

**Optional Study Suggestions for *The Art of Spiritual Living*,
Chapter 10, "The Invisible"**

1. Practice, Practice, Practice

Joel spends a lot of time in this chapter on the topic of contemplative meditation, and he strongly suggests that we practice, practice, practice. In fact, Joel says that ANYTHING that concerns your life is not too unimportant for contemplative meditation. The continuous practice of contemplative meditation develops the *habit* of turning within for everything, which builds the consciousness of relying more and more on Grace, rather than on your personal, human sense of what to do, what to say, or how to act.

So it seems that the most appropriate thing we can do as we study this chapter is to commit to practicing contemplative meditation as Joel describes it: "*Life becomes a going from one meditation to another ... No matter what you are doing, there is always some area of consciousness, some space in your mind, wherein you can contemplate reality even while doing the mundane things of life.*"

In this chapter, Joel suggests that we use Scripture or passages from The Infinite Way writings to trigger our contemplative meditations. In many of his classes, Joel also says that you can always start any contemplative meditation with the word "God," no matter the reason for the meditation. Starting with the word "God," we may find ourselves going to something like "God is the substance of all form ..." or, "God is the one and only power..." or "God is the health of my being ..." and the contemplation will continue from there in a way that is appropriate for the situation. The word "God" always works as a starting point.

2. Check Your Understanding

When we teach something, or we try in some way to get an idea across to someone else, we learn more about it ourselves because we have to think about it in a new way. It is an interesting exercise to check our understanding of a topic by asking ourselves how we would present it to someone else. There are many ways of doing this. For example:

- Suppose that a new Infinite Way student has come to you and asked you these questions about contemplative meditation. How would you answer them? Make notes on what you would say.
 - What is contemplative meditation?
 - How do we do we do it?
 - Why do we do it?
 - When should we do it?
- If the idea of teaching doesn't appeal to you, you can also do this exercise by assuming that you have been asked to write an short article about Joel's teaching on contemplative meditation, and to integrate answers to the four questions in the article. Write the article.

- If you are of an artistic bent, another possibility is to create a work of art in your preferred medium (e.g., painting, sculpture, photography, poetry, etc.) that captures the key ideas about contemplative meditation.

If you find one of these options intriguing, we encourage you to try it. The object is to go to a deeper level of understanding about contemplative meditation.