

## **Optional Study and Practice for Meditation Study Program Session 2 – Recording 20B: “God As the Law in Operation”**

### **Introduction and Glossary of Terms**

In the first session of our study program, Joel established that the key to meditation is recognizing that the kingdom of God is **within you**. Therefore, to contact and experience God, you must go within, and meditation is the way.

The next three sessions of our study program focus on the several forms of meditation taught in *The Infinite Way*, or what Joel calls the “states and stages” of meditation. Joel points out that he gives different illustrations of meditation in different classes because students become ready for higher forms of meditation as they progress.

In referring to these forms of meditation, Joel will use the terms “practicing the Presence,” “contemplative meditation,” “treatment,” “meditation,” “prayer,” “communion,” and “union.” What does each mean, and how do they differ? A brief glossary of these terms can be helpful as we proceed through the study program. To access the glossary, [click/tap here](#).

Joel acknowledges that “meditation”—by which he means entering the silence with no words or thoughts—can be difficult or impossible for those new to the practice, and they can become discouraged. But he assures us that practicing the Presence or short contemplative meditations will help develop the ability to meditate in silent receptivity without words or thoughts.

However, it is important to recognize that practicing the Presence and contemplative meditation are not just for beginners. They are practices for everyone. For example, practicing the Presence helps us fulfill our goal of “praying without ceasing.” Furthermore, even experienced meditators sometimes find themselves unable to meditate in silence without words and thoughts. They may be dealing with a physical appearance, a problematic relationship, or some other difficult life situation that makes it challenging to sit in silence without distractions. At those times, returning to practicing the Presence and short contemplative meditations can keep them anchored in truth and help them regain the ability to meditate in the silence.

### **Highlights from the Recording and Chapter**

Chapter 2, “Attaining the God-Experience,” in *Living The Infinite Way*, is virtually a transcript of recording 20B, so you can reference that chapter for a full review of the recording. What follows is a brief summary of the highlights. Bracketed portions are not from the recording or chapter; they are personal observations or insights.

#### *The Infinite Way Is an Experience*

In this class and the corresponding chapter in *Living the Infinite Way*, Joel reiterates that *The Infinite Way* is an **experience**: “The Infinite Way actually is a God-experience, an experience with God, or experiencing the Christ. The books, the written message, the classes, the recordings—these are but instruments leading to the experience of *The Infinite Way*, the experience of God.” As Joel has often said, **meditation** is the way to that experience.

So, our goal in meditation is to have an experience of God. [This is different from the goal of meditation in other traditions. In The Infinite Way, we do not meditate to relax, reduce stress, or live a more mindful human life. These are worthy goals, but they are not the purpose of meditation in The Infinite Way. **The purpose of our meditation is the experience of God.**]

### *How to Meditate and Contemplative Meditation*

In this class, Joel addresses the physical aspects of meditation. He recommends that we:

- Get physically comfortable, for the simple reason that when the body is comfortable, we can keep it out of thought.
- Sit with the spine straight so we can breathe normally.
- Hold the hands unclasped, either on or in the lap, feet firmly on the floor, and the head bent slightly forward in a comfortable position.
- Find a sitting position where the body is supported without conscious effort. We want to be “absent from the body and present with the Lord”—present with the truth.

To begin, Joel suggests the contemplative form of meditation, using the question, “What is God?” He points out that while we probably have concepts of God that came from others, in the contemplative meditation, we are seeking answers from within our own being. So, we contemplate and ponder the question with a listening attitude, waiting for an answer.

Thoughts will come that are unique to you, but they may be along the lines of “Ah, God is life.” You may see that God is all life, regardless of the form in which that life appears, and that we do not have to pray for life or for God to operate the universe. You may begin to understand Omnipresence and realize the presence of God, or life, as every form.

You may be struck by the fact that birds, fish, flowers, and trees are all being fed, and it might come to you that God is love and that God’s love is manifest in the physical universe. You might notice that “like always begets like,” and you may recognize that God is law. You can contemplate the question “What is God?” many, many times and get different insights and answers each time.

At some point, when contemplating the nature of God, you will find that you can’t think about it anymore. When that happens, you just sit at peace, with no more thoughts or questions. In that quiet, you may experience a long, deep breath, like a release, a burden dropping off the shoulders, or you may experience a quick, sharp breath. You may experience a profound sense of peace. A Bible verse or statement of truth may come to you. You may feel an inner assurance or have some other experience. These experiences are the presence or activity of God in your consciousness, making Itself known to you. Joel says:

“That deep breath, that click, or release was a God-experience. That was the actual presence or activity of God in your consciousness. It may have announced Itself in no other way than the deep breath, or the sharp breath, or the click, or the release, but you’ll know by your reaction—that you’re tingling, that there’s a life in you, that there’s an awareness in you that’s more than your human selfhood. And you’ll know that that’s the presence and activity of God in you, and you’ll begin to understand Paul: ‘I live, yet not I, Christ liveth’ . . . And you

will have that feeling right there, 'Why, this is the very Christ that I'm experiencing. This is the very presence of God, the Spirit of God, and through me, It does all things. It goes before me to make the crooked places straight; It goes before me to prepare a place for me. . . . It is the cement in my human relationships, the love binding us together. It is the understanding that comes between me and all those whom I meet. It is the guidance and wisdom and strength necessary for the next task that I have.'"

[The experience can happen in many ways, and each will be individual to you. So, be careful not to expect an experience that others may have described to you. Preconceived ideas can prevent us from noticing our own unique experiences of God.]

Joel goes on to describe what might happen after an experience:

"When that release or that relief comes, you won't want to sit there any longer. You'll be so full of the Spirit that you'll want to get up and do something. You will find something to do—some work you may have been neglecting or some work that lies ahead of you for the day. But with that release will really come divine wisdom, divine guidance, divine strength."

### *Do Not Try to Stop Thinking*

Joel does not tell us to stop thinking, because he knows that we cannot stop thought or stop the human mind. His advice is to take a spiritual idea and contemplate it exhaustively. Then the mind will become still of its own accord. Even if some thoughts remain, they will not interfere with God's activity, so do not be concerned.

### **Spiritual Demonstration Is the Awareness of God's Presence**

Bringing about a change in the outer picture is not a spiritual demonstration. Such changes are the **effects** of demonstration, or the "added things." The demonstration is the awareness of God's presence. This is essential to remember in healing work.

No matter how much truth we know, it is not a healing agency. What we know of truth is merely a step leading to a particular state of consciousness, and it is that state of consciousness that is the healing agency. So, in healing work, our goal is the same as it is for meditation: demonstrating the presence of God. Joel says:

"I have no power to demonstrate health or supply for anyone. But I can demonstrate the presence of God. I can get very still within myself, and, with patience, come to a place of consciousness where I feel the very living presence of God, where I feel the activity of God in me, the stir of God in me; where I feel such a complete release from human fears about patients and students that I know that God is on the field. And that's all that I can do. From there on, it is that presence of God that makes whatever adjustment is necessary in the mind, spirit, soul, or body of the patient or student and brings about their release from discord, inharmony, or lack."

Jesus said, "I can of my own self do nothing; it is the Father within me that doeth the work." You will never be able to heal the multitudes or feed the multitudes. You will only be able to demonstrate the presence, power, and activity of God in your own consciousness, and then It, the Father within you, will multiply the loaves and fishes, heal the multitudes, and even raise the dead. It will do that.

So, in healing work, when you go into treatment, (which is a contemplative meditation done for a healing purpose), turn away from the person and the claim, settle into the peaceful atmosphere of listening, and gain the conscious awareness of the presence of God. An answering response will come in some way, and you will want to get up and go about your business. You may forget the problem until suddenly, you hear about a healing. Or you may hear that the situation has become worse. If that happens, do not let it disturb you. Calmly, go back and give another treatment, another spiritual demonstration of the Presence.

### **One Goal Only**

Whether you are sitting down to meditate or pray or treat for yourself or another, remember: You can only have one goal if you wish to succeed. **Your goal must be to have a God-experience, an awareness, a feel of the presence of God.**

Never meditate, pray, or treat to change an outer circumstance. Have only one purpose: *"I and my Father are one. Let me have the realization of that oneness."* Meditate or treat in any of the ways given in The Infinite Way. Each of them will lead you to that step where you are quiet, a sense of peace enfolds you, and there is a release. That release is your evidence of the Presence, which goes out and makes the crooked places straight.

Everyone can reach some measure of happiness, wholeness, and perfection in this lifetime. Some can attain the full degree of mystic, or Christhood, the divine spiritual sonship. But as Joel reminds us, **"Be assured it will be in proportion as we understand that the object and intent of meditation, prayer, or communion is the God-experience."**

### **Practice**

Our practice for this lesson is obvious: Follow Joel's direction about meditation insofar as it applies to you.

If you are just beginning a meditation practice, try contemplative meditation, as Joel describes it in this lesson. If you are more seasoned with meditation but have not been using the contemplative form of meditation, it might be helpful to revisit it. Joel says that he often engaged in contemplative meditation, even after he had risen to the highest stage.

If Joel's recommendations about posture resonate with you, you can check to see if you are following them. Finally, we can take the opportunity to confirm that we are clear about the purpose of meditation in The Infinite Way, and that we remind ourselves of that purpose before each practice.