

**Optional Study and Practice Suggestions for Chapter 6,
“The Word and Words,” in *Awakening Mystical Consciousness***

Joel covers several points in this chapter, but the primary one, which is reflected in the title of the chapter, is understanding the difference between “words” and “the Word,” and knowing how to apply that understanding in our practice.

If the content in this chapter sounds familiar, there is a good reason for it. In describing the difference between “words” and “the Word,” Joel is really giving us a different way of thinking about the distinction he draws between contemplation and meditation. Contemplation and meditation are also the two parts that Joel describes for healing work. Did you see the similarity?

Difference between “words” and “the Word”

Let’s review the key points that Joel makes about the difference between “words (small w)” and “the **W**ord (capital W).”

- “words” (small w) refers to the statements and ideas that you know and bring to mind, or that you intellectually declare **about** the nature of God or Truth. These are your thoughts about God’s law, God’s presence, God’s power, God’s being, God’s man, God’s universe, and God’s kingdom. When we are engaged in contemplation, we are pondering, or thinking about, these ideas, or these “words,” as they are called in this chapter.
- When you stop thinking about what you know, and you enter the silence and become quiet and receptive, the awareness and experience of God’s presence can come to you. Joel refers to this experience as “the **W**ord (capital W).”
- What is written in Scripture and in metaphysical books is not **T**ruth Itself (capital T). It is a collection of statements *about* Truth. “**T**ruth (capital T) cannot be written or spoken; **T**ruth is your consciousness, or your awareness of **T**ruth. In this chapter, **T**ruth is referred to as “the **W**ord.” “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
- The **W**ord is never an effect; it is cause. It comes to you from within, not from without. When the **W**ord comes to you, your needs are fulfilled, because the **W**ord of God is the substance of life, and “The **W**ord is made flesh.” We perceive the **W**ord as forms that we understand—the forms of body, business, home, profession, ability, clients, supply, or whatever the fulfillment of our need may be.
- If our “words” (our thoughts or spoken words) were the **W**ord, they would be quick and sharp and powerful, and error would disappear in their presence. But our “words”—what we know intellectually, think, state, or declare about God and God’s universe—constitute only the truth *about* the **T**ruth, or the “word (small w)” about the **T**ruth. “My thoughts are not your thoughts, saith the Lord.” (Isaiah 55:8)

Questions for Reflection

Joel says, “Even though you read these words, they are not yet power insofar as you are concerned. Even if they sound reasonable to you, and you can accept the message intellectually, it still is not power with you. It becomes power only **when you have buried it in your consciousness** and pondered it until from a depth within you, the answer and an acceptance of it—which might be called a conviction or realization—comes. The statements in a book—the words, sentences, and paragraphs—represent the truth about the **T** Truth, leading you back to the depths of your own withinness, where you **make room for the Word to come forth.**”

- What does it mean to “bury” the message in your consciousness?
- How does one “make room for the **W**ord to come forth”?

What Does This Mean for My Practice?

In Healing Work for Yourself or Others

- If someone comes to you for help (or if you are working to help yourself), when you are starting into healing work, you begin with a “treatment,” which is really another term for contemplation. Joel suggests that you start this contemplation with the word “God,” and bring to **conscious** remembrance the truths that you know about the nature of God and God’s universe of Spirit. In the language of this chapter, these thoughts, ideas, and declarations are “words.”

You do not resort to calling up words or thoughts that you have used in the past to deal with cases, because healing is not the fruitage of “words.” Healing comes only when the **W**ord is revealed. You refrain from thoughts and ideas about a human being, a patient, a disease, or a sin, lack, or any other discord. There is no truth about a human being except that of himself, he is nothing. Thus you do not try to know the truth about a human, nor do you try to know the truth about sin, disease, or death. There is no truth about sin, disease, death, or any other discord. They are illusions. Certainly, you can know the truth that **G**od is expressed as individual man, but that is knowing the truth about **G**od, not about a human.

- So the first part in healing work is this knowing the truth *about* God, bringing to mind all the truth you know *about* God. This constitutes the treatment, or contemplation, or the “words.” You are contemplating the truth *about* the **T** Truth. But the truth that we know with the mind is only our preparation for receiving the **W**ord Itself in the soul. There is a second part to healing work, which is the most important part.
- When your thinking and contemplating come to an end, you sit back in silence in a listening, receptive attitude. Joel calls this “meditation,” and it is the second part of healing work. In the silence, the Spirit of God, the **W**ord, can come to you; you can hear “the still small voice.” “Hearing” the still small voice does not necessarily mean that you hear anything. You might hear a voice, but you might just as well experience a flash of light, or a deep breath, or a feeling and then a release, as if a weight was dropped from you. Or you might experience something else entirely. Any of those experiences can be “hearing the **W**ord,” or “having the **W**ord come to you,” even though you may not have heard an audible word.

When you actually feel the **W**ord, if you need the Red Sea to open, it will open; if you need rain, rain will fall; if you need food or money, they will appear. Your need will be met. And, if you are helping another, as *you* experience the **W**ord, the one coming for help can be lifted into a higher consciousness too and experience harmony, grace, and peace. So we do not depend on “words.” We rely on “the **W**ord.”

- You may have to train yourself for a while before you can settle into that silence in an attitude of receptivity and wait for the **W**ord. Joel says that if you truly want to have that experience, you will make your only desire the experience of God, or the **W**ord, and you will sit down two or three times a day, remind yourself of every truth about God, God’s kingdom, universe, and creation, and then rest back and listen. The whole kingdom of God is always available to you, if you seek it.

In Working with Scripture and Spiritual Literature

- Passages from Scripture or from spiritual literature of themselves are “words.” But we can take them into contemplation and ponder them. Then at some point, we can rest back and listen for the true meaning to come forth—the **W**ord. Joel counsels us not to spend all our time just reading or listening, but to give plenty of time to contemplation and meditation.

In the book *Consciousness Transformed*, in the lesson for August 31, 1963, Joel illustrates what can come from this approach to studying Scripture. In that lesson, he is speaking about work that he did with students on Scripture and saying that the work bore great fruitage. He had given the students one Bible passage each day to work with and apply for twenty-four hours to see if something might take place in their experience that had not happened before.

One of the Bible passages he gave them was “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (Proverbs 3:5,6) Joel describes what had come to him when he contemplated that passage and then rested in the silence:

Take my word for it, you will really fall into a ditch if you trust in the Lord with all your heart because that is what the world is doing. In the light of what you know, is there a Lord separate and apart from your own being? And the moment you read, “Trust in the Lord,” did you instantly say, “There is no Lord to trust in except the divine consciousness which I am?” Therefore, the passage should really mean to trust the truth that God constitutes your consciousness, and your consciousness is governing your day, your business, your home. Are you remembering that this passage also means “Lean not unto thine own understanding” but turn within and let the divine consciousness within you reveal its harmonies and its grace?

“He shall direct thy paths.” Is there a “He?” No, your consciousness shall direct your paths. That which you are and that which I am is governing your life, that divinity which is the reality of you, that Son of God which is closer than breathing.

Do you not see how the Bible passage was veiled as long as you thought there was an entity somewhere who was going to direct your paths? The man who brought this passage through knew he was talking about the inner Self, but all the people knew was “Lord,” or

God, or Jehovah. That was how it had to come through in consciousness and that was the veil, because there is no “Lord.” There is only the I that I am. In the moment you recognize that the I that I am is one with God and has all that the Father has and trust the Self of you to be the all-knowing, all-power, all-presence, you are abiding in this passage of Proverbs, where before you were trusting in a God who does not exist.

On another day, he gave the students this quotation: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.” (Isaiah 26:3) Joel describes this revelation:

*Isaiah knew that this statement, the way it was stated, was not truth. He knew it had a hidden meaning. “**Thou** wilt keep him.” Who is “Thou?” God or Christ? No, you is “Thou,” and then you look down here somewhere in the area of your chest and say, “Oh! Thou is consciousness, my consciousness, the divine consciousness which God bestowed upon me in the beginning. That Thou will keep me in perfect peace if I keep my mind stayed on this truth, the omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence of this Thou within me, this divine consciousness.”*

Joel explained more about this practice:

*If you will keep your mind stayed on the omnipresence of the divine consciousness, its function is to speak to you as the **W**ord. And, if you keep your mind attuned to the hearing of the **W**ord, if you are trusting in the function of your consciousness and are trusting the consciousness of the **W**ord that is to come to you, you are then living by grace. . . .*

*Remember this: Your study has taught you that everything in *The Infinite Way* is a spiritual interpretation of Scripture. Because of this you can go back into your own consciousness and draw out the spiritual interpretation of these passages [the **W**ord]. It may come in a different form than I have given you today, but the principle will be the same.*

You might enjoy studying Scripture in this same way—first focusing on the “words” and then listening for the **W**ord, or the mystical meaning of the quotation. Take any Bible passage you like, perhaps one that you like but which has mystified you. Contemplate it, ponder it, and then rest back in the silence and wait for the **W**ord, the mystical meaning of the passage, to come forth.

In World Work

Now that you understand the idea of “words” and “the **W**ord,” do you think it can be applied to world work? If so, how?