

**Optional Study and Practice Suggestions for Chapter 5,
“Our Real Identity,” in *Awakening Mystical Consciousness***

A key part of awakening to mystical consciousness is coming into the realization of our true identity. Joel speaks often about the importance of realizing our true identity, and he has said that ignorance of our true identity is the only cause of error in our experience and the main barrier to progress on the spiritual path:

Our ignorance of our true identity is the only cause of error in our experience, and it is in proportion as we regain the Father’s house—that’s the experience of the prodigal—it is in proportion as we determine to return to the Father’s house, the Father consciousness, and realize, “Why God, the Father, is my consciousness. God, the Father, is the author of my life, the architect of my life, and therefore, my life must show forth the perfection of Its creator.” Then do we begin to restore harmony through spiritual realization.¹

The main barrier to progress on the spiritual path lies in the personal sense of the word “I.” We cannot live this life through and in Consciousness, and at the same time keep indulging that word “I” in its human sense. The two are contradictory to each other. Whenever we say, “I am healthy; I am wealthy; I am grateful; I am loving; I am forgiving,” we are indulging in personal sense which will prevent us from reaching our ultimate goal.²

Key Points in the Chapter

This chapter addresses our real identity, or the nature of individual being, which is one of the four major principles of The Infinite Way. It sheds light on several aspects of this topic, including:

- The meaning of true spiritual identity.
- The body.
- How spiritual identity relates to spiritual healing.
- The eternal, unchanging relationship of oneness with God.
- The nature of prayer.
- The unreality of time and space.
- God as the government of my life.
- The Christ.

Did you catch the key lessons in the chapter? To check, see if you could answer these questions that could conceivably come from a new student:

- I understand Joel’s description of my “true spiritual identity,” but why don’t I experience that?
- If the physical body is a concept, what is it a concept of? Do we have two bodies?
- How does the true identity of an individual relate to spiritual healing?

¹ Recording 7B-1, from the 1952 New Washington Series, titled “Questions and Answers Including Supply, Tithing, Giving.”

² *Consciousness Transformed*: March 24, 1963, “The Inner Life.”

- I have always been taught that God is separate from “me.” Would you please elaborate on what Joel means by a “relationship of **oneness**” with God?
- What is “answered prayer”? Often, I feel that my prayers are not answered.
- I thought God was omnipresent in all time and space, so what does Joel mean when he says that there is no time or space in God?
- Please explain “The government is on His shoulders.”
- I was always taught that the Christ meant Jesus, but I see that Joel does not mean that. Would you clarify Joel’s use of the term “the Christ”?

A Recording for Optional Study

Joel has many wonderful recordings on real identity and the nature of individual being, and you probably have your own favorites. One that we find quite helpful is recording 601B, from the 1951 Second Portland Series, and we have posted it for optional study.

Recording 601B is posted on the same page as 97A, the source recording for our study chapter. This supplementary recording is the source material for Chapter 5, "God, the Substance of Universal Being," and Chapter 6, "The Substance of All Good," in [*Showing Forth the Presence of God*](#).

To listen to this supplementary recording by telephone, call **1-641-715-3900** and enter **883603#**.

If you have a library of recordings, or if you subscribe to the Joel Goldsmith Streaming Service, you might also want to consider any of these recordings, all of which are excellent on the topic of our real identity:

- 463A, from the 1962 Los Angeles Closed Class, titled “Son of God Raised Up”
- 463B, also from the 1962 Los Angeles Closed Class, titled “‘I’ Revealed”
- 464A, also from the 1962 Los Angeles Closed Class, titled “I Reveal Myself”
- 468A, from the 1962 Chicago Closed Class, titled “Discovery of My Self”
- 565A, from the 1964 London Closed Class, titled “Stature of Spiritual Manhood” (Joel’s last class)

Questions and Answers

Over the years, we have posted several questions and answers from Joel on the topic of the nature of individual being and real identity. You might enjoy reviewing them:

[10/7/17: “Man is an individuation of God” \(Explain\)](#)

[3/17/18: How is body to be regarded? As an ex-Christian Science practitioner, I am familiar with the concept of perfect spiritual body. But I am somewhat confused regarding The Infinite Way approach to the subject.](#)

[3/3/18: Please define Soul.](#)

[7/20/19: Some say there is no physical body, only spiritual body. What then is this body which we now use?](#)

7/6/19: Is it the material body which manifests God?

5/18/19: Christian Science teaches that the body is a sensual concept. The Infinite Way teaches that the body is the temple of the living God. Would you clarify this, please?

7/4/20: Please explain the term “the Christ” as it is used in our work.

3/7/20: A drop of water, though separate from the ocean, has the properties of the ocean, but when it is put back in the ocean it becomes merged in it. The drop no longer has its own identity. So with water, ice, and so forth. Now then, our identity is surely lost as we return to God.

The Body Exercise

In the sub-section of this chapter titled “The Invisibility of Spiritual Identity,” Joel talks about the nature of body. In several of his classes, Joel leads students in what he calls “the body exercise,” which is intended to help us recognize our true identity. If you have never done the body exercise or if you want to review it, you can listen to this excerpt from Recording 59A, from the 1954 Chicago Practitioner Class, titled “My Identity—Body—Communion.”

[Player for this excerpt is [HERE](#) on the website. (Scroll down the page.)]

To listen by telephone, call 1-641-715-3900 and enter 918546#.

Let God Run the Universe

In the sub-section “Prayer, A State of Receptivity” in this chapter, Joel states:

*After we have come to a place in our meditation where we can sit down and slide right into the rhythm of the universe, desire disappears. There is no desire: there is **just being in tune with the rhythm of perfect harmony.***

When I am thus centered, life flows with no conscious effort. I am not making the stars come out or the moon rise or the sun set. I am not trying to make flowers grow. I am just resting from labor. I am resting from the tiredness of thought, and I am perfectly content to let God run the universe.

Here Joel is describing the state of being a beholder, which is one dimension of the mystical consciousness. In the book *Consciousness Transformed*, Joel gives a practice that can be very helpful in developing that state. This is the talk from February 15, 1964, titled “Into the Mystical Consciousness.”

Good afternoon. Our 1963 work was to make the transition from metaphysical consciousness to mystical consciousness, and as you study the four tapes of the 1964 Honolulu Series and the papers so far, you will discover that we have been consciously making that transition and should either have made it by now or be right on the verge of attaining.

There is one final step you can take that will help you complete your realization, and that is this: Look out of this window and select a tree or a group of trees and behold that there is a law of life functioning in that tree—from the roots out to the fruit on the branches. Take it very

slowly. Look down into the roots beneath the soil and you will soon agree that the roots are drawing unto themselves from the surrounding earth, food which has been formed of the rain that has fallen, sunshine, fertilization, and that out of these surroundings is sent up into the trunk of the tree and out into the branches all that is necessary, not only for the sustenance of the tree, but for the forming of the leaves, the blossoms, and the fruit. All of this is possible, not by virtue of the roots or the surrounding earth, but by virtue of an invisible life force acting in and through the tree or upon it, producing the effects that are probably visible through a high-powered glass.

*The miracle of this exercise is that **you have been a beholder, but in no way have you had any part in what you beheld.** You did not bring it about, you did not start it into action, you merely beheld, and by your beholding came into the awareness of that which has been taking place out there in those trees before we even came into this room. What is the miracle? You do not set God at work or to work; you do not bring the power of God into any situation. God was there before you, because of omnipresence. It makes no difference if you had a wrong thought this morning or if you committed a wrong deed yesterday. It has nothing to do with what is going on in God's universe because it is not **your** purity that makes God work. It is **God's** function. God's grace is not dependent on how good or how spiritual **you** are. God's grace is dependent on how good **God** is, and any saint or sinner can behold God at work once their eyes are open to omnipresence.*

*Think a moment. If the particular tree you are beholding is barren at the moment, what kind of a treatment will you give it to make it fruitful? In mysticism you will not give it any treatment. You will know that, regardless of appearances, omnipresence means that God has been at work "since the beginning" and "unto the end of the world." There is no presence and there is no power to prevent the activity of God. Scripture says, "Who shall hinder him? . . . Who shall prevent?" What shall prevent God? Therefore, **the life of a mystic is the life of a beholder, one who through spiritual discernment sees God at work.** "What did hinder you," in spite of appearances? "Neither do I condemn thee," in spite of appearances. It must be spiritual discernment that enables you to look at a barren tree and not give a treatment, as if you are greater than God or as if God could be made to start some benevolent action today. "God is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. . . . Before Abraham was, I am with you. . . . I will be with you unto the end of the world." See how all this breaks down appearances, yet it does not change God and it does not start God in action. It brings the awareness of omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and knowing this truth sets you free. Every problem has its foundation in the belief of the absence of God, and most prayers are aimed at bringing God into the picture, which is impossible. "Before Abraham was" and "Unto the end of the world," God is. The beauty is that, in spite of appearances, nothing else is.*

If you wonder why it takes a long time to attain the mystical consciousness, remember that it takes as long as is necessary to develop the consciousness that can look at barrenness and see God at work, without attempting to "make it so." Suppose you are looking at a tree that appears to be dying. Remember that this is the place in which this principle is even more necessary than when you are looking at a healthy tree where you can readily agree that God is functioning. Now, through spiritual discernment alone, you have to agree that there is no evil, no death, no destructive power, and therefore there is no need for a God to change anything, improve anything, or heal anything. So whether or not that tree dies is up to who is beholding it. The one who can behold that tree and can smile because of the spiritual discernment of seeing God at work will watch that tree be raised up into life. The beholder of God in action bears witness to God in action.