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- *The needs of one's soul govern the nature of one's life*
- *Don't compare lives*
- *Life's priorities: moving toward God and serving others*
- *Sharing one's needs in a trustworthy group*
- *All are part of the same body*

God speaks to each of you. God speaks through peace, through challenge, through the works of others, through nature. God speaks to each of you through all of your senses. It is not just at times like these and through means such as this. God works a way into the fabric of life in such a manner that no one can completely block out or shade oneself from God's light.

You have all been put onto this earth, given human lives, for a purpose. The end result, of course, is the development of your souls, but the means by which you grow will be different for all people. What serves as a basis for such growth, for nourishment, may be appropriate to one but not to another. All living beings are different. Each of you has a different personality. Each of you has different needs. Because of your needs and your personality, your response to life around you must be different one from another. That is the uniqueness of human life.

For some, life is void of great suffering, while for others, it would appear that suffering is disproportionate in its severity. Why is it that you in this group live in such community when so many millions of others starve and suffer ailments beyond your comprehension? Why is it, so to speak, that the world contains both forests and deserts? Is the forest more blessed by the presence of rain than the desert which is characterized by its relative dryness? Is the forest more important to God than the desert? Do the animals that live within the forest live a life of greater ease than those of the desert?

Your answers would most likely be negative. One is not better or more fortunate an environment than another. It is only different. So it is with the nature of human life. One feels frustration depending upon the nature of one's perception of what else there is. If one lives entirely in a desert, having no experience or knowledge of the forest, one cannot feel in some way envious of what the forest offers.

If one lives in utter poverty and suffers illness and never experiences the comforts, the financial security, and long periods of health, then one does not experience envy. It does not mean that life is easier or more difficult. Life is endured. Life is accepted on its own terms. The difficulty comes in the recognition of other options, other styles of life, other values. What we are saying in all of this is that one must never compare oneself, one's mode of living, to another and judge it as unworthy somehow, nor judge it as unfair. None of you is being cheated in life, neither in your group, nor those within the world.

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All of you live life as it must be lived by you. Those who are poor may have great difficulties in life, but they are living the life that they must live according to God's will and in keeping with the needs of those individuals for the ultimate development of their souls. Your souls are each unique and thereby have unique needs. It is the purpose of life to meet those needs. It is not the purpose of life that all live according to equal conditions. There is a philosophy, of which you are aware, which states the principle of karma. This principle has much truth, but is not the entire story of why one lives as one does.

The ultimate controller of the nature of life as each experiences it individually is the specific needs, taken as a whole, of the individual soul. For some souls to develop, much difficulty in human life must be surmounted. For other souls a different demand in life is appropriate. What is important for each to recognize is that you are living your lives in accordance with that station in your existence given to you by God. This does not presume that wherever you are in life you must remain, for your development is directly affected by the manner in which you deal with your individual lives.

The insights that each of you achieves into the nature of your lives is essential, for through them you achieve a sense of direction which ultimately leads to spiritual growth toward God. It is important, therefore, that you all observe carefully the kind of lives that you are leading. Often we have spoken of the need for arranging your priorities in a way which you perceive to lead you toward God. Those priorities are basically unchanging in their primary importance. What does change is how those priorities are reflected in your lives.

You are committed to living lives which in some manner bring you closer to God. If you had not made such a commitment, you would not be here in this group, but how is that commitment reflected? How is that commitment given life and fulfillment? That is what changes.

Those areas in your lives which may have provided fulfillment in the past may have lost their association with a primary priority and therefore what you change are your commitments—not really the ultimate or primary priorities of life. Sometimes you lose sight of those priorities, but the priorities are still the same—moving toward God, serving others, maintaining an awareness of others' needs and responding to those needs positively.

Your view of those priorities may be cloudy. You are aware of that whenever it occurs, for lives can become meaningless in your perception. When you examine your lives, it is vital that you question whether or not your activities reflect those primary priorities.

Sooner or later all of you who seek God must examine your own life and face your activities squarely and honestly. The insights you receive are absolutely essential for your life and should be part of the search of each of you. Before answers can be reached, questions must be asked. Before questions can be asked, one must recognize

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that there is an issue to be examined. Be aware of issues. You may not have answers, but they shall be forthcoming from God if you can but keep a measure of stillness, for it is in such stillness that you can hear the quiet voice from within.

Others within your group have gone through such crossroads. Still others have yet to come to a complete grasping of the essential issues in their lives. The sharing that took place this evening would not have occurred had we not encouraged you to be willing to be open, to be willing to honestly share where you are on your path in life. The potential we have mentioned on previous occasions is enormous. What other opportunities do you have to be absolutely honest with one another about concerns? So often you express the needs of others and this is, of course, as it should be, but it is easier to talk of the needs of others than it is to be open to your own needs.

There is no threat to acknowledging what another may be going through, but there is often a sense of being personally threatened when you express what you yourself may be going through. If these messages are to indeed work, they must work within your group. If the ideas which God has planted within you are to be fulfilled, they must take seed and grow within your gathering. A cursory knowledge of the principle of God at work in the world is useless unless it is given life through your own efforts toward one another. The most fertile ground for the growth and the awareness of God's presence is the interaction of each of you with one another. It may seem like a risk but it is not. It's an opportunity. It's an opportunity to reach out, to help others, but it is also an opportunity to understand more fully that what each of you goes through in your own journeys is shared in some form by all others.

You are not alone. The needs of your souls as reflected in your lives may be unique, but ultimately it is not the uniqueness which characterizes your group and all humankind, but your unity, that common bond of which we so often speak—the bond of divinity, being part of one spiritual unity. You are all one, really. You have different purposes in life. You have different lifestyles. You are at different stages in your development, but you are still really one, just as an eye and a toe are ultimately part of the same body. You are part of the same body. What affects one part affects another. When one of you is in need, you are all in need. When one expresses a concern about another, you must all share that concern about the other. Life is to be shared, and your response in that life is to be shared.

God wishes that you would take more time in your lives to truly recognize the unity of each of you to all of humanity, not only to recognize it but to know what it means in terms of your own response. You pray for others who are suffering and who need God's special care, but so often your concerns are then put behind you, assuming that somehow it is in God's hands. In truth, it remains in your hands. You do have a stake in the lives of others whom you may never know. That relationship is your spiritual kinship. That relationship is nurtured through awareness and through the desire to serve.

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We receive our blessings from God, through God's service to us, and we allow those blessings to grow through our service to another. Ultimately it is God who serves us rather than we who serve God. We may emulate what we perceive to be according to God's will and may say that in some manner we are thereby serving God, but it is in God's service to us that we become aware of what is important. Service is reaching: God serves us by reaching out to us and what we do is to respond. We serve another, and of course by serving another, we can serve God.

The basic relationship of God to humankind is God's service to humankind—God's bestowing of blessings, the grace of God's presence, the warmth of God's love. God provides for all of us and all of you. God provides for our needs and your needs. That is God's service to you and to us.

We join God in service to you. That is why we are always with you, and that is what we do when you are gathered as a group. God speaks through us, we are serving you. We are giving to you. We are providing for you. Your response of love and gratitude and peace is so strong, but it is a response—it is not a service.

Rejoice in the realization of God's service to all life, and rejoice in the opportunities that each of you has for serving another by bestowing love upon another, by offering your concerns, by affording another your peace. We serve you with love by blessing you with God's light. Be comforted and strengthened by God's service.

Amen.