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- *The importance of being positive and not negative*
- *Be receptive in prayer*
- *All goals are spiritual*
- *The potential of group sharing*

God is, of course, with each of you. God's peace can penetrate, can work through each of your souls, providing peace and awareness that you all so fervently seek or desperately want. For many souls, the presence of God is like a cool breeze—it refreshes, provides strength, and can provide a sense of optimism, courage, and make one look beyond the future possibilities. The breeze can bring with it aromas and sounds of distant places, and you suddenly become aware of another dimension to life's happening.

So it is with God. God's presence can provide each of you with a greater sense of life, a broader awareness of what life can be, and thereby a clearer understanding of what life is. Life holds for each of you such great potential for growth—growth toward others and a growth of deepening inner strength. At times this broadening, this growing can be difficult, but it need not always be so. Growth can be achieved through joy. It can be a pleasurable experience, not merely one associated with a constant testing, a constant threat of disaster or the constant presence of crises. Certainly all those elements are a part of life, but life for you is so much more. Life is not to be endured; it is to be enjoyed. It is to be absorbed positively, for it is in the positivity of your response, whether it be an initial response or an end result, that true growth really takes place.

We find it difficult so often to reach you when you are negative. You may be negative toward your own feelings or the actions of others. You may be negative towards what life offers you at a given moment. Such negativism provides a barrier which is difficult to penetrate. When you are negative, you may pray and yet not really be in prayer. When you are discouraged, angry or vengeful, you may be active in praying, but not be in prayer.

It is necessary for us to explain what is meant by praying but not being in prayer. For you, praying is an active form of life. It is a kind of asking. It may even be a kind of willful waiting. But being in prayer is a state of being. It is in being quiet, it is in the elimination of tension that you are in prayer. Being in prayer means being receptive to God. So seldom do you take time for such receptiveness, and so often you are busy asking God for things. How often we speak to you about prayer, for it is so complicated for you to fully understand. The power, the potential, the possibilities of prayer are far beyond what you shall come to understand in your own human life.

That is not to say that it is futile to search for greater understanding, for it is in that searching that you come closer to a full understanding. But the potential for what prayer can do will only be fully visible to you when you are as we are, souls or spirits

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unburdened. We use prayer to communicate with one another, to hear God and to reach you. What we do with prayer is far beyond your possible understanding, and yet for you prayer is the greatest opportunity you have for exercising love in life.

Each of you, even now, seeks something. No matter where you are upon life's road, if you are fully in touch with yourselves, you will recognize that there is still more to be achieved whether professionally, personally, or spiritually. You never reach a stage in life which has no goals. As long as you have a goal, you will have an urge to strive for it. It is God and your perception of God through prayer which provide you with the selectivity for choosing the proper goals. Goals need not be mundane, they need not be material. At times in your life, they may not even seem spiritual.

Ultimately, all goals are spiritual. If one prays for financial security, one assumes that by having that security one achieves peace, but peace is not really achieved unless it is received spiritually. Goals may be professional goals of obtaining a desired result, for such attainment can provide a feeling of achievement and self-worth and personal fulfillment. But you see, achievements and self-worth, this personal fulfillment, can only be ultimately realized spiritually. For others, it is a matter of getting along with people. If you try to get along with people, you will achieve a kind of peace. But that too is spiritual, for if you achieve a spiritual peace, you will get along with all people.

Perhaps you can see by these simple examples that there is no goal in life that is not, in the end, spiritual. There is no goal that you have that cannot ultimately be achieved through spiritual means. There is no goal in life that can be achieved without the presence of spiritual identity. Those who deny their spirit are in a constant state of tension, for they will not achieve what they seek. We say you will always have goals. Perhaps that seems a paradox if you feel that you can achieve your goals spiritually by your present spiritual awareness.

The truth is that each of you seeks peace. Each of you experiences it sometime or another, but such peace as you have is never permanent. You may feel calm, or you may feel at times as if you have arrived, so to speak, but the calm is always broken, and again you seek the same goals with continued vigor.

So the goal is both possible to achieve and always distant. It is possible to achieve in the short run, but considered in the span of human life, is always to be achieved. We do not wish you to be discouraged if you hear that you cannot achieve a constant inner peace, for that is not the purpose in life. It is a goal to be sought after and in that seeking, as we have said, you grow.

Whether your challenges are mundane or lofty, whether they are spiritual or not, remember always that in the end they are spiritual in nature. For some of you, the period approaching is one of a gathering in of strengths. For others, it is a period of challenge and uncertainty, but the rhythm of life is constant. You are all in your lives in a position of gathering strengths or being challenged. Each individual life is never static.

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Its rhythms are the same as the rhythms of each individual life of this group at any given moment.

Your experience within this group is a way of experiencing a cross-section view of your lives as individuals. As you give strength to another in need, you are providing a means of receiving strength when you are in need. When responding to another, you really are responding to yourself as well. It is only the time frame which is different, not the reality of the situation. It is in being together as a group that you learn more of yourselves as individuals. Often we have said you cannot live in a vacuum. You cannot live alone, truly alone, for in doing so you have no perspective of what life is or what your life can be. In contemplating God as a group, you are contemplating God, in effect, as individuals with the perspective of an entire life span.

Each of you has periods of being up or down, celebrations as well as sufferings, of being spiritually uplifted and feeling desperately alone, of being optimistic of the future, and pessimistic about the present. All that you can experience in your lives can be experienced in your group. The group is therefore so valuable, for without it such a vast perspective would be impossible. You do give strength to one another and you give perspective to one another. We feel it is important that you be open to share on a deeper level what you experience in life. There is a trust within the group that one will not reject another because of feelings.

You are each a support for the other, and therefore you should not go along your path alone, but feel that you can share what gives you joy and what gives you pain. The response of each to another thereby becomes the response of God to another. You then allow God to work more powerfully within your lives. It is important then not just to deliberate these messages, but to be open to your sharing.

God's light continues to shine through each of you. There is much that you can anticipate for the future which gives evidence of God's presence. Rejoice that you have God, but equally important, rejoice that you have each other, for it is indeed an enormous blessing.

And now we share in that blessing upon your individual and group lives.

Amen.