

Optional Study and Practice for The Eight Most Important Chapters, Revisited
Session 5: “Break the Fetters That Bind You,” from *The 1958 Infinite Way Letters*
Recording 241A: “The Practice That Makes You Free”

What Joel Said About This Chapter

In the recording that we used as an introduction to this study series (453A), Joel said: “In the *1958 Infinite Way Letters*, you have ‘Break the Fetters that Bind You,’ and here again you have an entire lesson in **the nature of mesmerism, of hypnotism, of universal belief and how to break it.**”

Also, at the end of this chapter in “Across the Desk,” Joel says,

“When Darwin first presented his theory of the origin of mankind, it received very little attention, and that of a negative nature. Years later, the theory exploded in the minds of scholars, and a new era began. The few thousand words which you have just read in this Letter embody **one of the most important principles of my lifework.** These words you may receive with as much indifference as many received the result of Darwin’s lifework. They may make as slight an impact upon you today as Darwin’s explosive theory made upon his contemporaries a hundred years ago. But **if you will read and study this message and glimpse its underlying truth, the substance of this Letter may prove to be a turning point in your life and may be the means of ushering in a new day in your experience.** The years of my life spent in the search for truth led to the discovery of the principles of The Infinite Way, and whatever success has attended the work has been the result of the practice of these principles.”

What Are The “Fetters?”

Originally, the word “fetter” referred to a chain or manacle, typically placed around the ankles of a prisoner to restrain him. Today, the word means “something that severely limits one’s freedom of action or choice or makes movement or progress difficult.” Joel uses the word “fetters” to refer to the **world beliefs that operate mesmerically in human consciousness**, such as the so-called laws of disease, death, lack, and limitation.

How Do We “Break the Fetters?”

In this chapter and the source recording, Joel teaches how to free ourselves from the imposition of these mesmeric world beliefs, how to avoid being an unwitting victim of universal mesmerism, and how to be less affected by the conditions of the world.

As we study this chapter over the next two weeks, it is a good time to PRACTICE what Joel teaches and begin to develop the habits that will “break” the fetters.

What does Joel tell us to do?

1. UNDERSTAND the nature of mesmerism and how it operates.

Before we can break the spell of these mesmeric world beliefs, we have to understand their nature and how they operate. At the beginning of both the chapter and the recording, Joel explains this in detail, using a comparison to subliminal advertising.

He points out that the universal mesmeric beliefs of the human world are just as invisible as subliminal advertising, and that they operate in the same way—without your conscious awareness. Like subliminal advertising, mesmeric beliefs are aimed at the subconscious mind, not the conscious mind. You do not even know that the imposition of beliefs is taking place, and if you are not alert, you will obey their suggestions.

If we accept these world beliefs—even subconsciously—they will strike at us wherever we are weakest. On the human level, the body is subject to the mind, and the body can be governed by either the conscious or the subconscious activity of mind. So if we fear disease, world-mesmerism will take the form of some kind of illness. If we fear lack, world-mesmerism will take the form of poverty or limitation. If we have a tendency to false appetites, it will take the form of alcoholism, drug-addiction, or even gluttony. Mesmerism finds its way to our most vulnerable spot.

Wherever we are, mesmeric suggestions pour in continually from radio, television, social media, and world-consciousness. Everyone on the human plane is acting and reacting in accord with some suggestion that is being pumped into them from this mesmerism. We may not actually be tuned into the media directly; nevertheless, these suggestions are still being broadcast through the air. If we do not know that these world beliefs are assaulting us, we may become victims of them in one form or other. But if we know their nature and how they operate, we can protect ourselves from their effects.

How do we protect ourselves? First, we have to realize to some degree that humanly, we are antennas. We catch each other’s thoughts, moods, and dispositions; we react to each other’s feelings; we react to world feelings and tensions. If the rest of the country is fearing something, we will fear it too. Only when we recognize this can we begin to change the situation and become less and less responsive to outside influences.

Someone who does not believe that mesmeric beliefs can govern their experience will not take the time to learn how to avoid them. But once you are convinced that you do many things that you do not really want to do, and that you think thoughts that are not in your nature, you will begin to perceive that there is universal mesmerism that imposes itself on the ignorant mind, and you will be willing to do what it takes to separate yourself from it.

2. DECIDE to take charge of your own mind; REFUSE to let your mind be acted upon by world beliefs.

Joel tells us that once we understand the nature of mesmerism and how it operates, we have to **decide** whether we are going to wake up in the morning and accept any thought that comes to us, or whether we will take a positive stand and reject the negative.

In other words, we must decide that we will not leave our mind a blank for world belief to act upon us and compel us to follow its imposed suggestions. We must decide that we will do

our own thinking and be governed only by what we ourselves accept. When we make this decision, the effects of world-belief are lessened in our experience.

Joel says, “Everyone must learn to awaken in the morning and take hold of his own mind by realizing:

‘Nothing can enter my mind from without because my mind is an instrument through which I function—not an instrument through which somebody else functions or through which world-belief functions. My mind is an instrument given to me just as my body is given to me, and just as I keep my body inviolate, so I keep my mind inviolate, free from world-beliefs. I do not permit my mind to be used by suggestion, by outside influences, or by outside opinions or theories. I make my mind an instrument for the truth of God. My mind is an instrument through which I function.’

‘Universal mesmerism is not a power that can enter my consciousness; it seems to be a power and acts like a power only because of my ignorance of its nature. Now that I recognize it for what it is, I no longer respond to it, I no longer accept its suggestions, I no longer react to it. I am the temple of the living God, and all that the Father is flows through me.’”

We must do this **consciously**. We bar the possibility of world-thought entering our consciousness and operating in our experience. We **refuse** to let our mind be acted upon by world-beliefs and hold our mind open only to God.

3. Throughout the day, KEEP your consciousness filled with truth.

Joel says, “The evils of the world will not happen to us if we are living in obedience to the principle of **keeping consciousness filled with truth**, if we are **refusing to accept world-beliefs as power** and are **realizing that the only power operating within us is the power of truth**. Whether or not we consciously know a specific truth is not the point. The point is whether or not we know that the truth operating in our consciousness is power and that **nothing else is**.”

If we learn to abide in spiritual truth and apply that truth to every experience of daily living, negative thoughts and things that operate in the world through universal mesmerism will be nullified. If our consciousness is filled with truth, we cannot be made to accept a lie, and mesmerism is a lie. When we maintain our mind as a temple of God and let nothing enter that mind except what comes from God, we live in an inner peace.

We determine whether our human experience will be harmonious or inharmonious, successful or unsuccessful, good or evil, by our willingness to **set aside some part of every hour** to remind ourselves that we are not victims of whatever is floating around in the air, but that we are the outlet for the presence and power of God. Our mind is the temple of God, just as is our body, and we maintain its sanctity.

We take charge and **CONSCIOUSLY** recognize only one power, and that power not external to us, but within us, operating out from us. Anyone who is willing to **give sufficient time every day** to the recognition that even though world-beliefs exist, they do not exist as **power** can experience a measure of the immunity promised in Scripture: “Ye shall know the

truth, and the truth shall make you free.” “A thousand shall fall at your left hand and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not come nigh those who dwell in this truth.”

“World-beliefs can find no entrance into my consciousness because my consciousness is Truth expressing Itself. No human theories, beliefs, laws, or hypnotic suggestions can enter my consciousness to defile or to make a lie. All power—the power of Good, or God—flows out from within me to this world.”

At this stage of our experience, we should be able to shut ourselves out from world hypnotism, just as we can turn on any station on our radio or TV or turn it off completely. It may take us a few months or longer to arrive at this stage of consciousness, but it can only be accomplished **if it is practiced faithfully many times a day.**

For example, when something says, “I have a headache,” our immediate response must be, “No, it is not I who have a headache. This is universal sense striking at me.” Or if the suggestion comes, “I have a lack that I cannot fill,” the answer must be, “No, it is not I who have the lack. I am accepting a universal sense of lack.”

We do not have to accept limitation in any form—limitation of health, of pocketbook, or of human relationships. We do not have to accept limitation in any form because these limitations are merely manmade beliefs, which have no more foundation than the many theories which at one time were considered sound, but which today are dismissed as ludicrous.

But—and this is important—we must be sure that we do not believe that evils will not happen to us because some God will save us from them. No! The evils will not happen to us **because we keep our consciousness filled with truth.**

4. RECOGNIZE that hypnotism is not a power.

Do not make the mistake of fearing this invisible influence, for it is not a power except to those who are either ignorant of it or give it power. Consciously realize that this universal mesmerism is not a power that can enter your consciousness. Once you know the nature of mesmerism, you no longer respond or react to it. You stand fast in consciously knowing that I and my Father are one, all that the Father has is mine, and all that the Father is flows through me. You make yourself a state of receptivity to anything and everything that flows from the kingdom of God within, and consciously shut yourself off from the world’s mesmeric influence.

Joel says, “Ninety percent of the world’s errors can be avoided in proportion as we take hold of ourselves and **consciously—consciously—recognize no power but one, and that power not external to us, operating upon us, but within us, operating outward from us.**”

“Nothing can enter my being that defileth or maketh a lie, for I and the Father are one. I am subject only unto the law and life of God, the wisdom of God, the mind of God, the Soul of God. *I* am in the midst of me, and from that *I* comes my wisdom, my direction, my guidance, my protection, my sustenance. I turn only to It, and I am led and fed by It.”

In Summary

To “break the fetters that bind us,” we can take these steps:

1. UNDERSTAND the nature of mesmerism and how it operates.
2. DECIDE to take charge of your own mind; REFUSE to let your mind be acted upon by world beliefs.
3. Throughout the day, KEEP your consciousness filled with truth.
4. RECOGNIZE that hypnotism is not a power.

Every journey begins with a first step, and we can use these two weeks of study to take those steps toward our freedom. No one can do this for us. We alone can free ourselves of the invisible influence that exists as universal hypnotism.

How Long Will It Take?

Joel tells us that it can take months before we can separate ourselves from these universal beliefs and become receptive and responsive to the still small voice within, but that after just a few weeks of practice, we begin to be less and less receptive and responsive to some of these world-urges. But it can take months of work to arrive at a state of consciousness that simply does not respond to the things that the world is fearing, does not react to greed, selfishness, or sensuality, and is indifferent to the things that previously aroused anger, resentment, rebellion, or a desire for revenge in us.

How Do We Recognize Success?

We know that we are being freed from world-mesmerism when we respond less and less to the world’s impulses, fears, doubts, sins, lacks, and diseases; when we go through life less and less aware that those things are going on around us, or if we are aware of them, they make no impression upon us.

The Master said, “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” Until you break the hypnotic sense that makes you the victim of this silent thing that goes on, you will not only be *in* the world, you will be *of* it. But when we are free of world mesmerism, we are in the world but *not* of it. We are in the kingdom of God, and the still small voice can take over, direct us, and lead us into green pastures, beside the still waters. The inner spiritual impulse can do those things for us that Scripture promises.

A Question to Ask Oneself

Joel poses a question in this chapter that is worthy of reflection. He says, “The question is whether an individual believes that he is living as a human being in a world where hypnotism—a kind of subliminal perception—has been going on for generations, going on unknown to us as individuals, yet operative in our consciousness, or in what the psychologists now call the subconscious; or whether he recognizes that his mind is not subject to the suggestions and vagaries of world-beliefs, but is a transparency through which God functions.”

To paraphrase: Do you believe that you are living as a human being in a world in which hypnotism operates on your subconscious, or do you recognize that your mind is not subject to the suggestions of world beliefs, but is a transparency through which God functions?

Quotation Reference Card

The chapter “Break the Fetters that Bind You” includes four contemplative meditations, which are designated in the chapter text by asterisks (*). We have prepared a card with all four of these contemplations that can be a helpful reminder to recall the essence of this chapter throughout the day. To view, print, or download the card, [click/tap here](#).