

**Supplementary Material for the Meditation Study Program for
Session 7: Higher States of Consciousness Through the Practice of Meditation
Excerpts from Joel's Recordings**

In speaking about the states of consciousness attained through the practice of meditation, Joel uses different terms in different classes, which can be a bit confusing. However, if we look at his body of work as a whole, we see that he identifies these states or stages: practicing the Presence, contemplation, meditation, communion, and union.

- **Practicing the Presence** refers to keeping the mind attuned to God throughout the day in all activities.
- **Contemplation** refers to using the mind to contemplate or ponder spiritual truth.
- **Meditation** (also called “prayer”) refers to the period of silent, receptive listening after contemplative meditation.
- **Communion** is a deeper experience than meditation and refers to being aware of the Presence within and communing with it. The communion can be a “back and forth” with God, the Presence within you, in words or thoughts, or it can be just a silent inner feeling of communion.
- **Union** refers to the ultimate experience of oneness with God.

As you listen to other classes in the course of your personal study, remember that Joel uses some of these words interchangeably and may even describe them differently at different times. The point to remember is that Joel is not trying to set forth a rigid taxonomy or imply that the journey to conscious union with God must be taken in specific, well-defined steps. Rather, the journey is a continuously expanding experience. By naming the stages, we believe Joel is simply giving us a way to identify milestones. So, do not get stuck in or distracted by any apparent contradictions relating to terminology. As Joel has said, “catch the spirit” of the message.

Sessions 1 through 6 in our study program focused mainly on practicing the Presence, contemplation, and, to some degree, meditation. Session 7 addresses meditation, communion, and union, and the following excerpts from Joel's recordings shed further light on those.

From Recording 108A: 1955 Chicago Private Class, “Contemplation, Meditation, Communion and Union”

In one of your periods of contemplation, you come to an end, where no more thoughts will come to you. You've just about used up all the thoughts you can think of about God and God's creation, and you just feel like sitting this way for a few minutes. And I call that the period of **meditation**. That's the period when you've gone **beyond contemplation**, when you've known all the truth about God and God's creation that there is, when there's nothing more to think about. No more thoughts will come to you, and you just settle down into sort of a state of peace. It may only last half a minute, half a second. It may be just a flash of quiet, of peace. Eventually, it will last a whole minute. When it does, you're very fortunate. A minute is a long, long time. A

minute is equal to a thousand years, so if you just have one minute, you'll find you will have had a thousand years of great joy in that minute.

And you know why, don't you? Einstein explained that just a couple of days before he passed on—had to do with the law of relativity. He said that if you were spending two hours in the company of a pleasant young lady, that two hours would be like a minute, but if you were sitting on a hot stove for a minute, it would seem like two years. And so it is. If you ever get into communion, or into meditation, or into a state of peace with God, it'll only last a minute. It rarely lasts more than that, but it really will be the equivalent of a thousand years, and you'll be satisfied for a long, long time with that one minute.

And that minute is a minute of **meditation**. It is when you are no longer seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling, or thinking; when all of the six senses are quiet, and you are just at peace, as if you were already into heaven and had no more problems. Well, of course, when you have no more problems, you are in heaven. And in that minute, you'll have no problems, and you'll find that you are in the kingdom of heaven, and that's your period of **meditation**.

Now, as you continue, you will have fewer periods of contemplation. No—let me say your periods of contemplation will be shorter. You may, when you sit down in your quiet place, have a few minutes or seconds of contemplating God, but it is very quickly stopped, and you will find yourself in meditation, in that state of consciousness in which you do not see, hear, taste, touch, smell, or think, or reason; in which you are just at peace. And now, instead of that lasting half a minute or a minute, you're apt to find it lasting two minutes. There have been cases known where it lasted three minutes, and that, of course, is really a taste of heaven on earth. Three minutes of that is enough to keep you going in health, and harmony, and wholeness, and completeness, and perfection for a long, long time.

If you were to have two periods every day in which you had only half a minute of **meditation**, you'd find that your whole life would be lived under God's government. You would have God going before you to make the crooked places straight. It only takes one blink of a second of that realization of God to govern your whole day. God—literally, I'm speaking—God literally goes out before you to make the crooked places straight, whether it's parking places, or getting orders, or selling, or teaching, or whatnot. It's true that by the end of the day or the next day, the effects will have worn off because the mesmerism of the world is such that that little glimpse doesn't last an eternity, but you have the opportunity to recapture it.

Now, in my early days of this work, I found that if I achieved even five seconds of that peace, that my entire day was harmonious and successful. And so, I made it a practice never to leave home in the morning until I achieved it. Well, it became increasingly difficult because you can't force it. And so, the time finally came when I got up at four o'clock in the morning just to make sure that if it took until eight, I was going to stick around until it happened. And I did. If it took place in five minutes, I went back to sleep again. I was all right for that day, and then at my regular time, I got up and went on. But if it didn't, I would just wait—five o'clock, six o'clock. It had to come before I left for the office.

Occasionally, it didn't, but if it didn't, I knew enough not to expect that day to be quite as perfect as the others. And it wasn't. Probably my own expectation made it so. But nevertheless, on the days when I achieved—it was only those few seconds of that peace—those days were successful and harmonious.

Now from there, I went on to realizing that inasmuch as that period wouldn't really cover a whole twenty-four hours of activity, the best thing for me to do would be to have it happen twice a day. And so, at noon, I would lock my doors and sit there and wait for it again. If it didn't come at noon, I'd take some period in the afternoon, or dinner time, or evening. Usually, before I retired, I could recapture it a second time.

And from there, I went on to trying [to have] it three times a day, and then four times, and finally, I was up to twenty times a day. Well, by that time, I found that it was really not necessary to do it anymore. It was a normal, natural state of being all the time. Once in a blue moon, I would fall out of it. Sometimes I'd get awfully mad, fighting about Mr. Roosevelt, and then I'd get all out of whack again, and I'd have to work awfully hard, sometimes forty days—at least it seemed like forty days—and then I got back again to a state of forgiveness and started all over again. Now, I find that I don't fall out of that meditation very much. It is as if inside here, I was cushioned, and I'm right there most all the time. . . .

Sit down as many periods a day as you can for contemplation and meditation. Don't, at the beginning, sit for more than three or four or five minutes. That's plenty long enough. Three minutes is usually enough. Four minutes is plenty. Five minutes is usually too much until such time as your contemplation is smooth, as you can find more and more of God revealing Himself within you, and the nature of God, and the spiritual creation. Then you can extend it to four, five, six, seven minutes. I doubt that I'd ever want to go beyond that. But go back to it more often.

If you sit there for five or six minutes and you don't find your peace, don't accept that as meaning that you haven't succeeded. Oh, no, because God is not a state of emotion. You may not always have the feeling of God. As a matter of fact, I may tell you this: that there are times when you are absolutely in the depths of despondency and ready for suicide, that God is closer to you at that minute than when you are feeling an ecstatic emotion. It's a strange thing that we can't always know God's presence by our feelings. No. No. I've seen that operate in times, in my years of going through the work and study and meditations and practice, when I was going through the greatest difficulties, sometimes having the greatest criticisms and all the rest of it, and feeling the utter futility of it, when healings were better than at any other time.

And so don't judge whether or not you're succeeding by your emotions. Judge by whether or not you are putting in your periods of meditation, because if you are, that is letting God in, regardless of any emotion or any feeling on your part. You'll soon know it by its effects in your life. You'll soon see the outer affairs begin to change, and very often, you'll say, "I don't know why it is. I'm not doing anything about it. I'm not feeling anything. God isn't any closer than He ever was." He is, in effect.

Now, it is a wonderful thing to get to that place where you have not less than four periods a day, even if those four periods are limited to three or four minutes, because each time that you have that period, you sit down as much as to say, "Well, I'm sitting down for God." So, you've got your mind on God, and He will keep you in perfect peace. It is as if you were to say, "I'm sitting down to pray," and Paul says, "Pray without ceasing." So you're obeying that. . . .

Now, since it is true that we only bring God into our experience through meditation, then meditation must become the first and prime principle of The Infinite Way. Without the meditation, all the rest of the words are meaningless because they're only the letter of truth. It is only when you go into your contemplation that the letter becomes realized as spirit. So, whatever reading you do or listening, whatever principles you take into your mind, those you can take into your

contemplation and meditation. And the letter of truth will thereby serve you to reach that period of **meditation** when contemplation stops, thinking stops, thought stops, and you become aware.

Eventually, this leads to another experience, and that experience is **communion**. Communion is not frequently achieved by anybody. Communion is meditation when it has gone very, very deep, and God has come as a reality in consciousness, and there is something going back and forth between your individual consciousness and that universal Consciousness, which we call "God."

From Recording 108B: 1955 Chicago Private Class, "Contemplation, Meditation, Communion and Union – continued"

When you go beyond meditation into **communion**, that is when there is an interchange, when there is a something flowing out from God into your consciousness and back again from your consciousness into God. It is like a wave of warmth that goes back and forth. Sometimes, you receive in communion direct impartations, messages. They're not always in audible sounds, but they're direct impressions that you know the meaning of. . . .

Communion, then, is a deeper sense than meditation. It's meditation carried to a deeper degree—not that you carry it; God carries it, because it's all by grace. You can't bring it about. You can't force it. You can only be patient and wait for it. And then you'll find that It takes over, and there is this . . . communion is the only word—inner communion, peaceful communion, joyous communion, when you really feel that the love of God is touching you, and your love of God is returning unto God. And just as you are feeling God's love for you, so God is feeling your love in return. A wealth of experiences open up in communion.

And, of course, when that is carried to its ultimate, it results in the final relationship, which is, of course, **union** with God. And when that stage is reached, there is no longer a communion because there aren't two. That's the stage where Jesus realized, "*I and the Father are one.*" You find this in the Song of Solomon. It is given there almost as if it were a human love story, but it really isn't. It is the actual experience of divine communion, which I suppose a poet could only liken to that depth of communion that exists between men and women who are deeply in love.

In the communion stage, it is the two who love each other—the Father and the Son. . . . That is the relationship that comes in communion, where God loves us so supremely that we can feel it as clearly as a mother's love that's enfolding her beloved child. And you also feel the flow of the love that's going out to God. It brings tears to your eyes.

But that ends with **union**. And when union takes place, there is no "me" anymore—there's only God. And as you're looking out, you're only seeing what God sees. You're only feeling what God feels because there is no other selfhood; there is no other you. It's only God being you. And that experience happens to some people once in their whole lifetime. Other people have it happen three or four times, and there are some fortunate enough to have it many more times. . . .

Well, now, those moments of union are precious. They're few, but they're precious because they show us the world as the world is. They show us God's world as it is, and above all, they teach us this lesson: that if it's possible to experience it for an hour or for four days, it's possible to have it forever. There's only one necessity—getting ourselves out of the way. That's what happens in the moment of union. The self, with a small s, is out of the way. Now, just think that that can be prolonged and that, ultimately, that can and will be our life on earth.

The day will come when the earth will be so full of the presence of the Lord that there will be no mortal or material sense of existence left. There will only be that spiritual vision that looks out. But you see, that only comes to us by degrees through the practice of meditation. It has happened here and there to a person with no degree of religious life or meditation but very, very seldom. And the few times that are known when it did happen, it was usually a person who was internally in distress, and whether they were conscious of it or not, they were saying, "God, God, God, do something about this." Sometimes, in their very desperation, God did. In other words, their self got out of the way, and God could show through. But ordinarily, this experience comes to people who have some kind of religious leaning, some kind of a religious impulse that keeps them cogitating, contemplating, ultimately meditating, then communing. And from there on, of course, it's only a step to the union.

For us, then, in the message of The Infinite Way, this is important. God is, but God is going to do nothing for us or about us or to us, except in proportion as we can open out a way within ourselves to let God escape from locked up in there to an activity in our consciousness and a realization of Presence. Meditation is that way. If we can get the "click," if we can get to that point, not through mental striving or mental straining, but through discipline and patience, contemplating, meditating, where eventually this deep breath takes place, or this tingling in the body, or the sense of warmth, anything, or just an awareness, if we get to that, we can say, "Ah, it has happened."

From then on, it is simple to return to it and bring it on frequently, and ultimately to live constantly in God's presence, under God's direction, so that you never have to take thought about what to do today or tomorrow. It always comes the other way—the thought comes to you, and then you merely act it out. In other words, instead of you making a decision to go somewhere, or be somewhere, or do something, something within you happens, and then you say, "Oh, I have to be there," or you find yourself there, even without thinking about it. Or the invitation comes to you, rather than you seeking it. That's what happens as this Spirit, the presence and power of God, takes over.

You can see why the letter of truth is necessary, because when you first go into your contemplation, there's no use contemplating lies. There's no use contemplating fiction, darkness, or ignorance. You've got to contemplate truth, and the letter of truth is what gives you the truth to contemplate. . . . You contemplate truth, and that leads you to a period when thought stops, and you sit for a second or so in meditation and then go on about your business, and the Presence takes over. . . . The correct letter of truth becomes the spirit of truth, the consciousness of truth, and that takes over. Meditation is the means whereby it happens.