



Celebrate God as you Yield to the Authority of Soul — Become Master of your Body

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Celebrate God as you Yield to the Authority of Soul — Become Master of your Body
Metaphysical Application Ideas for the Christian Science Quarterly Bible Lesson on:

Soul and Body
November 14 – 20, 2022

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INTRODUCTION

It seems easy these days to fall into the trap of believing that the quality of our lives is determined largely by what our bodies and/or our minds are telling us about how we feel. The popular belief is that our identity is determined by bodily conditions, heredity, and things we've experienced in the past. It is common to think that our identity (our soul, so to speak) is contained *in* a human body and defined by a human personality. But, this week's Bible Lesson turns those mortal beliefs upside down and reveals that — in fact — our identity is the *expression* or *manifestation* of the *one* Soul, which is Spirit, God. Understanding this allows us to be masters rather than servants — to “take possession” of our bodies, and of our thoughts, and govern them with the authority that has been given to each and everyone of us by our Maker and our Maintainer — the infinite and divine Principle that is the only Soul and the very source of our being. Although the Lesson talks primarily about a material body, the same logic can be applied when thinking about the body of government, an organizational body, or any other kind of body.

The **Golden Text**, from the *International Children's Bible* says, “My whole being praises the Lord.” I love the use of the phrase, “my whole being” rather than “my soul.” (Psalm 34:2) Thinking about “my soul” as “my whole being” helps to eliminate any sense of parts to us — our mental part, our emotional part, our bodily part. We're just one complete, wonderful being — each a unique expression, having an intimate and unique place in the whole of Life. I know I've said this before, but ... I love comparing the completeness and individuality of each one of us to the completeness and individuality of each number, note, snow flake, sunbeam, and drop of water. Each has a place and a role that is supportive of the whole — while maintaining a totally individual and essential identity that is fully supported *by* the *principle* governing the whole.

Sometimes we're haunted by human questions such as, “what is my purpose”, “why am I here”? The Golden Text answers that. We are here (our purpose is) to praise the Lord. That doesn't mean just running around *voicing* how great God is. One definition of praise (from the Hebrew, *hilar*, as well as in modern dictionaries, is “to celebrate.” How do we celebrate God,

or Soul, with our whole being? To me, it is by recognizing that all that we are and do is the beautiful effect of an amazing, perfect cause, the Soul of all being. This Soul is also synonymous with Principle (soundness and order), Love (loveliness and selflessness), Spirit (energy, willingness, and endurance), Truth (integrity and faithfulness), Mind (intelligence and wisdom), and Life (vibrancy, constancy, and confidence). Celebrating that those qualities are *inherent* in ourselves and in others is a form of praising God — giving God the glory!

The **Responsive Reading** talks about running the “race” so that we can obtain the “crown”. In Paul’s day athletes were highly valued. For Paul, it was the qualities of an athlete that were important — the discipline and self-control required to excel. The Worldwide English Translation of the New Testament translates verses 26 and 27 as, “I do not run as if I did not know where I was going. And I do not fight like a man just beating the air. But I control my own body really well. I make my body obey me.” Taken by itself, these sentiments could be interpreted as just needing to have physical control over our bodies. But, as I continued to study this week’s Lesson it became apparent to me that isn’t the most Scientific interpretation.

The verses from Romans, chapter 12, help to shed a more spiritual light on the subject. Paul asks his listeners to *please* present their bodies (that is their whole selves, or complete persons) to God as a “sacrifice.” Whereas the Jews had brought doves or lambs for a sacrifice, we are now being asked to give *ourselves* to God — to be fully obedient to God’s will. We’re told to “be not conformed to this world”. To me, that means to be alert that we’re not going along with material theories and popular fads and patterns of thought, but to “renew your mind that ye may prove [that is discern] what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” It’s not that everything in the “world” is bad. But, in everything we do, we need to turn to God, to the Mind that is Love, to hear what next steps we should take. I have a mosaic that I bought while visiting Israel that shows a fish swimming upstream. It serves a reminder to me to not do *anything* just because it is the popular thing to do. I’m far from having a perfect track-record, but I know that it *is* important to take every thought, every desire, and every decision to Love, and then follow as much as possible the direction we receive.

The rest of the Lesson helps us discern *how* to run the race of life victoriously ... how to bring our whole selves (our thoughts and bodies) into subjection to God’s will, and celebrate the law of Good that is God — that is Life, that is Soul!

SECTION 1: OUR COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD — COEXISTENCE WITH SOUL

We have a covenant relationship (that is, a binding agreement) with the supreme law of Good. *That* is worth celebrating!! We are holy (complete) because God is holy (complete) (citation B2, Leviticus 19:2). God lives with us and will never “abhor” (reject) us. God’s job is to be the Source, and our job is to be the expression, allowing the Source to be seen as it shines through us (cit. B3, Leviticus 26:11, 12). Isaiah reiterates that our reason for being is to praise God (cit. B4, Isaiah 43:10, 21). In this case, the Hebrew word from which praise is translated is *teh-hil-law* and involves adoration and thanksgiving paid to God. The covenant relationship, teaches us that as we love God supremely, we are able to see God’s ever-presence, and recognize the “promised land” that God has prepared for us. *That* is a reason of gratitude! This promised land, of course, isn’t a physical place, and the substance of our being isn’t a “sentient material form.” Rather, we learn in Christian Science that we have a “sensationless body” and God imparts and perpetuates “individuality, harmony, and immortality ... through Mind, not matter” (cit. S5, 280:25-30).

Because our identity is not dependent on matter, is it any less real or tangible? Absolutely not! Think about what it means for identify to be “the reflection of Spirit, the reflection in multifarious forms of the living Principle, Love” (cit. S3, 477:19-25). Consider again the qualities I mentioned when talking about the Golden Text. I find it really helpful to expand on

these seven Bible-based synonyms (or names for God) that Mary Baker Eddy gives in the textbook of Christian Science. Remember, reflection indicates bearing the exact image of, as well as being the thought of, something. So, because Soul is the very substance, Life, and intelligence of each of us and it is individualized in such a way that no two of us are exactly alike, each one is unique and *essential* to the whole. We *each* express such things as the soundness and order of Principle, the loveliness and selflessness of Love, the inexhaustible energy and willingness of Spirit, the integrity and faithfulness of Truth, the intelligence and wisdom of Mind, and the vitality, constancy, and confidence of Life. You can expand on the qualities! These aren't qualities that can be sourced by or trapped in the limited scope of what we call matter. They don't belong to some and not to others. And, if we recognize *one* of those qualities in yourself or another, you can know that *all* of the qualities are present. I had a lovely healing of a physical condition when I realized that because I included the love of Love and joy of Soul (which I could see I did), I also included the soundness of Principle. Evidence of that soundness then became manifest in the outward appearance of an uncomplaining body.

So, let's expand our concept of Soul and body to see each individual as the embodiment of all the qualities that Soul (the identity of Spirit) includes. That leaves no room for accepting limitations of any kind based on past experience, size, health laws, gender, age or any other imposition. Because God is perpetual in being, man (all mankind) is perpetual in the expression of uninterrupted individuality and harmony. Refuse to accept anything less!

SECTION 2: BE "ABSENT FROM THE BODY" AND "PRESENT WITH THE LORD"

If we want to make progress in any area, it's important to be single-minded. We get nowhere when we pull on two ends of a rope, or argue on one side, and then the other. We need to ask ourselves often whether we are heeding the wisdom Jesus aimed through parables at the Pharisees, who were lovers of money. He told them, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (cit. B7, Luke 16:13). Although Jesus was specifically speaking about treating *wealth* as a god, the same idea applies to anything that would take our attention away from God and the wholeness of the spiritual universe. It all comes down to where thought is *dwelling*. Wealth can be a wonderful vehicle for sharing good. But, if it becomes the center of attention, and we lose sight of God as the *source* of all good, we have a problem. Later citations in this section specifically address giving too much attention to the *body*. It's a comparable idea. We read in II Corinthians, chapter 5, that when "we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." It occurred to me that there is a difference between *dealing* with our body — feeding it, clothing it, taking care of it, having it serve us — and identifying it as our *home*. We dwell in Mind. The goal is to "be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (cit. B10, II Corinthians 5:6,8). Again ... where is thought focused? That's what we need to be concerned about. What do you find yourself thinking about most during the day — your body and other physical conditions, or how God is providing for every need for everyone? As we read in Luke, "when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light ... if thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light" (cit. B8, Luke 11:34, 36). As our thought is full of the light of inspiration and trust in God, our entire experience is enlightened.

Mary Baker Eddy desired to "save ["the lame, the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the sick, the sensual, the sinner"] from the slavery of their own beliefs and from the educational systems of the Pharaohs, who to-day, as of yore, hold the children of Israel in bondage" (cit. S9, 226:22-29). Our bondage is different than back in Moses' day. It is much more subtle, but it is equally unjust. God will lead us out of that bondage as He led the Israelites out of Egypt, as we mentally fight for our freedom. This statement is key to our success, "You embrace your body in your thought, and you should delineate upon it thoughts of health, not of sickness" (cit. S12, 208:25). We need to practice doing that. Watch thought, and refuse to accept the lie of

discord. An artist first conceives an image in thought and then that thought is transferred to the canvas. We can think about our bodies as our canvas and hold in thought only what we want expressed! It takes alertness and practice, but God (Love) enables us to think rightly!

SECTION 3: ACKNOWLEDGE THE AUTHORITY OF SPIRIT, SOUL

In this section we have the wonderful healing of the centurion's servant, which Jesus attributes to the centurion's understanding of true authority. The centurion understood that the authority with which *he* gave orders came from the power bestowed on him from those who ranked above him. And, somehow, he must have understood that the authority with which Jesus spoke came from a power above his own. This understanding led to his absolute faith that his servant would respond to the healing Word that Jesus spoke (cit. B13, Luke 7:2,3,6-10). The authority that *we* have for speaking to discord comes directly from God, Spirit, too. Healing comes as we exercise, and yield to, this authority. As Mary Baker Eddy says, "Like the great Exemplar, the healer should speak to disease as one having authority over it, leaving Soul to master the false evidences of the corporeal senses and to assert its claims over mortality and disease" (cit. S15, 395:6-10). This is the first of three citations (one in each of Sections 3, 4, and 5) which come from pages 390-395 in our textbook. These are sometimes referred to as the "fighting pages". They are full of very specific directives of how to think and reason and speak when faced with suggestions of discord. The important thing that I try to remember when referring to these directives, however, is that we don't follow them from a sense of human will ... but, as the result of exercising our God-given dominion and the authority bestowed on us by Spirit! It is Soul that masters the false beliefs. We experience healing as thought is aligned with this Soul.

I have found citation S18 to be encouraging, and then at times, discouraging. It says to "become conscious for a single moment that Life and intelligence are purely spiritual — neither in nor of matter, — and the body will then utter no complaints" (cit. S18, 14:12-18). Sometimes I *think* I'm being conscious of this pure spirituality, but nothing seems to change. It is at those times that I realize that *if* I were truly conscious that all things were purely spiritual, I wouldn't be checking matter's report! It can feel tricky. But, that's why I find it so essential to follow Jesus' example of simply staying with God's view of the complete and perfect man. He was never in the "fixing" business. And, we can't be either.

We speak with the authority of Soul — ALL is governed by Spirit. Understanding "that the Ego is Mind ... makes the body harmonious; it makes the nerves, bones, brain, etc., servants, instead of masters" (cit. S17, 216:11-18). And, again ... this understanding comes as we open our hearts and let thought be filled with God's angels, assuring us of the supremacy of the authority of Spirit, Soul!!!

SECTION 4: FORGET MORTAL "RULES" — SEEK GOD'S KINGDOM

We hear so much about body this, and body that, these days. There seem to be so many "rules" in regard to diet, exercise, fashion, and necessary healthcare. The tendency for those who seem to have abundant resources may be to *obsess* about following all the "rules". For those who seem to lack sufficient resources, the concern may be more about having *enough* food and clothing in any form. And, yet, *Jesus* instructed his followers to "stop worrying about what you will eat, drink, or wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothes?" He went on to say, "Everyone is concerned about these things, and your heavenly Father certainly knows you need all of them. But first, be concerned about his kingdom and what has his approval. Then all these things will be provided for you" (cit. B6, Matthew 5:25, 32, 33, *God's Word Translation*).

To stop worrying about the world's *opinion* or about limited and limiting human circumstances, and to see God's kingdom first, foremost, and exclusively takes a lot of humility and discipline. But, Christian Science teaches that **not worrying because God is caring for us** also makes us *masters* of our bodies— masters of our entire being — enabling us to “control [our situation] with Truth” (cit. S19, 228:20). So, what is this Truth? It is the fact that there is *one* supreme Mind that governs all things.

The same Mind that causes flowers to grow and bloom and that enables young animals to instinctively know what they need to do to survive is the same Mind that cares for us. The problem comes when we allow limited mortal conceptions to “interfere with God's government by thrusting in the laws of erring, human concepts” (cit. S20, 62:20). Those concepts include both lack and excess and all sorts of limiting rules.

We get to decide what to accept and what to reject of the human concepts constantly bombarding us (cit. S21, 392:21). We need to refuse to accept limiting so-called laws, which suggest they determine our economic or bodily, or mental, or any other kind of health. Yes, we need to go about our human lives making the choices that seem the most right at the time. But, I have never heard any better advice than that found on page 261 of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy: “Hold thought steadfastly to the enduring, the good, and the true, and you will bring these into your experience proportionably to their occupancy of your thoughts” (cit. S22, 261:2).

Refuse to be discouraged. Although we need to refuse to let appetite, apathy, or laziness govern us, we also need to refuse to let what the “media” and the “experts” are saying make us afraid or paralyze us. “Man is harmonious when governed by Soul” (cit. S23, 273:18). And, each of us and the whole world *is truly* governed by Soul — by the balanced, harmonious, beautiful, gracious, abundant, individualized expression of infinite Spirit, where nothing is ever lacking or out of order.

SECTION 5: MIND IS THE MASTER

I loved thinking more about the story of the man at Lystra who had been crippled all his life, and yet responded to Paul's command by leaping up and immediately walking. The man didn't hesitantly get up and *try out* his new-found freedom. He went for it!! We're told that Paul perceived that the man had “faith to be healed” (cit. B21, Acts14:8-10). This was likely the first time this man had heard about the God (and Christ) that Paul spoke of. The area was a pagan area and Zeus was worshipped in the temple. But, the man *immediately* embraced the message of freedom.

This quick healing of lifelong lameness is a beautiful demonstration of the truth of the words found in Hebrews, “the word of God is quick, and powerful ...” (cit. B19, Hebrews 4:12). What struck me is how unreservedly the man accepted the message he had heard and how confidently he followed the command to “stand upright”. Sometimes I think there is a temptation to argue against ourselves and our well-being. We get mesmerized by the physical appearance or by the economic and health theories that bombard us. I have often found I need to take a firm stand and reply to all of those in-your-face suggestions with, “I will not fear what flesh can do unto me” (cit. B17, Psalm 56:4). I will neither be afraid, nor will I respect, what a material body or human opinions can do to me!

There are so many great statements in the *Science and Health* part of this section. We're told that the reason we deal with limited capacities is because we believe that we live in a body rather than in Soul, “in matter instead of Spirit” (cit. S24, 223:3). We're also told that we need to approach every challenge as its master, rather than shrinking in fear or defeatism and to watch our thinking, rather than what's going on with our body or with a human circumstance (cit. S25, 419:16-20).

And, we're encouraged to "take possession of [our] body, and govern its feeling and action. "Rise in the strength of Spirit to resist all that is unlike good." If we stop there, it can feel like we have to push through and somehow willfully control how our body is feeling. To me, that is the belief of mind (small m) over matter. But, the paragraph goes on to say: "God has made man capable of this, and nothing can vitiate (that means impair or destroy) the ability and power *divinely* bestowed on man" (cit. S28, 393:4).

Our job — our privilege — is to choose how to think about things and *respond* to Mind's direction as the man at Lystra responded to Paul's command to stand upright. As we act with confidence, trusting spiritual sense more than material sense, we will demonstrate our God-given mastery over all material beliefs.

SECTION 6: CELEBRATE VICTORY — ADMIT TO BEING GOD'S OWN LIKENESS

There's been a lot in this Lesson about mastering the corporeal senses. To me that means understanding that a material body and material circumstances are not in control. And, I often have to remind myself that when we say material body, etc. we're not talking about a real something, but about what *seems* to be — the false view. So ... if the false view doesn't have power to control us, and we've been given the authority to *master* this false sense, what is it that *is* in control? The Bible is full of promises of the victory of good over evil and full of praise for, and celebration of, that fact!

The Amplified Bible translates the last citation of the Bible in this week's Lesson from I Thessalonians: "Faithful and absolutely trustworthy is He who is calling you [to Himself for your salvation], and He will do it [He will fulfill His call by making you holy, guarding you, watching over you, and protecting you as His own] (cit. B24, I Thessalonians 5:24). God is the doer!!! Mary Baker Eddy expresses it this way: "The divine Mind is the Soul of man, and gives man dominion over all things" (cit. S29, 307:25-26). Again, I find it helpful to think of Soul as identity. So, Mind (and you can substitute any of the synonyms here) is the identity of man — of each of us.

Then, the question becomes, how do we see and experience this identity — the best version of our "whole being" (Golden Text, Ps. 34:2, *International Children's Version*)? By admitting to ourselves that "man is God's own likeness." We're told that this "sets man free to master the infinite idea" (cit. S31, 90:24-25). We don't have to change anything. We don't have to fix broken matter, a broken relationship, a broken government, or a broken economy. We just have to *admit* that God, Mind, is governing — and refuse to accept for a moment any other suggestion! Our job is to stay focused on the good ("the unsearchable realm of Mind.") Don't be fooled by the limited view, but "act as possessing all power from Him in whom we have our being" (cit. S30, 264:7). That's not a "head-in-the-sand" approach. It is taking a stand for the goodness of Soul — of our "whole being"! All is well! *Admit* it!! And celebrate God and His authority as reality!!

GEMs of BIBLE-BASED application ideas from COBBEY CRISLER & others will be POSTED and EMAILED later this week, so check your email (or junk mail) for them. You can always check the current GEMs at [CedarS INSPIRATION website](#), *whether or not you have SUBSCRIBED here to receive this offering.*

Also later in the week, look for Ken Cooper's "POETIC POSTLUDE" contributions related to this Bible Lesson.

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