

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM JOEL (10/20/18)¹

Q: Will you enlarge on the statement “Take no thought”? How may we avoid this human planning?

A: And here again we have that same old thing of words. “Take no thought” has no reference to taking thought, because it is impossible to live without thought, and it’s impossible to live without taking thought. So when we say, “take no thought,” it doesn’t really mean “take no thought.” What it means is, “**take** no thought,” and that’s quite different.

For instance, tomorrow afternoon at five o’clock we are to be on a plane bound for Hawaii, and we have to take thought. We have to plan; we have to be sure that everything is packed and in order; we have to make sure that all the details of this work are closed. There’s a lot of taking thought about that. In the same way, before we left home, my wife had a whole gang of people into the house to have the painters do this, and the decorators do this, and the furniture covered to do this. It took a lot of thought, and when we get home, there’ll be a freshly painted house and some newly decorated furniture. And you know that took thought.

But, where the “take no thought” comes in is this: Take no *anxious* thought; don’t be concerned, don’t be fearful, don’t be worried. Plan what you are doing, but always with the realization that there is something greater than you working through you, and be willing that even though you’re taking thought and making your plans and arrangements, be perfectly willing that they be changed.

In other words, regardless of how right a move may seem to you that makes you plan ahead—even buy tickets—don’t ever be disturbed if, at the last moment or before the last moment, something comes up to change those plans entirely, because it will merely mean that there is some reason behind it; some reason which couldn’t have been known a month ago or a year ago, whenever the planning was done.

Let me give you another illustration. I never go on a trip, I never go anywhere or do anything without first receiving inner instructions. Now a year ago this month, our entire ten months of travel was not only planned for 1960, but we had our hotel reservations made; we had our reservations for lecture halls, classrooms; we had our airplane tickets all made. That was all settled a year ago, and nothing has interfered with a single one of these dates. We have never had to wait over an extra day; we have never had to postpone; we have never been delayed. Everything is on schedule.

On the other hand, with 1961 ahead of us, I have only five weeks of work planned. My appointment book is empty, except for those five weeks. Why? I have received no instructions, and be assured I’m going to take no thought about it. I’m not going to try to plan; I’m not going to try to think. I’m just going to do my meditations each day and wait, and when the Voice speaks, I will go out, make my reservations, and go forward. If for any reason it should be

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canceled at the last moment, it will not disturb me. I will just understand that whatever it is that is guiding, directing, protecting, from the within is on the field.

So “take no thought” has nothing to do with the orderly planning of your life. That really must be done. You must know in advance when to arrange for your holiday or make a trip to a class somewhere, or something like that. But even though you are making those arrangements, hold yourself in readiness for a cancellation without concern, because you must trust the fact that there is an invisible Presence that knows far more than you do, and can govern and guide.

One of the reasons that we are so careful about our meditations is this, and I’m going to give you two instances of it. In the first, I was in swimming in Hawaii, and the Voice spoke to me and said, “In a few days you’re going to be in trouble, but do not fear because I will be there.” And I can assure you that I took no thought about it. That was the end of it. A few days later, I had to make a trip to California, and I left by air. We were out only one hour when I heard one of the engines starting to flutter. I thought, “Uh-oh, this might be it.” But the pilot seemed to pay no attention to it, and we went on. Again, that noise came from the engine, and I thought, “Oh that’s very strange.” And the Voice came again, “He’ll turn the next time.” On the very next time when that fluttering came, he turned right around and went back to port.

Now you might say, I took no thought. On the other hand, you can see that thought was brought to me, and that I leaned back in a reliance on “I will be with you.” That’s all that concerned me. If I is with me, I have no other worries.

Well now, on my first trip to Australia, we were in the midst of a closed class in Melbourne. I was sitting there just like this, conducting the class, when all of a sudden, the Voice spoke, and said, “Your next air trip is going to be trouble.” And I stopped and said to the class, “Let us stop for a moment. I’ve just been told inwardly that my next air trip is trouble, so let’s do something about it. Let’s meditate.” We cut off the machine and sat there, and we meditated, and I got this feeling of “all-rightness,” the feeling of Omnipresence, and we went on with our classwork.

On the very next trip between Melbourne and Perth, we were just about half or three quarters of an hour out of Perth when one of the engines stopped. I was sitting right next to it and noticed it instantly, but many of the passengers didn’t. The pilot sent for the stewardess to come down to the front, and then she came back, took her place by the exit and stood there.

Now all of this time, within me there was no fear or concern because I had been warned, and then I had been given “the assurance.” Within a few moments, this pilot started to jiggle the plane, make it dive this way and dive that way, and the engine started up again. The only thing that happened was we were twenty or thirty minutes late getting into Perth.

Here again, do you see that you don’t take thought, and yet something is brought to you, and you do something about it. You might say, “Well you took thought, and then you stopped the class and meditated.” No, we didn’t take thought. What we did was meditate for the assurance of God’s Presence. You might call that taking thought, and probably in a sense it was, but we acknowledged that a warning had come, and we acknowledged that the thing to do is stop whatever you’re doing and get this realization of God’s Presence before you go on. So in this sense you take thought, but on the other hand, it’s not really taking thought. It is really sitting back for the assurance.

Now when you govern your life as we do in this work, entirely by meditations—meditating twelve, fifteen, twenty, or even thirty times in a day, if you count twenty-four hours as a day

because we are awake many hours of the night meditating—you are so in attunement or “at-one-ment,” that anything can impinge itself on you, reveal itself to you, and you are aware of things that the rest of the world is not aware of. Then you can do something about it.

So it is, the secret that I learned—and it’s the only secret I have—is that when God is realized, harmony is. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is no evil. Therefore, the only attainment we need on earth is God realized. And that’s what Jesus meant when he said, *“Take no thought for your life. Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these things. It is His good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Seek ye the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.”* And they will, by divine Grace, but not without that intermediary point of *“Seek ye the kingdom of God.”* Sit still and seek: *“Speak Lord, Thy servant heareth.* Let me be consciously aware of Thy Presence. Let me know that Thou art with me.”

And you know, one of these days all of a sudden, you get the feeling, and sometimes you might even hear it: *“I am with you. Be not afraid. I will be with you to the end of the world. I will never leave you nor forsake you. Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”* Either words like that or some assurance or feeling of that comes to you in your meditation. And you can’t want any more than that. It’s like a child crossing the street with its mother. There is only one thing a child wants, and that is to feel its mother’s hand. As long as it can feel that, you know a child isn’t going to fear going across the street. It doesn’t make any difference how heavy the traffic is. Let it feel the mother’s hand and see if you could make that child afraid of anything. You never can while that hand is there.

So it is with us, the moment you have this, “Ahhh, that’s it, that’s it,” you can’t fear bullets, and you can’t fear bombs, and you can’t fear anything.