

## Optional Study and Practice for The 1962 Los Angeles Closed Class Session 5: Recording 462A “Atmosphere, Altitude and Attitude of Prayer and Identity”

*In the previous class sessions, Joel focused on preparation for prayer. In this session, he teaches about the nature of prayer itself, emphasizing that the atmosphere, altitude, and attitude in prayer is one of silence and listening, not words and thoughts. He teaches that we will be able to rest in silence and listening only if we recognize the nature of God as omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, and if we realize our own true identity.*

*This review of the class touches on some of the highlights. You will probably want to add others that spoke to you.*

### **The History of Prayer**

Joel reviews the history of prayer, from men creating gods to get they wanted, to devising ways to approach these gods—begging and asking, promising to be good, making sacrifices, and indulging in rituals.

The prayer of petition, the idea of sacrificing, and many rituals continue to the present day, all intended to please God. So to some extent, prayer has remained at the paganistic level, and even when it is advanced somewhat, it still has not reached the true altitude of prayer.

### **The Great Secret: The Name and Nature of God**

The original secret that would have enabled the entire world to live in harmony is the name and nature of God. This secret was revealed to Moses, but he recognized that he could never give it to the masses because they could not understand it or know what to do with it.

Jesus knew the secret and tried to impart it. Because of that, the Sanhedrin saw him as a menace, and he was crucified. They recognized that if people knew the truth, they would be freed from their bondage to the temple. This does not mean that if you know the truth, you will overthrow the churches. It means that if the real secret of the nature of God and prayer were known, the church would function to its fullest, bringing freedom to the entire world.

But truth can only be imparted sacredly, and sometimes secretly, to those who yearn for truth, those who give themselves to it, sacrifice for it, give days and nights of study and meditation to it, because they are the ones who are developing the faculty necessary to receive truth.

In spiritual work, if you realize just one truth, one idea of truth, one facet of truth, you could have harmony in your life and bring that harmony to others. Any one facet of truth would be enough, if that one were *actually discerned* and realized. Joel says that in The Infinite Way, the most important point has to do with the name and nature of God. If you catch this one point, all the truth that has ever been known through the ages unfolds clearly. Knowing the name and nature of God is the great secret, the secret of secrets, and once you know it, you rest and relax, because nothing more is needed.

When you know the name and nature of God, you understand the nature of prayer. Prayer is not words or thoughts. Prayer is an attitude, an altitude, and an atmosphere of silence and listening, and you are truly praying only when you are in this attitude, altitude, and atmosphere. You are not praying while you are thinking or while you are speaking. True, there can be thoughts and words leading up to prayer, but prayer itself is silence and listening.

Why does understanding the nature of God enable you to be in true prayer? Because the nature of God is omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence.

### **The Relationship of Omniscience, Omnipresence, and Omnipotence to Prayer**

God is **Omniscience**, meaning the all-knowing One. If you can feel within yourself that this is the nature of God, what could you possibly have to say to God or ask of God? Would you instruct or enlighten God? If you truly accept God as Omniscience, you cannot indulge in words, thoughts, requests, or demands. Those set up a barrier between you and God. There must be complete silence. Certainly, you can “speak to God” in preparation for prayer as a way of bringing yourself into an attitude of listening, where you can say “Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth.” But only when you are in silence, listening, are you in the attitude, altitude, and atmosphere of prayer.

We must remember, too, the previous class sessions, in which Joel taught that we must *prepare* for prayer. Jesus said that we must pray for our enemies and forgive seventy times seven. He also said that if we go to the altar to pray and remember that someone has something against us, we must first go and make our peace and then come back to the altar. In other words, we must go into prayer “pure in spirit,” having fulfilled all these terms. Also, we must go into prayer with the attitude and atmosphere of love and forgiveness. We cannot come into prayer if we are not loving our neighbor or forgiving all the wrongs that may have been done to us.

To come into true prayer, we must also understand God as **Omnipresence**, so that we do not feel the need to go somewhere to reach God—to a holy temple, a holy mountain, or even a quiet place in our own home. Because of Omnipresence, “The place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” Right where you are, God is! The kingdom of God is within you. Wherever you are, you are in the presence of God. So you can go on with your housework, or your business, or driving your car, and know that you are in the presence of the All-presence and the All-knowing.

Knowing that God is **Omnipotence**, the all and only power, helps us come into true prayer as well. If God is the *only* power, what do we need to pray for? Do we need a power to *do* something? God is not a temporal power, so praying for God to be a power over something or somebody is praying amiss. If you do not need any powers—even God powers—in your life because of Omnipotence, what will be your attitude, altitude, and atmosphere in prayer?

Once you have accepted the nature of God as Omniscience, Omnipresence, and Omnipotence, you change the nature of your prayers and enter a whole new atmosphere, altitude, and attitude of prayer. Prayer can be a stillness, a receptivity. It is as if you wanted to compose a piece of music, and you were being still to let the new melody flow into your consciousness. Your attitude is expectancy—not an expectancy of God as a power that can do something, but just the expectancy of God revealing Himself to you. Be still. Be still and know that *I* am God. In quietness and confidence you will receive your strength. Be still. Your mind isn't reaching out to God for anything. You are in an attitude of prayer that recognizes that because of Omniscience, God

already knows. Because of Omnipresence, God is already here on the field wherever you are. Because of Omnipotence, God is the only power. So you don't need God for anything. All you want of God is communion.

### **Will Prayer Be Answered?**

Will God answer this prayer of silence and receptivity? Will you have a response? That depends on whether you have prepared yourself for prayer. Have you forgiven seventy times seven? Prayed for the enemy? Loved your neighbor? Have you relinquished condemnation, criticism, and judgment? If you are living in that atmosphere, this new and higher consciousness will begin to reveal Itself, and you will begin to receive new light on God.

### **Drop Your Concepts of God**

You cannot know God with the mind. No word or synonym for God *is* God. God is not "Father," "mind," "soul," "spirit," or "love," because these are words in thought, concepts of God that men have created. To be in the presence of God, you must be without any concept of God. So drop them all. God cannot be thought. When you no longer try to know God with the mind, you will come to an atmosphere, altitude, and attitude in which there are no words and no thoughts for God. There is only listening.

Jesus gave us the name and nature of God: "*I* am come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly. *I* will never leave thee nor forsake thee. *I* am thy bread, meat, wine, and water. *I* am life eternal. *I* am the resurrection and the life." In other words, the name of God is *I*. This is the secret that has been hidden from the world, and the few times it was revealed, it was lost because it was misunderstood.

How does understanding the name of God as *I* enable you to be in true prayer?

It is only because we have not learned the true identity of our own being that we look to God to do something material for us. But when you know this great secret of the name of God as *I*, and you realize what that means, you can make prayer an altitude and attitude of peaceful listening, of stillness, because you recognize that you do not need anything *from* God. You are already Self-complete. Then harmony can reveal Itself.

How can you come to realize your true identity and true nature as *I*? One way that Joel offers is what he calls "the body exercise."

### **The Body Exercise**

In this class, Joel takes us through a short version of the body exercise, saying, "I'm going to ask you to follow this. Some of you have done it in the past, some haven't, but very few of you have caught it. I want to reveal to you the nature of your Self, of your own being, what you are and how you live, **so that you will know how to pray and what to pray for.**"

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*Note: If you would like to review the body exercise, there are several ways to do it:*

- *On this recording, 462A, you can move the slider bar to minute 52:10, which is where Joel begins the body exercise.*
- *There are two other classes on which Joel does a longer version of the body exercise:*
  - *Recording 513B, starting at minute 5:32, and going through minute 19:36.*
  - *Recording 59A, starting at minute 15:03, and going through minute 28:24.*

*Both excerpts are posted on the [same page as Recording 462A](#), and you can work with them there.*

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Following the body exercise, Joel asks,

“Are you convinced that you are nowhere between your toes and the top of your head? . . . Are you in that body? And if you aren't, where are you? . . . If you aren't inside that frame, where are you? . . . If you aren't anywhere inside that frame, *who* are you? *what* are you? . . . Do you see what a new being you are? Do you see how different you are than you thought yourself to be?” . . . Do you see the mistake of looking in the mirror to see whether you look well? You aren't there. This must become clear to you before we finish this class, even if you have to ponder it at home tonight and tomorrow. Where are you? What are you? What is your identity? How do you exist, if you're nowhere inside this frame?

If you pose these questions in the form “Who am I? What am I? Where am I?” the answer is in the questions: *I*. When you have the answer, you have the great secret of your identity and the great secret of prayer. You are incorporeal. You are not physical structure. So would you pray for something physical for a being that isn't physical? You are without physical structure, and the only thing to pray for is a greater realization of your incorporeality.

But how do you pray for a greater realization of incorporeality if you do not know the meaning of incorporeality? You have no way of knowing what to pray for, and Joel says that is a wonderful place to be. When you don't know what to pray to, or what to pray for, you are in the atmosphere of prayer: “I know not how to go out or how to come in; I know not what to pray for.”

That is prayer—an utter stillness, simply letting Omniscience reveal Itself. “Be still and know.” Know who *I* am, what *I* am, where *I* am. Be still and know *I* am. Nothing can be added to the incorporeality which *I* am, and nothing has ever been taken from me. In this attitude of prayer, we are in communion with *I*, that which is really our divine Self. This is where we recognize that *I* and the Father are one, not two. *I* and the Father are that One that already is incorporeal, spiritual.

*I* am incorporeality. *I* am nowhere between the head and the feet. *I* am incorporeal; *I* am spiritual. Therefore, *I* have no physical needs. I only have to know the nature of my own identity. But *I* has to reveal Itself to you within yourself. When you know the truth, you can't be

dominated by your family, the church, or the government. Once you realize the incorporeal nature of your own being, you are free.

### **Ponder the Questions**

It can be helpful to take some time to ponder the questions that Joel poses in the class, even if you have done it before:

- Are you convinced that you are nowhere between your toes and the top of your head?
- Are you in that body?
- If you aren't in that body, where are you?
- How do you exist, if you are nowhere inside this frame?
- If you aren't anywhere inside that frame, *who* are you? *what* are you?
- Do you see what a new being you are?
- Do you see how different you are than you thought yourself to be?
- Do you see the mistake of looking in the mirror to see whether you look well?
- What is your identity?

### **Scripture Verses for Contemplation**

*Many Bible verses speak to the nature of prayer. Here are some that Joel uses; others—from the Bible or other Scriptures—may come to you as you contemplate.*

- “Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth.” (1 Samuel 3:10)
- “The place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” (Exodus 3:5)
- “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17:20-21)
- “Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10)
- “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on . . . But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:25, 33)
- “In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.” (Isaiah 30:15)
- “Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.” (Matthew 6:8)
- “We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:26)