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God of all living things, resides within each of you and surrounds you with love and guidance.

So many of you have questions in your minds about your lives—their purpose, the directions that they should follow. You have questions about specific points in our messages. These questions are natural. They are a part of the searchings of your soul as it finds a path leading to a closer view of God. The messages that we transmit from God often contain information, ideas, concepts, which are difficult to comprehend. Actually, all that God teaches can be simply stated, but will always have implications, meanings, which are far beyond your present experience.

Part of your growth is dealing with these challenges. It is working for a stronger sense of your placement within these truths. You can view the contents of these messages from the superficial level of what they mean in terms of your own experience. But you may also view them in a deeper way, one which has implications for your eternal life, the life of your soul as it exists in its constancy and in its progress, its movement.

We are overjoyed at being able to meet frequently with your souls on occasions such as this, for indeed, God's wisdom, the insight God wishes you to achieve, cannot be obtained in a brief span of time. You are led along the path to God slowly. The path itself is an important one. It is not just a means of developing from one stage to another. When you travel a road quickly, you are not so aware of your surroundings. When you travel slowly, you have time to observe nature, and in so doing, the trip becomes more meaningful and you are changed. So it is with gaining a greater understanding of God.

If it were God's will, your souls would be able to absorb great masses of information rapidly, but in so doing, you would lose sight of the nature of your life experience. Life, in the end, is to be lived. It is not just a stopping-off point in the progress of your spiritual growth, but for life to achieve importance to your growth, it must be observed. Part of that observation comes through reaching out, being willing to stretch your understandings, looking for meanings which lie beyond the immediately visible.

Some of God's messages cover areas that are greatly foreign to your experience, but it is God's will that we transmit such content to you. It is God who

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determines both the content and the timing. If God feels that you are best served through a particular challenge and you open yourselves to God freely, you then receive that challenge. It is not a stumbling block. It presents you with the opportunity of nurturing your soul in a very conscious manner.

You have asked directly and indirectly what you can do to help your soul progress. Accepting God's challenges willingly, even joyfully, is a very strong way of leading your soul along the proper road. Progress through challenge is slow, but the deliberate nature allows you the opportunity of reflecting on God's presence in your lives. If you receive all answers to all concerns, you have been gratified but have not grown. It is your growth, in the end, which is so important, and that growth comes only through your approach to God's challenges in your daily lives. Those challenges may be individuals, they may be concepts, ideas, temptations, disappointments, grief, but all these have within them the seeds for growth.

In God's last message through us it was stated that each of you is no closer to one another than to all that is created, that there is no special relationship which singles you out and makes you, in effect, more important. It is true humans have souls. It is also true that a stone does not, and you may ask, "Where is the equality?" The answer is that both the human and the stone were created by God for a purpose. Because they have been so created, they are equal.

All of creation is equal. That means all, but it does not imply that all creation has the same purpose. The purpose of your earthly lives is eventually the growth of your souls. That cannot be the purpose of inanimate objects, but that does not mean that humans are more important than other life forms. Therefore, all creation is equal in the eye of God. If you accept this, you must accept the responsibility of recognizing the equality of creation in your own eyes, for each of you is a part of God.

When you accept the God-ness in you, you must accept the experience of God as it relates to all creation. When God recognizes equality, you recognize equality. God embodies love; you must embody love. God embodies patience; you must also represent the same. You are, therefore, undeniably tied into the reality of God. All that God is, you are too. All that is in the ocean is in that drop.

If you recognize the God entity equally a part of another individual, you cannot reject that person, for rejecting another is rejecting God. Your awareness of God's presence and importance in your lives makes such rejection impossible. You are, therefore, given an enormous responsibility, for you are challenged to relate to others as you perceive God relating to others. Each of you accepts the goodness that is God and the many forms that it takes in your lives, and yet, so often you are unable to place your own selves within the same response of goodness toward others.

You do not perceive God as selfish. Selfishness has no part in your relationships with others. It is not an expression of your soul. It is a matter of human choice. You can choose, therefore, not to be selfish. You can choose to be governed by your soul and

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not your ego. You can choose to be aware of what your soul wishes to do by listening to your conscience. So often have you heard, "Let your conscience be your guide." Think about what that says. It *is* your guide. It is the entity of God within you. All people have a conscience—very few follow it. But if you remove your pride and vanity and listen to what your conscience is instructing you to do, you will then be guided directly by God.

You may fear losing your individuality, but your conscience, your soul, is individual. By following that voice, you maintain your individuality but its character is forged in God's warmth and guided by his light.

When you pray you are actually opening yourselves to your conscience. Prayer is a two-way street. It is both the conscious act of directing your awareness to God, and it is an opening of yourselves to receive God's answers, to receive a response. Prayer then is a following of your conscience, and it is a listening to it.

Too many people spend time in prayer constantly asking—asking for help for themselves, asking for answers, asking for help for others. While all of this is vital, it is only half the story. Each of you must find opportunities in your lives when you can just pray by opening yourselves and listening. You can only receive through listening. You can only become aware of God in your lives through listening. You may feel that this is passive, that somehow you are not involved, but it takes great effort to listen to God. It takes practice and above all it takes faith—faith in your ability to hear, and faith to accept what you hear.

Consider prayer to be more beneficial when you listen than when you keep asking. We do not belittle the importance of what you ask, but you will continue to ask for the same things unless you listen to God's response. When you recognize strongly, and in faith, that God has truly answered a prayer, you no longer have the urge to ask again.

We have said many times, "God replies to each prayer immediately. It is your recognition of the answer which takes time." That is crucial to our discussion of prayer. When you pray for God to bring healing to another in a form which is as God wills it and which can be recognized when received, the prayer has been answered. When you pray again with the same concerns, you pray out of frustration, a sense that somehow you haven't gotten through, that somehow God can try harder. You pray without faith. If you pray for healing for another and have faith that God's strength will be transmitted because of your prayer, you no longer need worry that not enough has been done.

We do not suggest that you pray for an individual once and then abandon your closeness. We do strongly urge you to surround those in need with your prayers, but they can be prayers offered through a sense of love for that person, not with a feeling that somehow God will try harder the next time around.

Surrounding another with your prayers constantly is surrounding that person with love. That love makes God's work more effective. That love breaks the boundaries put up by another unknowingly that resist and repel God's response to your prayers. When

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we say surround one with prayers, think of it as surrounding one with love offered with the faith that God has answered your prayers. Approach that love positively. Imagine the person strengthening. Imagine the soul brightening. Imagine the flow of joy, of peace, the flow of faith. Imagine God's radiance surrounding another. This is what can be accomplished as you surround others with prayers.

God's response is immediate and it is constant. It is not an effort of the moment, for love is a sustained relationship. Love is a sustained response to another. When you pray, you invite that love. It is an invitation from your soul to God. Prayer is so vital in your lives. It is such a strong force that you can only now begin to sense its potential.

As you pray to God, pray through faith, not deafness. Pray with sight, not blindness. Seek ways of growth by meeting challenges. Seek ways of helping your souls by lovingly accepting those challenges. It is a slow road if it is to be a meaningful one. Travel that road observing your surroundings carefully. Be joyful in your recognition of God's presence in your lives. Pray for help, but open yourselves to receive it.

God is with each of you. God is within each soul and unites you all with the binding force of love.

Amen.