

Optional Study and Practice for The 1962 Los Angeles Closed Class Session 2: Recording 460B, “Further Preparation for Prayer”

Review the Class

Joel begins this class by reviewing the first steps in preparation for prayer that he described in the previous class: humility, benevolence, forgiveness, and praying for the enemy. He reminds us that these practices cleanse us and open our consciousness to the inflow of the Spirit.

He goes on to explain that the next step in preparing for prayer is to “understand the nature of prayer and the nature of the Christ, the nature of the blessing that we expect of God,” and he addresses these major themes through Bible quotations.

“As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap”

To address the nature of prayer, Joel cites “**As YE sow, so shall YE reap,**” meaning that we ourselves—not God—set in motion the blessings and punishments we receive. He reminds us that the secret of sowing and reaping is “**If you sow to the flesh, you reap corruption. If you sow to the Spirit, you reap life everlasting.**” When you sow to the Spirit, you are sowing to truth and to love, and Joel points out that in preparing for prayer in the ways given in the previous class, you are sowing to the Spirit of truth and love through forgiveness, praying for the enemy, loving your neighbor as yourself, and doing unto others as you would have them do unto you. In that sowing, you prepare the soil for your reaping in kind. In other words, you set in motion the cause—the law of love—and so the effect must be love, which comes back to you as spiritually answered prayer.

[A commentary: When you express love, the form it takes is not love itself. It is love formed as gifts, as acts of kindness, comfort, and forgiveness. The love itself behind these expressions is not tangible, but through your actions, you give visible form to that love. Similarly, the love of God is spiritual, not tangible, but when we are attuned to it through prayer, we can perceive that love as form—as health, abundance, food, clothing, housing, inspiration, guidance, or spiritual realization. Divine love itself is not these forms, these things, and divine love does not “send” these forms. When we pray aright, we can experience divine love, spiritual power, the spiritual impulse, and we will perceive it outwardly as some form that fulfills a need. Divine love is always just divine love, not any material form. The forms as which it is perceived vary from individual to individual, depending on one’s need. So in using “As ye sow, so shall ye reap,” Joel is saying that in your preparation for prayer, if you sow love, in prayer you will reap love, divine love, and you will perceive that divine love in form as the fulfillment of your need.]

In this part of the class, Joel also uses the passage “**The law came by Moses. Grace and truth came by Christ Jesus.**” This means that when we follow the instructions for prayer given by the Master by practicing love and withdrawing hate, envy, jealousy, malice, bias, and bigotry, we remove ourselves from under the law and bring ourselves under grace.

- *The notes above are just a brief summary of this part of the class. What additional points in this part of the class resonated with you? Did you get any new insights from*

contemplating the Bible passages? If none come to you right away, you might want to make some notes when you hear the recording again.

“Cease Ye From Man, Whose Breath Is in His Nostrils”

In talking about sowing and reaping, Joel highlights another aspect of sowing to the flesh and sowing to the Spirit, and he uses the example of money. Sowing to the flesh means that we put our faith and trust in the *form*, which is money, and we think money is our supply. Sowing to the Spirit means that while you value and respect money for its purpose, you look to Spirit, Source, for your supply and put your faith, hope, and trust in the invisible substance, not in the form.

Joel explains that we also sow to the flesh when we put our faith and trust in the people who are the channels of our supply, and he calls upon the Bible passage **“Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?”** We sow to the Spirit when we honor and respect those who are sharing with us, or who are the channels of our supply, and we are grateful for them as instruments, but we recognize God, Spirit, as the source of our supply, and we put our trust, dependence, and reliance there. Never must we put our faith and trust in that which has form, that which is created. Our faith and trust is always in the Infinite Invisible, the kingdom within our own being. When you do this, you are no longer under the law. You are under grace. **“Son, thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine.”**

Be thankful for whatever form of good comes to you and give God the first fruits by sharing with those who have not yet awakened. That is loving God by loving thy neighbor. **“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”**

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“I Am Come That Ye Might Have Life More Abundant”

As mentioned above, Joel said that the next step in preparing for prayer is to “understand the nature of prayer and the nature of the Christ, the nature of the blessing that we expect of God.” To address the nature of the Christ, Joel takes the passage **“I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have life more abundant.”** This *I* is your bread, wine, water, food, clothing, housing; It is the resurrection, the law of renewal, the source of your good. *I* in the midst of you is mighty and will never leave you nor forsake you. It is your rock and fortress. It has been with you since before Abraham was and will be with you unto the end of the world. This *I* is the Christ. But when we depend on this world, instead of relying on the Christ, the *I* of our being, we are sowing to the flesh. Joel emphasizes that when we understand the nature of *I*, we can stop sowing to the flesh by withdrawing our trust in the externals—people, dollars, investments, social security, or government, and we can sow to the Spirit by placing our faith in the *I* within.

Then you are praying spiritually, knowing the truth that makes you free. By an act of your consciousness, you have taken yourself out from under the law of matter, the law of man, the law of time and space, and brought yourself under divine grace, under Christ, the *I* within. Then you can live through that Christ: **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth**

me. I live yet not I, Christ liveth in me.” You have sown to the Spirit, and so you reap spiritually—infinately, abundantly—but *only* when you are abiding in love.

Joel emphasizes that as we look to this *I* that has come to give us life more abundant, we must also pray that the grace of God be equally upon all—friends and enemies. The function of the Christ is not to destroy anything in the external but to overcome the mortal, material tendencies in us. So we always pray that the Christ dissolve whatever mortality or materiality is in our consciousness, and that It resurrect us AND all mankind out of the tomb of mortality.

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Know the Truth about All People

In concluding the class, Joel says that as you look upon people anywhere—your business, your home, the government, the marketplace, or the streets, remember that they, too, are of the household of God, even though they may not know it. You must know it for them, and in doing so, you are removing from them the power of a universal belief that says that they are mortals. You are removing the universal mesmerism of fear by including them in your spiritual household, your spiritual consciousness. When you remember to “**call no man on earth your father,**” you invoke the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and you draw these people into your consciousness of love.

Joel says that in the face of any discord or inharmony, there is one word that can change the human picture for you and for all who are spiritually attuned. The word is “Emmanuel,” or “God with us.” When you call upon that word, you have practiced the presence of God, and “**Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.**” There is freedom from any discord.

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A Few Questions for Reflection

- Preparation for prayer involves refraining from judging, criticizing, or condemning others. But we must also refrain from judging, criticizing, or condemning *ourselves* because even if the judgement, criticism, condemnation, or unforgiveness is directed at ourselves and not others, it is still judgment, criticism, condemnation, or unforgiveness, and we must be cleansed of ALL such thoughts. So ask: Do I judge or criticize myself? Have I forgiven myself for any past offenses I may have committed?

If you would like to explore this idea of self-forgiveness further, we recommend Chapter 15, “As We Forgive” in *The Thunder of Silence*.

- What practices does Joel suggest in this class? How can I apply them in my life?

- Where am I putting my faith, hope, and trust? Are there any ways in which I am “sowing to the flesh?” Once we become aware of these, we can make changes.
- In what ways am I “sowing to the Spirit?”
- What other questions or points for reflection come to you as you consider this lesson?