

REALITY AND ILLUSION

Optional Study and Practice Suggestions for Recording 222B, “Mind Imbued with Truth and the Temple”

*In the first session of this study program, Joel taught the meaning of Reality and unreality, or illusion. In this session, he takes us to a deeper understanding, explaining that what appears to be good is just as unreal as what appears to be evil. He emphasizes that what we behold is not the illusion. Our **sense** of what we behold, our **perception** of it, is the illusion. In other words, an illusion is always in the mind; it is never externalized. So we must not “judge by appearances,” but reject them and see through them to the invisible Reality.*

Understanding the Lesson

As was noted in the first lesson, Joel has said that we will never experience God through the mind. However, he also says that if we want to advance spiritually, we must first understand the “letter of truth.”

In that spirit, some “bare bones” key points from the lesson are given below. After listening to the recording and/or reading the corresponding Chapter 8 in *Spiritual Discernment*, can you expand on these points as if you were explaining each one to a new student?

Use any method you like—jotting down notes, or just thinking through your explanation, or even creating pictures that capture the essence of the point.

If you engage in this exercise, you might find that you are not completely clear about something, and that new questions arise for you. It can be helpful to note these questions and use them for contemplation.

Here are some “bare bones” points from the class. You might think of others as well.

- Humanhood is a state of mortal illusion.
- Physical harmony is just as illusory as physical discord; wealth is just as much of an illusion as poverty.
- Your body, your wealth, and this world are not illusions. Your *sense* of them, or your *perception* of them, is the illusion.
- An illusion is always within your own mind. An illusion is never externalized. (What are some examples?)
- There is nothing “out here” but the life of God. God made all that was made, and all that God made is good.
- When a discordant appearance confronts us, we do not try to change the picture. We realize the invisible Christ.

- My mind, imbued with truth, is a law of harmony to any situation. (Why?)
- We must not judge by appearances; we must judge righteous judgment. (What is “righteous judgment?”)
- A practitioner does not heal you. The practitioner sees through the picture to the perfection that already exists.
- Thy grace is my sufficiency in ALL things.
- I have overcome the world.
- We are in the kingdom of God *now*, but we are not experiencing it.
- The only destruction of error is meeting one individual that does not accept it.

Supplementary Recording

In preparing for this study program, we reviewed several classes in which Joel gives excellent presentations about reality and illusion, but they are intermixed with other topics. We said that from time to time, we would post the best of these as additional study offerings, so that you will have the opportunity to hear them. **Recording 222A, titled “Soul – Mind – Body”** is the class that immediately preceded our current study class, and is one of the recordings that has a good section on reality and illusion.

Certainly, you are welcome to listen to the entire class, but the section on reality and illusion begins at **34 minutes 34 seconds**. To get to that place on the recording, simply click on the slider bar until you reach 34:34.

The supplementary recording is on the [same page as Recording 222B](#). Simply scroll down the page to find it.

To hear recording 222A by telephone, call **1-641-715-3900** and enter **391479#**.

Practice

In this class, once again Joel makes the case for study and practice:

*As you [encounter] the same principle a dozen times, it clarifies itself to you. Therefore, when you have read this principle back in The Infinite Way, and probably come across it in another form in Consciousness Unfolding, and then struck it again in The Master Speaks, and then a few times in The Letters, by the time you come to this class, you’re having no difficulty with what I’m saying. It’s really the old, old story again that **the more we bring this into our consciousness, the deeper it sinks.***

Now when we first hear it, it is only intellectual knowledge. When we first read it, it is only intellectual knowledge. That’s why it has no healing power. That’s why students can go through one or two classes and say, “I’m no different than I was when I started.” And it may

very well be true. But watch the student after six or eight or nine classes or after they have had two, three, four, or five years of study and practice.

What happens is that the truth that was first taken in intellectually begins to go from the mind down to the heart. At first it is an intellectual agreement, but later it becomes a spiritual perception. That is why the students who have been with me the longest are the ones that are doing the best work. There’s nothing personal about it. There is no personality involved. It’s only that the constant being with them, the constant giving to them of these principles, the constant breaking down of material sense gradually unfolds their spiritual sense.

*Now all spiritual teaching has to be like that. Nobody can impart a spiritual teaching in a book or in a class. Spiritual teaching takes place over the years. Spiritual teaching takes place through what is called time, effort, and devotion. **And the amount of time, effort and devotion that the student puts in, is the exact degree of spirituality they are going to take out.***

If you listen a second time to Recording 222B, the recording for our current session, you will find several places in the recording where Joel suggests practices or contemplations. Here is just one, in which Joel suggests how we can practice dealing with appearances:

*Now you are the offspring of God. You are spiritual. You are heir of God, joint heir with Christ to all of the heavenly riches. You are in the kingdom of God **now**. Your body is the temple of the living God **now**. Your business is the temple of the living God. Your family is the temple of the living God. Your home is the temple, because God constitutes all that God made. God is the reality of your being, your body, your business, your home, your family, your health, your supply, your profession, your art, your talent. God constitutes these.*

Therefore you can say, “I am the temple of the living God.” Or you can say, “My body is the temple of the living God. My talent is the temple of the living God. My business is the temple of the living God. My art, my profession, my home, my family life, my community life”—these are temples. God raised them up; God erected them, and God maintains them and sustains them.”

Now you, having spent years of study, you look out and you see a wrecked temple, physical temple, mental, moral or financial temple. By now, you don’t believe in appearances, because you know that appearances are only the product of this mesmeric illusion, like the sky sitting on the water, the tracks coming together in the distance, the mirage out in the desert. You know now that these are only mesmeric pictures. They exist only up here in universal belief.

But now, instead of fearing them and hating them, now you look right through them and say, “I know thee who thou art—the fabric of nothingness, the fabric of hypnotism, the son of your father the devil, nothingness, no power, no presence.”

And so by not believing in appearances, by not accepting them, by consciously rejecting them, by refusing to entertain them and by a trace of spiritual discernment which enables you to know that there couldn’t possibly be a God and a wrecked temple, especially when God created that temple to begin with, and God is its law, its creator, maintainer and sustainer, and the substance of it, then your mind imbued with truth is now the law unto any situation and to every situation.

Scripture Quotations

For those who enjoy working with Scripture, these quotations relate to this lesson and any one of them could serve as the basis for a contemplation. Other relevant verses from Scripture may come to you as you contemplate.

John 7:24

"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (KJV)

"You must not judge by the appearance of things but by the reality!" (J.B. Phillips)

"Look beneath the surface so you can judge correctly." (NLT)

Gospel of Thomas, Saying 113

[Note: The Gospel of Thomas is an ancient text discovered in 1945 near Nag Hammadi, Egypt. Scholars date the text from as early as AD 200 to as late as AD 250. The Gospel of Thomas is different from the familiar gospels of the New Testament. It is not a narrative account of the life of Jesus but consists of sayings attributed to Jesus. Modern scholars do not consider the Apostle Thomas to be the author of this document, and the author remains unknown.]

(113) His disciples said to him, "When is the kingdom going to come?" [Jesus said,] "It is not by being waited for that it is going to come. They are not going to say, 'Here it is' or 'There it is.' **Rather, the kingdom of the father is spread out over the earth, and people do not see it.**" (Layton)

2 Corinthians 12:9

[Note: Joel often quotes this verse as "My grace is thy sufficiency in all things."]

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (KJV)

"My grace is enough for you: for where there is weakness, my power is shown the more completely." (J.B. Phillips)

"My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." (NLT)

John 18:36

"My kingdom is not of this world." (KJV)

"My kingdom is not founded in this world." (J.B. Phillips)

"My kingdom is not an earthly kingdom" (NLT)

John 16:33

"I have overcome the world." (KJV)

Psalm 17:15

"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." (KJV)

"When I awake, I will see you face to face and be satisfied." (NLT)

1 Corinthians 6:19

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (KJV)

"Have you forgotten that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you, and that you are not the owner of your own body?" (J.B. Phillips)

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own." (NLT)

"Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit, Who lives within you, Whom you have received [as a gift] from God? You are not your own."
(Amplified Bible, Classic Edition)

Recommended Reading for the Study Program

The recommended reading list is for the entire study program was given at the end of the [Optional Study material for Session 1.](#)