

## Optional Study and Practice for The Eight Most Important Chapters, Revisited Session 7: “Introduction,” from *Practicing the Presence* Recording 476A: “A New Form of Practice”

*Clearly the very best practice we can do during our study of this chapter is to amplify our efforts to practice the Presence throughout the day. The following suggestions are merely enhancements to that practice.*

### What Joel Said About This Chapter

In the recording that we used as an introduction to this study series (453A), Joel said this about the Introduction to *Practicing the Presence*:

“Now, in the Introduction to *Practicing the Presence*, you have one of the most powerful chapters in our writings, because it explains the reason for practicing the Presence and how to practice the Presence, the function of practicing the Presence. And you see, whatever touches our lives has to touch us through our consciousness, and that means through our knowledge or through our ignorance. Whatever it is that we’re ignorant of cannot benefit us in our experience. Whatever truth we know helps to make us free.

“And so it is, The Infinite Way has really reintroduced into the western world the actual experience of practicing the presence of God and meditation. Now, none of these are new; none of these did I invent. These were all given to me in inner experience, in revelation, and in being given to me, I was also shown how these functioned through the mystics of old in the experience of those who embraced them. Through my own experience, I quickly learned that in proportion as I practiced the presence of God, in that proportion I lived and moved and had my being in an atmosphere of God, and the world did not penetrate it. The hates of the world, the fears of the world, the discords, the dishonesties of the world, these did not break through into me, because I was abiding in the Word, abiding in God, consciously having God abide in me.

“It’s all an act of your consciousness. *You* have to perform it. *You* have to understand why and how. It changes your life, because you’ll understand what the Master meant when he said, ‘My kingdom is not of this world.’

“Well, if you were going to continue to live in this world, to have a night’s sleep, get up in the morning and have a bath and breakfast, and get out into your work, you’re in this world, and you’re going to get some of the good of this world and some of the evil. You, individually, must come out and be separate by an act of your own consciousness, and the question has always been ‘How?’ And we have at least two answers in The Infinite Way: by practicing the presence of God, and later by meditation.

“And so this Introduction in *Practicing the Presence* is really worth the whole book itself, because without that Introduction, you hardly grasp the nature, the reason, really the story of the rest of the book.”

## What is Practicing the Presence? How Do I Practice the Presence?

In the Introduction to *Practicing the Presence*, Joel says that the secret of all successful living is consciously practicing the presence of God, daily and hourly. And in the excerpt referenced above, he says that students always ask the question, "How do I practice the Presence?"

In the optional study material for our 2018 program on the eight most important chapters, we provided a document that includes excerpts from Joel's writings and recordings that explain practicing the Presence as well as the "why" and "how" of the practice. You might enjoy reviewing it. To view, download, or print the latest version of that document, [click/tap here](#).

Also, recording 476A, which we used with this chapter, is a master class on how to practice the Presence, specifically when we are beset by a problem. Joel gives very clear instruction, and he encourages us to practice the technique, in spite of the fact that it is difficult. You may find it helpful to listen to the recording again to fully understand the practice he suggests.

## Some Key Points from the Chapter

Joel said that this chapter is "one of the most powerful chapters in our writings." Here are a few of the key points that bear out that opinion.

- The principle of life, the secret of all successful living, is making God a part of your very consciousness, something which Paul describes as "praying without ceasing."
- Practicing the presence of God consciously, daily and hourly, and abiding in some great universal spiritual truth of scripture will restore to you your original state of harmony, joy, and peace.
- Your life will only be complete when it is lived in God and has God living in it.
- The kingdom of God is WITHIN YOU, and that kingdom is established in you the very moment that you begin to contemplate His presence and His power within you. God is with you and will never leave you nor forsake you.
- The place whereon you stand is holy ground *as long as* you are contemplating the presence and the power of God within you, living *consciously* in the realization of God, and letting this realization of God dwell in you.
- Keep the Word of God alive in your mind, in your thought, and in your experience, and you will never know lack or limitation. Keep consciously before you the truth that no man on earth is your father; that there is only one Father, the creative Principle of all mankind, and you will never know anything but love from the people of this world.

## Bible Quotes

Joel cites many Bible passages that point to the discipline of practicing the Presence. Others may come to you as well. When we take them collectively, it is easy to see that the Bible has

always been teaching this practice. Any of these quotations would be ideal to use as we engage in practicing the Presence throughout the day.

- "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." (Isaiah 26:3)
- "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)
- "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Psalm 91:1)
- "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." (Isaiah 30:15)
- 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. (John 15:5)
- "He performeth the thing that is appointed for me." (Job 23:14)
- "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." (Psalm 138:8)
- "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." (Psalm 139:7-10)
- "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." (Psalm 23:4)
- "I can of mine own self do nothing." (John 5:30)
- The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (John 14:10)
- "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13)
- "The place whereon you stand is holy ground." (Exodus 3:5)
- "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)
- "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." (Matthew 23:9)
- "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)
- "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." (John 4:32)