

Optional Study and Practice for The 1962 Los Angeles Closed Class Session 9: Recording 464A “I Reveal Myself”

In this class, Joel gives a compelling lesson on the nature of individual being. He brings forward and elaborates on a theme from the previous class—that the object of prayer is to come into a realization of the original, perfect, divine nature of our being and live by it.

This optional study material includes a very brief summary of the class, together with more detailed material on a specific practice that Joel recommends. Toward the middle of the class, he says, “When we come to a place in this search for God, or search for truth, where we are convinced that there is a way to return to the Father’s house; that there is a way to be re-established in our divine and spiritual Selfhood; now we have to find a way, a method, a process of returning.” He goes on to describe the first step in that way—contemplative meditation—and that is our focus for this optional study. As a review of the practice of contemplative meditation, we have selected and provided an excerpt from one of Joel’s classes, in which he explains the practice and leads the students in a contemplative meditation.

A Brief Summary of the Class

Joel begins with an extensive review of God, or Consciousness, manifesting or expressing Itself as the *I* that I am, and imparting Its essence, substance, and all the qualities of Its infinite consciousness to individual being. In other words, we are heirs of God, and everything God has is ours.

Joel explains that “something happened,” and we came into humanhood with no awareness of our spiritual identity and completely ignorant of the fact that we are heir to all the spiritual riches. As a result, we believe that we have human parents; that we have to work for a living and struggle for a livelihood; and that others have dominion over us. And because we do not know that our life is God and is infinite, we do all kinds of things to protect it.

Scripture calls this human way of life the “prodigal experience.” In the story of the prodigal, the son, an heir to great riches, wanders off from his father’s house into a far country. We too, find ourselves in a “far country” when we are born into humanhood, unaware of our true identity. In time we come to realize how unsatisfactory human life is, and eventually we find ourselves on a search for God, for truth, looking for a path that will lead us back to the kingdom within.

Yet the entire time that you may have been living in ignorance, your real Self, the individualization of all that God is, has been hidden inside your consciousness. As you come to know this truth of your spiritual identity, and as you practice meditation, the human “you” gradually drops away, and you recognize that you are Consciousness, Spirit—nothing tangible, physical, mortal, or material. You realize that that incorporeal Selfhood, your real Selfhood, is the *I* that was in the beginning with God.

Joel says that this search for God, this search for truth, is actually praying, and that every thought you think in the direction of releasing the sense of mortality is a prayer. The object of this praying is to strip away the outer sense of self and find your spiritual identity to be the *I* that I am,

the Christ. When you have “pierced the veil;” when you have gone beyond a humanhood that is good, happy, righteous, healthy, or wealthy, and beheld your true identity, you have attained Christhood.

[At this point in the class, Joel asserts that there is a way to be re-established in our divine and spiritual Selfhood, and that we must find that way. He reveals that the first step toward realizing your true identity is “practicing the presence,” or “contemplative meditation.” Since that is the focus for our optional study, it is detailed in the section below titled “Contemplative Meditation Is the First Step in Re-Establishing Our Spiritual Selfhood.”]

After talking about contemplative meditation, Joel portrays Jesus as an example of one who fully realized his spiritual identity. Jesus was fully aware that the *I* of his being was God manifested as *I*, the Christ, or son of God, so he could say, “Thou seest me, thou seest the Father that sent me. I am the way, the truth, and the life.” His “Jesushood” was completely gone. Others saw his physical body, but he did not. He was looking out from the body of light. He was aware only of himself speaking as God, as the divine Christhood. Jesus reached the place where there was no more “Jesus-being.” There was only the Father revealing Himself as the son.

At the end of the class, Joel revisits the idea that the search for God proceeds through steps. First, you recognize that whereas to sense, you are a human being, there is a divinity within you. Then through acknowledging the truth of individual being and communing within, most of that human selfhood peels off, and you live your life communing with the divine Presence within you. You recognize that the *I* that I am is your true Selfhood, and that the human identity that walks the earth is the finite *sense* of it, the mask. You know that *I* in the midst of you is Christ, and that wherever you go, that Christ is your meat, your wine, your water, your supply, your cement in human relationships. You do not have to look outside for any powers of good or fear any outside powers of evil, for the Christ of you is your divine Selfhood, your divine protection, your divine maintenance and sustenance.

God is speaking to you, and you must learn to listen for God’s voice. Never take your troubles to God. God isn’t going to listen to them or do anything about them. Simply take yourself to God and be where the voice of God can reach you. Then you will find that this *I* at the center of your being will speak to you, and It will perform that which is given you to do. It will perfect that which concerns you—not by your taking your troubles to It, but by staying at the center of your being, abiding there, and listening until that voice comes through.

Contemplative Meditation Is the First Step in Re-Establishing Our Spiritual Selfhood

As noted above, in this class Joel says, “When we come to a place in this search for God, or search for truth, where we are convinced that there is a way to return to the Father’s house; there is a way to be re-established in our divine and spiritual Selfhood; now we have to find a way, a method, a process of returning.”

He goes on to say that the first step in that way is “practicing the presence of God,” or “contemplative meditation,” and he describes the practice and how it came to him:

“We have a preliminary step, which we call ‘practicing the presence of God,’ taken, of course, from Brother Lawrence’s title and mode of life, but actually taken from scripture. The way this practice was revealed to me was not so much through Brother Lawrence as it was through scripture—such passages as: ‘Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is

stayed on Thee,' or 'Abide in the Word, and let the Word abide in thee,' or 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High,' or 'Lean not unto thine own understanding. Acknowledge Him in all thy ways.'

"This gave me the cue on which this original practice of the presence of God was founded in The Infinite Way, and it meant this: It meant that I-Joel, this outer Joel, has recognized that there is a Presence within me. He that is within me is greater than he that is in the world. Now I don't know the nature of It; I don't know the name of It; I only have come to the conviction that there is a He within me, if only I can get there and get my hands on Him—my mental hands at any rate.

"And so I start my career by pondering this Presence within. You might call it a contemplative form of meditation. I didn't know it as such at that time, but that's what it was. It was where I would sit quietly and think to myself:

'I know now, I'm convinced now, there is a He within me. There is a Presence within me of some kind, of a spiritual nature of some kind, something the Master called "the Father within;" something Paul called "the indwelling Christ;" something the Buddha called "Me"—"Search after Me and you will find Me."

"And so I would sit and contemplate this: There is something within me. There is a Presence; there is a power; there is a God, or a Christ, or an indwelling Spirit. Scripture says, 'There is a spirit in man.' There is something which, if I can contact, or awaken, or find, will do things for me. There again Scripture comes out and says, 'It is a presence that goes before you to make the crooked places straight. It goes before you to prepare mansions.'

"And so begins what we will call, 'practicing the presence of God.' It is a pondering or a contemplating of whatever it is that is within us that is of a spiritual nature."

Joel grants that there is an element of duality in this practice. But he notes that if you were to start by saying "I am God," you would be faced with all the mistakes in your humanhood. So he says that rather than call yourself God, simply acknowledge that there is something of God about you or within you; that there is something to be attained, something to be known, and ponder It—Its qualities, Its nature, and Its activity.

If you learn to rely on this indwelling Presence, eventually you will come closer to a realization of It, and if you continue to practice the presence of God, eventually you come to such an inner stillness that the outside world does not trouble you so much. You do not react to it as much, and it becomes less and less real to you. You have less fear of the powers of "this world," and you begin to have a greater reliance, a greater confidence, in the Infinite Invisible. You come to an inner peace, and when you experience that peace, you can have longer and longer periods of meditation.

Speaking from experience, Joel points out that for most people, meditating for long periods is not easy, and sometimes even impossible. The transition from living in the external world to living quietly within is difficult. So he recommends that actual meditation—that is, being silent and still in a listening attitude—be for short periods. For example, you might have three to five minutes of contemplative meditation—pondering and contemplating a spiritual idea—and then between ten and thirty seconds of being still in a listening attitude. But Joel says that even though the periods are short, if you have them between ten and twenty times a day, you will gradually make a transition inside. Every time you ponder a scriptural passage, or dwell on the idea of God, the

Infinite Invisible, you quiet down. Then by taking the attitude "Speak Lord, thy servant heareth," you make yourself a state of receptivity, into which the Spirit can flow.

For quite some time, you may not notice any change within you. But you may find something taking place in your life that will convince you that even these brief periods of meditation are bringing you the Presence which goes before you. Eventually, these ten to twenty seconds of meditation will naturally grow longer and during that meditation, you will be completely at peace.

As you continue to practice, the nature of your life will change. You are bringing into actual demonstration that invisible Spirit, that invisible Selfhood, that invisible Christ, which has been locked up within you. That Presence within you is *I*, and *I* is your divine Selfhood. It says, "*I* will never leave thee. *I* will be with thee until the end of the world. *I* am your meat, and your bread, and your wine, and your water. *I* am the resurrection." *I* is speaking to you, going before you to make the crooked places straight, going to prepare mansions for you.

Even as we practice, we are still in duality, because we have this divine *I*, which I am, and we have this [your name] out here, who has not entirely found the way home but is getting closer. If you continue the practice, eventually the day comes when, in deep meditation, [your name] disappears completely. Only *I* remains, and you look out at this world not as [your name], but as *I*, without physical form, incorporeal. You fill all space. God fills all space and as God-manifest, so do you. You are that Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Omnipresence, and you have found your way home.

A Focus for Practice: Contemplative Meditation

Joel is always very clear that meditation is the essential practice in The Infinite Way. But he also recognizes that meditation is difficult for many students because they have a hard time settling down into an inner peace with a listening attitude. He teaches that practicing contemplative meditation is one way to develop the ability to go into deep, silent meditation. He has said that at times, even he needs to use contemplative meditation to help him attain that state of silent receptivity.

As Joel says in this class, the object of prayer is to strip away the outer sense of self and find your spiritual identity to be the *I* that I am, the Christ. Contemplative meditation is a key step in that direction, and as we study this class, we can focus on contemplative meditation. Even if you are already familiar with contemplative meditation, approaching it anew can refresh your practice. You might discern new aspects to it or find that you can practice contemplation in a new way. As Joel says,

"There [are] some persons already sufficiently adept in the art of meditation so that they no longer have to use the contemplative form as a first step. But these persons are few and far between. Unless you are among those in that category, it is wise to read the Bible or a spiritual or inspirational book for a few minutes until some particular idea or principle becomes uppermost in your mind. Then put the book aside and begin a contemplative meditation."¹

¹ *The Art of Spiritual Living*, Chapter 10, "The Invisible."

Example of a Contemplative Meditation Recorded by Joel

To review the practice of contemplative meditation, we have selected an excerpt from one of Joel's classes, in which he explains the practice and leads the students in a contemplative meditation. It gives a wonderful illustration of how such a meditation might flow. The excerpt is from recording 170A, "The Purpose and Method of Contemplative Meditation," and it is posted on the [same page as the recording for this session \(464A\)](#). You can also listen on the telephone listening line **(1-641-715-3900)** at extension **838190#**.