

ASK THE MINISTER

With Rev. Stacy Macris Ros

Sunday, Oct. 25, 2026

Hello; you all doing good? Yeah! You're a good-looking bunch, I gotta say. You had a good rest last night. Yeah, okay.

Well, I love this Sunday -- the "Ask the Minister" Sunday -- because the message is created from input from the congregation. I asked you to submit spiritual questions to me, and you had some challenging ones. You'll see that in just a minute. So, we never know what the message is going to be until I get those questions. So, it's always a great Sunday. I love this Sunday! You all challenged me very well.

I always like to start "Ask the Minister" Sundays with Unity's foundational teachings. So, we'll start right here with: **HOW DOES UNITY, THE ORGANIZATION, DEFINE ITSELF?** So, right here from Unity headquarters is our definition. It should be here on the slide for you:

Unity is a positive, practical approach to Christianity based on the teachings of Jesus and the power of prayer. Unity honors the universal truths in all religions and respects each individual's right to choose their own spiritual path.

And while Unity does honor all paths to God, we also do have our own teachings, as well, specifically the five basic principles. The five basic principles were created by Connie Fillmore, the great-granddaughter of Unity's co-founders, Myrtle and Charles Fillmore. Connie was asked to summarize Unity's teachings for a "Daily Word" magazine in 1989 for the 100th anniversary of Unity. And so, now these five principles are the foundation of our teachings. They offer guidance for us how we can stay in tune with our own divine nature.

So, our **FIVE UNITY PRINCIPLES**. The first one states -- and this should be here for you to read along. The first one states: God is everywhere and always present in every circumstance. This divine energy underlies and animates all of existence. So, Unity teaches that God is not a person or even this divine being calling the shots, but is Spirit, is Divine Love, is Divine Principle, is Presence with a capital P.

Our second Unity principle says: Human beings are innately good because they are connected to an expression of Spirit. Meaning you're not separate from, but one with this God energy, this living Life Force. You're not separate from it. You are a part of it, as is everyone here in the room, as is everyone outside of this room -- all living beings.

The third principle says: Our thoughts have creative power to influence events and determine our experiences. I always add with that and strong emotion. So, our thoughts, words with strong emotion create our experiences. We're creative beings. We are creating all the time. So, we can create a garden. We can create the feelings of our life or that experience that we're having. We get to create what our life and life experiences feel and look like.

Unity principle number four: Prayer and meditation connect and align us to our own spiritual nature. It does, right? In those moments of quiet, of stillness, it reminds us of our divine identity -- of our connectedness to, our oneness with all other living beings, with one another.

And then our fifth Unity principle states: It's not enough to understand spiritual teachings. We must apply our learning in all areas of life, incorporating them into our thoughts, words, and actions. This is my favorite one, because it means it's not enough just to sit and listen and take it all in and maybe even recite it, regurgitate it back. Actually, it's about applying them. It's about going beyond knowing it and *being* it. Being it in your everyday life.

So, with every challenge that we face as we're going through life, we can refer back to these five principles. So, we might, you know, ask ourselves if we're facing a challenge: "Am I remembering that there's absolute good in the universe and that I'm an expression of this loving presence, God?"

This creative life force? And that that other person I might be having a challenge with or those other people are also expressions of this loving presence? And if I forget that, then I remember to go to basic principles three and four. I release thoughts that are not in spiritual alignment, and I align my thoughts, words and emotions with spiritual truth. I take time in prayer and meditation, which can help align me and remind me of my spiritual nature and my oneness with all. And then I apply number five; and now I go out and I be what I want to see and experience in the world. I take action to be loving awareness, to be peaceful presence, to be God in action.

So, that's the foundation. We also have the 12 spiritual powers. There's 12 of them, so I'm not going to go into them right now. But also another part of our teachings -- our 12 spiritual powers or abilities, characteristics -- that live within us. So that's our foundation.

Now let's jump into the questions that were submitted. The first one -- I told you these were good!

The first question here: **WHY DO REALLY BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO REALLY GOOD PEOPLE?**

So, part of this, and maybe just as I'm reading it -- you know, my first thought is well, it's implying that there is maybe a human-like God controlling life and saying, *"You get bad things; you get good things."* Again, so just that reminder that, in Unity, we view God as Presence, as a Life Force, as eternal Loving Presence. A living, loving Spirit; Universal Energy.

So, when bad things happen to good people, the short answer would be: unfortunately, life happens. I'm from Southern California. I have seen fires tear through hillsides, knocking out old -- burning down old -- oak trees and native plants, taking houses right down to nothingness. I've watched those oak trees and native California plants grow back. I've seen homes be rebuilt.

Even last Wednesday here in Phoenix, we were all looking out our windows as golf ball-sized hail was falling, right? Got some pictures of that. No one here had their car windows broken, but I did see on the news some people did have their car windows broken. And I would say: don't take it personally if yours did. It just happened that the hail hit your car where it was sitting that day.

So, it's not that one person is better than the other or manifested better or prayed better. It just happened. Life just happens, and it's a bummer. Psychologically, we feel safer putting people in a box or labeling. It helps us understand what we're seeing or experiencing. So, when bad things happen to someone we deem bad or not good people, we feel like, well, that bad is justified ... right? They got what they deserved!

But when something bad happens to someone good, then we want to make sense of it. We want to understand it. Because probably we're also grieving with them; grieving for them.

So, here's what Unity co-founder Charles Fillmore wrote in his book, *"Jesus Christ Heals."* He wrote, *"God is the great heart of the universe and of human beings."* I love that -- just that part alone. God is the great heart of the universe and of human beings, drawing forth all feeling, sympathy, emotion, and all that goes to make up the joys of existence.

So, the fact that you are feeling sympathy for a friend or a family member when something devastating happens means you're connecting to the great heart of the universe. You're connecting to your own divine nature. And so, when you're feeling that, you can ask: *"And what is mine to do here? How can I offer support to the individual? How can I express more Loving Presence? More prayerful presence?"*

Because when you do that, that is being an extension of this living, loving Spirit -- God -- connecting us to one another.

So, Charles Fillmore in the same book wrote, *"God is life. Life is a principle that is made manifest in the living. You're the living. So be that life."* Make it come alive in your daily living. Be that peaceful, supportive, faith-filled Presence or whatever is needed in the situation before you.

Unfortunately, bad things happen. We say, “*Life lifes.*” But as Mr. Rogers -- his mom told him -- that when something frightening happens, to look for the helpers. So, when we see something terrible happening, frightening happening, look for the helpers.

And I would add, be the helper. Be the helper. That's your opportunity to express this God life, this God love through you. Don't get stuck in the why. Why is it happening? Because that keeps us suffering. That keeps us actually at a standstill; frozen. But get yourself in the doing and the asking: How can I express my divine nature in this situation for my friend or my family member? What spiritual opportunity is here for me? I didn't say lesson! What spiritual opportunity is here for me? In other words, what spiritual tool can I apply to the situation?\

So that, when bad things happen, we put our energy and our focus on how to be Divine Presence in the world, in the situation, to make the positive difference. Great question!

Next question, here on your screen: **WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF EVIL, AND WHY IS THERE SO MUCH OF IT IN THE WORLD?**

So, I'm going to actually tackle the second half of that question first. Why is there so much evil in the world? Why is there so much of it in the world? So, remember, everyone, where you place your focus grows.

And what we know now -- what studies show now -- is that we're all in silos when it comes to information, especially if you're on social media. Your device is going to give you -- even your device itself -- is going to give you more of what you like or more of what you hover over and read.

So, if you hit an article about a news story, you're going to get more terrible news stories. The more you spend time there, the more they're going to give you. And I would say that's even true of where we're going to put our attention as far as when it comes to the news. Whatever you're going to put your attention on, you will get more of that.

So, the question becomes: What do I want to focus on? And I'm not asking you to be oblivious to what's happening in the world. Be informed. But where do I want to place most of my time and attention? And I would encourage all of us, myself included: clean out your news and social media, just like you do the weeds. You've got to go through there every once in a while and clean it out. Unfollow. Because it's curated to you.

So, curate it to you and what you want to see more of. Tell it what you want. And that includes, again, unfollowing certain accounts. It includes turning off the television. Be informed, but don't place all your time and attention there. And again, I say this struggling with this myself. Maybe get a buddy ... because I know when I'm down the rabbit hole scrolling going, “*Oh! Doom and gloom!*” my husband has to say, “*And we're done.*” [Congregants laugh] So, get a buddy.

Because it's easier to see -- when we're focusing on that -- it's easier to see everything going wrong. And remember, everyone, that's also what makes news outlets money. That's what makes the influencers money. That's what makes the podcasters money. It's the anger, the division, the negativity that sells. So, it's up to us to make a conscious choice to put all of our focus on something else.

So, follow positive news accounts. Those exist. There's like the Happy Broadcast Company. One just came up on my screen today, see? Because I'm curating! I think it was called Good, Good, Good News. So, there are some positive news accounts out there that will tell you what's good happening. Look for more neutral accounts that aren't going to get you all worked up.

And also, of course, be looking for what there is to be grateful for just as you're going about life. What can I be grateful for? What miracles can I see and find during my day?

As for the beginning part of that question, as for evil, Charles Fillmore wrote that, *"Evil is that which is not of God."* It is error thought -- E-R-R-O-R error thought. Meaning we're not keeping our thoughts on the good, capital G good. Not keeping our thoughts on our connection to the allness of being -- God.

He wrote, "Apparent evil is the result of ignorance." He continues, *"We should not assume that all manifestation is good. All ideas have their foundation in Divine Mind, but humankind has put the limitation on his or her negative thought upon them and therefore see them in a mirror darkly."*

In other words, evil results from our own "stinkin' thinkin'." From our own limiting thoughts/behaviors, that then produce those thoughts and behaviors. Our thinking that separates us has us separate from Divine Source. Human beings' feelings/behaviors -- usually from past traumas -- cause actions that we call evil. Evil comes from us limiting or distorting a divine idea.

So individuals forgetting their spiritual nature -- their divine goodness -- create terrible things. Again, we're creative beings. So we can create a garden or we can create war.

The Book of Matthew, Chapter 5, Verse 15 says, *"No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket but on the lampstand and it gives light to all the house."* Well, I'd have to say to Matthew that, unfortunately, some people do put their light under a bushel basket and then they burn everything down.

And it's being in that dream of what the Buddhists would say, "the dream of separation": the idea of being separate; forgetting their divine nature. And so, they act in ways that are not in alignment with their innate goodness. They've put a heavy blanket over their lamp. The light is still there, but it's hidden. They've forgotten who they are. They -- like you -- are extensions of this living wise presence of Divine Life; of God itself.

Matthew continues, *"Let your light shine before others,"* reminding us to shine and share that divine spark that is within us to everyone around us

So, in summary, make sure you have a balanced intake of the news. Know what's going on, but don't swim in it. Don't marinate in it. Don't make it your whole focus. Because where your focus goes, your life flows. And keep your focus on how you can express your own divine nature, especially in the places where others have forgotten theirs.

So perhaps when we see cruelty in the world, we can see it really as an awakening to: Where can I shine my light? Where can you share your light and make a positive difference?

Next question. So actually, there was a couple questions around **THE LORD'S PRAYER.**

Rev. Richard just did a two-week, like literally just did a two-week series on The Lord's Prayer. He translated it through a Unity or metaphysical lens. He also shared the original Aramaic and Greek languages. So, definitely go back and watch on our website or on YouTube the last two weeks -- October 11th and 18th -- when he covered that.

I'll just add a couple more things here. I think it's important to note that the meaning got changed with the translations as it underwent the thousands of years of translations. Because remember, it was not originally written in English. It has been translated; it's even been changed in attitude. You know, he mentioned about how those last two lines were added afterwards. So, it's been changed and altered and translated many times since its original writing.

So, take, for instance, the word "Father." That can be translated from Aramaic as Source. Our Source. So it's an invitation to have an intimate relationship with Divine Source. Who art in heaven. Well, heaven -- as Unity teaches it -- is not a place. It's a consciousness. You can be in heaven or hell at any time. So, really here what we have is this Divine Source who art within me.

And another note on this prayer ... that Jesus said that this prayer, The Lord's Prayer, was an example. He did not say it was the one and only prayer of all prayers. He said it was an example of a prayer. So

may all of our prayers be such that we remember our connection with our Source. May all of our prayers remind us of our oneness with one another.

In the Book of Exodus, God tells Moses, *"Tell them I AM sent you."* Therefore, I AM is God's name in human form. So whatever God is, you are ... and you can express the same qualities as God: love, forgiveness, grace, peace, understanding. All that you can express -- as an expression of God -- is unlimited.

Therefore, in creating a prayer ... say you're feeling afraid of what's going on in the world. The prayer can be this: *"I open myself to the awareness that there's only One Power and One Presence in my life and in the world. I shift my thoughts to remember my divine nature. Since God is love, I am love. Since God is harmony, I am harmonious. I am love and harmony expressing on earth. I can be harmonious and remember my oneness with others. I choose to move forward in the expression of love, harmony, and peace with others. I see with eyes of love. I look for love. I claim my inner peace. I am so thankful. This is my truth moving forward."*

In Unity, we affirm the spiritual truth we know, even before it's made manifest. So, to close out this piece about The Lord's Prayer -- you can sing it and feel it like it's a favorite blanket or sweater wrapped around you. Or you can sit and just be in the vibration of the song, which is calling you to know your oneness and light with all that is.

Next question: **WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?** [Congregants laugh]

Rev. Sandy just said, *"You got an hour or two?"* I have had different answers to this question throughout my life, even having grown up in Unity, including up to today. And now I can very confidently, everyone, tell you the answer to what the meaning of life is is *"I don't know."* [Congregants laugh] None of us know.

I think all my answers in the past were correct to some extent. However, I don't know that any of us will truly know the answer to this question. We can go down a rabbit hole with this question: What is the meaning of life? Or we can ask: What do I want my life to mean? What do I want my life to mean? That's the question I would encourage you to ask. That's the more important question. It's the question you have agency over. That's the question that -- with deep reflection, meditation, self-awareness, spiritual understanding -- you can answer that. Ultimately, we each decide how we want to be expressions of love, wisdom, and harmony in the world.

So, let's go back to those original five Unity principles. If God is love and wisdom that underlies all of existence, and I'm an expression of God itself, then I am love. I am wisdom. And therefore, I am here to express more of that. I am here -- I think all of us are here -- to be Loving Awareness on earth, expressed in as many different unique ways as there are people in this room who are listening.

And also, I think, because I was reflecting on this after having talked to a good friend of mine. And I thought: well, what is the meaning of life is whatever is before you. So, if you're someone taking care of an elderly parent, taking care of your parent is what the meaning of life is right then. If you're someone who's just had surgery, healing is the meaning of life right then. Being present to whatever is in that moment.

So, I would encourage you not to use your energy trying to get to an answer that we may never know. But to answer the question that allows you to be an expression of Divine Presence on earth: What do I want my life to mean? And how do I want to express that? That's the question. I'm throwing it back to all of you.

And then our last question here: **WHAT BOOKS DO YOU READ OR RECOMMEND ON THE SUBJECT OF SPIRITUALITY?**

I have a lot of books I love, mostly Eric Butterworth. He is a well-known Unity minister/author who used to hold his Sunday services at the Lincoln Center in New York City. His *"In the Flow of Life"* book -- we

just covered four weeks of that on Wednesdays. So, you can go back again to our website. YouTube channel to listen to “In the Flow of Life.”{

Also, I would say anything by Reverend Linda Martella-Whitsett. A good start might be “Divine Audacity.” She takes the 12 Powers and puts it in modern languaging for us. Robert Brumet is another really well-known Unity minister and author. You might want to start with “Living Originally” or “Finding Yourself in Transition.” All these authors I like; they’re modern authors for the modern reader; for someone new to Unity.

You can also join ... Rev. Sandy Hopper has a new group, everybody. She’s reading Unity classics and discussing them. Because those old Unity books -- the original Fillmore books or Emily Cady books -- they were written in the late 1800s/early 1900s. It’s like reading Shakespeare. So, it really is helpful to have a group of folks to read and kind of discuss it over with. So, she meets Wednesdays at 1 p.m. now.

But you can also email me. When I teach the membership class, the “Unity 101” class, I have a whole list of books I recommend. So, if you want to email me, I can get that to you. But you can find all these books and more at the Unity World headquarters website, which is simply unity.org. And you can shop there for any books. But I definitely encourage you to read more New Thought and Unity books. It will just add to your spiritual growth and understanding.

And that, folks, wraps up our “Ask the Minister” Sunday. Thanks for everyone who submitted a question! Your invitation this week is to be the peace and harmony you wish to see in the world.

Blessings, everyone.