

LIVING THE TRUTH: Five Principles, One Powerful Life

Week #2 of a 4-Week Series, "Unity Basics"

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Sunday, July 15, 2026

So the Five Unity Principles actually came about from Charles and Myrtle Fillmore's great granddaughter. Charles and Myrtle Fillmore were the founders of Unity. And they had all these thoughts on what Unity people should be. All these thoughts. And they put it into a book, "Talks on Truth" by H. Emilie Cady. And they had it all around.

And then somebody goes, *"You know, there's a lot of stuff here. Can we narrow it down?"* They asked the granddaughter, Connie Fillmore: *"Can you just like narrow this down for us?"* She came up with just these five. She condensed them all to these five. So we're going to go over them.

The first one is: **God is the Source and the Creator of all. God is good and everywhere present.** Absolute good and omnipresent.

So, Charles Myrtle told that God is Infinite Mind – Spirit -- and the only reality present everywhere and in all circumstances, rather than a distant deity. God is everywhere.

Now, I don't know about you, when I was growing up, he was this guy in the sky that was sending bad juju to me because I was getting in a lot of trouble. And, you know, and my mom told me when I was growing up, well, if you were good, God would protect you.

And I was just like, *"Well, I'm not being protected, so I must be bad."* You know, logic of a five-year-old, right? So, I always looked at him as this guy up in the sky that was judging me all the time, watching everything I did.

And that's not what Charles and Myrtle were talking about. They're saying that God is ever-present: all around us all the time. And for us, especially right now, I'm saying this doesn't really always seem obvious that there's oneness; that there's all God everywhere, all good and all God ... especially if you open up your phone or you turn on your TV. It can be kind of scary out there.

So, it's really hard to look between it and go, *"No, but there's good. There's good. There's God. There's All there."*

So, for me, it shows up in the big and the small. I really feel close to God sitting on the beach. with the ocean waves. I'm from San Diego. With the ocean waves crashing and the sun setting, I feel that peace. That's the peace I get when I feel connected to God. I feel that same peace when I'm in meditation. But that's a big picture of what it looks like for me.

I feel it in my heart when I'm hiking or when I'm going in any kind of thing that's in nature. I don't hike as much as I used to. About 12 years ago, my husband and I walked the Camino de Santiago. And my grandkids were asking me the other day, *"Are you going to do it again?"*

I'm like, *"I'm not sure I can make it again. We'll try!"*

They said, *"We want to go!"*

"Okay, we'll look at it!"

But nature for me brings me that same -- anytime I'm in nature, it brings me that same oneness as it does in meditation. So, it shows me that I feel that this God presence all around me all the time.

And I'm going to tell you, honestly, I didn't feel this forever. You know what I mean? I didn't find Unity until 29 years ago. Before that, my life was a whole lot different than it is right now. Before I wandered into 12 Steps in Unity, my life was different. And I was trying, but I wasn't understanding. I couldn't get it

through. I got the theme of the Higher Power, but I didn't know what Allness/Oneness meant until I started with Unity.

Now, when I moved here from San Diego -- next week will be a year since I've been here, guys ... just so you know. [Congregants applaud] Yay! Like, *"Oh, no; has she been here still a year?"* But so, I've been here a year.

When I was working in San Diego, I worked for Interface Shelter Network. And I was actually a program manager for a homeless shelter that we had, which was rotational. It rotated through all different kinds of churches. And we did this over the winter months, which in San Diego is the rainy months, right? So, it's not really winter like it is in other places.

But I could see in that space all these different churches, different denominations, different theologies, all understanding that God is One. God is One. And it was just -- it was, like, so reinforced for me. I had that job for two years before I -- while I was still a student. But it so reinforced for me the understanding that it doesn't matter what language they're speaking. It doesn't matter what corner they're pointing to. It's just God is in all of it.

And sometimes I feel like I'm in the Oneness when I -- I don't know if this ever happens to you, but I'll be thinking about somebody and they'll call me or they'll text me. I'm like, *"Whoa."* Or I'll be thinking about somebody and I'll call them and they go, *"Whoa, I was just thinking about you."* That's the Oneness. We're all in the same field of energy.

Psalms 139:7-10 says this: *"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your Presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of dawn, if I settle as far as the side of the sea, even there, your hand will guide me; your right hand will hold me fast."*

So, no matter where we go -- this is what Unity teaches is: God is there. God is present. It's kind of like being a fish in the water. The fish doesn't know it's in the water. We're kind of in it. It's not visible, so people don't see it.

So, from principle number one, the highlights of that are: God's presence is about recognizing what's already true. Understanding that God is at play in all of it. Even when it's hard, understanding that it's there. In every room, in every relationship, in every struggle, it already contains the presence of God. God, the good, omnipotent.

Faith begins here: trusting the good is present before you can see it. That's where faith starts. Knowing that it's real; knowing that it's there before I can even see it.

So, how can you bring this into your life more often? I have a couple of things that I do. So, before my feet hit the floor in the morning, I just kind of take some breaths in. And I usually only get back three before someone's screaming at me, even my dog. He, like, smacks the side of the bed. He weighs 120 pounds, so he's like, *"Feed me, feed me!"* So, you know, I get these bounces off my bed!

But I take three breaths in and I go, *"God is; I am. God is; I am. God is; I am."*

And that grounds me enough that -- If I do that three times that when I get out of bed, I don't feel like I'm just running into something. I feel like I actually have this Presence around me.

So, I do this also in traffic, especially when I get cut off: *"God is love. God is love. And that person needed love right now. They need love from me."* My license plate says "Love Does," so I can't get away with it. I have to do it. People are like, *"You can't drive a car that says 'Love Does' and then be aggravated when people pull out in front of you."*

Because people are like, *"Oh, you're not following the signs,"* right? It's a lesson to me every time I get into it. God is here right now in traffic, in the waiting room of the hospital, in the pause. God is there, already present.

You see it; sometimes we just don't recognize it. You see it when somebody holds a door for somebody else. You see it when there's a car on the side of the road and someone else stops to help the person. This is actually that Presence, but we're so busy -- convoluted with all this busyness and all these screens and all this other, this fear of separation -- that we get stuck in that going, *"Oh, that can't be this, this is, you know, that's just them."* It's really God showing up.

So, at night before you lay down, you can ask yourself -- and I like to do this every now and again: *"Was there a place today where I almost missed God, where I almost missed God's handiwork?"* And then I'll remember; I'll play out my day. And I've had opportunity a lot lately to play out my day in my head when I lay down at night.

Because there's a lot going on, you know: a grandmother raising four granddaughters. That'll do it, right? So, there's always busyness! But just that moment where I can say: *"Where did I miss God?"*

I have one granddaughter that's especially a challenge for me. I love her to death, but I think she's too much like I was, and so she's my challenge child. And I was talking to her oldest sister, and I said, *"I really think I've done everything I can here, and I don't know what else to do."*

And on my way home in my car -- it says "Love Does" -- I thought, *"I haven't done everything I can. I haven't brought her into the Christ with me. I haven't brought her into this space. I haven't said, 'Yes, I'll share this with you here. We are both the same.'"*

And you know what? It's only been a week, but she seems softer. Maybe I'm softer. I don't know. But she does seem softer and kinder. And usually when she snips at me -- she's not snipping at me right now -- so, I'm going to keep doing it. Every night when I lay down, I'm going, *"We are in this together. Here we are in this."*

All right, second principle is: **We are all created in the image and the likeness of God, and God's Spirit is within all of us.** Yes, all of us. These two kind of go together, right? God is; we are. Our essence is of God, and we are inherently good.

That was such a hard thing to learn. I was in therapy. Well, not one time, but anyway. One time when I was in therapy, he was a wonderful little, small, little man. And he's, like, trying to get me to understand that I was a good person. And he had me write down: *"God is good and God made everything good."*

And then he goes, *"But only write it if you believe it."* And then he goes, *"God made me and I'm good."*

And I couldn't do it. I just started bawling. And he goes, *"This is where it is. You don't believe you deserve it."* That was way before Unity, right? So, it was like a realization that I am good. I am the good in God, and God is the good in me.

So, human beings inherently are good because they are expressions of Spirit. We say that all the time: *"You carry the Christ light. I see your Christ light. I see your Christ light."* Right? And I believe that! It's that spark of divinity in everybody, even when it's difficult. **It's not potential to unlock. It's a truth to remember.**

It's not like: *"If I earn it. I'll get there if I work hard enough."* I used to think that, too: *"If I work hard enough, maybe I'll be good and maybe God will love me."*

But it's not potential. It's a reality. It is what it is. It is spiritual law. We are worthy. Our worth is inherited, not achieved.

The truth applies universally to all the people you find the hardest to love and even to yourself on your hardest days. And I'm not sure you know this, but I know that, for me, sometimes I'm my own worst enemy. And I had to stop saying that. My best friend said, *"Stop saying that!"* Because I was always down. I'd be like, *"It's me again. It's me again."*

She'd be like, *"Uh, if you change your words on that ..."* This was, like I said again, before Unity.

So, I've learned all these things since then. The truth applies to everybody. And living on purpose, your goodness flows from your identity. And you can act from that worth.

So, if you live with intention and you live with this idea that *"I am One, God is One, and we are both good,"* and you live from that intention, life changes. Life changes for you then. And we can act from that place of worth.

Have you ever noticed that, when somebody doesn't feel worthy, they're kind of do this thing. I know. kids do it all down with the phones. But it used to be where you were hunched over and it's like, *"Oh, well, I'm not worthy."*

But do you ever notice people that feel like they have their worth? They've got their shoulders back, their chest is out. They've opened up this whole centerpiece of them. This is the Christ Spirit in you. Because you are worthy every step of the way. Even if something happened, you're not your past. You're this moment forward.

So, I like to do this. I have a thing when I work with women. I usually work with a lot of ... Well, I've worked often with traumatized women, and I love to give them a dry erase marker. On the very first day I meet them, I said, *"Here, you take this dry erase marker, and you go home. And on your mirror that you look at when you first get up in the morning, you're going to write yourself a love note the night before. Because when you get up in the morning, you'll forget that it's there, and you'll go to that mirror, and your love note to yourself will be right there."*

So you can write, like ... one of the ones I used to have them write: *"The Divine is in me and it is good."*

Some of them come back to me and said they did nothing but cry. Good! Do it again. Do it again. Because the tears are cleansing. They will heal you. And you'll keep going.

So, before reacting to someone who irritates you, silently acknowledge the spark of Divine within them. You don't have to even say it to them. You don't even have to engage. But if you just go ... Like somebody in front of you in the line at the grocery store, and the person in front of me is just really being mean to the clerk. And I'm back here going, *"There's God in you. There's God in you. There's God in you."* Because that's what I truly believe -- that It is! They're in fear or whatever reason they're not in touch with It.

And one really important one is to stop self-criticism. If something comes up -- pops up in your head. And they do all the time; I get triggered by little things. You know, a semi will go by and there will be a picture of something. Before you know it, I'm five years old in my brain. It's like, *"Whoosh, where did this come from?"*

So, I can take that, pick that up. I recognize it a lot faster than I used to. And I can say, *"That's not my truth. It is not my truth."*

So, there's an old fable about a musk deer. And this deer detects a beautiful, intoxicating scent and spends its entire life searching for this scent. Runs through the forests, runs through the mountains, across the deserts desperately searching for this source of this perfume. Just out of reach, but knows that it's right there. Until one day it collapses, and it's dying. And then it realizes that the source of the smell was a gland just under its belly button. All along, it was that deer itself that had what it was looking for.

Doesn't that make sense? A lot of people say, *"Oh, I'm in search for this, I'm in search for that."* It's already here! We don't need to search outside. We already have this inside us. And this metaphor highlights how humans search the world for the God-Spirit connection, unaware that they carry those exact treasures within themselves.

Matthew 5:14-15 says this: *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house."*

Marianne Williamson says the more you light your light and allow it to happen, other people will realize that they have a light and they can allow theirs to happen. You give them permission just by being this light in the world with them.

Okay. Principle number three: creative power of thought. **Human beings can create their experience through their thinking.** I didn't believe this one at first. Because I was just like, "How can a thought change your life?" you know? But it does! It's by our thoughts that we live. It's by the intention that comes out of our brains.

It's not a fringe idea. And Unity is not the only one that teaches this. There's traditions that echo this everywhere. In Proverbs, it says, *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue."*

But the Dhammapada translates to the path of truth. It's a collection of Buddhist sayings. And it opens with, *"All that we are is the result of what we have thought."* All that we are is the result of what we have thought. So, if I'm thinking, *"I'm worthless,"* I'm going to stay sunk in that.

I know somebody that is in her 80s now, and she's still caught in this cycle of self-abuse. This, *"I'm never going to get anywhere."* And it's like she's been hanging on to this for 60 years.

And I asked her, *"Can you just drop it?"* She couldn't even identify the fact that she had it. Because we get so caught up in it, right?

But we are all the thoughts. We are is a result of what we have thought. That's who we become.

And even psychology backs this up, like the placebo effect. They can't explain that, right? They give somebody a pill in a trial, and they give somebody a fake pill, and they can get almost as healthy as the person that really had the dose. That's their thoughts that's doing this.

They've actually proven in hospital rooms where people circle people in prayer -- the rooms where the person is circled in prayer, people heal faster, feel better. You know what I mean? It's just like this whole thing is actually part of it, because we're becoming all that one.

And almost every wisdom tradition has arrived at the same truth, but from different directions. What we think and speak, we tend to become. So, what are you thinking? What are you saying to yourself? Even when nobody's listening? Because, you know, "Oh! That was stupid, Beci!" What did I just call myself? Stupid, right? Run into something downstairs or almost kill myself going over the top of the dog. *"Well, just wait for him, you know, but that was stupid."* No, it's not! I'm not stupid! I'm not that thought.

Unity didn't invent this. It's just naming something ancient and universal. This is empowerment, not blame for hardship. It's about direction going forward. We don't have to carry about the past. Being at peace is a thought discipline, not a circumstance.

Denials and affirmations are great working tools for that, right? If you've been here at Unity anytime at all, we have denials and affirmations. Great tool! The thought comes in, you deny, and you reframe, and you give an affirmation for it.

So, try when you go home tonight, or tomorrow, if you get a chance to think about it, try to pick out one -- just one -- worry that you have a specific issue with. Just some one thing. And try to reframe it, make it a positive.

So, I don't know how to start: *"I have a teenage daughter that drives me crazy; granddaughter."*

"My granddaughter is learning to be who she needs to be in God."

And when I walk with that, that's a whole lot different than what I said. It can change lives. It does change lives! I see people all the time in here. It changes their lives.

So about halfway through the day, think about it. If you're sitting there working away, Just stop for a minute. I have this bell on my computer. I don't know if any of you guys have that. Ever hour, it bings,

blings. And I used to think -- because when it bings, I take three slow breaths. And I used to think those three slow breaths are really going to cost me a lot. I used to work for IBM. And so, when I'm on the customer line, I thought, *"There's no way I can take three long breaths while I'm talking to this person,"* you know. But I found that it didn't even change. They didn't even notice that I was taking these three long breaths. But for me, it made all the difference. It brought me back to myself. It brought me back to who I am in that Presence, trying to help them when they're very aggravated. And I don't have to follow them into that. I can reset myself.

And so, you can speak one sentence over the truth, over a fear before you go to bed tonight. What is a fear that you have? Just change it and make it -- speak a truth over the top of it. *"This fear has no control on me. This fear is not who I am. I am the Divine. I am good. I am co-creating my life."*

So, when you lean into co-creating your life, life changes.

I always say that the first three of the five kind of seem like they're lumped together: God is; I am; I create.

So, we're going to move on to the fourth one, which is prayer and meditation. **Prayer and meditation are the way to connect to the presence and the power of God.** And the Fillmores talked about the affirmative prayer and silence. And they said -- they emphasized -- speaking truth rather than petitioning for change. You're not asking God to fix something. You're aligning with the truth of who you are.

So, they practice this at Silent Unity. They do it themselves. And Silent Unity started -- for those of you that are new, started over 130 years ago; nearly, I think, 140 now; we're very close -- with prayer. Because that's why it was called Silent Unity before it became Unity.

And it was Myrtle praying. And they would collectively -- you know, at the time, we didn't have text messages. She had letters, right? You wrote letters, and you went back and forth with letters. So, you had this time to sit at a specific time during the day. She would tell them, *"At this time on this day, I'm going to sit and we're going to pray together."* And it changed people's lives.

So, practicing prayer and meditation -- practicing meditation here -- changes lives. Again, across traditions. Christian contemplatives call it practicing the presence of God. Buddhists have meditated as the direct path to stillness and insight. They say it's the direct path. Islam has the Asad, and it says, *"five fixed daily pauses to realign with the Divine."* All day long -- five times -- they start to realign. Hinduism has Japa and they repeat the mantra to settle their mind into the sacred.

And again, science. Science backs it up, too. That meditation and prayer both point to lowering stress. There's so many benefits from doing it! If we just bring it into our life.

Unity isn't inventing this new practice. It's just returning. to what every generation of seekers has already discovered: Stillness is how we hear.

One of the things I learned a long time ago when Rev. Alice was here. Someone asked her, *"What's the difference between prayer and meditation?"*

And she says, *"Praying is speaking to God. Meditation is listening. You have both of them in your life."*

So, practice this. Silence. Practice it before you make a phone call that you really don't want to make. Practice it before you run into somebody that maybe you really don't want to be around. Or practice it with someone that you do want to be around. See what the joy ...

I have friends that we used to pray the rosary together. And I'm not Catholic; they weren't Catholic. But it was just so soothing to do this with them.

And breathe into those moments when you can't stop and meditate and say, *"I am at peace. I am at peace."*

So, we're at the last one. The last principle here is: **Understanding is not enough. We must live these principles.** You got to start walking it, right? Understanding isn't enough. We got to live by it. Knowledge isn't enough. We must live in this truth.

Myrtle Fillmore said, *"Ways to live in the truth we know is to be of service and living truth."* She stressed that spiritual healing must be accompanied by service to others. Giving back is a way to do it. Living for it, you know.

And she also said that *"physical and mental abundance was a natural state intended for the humanity by God, achieving it through metaphysical understanding and the application of spiritual walks."* Walk the talk! So, we take all these four, and we've got to put our feet to the floor. And we've got to start doing it.

Christianity says on this one, *"Be doers of the word, and not hearers only."* The Buddhist says, *"However many holy words you read, however many you speak, what good will they do if you do not act upon them?"* Judaism says, *"Not the learning is the main thing, but the doing."* And Hinduism even says, *"Krishna teaches that action performed with knowledge, and without attachment, liberates. Knowledge alone without right action is unfinished."*

And my personal favorite is the indigenous African one. It comes from Kenya. And I use this often, so you might have heard it before: *"Knowledge is like a garden. If it's not cultivated, it cannot be harvested."* If we don't put our work in it, we can't get anything out of it.

So, this is the principle that brings them all together. That brings together the being with the doing. And you step out into the world in it.

So, bringing it back full circle right here. We have presence, which is **God is**. Identity, which is **I am**. Thought, **I think**. Connect, **I pray**. And practice, **I live in my truth**. They're not five separate ideas. They're one powerful life.

So, one more time, I'm going to close by reading that affirmation here, and I want you to just listen to it and find the words that stick out for you: *"I awaken to divine truth within me and live each day with faith, purpose, peace, and love."*

This week, try not to live all five principles at once. Just take one. Try it out. Go for a ride on it. See how it works. If you slip, start over, or start the next day ... whatever you want to do. Be mindful of where you are, and tomorrow start again. Anytime it doesn't seem like it's holding, just start over. Because I do.

And it is important to know yourself. I do this this way because I, too, want to have one powerful life.

Thank you.