

January 21, 1984

- *Dealing with relationships through thoughts, prayers, and actions*
- *Handling disagreements*

God surrounds each of you with love and concern, warmth and compassion, strength and sensitivity.

We are indeed joyful that you again are together as a group. It has been a long time and much has occurred in the lives of each of you which brings a sense of focus or purpose to your gathering tonight. You have all grown considerably in the intervening weeks. Your lives steadily acquire greater character and depth. It is interesting that much of this growth for every one of you has involved at least one other person outside of this circle. That involvement in every case has required sensitivity and listening and a kind of outreach. The fact is that each of you has served as a hand of God. It is not always easy but always rewarding. You feel a sense of pleasure because of the apparent rightness of your actions. These experiences are common to all people, but it is interesting to note that every one of you in this group has shared this in recent weeks.

Your responses to others are the result of your growing sensitivity to the presence of God, not merely in your own lives but in the life of another. We speak so often of your responding to God through your response to another, and your experiences bear this out most graphically. Love is not to be talked about. It is ultimately to be experienced, most especially by being offered. Each of you has offered love in a meaningful way to another. That recognition should continue to afford you evidence of God's presence in your lives.

Certainly, there are times in the future when you will be less able to be so giving. There are times when one feels inadequate to a task, or unwilling. Both are natural in the cyclic nature of human life, but both can prompt a sense of remorse, a diminishing of self-respect. How often have you said to yourself, "I should have done this for that person, and I didn't because of fear or selfishness or lack of time or lack of sensitivity"? At times like these it is easy to be self-critical, to feel that somehow you have failed God by failing another. When those times happen, when your response to another is not as you would wish it to be, remember those times when you have reached out and realized that despite your inability or lack of action, you remained always a hand of God.

We have often said that you serve God by serving another, but it is also true that in treating another in your mind with love, you are also serving God. There are times in your life when you look upon an opportunity for relating to another, and the closest you get is the recognition of what you should do. This recognition is a kind of reflection of God's light that your soul produces by thinking of another kindly.

By thinking of another with love you are also serving God, for you are surrounding that person with your light as you reflect it. That individual is frequently unaware of your thoughts—of your thoughts of compassion, healing thoughts,

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supporting thoughts—but nevertheless, the benefit of those thoughts is still present. God does not ask that you always respond in a positive, visible manner to the needs of others. Your prayers on another's behalf are often the most appropriate response.

You pray for the souls of those who have crossed the threshold. There is nothing you can do visibly or materially to aid them. Your prayers are the most helpful. They are the means of breaching the gap between both forms of life, physical life and the life beyond the physical.

Your prayers for the health of another provide evidence of God's hand being used through your efforts. Often little more can be done than to pray for another, but that is so beneficial, for it provides the channel to be open for God's care and support and nurturing to take place. Your prayers are for their continued strength. They are also for those of their families. They need considerable support, but that support is silent. It is best offered through prayer. God has responded immediately to those prayers, and they will in time grow in their conviction of the presence of God in all that is.

We feel the warmth of this group tonight and wish it were possible to be unbroken for all of the future, but that is neither natural nor expected. You will have opportunities in the future to respond to another within the group in a manner which will differ one from another, but the response that each offers will be offered through God because you are all joined together by the common bond of searching for a greater understanding of your lives now and in the future.

When you disagree with another, it is important to recognize that the disagreement is not in principle but in perception. It is true of any relationship. Disagreements are not ultimately of principle. When two approach an issue, both wish it to be resolved in the best possible way. Their perception of the proper solution is aimed toward such an appropriate solution. So, the objectives are the same; it is only the means which differ.

If you find disagreement with those with whom you work or associate, keep in mind that you are all after the same things really. You want what is ultimately the best, but each will find a different route attractive. It is important, therefore, to recognize the commonality of principle in all of your dealings with others. Recognizing that unified principle, you are much more able to achieve agreements to issues of importance.

More needs to be said about this common principle. What is the best solution? What is the ultimate objective? If you search deeply enough, you must ultimately recognize that the underlying principle which governs all issues is the presence of God in some form or another. It may be an attitude of love or an attitude of acceptance or one of tolerance, but it is God's presence.

The issues which confront you in your daily life generally seem far removed from some kind of recognition of God. They may involve money or discipline, career, family, health. They may take many forms, but as you know, everything has its place within the

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creation of God, and therefore everything is interrelated by that very creation. That is the underlying principle of which we speak.

We don't wish to present a sense of expectation of conflict in the future. That is not our intent. It is merely our desire to help you relate the normal experiences of life on a daily basis to those experiences you share in common at times like these, for life alters significantly within a relatively short period between satisfaction and frustration, joy and remorse, closeness/distance, agreement/disagreement, confidence/concern. You cannot change that. You cannot change what life is, but you can control your attitude toward it. You can control what you do to the challenges of life, and by recognizing the commonality all share, your response to all that life is around you will be according to God's guidance.

God's love is for every person. God is open to all of your needs, all of your praises and out-cries, all of your joys and frustrations, all of your thanksgivings and regrets. It is God who provides the consistency and continuity to life, to your response to life. If you can only stay tuned to God's presence, then your response throughout life will be steady and sure, and a peace within will be strengthened to become a peace evident from without. Our function in your life is to help foster, to help nurture that inner peace that it may grow and spread to dominate every corner of your life. We pray that you will continue to remain open to God's peace, and that you will continue to find opportunities for being together to share in your mutual journey toward spiritual growth and enrichment.

We bless all of you with God's love and warmth, God's light and peace.

Amen.