

**Optional Study and Practice for *Consciousness Is What I Am*,
Chapter 9, “The Issues of Life Are in Consciousness”**

For some of us, this chapter may challenge our assumptions, but it also invites us to consider a new perspective. In these optional study suggestions, we have taken the chapter section by section, briefly summarized the key points in each section, and offered some questions for reflection. If this approach fits your preferred study methods, you are welcome to use it.

First Section (No Subtitle)

Key Points:

The materialist believes he must first get money and then exchange it for something that will bring spiritual values (peace of mind, joy, health, satisfaction). The person of spiritual vision realizes that these come from within his own being and have nothing to do with money. Seeking good in the outer world is not satisfactory.

There is an invisible substance within our own being, called God, Spirit, Soul, or Consciousness, from which the good things of life are formed. The issues of life come out of consciousness.

Questions for reflection:

- What are the “issues of life” for you? Health? Supply? Relationships? Happiness? Success? Something else?
- What does Joel mean when he says that the issues of life come out of consciousness?
- Can you accept the idea that the fulfillment of every issue you identified is not in the external world but in your own consciousness? In other words, health is in consciousness; supply is in consciousness; happiness and success are in consciousness.
- Consider just one of the issues you identified. How would your life be different if you realized that the fulfillment of everything concerning this issue is already in your consciousness?
- The question is: “How do I bring it forth?” or “How do I allow it to come forth?” If you do not have an answer to this question, take the question into contemplation and silent receptivity and see what comes to you.

Transfer Power from Effect to Cause

Key Points:

World belief says that the organs and functions of the body can determine health issues and cause disease and death.

Since our consciousness accepted the false belief that the organs and functions of the body can act of themselves, it must be our consciousness that rejects that belief and accepts the truth that no part of the body can determine what it will or won't do. **God gave us dominion through Consciousness**, and this **Consciousness is the cause and the creative principle of our body, and Consciousness maintains and sustains it.**

Questions for Reflection:

- To what degree do I accept or reject the belief that the organs and functions of the body determine my health?
- Consider a simple function of the body. You get a paper cut on your finger. The cut has to be repaired, and your unique fingerprint restored to its original pattern. Typically, you don't give much thought to such an incident. Why? What executes this delicate repair to your skin? Is the body acting on its own?
- Do you believe that whatever executes the repair to your finger can restore anything that seems to threaten your health? If not, where do you draw the line between what can be restored and what cannot?
- To what degree do you accept that you have God-given dominion over your body through your Consciousness? Does your degree of acceptance vary according to circumstances?

The Nutritive Value of Food Is in Consciousness

Key Points:

There is a strong world belief that food has power over us and that its nutritional value is *in* the food. Joel asserts that the nutritional value of food is in our consciousness, not in the food. He says that the Soul at the center of our being, our Consciousness, has to impart value to the food before it can nourish us, and Consciousness has to give it the power to harm us before it can harm us. Whatever value we get from the food comes from our Consciousness.

Human belief also claims that life is *in* the heart and other organs of the body. But in and of themselves, the organs cannot move or operate. Apart from Consciousness, the body is dead flesh. There is an *I* that governs and controls the body.

Nothing in the world of effect has power. All power is in God at the center of my being, the *I* that I am, the Christ of my being. It imparts to the body and my food all the energy and power that they have.

The Consciousness that formed me governs my body. It maintains and sustains every action, organ, and function of my being. It imparts to my food its qualities of good. It is the substance of the food I take in and determines its value to me.

Once we catch this principle as applied to food and to the organs and functions of the body, we catch the entire spiritual principle of life: EVERY issue of life is determined, not by external conditions and things, but by Consciousness. The issues of life are within us, not external to us. When we realize this, we make contact with God, and from then on, God supplies everything necessary for our fulfillment.

It takes discipline to come to this realization. Throughout the day, we must realize that Soul, the intelligence and life at the center of our being, is governing and controlling every function, organ, and activity of our body. The body is not controlling us. Soul governs and animates our body intelligently and harmoniously unto eternity. We must consciously withdraw power from the outer realm—from weather, climate, food, or anything else—and place it where it belongs: in Consciousness.

Questions for Reflection:

- What beliefs do you hold about food?
- Do you agree with Joel that the nutritional value of food is in consciousness? (You don't have to agree; he is asking you to consider that possibility.)
- Think of the food on your plate at your last meal.
 - Can you believe that it has power over you? If there was power *in* the food, couldn't you hold it or look at it and have it exert its power on your body?
 - Why do you have to eat it?
 - Once you eat it, what happens to it, and what controls what happens to it? Does the food control what happens to it?
 - What decides whether the food will influence the body for good or for ill, and when does it decide?
- Similarly, consider medicine.
 - Is there power *in* the medicine? If the power were *in* the medicine, couldn't you hold it in your hand and let it use its power to influence the body?
 - Why do you have to put the medicine into the body?
- Consider all the things that happen in the body without your paying attention to them. Thousands of enzymes and hormones are produced, body temperature is regulated, cells are replaced, the heart beats, blood circulates, and hair and nails grow. Even a perfect infant body can be formed in a mother's womb. What is doing these things?
- Do you agree with Joel that EVERY issue of life is determined, not by external conditions and things, but by Consciousness? If not, what are your exceptions?

Spiritual Selectivity

Key Points:

We should eat intelligently and eat what is good for us at our state of consciousness. As we abide in the word of God, we will automatically select the appropriate food because Consciousness is fulfilling our needs, and we interpret that fulfillment as a form that we understand. In this case, we interpret it as food.

If we live each day in meditation and contemplation of the word of God, we can be fed from within, for “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.”

As long as we have a fleshly sense of body, we have to eat, and the food we eat will carry some measure of world belief. But as we work with the principle of one Substance and one Power, world belief will have less and less power in our experience, and we will be living out from our God-given dominion.

Questions for Reflection:

- Have you experienced this spiritual selectivity with respect to food? Have there been times when you have been led to eat certain foods or refrain from eating certain foods? If so, what is prompting you?
- How do you interpret “I have meat to eat that ye know not of”?

Power Is in Consciousness

Key Points:

Nothing external has power over us. All power is derived from God and given to us through Consciousness. Whether it is the body, food, or weather, our Consciousness determines its good in our experience. When we realize this, we have transitioned from material sense into spiritual consciousness.

Then, we look to Consciousness for our good, not to external sources. Our good appears outwardly from the divine Consciousness within, and we can enjoy that good.

When Jesus experienced the three temptations, he refused to give in because he knew he was being sustained and maintained by the God-power at the center of his being. He did not have to prove it by turning stones into bread or jumping off a cliff.

As we realize that our lives are Self-maintained and Self-sustained, we make less effort to improve them and find that they take care of themselves.

Questions for Reflection:

- When a need arises for you, do you look first to Consciousness or first to external sources to fulfill the need?

- Does your choice depend on what the need is? In other words, do you look to Consciousness for some things but to external sources for others? If so, what determines the difference?
- If you still look to the external for something, what would enable you to shift to looking to Consciousness first? How would you make that shift?

God, the Self-Created and Self-Maintaining Principle

Key Points:

Using the story of the professor who taught that hydrogen is the basis for all that exists, Joel teaches that the *substance* of all forms is eternal, immortal, and governed by the one Self-created, Self-maintained Principle or Substance. (*Note: "Substance" is derived from a Latin word that means "stand under." So "substance" is that which "stands under" or "gives rise to" a form.*)

The forms that constitute the organs and functions of the body, the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the rain and snow are all of that Self-created and Self-maintained Substance, which we call God. Therefore, there can be no evil *in* anything.

This is the highest law of mysticism: There is only one power in the universe, all good, and there is nothing evil. Yes, we can make anything evil by thinking it so, but in and of itself, it is not evil. There is one substance, and it is good, so it is good in any form in which it appears.

Everything that exists is formed of this one Substance. Since we exist, we are formed of this one Substance, and It is within us. Our realization of that makes It the law to the organs and functions of the body and to the food we eat.

When we eat, not only do we take in the food, we take in the world's belief about the food—it is fattening, it is thinning, it is good for us, it is bad for us. Since no change takes place in our life except through the activity of our Consciousness, every time we eat, we must realize that *I* impart all qualities to my food. Furthermore, it is Consciousness at the center of my being that gives the organs of my body their capacity to digest and assimilate the food.

Questions for Reflection:

- Contemplate this idea of a Self-created, Self-maintained, universal, eternal, all-good spiritual Substance. What comes to you?
- Joel has said, "This is a spiritual universe, about which we entertain a material concept." We might paraphrase and say, "This is a spiritual body, about which we entertain a material concept." Or "This is spiritual food, about which we entertain a material concept." Contemplate this. What comes to you?
- Do you resonate with the idea that "I impart all qualities to any food." If you accepted it, how would it change your life with respect to eating?

Surmounting World Beliefs through an Activity of Consciousness

Key Points:

God gave us dominion over everything, but we must **consciously** exercise that dominion. Our dominion comes from the truth that there is a Life, Consciousness, Soul, or Spirit at the center of our being, and It functions through us to manifest good in this so-called outer world. It governs and controls every circumstance of our experience.

For weeks and months, we must realize this until it becomes automatic to assume our dominion. If we are tempted to think in terms of money, we have to realize, “Substance and supply are within me, not in dollar bills. The power of supply is within my consciousness, which determines my supply.”

Every day, we must remember consciously that God at the center of my being is the law of my experience, a law of love. God is the substance and nourishment of my food, the law and activity of every function of my body. God, at the center of my being, draws to me everything necessary to my fulfillment and eliminates everything not necessary to my spiritual unfoldment.

As human beings, we are living under the laws of world belief, including laws of materia medica, laws of food, and laws of climate. Even though these human laws have no power, they operate in our experience as if they did, until we consciously eliminate them and replace them with the truth that *I* at the center of my being is the substance and soul of my being, governing my entire experience.

If we can *let* the *I* take over, It will live our life and fulfill us far better than the personal sense of I ever could. God has good for us that we could not dream of, so we let this *I* within, the Spirit of God, the Christ of our being, map out our days and direct our actions.

As you whittle away world beliefs and substitute the activity of truth, eventually, you reach the ultimate of spiritual living, where you do not take conscious thought for any phase of your life. Something at the center of your being is bringing the right food for you to eat, rejecting the wrong, and digesting, assimilating, and eliminating. This Something brings the right friendships to you, taking those from you that have no part in your experience. It brings the right opportunities to you and sees that you don't take advantage of the wrong opportunities.

The personal sense of I is no longer living your life. Something at the center of your being is living Its life as you. You let It take over and just watch what it does.

Questions for Reflection:

- What spiritual truth is the basis for Joel saying that God gave us dominion over everything?
- What does it mean to “consciously exercise our dominion?” To what degree do you consciously exercise your dominion? What is an example in your life?
- To what degree do you let God at the center of your being live your life and govern your experience? If you see places where you do not yield, how could you change that?

Suggested Practices from the Recording

In Recording 605B, the primary source for this chapter, Joel suggests a few practices to help us realize that the issues of life are in Consciousness, not in the external. Choose one that appeals to you and work with it for a while. Then, if you are moved to do so, take another for practice.

I Control My Body

At least two or three times every day, practice this:

My Soul, the intelligence of my being, the life of me, which is at the center of my being, is governing and controlling my body. My body does not control me; I control my body. There is a Soul at the center of my being, a Spirit, or Consciousness, and Its function is to animate my body, to be the law unto my body, to be the substance and activity and intelligence of my body. Its function is to govern my body intelligently, harmoniously, and eternally.

It takes practice to get used to the idea that your body does not determine your life and that the actions and functions of your body do not determine your health, but that the issues of health are determined by your Soul, your Spirit, your Consciousness, and your Consciousness animates, governs, and controls the organs and functions of your body.

For thousands of years, we have lived under the universal human belief that the body can talk back to us and tell us whether we will be healthy or sick, live long or not, or function properly while we're here. We have been trained to say things like, "My head aches me" or "My heart pains me." So, it takes time to release those entrenched beliefs.

Now we must make the transition into spiritual consciousness, which says that at the center of your being, there is that which is called God or Soul or Consciousness or Spirit or Mind, and It is the principle of life, the animating principle of your body, the substance of your body, the law of harmony unto your body, and even the eternity and immortality of your body and mind.

Consciousness Imparts Value to Food

Each time you eat, realize that whatever value there is in the food comes from your own Consciousness. Your Consciousness imparts to this food its value and draws out of it whatever is necessary to maintain and sustain your body in health and harmony.

Sooner or later, you must do this not only with food, but with money and with the organs and functions of the body. For months and months, we must discard human beliefs and replace them with spiritual truth. There's no way of avoiding that responsibility because nobody can make this demonstration for you.

Nothing and nobody out here in this world of effect is power. All power is in God at the center of my being. All power is in God, and that God at the center of my being imparts to my bones and blood and flesh, to my food and to my weather and climate, all of the energies and powers that they have in and on me.

Once you reject the belief that something external to you has power over you and realize the truth that all power is given unto you, that all power is derived from God, and that your consciousness determines the good in your experience, whether it is the organs and functions of the body, the food you eat, or the climate or weather, you have passed into spiritual

Consciousness. Then, you no longer look outside for your good but to this great power within your own being, and when your good appears outwardly as food, transportation, or home, you enjoy it.

Joel's Own Exercise

Joel invites us to join him in the exercise he uses, pointing out that while God is the substance, the law, the activity, and the reality of all that concerns us, it is only in proportion as we know this truth that this truth can make us free. The truth itself does not make us free; knowing the truth enables the truth to make us free.

Every day, Joel remembers consciously:

God, at the center of my being, is the law of my experience, and It governs my every experience. God, at the center of my being, is the law of my friendship and love unto me. God, at the center of my being, is the substance and the nourishment of the food that I eat. God, at the center of my being, is the law and the activity unto every organ and function of my body. God, at the center of my being, is the law of weather, the law of climate, and the activity of the weather and climate.

This God, at the center of my being, which is the law and the substance and the reality of my being, the principle of my being, draws unto me everything necessary for my good. It acts as a law of elimination to everything not necessary to my spiritual unfoldment and development. All power is at the center of my being, vested in my own Consciousness, in my own Soul, and my own Soul is the substance of my body, the substance of my food, the substance of my weather, the substance of my climate, the substance of my friendships and of my family relationships. Soul is that. God is that.

As always, with all three of these practices, while we might start to practice using Joel's words, remember that he encourages us to let our own consciousness give us the same truth in words custom-tailored for us.