

REALITY AND ILLUSION

Optional Study and Practice Suggestions for Recording 497B, “Reality and Concepts”

In the first session of this study program, Joel taught the meaning of Reality and illusion. In the second session, he explained that what appears to be good is just as unreal as what appears to be evil, and that what we behold is not the illusion. The illusion is our sense of what we behold, our perception of it. An illusion is always in the mind; it is never externalized.

In the third session, Joel connected illusion with the spiritual principle of one power, pointing out that if there is only one infinite power, there can be no other power, so whatever is perceived as another power must be an illusion. He spoke about the practice of protective work and explained the role of the mind in forming illusions.

In the fourth session, Joel related Reality and illusion to the healing work, emphasizing that to be effective, we must come to the realization that God is the only Reality, and that sin, disease, death, lack, limitation, and any other appearances must become as unreal to us as the water on the desert.

In the fifth session, Joel revisited and expanded on two key points: one power and the nature of illusion. He emphasized that nothing and nobody is either good or evil and spoke about how that idea is used in healing work.

In this final session, Joel asks the important question, “How do we make the transition from the human to the divine? How do we put off the human self and put on the Christ-self?” He reveals that the way we can do this is by giving up false concepts, false views, and false ideas of God, man, and the universe; by recognizing the unreal nature of these illusory appearances and standing fast in the Reality.

Summary of the Lesson

As always, we encourage you to do your own summary of the class in whatever form you prefer, because each person will find different points that speak to them. However, if it is helpful to you as a quick review, you are welcome to use this summary of recording 497B. The bolded passages indicate key ideas that we found to be worthy of reflection. You will probably find others as well.

The Infinite Way message has to do with Reality and correcting the false concepts of Reality that we entertain. When we are enlightened to spiritual truth, the light we receive is this: **God expressed Himself as individual you and me, and God constitutes your life, mind, soul, and body. This spiritual Presence and Power within you is called by many names—Emmanuel, the Christ, or Buddha. It is endowed to heal the sick, raise the dead, feed the hungry, forgive sinners, and multiply loaves and fishes. Its function is to maintain**

harmony in your being and body, forgive your sins, keep you from temptation, and provide abundance in every aspect of life.

Our ignorance of this truth prevents our demonstration of it. Most of us were falsely educated into a material concept of life, so it is not our fault that we do not exercise our God-given dominion. But once I know the truth, I alone am responsible for living through this Christ. No longer can I excuse myself on the grounds of ignorance. It is more a matter of laziness.

Once you know this truth, you must acknowledge that it is true about *every* individual. Only then are you entertaining the truth about Reality. Otherwise you are still entertaining false concepts, ideas, or opinions, and suffering from them. If we believe that man is mortal, or that life is limited, or if we entertain other false concepts of God, man, or the universe, we box ourselves in mentally just as much as did those who believed the horizon was the end of the earth. **The truth is that this is an *incorporeal* universe, not material or physical, despite appearances.**

There is somebody called YOU who determines what goes into your mind. Your body is not YOU; your body is yours. Your mind is not YOU; your mind is yours. **What you take into your mind will appear as your world—your body, your business, your home.** When you know this, it gives you dominion over your life. When you go to a class, YOU are the one who decides to go, not your mind or body. Your mind and body have to come along with YOU. Similarly, **YOU determine how much of your time and attention you will give to putting truth into your mind and how much time you will give to the outside factors of life.**

This one called "YOU" has two aspects. One is the natural man, who is not under the law of God. But since you have come to spiritual truth, this aspect of you is likely now half under the law of God and half under the laws of world, living partly under law and partly under grace.

The second aspect of "YOU" is the You that can live without taking thought or even having to know truth. This is your Christ-self. Presently, you may have only a limited degree of awareness of this indwelling Christ, but as you advance on the spiritual path, the "human" you fades, and you experience your Christ-self more and more.

How do we make this transition from the human to the divine? How do we put off the human self and put on the Christ-self? By giving up false concepts, views, and ideas of God, man, and the universe. For example, in looking at group of people, it is humanly natural for the mind to see old, young, sick, well, thin, stout, and so forth. But there is no truth in that vision. You are seeing false *concepts* of those people, and you are still in humanhood. **But to the degree that you can look with *spiritual discernment* and see each individual as incorporeal, spiritual, divine being, you are living from your Christ-self.** If you pity anyone, you are living from your human self, but if you refuse to accept the appearances or refuse to fasten them to the individual and can say, "I know thee who thou art," you are living from your Christ-self.

As you hold to spiritual truth in spite of appearances, your own life improves. Just by knowing the truth about another, you bring harmony to yourself. Each of us is responsible for our demonstration of life, and **the way is not so much knowing the truth about ourselves, but knowing the truth that our friends, relatives, AND enemies all constitute God's universe, kingdom, and creation. If the world doesn't know this truth, it pays the penalty of ignorance, but as long as you can behold God as all creation, your universe will be intact.** If you abide in truth and let truth abide in you, you will bear fruit richly. But if not, you are as a branch of a tree cut off that withers and dies.

In the beginning of our spiritual life, we are responsible only for our OWN demonstration of forgiving, doing unto others, and not resisting evil. As we gain enough spiritual light to have the conviction that God constitutes the universe, and to automatically disregard appearances, we draw to ourselves those in darkness. Then they become part of our responsibility, and as we have freely received, we must freely give. But we need only concern ourselves with those who are led to us for enlightenment. Some on the spiritual path gain so much light that they have no personal or family problems, and they undertake to do a world work from behind the scenes to bring enlightenment to the world without having to proselyte or preach.

We are limited ONLY by the concepts we entertain. If our life is not testifying to grace, we are still entertaining worldly concepts. You can only live by grace in the degree that you can surrender false concepts and give up the belief in the reality of the material universe.

One revelation that will help us release material concepts is this: **Nothing of itself is good or evil. Our concepts make things good or evil.** If you can accept that and live from it, you change how the things of this world affect you. **When you withdraw the belief in two powers from your mind, you do not experience two powers.** When you can see that no material form is good or evil of itself, then none of those forms can act for good or evil upon you.

In Infinite Way healing, you relax in the assurance that there is neither good nor evil in any form or effect. Despite any appearance, you hold fast to the truth that all qualities emanate from God, so all quality is *spiritual*; not good or bad, but spiritual. It was the acceptance of the belief in good and evil that constituted the so-called “fall of man,” and when you no longer have that belief in externalized good or evil, you are back in the Garden of Eden in divine harmony.

So we train ourselves to look through appearances and realize there is neither good nor evil, only spiritual. The difficulty with this comes when we see what we consider GOOD appearances—flowers, pets, children. But **when you can give up calling anything good or evil and really hold to “I know thee who thou art. There is neither good nor evil in you, only God, Spirit, Reality,” this changes your concept of the entire world.** “Judge not by appearances. Judge righteous judgment.”

BIBLE QUOTES

Joel’s classes often shed new light on familiar Bible verses, and they take on a deeper meaning for us. This class illuminates many Scripture quotations to contemplate anew, such as:

- “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17: 20-21 KJV)
- “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” (Luke 17:11 KJV)
- “For there is no respect of persons with God.” (Romans 2:11 KJV)

- "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. . . . A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee." (Psalm 91:1, 7 KJV)
- "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (John 15:5-6 KJV)
- "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. (Matthew 18:21-22 KJV)
- "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matthew 7:12 KJV)
- "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34 KJV)
- "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (John 7:24 KJV)
- "One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these." (Mark 12:28-31 NLT)

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](#).

Please Note: In preparing for this session, we found another excellent chapter to add to the recommended reading list for this topic of Reality and Illusion. It is from *A Parenthesis in Eternity*, Chapter 27, "Living Above the Pairs of Opposites."