

HEALING, ABUNDANCE & LIGHT

Week #2 a 4-Week Series Inspired by the Eric Butterworth Book, "In the Flow of Life"

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Well, everyone, we're in a four-week series -- this is Week #2 -- a four-week series of ... it's the teachings of a well-known Unity minister/author, Eric Butterworth. He was at the Lincoln Center in New York City -- couple of you were lucky enough to see him. I know! I'm looking at you over here. They were lucky enough to see, actually, Eric Butterworth at the Lincoln Center.

And so, tonight we're looking at his book. Like I said, I've got lots of markings here. Can you see it? "In the Flow of Life" by Eric Butterworth, 1984. Fantastic book! In this book, he says that his philosophy -- as far as in the flow of life -- his philosophy allows you to live from within out; to heal your consciousness; to receive guidance and wealth; and to find the good in challenging situations, including getting older. We're going to cover that in a couple weeks. *[Congregants laugh]* I left that one with Rev. Richard. *[Congregants laugh]*

And last week when Rev. Richard was here, he shared the introduction/chapter one of the book. And Eric Butterworth -- this is a great summary of that section. He says, "*The whole universe is concentrated at the point where you are.*" The whole universe is concentrated at the point where you are! "*More than this,*" he says, "*You are the universe expressing as you. You are its living enterprise.*"

Doesn't that make you feel special, everyone? I mean, that's sacred, isn't it? You're the universe expressing as you! You are its living enterprise! That gives you a big responsibility, doesn't it? Yeah.

Here's another powerful quote from the beginning of the book. It says, "*God is a sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.*" And he continues, "*If the center is everywhere, it must be where I am.*" It must be where I am.

So, we're reminded that because of this truth -- because that we are the universe expressing as each of us, its living enterprises -- that we can be in the flow of life. That we can never be separated from the Allness that is God. Because wherever we are, God is. We are God expressing in the universe.

It's when we get out of alignment with this idea -- when we forget that we're powerful, creative beings, as the universe expressing itself as us -- that's when life stops flowing. That's often when we hit those roadblocks of life.

And since we're co-creators with the Divine, we become what we visualize over and over and over again in our mind's eye ... or what we tell ourselves over and over and over again. What we focus on, we become. So, tonight we're looking at expanding that idea from last week and looking at it: how it applies to our health, our wealth, and our decision-making and our work.

So, let's start with our health. So, on this topic of health, Eric Butterworth states, "*Each of us is a flow of wholeness.*" Each of us is a flow of wholeness. Because, see, you're already whole. You're a spirit. You're a soul. That means your essence is whole. Now, you might be struggling with a health challenge, but you're still whole. Even as you're healing -- even in your healing -- you are still already whole.

He says, "*You are a child of the universe, and spiritually, you can never be cut off from the stream of life.*" And I would add to that: you can never be cut off from your own wholeness.

And as souls with bodies, like I said, sometimes we do have stuff that we're working on with healing with our bodies. And he focuses a lot in this book about what he calls emotionally-induced illness. And we know today that there's a definite correlation between stress and health. The book, again, was published in 1982, but today we have Western medicine that knows that stress causes illness. One reason is because stress depresses our immune system, making it harder to respond to illness. And stress hormones also can get released that affect our heart and other organs.

You know, when I was in my late 20s, I was working at UCLA as a research dietitian. I called it the Nutrition Mafia. *[Congregants laugh]* And I'd be driving home through the canyons of Los Angeles from UCLA into the Valley. L.A. traffic. And I would say ... and I can barely even say it right now, but again, late 20s, I would be saying, *"This job is sucking the life out of me."* And I had so much emotion around it, and I kept saying it over and over, at least five times a week as I was driving back home.

Well, sure enough, at the age of 29, they found a breast lump. And it was discovered; it was removed. And the surgeon called me and he said, *"Wow, this is really strange. It's a polyp. It's something we usually find in the colon, not in the breast."* And he said in his 20-something years of experience, he'd only had two other people who've had this polyp. And he said, *"So we're not really sure. Do we remove it or do we do a wait-and-see? Because it's very, very rare."*

And I said, *"Well, what did the other two do?"*

And he said, *"Well, one woman went back and got more tissue and the other one just did a wait-and-see."*

And I said, *"Okay."* And I chose ... I got really quiet and I reflected, but I almost immediately knew how much emotion I'd been putting into that affirmation and that thought about that job. And so, I chose the wait-and-see, because I said, *"I'm pretty sure I know how I have manifested this affirmation in my body."* I'd gotten myself out of the flow of life.

And since then -- and since the removal of that polyp, and I didn't go back again -- like I said, but I've been healthy ever since 1999. I'm not saying to avoid surgery. I'm not saying to not take medicine, because I've done both of those, also. What I'm saying is how much our stress and the thoughts we say to ourselves, our body registers. And our body's that book, right? The body keeps the score.

Here's what Eric Butterworth says: *"The healing stream of life is the reality behind every appearance."* *[Audio difficulties cut off the end of the quote]* Medication or meditation. I would even say medication and meditation.

But it's about: Are you open to the healing process? Because it's all God's wisdom. If we all are expressions of God -- if we all have this inherent quality of wisdom -- then that divine idea of that medicine or that treatment can also lead to the divine wisdom through that person who discovered it that leads to healing; that can lead to our healing.

So, I say that because a lot of times in New Thought communities, we have guilt around medicine or surgery or I don't know what. All I'm saying here is we don't have to be guilty. Don't add that stress to it, right? To use discernment; to listen to your voice within, because it will guide you to what you need in every instant.

Because, it comes back to this, he says: *"You can be healed. The means employed may be many and varied, but the reason for the healing is one: the unimpeachable wholeness of the universe. You can be healed because you are whole."* Because remember: you are the universe expressing as you.

So, we get our mindset and the flow of health. We can start right at the beginning of the day, blessing that first cup of coffee or tea or smoothie. We really check our thoughts, our attitudes, our habits. When I say thoughts, I mean, you know: How do you speak to yourself? How do you speak to your body? This is a big one for me! I've got my husband here. I've got to stay honest. *[Congregants laugh]*

What am I saying about my body to my body? Am I saying, *"Hey, it's strong. Hey, it's healthy. Hey, it's getting me from point A to B. Hey, it's helping me do my work!"*? Or am I saying other things to my body? It's listening! Your cells are listening!

We've got to look at the "spiritual bypassing," too. Because you can't smoke packs of cigarettes every day and just keep affirming, *"I'm healthy. I'm healthy. I'm healthy."* That's denial, my friends.

So, please use your divine wisdom and discernment to make, again, choices that align with your health. We have that divine wisdom in us; discernment within us. We use that, too.

And it goes back to, many times, our stress level. Our stress level affects our health. It keeps our immune system and our body's ability to respond ... if it keeps it healthy or not. It's that stress. So, the more relaxed you are, the better your immune system is going to be.

So, looking at the quality of our relationships -- because it's been shown how important; what an important factor it is -- the quality, not the quantity, of our relationships, but the quality of our relationships.

How we think about ourselves. There's a fascinating study where, if you think yourself old, your health markers reflect that. And for those that thought themselves young and healthy and vibrant, their health markers reflected that.

Eric Butterworth says, *"Resistance begins in the mind, where self-limiting attitudes become poor conductors for the flow. The limitation consciousness produces stress, which in turn gives rise to all the ills experienced by the body."*

And the organization is called Science Insight. It says a healthy person can regulate their emotions, can maintain perspective during difficulty, and recover from setbacks without spiraling. That's resilience. That's how mentally fit you are.

So, to keep mentally fit, we use the tools of meditation, affirmations, along with spiritual and emotional support that will also keep you physically fit. And so, both of those together help keep you in the flow of life; in the flow of the universe.

And this same idea can be applied to our wealth. So, the next chapter is titled "The Reality of Affluence." And he writes, *"The word 'affluence' is normally used in the context of things,"* but he says, *"it actually means to flow forth, or the free flow of."*

So, once again, when we get in touch with the consciousness of the creative process -- being a co-creator with the universe -- when we get quiet and we listen, we'll be given directions on what to do next. That applies to any area that we need more abundance in our lives. Once you focus on expanding consciousness, you attract the numbers.

My teacher, Rev. Toni Boehm at Unity -- she was the dean of Unity School of Christianity for over 20 years. And she said, *"Stacy, you expand consciousness and then you get the numbers."* That applies to any area, whether you're talking about church or your life. Whether it's cars, an increased paycheck, health, relationships ... expand your consciousness and then you attract the numbers. Because you're an expression of universal substance. We keep going back to that, right?

So, what blocks abundance or affluence? It's the limitations we place on ourselves. So, what are you blocking? Where are you blocking your substance? And it could be from more than one source. And it could be in the form of income, gifts, help. Every time we deny a gift or help from someone, that's also denying our substance, our wealth, our abundance. The way we think of money; the energy we place on it.

Eric Butterworth talks a lot about that, because that's the energy that's going to go out. So, if we're thinking money's bad, or money's hard to get, then yes; that's going to be your relationship with money. That's what you'll get in return.

He says, *"True prosperity consciousness is consistently open to the flow. It attracts opportunities both to give and receive; wisely directs the use of substance; and remains free from its burden. An important guideline: if you're worried about the money you have or don't have, you are out of the flow."*

So, if you're constantly feeling like a victim or like you're poor, then you're going to take on that energy -- that vibration of that victimhood or poverty mindset. And that's also going to get in the way of any creative solutions that may help with that flow.

You know, I love Dolly Parton, who just made her transition. Love, love, loved her. She grew up in a one-room cabin in the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee. She was one of 12 children in this one-room cabin. And she said this. She said, *"Mama used to sew all of our quilts and curtains for the windows, remake our clothes, and make clothes out of feed sacks or scraps. But Mama said, 'I don't want to ever hear you say that we're poor. We are rich in kindness and love and understanding.'"*

And that's what Eric Butterworth is reminding us: It's the attitude in which we approach money -- that idea of prosperity and abundance. He says, *"The support of the universe is constant in you and the creative process is constantly seeking to flow forth through you."* So, to meditate on that truth.

He says meditate on it even when you're sitting at your desk in the morning. The work we do is an opportunity to get into that flow of life: to be the Presence; to be God on earth. He encourages us to see that creative universe working through us as we do our work.

Ultimately, success is going to be defined by each one of us. It's going to be defined by you. For some people, it's going to be the corner office and a fancy new car. For other people, it'll just be the ability to pay bills and go on vacation.

I just read an interesting little research project they did with Gen Z. Because they were wondering: Why does Gen Z not get along with Gen X or Millennials who are now in managerial? And it's because managers want people who want to go up the ladder and get all the money and make all the goals. And Gen Z is like, *"We just want life/work balance. We want self-care. That's what's important to us."* And that's success. For them, that's success. Work/life balance.

So, it's up to you how you're going to define your success and your wealth. Every day, whether it's volunteering or helping family, or working. But to practice being in the silence and to know that you are surrounded by and open to being that Divine Presence.

He says, *"Divine guidance is not an exterior force acting upon you. It's the seed of your divinity -- that Christ in you -- seeking to fulfill its pattern in the outforming process of your life."*

That divine guidance -- it's the flow of divine mind through you. You're part of that creative flow of the universe. You're expressing life as a creative being on earth. Universal substance is always moving through you -- if you remember that you're an expression of divine life. So, getting into the flow of giving and receiving and celebrating yourself as that creative expression of the universe.

Which brings us to that third chapter of bringing more light into the world. And the world needs a whole bunch of light right now. When we feel healthy, when we feel wealthy, we can more easily be that beacon of light that the world needs.

From Matthew Chapter 5, Verse 16: *"You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine."*

And we have a natural inner guidance system. Just like when I was in Alaska -- all those salmon; they just know how to get from the ocean back up the stream that they were born into. Or, you know, I'm fascinated -- I love here in Arizona, the saguaro cactus. And you know, the woodpeckers, they put a hole for a nest in the saguaro cactus. They fly away for, like, six weeks or more. And then they come back to that exact nest that they built. They build the nest; they lay the eggs six weeks later. I mean, I get lost in the Target parking lot, everyone! *[Congregants laugh]* Like, how did they find, like, that cactus with that hole that they did six weeks ago?

But it's a great reminder, right? That that natural guidance -- its divine and divine guidance -- is natural. It's not about guidance "out there," actually.

And sometimes our prayers can block that flow of guidance, because we limit the outcome. Because we don't want to stop and listen for what is the highest and best outcome. We have a preconceived idea -- our human urge to control a situation or push it into one direction. And so, then we block the flow of this inner guidance that we're a natural part of. But it's already within us. We try to override it.

But *be still and know*. Be still and know! Give yourself; get yourself into that flow for your highest good -- and for the highest good for whomever you're praying for.

So, we cultivate silence. And to know that inspiration can come in flashes or really loudly, but to be open and awake to all possibilities.

And, of course, my favorite reminder, don't sit on your affirmations. [*Congregants laugh*] Don't just sit in the silence.

A man once asked Socrates how to get to Mount Olympus, to which Socrates replied, "Just make every step you take go in that direction."

So when it comes to that question of: Well, what do I do about this situation? Where do I begin? Just begin. Don't freeze up. Don't get into your head or your ego and thinking, "*What if this is the wrong direction?*" Well, then you know it's the wrong direction, and you can self-correct and move in a new direction. But every step eventually leads you to your good.

He tells this story in the book. He says a man was visiting New York and stopped another man on the street asking him, how do you get to Carnegie Hall? And the man answered him, "*Practice, practice, practice.*"

Eric Butterworth says, "*Study and work and pray until the light comes on.*" Study and work and pray until the light comes on.

So, when you're feeling yourself stressed or stuck or worried or afraid, you don't know what to do next, you take a breath. You get quiet. And you remind yourself: "*I am already in the flow of divine life.*"

"I am already in the flow of divine life."

Let's say that together: [with congregants] "*I am already in the flow of divine life.*"

And you just remind yourself: "*I don't have to force it. I don't have to figure it out. I can simply listen and trust and take the next step.*" Yeah; don't wait to be guided. Just know that you're already connected to the flow of guidance.

Being in the flow of life means recognizing and remembering that divine nature is your true identity. That you are as connected to -- an expression of -- God, of this divine life ... just like the plants and the animals, other beautiful inhabitants and landscapes of the earth. You, too, are that. The flow is already within you. That guidance is already within you.

It's that flow of wholeness that reminds us that, even when our bodies are struggling, our divine nature remains whole. It's that flow of substance that reminds us that we're not separate from the abundance of the universe and that abundance isn't just about money. It's about being open to giving and receiving, creativity, opportunity, support, and the goodness of life. And then celebrating all of that.

And it is the flow of divine guidance that reminds us that we don't have to have everything figured out before we take the next step. We can become still, listen within, and then move. Because the guidance isn't going to come from a booming voice from heaven. Sometimes it's a nudge. It's a whisper. It's an idea. It's a feeling. We simply have to take the next step and trust that the path will become more clear as we move forward.

So, the invitation tonight is simply this: Stop trying so hard to make the river flow. Get out of the way of the current. Listen. Trust. Take the next step. You're already in the Presence. You're already part of the flow. You're already an expression of Divine Life. You are the light. And we let that light flow through us:

into our health; into our relationships; into our work; into our prosperity; into our choices; and ultimately into the world.

And that's what we learn, my friends, from chapters two to four in the book, "In the Flow of Life." Blessings, everyone.

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