

BIBLE LESSONS

Compiled by
Virginia Stephenson

Correlated to *The Infinite Way* and
Spiritual Interpretation of Scripture
By Joel S. Goldsmith

Lesson 2: The Nature of Individual Being

Introduction to the Bible Lessons

At Joel Goldsmith's 1962 Princess Kaiulani class in Hawaii, Joel invited Virginia Stephenson to give daily lectures on the Bible. To his delight, the whole class attended the lectures, and there was a great receptivity to them. As a result of these Bible lectures, Joel asked Virginia to make up a Bible study program that revealed the timeless, universal spiritual principles which are the basis of the Infinite Way. Joel wanted every student to be familiar with the spiritual thread of Oneness that runs through the Old Testament and the New Testament. Virginia's Bible Lessons originally appeared in Joel Goldsmith's Monthly Letters starting in January, 1963, and continued through April of 1965. They focused the students on the various principles and aspects of mystical unfoldment.

A mystical teaching like The Infinite Way requires study. It is not a religion in which you can find comfort in a church, temple or mosque. The way one comes to mystical realization is through study and meditation. These lead to illumination – that state of consciousness in which the presence of God is experienced. The tools we have for this kind of study go back to antiquity. Many great lights lived as transparencies for the Divine, and many of them left records of the principles for living in that mystical consciousness. Joel Goldsmith's work is a message of Christian mysticism, and he left a large body of work for people to study. To fully understand the principles he left to the world, it is helpful to know the Bible.

These Bible Lessons require the active participation of the student; they involve more effort than just reading from a book. They guide the student into finding the connections between the modern presentation of mysticism and its ancient roots. Not everything in the Bible is spiritual. Much of it describes the struggle of a people wanting to know God, and defines their concept of God and how man relates to the divine and to his fellow human beings. The mystical revelation in the Bible is hard to find, and often it is veiled behind a human agenda. Because of Joel's many years in Christian Science, where the Bible is essential to the service, Joel knew the Bible and was able to unveil its mystical thread. In his Infinite Way message, Joel continued to use the Bible as the foundation for mystical revelation.

How to study the lessons

To study these lessons, first read the Bible passages given in the box. These passages have been selected to emphasize the theme of the lesson. Then read the selection from Joel's book(s) that is given after the Bible passages. Read just one section at a time and contemplate and meditate on what you have read. In this way you will increase your knowledge of scripture, and you will discover the connection between the mysticism of The Infinite Way and its ancient root.

Studying these lessons can also be a group activity. Individuals can take turns reading the passages and the group can meditate after each section is read.

Please note that the page references for quotations from *The Infinite Way* (abbreviated “TIW”) are from the DeVorss & Company thirty-fourth printing of the book in 2006. Page references for quotations from *Spiritual Interpretation of Scripture* (abbreviated as “SIOS”) are from the DeVorss & Company twenty-fourth printing of the book in 2003. If you have older or newer versions of these books, the passage that is quoted may be on a different page. If you are using the e-book versions of the books, you may not have page numbers at all. However, you can use the “Search” function on your e-reader to search for the first few words of the quotation and easily locate the passage.

Each book reference is given in this format: [*Book Title, page number: paragraph number*]. For example, the reference “*TIW, p. 21: 1-2*” refers to *The Infinite Way*, page 21, paragraphs 1 and 2. The reference “*SIOS, p. 25: 2*” refers to *Spiritual Interpretation of Scripture*, page 25, paragraph 2.

The paragraph numbers refer to “whole” paragraphs. In other words, a partial paragraph at the top of a page is not counted as the first paragraph on that page. It is considered the completion of the last paragraph on the preceding page. So for example, the reference “*TIW, p. 34: 1*” refers to the first complete paragraph on page 34 of *The Infinite Way*.

All Bible quotations are from the King James Version. Today, there are many online Bible study websites such as biblegateway.com and biblehub.com that are rich with features to facilitate study. Most of them allow you to specify a Bible passage, and then read that passage in many different translations. While Joel always used the King James Version, it can be helpful to read the same Bible passage in a few different translations before contemplating the passage to discern the meaning.

Our Gratitude

We are most grateful to DeVorss & Company for their gracious permission to use quotations from *The Infinite Way* and *Spiritual Interpretation of Scripture* for these Bible Lessons.

Lesson 2: The Nature of Individual Being

Part I

Genesis 1:26-27

- ²⁶ *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*
- ²⁷ *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

“The Life which is God is our life. There is but one Life and this is the life of all being, of every individual. We individualize this eternal Life, and it is no less God in one than in another, and it is diseaseless and deathless in all. Our consciousness of this truth is the healing influence within us.”¹

Isaiah 43: 5-7, 10-12

- ⁵ *Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;*
- ⁶ *I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;*
- ⁷ *Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*
- ¹⁰ *Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*
- ¹¹ *I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.*
- ¹² *I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.*

“Illumined consciousness dispels the personal sense of self with its problems, ills, age, and failures. It reveals the real Self, the *I* that I am, unlimited, unfettered, untroubled, harmonious, and free. This Selfhood is revealed as we retire within ourselves each day and there learn to ‘listen’ and to watch. Likewise, instead of anxious care about the work of the day or the events of the future, we let the Soul, or our divine Spirit, go ahead of us

¹ *The Infinite Way* (DeVorss & Company, Thirty-fourth printing, 2006), p. 57: 3. Please note that all subsequent references to this book will be abbreviated as “TIW.”

to smooth and prepare the way; we let this divine Influence remain behind us to safeguard every step from the illusions of sense.”²

“So far then, we understand that I am God; that God is the mind and life of the individual, that body exists as the idea of God. God, or I AM, is universal, infinite, omnipotent, and omnipresent; therefore the idea body is equally indestructible, imperishable, and eternal. It was never born and will never die. I shall never be without the conscious awareness of my body; therefore, I shall never be without my body.”³

“When we look out upon the world with our eyes, we are not beholding our bodies, we are not seeing this infinite divine idea body: We are beholding a more or less universal concept of the idea. As we see a healthy body, a beautiful flower or tree, we are seeing a good concept of the idea body, flower or tree. When we see an aging, ailing body, withered flower, or decaying tree, we are beholding an erroneous concept of the divine idea. As we improve our concepts of idea, body, or manifestation, we term this improving of concepts, healing. Actually, nothing has happened to the so-called patient or his body – the change has come in the individual’s consciousness and becomes visible as improved belief or healing. For this reason the healer alone must accept responsibility for healing and never try to shift the blame for non-healing onto the person who asked for help. That individual is I AM, Life, Truth, and Love, and his body exists as perfect spiritual eternal harmonious idea, subject only to the laws of Principle, Soul, Spirit – and it is our privilege, duty, and responsibility to know this truth, and the truth will make free every person who turns to us.”⁴

Part II

Isaiah 2: 22

²² *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?*

“We must understand the word ‘consciousness’ because we can only prove what we are conscious of. Where do we stand in consciousness? Are we still mortals? Or have we renounced our material selfhood and acknowledged ourselves to be the Christ, the fulfillment, the presence of God? Some day we must give up the effort to get and acknowledge ourselves to be the eternal Giver in action. We must feed five thousand without taking thought as to whence it shall come. Out of our Christhood, the multitudes can be supplied. Wherein then is lack except in the belief that we are humans? We must give up this belief and claim our true identity.”⁵

² *TIW, p. 37: 3*

³ *TIW, p. 113: 1*

⁴ *TIW, p. 113: 2*

⁵ *TIW, p. 56: 1*

Matthew 23: 9

⁹ *And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.*

“The first step in the attainment of immortality is living *out* from the center of our being, as in the idea of unfoldment from within, rather than accretion: It is the *giving* sense rather than *getting*; *being* rather than *attaining*. In this consciousness, there is no condemnation, judgment, hatred, or fear, but rather a continuous feeling of love and forgiveness.”⁶

Matthew 16: 13-16

¹³ *When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*

¹⁴ *And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.*

¹⁵ *He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?*

¹⁶ *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

“There comes a time in our experience when spiritual inspiration reveals to individual consciousness a state of being free of mortal conditions and beliefs. Then we no longer live a life of mental affirmations and denials, but rather receive constant unfoldments of truth from Consciousness. Sometimes this comes through no other channel than our own thought. It may come through a book or lecture or a service imparted by divine Consciousness. Regardless of the seeming channel through which it may come, it is the divine Consciousness revealing Itself to individual consciousness.”⁷

⁶ *TIW, p. 31: 3*

⁷ *TIW, p. 105: 3*

Part III***Psalms 139: 1-18***

- ¹ *O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.*
- ² *Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.*
- ³ *Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.*
- ⁴ *For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.*
- ⁵ *Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.*
- ⁶ *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*
- ⁷ *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*
- ⁸ *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.*
- ⁹ *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;*
- ¹⁰ *Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*
- ¹¹ *If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.*
- ¹² *Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*
- ¹³ *For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.*
- ¹⁴ *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*
- ¹⁵ *My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.*
- ¹⁶ *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*
- ¹⁷ *How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!*
- ¹⁸ *If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.*

“As individual infinite spiritual consciousness, I embody my universe, I embody or include the idea body, home, activity, income, health, wealth, and companionship, and these are subject only to spiritual law and life. The body is not self-acting: It is governed harmoniously by spiritual power. When the body appears to be discordant, inactive, overactive, changing, or in pain, it is always the belief that the body is self-acting, that it of itself has the power to move or not move, to ache, pain, sicken, or die. This is not true. The body is not self-acting. It has no intelligence or activity of its own. All action is mind-action; therefore, omnipotent good action. When we know this truth, the body responds to this knowing or understanding of truth. No change then takes place in the body because the error never was there. It is entirely exchanging a concept for the truth that already is, always has been, and ever will be. Remember there is no patient ‘out there’ and no body out there to be healed, improved, or corrected. Always it is a false concept or belief to be corrected in individual thought.”⁸

⁸TIW, p. 114: 1

“When we begin to understand that the body is not self-acting, that it responds only to the stimulus of mind, we can disregard so-called inharmonious bodily conditions and abide in the truth that Life is forever expressing itself harmoniously, perfectly, and eternally as the divine idea body.”⁹

“There is but one Consciousness, God. We individualize this omnipotent, omniscient Consciousness; therefore, our consciousness is the ever-present help in every circumstance. For this reason, we do not pray to, or contact, some far-off Being, but realize the omnipresence of divine Consciousness as our consciousness, and let go of the seeming problem. The awareness of this truth establishes us in the consciousness of the presence of Life, Truth, God. The understanding of the oneness of Consciousness as our consciousness, of Life as our life, is Truth eternal.”¹⁰

Part IV

Luke 17: 20-21

²⁰ *And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:*

²¹ *Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.*

“True prayer is never addressed to a Being outside ourselves, nor does true prayer expect anything from outside our own being. ‘The kingdom of God is within you,’ and all good must be sought there. Recognizing God to be the reality of our being, we know that all good is inherent in that Being, your being and mine. God is the substance of our being; and, therefore, we are eternal and harmonious. God is life, and this Life is self-sustained. He is our Soul, and we are pure and immortal. God is the consciousness of the individual, and this constitutes the intelligence of our being.”¹¹

⁹ *TIW, p. 115: 1*

¹⁰ *TIW, p. 57: 4*

¹¹ *TIW, p. 102: 1*

Matthew 6: 5-6

⁵ *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

⁶ *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

“Whenever you are faced with a problem, regardless of its nature, seek the solution within your own consciousness. Instead of running around here and there, instead of seeking an answer from this or that person, instead of looking for the solution outside of yourself, turn within. In the quiet and calm of your own mind, let the answer to your problem unfold itself. If, the first or second or third time you turn in peace to the kingdom within, you fail to perceive the completed picture, try again. You will not be too late, nor will the solution appear too late. As you learn to depend on this means for the working out of your problems and experiences, you will become more and more adept in quickly discerning your mind's revelation of harmony.”¹²

Isaiah 30: 15

¹⁵ *For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.*

“When we become still and go into the temple of our being for the answer to some important question or the solution of a vital problem, it is better that we do not formulate some idea of our own, outline a plan, or let our wish in the matter father our thought. Rather should we still the thinking mind so far as possible and adopt a listening attitude. It is not the personal sense of mind, or conscious mind, which is to supply the answer, nor is it the educated mind or the mind formed of our environment and experience, but the mind of God, the Reality of us, the creative Consciousness. And this is best heard when the senses and reasoning mind are silent.”¹³

“It seems strange to us at first to realize that inner laws govern outer events – and it may at first appear difficult to achieve the state of consciousness wherein these laws of our inner being come into tangible expression. We will achieve it, however, in proportion to our ability to relax mentally, to gain an inner calm and peace, and therein quietly contemplate the revelations which come to us from within. Quietness and confidence soon bring us face to face with reality and the real laws governing us.”¹⁴

¹² *TIW, p. 120: 3*

¹³ *TIW, p. 123: 2*

¹⁴ *TIW, p. 126: 1*

Notes: The Nature of Individual Being