BIBLE LESSONS

Compiled by Virginia Stephenson

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

Lesson 25: Praise and Thanksgiving

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 <u>complete</u> 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.

Part I

Psalms 50:2, 7, 9-15

² Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

⁷ Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.

⁹ I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds.
¹⁰ For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.
¹¹ I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine.
¹² If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.
¹³ Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?
¹⁴ Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:
¹⁵ And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

"The Bible is literally true when it says that 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof' and 'Son . . . all that I have is thine.' There is no need therefore to take any anxious thought for our own well-being. As we forget ourselves and learn to be a state of receptivity, we will find ourselves filled with Soul-power, Soul-consciousness, Soul-resources, and our lives will be filled with the company of Soul-filled men and women sharing the joys of their discoveries with us.

"The mind that was in Christ Jesus is not afar off, nor is it the mind of only a few great religious leaders: The mind that was in Christ Jesus is your mind and it is ready to impart itself to you as you forget self and become receptive to the divine wisdom within you. The resources of Soul are waiting at the door of your consciousness ready to pour forth more than you can accept, but not to satisfy some personal or selfish desire. These false desires are the stumbling blocks to our spiritual development, and we must not think to use our spiritual powers to gain personal and selfish ends. The song of the Soul is freedom, joy, and eternal bliss; the song of the Soul is love to all mankind; the song of the Soul is you."

¹ *The Infinite Way* (DeVorss & Company, Thirty-fourth printing, 2006), *p. 84: 2 and p. 85: 1.* Please note that all subsequent references to this book will be abbreviated as "*TIW*."

Isaiah 58: 5-12

- ⁵ Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?
- ⁶ Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?
- ⁷ Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?
- ⁸ Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward.
- ⁹ Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;
- ¹⁰ And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day:
- ¹¹ And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.
- ¹² And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

"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."²

² TIW, p. 56: 1

Mark 2:18-22

- ¹⁸ And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?
- ¹⁹ And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.
- ²⁰ But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.
- ²¹ No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.
- ²² And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

"When we are confronted with any person or circumstance that appears to be mortal, we must realize, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' and that all that appears as mortality is illusion or nothingness. We will fear no mortal and no material circumstance because we recognize its nothingness.

"Truth is simple. There are no deep metaphysics or mysterious truths. It is either truth or not truth, but there cannot be deep truth and shallow truth, nor can there be degrees of truth. Truth to be truth must be absolute truth. We are concerned now with the truth that we individualize infinite power. We must not look to a power outside of, or apart from, ourselves. We individualize infinite power in proportion to our consciousness of Truth."

Part II

Isaiah 33:20-22, 24

- ²⁰ Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.
- ²¹ But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.
- ²² For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.
- ²⁴ And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.

³ TIW, p. 57: 1-2

"We are not bound by the evidence of the physical senses; we are not limited to the

visible supply; we are not circumscribed by visible bonds or bounds; we are not tied by visible concepts of time or space. Our good is flowing from the infinite invisible realm of Spirit, Soul, to our immediate apprehension. Let us not judge of our good by any so-called sensible evidence. Out of the tremendous resources of our Soul comes the instant awareness of all that we can utilize for abundant living. No good thing is withheld from us as we look above the physical evidence to the great Invisible. Look up, look up! The kingdom of heaven is at hand!"⁴

Isaiah 35:1-8-(;), 10

- ¹The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.
- ² It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.
- ³ Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.
- ⁴ Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.
- ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
- ⁶ Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.
- ⁷ And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.
- ⁸ And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness;
- ¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

"In our beginning days of meditation, we pondered or contemplated God, the qualities and nature of God, as we understood Him. As we rose higher in consciousness, we learned that any idea of God that we could entertain was not God Himself, but was only a concept of God. Thus we entered the stillness of mind leading to the deep silence of *My* peace – and *experienced* God."⁵

⁴ *TIW, p. 182: 2*

⁵ TIW, p. 157: 2

Luke 17:12-21

- ¹² And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:
- ¹³And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.
- ¹⁴ And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.
- ¹⁵ And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,
- ¹⁶And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.
- ¹⁷ And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?
- ¹⁸ There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.
- ¹⁹ And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.
- 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.

"Prayer is the inner vision of harmony. This vision is attained by giving up the desire to change or improve anyone or anything."⁶

"To pray is to become aware of the harmony without a mental effort on your part."7

Philippians 4:4-7

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

- ⁵ Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.
- ⁶ Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.
- ⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

"Rest in the deep, clear well of contentment within you. Peace already IS."8

⁶ TIW, p. 150: 4

⁷ TIW, p. 151: 3

⁸ TIW, p. 152: 3

Part III

Psalms 105:1-5

- ¹O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.
- ² Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.
- ³ Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.
- ⁴ Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore.
- ⁵ Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

"To meditate is 'to fix the mind upon; think about continuously; contemplate; to engage in continuous and contemplated thought; dwell mentally on anything; ruminate and cogitate."

"In the spiritual tongue, meditation is prayer. True prayer or meditation is not a thinking about ourselves or our problems, but rather the contemplation of God and God-activities, the nature of God, and the nature of the world that God has created.

"Everyone should take some time daily to retire to a quiet spot for meditation. During this period, he should turn his thought to God, consider his understanding of God, and search out a deeper understanding of the nature of Spirit and Its formations. He should be careful not to take any of his ills or other problems into his meditation. This particular period is set aside, dedicated and consecrated to thinking about God and God's universe.

"As God is the mind and Soul of every individual, it is possible for all of us to be tuned in to the kingdom of God and receive the divine messages and assurances and benefits of the one infinite Love. The grace of God which we receive in these periods of meditation or prayer becomes tangible to us in the fulfilling of our so-called human needs. If we do not open our consciousness to receive spiritual understanding, we must not be surprised if we do not experience spiritual good in our daily living. There is no other way to open our consciousness to the realm of Soul than through meditation or prayer, through contemplating the things of God. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.'"

⁹ TIW, p. 91: 1-4

Acts 16:16-36

- ¹⁶ And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:
- ¹⁷ The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.
- ¹⁸ And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.
- ¹⁹ And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,
- ²⁰ And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,
- ²¹ And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.
- ²² And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.
- ²³ And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:
- ²⁴ Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.
- ²⁵ And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.
- ²⁶ And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.
- ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.
- ²⁸ But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.
- ²⁹ Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,
- ³⁰ And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?
- ³¹ And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.
- ³² And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.
- ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.
- ³⁴ And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.
- ³⁵ And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.
- ³⁶ And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

"All through the day our thoughts are centered on the activities of human experience, on family cares and duties and the earning of a livelihood, on social and community affairs, and sometimes even on the greater affairs of state. Is it not natural then that at some time during the day or evening we take time off to retire to our inner consciousness, which is the temple of God, and there dwell upon the things of God? Above all, we must develop the sense of receptivity so that we can become ever more aware of the very presence of God in his holy temple which is our consciousness. In the secret place of the most High, which is the Holy of Holies, which is our very own inner consciousness, we receive illumination, guidance, wisdom, and spiritual power. 'In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."¹⁰

Isaiah 61:1-3

- ¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
- ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;
- ³ To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

"As we learn to listen to the 'still small voice,' the Spirit of God opens our consciousness to the immediate awareness of spiritual good. We are filled with the divine energies of Spirit; we are illumined with the light of the Soul; we are refreshed with the water of Life and fed with the meat which does not perish. This spiritual food is never rationed to those who learn to meet God within the temple of their being."¹¹

Part IV

Jeremiah 10:23-24

- ²³ O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.
- ²⁴ O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

¹⁰ TIW, p. 92: 1

¹¹ TIW, p. 93: 1

"Through meditation, we become aware of the presence of the Christ, and this awareness remains with us all day and all night as we go about our human existence. This awareness enters into our every experience and prospers every endeavor. This consciousness of the presence of the Christ is a light unto our feet and a guiding star unto our aspirations. It is the Presence that goes before us to make the crooked places straight. It is the quality in our consciousness that makes us understood and appreciated by others.

"On awakening in the morning, and preferably before you get out of bed, turn your thought to the realization that 'I and my Father are one.... Son ... all that I have is thine The place whereon thou standest is holy ground'; and then let the meaning of these statements unfold from within your own consciousness. Gain a conviction of your oneness with the Father, with the universal Life, the universal Consciousness. Feel the infinity of good within you which is the evidence of your oneness with the infinite Source of your being."¹²

Psalms 8:1, 3-6

- ¹O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.
- ³ When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
- ⁴ What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
- ⁵ For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.
- ⁶ Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

"As soon as you begin to feel a stirring within you, a sense of peace, or the surge of divine Life, then get out of bed and make your physical preparations for the day. Before leaving your home, sit down and ponder your oneness with God.

"The wave is one with the ocean, indivisible and inseparable from the whole ocean. All that the ocean is, the wave is; and all the power, all the energy, all the strength, all the life, and all the substance of the ocean are expressed in every wave. The wave has access to all that lies beneath it, for the wave really is the ocean, just as the ocean is the wave, inseparable, indivisible, one. Note here this very important point: There is no place where one wave comes to an end and the next wave begins, so that the oneness of the wave with the ocean includes the oneness of every wave with every other wave.

As a wave is one with the ocean, so you are one with God. Your oneness with the universal Life constitutes your oneness with every individual expression of that Life; your oneness with the divine Consciousness constitutes your oneness with every idea of

¹² TIW, p. 93: 3 and p. 94: 1

Consciousness. As the infinity of God surges through you to bless all with whom you come in contact, remember that the infinity of God is also surging through every other individual on earth to you. No one is sharing anything with you that is of himself, but all that he has is of the Father; so also everything that you have is of the Father and you are sharing it with all the world. You are one with the Father, with the universal Consciousness, and you are one with every spiritual idea of which this Consciousness is conscious."¹³

John 17:1-8, 17-26

- ¹These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:
- ² As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.
- ³ And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.
- ⁴ I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.
 ⁵ And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.
- ⁶ I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.
- ⁷ Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.
- ⁸ For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

¹⁷ Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

- ¹⁸ As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.
- ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.
- ²⁰ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;
- ²¹ That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.
- ²² And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:
- ²³ I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.
- ²⁴ Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.
- ²⁵ O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.
- ²⁶ And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

¹³ TIW, p. 94: 2 and p. 95: 1-2

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"This is a tremendous idea if you can grasp it. It means that your interest is the interest of every individual in the world; it means that his interest is your interest; it means that we have no interest apart from each other even as we have no interest apart from God; it means actually that all that the Father has is ours and all that we have is for the benefit of everyone else, as everything that they have is for our benefit, and all for the glory of God."¹⁴

¹⁴ TIW, p. 96: 1

Notes: Praise and Thanksgiving