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- *Guides learn and benefit from humans*
- *Listening is love*

God's peace and light are very much a part of your gathering this evening.

Although everyone does not feel completely at peace within, there is a strong presence that we see, and it gives us great joy for it is not often achieved, but it is certainly our goal for everyone of you. With our joy is also our recognition that all of you have such great potential for continued growth. There is no one who has reached the limit, who has reached some kind of ideal goal. You have much to learn from within, but even more to learn from one another.

In the past recent weeks, each of you has had considerable contact with one another, whether that contact was verbal or through prayer of mutual concern. There has been a closeness demonstrated which is a kind of reflection of all that we have taught and all that we wish to teach yet. Your lives are an unending progression of challenges and opportunities.

We have alluded in the past to the fact that when you are together, all of your guides are together. Your gathering is indeed enriched by both sides of life. Have you considered that we learn from you? This union of two sides of life is not a one-way relationship, for we too experience human life, and we learn from our experience. Human life is for learning, and for that very reason we learn from your human life because we are in such close contact with you. We learn more about frustration and anxieties. We learn more about compassion. We learn more about jealousies. We learn more about joy. We learn more about motivation. We learn more about love.

There is a common belief that in some manner human life is imperfect and in the end, of little significance. But it is important to realize that your lives are of great significance for you, but also for us. We learn by watching your response in life. There are times when you struggle for greater understanding of each other. There are times when you struggle for greater understanding of yourselves. The growth which results from that struggle becomes our growth, for our energies become your energies. Our efforts are your efforts. It is together that you grow, and we therefore share in that growth.

We pray for you and we are indeed grateful when you pray for us. Those prayers that you offer us give us strength...indeed, it is almost confidence. When you pray for our continued growth, we feel stronger and more able to move forward in our deepening understanding of God. It is a wonderful union we have here, for both sides draw closer and in the end are uniquely one.

When you withdraw from activities which normally occupy your daily lives and meet in this group, you are really sharing in the spiritual side of life. You are tasting for but a brief moment the fruit of eternity. Relish that. It is a rare opportunity that you have.

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For a moment, you are in eternity. For a moment, you have contact with that essence that unites everything—everything which is living, everything that has lived, and everything which shall live.

It is so important that each of you accepts the continuity, the permanence of life, the permanence of love. You have learned much about love in the years you have been together, but you know so little of love really. We hope that as you continue to be together, you will grow in the perception of what love means, for love, as you know, must be given. It is never taken. It may be received, but as a gift. Love is never deserved. It is never owned. One is never entitled to it. It can only be given. Sometimes it is offered easily; at other times, through sacrifice. But in the final view, it is always offered, never to be kept. You know this in principle. You have heard it before, but so rarely do you live in this way. And when another offers love unconditionally, you often receive it with a degree of suspicion: *Why is anyone doing this for me? What does that person want in return?*

Human society is not based on receiving love and giving it out. Society is comprised too often of individuals—Individuals who feel love must be deserved by another before being given. Society is too individualistic in its reliance of self. Humankind never moves forward as individuals. It progresses only in union with others. If each of you reflects back in memory to a moment in your lives of particular importance of lasting value, the moment you see will be related to some other person—something someone did, perhaps something someone said that indicated everything. It is the love which you receive from another which perhaps has special importance. We wonder whether any of you reflected upon a time when it was love that you offered that was special. Try to focus your lives in a direction of offering, of sacrifice, of giving—giving concern, giving time, giving effort, listening.

Listening is an act of love, and precious few practice it. When two are in disagreement, at least one is not listening. One of the messages you read this evening focused on listening, not to what is said, but what is meant. This is part of our intention. Listening is vital. Listening is love, because in listening, you are giving. You are giving up your own sense of self, of personal priorities. You are giving yourself over to the values and priorities of someone else. That is a difficult task. How often have you put your own priorities into a position of secondary importance and responded to another's needs? That kind of giving is what we mean when we say love is giving. Think upon the implication of what is meant when you are challenged to give and not receive. Think of what it is that you give, what it is that you offer.

We ask that you also consider when another gives to you. Drop your feelings of awkwardness and perhaps suspicion. Be willing to trust that someone gives to you for no other purpose than love. Giving is an act of love. Receiving is an act of trust. Love must be responded always with trust. One cannot easily and readily respond with love

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to an offering of love. That comes later. What comes first is trust, for without trust there is no response in love.

Trust one another. Be willing to be totally open and candid. Take off those masks. Be willing to let another know you as you are. You can only do that with trust. Have trust that another trusts you as you are and not as they would have you be.

There is a wonderful potential for your group, the exercise of trust as an appropriate response to the offering of love. You do not question our offering of love for you, our commitment to help guide you in your life. You accept that, sometimes more easily than others, but nevertheless you accept it. You don't question it. If you don't question our act of love through giving to you, neither question the act of another's giving of love to you. It makes no difference whether the giver is on your side of life or our side of life. Your response can always be the same: trust and acceptance.

We bless you with God's love, and you trust that. Each of you must bless the other with God's love and trust in that offering. You are being challenged, as it were, to give to each other as we so freely give to you.

God's gift is our gift. Our gift is your gift. Rejoice in the joy of giving love. Grow in your acceptance of love around you. God's peace is your peace. May it spread to others and become the peace of the world.

Amen.