

Optional Study and Practice for the Spiritual Healing Study Program Part 2: The Principles and Their Role in Healing Session 3: The Nature of Error

Review of Previous Sessions

Part 1: Introduction

Session 1: Introduction and Overview (Recording 477B)

Joel gave a broad overview of spiritual healing in *The Infinite Way*, emphasizing that it is not a technique or system to be learned. Healing is the fruitage, or the natural manifestation, of the realized consciousness of the major principles of *The Infinite Way*: the nature of God, the nature of individual being, the nature of error, and the nature of prayer. The realized consciousness is the state in which the truth of these principles is *real* to us; it is our lived reality. In *The Infinite Way*, spiritual healing is never about manipulating or changing conditions. Healing is *revealing*—the revealing of the truth that already IS. To review the key points in this recording, [click/tap here](#).

Part 2: The Principles and Their Role in Healing

Session 1: The Nature of God (Recording 261A)

There are no special healing principles in *The Infinite Way*. While Joel does speak of the “healing” principles, they are the same as the foundational principles of *The Infinite Way*—the nature of God, the nature of individual being, the nature of error, and the nature of prayer. With this recording, we began our detailed review of these four principles, starting with the nature of God and its relationship to spiritual healing. To review the key points in this recording, [click/tap here](#).

Part 2: The Principles and Their Role in Healing

Session 2: The Nature of Individual Being (Recording 120B)

The nature of individual being stems from the nature of God as Omnipresence. If God is Omnipresence, there can be no other presence. Therefore, if we are “present”—if we exist—our being must be wholly within that Omnipresence and share its qualities. We are infinite, eternal, and unique expressions of spiritual being. As Joel reminds us, God alone **is**, and because God **is**, all individual being is God expressing **as**. Discords come from the belief that we are separate from God, outside of Omnipresence. To have a healing consciousness is to recognize that, because every individual is one with that Presence, each is a perfect spiritual being. So rather than attempting to change or overcome any appearance of discord, we *rise into the consciousness* of the true spiritual nature of individual being as one with God. To review the key points in this recording, [click/tap here](#).

Study Method Review

From time to time, we have offered ideas for studying a book or a recording. Each individual has to find the method that works best for them, and you may already have a preferred method. If

you don't, you might enjoy experimenting with this method for studying a recording. It is based on some of Joel's study recommendations¹ and has worked well for many students.

Listening to the Recording or Reading the Transcript

- Begin your listening (or reading) period with a short prayer for spiritual light, guidance, direction, and understanding, followed by a few moments of silence.
- Listen attentively to the recording (or begin reading the transcript).
- When a particular statement stands out for you or catches your attention, stop the recording (or stop reading). Write the statement down or paraphrase it.
- With that statement in your awareness, "Ponder it, repeat it, think upon it, because this passage is a seed of truth which is now being planted within you. After you have ceased thinking about it, that seed begins to germinate and eventually takes root, later bearing spiritual fruitage."
- When you feel complete with the contemplation, resume listening to the recording (or reading the transcript) until something else stands out. Again, stop the recording (or stop reading), write the statement down or paraphrase it, then contemplate it.
- Continue in this way for as long as you are led. Do not feel that you must cover the entire class in one session. Take your time.

Some students prefer to review a summary of the recording. If that is the best method for you, the following is a summary of the major points in Recording 645AB. For each major point, we have included questions for reflection. We suggest that you pause reading to consider the questions or take them into contemplation.

Current Session: The Nature of Error (Recording 645AB)

Joel begins this class by reviewing the divine nature of individual being and then asks the obvious question: "But I have pain, there's a war, there is injustice, the world is cracking up, there are earthquakes, floods, famine, disaster. How can that be after what we have just learned about God *as*, and God *is*, and I *am*? Where would there be room in the whole of this world for a single error if our basic premise were true? If it is true that God is infinite, and beside God there is nothing else, where then is there an error?" This question leads to a marvelous lesson about the nature of error and its role in healing work.

Major Points in the Recording

Our study recording for this session is 645AB, from the 1956 Johannesburg Closed Class titled, "Nature of Error and Specific Treatment."

- **There can be no error, and there is no error.**

Joel uses the first chapter of Genesis to explain that no error or evil can exist in God's creation. That chapter describes God revealing Himself as light, as food, as man, as law, as eternity. You have the immaculate conception—God creating out of Himself; God

¹ *The Heart of Mysticism, Volume 6, The 1959 Letters*, Chapter 3: "The Secret of the Resurrection.

expressing Itself as form. The one infinite God manifesting Itself in billions of forms out of Its own inner being. And that's the true creation.

No one has been able to explain how, in view of this marvelous creation, that right alongside it is a second creation, set forth in the second chapter of Genesis. We have come to understand this second creation as the creation of the human mind, driven by the belief in God *and* something other than God—the belief in two powers—with a capacity for self-thought, selfish thought.

In the Infinite Way, we refer to this mental creation as a *sense* of separation from God. We speak of a “sense” of separation because, in reality, we cannot be separated from God. When we live under this erroneous *sense* of separation, instead of living and moving and having our being in God-consciousness, we live and move and have our being in our own selfish interest, which ultimately proves disastrous to us. The story of Adam's fall supposedly explains how we develop a sense of separateness.

The parable of the Prodigal Son symbolizes our journey “back to the Father's house.” This is the story of a young man who is already joint heir to a wealthy landowner. But he is not content; he wants to set up a sense of “I-ness.” He leaves his father's house and sets out to make his own way. Eventually, he uses up his resources and is reduced to eating with the swine. At that low point, he remembers that he is the son of a prosperous man and heir to all his riches, and that even the servants in his father's house are better off than he is. With this realization, he begins the journey home.

Like the Prodigal Son, we have been human beings living on this human sense of “I,” and not doing too well. When we recognized that, we were divinely guided through a metaphysical or spiritual teaching to realize that there is a way to “return” to our original perfection; to consciously realize the truth of our oneness with God and awaken to the truth that we have never been separate.

For Reflection:

- *What key points is Joel making with these Bible passages?*
 - *If you want to read these Bible passages in several translations, we recommend the online site BibleGateway.com. To read more about this resource and how to use it, [click/tap here](#).*
- **Even though we understand that there can be no error in the spiritual universe, our human sense still sees the *appearances* of error in daily life.**

Discords have to be dealt with, but we do not overcome them with blind faith. We have to recognize that these appearances of error, these problems, do not exist out in the world. *They exist in our mind*, in our beliefs, in our false concepts of the world. This does not mean that the problem isn't real, painful, or destructive to us. Regardless of where we think it originates, we suffer from it.

However, when we know the truth that a problem does not exist as a reality with a law to uphold it, we can transcend the problem and get back into that original, pure state of consciousness, in which there are no discords.

The human world walks around more or less hopelessly, trying to escape its troubles through distractions or drugs, but sincere spiritual students are not satisfied with that. They would rather face the problem and meet it through spiritual practice.

For Reflection:

- *Bring to mind a problem you are facing.*
- *It may be difficult, but can you begin to realize that the problem exists only in your mind, and not outside yourself?*
- *Without judging yourself, can you identify any belief or erroneous concept you may be holding that might be manifesting outwardly as the problem (a belief in two powers, in personal responsibility, in separation from God, or in punishment)?*
- *Rest in the awareness that no belief, appearance, or condition exists as a reality with a law to uphold it.*

- **Appearances are not Reality; we must see through them.**

Joel emphasizes the importance of knowing the nature of error.

Most religious traditions teach that there are two powers—a good power, usually represented by God, and an evil power, usually represented by Satan or the devil. God is supposed to be the greater power, but nobody has yet found how to get God to overcome evil, so the appearance of evil still exists in the world. The object of religion is to find a way to reach God so that our evils can be overcome, but that is not the object in The Infinite Way.

In The Infinite Way, we have *one* power—God. There's no need to use that power, because in the allness of God, there is nothing to use it over. We recognize that what appears to us as evil is a picture, a suggestion, a hypnotic influence. It is not a thing, a person, or a cause, and it has no law to sustain it. It exists as a mental image in thought, just as seeing railroad tracks coming together in the distance does.

The tracks do not really come together, and our knowing that fact overcomes the erroneous appearance. Likewise, the sky appears to rest on a mountain, and if you believe the appearance, you will think that you cannot cross the mountain because the sky is in the way. But if you know that you are seeing an illusion, a false picture that is not a reality, you will not hesitate to climb the mountain.

In neither case did you try to use one power to overcome another. You didn't pray for the tracks to be separated or for the sky to be removed from the mountain. Your intelligence told you the truth that the tracks do not come together, and the sky is not sitting on the mountain. You didn't try to push the tracks apart or move the sky off the mountain.

Likewise, in healing work, you do not have to use a God to remove your sins, diseases, or lacks. Instead, you acknowledge that, despite appearances, there are no sins, diseases, or lacks; God never created them. So you are not dealing with a condition that has to be changed, improved, healed, or removed. You are dealing with an *appearance that you must see through*. But you cannot see through the appearance with human eyes; you need a higher faculty that can see *that which IS*. This faculty—spiritual discernment—is already within you, waiting to be developed. As spiritual discernment is developed, you can look at any appearance and know that it isn't true; it hasn't a law or a cause; it is not of God's creating, and you need not fear it. "I shall not fear what mortal man can do to me."

Spiritual discernment also tells you not to “put your faith in princes,” in human authority or material power. In healing work, have faith in God, not that God will do something for you, but that since “before Abraham was,” God’s kingdom has been established on earth, and perfection IS. At first, this may be only an intellectual acknowledgment, but with practice, you begin to see through appearances and behold the man and the world of God’s creation.

For Reflection:

- *What key points is Joel making in this part of the class? Phrase these in your own words.*
- *What is spiritual discernment, and how do you develop it?*
- *How would you explain to a new Infinite Way student that appearances are not Reality?*

- **Why bother with the nature of error?**

If you do not understand the nature of error, you will look for a God to do something for you, and you won’t find it because all that God can do was done in the beginning. That which IS has always been and always will be. God IS. Good IS. Harmony IS. Spirit IS. Reality IS.

When you have attained that realization of IS, you will know the nature of error as illusion, and you will not go to God for any purpose but the joy of communion, oneness, peace, and joy, abiding in God’s grace and presence. That is why we meditate or pray. You can’t *get* anything from God because you are *already* heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ in God, and all the heavenly riches are *already* yours. God has nothing to give because God isn’t withholding anything. God just IS. God is IS-ing—expressing, unfolding, disclosing, and revealing Itself all the time. Not after you pray, but from the beginning.

If you live in the consciousness of God, willing to give up your desires, hopes, anxieties, and fears, resting in God and trusting that the allness of God is forever being expressed, you will find a state of peace and relaxation. It may take a while, but as you relax and stop looking to God *for* something, stop believing that God is withholding something, and that, in some miraculous way, you can start the flow, it will not be long before that flow begins. You can’t make it happen. You can’t influence God. God is always about Its own business.

So let God do it, but always seek to be in the companionship of God. “Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace,” or “Acknowledge Him in all thy ways,” or “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.” Consider the sunrise and sunset every day, the rain, the snow, and the seasons, and notice that you have never had to pray for them. You have been merely a beholder of this divine activity.

The nature of error is important because if you understand it, you will stop trying to use God as a power over discordant appearances. You will rest more in the assurance that these errors of the world are a dream substance. You will realize that the whole human picture is a mental image in thought, which disappears when we relax from fear, doubt, hate, and selfishness.

When you practice applying the principle of the nature of error, you will develop spiritual discernment, the faculty that enables you to see with inner vision without effort. When you understand that all that God *is*, I *am*, that there is no “me” separate and apart from God, and

that I embody all that God *is*, you can say, “What of this error?” You can rest in the realization of your oneness with God and the truth of one power.

For Reflection:

- *In your own words, what is the nature of error?*
- *In healing work, why is it important to know the nature of error?*
- *How would you explain the nature of error and its role in healing work to a new Infinite Way student?*

- **How to apply the nature of God and the nature of error to a physical claim**

We have the broad principles of the nature of God and the nature of error. But when someone comes to us for help, or when we ourselves need help, we have to bring the principles to a specific application. How do we do this?

Joel suggests that we sit comfortably, away from others. Drop the person and the physical claim from your thought. Then, bring to mind the word ‘God,’ let your contemplation rest there. We always begin with God:

God. . . God. Now, that was a person who asked for help, but God is infinite being, so God appears as this person, and only the qualities of God are present. Only the quantity of God, the laws of God, the life of God, the allness of God, and the purity of God are present. The infinite nature of God’s pure being *is* expressing Itself as this individual.

All that God *is*, this individual *is*, because there is not ‘this individual’ *and* God, but only God *appearing as* this individual. All that God *is*, this individual *is*. God *is* the life of individual being, the purity of individual being, the soul of individual being, the only law and the only lawgiver.

To human sense, there appear to be laws of matter—laws of disease, germs, infection, contagion, or heredity. But since God is infinite, there can only be one law, and it is spiritual. So, what is there to material law or medical law? It is illusion, having no substance. It is a belief. But we do not accept the belief, and therefore, it cannot affect us.

Some people may die from believing in the power of infection or contagion, but as the Psalmist said, “It shall not come nigh your dwelling place” if you do not accept the belief as having power.

For Reflection:

- *When you become aware of a physical claim—yours or someone else’s—are you able to immediately pause and remember that only the qualities of God are present? If not, what are some ways you could help yourself remember to do this?*
- *What material laws (beliefs) relating to physical issues are most difficult for you to see as illusion (e.g., laws of aging, infection, contagion, heredity, power of food, specific “diseases,” etc.)? What might help you see them as illusion?*

- **How to apply the nature of God and the nature of error to the case of a “bad” person**

Suppose that instead of a sick person, you are called to help a person whose character appears to be immoral. Again, we start with God:

God . . . God. Since God is infinite, God’s nature is the only nature of this person, and so there are no qualities of good or evil. There are only the qualities of God.

Joel reminds us that when he gives an example of treatment, it is not a formula. Repeating his words won’t heal anybody. Every treatment must be somewhat spontaneous, while still including the same elements.

In almost every case that comes to you, you will find some supposed law, or belief, at work—a law of human nature, matter, heredity, infection or contagion, decay, or breakage. You have to meet it realizing, “Ah, yes, but none of these so-called laws are law. They are beliefs, for there is only one law. God is the only law, and God is spirit, omnipresent, eternal, here and now.”

For Reflection:

- *Bring to mind someone who seems to you to be a “bad” or “evil” person or is thought to be such by others. Try to drop all beliefs about the person and see them as God appearing as individual being. Try to recognize that only the nature of God is truly present. As you do this, how does it feel?*
- *Do you accept any negative “laws” (or beliefs) about human nature (greed, selfishness, ambition, fear, hate, jealousy, ignorance, etc.)? If so, which ones? What happens when you recognize that there is only one law, the spiritual law of God?*

- **How to apply the nature of God and the nature of error to the appearance of death**

If you were called to help someone who is gravely ill or dying, again, you start, not with the condition, but with God:

God . . . God. God is life. If God is infinite, there is only one life, and the life of God *is* the life of individual being. God’s life has no old age, so we have no age to deal with. We are not dealing with the life of a human, but with the life of God, which is the life of man.

The only way to maintain the life, vitality, strength, and health of your body is to know that as a human being, *you* have no life, health, or strength of your own. God is the only life, and that life is perfect. Because there is only one, all that God has and is, is yours. Surrender the belief that you have a life of your own and acknowledge that the only life is God. God’s life—which is your life—is not subject to matter, material beliefs, material conditions, or mental conditions. It is subject only to Itself, God, the only law and life.

We never neglect anyone who asks for help, nor do we treat any claim lightly. We do not believe that something will happen just by saying “Folderol!” There must be a *specific, conscious* realization of the truth, and sometimes we have to persist in it for long periods.

For Reflection:

- *When you think of life —your own or another’s—do you tend to see it as personal and finite, or as the one infinite Life of God expressing Itself?*
- *Have you come to the place where you no longer believe that you have a life of your own? If so, how has this changed your daily living? If not, how would your daily living change if you realized that God is the only life, and you have no life of your own?*
- *Can you recall any time in your life when quiet persistence in realizing truth brought peace or healing?*

- **Practice, practice, practice.**

You must take these principles and practice, practice, practice them, in the same way you would practice with a musical instrument. The object of this work is to develop spiritual consciousness, because it is spiritual consciousness that will do the healing work. Actually, it can change the whole consciousness of this world. Neither of these will happen by the knowledge you get in class, but by *what you do with the knowledge* that you get in class; by the extent to which you use it to develop your consciousness.

Joel spent sixteen years in the healing work before he began teaching, because he wanted to be certain he was teaching truth, grounded in realization. He counsels us to wait until we have a firm foundation before taking further steps. When students fail to live up to their teaching, often the teaching is blamed. But in fact, the failure is not in the teaching, but in the student who tries to set themselves up as a teacher or practitioner without waiting for spiritual unfoldment, without developing spiritual consciousness.

For Reflection:

- *How consistent are you in practicing the principles of the nature of God and the nature of error, rather than simply taking them in intellectually?*
- *If there is inconsistency, how might you improve?*

- **Do not “pass by on the other side.”**

Every specific claim that presents itself to you has to be met *in your consciousness*—every specific claim—not only when people ask you for help, but every claim that comes to your attention. If you are walking along the street and see an intoxicated person, that is a claim coming to you. If you see a disabled person or a beggar, don’t ignore them; don’t “pass by on the other side.” You can leave them alone physically, but not spiritually. Lift them up in your consciousness to the truth of being.

Joel speaks about two instances in which Infinite Way students met with claims of intoxication and, through their realization of the nature of error and the truth of individual being, witnessed healings.

We cannot pass by anyone who appears to be sick, sinful, or dead. We must lift them up in consciousness. Realize the infinite nature of God as individual being and realize that that truth *is* operating. As you do that, if they are at all receptive, they will respond; they will feel the touch of that realization.

For Reflection:

- *When you see appearances of suffering, limitation, or discord in daily life, such as a homeless person, a sick person, or a person on the street begging for money, do you tend to turn away, or do you pause to recognize their true identity and lift the individual up in consciousness? If not, what would help you do this?*
- *Can you recall any time when quietly acknowledging the truth about someone changed your experience?*

- **You must have the developed consciousness of a principle for it to be effective.**

As Joel said in the introductory class for this study program, healing is the fruitage, or the natural manifestation, of the realized consciousness of the spiritual principles of The Infinite Way. We do not develop the realized consciousness of the nature of God and the nature of error by just going through classes, reading books, or listening to recordings. We must also apply these principles in our daily lives, and practice, practice, practice them until our consciousness is so developed that we do not see a dead person, or a sick person, or a drunkard, or a beggar. We see *through* the appearance to the infinite nature of God appearing as individual being. Then we will have healings, not by an act of will, but as the effortless activity of awakened consciousness.

For Reflection:

- *How are you practicing the nature of God and the nature of error in daily life? Did this lesson give you any ideas for deepening your practice?*

Supplementary Recording

At the beginning of recording 645AB, Joel references the previous class, recording 644AB, on which he speaks about “as, is, and am” as key to spiritual healing. This is a very clear, engaging, and worthwhile class, and we recommend listening to it. We have posted it on the same page as 645AB. As you hear the recording, you might want to use the study method suggested at the beginning of these study options.

(Note: Recording 644AB contains a few remarks that could be interpreted as disparaging to women. The context or background for the remarks is not provided, and it may relate to something from an earlier class. We encourage you to set aside these comments in that light and focus on the essential message of the recording.)

Also, Recording 644AB has several lengthy silent meditations. Nothing is wrong with the recording; you can simply join in the meditations.)