

## UNITY PRINCIPLES #1 AND #2:

### “ONE PRESENCE” AND “WE ARE EXPRESSIONS OF GOD”

Week #1 of a 4-Week Series, “The 5 Unity Principles”

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So we're going to talk about ... We're kicking off the five Unity principles. And these are very important principles. Back in the day -- when they first started -- they had a whole lot more of them. But then somebody came up to them in, like, the early 30s I believe it was, and said, *“You know what? Just give me the ‘down low’; you know like Jesus was asked? Just the one I have to follow. What is that?”* They came up with these.

The first two I get to share with you, and kind of because they go together. That's why they put him together. Either that, or they just dumped him on the newbie, right? [Congregants laugh] *“Oh, she can do two!”*

So, the first one is that -- Charles Fillmore says -- **“There is but one Presence and one Power in all the universe: God, the good, omnipotent.”** What does that say to you? One Presence and one Power. There's nothing to oppose it.

You know, when I first started attending Unity, my son told me, *“Oh, if there's no devil in your church, then that must be a cult.”* I said, *“Well, the word ‘devil’ exists, but not like you think it does.”* You know, and he's a Baptist minister now, just by the way ... [Laughs] He followed his dream and I followed mine.

But there is only one Presence and one Power active in the universe and our life: God, the good, omnipotent. So, we break that down a little bit: we're saying there's one power, and it's God. So, we're saying God exists and is everywhere, always. Right?

So, both two work in the same. That means wherever you are -- whether you're in joy; whether you're in celebration; whether you're in anxiety; whatever it is that's going on in your life -- God is always present there. Because that is the only power that exists -- is God. There's nothing to oppose it. It is there. God is there. Good is there. Because God is good.

So, I don't know about you guys, but I find Unity Principle #1 kind of hard to take sometimes, I'll be honest with you. When the person cuts me off in traffic, or flips me off with my grandkids in the car ... [Congregants laugh] Or, you know, the rude customer service agent just is intolerant, and I'm doing everything I can to say, *“Bless you, darling; thank you.”* A little old lady, you'd think they'd think, *“Oh yeah; I'll be nice to her!”* It doesn't matter.

So, God is good and in everything ... even in the rough days. That's hard! It was just ... When I first started with Unity, that was really hard for me to believe. Because I'm like ... when I grew up, my mother told me, *“If you're good, God will protect you and you will never be hurt.”* I was hurt a lot as a child! I don't know about you guys, but daily in my life I was hurt.

And I kept thinking, *“Where is this God that's supposed to protect me? Because I don't think I'm doing anything wrong, but yet I'm getting hurt.”* She was very strict about that. She didn't really follow any dogma or religion, but that was the one thing that she tried to instill is that, *“He's watching you.”*

And it was funny, because when she described him, he always sounded like Santa Claus. He's always watching you. He's up in the sky. He's a big guy. He's got white hair and a beard. And I'm like, *“Well, isn't that Santa?”* [Congregants laugh] You know, sounds like it is to me!

So, even in the bad days -- when the email shows up that you don't want to see; when the job falls through; or when the diagnosis shows up; when someone disappoints you or we disappoint ourselves -- God is there. God is there!

It's harder then, but it's more important then: in the hard times. It's more important to remember that you're not alone, that God is good and everywhere present.

This principle isn't about just having a feel-good idea. It's a spiritual lens with which to watch the world through. If you could just put that lens on and go through the world, what could you see on those days when you thought, *"Ooh, this is shaking me down! You know; it really is!"*? You can trust that there is something deeper happening, even when you can't see it through this lens.

So, a lot of people ask me about the hard stuff, and like I said, you know, the tragedy; injustice ... All you've got to do is turn on the news. All you've got to do is open up TikTok, right? Facebook. It's all there! Everybody's throwing it at us. And God is in those people, too. God is in the circumstances, too.

I know it took me a long time to believe it myself, but there is no opposing power in this principle: only God.

In Unity, we don't deny the pain. We don't say it doesn't exist. We just don't give it the ultimate power. It doesn't have any power over me, you know? I'll do my part: I'm an activist; I'm an advocate, I'll stand up and do my part, so I'm not going to be run over. But I know that, whatever I do, God is always there with me. And that we recognize that good is greater than what's going on.

Good. God. Half the time when I go to write an email, I start by going, *"Good morning"* and it says *"GOD morning."* I just let it go because I'm like, *"Well, they must know it's a God morning this morning!"* Right? So, if you get one from me that says God first, you know they're interchangeable for me. And that love is deeper. And that God is not finished yet. We're still here. I keep telling ... people ask me how I am; I say, *"I'm above ground; God's not done with me yet!"* So, I'm going to keep going.

So, remember that the first principle is not a theory; it's actually a way of life. It's actually a way: something to take into the world with you. It invites us to lean into the deep, unshakable truth that good is always here.

Just like some people say if you go into a room and you turn all the lights out, you don't have any light. Have you ever been in a dark room or shut all the lights out? And immediately you're like, *"Oh my gosh, I can't see!"* And then, all of a sudden, there's these beams of light coming from under doors, over doors, out of windows ... You're never really completely in the dark. The light is there! And we can rely on that light.

So, leaning into that: this first principle asks you to do it. It asks you to look for it in life: look through that lens that God is always there and always present. To name it when you see it, because that will help you remember it.

If you go around and say, *"Oh, that's what it is!"* Today I saw some people helping a person, a man, push his car out of the street. It was literally blocking three lanes. And I felt so good that they were helping him. And they got back into their own cars. They weren't with him. And I'm like, *"it's been a long time since I've seen someone step out and do something like that."* Not only is it dangerous, but you know what I mean? It felt good to witness that, so I named it. *"That is the good that exists in this world."*

And when you do good in this world -- when you learn to live from that lens -- claim that you do. You know, *"I'm going to see the good in this world!"*

And, most importantly, share it with others. Share the good! When something happens and you notice the good, you go, *"You know what? That seemed like a tough thing, but you know this happened."*

For instance, years ago I had a really bad accident. And I shouldn't be here today because of an accident. What it prompted me to do was to move to California, which is where my sister and my dad were. My dad was aging. My sister lived there. She's a little younger than me. I was like, *"Okay, I have to be close to my family."* And I did.

And then I got there and I go ... Okay. Six months later, my dad passed. He made his transition. And two months after, that my sister moved to Illinois. And I had drug my husband and our four granddaughters -- and their brother was with us, too, so five grandkids -- from Arizona (Northern Arizona) to California, an expensive state to live. And I'm going, *"Now what? What do I do?"*

Without that step though ... I wound up going to a small church called Unity of El Cajon. And I met a young woman there. I say young because she's probably a couple months younger than me. [Congregants laugh] Anybody that's younger than me, I call them young. And she was going to ministerial school online. I did not know that that was an option! And the fire just burned inside me. I was like, *"I've got to do this; I've got to do this!"* I went home and told my husband, and he thought I was doing another crazy thing. But I had to do it!

And that's what led me here. I'm over there in California. And I'm like, you know: all the churches are full. They all have ministers. Nobody's retiring. I'm in Southern California. They're not leaving, right? Who's going to leave Southern California?

And then I get an email and it says, *"Has anybody looked to see that Phoenix is hiring?"* And I went, *"Rrrrr."* Because I had been here for years. So, if all of this hadn't happened -- if there hadn't been this happened in my life; if I couldn't see the good in it -- that good brought me right here. That good brought my grandchildren here. I don't want to cry, because they're amazing!

But it is: the good that we can see if we can lean into it and look for it.

That leads me into the second principle. Let me see if I can find my ... It lost me. Okay

Well, for this one; I'll finish this one. It says: how do you really ...? When you're going to ask yourselves: How do we remind ourselves that one Power and one Presence is all good? I have three things I put up there.

Speak the truth even when it feels small. I didn't know that going to California was going to change my life, but I knew that I had to go. So, it was small, but there was some hope. *"God is here now and I trust the unfolding of this divine order."* It might not feel powerful in the moment, but affirmations -- as we know -- are magic spells. Unity teaches us all the time: affirmations are the magic spells and they help us/our souls realign.

Ask a better question. Instead of saying, *"Why is this happening to me? You know, what's going on?"* Maybe you could ask: *"Where is the good in this? What is this here to teach me? And how is love wanting to express here?"* Because love is always wanting to express in your life, in one way or another.

And the third one is: Stop waiting for God to appear or the good to appear. Start looking for it. You know, my mom used to tell me all the time when I was growing up, *"A watched pot never boils."* Did you guys hear that when you were growing up? Because you sit there and you're waiting for it and waiting for it! My grandkids still do that. They're like, *"I want some hot chocolate."* Waiting and waiting and waiting. *"No; you need to back away and go somewhere, because it'll boil; just give it a minute!"* You know?

But it feels so impatient sitting there waiting for it. We're waiting for God to walk in and say, *"Here I am!"* God is already here! Right in here; always present; always with you.

And remember, you have the resilience to get through all of this.

Now it's Principle #2. My maiden voyage; I'm allowed one slip, right?

You are the light of the world. Unity of Phoenix says, **"We are all created in the image and likeness of God, and God's spirit is within all of us."**

We all look different. How are we all created from One? But we are! Because we're individual expressions of that God, right? We all have that divineness inside us.

Unity Principle #2 says, **"Human beings have a spark of the divinity within them, the very essence of God; and, therefore, they are inherently good."**

So, many moons ago, I was sitting in yet another therapist's office trying to go through my life; figure out what was going on. And this little man -- little frail man/therapist -- was very religious. And I wanted him to be religious, because I needed to know what was going on. And it felt like it was attached to that.

So, he said, he came to a point where he asked me ... He said, *"I'm going to say three sentences to you and what I want you to do is to write them down. But I only want you to write them down if you truly believe them."*

I'm a person of my word, so I said, *"Okay."*

And he said the first sentence was, *"God is all good."*

All right; God is all good. God's out there, right? I'm still in the theory -- I wasn't in Unity yet -- that God was "out there" and, okay; God's good.

The second one was, *"God makes everything and everything is good."*

All right; I can do that one. God makes everything and everything is good.

Then he asked me to write, *"I am good."*

I couldn't do it. In that moment, I couldn't. I froze because I really didn't understand. I didn't even know until that moment that I didn't believe it. But in that moment, I just froze and started crying. And he said, *"This is where we're at."*

And at the time, he gave me the book, *Man's Search for Meaning*. I don't know if any of you have ever read it. It's an awesome book. It really helped me get back on track at that time. But I didn't have the tools that I have here. I didn't have the education and the understanding that I am a part of God, and God is a part of me, within me.

So, we are each individualized expressions of God. Our essence is of God, and therefore we are inherently good. Kind of a radical thing to say! I don't know how many people beyond these walls actually hear that, right? But we hear it here, because we know that is part of our truth.

But I want you to know this goes along with it, and this is part of your truth: **You were created out of love by love to express love.** Plain and simple.

You are not broken or separate or bad. You're not broken! If anybody ever told you you were, it was a lie. You are not here to "get" God; you're here to remember that God is already within you. You already have God in you!

So, I know some of us didn't grow up hearing that. I know I didn't. You know, there was -- like I said -- that pie-in-the-sky man. [I feel like my mic is ringing back. I don't know, Roger.]

But anyway, we might have been taught that about sin and that we needed "fixing" or "saving." That I would never be right without somebody to save me. I know I heard that, but that's not the truth. Unity teaches that **you are made in the image and likeness of God**, and that image has never been lost. You might have forgotten it. It might have been covered up somewhere along the road. But the divine spark in you is always there. It's still there, even in the struggle. It's there.

I'll tell you what this principle is not, right? This is what it's not. It's not saying you're perfect in every action. I know I am not! If you're looking for perfection in a minister, don't come looking for me!

[Congregants laugh] It's not happening! I bent that needle probably at six years old, you know?

[Congregants laugh] It wasn't happening.

It's not saying we never made mistakes or caused harm. Mmm; yeah, I'm on that one, too. I still make mistakes. Ask my granddaughter right there! I have to go, *"You know what? [Sigh] You're right. That was my mistake. You're right. Let's go. Let's change that around."*

And no one ... Oh, hold on.

What it is saying is that it's your core. We are expressions of divine life.

And I don't want to miss this next part, because what it does mean is very important. Your worth is not up for negotiation. In no place and time. Your essence is not defined by your past. And no one is beyond this goodness, because divinity is the truth of who we are.

And I wrote this down and I want to say it one more time, because I think it's something we don't hear often enough: That our worth is not up for negotiation. You are worthy! You don't have to earn it. You don't have to beg for it. It's your birthright!

And your essence is not defined by your past. You know, *"every saint becomes a sinner; every sinner becomes a saint."* If I was judged by my past, I surely wouldn't be here. There would be nobody listening to me. They'd be going, *"Oh, you know, we can see all your warts, Beci."* I couldn't have been here if I hung on to all of those.

And no one -- absolutely no one, is beyond this goodness because divinity is the truth of who we are.

So let's go deeper. Jesus says, *"You are the light of the world."* He says that more than once, right? Not, *"You might be if you try hard enough,"* right? Not, *"You've got to earn it."* Not, *"You will become that one day if you behave."* Didn't we hear that one growing up? *"Be good; you have to behave. Children are seen and not heard."*

I know I'm dating myself here, because that was what I grew up with. And I remember we went and looked at a house one time, and the owner rented it to us based on the fact that the children didn't speak the whole time we were there. Why didn't we speak? Because we knew what was going to happen if we did! Not because we were good, or because we behaved, but we knew; we were scared. So, we did as we were told.

So, *"Not you will become it some day if you behave."* it's just who you are! It is who you are! The light is not something you achieve; it's something you uncover.

And I've kind of called this "rediscovery" in my life. Because I think that every baby that's born knows it already. Have you ever seen a baby smile? Have you ever seen a baby look up and just start cooing and laughing? They know! They're the closest to God that we ever get at the time -- is when that little baby is born and they see it.

And along the way, something happens to us. It could be partially done by us. Most of the time, it's not. But we're drawn away from that. We've faded away from that.

So this principle, the second principle, reminds us that **we already are good and that we have the divine within us.** Your spiritual journey isn't about *earning* divinity; it's about removing the blocks to remembering it. How many blocks are in the way? Let's get rid of them! You've just got to remember.

So, imagine this: there's this beautiful stained glass window. It's stored in the basement of a church, all boxed up. It's been there for years. Everybody keeps saying, *"You know, someday we'll build a church and then we'll put that stained glass window up. We'll put it up there, you know, someday. But in the meantime, we'll store it down here."* It gets dusty and dirty, and cobwebs and stuff.

And then one day somebody finds it and says, *"Well, the church is ready, so let's bring it out."* When they bring it out, all they see is the goo, the gunk, the spider webs, the dust. And they're like, *"What is this?"* Looking from the outside, until somebody takes a rag and starts wiping it clean. And then a light comes on. You see the beauty. You see everything inside there.

As it shines out -- its radiance, its color: that is who we are. The gunk and the dust and the cobwebs try to hold on to us, but it's not who we are. The light was always there. It just needed room to shine through.

And that's us: the second principle.

So, how do you practice this truth? Well, we speak to ourselves with compassion. I'm listening; how many people don't? I know! You know, *"Oh, that was stupid. Why'd you do that?"* You know, it seems like a simple thing, but it's an affirmation: affirming that you're disgusted with yourself in some way. You're not happy with yourself ... when you are divine!

So, you can say, *"This action was out of alignment, but my essence is still divine."* And I can say that still ... I'm still a work in progress just because I'm standing up here doesn't make me, *"Oh, I've got all the answers!"* Mmm. I don't. I'm still working on these things.

So, see the spark in others. when you see somebody that has that beautiful light. I mean, I see it right here. I'm just looking at you guys. And you don't understand that I can see it. I am so blessed and honored to be able to stand here and see your divinity. I really am. And I wish you guys could see you the way I do, because it's amazing.

So, sometimes it's real spiritual work remembering who we are. Sometimes you've got to roll up your sleeves and get in there and do it. It's worth it! I can tell you that; it's worth it. All the things that I've been through in my life is worth it all the way. I would never give up.

So, that's where Principle #1 and #2 meet together. That **God is everywhere, including in the person: yourself and the jerk that passed you by in the car tried to run you over. We both have that spark of divinity.**

And I want you to let your light shine! That's the one important one. It's important that people know that you have this light inside you. Don't hide it! Don't hide your kindness and your creativity. I spent years, lowering it so that other people feel comfortable. I lost those years doing that. I learned a valuable lesson along the way that I will never do it again. Never.

If they can't match my light, or don't choose to or don't want to, that's fine. We just vibrate at different rates. And maybe we'll vibrate away; maybe we'll vibrate together. But it's okay either way. Let your light shine.

Marianne Williamson says it this way. She says, *"We are all meant to shine as children do. Your light gives others permission to shine their own."* As long as we're holding back, we're not allowing other people to shine. Because they're not seeing that we are free with it. We allow it in ourselves.

So, the second principle reminds us that we're not separate from God. Unity principle, yeah? **We are expressions of God.** And when you remember that, your whole life begins to shift.

So, try to go out there this week and to prove -- not about proving your worth -- but to shine your light, instead. Let your kindness be an act of your truth of who you are. And let your love be an act of your truth. You don't have to give it to everybody; you don't have to give it to people who are being mean or rude or crude, but you can still send them love.

I do it in their grocery lines. I'm like, *"Oh, you're miserable, but here's your love."* [Congregants laugh] You know? Even my license plate in my car says URLOVED. Even the people that are rude in traffic need to know that they're loved, you know, because they are worthy.

And you can let your joy be an act of this truth, as well. Because when you live from your divine essence, others remember theirs, too. They start to uncover it. And that is how we transform the world.

So, my final ideas on both of these principles is: Good is here. Now and always. Good; God – same word. Not as an abstract idea, but as the very essence of who we are. Not as separate from the divine; you are an expression of it.

So this week, live it! See how it feels to go out there into the world and to live your divinity. To share that light with other people. Because when you live from this place, you will witness the presence of good all around you. The presence of God will be there. You become it for yourself and for others. Let that be the light that you carry into the world.

So, as I started this, the affirmation was, *"I am the living presence of Divine Good, here and now."*

Can we say that one more time? [With congregants] *"I am the living presence of Divine Good, here and now."*

Namaste.