

Optional Study and Practice for the Spiritual Healing Study Program

Part 5: Beginning the Healing Work

Session 3: Developing the Healing Consciousness, Continued

Recording 128B: “Bear Witness to the Universal Nature of Illusory Error”

Review of Previous Sessions

Part 1 of our study program provided an overview of spiritual healing, and **Part 2** focused on the core principles of The Infinite Way and their role in spiritual healing. **Part 3** of our study program concentrated on the practice of spiritual healing, and **Part 4** addressed issues that can arise in spiritual healing.

The Current Session

In the first session for Part 5 of our study program, Joel clarified that the healing ministry begins when you “know *what you are doing, why you are doing it, and when you are willing to take responsibility for doing it.*” While we do not believe that Joel was speaking about entering the healing ministry professionally (as noted in [the Q&A for the first half of April](#)), we do believe he was telling us that when a request for help comes, we should be willing to accept it. In other words, if someone asks you for help, you do not simply give that person the name of a practitioner and pass the responsibility along. You accept the request yourself and do the healing work to the best of your present ability.

Joel often said that the healing work proves the message, and for that reason, he frequently encouraged students to develop the healing consciousness. As we noted in the study material for the previous session, from a human standpoint, you may not yet feel ready to accept a request for help. You may not yet fully understand that the request is not being made of the personal “you,” and so it may seem like too great a responsibility, or you may fear that you could fail. Even if you feel grounded in the principles and practices of spiritual healing, you still may not yet be willing to take that step.

So what can you do? At the very beginning of this study program, we quoted Joel’s statement that if you learn the principles and catch the entire vision, you have a background for healing, and then “healing becomes just a part of the picture, and that’s the way it should be.” What this means is that you can continue working with the principles and practices that naturally develop the healing consciousness until the time comes when you are willing to accept a request for help.

There are two important stepping stones in that direction: first, a commitment to continually bear witness to God; and second, a commitment to continually bear witness to the illusory nature of error. In essence, this is the practice of the principles concerning the nature of God and the nature of error. The previous session focused on bearing witness to God. In this final session of our spiritual healing program, we will focus on the second of these: bearing witness to the illusory nature of error.

In this session, Joel does take a few excursions into his personal observations, and you may or may not agree with him. But remember that these are not part of the core message of The

Infinite Way. Keep your focus on the core message of the class—understanding that error is impersonal and illusory, and that when confronted with appearances, we are to remain the quiet witness, neither accepting them nor reacting to them.

Key Points from the Recording

We are taking a slightly different approach to reviewing this lesson. As usual, we have identified several topics that Joel addresses in the class. For some of them, we include key points for you to build upon. Others we have left open for you to note the points that were most meaningful to you. Remember that you can always [review this recording, 128B](#), at any time.

Review: Bearing witness to God.

Referring back to [the recording we heard in our previous session, 428B](#), as well as to the first part of [our current recording, 128B](#), jot down the points that were important to you about the practice of bearing witness to God. What does it mean to bear witness to God, and how can you do it?

There is another important step.

- Seeing God in action and manifestation will begin to bring changes in your experience, but it will not bring the final and complete harmony or the demonstration of spiritual power in your life. There are unorganized teachings on earth that recognize the one ego, the one life, and the one mind, but they do very little to bring forth real harmony to their followers. The reason lies in the inability to accept what we know about the *nature of error*.
- To bring the full demonstration of harmony into experience, we must not only bear witness to God in action; we must also bear witness to the nature of error. If you were to realize only the allness of God with no knowledge of the nature of error, your knowledge of the letter of truth would only be half correct, and you would not achieve the demonstrations to which you are entitled.
- Why? Just as you are not good, so you are not evil, nor are you a sinner, or the one who is poor, or the one who contracts a disease. These have nothing to do with you, and that is

why no amount of right thinking will ever solve your problems. Your wrong thinking didn't cause them, and your right thinking won't cure them. There is only one thing that will bring an end to the discords and inharmonies of individual experience, and that is an understanding of the truth.

- The first half of that understanding involves this: Do not call me good. There is but one good. There is but one life, one mind, one soul, one law, one cause, one being, and one effect. The second half involves this: Do not call me evil either. Even if you see a man steal a wallet, do not call him evil. He had no more to do with it than you had when you were good to somebody. When you were good to somebody, it was the activity of God through you, and if you do evil, it is the activity of what we call mortal mind, the human sense of life, the physical sense of life, the material sense of life, or the structural sense of life. It is a *sense of separation* from God.

Error is universal belief.

- Error is *universal*. If you want to help the thief, immediately take your thought off him and realize that the *universal belief* in a selfhood apart from God is not a power, nor is the *universal belief* in lack and limitation. In other words, whatever the form of error may be, it isn't of the person. It is a *universal belief*.
- Therefore, when an individual comes to you for help, the first thing you must do is bear witness to God in action. Bear witness within yourself to the realization that right here, invisible to human sight, is the Christ, the activity of Christ, and the law of Christ. The Spirit of God is in action even though appearances testify otherwise. But then, what about the appearance? It is the one illusion, the one universal belief of separation from good. It is the one universal belief of a law apart from God.
- When you stop personalizing good, you start the flow of blessings, but the moment you stop personalizing evil, you complete the picture. When you can look at "Satan" in the form of Judas Iscariot and say, "This man is not a sinner. Father, forgive him; he knows not what he does. Satan, the one evil, the one sense of selfhood apart from God, is not a presence or a power. It has no one in whom or through whom to operate," you begin to nullify the apparent evil.
- When you see a burned-out light bulb, you do not believe that all electricity is dead. You simply change the bulb, and you have light again. Similarly, when you see an individual showing signs of deadness, whether of sin or disease, do not be concerned with the appearance. Realize that the appearance does not concern that individual; it concerns a universal sense of separation from God. Then the dead become alive.

How should a practitioner handle a claim?

In this part of the class, Joel describes how a practitioner handles a claim, based on the idea of bearing witness to God in action and bearing witness to the illusory nature of error. What key points does he make?

Practice in daily life

In this part of the recording, Joel talks about how we can practice bearing witness in daily life. What stood out for you?

God does not punish anyone for their sins.

- Theology has given the world the horrible belief that God punishes us for our sins. As a result, even minor sins can lead people to accept severe punishments, consciously or unconsciously. Joel notes that many people tell him, "I suppose it's really my fault. I suppose I've done something and I'm being punished for it." The belief that you are being punished for something that happened yesterday or a thousand years ago can keep you in bondage to sickness for the rest of your life. No!
- It is true that we punish ourselves for the wrongs that we do, but there is no God of punishment, and so there is no punishment when we stop doing the wrong. The law of "as ye sow, so shall ye reap" operates in this way: If you have accepted the belief that there are laws of inheritance, laws of matter, infection, contagion, birth, heredity, and death, then those laws are in operation. You have sown to the belief that flesh has power, matter has power, and material law has power, so you reap corruption. Just by virtue of being born, you are sowing to the flesh because you automatically accept beliefs about matter, materiality, and physicality. You are born into them.

Sowing to the Spirit

In contrast to "sowing to the flesh," Joel speaks about "sowing to the Spirit." How can we sow to the Spirit, and why might we not reap the full fruitage right away? Jot down the key points that resonated with you.

Everything visible comes from the Invisible.

- We bear witness to the fact that Spirit, the Invisible, is the cause of the visible; that the Invisible is the law unto the visible; that the Infinite Invisible is the essence and activity. We look only to the Invisible for our good and the good of this universe, and we do not look to anyone or to anything in the visible, except as they may be an instrument through which the Invisible operates. We understand, at least intellectually, that there is an invisible Presence and Power, which, when we permit it, operates through us.

The way to establish peace

- Joel believes that one nation could end war forever and establish peace on earth. They would tell the world, “You can kill us if you like, but we are not going to kill you. We have agreed that ‘Thou shalt not kill’ and decided it would be better for us to die and find life eternal than to live at the expense of taking your life. We are going to follow the teaching of the Master.”
- There could be no war after that. No nation could take up arms against one that had no arms. No one would take up weapons against someone who leaves himself defenseless in God and takes God as his sure defense. “Those who live by the sword must die by the sword.”
- [Joel also comments on his views about sending young people to fight in a war and about the difference between those living in material sense and the spiritually illumined when it comes to the possibility of dying in battle.]

Dispelling the universal belief that the forms of error have power

In concluding the class, Joel asserts that the evils of the world will not pass through revolution, but through evolution. How do you interpret what he is saying?

Other Key Points

If you found other points in the class that resonated with you but are not covered above, write them down here.

Summary

In a few sentences, summarize the main theme of this recording.

Optional Practices

We may get tired of hearing it, but Joel repeatedly tells us that we are not merely to hear the truth, but that we are to apply it and live in it until it becomes our realized consciousness. He emphasizes that the difference between students who make progress and those who do not is ***practice***.

Here are some ways to practice what we learned from Joel in this class.

1. Adopt the discipline of not reacting to appearances; not agreeing with them or disagreeing with them, not fearing them or judging them. When *any* discord appears—physical, emotional, or situational—pause inwardly. Do not analyze, resist, or attempt to fix the situation. Quietly acknowledge, “This is an appearance, an impersonal suggestion, without law or reality. I do not accept it, and I refuse to engage it.” Then rest. Turn within in stillness and listen, not in denial, but in the awareness that God is the only Presence, and therefore nothing unlike God can be present. This practice helps develop the capacity to see appearances without being drawn into them.
2. Throughout the day, whenever you are tempted to think of “my problem” or “her fault” or “this condition,” correct that perception by realizing that whatever it is, it is *not personal*. It is a *universal* belief presenting itself for acceptance. You can choose to reject the belief and entertain the truth.
3. You may think of other ways to practice this lesson. Reflect on the major points in this class about bearing witness to the illusory nature of error (128B), and jot down anything that comes to you about how to practice. Then choose one or two practices to focus on for the duration of this study period.