

Q: How does one attain enlightened consciousness? (9-5-26)¹

*If you have access to recording 0297A and would like to hear Joel answer this question, he begins at approximately **42:15**. If you have a streaming service subscription, you can [go directly to this question and answer by clicking/tapping here](#). The recording will already be queued; simply tap the play button.*

A: And this I can only give to you from personal experience. In other words, I am not laying down a rule which says that this is the only way. There may be dozens of ways, but this is the way that worked itself out in my experience, and which I have been passing on to our students for thirty years, or nearly that.

The first step toward receiving enlightenment lies in a practice that Brother Lawrence called "practicing the presence of God." Now, in my own experience, it worked out not quite the way Brother Lawrence worked his out; in quite a different way, and with different results, but the principle is the same.

On waking in the morning, instead of either lying there daydreaming or jumping out of bed quickly to get ready for the day, remain there for about five minutes and begin immediately to reach out to that word "God." Let that word "God" come into your consciousness. And then see what unfolds from there. Something along this line of:

"God, God. God is where I am, or this is the day the Lord hath made. This must be a good day. God governs my day. The place whereon I stand is holy ground; God is here. God is to be the activity of this day. God is to be the all in all of my day. Ah yes, yes, it says, 'Lean not unto thine own understanding. Acknowledge Him in all thy ways.' Acknowledge Him. I acknowledge God as having given me my rest and sleep. I recognize God as bringing me to awakeness. I recognize God as having brought daylight after night. I recognize God as functioning in the incoming and outgoing of the tides. I recognize God. Even if the trees outside are barren right now in January, I know that God is doing something about it, for in a few weeks, a few months, there will be buds, and blossoms, and fruit. I know that God is at work in every phase of life, regardless of any appearances to the contrary."

We are out, and we make our physical preparations for the day, and we come to breakfast. And here we have to give pause because there is a temptation to believe that we have that breakfast because we had money to buy it. No. No. Money wouldn't grow it. No. It took God functioning through nature. And so we can say, "God can set a table in the wilderness, and God does set my table, regardless of the human activities of my day."

We prepare to leave the house, whether for marketing or shopping, or whether for business. Always we are to pause at the door before we go through it to realize that the Presence has gone before me—the Presence that prepares a place for me, the Presence that makes the crooked places straight. I, of my own self, cannot do very much in this

day, except that the grace of God goes with me and before me. We have duties to perform, tasks to perform, labors to perform, and how wonderful it is then to realize, "He performeth that which is given me to do. He perfecteth that which concerneth me. He that is within me is greater than any of these problems of the day."

And so on throughout the day and on into the night, some acknowledgment of God. And we are thereby fulfilling Scripture, which says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee" and also, "Acknowledge him in all thy ways, and he will give thee peace." And finally, the Master, in the fifteenth chapter of John: "If you abide in this word; if you let this word abide in you, you will bear fruit richly. If you do not abide in it; if you do not let it abide in you, you will be as a branch of a tree that is cut off and withereth."

So it is, then, that we go through days and weeks of consciously bringing to remembrance the word "God," and the importance of God, the need for God, the reliance on God, the function of God in our experience. And it only takes days, a week, two, three, until we find that an inner stillness has developed within us—an inner peace that we never knew before, an inner assurance that something greater than ourselves is on the field. Then, we come to our second step, which is meditation.

Now, until one has found an inner peace, an inner quiet, they will find meditation impossible. The human mind just won't be still. But if, through the practice of that presence of God, an inner stillness is attained, then meditation is very simple. You sit down and ponder some idea of God—whatever comes into your mind—for a few minutes, and then be quiet, and you are in meditation, receptive and responsive to whatever may come into you from within you.

Remember, everything now is taking place within you. The kingdom of God is within you. This quiet is established within you. This peace is established within you and, finally, the impartations come to you from within you. And, when this begins to happen, you start your life of living by grace, rather than under the law. And you will now find that the physical laws and mental laws, which functioned so strongly in your experience, begin now to lessen, and you are less subject to material and mental laws, and more and more receptive to the spiritual.

And so this goes on until, eventually, you discover this—that whereas before you were blind, now you see. Whereas before you had a darkened, material consciousness that loved, hated, or feared that which existed in the visible realm, now all of a sudden, your consciousness is so enlightened that you can look out here and say, "I shall not fear what mortal man can do to me. I will not put my faith in princes. I will not lean on that which is external, on that which is visible, for now I have discovered that all that is visible is made of the substance which is invisible."

And so, from now on, the reliance is on your own enlightened consciousness, your own

developed spiritual consciousness. And then you can understand why the Master could say, "I am the bread, and I am the wine. I am the meat. I am the water." In other words, I embody my good within my own being. And instead of trying to get it from out there, from people, instead of trying to get it up there from God, I understand now what it means: "Open out a way for the imprisoned splendor to escape." For all of the good that can ever flow into anyone's life is, at this moment, stored up in their consciousness. And all that is necessary is for them to find a way to open out so that it can flow out from within them. And the way is, naturally, attaining some measure some measure—even a grain—of this illumined consciousness.

You see, Scripture speaks of the "man of earth" and then "the man who has his being in Christ." The man of earth is the darkened, mortal consciousness. The man who has his being in Christ is probably that same man after the illumination, just as we have seen it with Gautama, who was only a man and then, in the moment of illumination, became the leader of an entire nation. We see it with Moses, who was only a shepherd, only a man, but in one brief moment of illumination, he becomes the whole leader of the Hebrew people and is empowered to take them out of slavery into freedom. We find it with Christ Jesus, who was a Hebrew rabbi, but, with illumination, he becomes the whole of the world's hope, not only in the Christian world, but as you travel the rest of this world, you find out how the rest of the world also realizes that the revelation of Jesus Christ is the hope of all the world. A man! A man, a student, a rabbi.

But no, with illumination, he's no longer the son of man; he's the Son of God. No longer is he Jesus, but Peter says, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." So you'll find, in your experience, that there are housewives, and there are clerks, and there are businessmen and professional men, and they're just men and women. And then you'll find that they turn to a metaphysical or spiritual teaching, and they work with it faithfully, conscientiously, consistently, and then all of a sudden, they're healers and teachers. And you say, "What, what brought this about?" Well, it wasn't their human learning because if they could memorize this whole Bible, they probably couldn't heal a headache with it. If they could memorize all of the metaphysical textbooks that have ever been written, I doubt that it would help them to heal a headache.

But the moment that their reading of the Bible or their reading of their textbook goes a step further into *practicing* these principles, they begin to develop this consciousness, and their darkened mind, or Spirit, or consciousness, becomes illumined. And in one moment, they make the transition from just a man or woman to a healer, which is the equivalent of the Christ, the savior; that which forgives, that which transforms, that which raises the dead. All of this is the enlightened consciousness of an individual.

Now, our experience shows this: First of all, we as students must have presented to us certain specific principles of practice. I'm sure that all of the metaphysical movements have their particular ones. We, in our work, have the book *Practicing the Presence*, which

is our textbook on that subject. We have *The Art of Meditation*, which is our textbook on that subject. Now, as we practice faithfully these particular principles, not merely reading them or memorizing them, putting them into practice, all of a sudden, enlightenment begins to dawn, and we say: "Whereas I was blind, now I see. Now, I know what an illusion is. It isn't anything out here. Can't be. An illusion is nothing more or less than a non-existing mental image, something that has no substance, no law, no cause."

So it is, when you're called upon to heal, and you realize, "Certainly God couldn't have made a disease; therefore, the very appearance must be illusory." And so, you can start in, not to remove the illusion, but to smile at it, in the realization of the fact that now you know the nature of mirage, or illusion, and you know why Jesus Christ said, "Bless them that curse you. Forgive them that do evil unto you. Resist not evil." Why? It has no power unless you, in the three-dimensional mind, give it power.

So, to briefly sum up, here we are: each one a potential Buddha, or a potential Christ, each one with the full capacity for spiritual enlightenment; each one of us with a consciousness that goes beyond the physical and the mental. And then the next question is, "What will I do about it?" And the answer to that is, "What do we want out of life?"

Now, we can go as far as we like. Or we can start with this, and when we get to the stage where we see a few little miracles, some "loaves and fishes," a few healings, a happier home, we can stop and say, "Well, I've arrived." Or, we can look ahead into that Master's revelation, which says that My kingdom is not of this world. So, even if you have more money, or a happier marriage, or a nicer family, or a better home, that still is not *My* world. And then you get curious about what *My* world is like. And once that curiosity is aroused, there's no more rest. No more rest. Not on earth, anyhow.

But joyous experiences come for this reason, and it's all worthwhile. The moment that you attain a measure, a slight measure, of this spiritual consciousness, you will find that material and mental laws fade at your presence, even when you don't consciously give a treatment, even when you do not consciously say a prayer.

The very fact that you are that illumined, that you no longer hate, fear, or love the forms of this world, does it. That is what happened when the woman pressed through the throng and touched the hem of the Master's robe, and he didn't even know she was there, but she was healed. And then when he recognized it, and then he knew she had touched his consciousness, a consciousness which did not hate or fear sin or disease.

He could say to the woman who committed the number one crime in the entire Hebrew faith, that which is greater than murder in our day today—adultery—to the Hebrew, adultery is unthinkable, so much so that a woman guilty of it must be stoned to death. But not the Master; the Master could look at the worst sin in his whole religious catalog

and say, "Neither do I condemn thee." He could look at the thief on the cross and say, "I will take you with me into paradise this night."

In other words, in the fourth-dimensional consciousness, all of the evils of this world become nothingness, and they're dissolved.

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