

Excerpts on “Neither Good nor Evil” from the Writings and Recordings of Joel S. Goldsmith¹

In Recording 522B, “Above and Beyond the Pairs of Opposites, continued,” Joel talks about supply, but in this class, he puts an emphasis on the aspect that supply depends only on our relationship of oneness with God, and not on our apparent goodness or badness. As he addresses this, he reiterates a theme that is repeated in many classes and writings: I am neither good nor evil. As we have seen, when focusing on a specific subject, it is often helpful to read several excerpts from Joel’s writings and classes that address that topic in different ways. In doing this, we can get additional clarification and better understanding. This document includes selections from the works that focus on the theme of being neither good nor evil.

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The Master said, “*My kingdom is not of this world,*”² but out here in this world, we believe that we have a capacity; that we have an intelligence of our own. And sometimes we think very highly of it. We think we have gifts of our own and qualities of our own. Sometimes we even think we are benevolent. Heaven forgive us! Sometimes we even think that we are spiritual, and lots of people believe that they are moral. Those are all sinful beliefs. The Master revealed that so clearly: “*Why callest thou me good?*”³ If there is any good quality about me, you may be assured of this: it is the God quality shining through. Of myself, I am not good, and whatever goodness there is, is but God's grace flowing through me.

But I'm going to go a step further and say with Paul that neither am I bad. I do not sin, but sometimes I feel a sense of sin in me. Ah, yes, I recognize temptation. I might recognize a sinful desire in me, but I'm not going to claim it. No! I'm not going to claim any evil in me any more than I am going to claim good. If there is any evil still lurking about me, I'm going to do like Paul did. I'm going to say it's the carnal mind, not me. It's the carnal mind, the tempter. Or as Jesus called it, “the devil.” But it's not me. I'm not bad. Oh, oh, don't anybody think I'm bad. As a matter of fact, I'm really not. I'm not bad at all. There is no sin in me.

But on the other hand, I must admit that I'm not good. Whatever goodness, whatever benevolence, whatever virtue is evident in my life; whatever intelligence, whatever capacity for spiritual thought—that's the grace of God flowing through me. Whatever evil comes into my experience is the carnal mind still tempting me to believe that God is not “closer to me than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.” And so, I can accept all evil as a temptation,

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² John 18:36

³ Matthew 19:17

whether it comes in the form of a sinful desire, or whether it comes in the form of a sickness. I can accept it as a temptation, not as a part of me; as something that’s tempting me to believe in something apart from God, or a power apart from God. Therefore, I do not identify evil with me.

But remember, I will not identify good with me either. I identify all good as God and therefore I am an instrument; I am a transparency; I am the son through which the qualities and the quantities of the Father are appearing. This agrees with the Master’s teaching that *“I of my own self am nothing; if I speak of myself I bear witness to a lie.”*¹ I can of myself do nothing, but I can do all things through the grace of God—all things through the grace of God. Nothing—nothing—is outside of my possibilities as long as I recognize that I am not claiming the qualities as my own, or the virtues or the quantities, but that I am acknowledging that I am an instrument through which the grace of God is appearing, is acting. This is choosing—choosing.

Now, as I make the choice not to be this man of earth, ... but to be the son of God, heir of God, ... I have to walk in the remembrance of my sonship and let the grace of God, which has made me the son, bless wherever I am. In other words, I must carry in my consciousness the “peace be still” to the errors of this world. As I sit up here silently, I’m realizing that the peace of God that is upon me is upon you. As I walk into a hotel to register, I must remember that the peace of God that blesses me, must bless this place whereon I stand—a restaurant, an airplane, anyplace. I must carry the peace of God with me because the peace of God wasn’t given to me for me.²

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I am not good. Any good that is being manifested through me is the Father. There’s no evil in me, because all evil is the one universal belief in two powers, but neither is there good in me of my own, for there is only one good, the Father, and whatever good shines through me is the Father shining through, for I have no goodness of my own.³

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Over and over in Jesus’ teaching he says, *“I can of mine own self do nothing. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.”*⁴ *My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.*⁵ Always, his message was a presentation of the great revelation that only God is doing, acting, and being. There is no good “me,” and there is no spiritual “me,” and there is no “me” as the Savior. There is only God. When we can take the attitude that whatever is coursing through us is God, we will not claim personal good. But in not claiming personal good, we will not claim personal evil either. Here we come to the hardest part. It is one thing to say of ourselves, “I am neither good

¹ John 5:30, 31

² Recording 552, Side 1, 1964 Portland Special Class: “Between Two Worlds”

³ Recording 376, Side 2, 1960 Melbourne Closed Class: “The Virgin Consciousness”

⁴ John 5:30,31

⁵ John 7:16

nor evil. It is God that works in me. Whatever qualities I have are qualities of God." But how different and how difficult it is when we look out in the world and see some of the evil characters and some of the very good ones! We cannot help loving and admiring the good ones, and we cannot help condemning, criticizing, and judging the evil ones, or at least knowing how they could be better. A line must be drawn in our consciousness that enables us to stop judging the appearance, so that we can look through it and say, "I am not interested if the appearance at the moment is good or evil, whether the fever is up or down, or the pocketbook full or empty. I am looking through to the truth that God alone is. And because God alone is, all is well."¹

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We come out from under the law and come under Grace when we no longer ascribe evil to ourselves or to another, but always impersonalize it; and above all, when we do not ascribe qualities of good to ourselves. Let us never fool ourselves by believing that we are good, that we are philanthropic, that we are charitable, that we are gentle, because we of ourselves are none of those things. If such qualities are finding expression through us, it is because God is finding expression through us, and all of those qualities belong to God. If temporarily any bit of evil should find outlet through us, let us not condemn ourselves, but immediately impersonalize it and realize that this too is not of us: it is the carnal mind which temporarily we have let find expression.²

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"Love thy neighbor as thyself."³ That is a cosmic law. You violate this law every time you say, "This is a good person," or "This is a bad person." And you violate it just as much when you call them good as when you call them bad, because in neither case is it true. You are voicing an untruth. Nobody is good, and nobody is bad. The Master said, *"Why callest thou me good? There is but one good, the Father in heaven."*⁴ And so, if you have any qualities of good, don't call yourself good. Be grateful that the qualities of God are manifesting through you. On the other hand, if you have qualities of ungood, don't go around calling yourself bad. Just acknowledge to yourself that you have not yet attained the fullness of the realization of letting God flow through you, and then make the greater effort next time.

But remember this: It is malpractice to call anybody sinful, sick, weak, poor. It's malpractice to think of yourself in that regard, because the truth is that you are spiritual. You are absolutely in and of God. That's your true identity. Anything else is a lie, and a lie is a violation of cosmic law. But on the other hand, it's just of the height of egotism to say, "I'm good," or "I have understanding," or "I'm moral," or "I'm generous," or "I'm benevolent." That's the height of egotism, and that also is a lie, and there's a penalty for that. But when you recognize, *"Son, all*

¹ *Spiritual Discernment*, Chapter 5: "Judge Not According to the Appearance"
² *Living the Illumined Life*, Chapter 6: "Building the Transcendental Consciousness"
³ Matthew 22:39
⁴ Matthew 19:17

*that I have is thine;*¹ all the qualities of good of the Father are manifest, expressed through me," that's all right. Then I can be as good as I like, because I'm not taking any credit for myself. I'm loving the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my soul.

But now, if I want to love my neighbor as myself, I not only have to bear witness to that about myself and my neighbor, I have to be very careful that I include all my enemies ... because I cannot say one thing about Jesus Christ and another about Judas Iscariot. I just can't do it. I can say that Jesus was a greater outlet for those qualities, and Judas made the mistake of damming them up. That I can do, but I can't say Jesus was good and Judas was bad, because if I do, I'm judging by appearances. I am malpracticing, and the reaction is not on Judas or Jesus. It's on me.²

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"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."³ In this lesson, it is revealed that this does not mean that you shouldn't gossip about your neighbor or indulge in scandal or slander. It doesn't have such a meaning at all. The Bible doesn't come down to that level of human conduct or belief. It means equally that thou shalt not tell *good* things about your neighbor, because that's bearing false witness, too.

It means that you are to understand that God is your neighbor. God, the Spirit of God, the Christ, the Son of God, is your neighbor. And therefore, your neighbor is not a bad person or a good one. They are spiritual. They have no qualities of good or of evil; they are spiritual. The qualities of good and of evil belong to the mortal sense of man, which must die daily in order that the other man be reborn of the Spirit—the new man, the new creature in Christ. You are not a new creature in Christ if you are a good human being. I should say not! You are a new creature in Christ if you are an immortal, spiritual being and you know it.

It doesn't make much difference in the scale of God whether I bear false witness against you by carrying tales, scandals, rumors of evil, or whether I turn around and say, "Aren't you benevolent, and kind, and just." Neither one of those conversations ever get into heaven. Neither one are known in heaven. They're both violations of heaven. When I keep my conversation in heaven, when you keep your conversation in heaven, is when you are saying, "This is the Christ, the beloved of God, in whom I am well pleased. This is indeed he that should come; he is risen." Then your conversation is heaven. You're talking about the Son of God, in whom is no evil, no death, no disease, no age.

Learn this lesson well, if you would obey cosmic law. Don't waste your time in gossip, scandal, or rumor about man whose breath is in his nostril, but also don't go around saying "Good

¹ Luke 15:31

² Recording 107, Side 2, 1955 Chicago Private Class: "Instructions in the Practice and Living of The Infinite Way, Part 2"

³ Exodus 20:16

master,” because both received the rebuke of the Holy One. *“Why callest thou me good? There is but one good, the Father in heaven.”*¹

Always remember that the same mob that calls Jesus good throws the stones at the crucifixion, and it always has been so. The enemies that we have are of our own household. Usually those that are saying the best about us today are finding something of an evil nature tomorrow. That has no part in a spiritual life. A spiritual life doesn’t indulge human condemnation or human praise. Neither of these enter heaven. Neither of these are the conversation of heaven.

“Why callest thou me good? There is but one good, the Father in heaven.” If I, by any chance, am an instrument through which God is doing good, then I am an instrument through which God is doing good. Those individuals who at the moment may be instruments through which evil is being made manifest are but momentary instruments for that evil. Tomorrow, they may be the saints. Saul of Tarsus today becomes Saint Paul tomorrow. The devil Augustine, that horrible, immoral character, becomes Saint Augustine tomorrow.

Don’t worry about the human goodness or human evil of an individual. In cosmic law, where you are at this minute, you recognize only one being, and that is your Self—spelled capital S-e-l-f. Your Self is my Self, and what you’re saying about me, you’re saying about you, and what you’re saying about you, you’re saying about me. And if you’re saying evil about yourself, you’re condemning your world, because there is only one Self.

Don’t hold yourself in self-condemnation, even to your past errors, but rise above that to your true Self, and know the truth about its infinite, omnipresent nature. Don’t waste time in regrets. Acknowledge human wrongs for one second, and then for ninety-nine minutes, climb up there in heaven and recognize the nature of your true being, because when you do, you’re recognizing my true being. And you see, when you are doing that, you’re in the healing business.²

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Bearing witness to God in action will begin to bring changes in your experience, but this one step, in and of itself, will not bring the final and complete demonstration of harmony or of spiritual power in your life. It is necessary not merely to bear witness to God in action, but to bear witness to the illusory nature of error in order to bring the final demonstration of harmony into your experience. Just as you are not good, so you are not evil. You are not responsible for the ills you are experiencing: You are not a sinner; you are not the one who is poor; you are not the one who contracts a disease. Your wrong thinking did not cause your problems, and your right thinking will not cure them.

¹ Matthew 19:17

² Recording 131, Side 1, 1955 Seattle Private Class: “Cosmic Law and Grace”

There is only one thing that will bring an end to the discords and inharmonies of individual experience, and that is an understanding of the truth. The first point in this understanding is not to call anyone good because there is but one good; there is but one life; there is but one mind, one Soul, one law, one cause, one being, and one effect. The other and equally important part of the understanding of truth is not to call anyone evil because a person has no more to do with the evil appearance than he has to do with its opposite, the good appearance. When we appear to be good, it is the activity of God operating through us. When we appear to be evil, it is the activity of material sense which is only a sense of separation from God.

For example, if you saw a thief whom you wanted to help, you would not accept into your consciousness a person needing to be healed of dishonesty: You would separate the dishonesty from the person and you would recognize this as a universal belief in a selfhood apart from God, a universal belief in lack and limitation, or a universal belief in the possibility that someone can get good from another, all of which beliefs are without power. In other words, whatever form the error assumes, it is not an error belonging to any person: It is simply a universal belief. Never forget that error is nothing but a universal belief.¹

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As I realize the / of my being; as I realize that it is God Itself as my individual experience, then I am able to look out upon the world and say, “Even if good and evil confronts me, or only good, or only evil, still I know that it appears there only as a mortal concept, because that which is good to one is evil to another; that which is evil to one is good to another, and so there’s no reality in either good or evil, nor is there anything that is good or evil in and of itself. But / am. / am neither good nor evil. / just am, and / eternally am, and / completely am and perfectly am, and all that God is, / am, and all that the Father hath is mine. That is my true spiritual identity within myself.²

¹ *The Heart of Mysticism*, October 1957 Letter: “Bear Witness”

² Recording 161, Side 1, 1956 Chicago Closed Class: “The Christ Prayer—Inner Communion”