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- *What sets human beings apart*
- *The real power of Jesus*
- *Human divinity*
- *All humans are equally gifted*

Your guides bless you through the living presence of God. Life is indeed a beautiful experience, not because all that it contains is beautiful, but because of the beauty of its potential—the potential for growth, the potential to reach out, the potential for love, both as the one being loved and as the one expressing love. It is a unique opportunity for your souls. Your lives, as is true of the lives of all, have the potential of enhancing the beauty, the joy, the peace experienced by another.

In the rest of the animal kingdom, one animal does not enhance the living experience of another. That is a purely human occupation. It is what ultimately sets human beings apart from all other life forms. All life is certainly divine, but the ability that you have to enrich the life of another is unique in God's creation, and it provides you with a special challenge, a mission, as it were. How do you enhance another's life? Is it through material support, spiritual support, love and friendship? In fact, it may be all of these and can be found in any combination, but this unique trait of affecting the nature of life's experience in another human being is absolutely unique. It is, in many ways, what gives your lives purpose.

It is not a bird's mission in life to create an affirming, joyful experience for another bird. The relationship between other animals is very different from the relationship between people. Because of that uniqueness, you are bound undeniably with others with whom you work and associate. Everything that is shared with you about relationships and about faith is centered on the truth of this uniqueness. All else flows from this uniqueness. You're given this trait because all humans are endowed with potential for its realization.

You are empowered to pray for another—no other animals have that ability. You are empowered to inspire another—no other animals have this ability. You are empowered to serve others through medicine, research—no others are given that ability. Because of this empowerment, you are also given the challenge, the necessity of fully exercising your uniqueness. You are given the power to love, whether that love is between individuals or love expressed with compassion and care. These positive relationships are given meaning and direction through your awareness of this unique gift that accompanies human life. There are many who turn their back on this gift. There are many who have no awareness of the gift, but the gift remains nevertheless.

You wonder about the nature of Jesus. That question is particularly appropriate to your spiritual quest, but it is also appropriate to this time of year. Much is made of the divinity of Jesus, of the uniqueness of his life in its relationship to the lives of all who came before or who have come since his life. It is the tradition in the Christian church to

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recognize his spiritual presence, to recognize his divinity, to recognize his influences over those who knew him, to recognize the uniqueness of his life in all respects. The real power of Jesus is not that he was divine but that he was human and behaved in a divine manner. There is nothing superhuman about his presence, but his divinity was evident. There was a transparency that has enabled subsequent generations to recognize that divinity. But you must recognize that his own contemporaries were often unable to see that unique quality, that special presence. The fact that he is considered divine today and for so many centuries is a function of your own understanding. It is not a statement of his singular divinity.

You are all divine, but you are also all unable to clearly see that divinity in one another. There are those who respond to life around them through divine inspiration. That does not mean they are more divine. That does not mean they are uniquely divine. It merely recognizes the fact that their divinity is more easily witnessed. Of course, there are those whose actions may be more or less divine than their neighbors and colleagues. Whether you act always in a divine manner has little to do with your own divinity and everything to do with your actions.

There is no one who is more special, who is more empowered to be divine than anyone else. This is true today, this was true two thousand years ago, five thousand years ago, ten thousand years ago. God did not create an individual and say, "This will be the most divine person in history." That was not God's desire, for that creates an inequality that sets up a kind of system where some children get more gifts of greater value than others. But that is not the action of a loving spiritual presence that values equally the lives of all. It is therefore true to believe that all individuals who have lived and all individuals who will yet live are equal in the divinity that is their own. The difference is how this divinity is expressed, not the divinity itself.

The individual that you study and learn about and you refer to as Jesus had an extraordinary gift that enabled his divinity to reach outward. As you have discussed tonight, no individuals can be singled out as the only ones given the powers to heal with their hands or through prayer. Many are given that power. Many are given the means of expressing compassion in a godly sense. Recognize the gifts of Jesus, but recognize also the gifts of everyone else, for everyone has unique gifts.

Not everyone uses what has been given. Not everyone reflects those gifts because they ignore their presence, but all are given gifts. For some, the gifts of reason; for others, the gifts of speech, art, music, sciences, healing—the list is really endless. All individuals are equally gifted. There are those whose expression for these gifts is limited by choice, by injury, by mental limitations. There may be many reasons why those gifts are not so evident, but they are there.

Jesus' gifts of compassion, of demonstrating what it means to be loving, are important gifts. They are gifts to be appreciated, witnessed, emulated. You can appreciate the gifts of a musician and yet never make music, but you recognize that gift. You

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appreciate the gift of the artist or the actor or scientist, yet you may never become an artist, actor or scientist. You still can acknowledge the value of those gifts. So it is with Jesus. The gifts that he possessed are more evident now, but they were not totally unique. He showed many, and his example continues to show many, what it means to be loving, what it means to live a faithful life, and that example is worth cherishing. It is worth accepting as an inspiration for your own lives. It is a way of understanding more about the nature of God because you understand more about the nature of one who acts in godly ways. It is really for that reason that Jesus is so important a figure.

At this time of year many in the world turn their thoughts to what Jesus represented, and that serves a noble purpose, for it rededicates lives in a manner that gives importance to love and service and faith. It makes human beings consider their own love, service and faith and be open to its inspiration. Your lives are filled with examples for inspiration, whether it is a book or music, a painting, a photograph, nature, or another individual. Part of the gift of God's presence is being served by another individual. It is your recognition of the gift given by another that can serve as a confirmation and affirmation of God working in your own life. The ability of others to inspire and enhance your life and for you to inspire and enhance the life of others is the exercising of the uniqueness of human life among all life forms.

You have much to be thankful for. You have achieved much growth in your understanding of the potential for human life. Work to develop an ability that allows that potential to grow in completeness. The potential will always be there, for it will always be greater than your ability to realize it, but that is what keeps giving your lives purpose. It is the striving to achieve what has not yet been achieved. It is the endeavor to live a godly life based on your perception of God.

We rejoice in your perception as it grows, and it is a source of great strength to us when we see your potential developing, ripening, becoming more colorful and vibrant, becoming brilliant and intense. God bestows love upon each of you, upon all of humankind, upon all that has been created. Feel that presence, and draw it within that it may create a fire of intensity, giving you strength of conviction and clarity of vision.

Amen.