

**Optional Study and Practice for *Consciousness Is What I Am*,
Chapter 11, “The Fourth-Dimensional Consciousness”**

In this chapter and source recording, Joel focuses on the fourth-dimensional consciousness, how life can change when we attain it, and how we can develop it.

Once again, for optional study, we created a review of the key points in the study material and framed them in a question-and-answer format. Before reading the review, you might want to reflect on the questions and how you would answer them:

- What is the fourth-dimensional consciousness?
- Does everyone experience the Presence in the same way?
- What can happen in our lives as we develop the fourth-dimensional consciousness?
- How do we develop the fourth-dimensional consciousness?
- How long does it take to develop the fourth-dimensional consciousness?

What is the fourth-dimensional consciousness?

Joel speaks of “two distinct lives” for an Infinite Way student. There is the normal human life, or the three-dimensional consciousness, in which the only reality is what we know through the physical senses. In the third-dimensional consciousness, **we** make our own decisions and believe **we** alone live our lives.

If you work faithfully with meditation and spiritual principles, eventually, you come into the fourth-dimensional consciousness, or the mystical life. You become aware that there is a Presence, a Something close to you, that governs your life. You may find yourself going in a direction you had not thought about or planned, or doing work you never dreamed of. In the fourth-dimensional consciousness, you are always aware of a Something, a Presence, which goes before you. You have the sense that you are no longer living your life; that this Presence lives it, goes before you, and is your meat, wine, and water. You no longer depend on people or external things because this Presence provides everything necessary. Jesus had fourth-dimensional consciousness, which is why it is sometimes called “Christ consciousness.”

The major function of the entire message of The Infinite Way is to bring about this change in your consciousness so that you rise above the limitations of humanhood into the atmosphere of the fourth-dimensional consciousness, the Christ consciousness, that mind which was also in Jesus.

Does everyone experience the Presence in the same way?

The experience varies for each individual. You might sense it as something looking over your shoulder or feel it as something within. You might have the feeling that you are not alone. You might hear it speak in an audible voice, or you might just have an awareness, a sense of the Presence. You will experience It in a way that is unique to you.

What happens in our lives as we develop the fourth-dimensional consciousness?

Once you are receptive to a spiritual teacher or teaching and you begin to meditate, Spirit starts to work in you to change your consciousness. As your consciousness changes, there are tangible effects. On the human level, you may have “demonstrations,” but instead of rejoicing that some pain is gone or that you have more income, your attention turns from the effect to the Cause.

As you gain spiritual wisdom and more awareness of the invisible Presence, the human picture unfolds harmoniously for you. Your life might change in some way for the better, or your consciousness, your nature, or your habits change. You might find yourself doing work that you never dreamed of. You may find more pleasure in spiritual study and spend more time in study and reflection. More and more, you are aware of this Something with you. In Christian mysticism, this Something, this Presence, is called “the Christ.” Lao Tze called it “Tao.” It is transcendental, meaning it transcends our ability to describe, contemplate, or know it. It lies outside the range of human thought, yet we know it is there because we have glimpses of it or see its fruitage.

As your consciousness develops, you begin to understand that this invisible Something is producing these visible effects, and that what is happening in the tangible world is the fruitage of what is happening in the invisible world. Your thoughts are less on the material and more on the invisible. You think more about the spiritual realm.

Fourth-dimensional Consciousness can see into the third dimension and benefit from what is seen. Jesus had fourth-dimensional consciousness, and through it, he had access to “My kingdom,” the invisible realm behind the visible one. When necessary, he could read the minds of others, like the woman at the well. He could select the disciples most ready to grasp and experience his teaching. You will have similar discernment in proportion as you develop the fourth-dimensional consciousness. You may be able to see into the human mind and see experiences of the past, present, and future; you might even see previous lives, if there is some reason for knowing about them. You may be able to recognize people you have known before in previous lives.

You may find yourself receiving direct instructions to do something different from what you had planned, or you might see obstacles suddenly removed from accomplishing something you have to do. Something clears the way for you; it goes before you to “make the crooked places straight.”

You become aware that you have a strength, power, dominion, and joy that the world does not know, because these spiritual qualities do not arise from circumstances in the outer world. They come from within. You realize that Consciousness is what you are. You are conscious of

an indwelling Spirit, a divine Presence living within you, going before you, doing all things for you, and bringing to you everything necessary to your spiritual life.

Spirit can operate in you to make you better at your art, your profession, or your business, but it never permits you to lead other than a spiritual life. It can develop the healing gift in you; it can enable you to understand Scripture spiritually and become aware of the spiritual laws in Scripture.

When you are keenly aware of the Presence, you are coming into some measure of the Master's life and demonstration. You are coming into some measure of grace, and it may seem that much of your life is being lived by grace rather than by your own efforts or strengths. You begin to understand that you have more than the world knows of; you have a strength, power, dominion, and joy, whose source is not something in the outer world but something within. You have reached the place where there is an indwelling Spirit, a divine Presence, living within you, going before you, doing all things for you, and bringing everything necessary to your spiritual life.

All this happens because the spiritual seed, transcendental Presence, or the Christ, has been within you eternally, and you are awakening to it. This spiritual seed is within every individual, since God is no respecter of persons. But it is of no value to you until you awaken to it. Only in proportion as you awaken to It does it take over and become the leading light in your experience. It becomes your mind, your soul, your being, even your body, and it rejuvenates and resurrects you. If your body were broken, It would rebuild it. If your mind were broken, It would rebuild it. All that is necessary is awakening to the Presence already within you. When you are unaware of it, you are the "natural man," not under the law of God. When you are aware of it, you are the child of God.

How do we develop the fourth-dimensional consciousness?

We will not experience all the gifts of fourth-dimensional consciousness described above unless we actually make the effort to develop that consciousness. The Infinite Way provides principles and practices that help us attain the fourth-dimensional consciousness. In this chapter and the source class, Joel explains how:

- Every time we meditate, even if it is only a ten-second meditation, we develop our consciousness a little more to the fourth degree. Some onion skin of mortality drops off, and we are that much closer to immortality.

When Joel meditated with students, the object was to abide in meditation until the Spirit within announced itself in some way. He observed that when students meditated regularly with a spiritual teacher, they might not notice any changes in their lives, or they might experience dramatic changes. In any case, after a few years, the students manifested changes in physical appearance, an increased sense of supply or health, or better relationships. He believed that these tangible effects were the fruitage of continued meditation.

- Every effort we make to gain more of the fourth-dimensional Consciousness through reading and hearing the words of a spiritual message destroys some mortality in us and clothes us with immortality.

- Every time we face two powers in the world and remind ourselves that there is but one Power, the power of the Spirit within us, we lift ourselves higher in consciousness.
- Every time we remind ourselves that we are not using God to do something to evil, but we are recognizing the nothingness of the appearance, we are developing the fourth-dimensional Consciousness.
- Every time we impersonalize evil and nothingize it, realizing that neither sin, disease, nor false appetite is a part of individual being, and that evil is just the universal belief in two powers, we destroy some of our third-dimensional consciousness and develop more of the fourth-dimensional Consciousness.
- Every time we recognize that *I* in the midst of us is God and that this *I*, the individualization of God within us, is the Source of our supply, health, and harmony, part of the old man dies, and part of the new is reborn. Part of mortality is put off, and immortality is put on.
- Every time we turn within in the realization that *I* and my Father are one, and all that the Father has is ours, we increase our ability to derive our good from the inner plane, from the kingdom of God within us.
- Every time we realize that My peace comes forth from the Father within me, we develop more of the fourth-dimensional consciousness.
- Every time you realize that God is consciousness, that God is your individual consciousness, and that you can reach into your own consciousness and draw forth the hidden Splendor, you develop more of the fourth-dimensional consciousness.

How long does it take to develop the fourth-dimensional consciousness?

From your first contact with an individual who has consciously realized this indwelling Presence or with a spiritual teaching that resonates with you, Spirit touched your consciousness and is working in you. Yet any change in your life, mind, or body occurs because of a change of consciousness within, and the change can be fast or slow, depending on several factors.

One factor is resistance—something in us that does not permit us to respond to the spiritual influence. Everyone has this resistance to some degree. No one is responsible for it, and we can't wish it away instantly. It is the cumulative effect of life experience and whatever we brought forward into this life of which we might be unaware. Consciously or unconsciously, we are holding onto something. If we are fortunate enough to find a practitioner who can discern what is holding us back and nullify it with the knowledge that there is no law of God to sustain it, we can become free.

Another factor is the materialism in our consciousness. It manifests in the thought that some material good—more health, wealth, happiness, or human harmony—will follow from our spiritual work. We are not responsible for this materialism, either. We were born into materialistic consciousness and were not taught about the “My kingdom” and “My peace,” which are not of this world. So, our interest may be less in spirituality and more in the human good that

will come—removing disease, doubling our income, or having more happiness in our home life. That can be a barrier to our spiritual development.

Even though these barriers exist, if we faithfully practice the Presence and meditate, study the message and Scripture, practice the principles, associate with a teacher if possible, and commune with others on the spiritual path, the barriers will gradually dissolve. Like Paul, we will increasingly be able to “forget those things which are behind, and reach forth unto those things which are before” as we move closer and closer to the prize of fourth-dimensional consciousness.