emphasize:

(8). What “radical environmentalism” is: Making the well-being of the environment an ultimate value, justifying disrupting actions including violence. 72-73

(9). Its many sources. Mid. 77

(10). Its “Apocalyptic” nature, and hope. 84-85.
And “interconnectedness” again. 100-101

(11). “Abrahamic” opposition. 101.

SURFING SPIRITUALITY:

Some main ideas and “soul” surfing. 104-105.

The meaning of “Aloha.” Mid-107

Respect and sacredness. Last full ¶ on 108
Nature=God. Top 109

Psychedelics and the ecstatic and mystical experiences of “the surfing ‘tribe’.” 110

The sublime in nature and surfing: “...natural habitats as sublime places and pilgrimages to them as a way to discover one’s authentic self.” Garden of Eden. Bot. 111a

Out of the troubles of the world. 112a-b
“Mindful” of balance and union with nature energies. Bot. 112

Surfing and “identity.” 114
Strong religious dimension. Mid 115

The experience of wave-riding as sensual center of the sport. 117a “Living in the moment is believed to bring peace, wisdom, and divine purpose.”
“Peak experiences” and “flow.” 117d.
And brain chemistry. 118a

“Healing” from the surf. 119. Especially bottom ¶. Top 120.

“The eternal now”—“My best surfing experiences are those ongoing moments...where I feel and intuit/think everything together and the eternal now emerges.” Mid 121. And see last sentence on this page.

“What is spirituality?” Mid 122 In relation to surfing, of course.

Connection, communication, and even communion with nonhuman life. 124b-c
“Wildness.”

Application of the surfing results to DGR. 125. A VERY IMPORTANT PAGE.

*

Just a few comments about predators (“being eaten”)—p. 127f—and Movies. 133
Documentaries and “science” contribute to DGR. 121
“Awe, wonder, and humility.” 149c

*

AFTER READING CHAPTER 9, PLEASE WRITE ME A FEW PARAGRAPHS OF YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT “DARK GREEN” SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION. Please email them to me (dwillard@usc.edu) by Wed. evening Feb. 29th so I can make copies for everyone for the meeting on March 1st.

FSEM 180
March 1, 2012

Remember that we are not meeting on March 8, and that the following week is Spring Break. SO OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MARCH 22.

We want to be thinking now about “Abrahamic” spiritualities in contrast to the spirituality of “Dark Green Religion.” At that meeting (on the 22nd) I will undertake to make a presentation of Mainline Christian Spirituality, and the following week (March 29) we have a presentation by a representative of Sikhism (sort of Abrahamic)

Please see *the attached invitation* to submit a few sentences as a statement on some topic selected from this course in an FYI conference. Note the deadline. There is money involved.

You might want to relate that to your presentation for this class. (See comments on that in last time’s handout.) Please try to have decided on the topic for your presentation by our next meeting (22nd). We need to think about scheduling, and what I can do to help you with your presentation.

Let’s just glance over the main sections in the final chapter of DGR, pp. 200-222.

Note the **salvation** sought by Taylor in his final paragraph. 222.

Is DGR adequate to bring that “salvation.”

Now let’s look at the statements sent by Jenna, Joy, and Nathaniel—and anyone else who may have brought one.

A few points to raise with Taylor’s DGR—

1. The use of Darwin and evolution:

Darwin’s theory is a theory (“natural selection”) concerning how living forms arise from other living forms. It is not a theory about the origin of life itself, nor about the cosmos. It has nothing to say about “how the world came to be,” but actually presupposes the existence of a complicated order as a condition of evolution occurring. You only have to think a moment about what is involved in evolution on Darwin’s account to see that that is so. Evolution and Creation answer different questions. Pp. 200, 204b, 219c.

2. The “laugh test” among the “scientific literate” (§ mid page 221) as a way of dismissing some “non-material spiritual dimension.” Does “science” or any particular science have any bearing at all on such a “dimension”? Exactly where?

3. Especially if the universe is “a great mystery.” 220 Or “miracle.” 221d

4. Is the “real world” according to Taylor actually “the world we can understand through our senses (...aided by our ingenious gadgets)”? 221d Is the perception that he invokes of intrinsic values of natural objects, sacredness, interspecies communication, and so forth, really **sense** perception? Note his repeated invocation of new “epistemologies” to cover the various awareness of nature that he calls upon from his star witnesses, Thoreau, Muir, etc.—“mystical experiences encountering a divine life-force in the earth, or of animistic encounters with the spiritual intelligence of nonhuman beings or entities.” 86c

5. The physical universe has not always existed. This is a basic premise of the Abrahamic religions and spiritualities, now assumed by our best physical theories. It’s source then had to be “nothing” or something that is not physical. The former is extremely unlikely, though various authors are now trying to make a go of it.

6. There is nothing inherently problematic in the idea of a non-physical reality, though of course it must face the test of evidence for its existence and nature. Physical reality has been just as puzzling to human thought as non-physical. It doesn’t seem so at first glance, for it seems to be right *there*. But further thought calls that in question. Your first and enduring presentation of the non-physical is that of your own experiences.

FSEM 180 SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS:

April 19:

2-2:30 _____

2:30-3 _____

3-3:30 _____

3:30-4 _____

April 26:

2-2:30 _____

2-30-3 _____

3-3:30 _____

3:30-4 _____

FSEM 180
March 22, 2012

(1). Today we want to finish up discussion of Taylor's position, and look at some main points in classical Christian spirituality. Next meeting, on the 29th, Mr. Angad Singh will talk to us about the spirituality of Sikhism.

(2). But, before all that, I would like to schedule the individual, 30-minute presentations. I am thinking these would occupy our last two class meetings, on April 19 and 26. (We will not meet on the 12th of April, as I will be away speaking— again.)

My idea is that we would have four presentations on each day. I will circulate today a separate sheet with sign-up slots. You could take 20 minutes to develop your thoughts about some particular point—could be something you have already written some on, or a new point about spirituality and reality. I am thinking you could prepare a handout with a few points and comments, and just discuss that before the group. Then 10 minutes or so for class discussion. I would be delighted to meet with each class member beforehand to answer any questions or make suggestions. That would be a private interview at your convenience. So---the sign-up sheet is going around.

(3). Now let's look at some of the statements submitted by the seminar members: (Handouts)

(4). And then go back to finish up the critical remarks on Taylor that we started last time.

A few points to raise with Taylor's DGR— (Repeated here from last meeting's notes):

1. The use of Darwin and evolution:

Darwin's theory is a theory ("natural selection") concerning how living forms arise from other living forms. It is not a theory about the origin of life itself, nor about the cosmos. It has nothing to say about "how the world came to be," but actually presupposes the existence of a complicated order as a condition of evolution occurring. You only have to think a moment about what is involved in evolution on Darwin's account to see that that is so. Evolution and Creation answer different questions. Pp. 200, 204b, 219c.

2. The "laugh test" among the "scientific literate" (§ mid page 221) as a way of dismissing some "non-material spiritual dimension." Does "science" or any particular science have any bearing at all on such a "dimension"? Exactly where?

3. Especially if the universe is "a great mystery." 220 Or "miracle." 221d

4. Is the "real world" according to Taylor actually "the world we can understand through our senses (...aided by our ingenious gadgets)?" 221d Is the perception that he invokes of intrinsic values of natural objects, sacredness, interspecies communication, and so

forth, really **sense** perception? Note his repeated invocation of new “epistemologies” to cover the various awareness of nature that he calls upon from his star witnesses, Thoreau, Muir, etc.—“mystical experiences encountering a divine life-force in the earth, or of animistic encounters with the spiritual intelligence of nonhuman beings or entities.” 86c

5. The physical universe has not always existed. This is a basic premise of the Abrahamic religions and spiritualities, now assumed by our best physical theories. It’s source then had to be “nothing” or something that is not physical. The former is extremely unlikely, though various authors are now trying to make a go of it.

6. There is nothing inherently problematic in the idea of a non-physical reality, though of course it must face the test of evidence for its existence and nature. Physical reality has been just as puzzling to human thought as non-physical. It doesn’t seem so at first glance, for it seems to be right *there*. But further thought calls that in question. Your first and enduring presentation of the non-physical is that of **your own experiences**.

**

(5). Some main points in classical Christian spirituality:

The “Apostles” Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

An Ancient Picture of the Spiritual Life

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not lack.
 He makes me lie down in green pastures
 He leads me beside quiet waters;
 He restores my soul.
 He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I fear no evil; for Thou art with me;
 Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.

Thou dost prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies
 Thou hast anointed my head with oil;
 My cup overflows.

Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,
 And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
 (Psalm 23)

(Notice that Spirituality is here presented as a living, ongoing relationship
 between persons.)

*

Contentment

Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for
 He Himself has said "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you." So we may
 confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can men do to me."
 (Letter to Hebrews, 13:5-6)

*

Prayer

Our Father, the One in the heavens
 May your name be revered and loved.
 Thy kingdom come
 Thy will be done
 On earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread
 And forgive our offenses to you
 As we have forgiven all who offend us.
 And do not lead us into trouble,
 But save us from everything bad.
 For the kingdom is yours,
 As is the power and the glory—forever!
 (Gospel of Matthew, 6:9-13)

Love is the main thing.

If I speak with languages of men and of angels, but do not have love,
I am just making noise.
And if I can prophesy, and understand all mysteries and knowledge;
And if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains—but have not love,
I am nothing.
And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned,
But have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous,
Love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act like a jerk;
It does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not keep a list of wrongs suffered,
Does not get happy over things that are wrong, but rejoices in truth;
Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never gives up.

Prophecy, languages, knowledge—they will come to an end.
Our knowledge and our prophecies are partial,
But when the perfect comes the partial disappears.
When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, think like a child, reason like a child;
When I grew up, childish things dropped away.

For now we see dimly, as in a mirror, but then face to face;
Now I know in part, but then I shall know fully,
Just as I am now known to God.
But three things remain: Faith, hope, love, these three—
And the greatest of these is Love.
(1 Corinthians 13)

The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
(1 John 4:8)

By this everyone will know that you are my students, because of the kind of love you
have for one another.
(John 13:35)

*

Forever

And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp
nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall live
with Him forever.
(Revelations 22:5)