

**Optional Study and Practice for Meditation Study Program**  
**Session 3: Recording 281B, “Practicing the Presence, Meditation, and Treatment”**

**Recap of Previous Sessions**

In the first session of our study program, Joel emphasized that **the kingdom of God is within you**. So, to experience that kingdom of God, or the indwelling divine Presence, the mystical *I*, we must go within, and the way to go within is through meditation. He explained why we meditate and the attitude we should bring to meditation, and he identified some obstacles to meditation.

In the second session, Joel put the spotlight on the goal of meditation, teaching that there is **only one goal for meditation in The Infinite Way: to have an awareness, an experience, a feel of the presence of God**. He recommended a posture for meditation and explained and demonstrated contemplative meditation.

**This Session**

In this third session, Joel elaborates on why we meditate and explains the various forms of meditation in The Infinite Way. He describes practicing the Presence, which is also known as “keeping the mind stayed on God,” “acknowledging the Presence in all our ways,” or “abiding in the Word.” He gives another example of contemplative meditation, explains and illustrates treatment, clarifies the practice he calls simply “meditation,” and touches on the stages of meditation he identifies as “communion” and “union.” [The glossary](#) provided with the optional study material for session two can help you review and understand the meaning of each of these forms of meditation.

**Key Points from Recording 281B: “Practicing the Presence, Meditation and Treatment”**

*This recording was not used as a source for any book chapter. To purchase the transcript, [click/tap here](#). Here are some of the key points in this class that might be helpful as a review.*

**Answered Prayer**

Our prayers are not answered when we go to God, or Spirit, with the human mind. To pray with the human mind is to reach no higher than one’s own belief. The human mind can bring about many wonderful things, but these have no relationship to God or spiritual power.

The prayer that brings an answer is a spiritual activity that takes place within an individual when they are still, silent, and peaceful. There is a part of every individual that is in direct contact with God because every individual is spiritually one with God. It makes no difference whether we are saints or sinners, sick or well, rich or poor. That spiritual center is already within each one of us.

We are told that when God utters his voice, the earth melts. Evil fades away, and error is eliminated from our lives. But we are also told to be still so that we can hear the still, small voice:

“In quietness and confidence shall be your strength”—your health, harmony, wholeness, completeness, and perfection.

### ***God Is Always “Broadcasting”***

The still, small voice never starts and never ends. It is talking to us from within us twenty-four hours a day. There is never a second when It is not uttering itself within and bringing us its gifts. Why don't we hear it? Because we are not listening, we are not silent; we are not still; we are not abiding in quietness and confidence. It is no different than your radio or television. If you don't have it turned on, or you are not tuned in, you get no programs.

If your human mind is always busy, the still, small voice can't get through to you. To hear it, you must be in stillness, in silence. Jesus told us that if we do not abide in the Word and let the Word abide in us, we are like a branch of a tree that is cut off and withers. We are that “branch cut off” when we do not abide in God and let God abide in us. We keep the human mind so busy that even when we go to pray or meditate, we quiet it. We cannot hear the Voice and receive the impartations from God, which would lift us out of humanhood and bring us the experience of spiritual grace. The still, small voice can only be heard when we are still and at peace.

### ***Develop the “Listening Ear”***

Spiritual grace comes to us through preparation for it. Our goal is to develop the listening ear, the inner awareness, so that we live almost constantly with an open ear. Even when we are talking or having fun, there is a little space inside where we are listening, attentive, and aware that God is “closer to us than breathing and nearer than hands and feet.” Throughout the day, we listen: “Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth.” It doesn't matter whether we hear a voice or not. Having a listening attitude simply means that we are alert and attentive, awaiting the feel of the Presence, the awareness of the Father within.

### ***Practicing the Presence***

At some point, the human being comes to a place where they say, “God's grace must be for me, too. Why must I always be outside looking in? Why must I struggle for health, harmony, supply, home, or companionship when the Master taught a way of living that is not by might, not by striving or struggling, not resisting evil?”

Usually, the first step in acquiring that listening ear, that inner stillness that can receive God, is “practicing the presence of God.”

*[Joel describes practicing the Presence in detail, showing how, throughout the day, regardless of where we are or what we are doing, we constantly acknowledge the Presence of God and remember that God's grace is with us.]*

Practicing the presence of God brings about a stillness, a quietness. Eventually, that quietness begins to pervade your mind and body. It isn't long before practicing the Presence becomes so much of a habit that you can live your normal day and night and never have a single hour without a conscious remembrance of God's presence, power, and function in your life and a recognition of the omnipresence of God where you are.

This continual state of conscious remembrance is the object because it helps overcome the sense of separation from God. There would never be a discord of any nature in the world if it weren't for that sense of separation from God. Almost everyone who seeks help is doing so because they are entertaining a sense of separation from God, and they need a mediator. That is the function of the teacher or practitioner—to be a mediator—but it is only a temporary relationship. As the Master said, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you."

When we practice the Presence and acknowledge God in all our ways, a greater degree of peace and quiet comes upon us, and we are ready for the next step, called in The Infinite Way simply "meditation." Meditation is the deepest secret of all the spiritual life. Nothing goes beyond meditation because it is in and through meditation that the harmonious life begins to unfold.

### ***Contemplative Meditation***

At first, we enter into "meditation" through the practice of contemplative meditation, in which we use the mind to contemplate or ponder some aspect of spiritual truth. The deeper you go in the spiritual life, the less you will use contemplative meditation, and the more you will use other forms of meditation. Still, few entirely outgrow contemplative meditation, which is often used as a stepping-stone to the higher forms of meditation.

*[Joel talks about posture in meditation and then demonstrates a contemplative meditation, using "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" as a starting point. ]*

A contemplative meditation in the morning sets the pattern for your day. At night, another contemplative meditation can help you consciously re-establish yourself in the presence of God. Rather than jumping into bed and going to sleep or lying awake pondering your problems, have another contemplative meditation.

*[Joel gives an example of a nighttime contemplative meditation.]*

Contemplative meditation helps bring us to where we no longer live our own lives. As Paul put it, "I live yet not I; Christ lives my life." We can keep ourselves so busy that we prevent the "He that is within me" from living our lives and performing our work for us. But through practicing the Presence and contemplative meditation, we are better able to attain this ideal.

### ***Treatment Is Contemplative Meditation in Response to a Specific Problem***

Contemplative meditation is also the way we begin "treatment" in The Infinite Way. Treatment is a contemplative meditation done in response to a specific problem of our own or of someone who has asked for help. However, we cannot do treatment work unless we know the principles of The Infinite Way, the specific principles that constitute our healing and treatment work.

For example, the problem might be inharmonious human relationships within the family, with friends, or with an employer or employee. In this case, we might begin treatment with the word "God."

*[Joel illustrates a treatment for harmonious relationships, based on the principle of the nature of individual being and the practice of forgiveness.]*

We might be faced with health concerns, and again, we can do a treatment, starting with the word “God.”

*[Joel illustrates a treatment for a health concern, based on the principles of the nature of individual being and the nature of error.]*

Sometimes, the problem is supply or the belief that we have little or nothing. Again, our treatment work is grounded in the principles.

*[Joel illustrates a treatment for supply concerns based on the principles of the nature of God and the nature of individual being.]*

### **Higher Forms of Meditation**

After you are accustomed to contemplative meditation, you will go on to other forms of meditation. The next form, which Joel calls simply “meditation,” is a stage that cannot be taught. You experience it within yourself when you are consciously aware of a Presence other than your personal sense of self. The “back and forth” that takes place within you is called “communion.” At some point, the ultimate stage of meditation comes, which we call “union with God,” or the perfect experience of oneness. In this stage, there is no sense of “twoness.”

## **Practice**

### ***Practicing the Presence and Contemplative Meditation***

Practicing the Presence is a lifetime practice. There does come a time when you do not have to remember to do it; it occurs automatically. If you are not yet at that point, you may want to take this opportunity to renew and refresh your practice. The book *Practicing the Presence* covers the practice in great detail. Even if you already understand the practice well, it can be inspiring just to open the book to any page and read a few paragraphs.

If you have meditated for a long time but find that meditation has gone somewhat “stale,” returning to practicing the Presence or contemplative meditation can be helpful. Both have the effect of “priming the pump” for meditation in silent receptivity.

Similarly, it can be difficult to settle down and meditate for longer periods if you are facing a challenging life situation. Returning to practicing the Presence or short contemplative meditations can help you maintain a spiritual altitude.

### ***Practicing Treatment***

You can practice treatment even if no one has specifically asked for help. All you have to do is read or see the news reports, and you will find many opportunities for practice. Remember that in practicing treatment, it is important to use the spiritual principles of The Infinite Way as a basis for contemplation.

## **Bible Quotes**

*The value of meditation is confirmed in many quotations from Scripture.*

- “Rejoice evermore. **Pray without ceasing**. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
- “**Abide in me, and I in you**. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” (John 15:4-7)
- “He that **delleth in the secret place of the most High** shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. . . . A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.” (Psalm 91:1,7)
- “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things**.” (Philippians 4:8)
- “Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed **by the renewing of your mind**.” (Romans 12:2)
- “But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he **meditate day and night**.” (Psalm 1:2)
- “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose **mind is stayed on thee**: because he trusteth in thee.” (Isaiah 26:3)
- “Be still, and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10)

And one quote from Joel:

“A **mind imbued with truth** is a law of harmony unto our life.” (*A Parenthesis in Eternity*, Chapter 18, “The Function of the Mind”)

## Related Reading

The appropriate practice for this study program is devoting time to the forms of meditation available to you. However, if you are new to meditation and want more instruction, or if you have meditated for a long time and feel that you need a refresher, we recommend these chapters:

- *The Infinite Way*, Chapter 6, “Meditation”
- *Practicing the Presence*, Chapter 7: “Meditation”
- *Living the Infinite Way*, Chapter 8, “Meditation”