

September 13, 1994

- *Look for the God in others*
- *Eliminate pride that ignores unity*
- *Reflect the positive and allow the negative to pass through*

We are again joined together in the same spiritual bond that you experience when you are gathered in your group. There is a sense of unity and care and mutual concern which is in itself a kind of microcosm of what we experience in the universe of God's creation. What a blessing it would be if more human beings would be willing to share in such worthwhile pursuits in their search for God and in their search for each other. It is moments like this that you can glimpse the God in another human being. Devoting your time to a further understanding of God's presence in your lives is of course the highest goal, but you must not lose sight of the potential each of you has to recognize the God that resides in one other person. Recognizing that, you are then open to accepting the reality of God's presence in all other people.

That presence is the same regardless of status, nationhood, race, or religious beliefs. The religions of the world differ in accent, but all recognize the existence of some force which is more powerful and always alive. The problems that so many in the world face are struggles over accent, not content. The belief in God or Allah or any other supreme being is essential for giving meaning, purpose, and direction to your human lives. The issue of accent can only be divisive and serve to separate humankind one from another.

You are really all the same. You all have the same needs, the same concerns. They may be clothed somewhat differently but they are essentially the same. All human beings strive for a sense of self-dignity, a sense of value, a sense of meaningfulness, relevancy. There is no one who exists solely for the benefit of others. There is no one who has no sense of the value of being, of being an individual, of being unique. All have the need to love. All have the need to experience love.

You recall the reflection of the dying musician Elaine Schaeffer when she wrote on the tablet next to her bed, "The three most important things in life: to love, to be loved, and to be free." There is much wisdom in this and it can be applied across all manner of nations and beliefs. It is really what unites you, for the spark of God which is a part of all human beings is the spark of loving, and it is the spark of receptivity to love, and it is the spark of freedom—freedom from hatred and prejudice, freedom from worry and anxiety, freedom to express love. All of you are united by those needs.

We wish it were easier for all human beings to become completely aware of the unity which combines everyone together. When there is talk of war and strife, dominance of one people over another, one political system over another, one religious belief over another, all sense of unity is being shunned. Pride in one's work, in one's feeling of personal worth is important, but pride at the expense of another individual or

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group has no place at the table of God. You are all proud, but you all share the negative elements of pride as well.

Spend more time trying to eliminate the negative aspects of pride from your lives. It is counterproductive to your spiritual development, and it is counterproductive to the reflection of God throughout the world. God is not proud, for love is not proud. There is no place for that kind of pride. If you eliminate the negative pride from your lives, you are more ready to reach out to another unconditionally, and you are fully able to receive the unconditional love from another, for there is no longer pride which gets in the way, the pride which implies weakness on one part.

There is no weakness in receiving love—there is only joy. The response to love received is love offered. It is the receipt of love which comes first, and it is through the experiencing of that which is received that you are enabled to give. Your unity can be even stronger when you become more willing to receive love offered by others. It is like a conversation. Sometimes the best conversation that can be experienced is achieved by listening and not by talking. One doesn't grow by talking--one grows by learning, one learns by receiving. Then when you speak, you speak from knowledge and not from ignorance. When you offer love to another, it is offered because you are strengthened by the love that has been given to you.

When you are in the presence of one in great need, you must be open unconditionally to what is being expressed, to what is being said. Being open allows the other the freedom of expression. It is by jumping in judgmentally that you curtail that freedom, that you limit the expression. Strengthening love in the world therefore is achieved in great measure by being willing to be the recipient of love in the world. It is being receptive; it is not being dominant.

If you recognize the God in another, you are being receptive to the God that is in another, for how is it that you acknowledge your relationship to God? You acknowledge it by receiving, not by giving. You give thanks, but you give thanks for what you have received. You give love because you have received that love. You give warmth and compassion because you have sensed what it means to be the receiver of such warmth and compassion. Your lives are certainly meant to be the givers of love, but you can only give after you have received.

It is therefore important to go through your daily lives in more of a receiving mode. That is not being selfish any more than it is being selfish to be open to receive the blessing that God bestows upon you. Being receptive means being thankful, for as you receive God's blessings, you are grateful for them, for you recognize them, you recognize their value.

Be willing in your encounter with others, therefore, to emphasize more the need for receptivity. The giving is merely a reflection of what has been received. A mirror cannot reflect light until that light has struck the mirror. First comes the light, then

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comes the reflection. When you reflect God's light, it is because you were present to receive it.

It is too often that each of you denies the potential that is yours to be receivers. You look for light, you want guidance, you want direction, you want to know the path to take, but all of that can be achieved only when you have received direction. Therefore as you interact with the world around you, first of all be receptive, first of all listen, first of all keep your eyes open to the indications of God's presence in another. All else that follows will be a direct reflection of what you have received.

The adult who inflicts pain has often been the recipient of pain as a child. The individual who is consumed by anger is most often the one who received the anger of another. The person who has hate has learned what hate can do, for that person has been the recipient of hate. You are in the end all that you have received. Being receptive does not mean you must be passive. Being receptive means seeing the good in another, seeing the God in another and capturing that, reflecting it outward. It also means recognizing the negatives in another and letting those go and not reflecting.

Your ability to reflect God in life, therefore, implies your openness to receive and a selectiveness that allows you to reflect what is positive and to allow all that is negative merely to pass through and go on. Your love is the reflection of all that is positive and a rejection of all that is negative.

We pray for your ability to become good receivers of God as expressed in the lives of others. We pray for your ability to accept love as offered by another. We pray for you to recognize beauty and to be able to reflect beauty outward once again. This is what is essential to the strengthening of your spiritual growth, for your souls grow through positive reflection. Your souls ultimately are strengthened by what you do that reflects the God that is seen everywhere.

Be open to God's presence in others, God's presence in nature, in all that has been created. Open your arms to the presence of God, embrace it and let it pour forth to the world around you.

We bless you with the warmth of God's presence that we reflect upon your souls, that such reflection may also be cast about the world in the form of love and peace.

Amen.