

Work

Work as it relates to the qualities of Deity

How the wisdom coding system works.

WISDOM CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Type of wisdom (purple box)

- E** = Evolutionary wisdom
- R** = Revealed wisdom
- H** = Hybrid wisdom (evolutionary + revealed mix)

Target audience (green box)

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Reliability factor of content (blue box)

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APPLICABLE JURISDICTION(S)

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It is through work that Father helps all of us to bring good out of bad. The capacity to participate in spiritual creation is within all of you. In fact, this special ability of spiritual creativity is an important part of your destiny as imperfectly created beings.

A perfectly created being, in a sense, follows a perfect, program, but a perfect program is not so creative. Why not? Because far less work is required on the part of a perfect being to follow a perfect program compared to that effort that must be expended by the imperfect, striving for spiritual growth toward perfection. This is because the imperfect is ever working to turn bad or imperfect into good or perfect.

Now what is that quality of Deity that makes this possible? Faith, truth, goodness, beauty, service, and other areas in this line. These qualities are outworkings of Deity. They are the tools, as you know, that are given to you from Paradise through your indwelling Adjuster that enable you to turn good from bad and, as you progress in your journeyman's task of mastering use of these tools in your present environment, you are always assisted by the unseen instructors who are about. You only need to ask. And it is important to realize that the worse the situation, or the more bad in it, the greater the potential to turn good.

A great artist can indeed fashion a wonderful and beautiful work of art from a tiny bit of metal or stone, but it is a wonder indeed to make good a large chunk of granite or marble or a large pile of wood, is it not? Bad is the creative material that you are given to work as an artisan. If there were no bad, how could you ever help Father to create good of it?

You see, it is work to create good from bad - hard, arduous, painful, exhausting, demanding work - like all service, you will find, as you move from stage to stage over the eons. Blessed is the man who embraces his work with hands and approaches it with a joyous attitude. Blessed is he who works for the love of God. Blessed is he who works with little complaint but with a song in his heart

and peace in his mind. And blessed is he who gets others to work.

These are all lessons brought here through Jesus, and indeed he was a wonderful example of this concept. Was there ever a minute of any day during his mortal life here that he did not work? And yet it is not Jesus who spoke of suffering of His own, nor was He ever heard to complain. Ever did He describe the qualities of work in positive and service-oriented terms, did He not?

My friends, work is not something that you are born learning and knowing how to do. You must learn how to work, and one of the very important tasks of your mortal lifetime on this planet is to learn how to work as well as you possibly can. And yet it will always be true that the more adept you become at working, the more work will be presented to you. The idea of retirement is a myth, if one has truly learned to work.

By working as well as you can, not only do you serve Father and advance the growth of His teachings on this planet, but you also, unknown to you though it may be, lead and inspire others. Believe me, this is quite powerful. When the times of Light and Life come to this planet, beings will spend their whole waking existence in work. It will not be the backbreaking toil to which you have become accustomed and which serves as part of your connotation of work. But it will be effort, and it will be tiring, and it will require strength, perseverance and faith.

Yes, Deity can easily transform bad, imperfect, into good, perfect, instantaneously - or even prevent it from occurring in the first place. But that would not be as creative as the present manifestation in which beings such as yourselves work to transform your own imperfections in the direction of perfect and good. Your persistence and devotion in your work is much admired by those who observe, and the good feeling that you receive as you accomplish the goals of your work chores is a direct reward from Father.

That good feeling is something to be cherished and it grows as your spirit grows, perceives. As you work and grow toward Paradise, that feeling will grow, too. And, to use your jargon, it is most addictive. So one might say that the transformation of bad to good is the accomplishment of addicts, in a sense.

R = Rayson the teacher, S = Students.

Question: I understand through the Urantia Book that the purpose of the physical universe is to make something spiritual out of something physical. Is that a simplistic way of putting it? Is that basically correct?

Answer: Yes.

Question: And that in order to create spiritual qualities, there has to be the possibility for - on the spiritual level - evil, but - on the physical level - bad. Am I correct in that?

Answer: Yes, there must be the potential for error.

The following question occurred on 11/13/93, eleven days after the burning of two students' home in the Malibu fires.

Question: And the recent fire - the burning of the buildings - was, in itself, not spiritually evil, but physically disastrous or bad, is that correct?

A: Yes.

Q: And our response to that situation, all of our responses, are spiritual in nature in addition to physical in nature. But they're the stuff out of which spiritual reality is created. Is that correct?

A: Yes, you understand well, and do you know the next corollary, my dear? Once you have replaced that which was lost, you will have a more complete understanding of - a better sense of perspective - regarding that which is physical. You will see that the important parts of yourself have not been harmed at all, but indeed will have increased. Do you understand?

Q: Yes, I think so. The "Ventola" [painting] which was lost will never, never be replaced, but it can be substituted for by our attitude of acceptance. Is that correct?

A: Yes. You retain your creative spirit regardless of the physical presence of canvas, paint, or printed page. And the vision that one man was privileged to experience and have the physical talent to describe on canvas has already been imprinted on your minds.

Q: Rayson, while you were talking about work I couldn't help but think that Jesus used the illustration of servants more than He used any other illustration. I presume there was a reason for this.

A: Yes, yet indeed He Himself acted as servant on many occasions. What other word than "servant" would you use for the one whose life is spent in service?

Q: He was "the suffering servant" that was predicted in the Old Testament.

A: Yes, indeed, and those who would follow Him also.

Q: I think I understand the nature of the ascension plan, that Vince Ventola and my mother and others who have survived would not be aware any longer of loss or fear. So Vinny would not suffer the loss of his created work, nor would my mother be aware of things that were hers that were treasured that no longer exist in the material form, because they would be involved in spiritual activities. Is that correct?

A: Yes, yes that is true. They gave freely and with love and with no expectation of any continuing attachment to those physical items. And further, to use an analogy that I believe you will understand, those are remnants of the womb to them in their present states. What think you of your placenta?

S: It was thrown away and discarded after it had served its purpose.

S2: I just want to say that I'm experiencing what you speak of with work. I'm an addict, and like it quite well. I'm working at this in art. Thank you.

R: You are welcome. It is most pleasurable to feel the bright light of Father's love with your effort. Is it not?

S: It's wonderful.

R: And unlike physical addiction there is no development of tolerance or waning of the effort, is there?

S: No. You want to do it more. (Yes.) And it is hard.

R: Yes. Do you not notice however that others are drawn to you? S: Yes. And I look forward to that like my friend (S).

R: Good is so much more attractive to animal mind than is bad that it takes only a very small bit of it to light the darkness and lead the way. Do not be discouraged by the seeming dearth of others who share your philosophy. Each one is a pinpoint of light, and the cumulative effect of the pinpoints is powerful and impressive, indeed. At a higher level of being, the pinpoints are easily perceived even from great distance, and this helps us to assist you when you call for help.

Work as it relates to worship

How the wisdom coding system works.

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Heightened curiosity is yet another element of the subtle change in your mind-thought that occurs when you take a spiritual step forward in your own personal development. The Urantia Book describes the time of

Light and Life as a period during which very little work would be done with much leisure remaining.

Understand, my friends, that at the time the Urantia Book information was handed down and transcribed, there were many difficult decisions to be made regarding syntax and other linguistic details. For the animal mind outworking of intellect is fastidious in its highest development when linguistic considerations arise.

That is to say, the masters who oversaw the project wished to have as little ambiguity as possible in the language used in the body of the papers themselves. And yet it was understood that these papers would stand for many generations as reference material, and language does indeed change through time. So the decision was taken to use the language that was the most formal for the very time period during which the book was indicted, because formal usage is less susceptible to change, particularly frivolous idiomatic change, than is casual usage. And so when the matter of work was discussed, the linguistic value assigned to the word “work” was that of the earlier period of that century of your time. That is, labor of the body, primarily physical with relatively little spiritual content, somewhat more intellectual content, what you presently would call toil. And it is indeed true that at the time of Light and Life relatively little time in the life of a given mortal individual will be spent in toil, physical labor.

Again, the word “leisure”, at the time of the indictment of the papers, included those activities in which energy is expended toward spiritual growth. And thus the leisure time of Light and Life, using that linguistic value of the word leisure will be worship.

Who can ever truly grasp the full meaning of worship, but Father Himself? Even those who have journeyed to Paradise state that in some ways their knowledge of worship is less than they ever thought. And it is at that point, of course, that one fully grasps the necessity for an eternity of time to learn to worship Father properly.

At your stage of development, my friends, worship is at its beginning. You are taking the first cautious steps of the baby from the crawling posture to the upright in terms of your worship activities, moving from the animal considerations of self, the intellectual considerations of ego, to the spiritual considerations of the cosmos. This is indeed hard work, as all of you know, and yet so critical. And you must walk before you can run.

So too must your spiritual growth stumble and fall and falter in the basic concepts of right and wrong before you will be able to walk with confidence toward your destinies. This is hard work, very hard work, and it does not end with this life. You might say that to extend our analogy, you barely learn to walk spiritually by the end of a full term of human life. You learn to run while on the mansion worlds if you work very, very hard and spend many thousands of years in intense effort. And the delightful part is yet beyond that where you learn to fly, steps beyond. And all of this work, my dear friends, is worship: the doing of the will of Father, moving through the darkness, the uncertainty of imperfect creation, groping, despairing, crying out.

This is what Jesus came to your beloved planet to experience for Himself. Can you imagine how it must have been for Him to descend from a state of physical existence that is not even imaginable to you, far beyond light, continuous communication with Paradise, to descend from that down to the level of a helpless babe of imperfect creation? Humbling indeed, and much, much hard work for Him, as it is for you.

As you become more skilled at the craft of worship, and progress from crawling to walking to running and beyond, you will be intensely gratified. The sense of wonder that one experiences with the increasing pace of growth that attends spirit striving, spirit work, and spirit growth, is far beyond any pleasurable sensation imaginable to an animal.

Some have mused about mating activity in the animal state, and its possible correlate at existences beyond the earthbound level. Do you not see that the intense - to you - pleasure that you receive from your mating instinct and its gratification is quite small in comparison to the true joy of spirit experience?

You may say, "But how can I call such work with such reward anything but 'play' or 'leisure'? Why work?" Because, my friends, it is more consuming of effort than anything else you have ever experienced or shall ever experience. The reward of joy, of peace, of wisdom, you might liken to those instincts which have been planted in you as an animal descendant. Your instincts on this planet, to eat, to sleep, to reproduce, not only work for your survival, but also enable you to experience pleasure, do they not?

So too it is with the worship urge. Hard, hard, work it is to walk toward Father, intense hard work. And yet once you have firmly committed yourself on this road without question, without doubt, that spirit instinct to work and worship and grow toward Paradise will become stronger and stronger, and its gratification will yield the spirit correlate of what you call pleasure.

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S: I would like to hear you comment for just a few moments on the application of mental effort to a problem, whether or not that is work, and whether those who don't do manual labor but who work with ideas and correspondence and things of that nature are actually working. I know the answer's yes, but I would like to hear you explain what it is about this that has now encroached upon the definition of work.

R: Yes, certainly. You may recall that the mindal components of animal brain function are dual on this planet, the physical out-workings and the intellectual out-workings, and as this planet and its cultures evolve, work which is done and the definition of work will evolve also. The most rudimentary form of work which occurs in the most primitive of human cultures encompasses those efforts which are required to barely survive, which, of course, is food gathering, protection of the young, procreation and mating, and shelter from elements and other threatening environmental factors. The next step involves the development of tools and other technological adjuncts through the first use of intellect. But at this stage still work is primarily physical.

As the culture evolves there is more and more of intellectual work and less and less of physical work. And then in a normal planet of imperfect creation there will be that wonderful time at which the first of the spirit work begins to show on a cultural level. On this planet - because of interference with the plan - the period of time that has elapsed since that first bit of spirit work in the life of the average Earth mortal showed and now has been so long. And the advancement has been so small by the accepted standards of the universes.

Nonetheless that fragment of spirit work is there, but it is quite small now. During this last century of your time, the proportion of intellectual work to physical work has widened greatly for many, many persons in your culture and, indeed, over the planet at large. And just recently we have been most gratified to see a definite increase in the proportion of spiritual work undertaken by the great mass of Earth mortals.

This may seem like a long-winded answer to your question, but the short answer is that yes, of course, intellectual effort is very much work. As time passes on your planet, in future times, physical work will become more or less extinct, and the notion of toil will be applied increasingly to intellectual effort, and the notion of leisure to pure spirit development. But there will come the day that there will be widespread realization that spiritual effort is indeed work.

S: The Master, when He was here, had a group of apostles who did what we would call work and there were time - at least once a week, maybe twice a week - when they ceased work and enjoyed leisure. I would expect that even during their leisure they worked at least a little, but I would like a comment on the relationship between work and leisure.

R: Well, at the time that the Urantia Book was indited, the formal understanding of the word "work" included mainly physical toil, but also an element of the intellectual toil to which you alluded just now, and the syntax use of the word "leisure" included rest activities such as sleep, nourishment activities such as eating, and worship activities, so leisure did not primarily refer to worship. But worship was considered to be leisure, definitely.

S: How about play, or - as the apostles went - fishing?

R: It is during what you call "play" that very much spiritual work is accomplished. That is why the reversion directors play such an important role in later activities in your existences. In a sense you could say that they guide your play. But, my friends, do you not see that worship is indeed play?

S: I hadn't thought of it that way.

R: What you call fun now is just a glimmer of what you will feel about worship increasingly as you progress in your spiritual growth. Do you think that Father in Paradise does not enjoy Himself?

S: I certainly hope He does. I think it's rather interesting that the word "recreation" means recreation.

R: But re-creation of what?

S: Yes, re-creation of energies to work is what I would think. Re-creation, a new beginning.

R: And perhaps re-creation of the perfect from the imperfect. Have you not had at least one acquaintance in your life whom you enjoyed because they were so playful? (Yes, yes.) Then imagine how Jesus must have been perceived. Think of children shortly after the arrival of the Thought Adjuster. Is there not a marked increase in the desire to play?

S: I hadn't observed it, but now that you called it to my attention I know that it exists.

R: To work at play, rather than passively allowing play to occur - if you view it in those terms - you may begin to remember in your life and the lives of your progeny. And yet so many allow the playful spirit to drain away, and be replaced by rage, fear, greed and pride. The extirpation of those qualities from your mindal activity will create space in a recreational way for the playful spirit of worship to enter. And you will leap forward in your worship skills when you undertake that

housecleaning within.

Q: I'd like to know what you do personally for recreation.

A: At my stage of education, I guess you would call it; I spend a proportion of my time under tutelage of experienced reversion directors. Their company is most refreshing and the reversion directors with whom I work are most gracious in guiding me in my play. We have a lot of what you would call “fun” together. And it is, for this time in my existence, very much like the play of a human child, in the sense that I expend large quantities of energy in a seemingly effortless fashion. I always leave these encounters feeling replenished. Additionally, I am assigned periods of time for contemplation, meditation, visitation to what for my level you might consider to be a garden, a place of peace. You may recall that Jesus engaged in such activity while on your planet. These periods of time are also part of my education and like all my activities are closely monitored and recorded so that I shall not ascend to the next administrative level until I have accomplished all of those growth tasks which are appropriate for this phase of my being.

Q: You say that you are under the tutelage of reversion directors. They are teaching you the most enjoyable ways to relax and refresh yourself?

A: I would say that they are teaching me the most efficient ways to improve my worship skills and by improving my efficiency in that manner, I achieve what you call “relaxation”.

Work as it relates to beauty

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You all understand, to some extent, what the concept of work means in the spiritual sense, and you understand that it is separate from play, recreation, and yet shares some qualities with worship, prayer.

You may be asking yourselves now “How can work and beauty possibly have anything in common?” Is not beauty that which, when passively beheld, brings forth a joyous and loving response in the one whose senses are thus stimulated? How can this be in any way related to work with its implied ordeal? How can any ordeal, after all, be beautiful?

You are correct in your perception that work - not only in your present state but all the way to Paradise and beyond - is difficult, challenging, sometimes disappointing, and sometimes painful. And yet, you all do truly know that it is Father's will for us to work, as even He does. Therefore to work is to follow Father's plan and His will for us and for all of His creatures of higher mind.

You may recall that all things of Father's creation are by definition beautiful, and indeed all qualities of Father's are beautiful, and all acts which are in harmony with the will of Father are beautiful. So you see, my friends, when you work at that task which you may despise and curse and sweat and struggle - as difficult as it may be to believe - you are engaging in a thing of beauty.

Father smiles on he who works without let up, with little complaint, even with joy in his heart. Father is pleased when the one who is reluctant makes a valiant effort and toils nonetheless. And it is indeed true that the angels rejoice when you successfully complete a piece of work over which you have striven mightily.

My friends, as you go forth and become teachers in the future, it will be a very effective, thought-provoking and spirit lead act for you to discuss the merits of work and the beautiful aspect of work with your fellow mortals. You will find that this often will be most difficult and challenging for you.

Indeed, it will be hard work. But it is most important as we untie the snarled knots wrought by Lucifer and Caligastia and their followers who promised life everlasting without pain or difficulty, and appealed to the animal mind which seeks always to avoid discomfort. If you can undo this by expressing - in your own individual and unique way - the beauty in work, so that your fellows have a chance to understand, you will be doing much to further the cause of this mission and others to come. Yes, there is much beauty in work.

Is there work without beauty? Is there beauty without work? I would say, at this stage in your universe existence, the answer to both questions is probably no. You may ask, "But what of the wonders of God's creation that I may be privileged to glimpse with relatively little effort?" That beauty did not come about without effort being expended, did it? No, much energy was used in the creation of that beauty. If you would create beauty yourself, you must toil mightily.

To view beauty may indeed afford pleasure, but pleasure at perceiving beauty is not the same as beauty

itself, and this, too, is a place where much confusion arises on this planet regarding the subject of beauty. Can beauty be possessed? Can you acquire it at the market place? Can you own it, enslave it, contain it in a box, and ship it abroad? In the spiritual sense, no. What you understand materially as beauty is a quite different thing than the beauty as expressed by God, created by God, and created by God's co-creators in their spiritual toil. And yet you all do know beauty when you see it, do you not?

It has been said that in the presence of great beauty the mind is still and brought to peace, and all of us who journey Paradise-ward are reminded of that, in a broader sense, when discussing how it will be to

stand in the presence of God. You can sample a very tiny fragment of this when you behold God's magnificent creations - what you call natural beauty in your culture - the beauty of a bright spirit in another whom you behold, and that feeling of accomplishment, that good feeling that you achieve when you have done a job well, is also part of that feeling. Think about that, and do you not agree that it is a sense of peace within?

And yet, there have been those in your planet's past who asserted that what we have just discussed does

not exist, and there are many on this planet even today who still believe that. You can see how that has affected your planet, can you not?

Question: I remembered while you were talking that probably the most used concept in Jesus' parables was that of master and servant, with the servant being extolled for faithful service. I

believe that He asks each of us to be first servants and then sons and daughters of our Father. This, of course, requires work on our part. I've heard it said that there is no such thing as a menial task, there are only menial people. I believe the first half of that, I'm not sure about the second half. I wonder if you would comment on what I just said?

A: Yes, that is a most thoughtful question, and I thank you. In the ideal circumstance on a planet of imperfect creation, there will evolve family units which eventually will be patriarchal in nature and on a very small scale will imitate the grand structure of the cosmos. It is staggering perhaps to consider this, and yet it certainly is a most sensible model. In the family model of which I speak there is a strong, loving, creative, honest, giving, loyal, good father at the head. And his partner is a loving, loyal, obedient, kind, nurturing, benevolent mother. The children are obedient, and, as their parents, hard-working, honest, eager to learn, service-driven, as are their parents, good. You may recall that Jesus the man frequently compared mortal man to a child, often spoke of children did he not? (S: Yes)

You are the children in God's family, all of you who reside on planets of imperfect creation, even as you serve as parents in your own families to your own children. How would you want your child to be? You would like your child to be good, and yet to work within his capacity toward perfection and independence. And the best way to ensure that his will happen is to yourself be a good child to your heavenly Father. Your child will naturally imitate your example.

As far as your second question regarding menial service and menial people, you correctly understand that God does not regard any of His children as menial. He is not even disappointed as a human father might be when time-related performance appears to be deficient. His love shines forth everlasting, without pause, and the good child of God knows when he has acted well and in accord with His Father's wishes because it is inherent in the cosmos that by behaving in accord with Father's wishes, you draw closer to Father. And that is a more rewarding experience than any other could possibly be. So the one that may be called, in human terms, a "menial person" might, in spiritual terms, be seen as one who is somewhat less close to God.

Work as it relates to worship and service

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My dear friends, from the moment that you are conceived, and forever after, you are engaged in work activity involving expenditure of effort, struggle, meeting challenges again and again. Ever will there be more, and, yes, failure - but also success - for such is the course of existence for those of us created imperfect. It is part of our endowment, our gift from Father, to be imperfect, this sometimes causes pain and regret in us. That is the beginning of the dislike for work that occurs in mortal creatures of imperfect creation.

It is this that Lucifer and Caligastia seized upon and so skilfully used as a potent force in their rebellion, emphasizing to imperfect mortals that pain and struggle were truly not necessary, because, after all, Father could easily make all things possible and perfect. This led to much anger and resentment on this and other planets, and indeed in the mansion worlds there was also great turmoil related to this issue. It will take you many eons, much study, and experiential growth before you begin to understand fully Father's true wisdom in creating imperfection.

For now it must be an article of faith for you to accept this as a benefit of Father's love, a true asset. Now, my friends, the visceral response that all of you experience at the thought of painful and arduous work is an animal thing which most unfortunately has been much magnified through the devious activities of the rebels, and you will not be rid of this for the remainder of your mortal life on this world, I am sorry to say. However, I will attempt to help you to understand some of Father's motives and reasons for endowing you with work, which may well help you to accept the discomfort that you have when faced with work and modify your own inner attitudes and those of others by your example.

You may recall that Jesus declared that He was here to do His Father's work. In fact, the word "work" was one used very much by Jesus during His time here, and this was no accident, for an important part of His time here was the work of restoring worship and diverting some of the more heinous results of the rebellion. In this He succeeded through mighty effort, and even today you can feel it within yourselves, can you not? Do you not sense that joy of worship of Father within you?

Before this planet embarks upon the final stage toward the emergence of Light and Life, you mortals will have the same sense of joy regarding work that you now - some of you, the more advanced - experience as a part of your worship activities.

I know it is difficult to imagine at this stage, but the way that this will come about will be through, initially, faith-motivated acceptance of work as a worship activity and later, when spiritual evolution has moved forward there will be more Thought Adjuster connectedness added to faith to reinforce each individual's knowledge of work as worship.

My friends, all of Father's qualities are united. They are not discreet entities. You cannot separate love from goodness or from truth or from beauty or worship or service, just as you do not see discrete rays of the sun. Whenever your actions are in any way in accord with Father's will, they are in all ways in accord with His will. So as you go forth in your work activities, whatever they may be, please understand that you are worshiping Father in your toil and effort and struggle. You are learning skills that you will use for the whole of your existence in the cosmos, for you will be working forever, and it will come to be the most exciting, joyous and loving activity imaginable for you at some point in your universe career.

It may seem inconceivable to you, but there will be a time when recreation will be almost an annoyance to you because you will be anxious to get back to your work. I regret to say that I myself have not yet reached that point.

So, my friends, again it comes down to faith, does it not? For now you must accept on faith that work is a God-directed activity and is blessed and contributes mightily to your own personal growth and contributes mightily to the forward movement of the spirituality of this planet.

Teach your children to love work. Be an example to your friends and neighbors of one who loves work. You may complain, but they know by watching that you are working, and you must therefore embrace your work activities, and when they see you thrive, the inescapable conclusion will be that it is a result of not only work but of your loving and worshipful attitude regarding your work. And this will be a strong motivator to your neighbors to imitate you in this way. So you will be doing Father's work, you see, like Jesus, a co-creator with Father. And what could be better than that?

R = Rayson the teacher, S = Students.

Question: I have heard the proverb, "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." Would you care to discuss work as it pertains to the mind?

Answer: Yes, certainly. When you work, there is no part of you that is idle, not your body, nor your mind, nor your spirit. And your Thought Adjuster is present supervising and available for guidance,

as are your Seraphim and other assistants. However, when one is idle, the opposite may occur, particularly if lack of work activity persists for a long period. Why should the Thought Adjuster continue to make efforts when there is no reciprocity on the part of the mortal, no effort? Why should the seraphim continue to suggest and advise when the ears are deaf and the eyes are unseeing?

The idle one walks away from all that Father has constructed in the way of assistance, and in this condition it is unfortunately easy to turn fully away from Father, or as pagans might say, toward the devil. The one who is not engaged in work with idle mind, body, and spirit may choose to become involved in non-worship activities, non-work activities, that is iniquity. That is the meaning of your proverb.

Question: What about those people who for whatever reasons aren't able to work? I'm thinking of people incapacitated, or those who have reached a stage in life and are very elderly, that for whatever reason now no longer seem to be able to work. It made me think about concepts that would enable them to do more. We seem to have a society that wants to get people out of work when they get older. It's real painful.

Answer: Have you not noticed how often material death follows?

S: Yes. I want to tell you of my own personal experience. My father worked until he was 82, and I think it was one of the key factors of his longevity, plus his excitement and thrill. Everything you said about what work provides, my father benefited from by continuing to work. He never ceased to work until he was forced to by a fatal disease. I can see the transformation constantly in his life, which has been a real example to me, and I guess maybe an example for all of us. So I really appreciate what you've been saying today.

R: Yes. Thank you.

Question: Rayson, this has been a particularly inspiring lesson for me because it explains why, when one retires from one activity of work, there is this urging to seek out something else. Would the creative activity of making gifts for people, of creating things, writing poetry, music, and handcrafts be classified as a work activity, even though it's so pleasant to engage in?

Answer: Yes, if the motivation is God-directed. Yes, of course.

Question: In other words, if one is using the time as dedicated to creativity because one feels the need to be doing something as a part of God's plan, wouldn't that be what you're leading to there?

Answer: Yes, if your activities involve carrying out God's will and have the qualities of goodness and truth and beauty and love, of course, that is worshipful work and very acceptable.

Question: OK, because when you retire from one thing there's a sense of "I ought to be doing something else." And not just the routine survival things, but something that contributes something. I have this other question about another phase of the lesson. You mentioned that one of the qualities of Father was worship, and I assume with regard to Father that is the characteristic of Him that inspires worship in others. Does Father worship anything or any being? Or is it because of His worshipful quality that that's a characteristic of Him?

Answer: Father worships everything that exists in the cosmos. Do you not see the care with which He has created everything that is?

S: Yes, I just never thought of that as being worship, but of love and caring. I can see that as a characteristic of worship. Thank you, that clears it up.

R: Father is always and ever a partner with you, if you care to join Him and share His qualities. He always, always extends His hand to you. You have only to reach up and grasp His.

S: That's a quality that's very hard to transmit to a non-believer. We have a friend at our church who is very much in need of that sort of belief but seems very resistant to faith. My prayer is that we be given every assistance to help her get past that stage and know how loving and caring Father is.

R: Is she a loving person?

S: I'm afraid not. I'm afraid that somewhere in her life she had a deprivation of love, so it's an, experience she's not altogether familiar with.

R: Perhaps she has merely made a conscious choice to take the other path, and in this case it may be non-productive for you to pursue her. She is capable of making her own decisions?

S: Oh, yes. They may not be very wise sometimes, but she's very able. It seems she clings to the negative, and we would like to help her get beyond that.

R: You cannot help her to make her own free will decisions.

S: Just love her and hope that with that experience she can eventually turn around?

R: Protect yourself.

S: Yes, I've noticed the need for that, I'm sorry to say.

R: Well, there need not be regret at the awareness of the danger that those who choose iniquitous paths pose to yourself. At this stage in your world's development it is important that you understand the need to guard against those who have chosen evil ways, for they can harm you very much. Some will harm you in chipping away at your faith, if you allow it. Others will harm you by inflicting pain on your person, either physically or financially or emotionally. Some may even kill you, so please be aware that there is danger.

S: I am not aware that she has deliberately chosen iniquity. I just don't feel a threat from her in that form. I feel more that she's just floating, just not ready to choose anything.

R: It is something for you to consider that a spiritual matter will not be swayed by material considerations. Surely you know of those who have experienced, or even presently experience, material deprivation and mistreatment and yet gladly and lovingly choose to follow Father's path. And the opposite also, that is, those who have been fortunate and appear to have everything that money can buy, so to speak, who yet dwell in misery, rage, pride. You could never give them anything that would cause them to turn toward Father. Of course, there are all the variations. But do not make the error of believing that there is anything you can give such a person in the material sense that will cause them to alter their behavior. Your best hope in such a situation is to carry yourself with dignity and be a living example.

Question: On the definition of work, there are many forms of work, obviously, the one that we get paid for; is that the one you're speaking about mostly? Or is it just work in general, like the work we spend working in our garden, or helping a friend at their house? What is it that you're particularly speaking of?

Answer: Expenditure of effort with the goal of productivity in mind. Actually, most of the work that you perform is unpaid in the sense of wages. Think about the times you have had to deal with grief in friends or family. That was work, was it not? (S: Yes) Or your family chores, other family chores?

Question: I ask this because I find I have so much more joy in the physical work - whether it's growing or helping someone else - and I am, at this point in my life, struggling with the work I do to make a living, in terms of just how empty it is and how it's just not what I want to be doing. And I feel quite stuck as to how to get out and change it.

I feel like Father's given me many, many, many gifts, and I realize that we can touch people by way of our daily work. I think perhaps that's what I'm doing in this job, but I can relate very much to when you say that there's work that's joyous and there would be such different work for me to do that would not be like work. I know so many lead lives of quiet desperation because they're doing things they just don't want to be doing, and I truly believe that people should be joyous in the work that they do, whether it's to make a living or whatever. And I'm lost right now on that subject because I'm not happy where I'm earning my living. I'm much more happy, whether it's

cutting down a tree or helping somebody rebuild their house, or doing physical labor - the things I can see, fruits from my labor. Does that make sense?

R: I believe I understand what you are saying, however, desperation, to which you refer, is that element that I alluded to in our lesson which Lucifer and Caligastia so expertly magnified in the planets of rebellion. It is entirely possible that if what you refer to as your pleasure activities were incorporated into your present wage paying job, you would dislike them as well. The joy of work is something that you must develop on your own. It is your own inner attitude toward the activities that will result in joy, not the opposite.

S: Yes, I've had that self calm as well. But what do you do when you're just in a place that's reeking negativity? I know I choose my own way. That's what I'm struggling with right now, is trying to get myself out of a situation where I just think I've reached the end of my rope.

R: What do you think Jesus would do in your situation? (S: I don't know.) Can you imagine? Well, I imagine He would try to find the joy in it.

R: How would He do that? (S: I don't know.) What do you think would be the first step? My dear friend, you may wish to seek, earnestly seek, for goodness in your work. There is no thing on this world that is all bad, nor any that is all good. There must be some goodness there. I advise that you look for that goodness and make it your focus and your jumping off point to help build a joyous attitude. If you do that, you may indeed find that another opportunity which will be less onerous to you will present.

Work and conviction of truth

How the wisdom coding system works.

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I shall remind you of the great, great importance of work in your life now and for a great time after you pass from this material form. The work that you do is part of your vital contribution in the way of transmitting Father's qualities to your fellow beings and participating as a co-creator with Father. If your work is good, if it is carried out in a sincere fashion with the object of service to Father, then it must be truthful and honest. It cannot be otherwise. Additionally, such God-directed work will help to reveal further truth, by which I mean showing you and your fellow beings that which is of God in contrast to that which is of man.

Part of what you do as a follower of Jesus, as a believer of Father, is to strive as you go about your business to always find the higher meanings in that which you observe by means of your senses. It is as if you are a scientist exploring an ancient ruined city, sifting through the sands, searching for original artefacts, remnants of buildings, structure of a culture, carefully picking away with your brushes and brooms, your metal tools, scrapers and forceps. As you have been progressing with your spiritual growth, you have been learning to use the spiritual tools of discernment which assist you in determining that which is Father's will and distinguishing it from that which is not Father's will.

Each of you here today makes a living in a different fashion. You all have your talents, your skills, your training, and there surely are differences in the manner in which you carry out your work. And yet, for each of you, as for every being on this planet, there is much value not only in working in a sincere, committed, good and faithful fashion, but there is also a great potential for influencing your fellows on this planet as Jesus influenced His fellows.

Even now those of you who are not living at the same time period as Jesus are very much aware of His high qualities as a worker. He was much admired and much imitated as a worker in His fairness, His consideration, His honesty, His continual attempt to always produce a work of the highest quality, His willingness to admit and correct mistakes, and His striving to improve His own skills. Regardless of what your job may be as a worker, you can do all these things, too.

In the eyes of Father there is no menial labor, nor is there any exalted work in the sense of how a material being earns his livelihood. Rather, one's work is judged according to those qualities which demonstrate a commitment to service to Father. Ask yourself, "Does my work measure up? How can I improve my work?"

Remember that you are always being observed by your fellows, by the unseen beings who move among you, and, of course, by Father. This should not cause you to be fearful, but I tell you this so that you will be aware that your activities are important and should be carried out to the best of your ability. Now you all know that imperfection is your endowment and perfection is a long way off. Do not be harsh with yourself because your work is not perfect. And be merciful with your co-workers who are not perfect either. In yourself and in others search for the good qualities, the God directed qualities. Seek to amplify those, and you will be much gratified in the outcome, and much truth will be found.

There are many on this world today who do not wish to work because of misunderstanding the value of work. As you go forth, and by your personal example, demonstrate the righteousness of work and the many benefits to be gained by sincere hard work; you will do much to reverse this trend which gained its major impetus from the rebellion.

R = Rayson the teacher, S = Students.

S: You mentioned the fact that we are co-creators with divinity, with God. Is there any way that we can be co-creators other than by work?

R: At this stage, no. Later there will be other ways, but there will always be much hard work for you to do in your role as a co-creator. Of course, faith is an essential ingredient, as you know, but faith alone, without work, will gain you little in your material life.

S: I think Paul said faith without works is dead.

R: That is rather extreme, but it does have an element of truth.

S: It's funny; I had a different interpretation of work and co-creation. I was thinking of the work of parenting and what goes into the creation of the assistance of the development of human beings of talent as being work, rather than just a job as work.

R: That is a vitally important job, of course, and one that you do well, however this issue of the work that you do to earn your livelihood is also very important at this stage in planetary development. Yes, there are many who wish not to do the work of parenting, as well as avoiding the work of earning a livelihood. In fact, the two often go hand in hand, and it is common to see

the good worker for wages also function well as a parent and family member and vice versa. However, co-creation with Father, which is a special part of what you as an imperfect being are allowed to participate in during your universe career, goes far beyond procreative aspects of your life and includes the influence that you have on fellow beings through your appropriate responses to your indwelling Adjuster's promptings. And, additionally, on a planet in rebellion such as yours, you can greatly help Father through your service directed activities in all aspects of your life, help to undo the lingering and deleterious remnants of Lucifer's doctrine as they continue to abound on this planet.

S: I seem to understand from the combination of all your lessons on work that it's not the job we choose to do, but that in whatever we do, we do it the very best we can, develop the best skills we can, and try to have a happy attitude while doing it, even though it may not be the job we'd most like to be doing. Is that what we're striving for?

R: Yes, you have stated it very well. Thank you.

S: What about choice of jobs? Does it really not matter what you do, or is there some responsibility for doing a job that you know is helping, or rather not hurting, the rest of mankind to the best of your ability to judge that?

R: Could you restate the question?

S: Yes, I'm trying to get at - does it make a difference what you do? Let's say you have a choice of doing one job or another, is it more valuable, or is there a benefit to choosing one that you believe is more helpful to mankind in some way? Or maybe another way of stating it would be if somebody worked very hard dealing drugs, does that constitute good work?

R: That is a very good question. The one who participates in activities which are harmful to fellow beings, of course, is knowingly choosing to go against Father's will. I do not think anyone here would disagree that Father would not have drugs disseminated to children or others who are weak and vulnerable. However, even the one who chooses to earn a living in an evil way can carry out evil duties paradoxical as it may seem in a fashion which is a model of sincerity and honesty. But you probably would have to look very hard to find such a person.

My understanding is that drug dealers do not hesitate to kill others for non-payment or to sell their product to persons who will surely die soon. Even if this is done in a diligent fashion, how can it be good? And yet there are always exceptions, are there not?

S: Somewhat related to the previous question, in terms of value of the work that we do, no one position is more elevated than another, and there's really no such thing as menial work. But what, if any, responsibility do we have to apply our God given talents, to strive to find work that would utilize those qualities, that would best further the Father's will? We are all different. For an

example, someone has a musical talent which, if developed, might be able to a greater degree disseminate truth, but instead they deny that talent and work as a dishwasher in a restaurant. Is there any moral or ethical responsibility - well, can you just comment on that please?

R: I can share with you a model that has been developed on other planets of imperfect creation which has lead to good outcomes. In this model, childhood is a time of learning and acquiring skills as well as participation in family life and the beginnings of spiritual teaching, However, once the child has achieved reproductive capability and the capability of self support through one's own work, this young adult is compelled to leave the family unit and live alone supporting himself at whatever trade he has chosen. Now in this model there are some who perform manual labor, such as you have alluded to, who find enough leisure time to develop other skills which they later use to support themselves financially. However, there is no allowance in this model for a prolonged period of idleness in the adult part of life, so that your budding musician who is capable of work but prefers to spend time acquiring another skill, would not be allowed to remain idle for a prolonged period, of say, more than six months while being supported by another adult.

Surely you know of persons who have spent many, many years searching for the ideal profession only to

look back late in life upon a career of idleness having been supported by others. Is that not true?

S: Yes, that is true. I'm talking about a person who is self sufficient financially but denies a talent that they have. I call it a God given talent because some people do have a propensity for, for example the music that others just don't have. Is there anything morally or ethically wrong with denying, never tending to a talent that you have?

R: No, not at all, the talent will never leave you. You will take it forward into your next life.

S: Ah, interesting. Thank you for that.

R: You have potentially all of eternity to develop yourself.

S: Well, that's a relief. The days are too short, that's for sure. But do you have an obligation to try to develop those talents while here?

R: Your obligation is to work while you are here, and to have faith in God.

S: But is not a talent something within, and is not exercising that talent in some way achieving the will of God by expressing it?

R: That is an argument which is presented by those who highly value service to the self rather than service to God. It is very easy to convince yourself that gratifying animal urges - including what you would call the service of the ego - is God directed and serves the cosmos, but do you

really believe that that is the case?

S: Well, the Urantia Book says that one person through music can change the world. If this person has a talent for music but through the vicissitudes of life, and the different turns, and being insensitive, and not wanting - for whatever reason - to express his talent, is that not doing something very wrong?

R: Do you recall the life of Jesus? Remember that He was a gifted musician. Did He lay down His carpenter's trade to develop His skills as a harpist?

S2: I have a different view. I am concerned that there are a great many social ills on this planet, and there are vast numbers of people who have gifts and talents that they are unable to develop because of poverty, racism, oppression of women, etc. I would hate to think that there would be an idea developing that somehow those people are immoral and unethical because they're not developing their God given talents. I think it is important to know that there are people who want to work and can't, or who are caught in a system where work is punishment throughout the planet. I don't know, I guess I just needed to say that for me. Do you have comments on this?

S: I would say the women in the rape camps in Serbia. Women, single parents, in poverty stricken communities in this country, stuck on welfare, who do the work of their immediate environment but don't have the privilege to sit back and postulate on spiritual values and their ethical responsibility to cultivate a talent, because they're busy trying to find food for their children.

R: But do you not see that by doing what you say and performing as loving and caring parents they are very much working?

S: Yes, I do.

R: And further that such work is highly spiritual. There is much sacrifice of the self in such a pursuit.

S: Yes. I think some people tend to view them as not doing spiritual work. It's important to see that because people are caught in poverty does not mean that they are valueless.

R: No, certainly not, but let me ask you a further question. What do you say if such a parent, a woman, allows herself to become impregnated under these circumstances?

S: I think that the complexity of the social problems in this country contribute to a lot of those factors, and I don't have an answer, do you?

R: I offer to you that the family with a father and a mother in attendance is a very strong and durable structure to offer a child. It is understood that there are circumstances which occur despite careful planning which do not follow this model, however, in a culture where procreation is easily preventable I question the responsibility of bringing forth more children.

S: Would you say that mortals are far more critical of other mortals for not developing all of their talents than Father or Michael (Jesus)?

R: Yes, of course this criticism is culturally dependent. There have been cultures on this planet in which such an idea was far less developed than is the case in your culture. Your culture has been relatively affluent, and there has been, for some, an abundance of leisure time which has afforded ample, sometimes too much, opportunity for reflection on the self and real or imagined talent development.

It is important to ask yourself in whatever you do, whether you are impoverished or affluent, are my actions in accord with the will of God? if you can sincerely answer yes, then those activities, the work of your life, are appropriate and are God directed, and Father would have no complaint.

Remember, my friends, that as uncomfortable as adversity is for you, it is a vitally important part of your personal growth, and does much to aid you in your spiritual progress. The ones who suffer through enslavement, poverty, physical handicap are able to benefit much, if they will heed the Adjuster's promptings. Father loves this effort far more than the poem or a song which is written as a tribute. Do you see this?

S: Yes. What about play? Is play a waste of time or is it something to balance the other parts of work of life?

R: Play is very important, however as we discussed in a previous lesson, play may not be what you understand it to be. In your play, as in your work, it is best for you to keep in mind the will of Father. Do you believe that a play activity which involves the killing of animals is in accord with Father's will?

S: Does that include fishing?

S2: My thought exactly.

S: I mean, Jesus was a fisherman.

R: But He did not mount trophies.

S: If we eat it, it's OK.

S2: Then it's not play, if you're fishing for food.

R: That is work.

S: Feels like play.

S2: Well, it does, and it's incidental because then maybe you put the beef in the freezer and eat the trout that you caught that day.

R: You enjoy your work.

S: OK, I guess we're really used to thinking of work in a very regimented kind of way, but you're speaking of work in a broader sense then?

R: Yes, work is a worship activity which is a difficult concept to grasp while in the material state. However, it is true that this is the case, and understanding this may make it easier for you to trudge along in your toil with a loving attitude and far reaching goals in mind.

S: I personally find your lessons transforming to myself. I haven't heard all the lessons, but of what I've picked up already it's changed my attitude tremendously, and I want to thank you for that and for your patience in continuing to pursue the subject for us.

R: You are most welcome. My dear friends, much effort is being put into your education, and you will in future go forth and work hard to educate others. The beauty of work is that it always follows this pattern. Think to yourselves of all the jobs that you have ever known of. Have they not always led to further work? This is how the universes were created, and this is how in future the outer universes will be settled. When you are permitted to make your final decision for or against survival, you will be presented with, among other things, the prospect of eternal work. And there have been some, fortunately very few - who have found this to be so distasteful that they have elected non-survival. Do not hate your work. Embrace it. See it as a blessed activity. Let it draw you closer to God. Become a shining beacon among your fellows. Move smoothly and lovingly among the masses of mankind leaving the imprint of God in your wake.

Work with respect to love

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We all are capable of recognizing love when we experience it. Some say that those of us created imperfect have a greater enjoyment and awareness of love than the perfectly created beings because our hearts are not always filled with love. Being of animal origin, we are vulnerable to other states that are not in accord with Father's will - states of rage, greed, pride; states in which we seek to harm and destroy others; states in which fear conditions all of our actions - so that in the material state at least that feeling of love, if you allow it to come through, will seem very refreshing, uplifting, freeing, relieving, strengthening, in contrast to states of animal origin.

Have you not noticed in your experiences that you may easily find yourself in an animal state without having much conscious awareness of how you got there? That is a common experience for imperfectly created beings, one of which it is difficult to not feel ashamed. However this part of your imperfection.

I encourage you to work hard to learn how to resist this inclination in yourselves. You will find that it is most difficult to do this, initially. If you achieve any measure of mastery in this regard during your life in the flesh, you have, believe me, far surpassed your peers, many of whom are never truly aware of this capability, but instead attribute the joyful feeling of love which sometimes comes to them to luck, magic, or other happenstance occurrences, never truly realizing that it is their own behavior and work that cause this to come about.

Remember again that Father's love is always coming toward you, but you must reach up and take it in order to fully experience this and other aspects of Father. And this, of course, is where work comes in. Some mortals have said that the work is particularly difficult because things of a spiritual nature are so difficult to perceive, gossamer in quality, elusive in nature. That is indeed how it may seem to a mortal being, however you may be interested to know that there have been some few who have, through diligent effort, been able to attain and maintain a firm grip on at least certain aspects of the spiritual world that is within and without and everywhere around you.

Surely all of you here have noticed a subtle but definite change in your usual sense of being since entering the teaching mission, have you not? (S: Yes) Would any here care to describe that?

S: Real peaceful. It's a change in the matrix from which you make your decisions.

S2: Another one is a heightened awareness, of not only our own awareness of spiritual presence around us, but of the spiritual presence that's in other people, an awareness of their searching, and their Thought Adjuster and other personalities.

S3: I find myself able to step aside from a typical reaction and anticipate how I would normally do something, or react to something, and almost have a time out and recognize how I would normally behave. That wouldn't necessarily be the best way. I catch myself doing things a lot easier now than I did before, more aware and more sensitive.

R: So you find yourself working harder?

S3: Yes, definitely. It's more work in that sense, sure.

S: And more of a desire to apply the Father's will as you perceive it to your reactions and your relationships.

S2: I feel a sense of the spirit of competition that's so nurtured on the animal level being replaced by a spirit of cooperation. I feel very motivated that way, and I think it's a direct result of the lessons and the teaching mission.

S4: And I have difficulty in seeing work as work. It seems to me that it really is self fulfilment rather than work, and it's got to be done.

S3: And concerning the teaching mission, and also my spiritual journey that I'm taking, I don't perceive of that as work. I understand better now that it's been explained in the mission, but I'm just so excited about it and I'm so motivated by it that it just doesn't feel like work to me - in the traditional definition of work.

S5: I think about one time (S) gave a talk about paradigm expansion, and I think that being involved as we have in our mission has completely changed my paradigm reference. I mean now suddenly everything looks entirely different. I still have a base reference point, but it's opened up to accepting all kinds of things that would never have happened had it not been for the lessons.

R: Do you notice that you feel more a part of the universe?

All: Absolutely. Definitely. Yes.

R: And less prone to drift in the wind, so to speak, (S: Yes) be carried about by the gusts of fate, as some of your poets would say. These are all excellent observations and show that you are indeed growing spiritually and reaching toward Father. And you will be pleased to know that two years from now you will look back at this time and realize that you have come very far since today.

S5: Exciting.

R: Yes, it is exciting, and it is a glimpse for you of the wonderful adventure that awaits when you pass from the material form to the morontia form and beyond. There is no harder work than the work of Father. Do you see that?

All: Yes.

R: And as you, my friends, go forward to inspire your fellow beings and become spiritual leaders. You, like our loving Father, will be an example as the hardest worker in the group, just as Jesus worked hard and diligently. Is that agreeable?

S: It is. I get great satisfaction from what we have referred to here as work. Somehow it seems to be a normal thing to me as distinguished from some additional effort.

R: Yes, it is a normal thing once your eyes are open and you are able to see beyond the animal drives.

S: What I'm saying is, it doesn't seem to me to be harder. It seems to be easier to do the work of the Father.

R: Yes, to follow Father's will is always the most efficient way of using your energy, as you would say, the shortest distance between two points.

Question: As I understand it, one definition of love, according to the Urantia Book, is the desire to do good for others. When we respond to that desire in any manner, is it work?

Answer: Yes, spiritual work. You are right. Are there any other comments?

S: You say so many things that inspire me, one in particular I had written down and put stars all around it. Father's love is always coming toward you but you must reach up and take it. The reaching up and taking it, would that fall under the category of work, the effort that it takes? I mean, that seemed to me - your comment seemed a direct connection between work and love.

R: Yes, the reaching up and taking is that work that I have been talking about, and, in this case, it involves loving back. To feel Father's will most deeply involves acting out His will in your behavior and your experiences. And as you become more experienced and work hard in your

journey toward Paradise, you will become more and more adept in your capacity to act in accordance with Father's will.

Question: When I'm practicing the stillness in the evening, I perceive of this outreach as a, maybe an analogy would be, as a muscle and that the more you work your spiritual muscle, the easier it becomes. And I perceive of mustering up all of the love that I can in my heart, and just sending it toward the Father, and then really trying to open myself up for a response from Him. And this reciprocation seems to confirm the idea that it is a muscle that I'm working in that sense. Can you comment on that?

Answer: Yes. Yes it is like the development of a muscle. You are correct in your perception, and in addition to sending love to Father in the fashion to which you refer, there is another perhaps more easily understood way that you can love Father. That is to love your neighbor. Your neighbor is not an abstraction to you but a real living, breathing person. Can you truly love your neighbor when he is noisy, smelly, dishonest, unkind, obtrusive, greedy, fearful. If so, then you have achieved a high level of spirit growth.

This does not mean that you need to bring the creature into your home or draw your savings from the bank and hand it to him. Love has not to do with these material displays. But if you do love your neighbor, you will find that this is the most effective means that you could employ to help him to modify his behavior and be more loving in return. You see, you will be acting as a co-creator with Father that way. To think that Father can love you in all that you are, is that not a marvellous thing? Does not that require the same forbearance and mercy that you would show to your neighbor?

Question: Then is it more an attitude than an actual doing of a thing, since you're saying you don't have to have that neighbor into your house or give them money. Is it more just how we think of them, the kind of mental energy we send their way, the way we - when we do - speak with them? I mean, what do we do to love that neighbor? I think I understand what we don't do.

Answer: Perhaps you could describe to me a neighbor whom you find objectionable, and then I can offer more tangible advice to you.

S: Quite honestly, I barely know my neighbors. I've just moved, but I was simply extending your example. I know, a former situation. I had some neighbors who would have live bands over and play music into the wee hours, and it was very distressing, and it brought out the worst in me. But I never really had a personal encounter. I would always just call the police, but I had very negative feelings about these people and would express them loudly within my own walls but never to them. It certainly interfered with my own spiritual growth in terms of how I was feeling, where my mental energy was at that time. But there was no interaction with those people. I don't know if that example is useful. I guess not.

R: Do you think that having a direct interaction with this neighbor might have led to your developing a more loving attitude and your neighbor, in turn, responding and being more kind and considerate toward you?

S: I think, at the time when these incidences occurred, I wouldn't feel safe doing that. For one thing, I think that they were inebriated, but I suppose I could have tried that in the more likely sober hours of the day. Would it have helped? I don't honestly know. I guess I have somewhat of a pessimistic attitude about that with some people. Maybe that's where I need to stop having those assumptions and give it a try.

R: Of course, a neighbor who is a savage and does not accept the hand of friendship cannot be very responsive to your loving gestures and may actually be dangerous to you. I assume that you eventually moved away and severed the relationship of neighbor with this person. Did you not? (S: That's right, yes).

That was probably the most useful action to take under the circumstances, however, you must have had a neighbor who did not behave in that way, yet whom you feel you did not develop a high level interaction with.

I do not mean by use of the term "neighbor" the one who lives next to your dwelling. There is the neighbor with whom you work, the neighbor with whom you interact in financial matters, the neighbor who shares the road with you, the neighbor who stands in line next to you at the market. How do you feel about these people? There is the neighbor whom you will never see again who asks for directions. Do you offer help in an appropriate fashion? This is all something for you to think about and consider in this matter of loving your neighbor. Are there other comments?

S: Many times over the years I use the phraseology, I demonstrate good will or unbreakable good will. To me, a love relationship, in my own definition, can become such an emotionally involved thing, like loving everyone in this room and those in intimate contact with. To me demonstrating good will is probably an aspect of love that I find a little more comforting at times when somebody's cutting me off in traffic. I can demonstrate good will, and even unbreakable good will, but the emotional involvement of the word love would be hard for me to deal with probably at that time. Maybe you could comment on that.

R: You are wise in perceiving the difference between mortal love, which has animal elements of emotion and intellect, and the divine and spiritual love of Father. Father's love is, as you say, unbreakable good will, but also has the very important element of mercy. You refer to being cut off in traffic. If you would include mercy toward that neighbor, it might be more palatable to you.

S: Thank you, Rayson, that really does add a wonderful dimension. Thank you so much for that.

S2: I just want to share one comment about love, something that I'm dealing with now, or that's helping me define what love is to me. And that is simply learning and wanting to value, simply just value, the other person in the way that our Father does, and the way that I am valued by Him. To me that is like a foundation stone at this point in how I'm defining love. Simply learn to value that person, to want to value them as I am valued.

R: Yes, that is most important, and remember again from this lesson and other lessons that material contributions are not an element of spiritual love. Do you expect God to fix your car, repair your bank account, provide you with a home or food or jewellery or training or education? Certainly not. And in transmitting Father's love to your fellows, is it appropriate for you to offer these things to them? Would you deprive your neighbor, all of your neighbors, of that necessary adversity that is required for spiritual growth?

It is not greedy to withhold material things from your fellow beings who have the hand out and seek to convince you that if you are a believer in God and a loving person, you should fill their cup. Consider their motives, and you will see readily who the greedy one truly is. This is a hard, hard lesson for you, my friends, particularly because formal religious training has taught you otherwise, and this is a deeply ingrained concept. But I urge you to work hard with this. You all have the capacity for reflectivity and may develop that muscle, as you say, to a very fine and precise level, if you work hard.

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