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- *God uses many methods to directly reach each person*
- *Praying for others*
- *Peace within as a prerequisite for world peace*
- *World conflict results from individual restlessness*

God is indeed with you and wishes you to firmly believe that each of you truly is a receiver of God's presence. To be receptive means to be open and to be free from one's self. Your receiving is growing steadily in depth and clarity, and there is a steady reduction in the presence of self in what you perceive and receive from God. It is true each of you can receive in such manner. Not all are given the ability to receive messages, and not all who have such ability exercise it. For many it remains latent for their entire life.

The fact that each of you can receive is a statement of potential. It is not a prediction. You may receive in this manner but find that it is overwhelmingly difficult to separate self from content, and therefore choose of your own will not to receive. Regardless of how you hear God, what channel you choose, be it in this manner or in a sense of direction achieved when in a peaceful state, God can reach each of you. It is not important how you receive, but it is vital that you be open. Your openness might be in the form of recognition through another indirectly, you might say. But in experiencing God through another, God's presence is made apparent in equally an immediate manner as in the form that you experience as a group.

You know God works through others. You know God works through you to reach others. Both are equally valid. Both are absolutely necessary for the world. If you can believe that God can work through someone, how can you deny a belief that God can work through all people? That God can work through you? The belief in one requires the belief in the others. God's working, therefore, is always direct. You may receive from another, you may receive through your own experience, but you have the ability to receive clearly.

You have the ability to receive God's guidance through numerous methods. God does not single out one method per person so that if you miss that method, you miss God. You do not express your love to a child in one way, one way for a son and a different way for a daughter. Both know your presence, not only by sight, but by sound and touch.

So it is with God. You are as a radio with numerous stations contained within. You may choose one means or another of receiving God that depends upon your situation, your mood, the kind of life you may live, your concerns, but God is available to all through many routes.

If you seek one method of reaching God and find it difficult, try another. You may seek direct guidance but find you are more successful in achieving a sense of God's

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presence through prayer. Prayer is also direct, for it operates to God and from God simultaneously. When you honestly pray to God, you really are open to receive.

When you pray for another, you are in turn opening yourself to a sense of God's presence as manifest in the life of that other person. You may pray that God guides another's life. You are in a sense being present in that person's life, observing evidence of God. Such observation comes from seeking. Therefore, when you pray for another, seek the opportunity of sensing distinctly that God is answering your prayer. You may pray for someone far away, and therefore it is impossible to be physically present, but you must also pray that you may be open to an awareness that in some way God has truly responded.

Such assurance may be no more than a fleeting feeling that God has really intervened. Such feeling may pass quickly, but for an instant, you are certain of God's presence. For that instant you are being given a direct vision of God, as direct as these communions which you share together. There is nothing indirect about God's presence in the activity of human life. Whether your concerns are for an individual or for humanity, God's response is personal. God's presence is felt.

You wonder about the presence of God within the possibility of world annihilation. It is not God's wish that the world be destroyed by the acts of humans, but it is humans acting through the will of God that can prevent such destruction. Your prayers often are for peace, for world peace, but what does that mean? We pray that God will stop wars. You recite accounts from the Bible of the lamb and the lion lying down with one another. Somehow humans perceive peace as being the responsibility of God, not human beings. Such peace as you speak of will only come about when humans recognize that it is their responsibility acting in conjunction with the power of God. Humans alone cannot achieve peace. God alone will not deny humanity free choice, but God working with humanity can achieve the peace for which you pray. It places great responsibility on all people, responsibility and opportunity, both working hand in hand.

If you want peace in the world, you must first make peace within yourself and next with your neighbor. You cannot achieve peace in your community if you are at war with yourself. Such peace within is achieved through prayer. It is achieved through that recognition of God of which we so often speak. That is the beginning step. When you feel at one with God, you may move outward to reflect with security that oneness to those around you.

You may wonder what a sense of inner peace has to do with world peace. Perhaps it is easier to understand when you recognize that world conflict eventually can be traced to individuals who are in conflict with themselves. The elimination of conflict and what it creates leads to world peace. The conflict from within is experienced as greed, jealousy, competition, anxiety, impatience, intolerance, both with others and most importantly with one's self. It is the restlessness from within which serves as the

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foundation for restlessness without, just as it is peace from within that serves to power peace from without.

Each of you travels in your life on a path with a hope for such inner peace. The peace which you seek within is never constant. There are times when you feel a kind of inner glow and life around you appears more harmonious, but it is natural that one feels turmoil within and that cannot help but affect your perception of life around you. Those who are at peace with their neighbors are at peace with themselves. You reflect what you are. How often you have heard that from us in one form or another. Its application can be taken eventually to the extremes of world peace.

World peace is a goal, a goal to be sought after, but you may be assured, never fully achieved, for there will always be souls in torment. There will always be individuals who are going through inner turmoil, and they will create disturbances around them. Why seek world peace when it can never be fully achieved? Why educate oneself if one can never know everything? It is in the seeking that growth takes place. It is in the striving, it is the looking ahead along that road of which we spoke. You may not reach the peak of the mountain which lies before you, but in being drawn toward the peak, you move closer to the beauty, and you grow through the experience and are broadened and brightened. It is in the seeking of peace from within as well as without that your souls grow in their light and illuminate your lives and thereby the lives of others, and then beyond to realms far distant.

We pray that at this time of year you reflect upon the meaning of inner peace and its centering on God, and the application of that feeling of peace momentarily or for long duration to those around you. We pray for your vision of God, for in the seeing, you are given peace. We pray for your reflection of God, for in your brightness, others are warmed. And we pray for the warmth of others, for in the heat which is produced, a light is brightened in the world—God's light as reflection of love.

We bless each of you with that light from God that it may brighten in your lives, through your lives, and because of your lives.

Amen.