



THE JOY OF LETTING GO

by Jim Gordon, President of ILM

about what to do. While I sat in class I was not paying much attention to what was going on. Soon, the teacher asked what was bothering me.

I was surprised that she could know I was troubled with something. I asked her how she knew I had a problem. She said that people often express in their faces and in the way they act their state of mind and their feelings, and that often the person trying to hide something is the last to know that everyone around them is aware of the disturbance in them.

I began to explain to her my dilemma about my toy box. I remember so well what she said, because in that moment I was sure she was going to give me the answer to this situation so I would not have to figure it out myself. Her response was, "These are the decisions that we have to make in our lives which help us to learn to be responsible and to grow up. I am not going to give you an answer, but I will listen if you want to talk about your ideas." Ideas, what ideas? I could not see beyond the fact that I did not want to give up any of my toys. When I told her this, my teacher then shared with me that, "Sometimes we have to let go of the old in order to make room for the new." That made sense to me, and I began to feel something release inside. She then asked me if I wanted to throw the old toys away. I said no. She then said I might want to think about what I wanted to do with them.

As we drove home on the bus I asked my best friend, sitting next to me, what to do. He said he would take the toys and keep them at his house so I could play with them when I came over. That might be my answer, I thought. But then as I looked out the window we drove by a large group of buildings. And as soon as I saw them I knew what I wanted to do with my toys.

I got home and waited for my parents to arrive home from work. Before dinner I went in and told them

JOY continues on the next page ►

When I was seven years old I was faced with a dilemma. It was getting close to Christmas, and I was giving hints to my parents about what I wanted under the tree on Christmas morning. One morning at breakfast my dad said he thought he knew what I wanted for Christmas—but he thought I didn't need any more toys. This shook me and I asked why he thought that. He said that he looked into my room that morning and saw my toy box full-to-overflowing. He said that it looked to him that with so many toys already in my toy box to play with I did not need any more. I tried to explain to him that those were "old" toys and that I was not playing with many of them because I was too old for them. "Oh," he said. "Well why are you keeping them if you don't play with them anymore?" I did not have an answer.

He then walked with me to my room so we could look at my toy box. Sure enough, it was overflowing with toys. We began to take out toys and arrange them in two piles. One pile was for the toys I was still playing with and the other pile was for those I no longer played with. After we were done, there were the two piles—and the pile of toys I still played with was much smaller than the pile of toys I didn't use. This was a surprise to me.

My dad then said that I needed to decide what I wanted to do with the toys in the larger pile. I remember looking at the toys and thinking that even though I did not use the toys anymore I did not want to throw them away. My dad realized what was going on inside of me and said, "You don't have to throw those toys away, but if you want new toys you have to make room for them in your toy box."

What a dilemma! I had to make room for new toys, and that meant that I had to do something with my old toys. I went to school that morning thinking



TWO NEW TAPES BY JIM GORDON

A Simple Way – The Path Of ILM



An Excerpt:

“In truth, neither I, nor anyone else in this world, can do it for you. The only one—the only one that can truly have you experience the inner Light and live in the inner Light and know the inner Light and be the inner Light that you are—is you. It is up to you. Just as it is up to you to graduate from school, to do the work to do that, to get the diploma, and to do whatever it is that you have to do to make your life work—so it is in the inner. It is up to you to do the work. But it isn’t really work so much as it is devotion, it’s dedication. It’s devoting yourself and dedicating yourself to an action of loving, of sitting down and loving God.”

Understanding The ‘Inner’ Pathway



An Excerpt:

“We in Inner Light Ministries present a teaching that is universal. It is one pathway that is a pathway of Loving. It is a pathway of truth. Throughout time it’s been called many things ... but mostly it is The Path, or The Way. This pathway is an ‘inner’ pathway. It has nothing to do with evolution, it has nothing to do with the Masters of Hierarchy, or angels, or teachers outside. It has everything to do with the divine spark that is in you, and you connecting back to that, and awakening to that, and then traveling as that divine spark on up to your own soul and uniting and connecting back here once again in fullness and awareness. Thus knowing who you are in the whole being of God, and living that and manifesting that at this level as well.”



To Order: Each tape is **\$8.95** (Please include **\$3** per order for shipping and handling.) Checks may be made payable to **Inner Light Ministries** and sent to: Inner Light Ministries, P.O. Box 164332, Austin, Texas 78716-4332. Please include your name, address and phone number. *Allow 2-4 weeks for delivery.*

Joy continued

by Jim Gordon

my idea. “I want to give my toys to the orphanage on the way to school.” My dad looked at me with surprise and a smile. I also saw a tear in his eye forming as I told him how I came to this choice.

After dinner we went in and began to box up the toys that were in the ‘outgrown’ pile. As we began to put the toys into the boxes I began to feel a joy inside I did not understand. That Saturday my mom, dad and I got into the car and drove up to the orphanage to deliver the toys. We walked in and my dad asked me to explain why we were there. I told the lady about the toys and she smiled and reached out to take my hand. She thanked me and as she did, I looked up and my mom, dad, and the woman holding my hand all had tears in their eyes.

We unloaded the car and took the boxes inside. Then the lady asked me to come with her so I could meet some of the children that the toys would go to. When she told them what I was doing they all got excited and thanked me. It was then I noticed I also had a tear rolling down my cheek, and I understood the tears I’d seen earlier. I also understood what the joy was that I felt when I began to box up my toys. It was the gift of giving to others.

Soon it was Christmas and under the tree were all the new toys I’d asked for. Receiving these gifts was great. And I felt that I’d already received an even greater gift at the orphanage the day we delivered the toys. I looked up, feeling the gratitude for all I had learned and experienced in these last few days. My mom saw in my face my feelings of loving and thankfulness and she said, “What you are feeling now is the true spirit of Christmas. Sometimes giving is the greatest gift we can receive.” ▲

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES

CALENDAR CLASSES & PROGRAMS: SEPT. 2003 – JAN. 2004

PRESENTED BY JIM GORDON:

For additional information, call 512: 306-1056

WEEKLY CLASSES: Jim's weekly Austin class is held **Tuesdays 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm**,
ILM Center, Franklin Sq. Bldg., 3724 Jefferson, Ste. 100, Austin, TX.

Each class includes spiritual teaching, practical exercises, group discussion, and meditation. Jim helps participants to become more deeply in touch with the Spirit within.

PRESENTED BY BRIAN YEAKEY:

SPIRITUAL COUNSELINGS: Brian is available for spiritual counselings.
Call 512: 306-1056 to schedule an appointment.

These counseling sessions are offered as a service for assisting people in awakening to the Spirit of who they truly are, in living the day-to-day reality of Spirit in their lives, in bringing their lives into greater alignment with walking the spiritual Path of Sound and Light, and in experiencing all the Loving that Spirit has to offer.

Please allow 60 minutes for your session and come prepared with specific questions. Sessions can be done in person or over the phone. They are tape-recorded and the cassette is given to you at the end of the session. There is no charge for this service; however, donations are welcome.

Coins For Kids

Our **COINS FOR KIDS** Christmas service project is coming up real soon ... so if you've been saving your coins or wondering what you might like to do as an expression of service this year, consider participating with us as we once again go on a joyful gift shopping spree for children in need.

This years shopping day will be **December 6th** and it will take place in Austin, Texas.

So mark your calendars and come participate hands on OR send a donation (**before November 30th**) to have your joyful experience of being of service!

For more information call 512: 306-1056.

CHRISTMAS POTLUCK PARTY

Join us for ILM's Christmas celebration at 203 Buckeye Trail in Austin, TX. Everyone is welcome! It's a potluck so bring a dish to share.

DEC. 14, 2003 from 1:00 pm to ???

Call 512: 306-1056 for more information.



ILM EVENTS *in* HAWAII

with ILM Ministers,
Jim Gordon *and* Brian Yeakey

WORKING WITH SPIRIT IN RELATIONSHIPS



WHEN: Sunday, January 11, 2004

TIME: 9 am - 7 pm

WHERE: TBA

DONATION

1.

This workshop will focus on working with Spirit in creating greater intimacy in all of our relationships, including those with ourselves and with God. We will explore how to effectively communicate with ourselves, others and God so that we can more fully experience the Peace, Loving, and Joy of Spirit.

AN ILM SEMINAR

with

JIM and BRIAN

WHEN: Tuesday, January 13

TIME: 7 pm - 9 pm

WHERE: TBA

DONATION

2.

Initiations *and* Spiritual Counselings

Jim and Brian will be available for initiations for those who have been approved.

Brian will be available for
spiritual counseling sessions:

WHEN: Mon., Jan. 12 – Fri., Jan. 16

DONATION

The counseling sessions are offered as a service for assisting people in awakening to the Spirit of who they truly are. *To schedule a counseling session with Brian call 512: 306-1056.*

3.

A POTLUCK DINNER *and* Q&A

with **JIM and BRIAN**

WHEN: Sat., Jan 17 TIME: 6 - 9 pm

WHERE: TBA DONATION

4.

ILM REGISTRATION FORM: Please check the event(s) you will attend, and if you wish to make a donation send a check (payable to ILM) along with this registration form to: ILM, P.O. Box 164332, Austin, Texas 78716-4332

HAWAII EVENTS: **WORKING WITH SPIRIT IN RELATIONSHIPS** **POTLUCK DINNER AND Q&A**
 AN ILM SEMINAR

(Please print.)

NAME(S): _____ **EMAIL:** _____

ADDRESS & ZIP CODE: _____

DAYTIME PHONE: _____ **EVENING PHONE:** _____

Call Sally Geis at 808: 741-2934 to receive more information about these events.

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES CALENDAR

PRESENTED BY LAURA KESTEN:

For additional information, call Laura Kesten at 512: 894-0992

STORIES UNTOLD, KALAMAZOO, MI: *Have you heard your “calling” to write? Have you answered it yet?* In this program, we attend to our own personal callings to write—to write from the heart about our life experiences—our tragedies, our triumphs, our insights, our wisdom, our awakenings, and our opening hearts. We do this through the healing words of our own *untold stories* as we write them down on paper, and share them (optional) in a loving, safe and supportive group. (No experience is necessary!)

2003: SEPT. 12-14 Martha’s Cottage (Lake Michigan retreat) Saugatuck, MI \$125

2004: FEB 7-8, APR 3-4, JUNE 16-22 (Intensive: Traverse City, cost: TBA),
AUG 7-8, OCT 2-3, DEC 4-5

STORIES UNTOLD, AUSTIN, TX: The dates for the Austin program are as follows:

2003: OCT. 10-12, DEC. 5-7 The Hill Country Lighthouse Dripping Springs, TX \$100

2004: JAN 9-11, MAR 24-30 (Intensive: Sedona, cost: TBA),
MAY 14-16, JULY 9-11, SEPT 10-12, NOV 12-14

MOTHERING OURSELVES: Using the book, *Mothering Ourselves*, by Evelyn S. Bassoff, we explore the journey between our mothers and ourselves, as daughters. Bassoff’s extraordinary book eloquently shows us how to turn disappointments of the past into something hopeful and empowering. Regardless if our mothers are with us in body or in spirit, or regardless if we have a physical relationship or one that is distant, as we invite Spirit into our hearts, we can move toward more meaningful, intimate, and honest relationships with our mothers and ourselves.

SEPT. 26-28 The Hill Country Lighthouse Dripping Springs, TX \$100

BOSOM BUDDIES: We so often find that dear friends are as essential to our lives as breathing in and breathing out. In honor of cherished friendships we offer you and your best ‘bud’ this retreat. All processes are done with your buddy and are designed to create a delightful weekend between kindred spirits full of joy, laughter, and connection.

OCT. 24-26 The Hill Country Lighthouse Dripping Springs, TX \$100

A CIRCLE OF WOMEN: 7 PM-9 PM ILM Center, Austin, TX NC

OCT. 3: STRETCH THAT BODY! Oxygenate your blood by gently moving your body. We’ll learn simple Yoga stretches, and heighten our experience of “freedom” with Ecstatic Dance.

NOV. 7: GET OFF YOUR FEET! Your feet are gonna’ love you for bringing them to this Circle of Women. We’ll pamper your feet with massage, essential oils, a foot bath, and fancy toenail painting and decorating.

(Note: please be aware that new programs are often scheduled after the newsletter goes to press, and, in rare instances, published schedules may have to be altered. For current information on any event or series, please call the presenter or contact person listed with the program. Thank you.)

WORKING WITH SPIRIT IN RELATIONSHIPS

with ILM Ministers:
Jim Gordon and Brian Yeakey

DATE: Saturday, October 18th, 2003

TIME: 9:30 AM - 6:30 PM

**PLACE: "Brigade of Light" meeting room at the YMCA Villa
2000 N. Wells St., Fort Wayne**

Donation

This workshop will focus on working with Spirit in creating greater intimacy in all of our relationships, including those with ourselves and with God. We will explore how to effectively communicate with ourselves, others and God so that we can more fully experience the Peace, Loving, and Joy of Spirit.

And a ...



Q&A Session

an informal sharing with Jim Gordon and Brian Yeakey



DATE: Sunday, October 19th, 2003

TIME: 2:00 PM -5:00 PM

PLACE: "Brigade of Light" (as above)

Donation

A **Dinner** will be held at 6:30 pm, following the Q&A Session, at:

Don Hall's Guesthouse Restaurant, Ft. Wayne
People wanting to attend the dinner will need to register for it. Individual checks for meals will be given.

For further information on any of these events call Steven McAfee at 260: 485-2167.

ILM REGISTRATION FORM: Please check the event(s) you will attend, and if you wish to make a donation send a check (payable to ILM) along with this registration form to: Steven McAfee, P.O. Box 5139, Fort Wayne, IN 46895.

WORKING W/ SPIRIT IN RELATIONSHIPS

DINNER

Q&A SESSION

NAME(S):

EMAIL:

ADDRESS & ZIP CODE:

DAYTIME PHONE:

EVENING PHONE:

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES CALENDAR

PRESENTED BY STEVEN R. MCAFEE:

For additional information, call Steven at 260: 485-2167

SUNDAY SERVICES: Steven periodically serves as a guest speaker for various churches and spiritual groups in the Ft. Wayne area. If you would like him to speak to your group, please call to make arrangements. The following are presently scheduled:

SEPT. 28, OCT. 19, NOV. 23, & DEC. 14 11:00 am Brigade of Light Ft. Wayne

COMMUNITY NIGHTS: Our local ILM Christmas party. We'll provide hot teas and cocoa. Feel free to bring some cookies or munchies to share. Weather permitting, we will carol the local neighborhood; otherwise, we'll just sing for ourselves. Come join the fun.

DEC. 23 7:00-10:00 pm 6228 Lombard PL, Ft. Wayne, IN No Charge

SEEKERS OF INNER LIGHT: (Kalamazoo area monthly study circle) This group is intended to serve spiritual seekers who desire a community of kindred spirits with whom to study and share their journey. Each session includes time for group meditation and discussion. *If you are interested, please call Carolyn Dailey at 269-327-6851 for our current meeting schedule and locations.* Donation.

THE ROOTS OF CHRISTIANITY—PART II: (Five week class series) We will meet once a week on Tuesdays in September. This is the second series of weekly classes presenting information on the origin and early life of the Jesus movement. We will learn about Jesus by focusing on his parables, prayers, and "sermon on the mount," in light of the religious and social context in which they were presented. By the end of the series, you will know a number of spiritual practices used by Jesus and his disciples that you can use in your own life. Call Steven at 260: 485-2167 to register or for more information.

SEPT. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 7:00-8:30 pm Unity Christ Church—Ft. Wayne Donation

"KNOCK" PROGRAM: This is the final series of a three-year program. The first segment was called the ASC program, the second the SEEK program, and this final installment the KNOCK program. Participation in the two previous segments is not a pre-requisite for registration. The new KNOCK program is open to anyone interested in deepening their spiritual life through daily meditation, study, and devotional practices. An introductory luncheon meeting will be held on Saturday September 27th in Ft. Wayne. The KNOCK program content, requirements, and enrollment procedure will be presented from 11:00 am-12:00 pm, followed by a luncheon discussion. To register for the luncheon meeting, call Steven by Tuesday September 23rd. There is no cost to attend the luncheon, and attendance will NOT obligate you to enroll in the program. If you are interested in the program, but will be unable to attend the luncheon, contact Steven. Enrollment for this series will close Oct. 3rd.

SEPT. 27 11:00 am-1:00 pm Hilton Hotel, Foster Room Ft. Wayne No charge

Workshops will be held on the *fourth* Sundays of the month from 2:00-5:00 pm in Ft. Wayne. The 2003 dates are **Oct. 26** and **Nov. 23**.

SILENCE AND MEDITATION RETREAT: This retreat will include group silent meditations, individual meditations in solitude, private journal writing, instruction in contemplation techniques, chanting, and gentle yoga postures. A majority of the weekend will be spent in silence together, learning how to listen more deeply within.

OCT. 10-12 Fri. 7:30 pm- Sun. 2:30 pm Gilchrist, Three Rivers, MI \$150

Living A Life In Gratitude

an ILM Retreat

with Jim Gordon, Brian Yeakey, Laura Kesten and Steven McAfee



DATE: NOV. 14-16, 2003

TIME: Friday 7:00 pm - Sunday 12:30 pm

**LOCATION: Seasons - A Center for Renewal at the Fetzer Institute,
9292 West KL Ave., Kalamazoo, MI**

**REGISTRATION FEES: \$100 per person for onsite accommodations .
(Includes workshop materials, room Fri-Sat nights, three meals on Sat. and breakfast on Sun.)**

OR

**\$65 per person for offsite accommodations on their own at local home or hotel, etc.
(Includes workshop materials, lunch and dinner on Sat. and breakfast on Sun.)**

In this workshop, we'll focus simply on gratitude.

We will look at how living a life in gratitude can be beneficial to our meditation, to our relationships, to our health, to everything in our lives. We will share practices for enhancing our awareness of gratitude, for improving our attitudes, and for creating an atmosphere of appreciation in our lives.

This workshop centers around a positive, upbeat theme in a positive, upbeat environment.

Already there is so much to be grateful for!

Come and Join us for this exciting weekend with the ILM staff and loving participants who want to live more fully in gratitude.

For more information on this retreat call Steven McAfee at 260: 485-2167.



“BUT! BUT!” YOU SAY!

by Laura Kesten-Beaver, ILM Minister

Recently my husband Tom and I were sitting at a table in a Chinese restaurant in Austin having lunch with Jim Gordon and Brian Yeakey. We were looking over the menu—this wonderful restaurant had lots of vegetarian choices for me to choose from. When the waiter came back to take our order, I give him my request. To my small dismay, he informed me, “I’m sorry but we don’t have that today.” “But-but ...” I stammered. Slightly dismayed, I looked at the menu again so I could make another choice, and this time the waiter took my order, writing it down on his pad of paper. While we were waiting for our dinner, I told Jim and Brian about a problem I was having in my life. They offered me several suggestions as to how to handle this problem, but each time I would quickly refuse it, launching my rejection with a “But ...”, followed by a reason as to why ‘I knew’ that particular suggestion would not work. This little ‘song and dance’ continued for awhile until Brian stopped the music. He looked at me with a twinkle in his eye and said, “You know, if you keep feeding that ‘But(t),’ it’s just gonna keep getting bigger!” I leaned against the back of my chair, opened my mouth to say something—I could feel my lips come together in an attempt to sing out yet another “But ...” This time, I stopped and there I was, mouth open, without any other tune to croon. Luckily I was saved just then by the arrival of our food. The waiter set our plates in front of us and left. We all looked at each other and laughed.

Brian’s humorous insightful comeback to my unremitting “Buts” was my ‘fortune cookie’ at the Chinese restaurant that day, because it led me to try a little experiment. I decided that whenever I was looking at suggestions in working out a problem, and the word “but” began to form either in my consciousness or on my lips, I’d change my vocab-diet by replacing the “but” word with an alternative word, such as “hmm”, then add the suggestion to a menu of possibilities.

I tried my experiment first with the problem I’d vetted with Jim and Brian at our Chinese lunch. I wrote down their suggestions and vowed to myself to try them, one by one. The first suggestion ... hmmm ... well I’d already tried that one to no avail. So I moved to their second ... that one was new. So I tried it. Nope, that one didn’t work either. But you know what? It felt good to be TRYING things. And during this latest try a great solution of my OWN popped into my head. I tried this one—and it worked! My experiment was a success! HMMM!

I learned three wonderful things as a result of performing my experiment. First was that I learned to shift my attitude from impossibility to possibility, from limitation to expansion—from inaction to ACTION. I went from seeing every suggestion as a dead-in-the-water impossibility, thus nixing it and settling into the unhappy inertia of defeatism, to simply being able to add each suggestion to a menu of lively potential possibilities, ‘trials runs’ in a ‘life experiment’. Secondly, I realized that if, as happens, the ‘waiter of life’ informs me he is not able to bring me my first choice, I can simply look over my ‘menu’ again and choose another selection. When we make a choice in our lives that may not give us the result we were hoping for, we too can make another selection from our menu of ‘life possibilities’. And lastly, I discovered that writing out a menu of potential possibilities is key in adopting a more affirmative and effective approach to problem-solving, thus opening the floodgates of ideas and possibilities positively and abundantly.

For me, a “But” had become an overfed excuse to not problem-solve, to instead just sit down and allow the “But” to expand into a huge wallowing mass that squashed any problem-solving possibility. Brian’s playful comment helped me remember that in order to stop feeding my “But” I needed merely to change my unhealthy diet of limited thinking, and to expand it to considering the potential of every possibility written on a new menu of “Life’s Hmm’s.” ▲



INNER DIRECTION, OUTER REFLECTION

by Brian Yeakey, ILM Minister

One of the things I've learned over the years is that what's going on inside of me reflects into the outer world. When I'm feeling happy, I'll share that happiness in my expression by being more joyful, enthusiastic and uplifting. Or if I'm feeling sad, I'll often be silent or more reserved and closed down, or I'll express myself more pessimistically. Either way, it comes through in what I say, and what I do.

The more I've realized this over time, the more I've paid attention to my internal states, in order to work with whatever is going on inside of me to begin to direct it in ways that would be more uplifting and loving for myself and those around me. One of the main ways that I do this is by being more accepting of whatever is going on inside of me or in the world around me, regardless of whether it appears negative or positive, and also regardless of what others may think, say, or do. I just move in the direction of accepting it all in a state of neutrality. And in that neutrality, I experience the light of loving begin to come into me and fill me in such a way that whatever may have been going on inside of me, thoughts or feelings or actions of negativity or positivity, dissolves into this loving. Then, all that's left is the loving. Just loving. And in this state of loving, things in me and around me begin to change to reflect this 'beingness of loving' that I am in. It is truly a magical experience!

I'll share with you one experience of this happening. In this case it was a negative experience. A few years ago I was on a trip with Jim Gordon, and we were out sight seeing. As it got later in the day I began experiencing a lot of upset and irritation inside of me, so I decided to go back to the hotel we were staying at and 'chill out' to take care of myself. By the time I got back to the hotel, I was feeling very irritated and angry. After using the restroom, I somehow had gotten the zipper on my pants stuck on the fabric, and

it really upset me because of the state I was already in. In a rage, I just tore my pants from the zipper all the way down the pant leg to the very bottom of the cuff. I was so mad I ripped the other pant leg as well and as I was tearing it, in my rage, I somehow knocked myself down to the floor. It was a hard, tile floor and I ended up hurting myself (I had bruises later). The upset and irritation had built up so much in me that I just let it out in this burst of energy expressed outwardly as a destructive rage.

It is amazing to me when I look at this situation to see how I let the irritation build up inside of me—starting with negative thinking, then negative emotions, and all the way into a negative, physical action. And in the process I ended up hurting myself. From the inner to the outer, it reflected through each level. I got to see the power of how energy moves through the levels and is reflected from one into the next. It all happened in such a short span of time that I could see and tie together all the interactions and reactions in such a way that it brought me a clear understanding of how it works. I learned immensely from it. Negative experiences can be great teachers!

This experience brought me a wonderful lesson of how the inner reflects into the outer and how what we do with it affects all of our experiences. Afterward I began paying much more attention to how this works in my life. I decided that I would be more 'present' with whatever was going on inside of me, and that I would begin to work with it, right 'in the moment', with a sense of acceptance and neutrality. I learned that I could inwardly choose the direction I wanted to go, and that in making that choice it would reflect outwardly and I would get the more loving experiences that go with that.

So, I keep choosing acceptance and neutrality more and more. And as I do, my life keeps getting better and better, and more and more loving! ▲



THE MAINE THING IN LIFE

by Steven McAfee, ILM Minister and Midwest Coordinator

This summer my wife, Anita, and I visited the southern coast of Maine, a place neither of us had ever been before. Our ‘vacations’ are usually part business/part vacation—traveling somewhere for a workshop or meeting and then doing some sightseeing before returning home. This was to be a pure vacation—time away from our daily responsibilities to relax, explore, and be spontaneous. We were eager for the freedom to just ‘be’ together.

At first, we found ‘just being’ to be difficult. We kept feeling like there was something we ‘should’ be doing, that whatever we were doing, we ‘should have’ been doing something else; no matter what direction we took, there was another direction we ‘should have’ taken. As we eased into just being where we were with whatever was happening at that moment, a feeling of peace began to arise within us, a deep sense of inner relaxation. It felt as though God’s Presence was everywhere, gently supporting us in our every movement.

Unlike most of our travels, we deliberately chose not to have an itinerary of things to do. We would go wherever our hearts led us. The scenery along the rocky coastline was breathtaking. Around every corner there seemed to be a view even more beautiful and awe-inspiring than the last. When we would find a lovely rocky beach or a quaint little town, we would think about stopping to explore it more fully. But then, we would say to each other, “No, there could be something even better just up the road,” and we would keep on driving. And sure enough, there *was* more to see, always more to see. So, we passed by a number of inviting spots in search of the perfect one, the ‘just right’ place to stay that would have the best of everything—that perfect place we had dreamed of in which to experience the essence of Maine. After several hours, it finally occurred to us that we were, in fact, missing Maine. *That* wasn’t what we wanted at all. So Anita said a little prayer for guidance, and we pulled into a motel. It turned out to be a cozy little apartment, tastefully decorated and remarkably affordable. We discovered many fantastic places nearby to visit—unique shops, an inspiring lighthouse on a rocky prominence, and friendly family-owned restaurants with real ‘home-cooking.’ We had a thoroughly wonderful time. The

time we spent there has become one of our favorite vacation memories, and we almost missed it, in search of that elusive, ‘perfect’ somewhere, which always seemed to be awaiting us just a little further up the road.

At almost the same instant, we both had a realization: not only had we been missing Maine in search of our illusory perfection, we live our lives that way!

How often do we drive right past the people, opportunities, and blessings God has given us right now, always looking for something better, something more, that ‘perfect’ something or someplace of our dreams? Instead of seeing what we have in the present, we look to what we hope to have in the future. Instead of committing ourselves to what is present, we avoid commitments, thinking we will find something better. We tell ourselves that we are “keeping our options open.” We won’t commit to dinner with a friend this weekend because by then, we might find something better to do. We won’t register for the retreat yet, because a better opportunity might come along, and we wouldn’t want to miss it. We miss the love that is being offered to us right now, because we are so pre-occupied with finding an imaginary love we hope to receive. We walk by an opportunity to be of service, looking for a ‘more important’ service to do. We do not commit to our spiritual teacher or practice right now because we are so busy searching for the higher and more perfect one we will find ... someday. The problem is, we don’t live “someday,” we live now. What really happens is that nothing ‘perfect’ comes along, and by the time we decide to commit, our friend has already made other plans, the retreat is already full, and life has moved on. We can travel all the way to the end of the road without ever having experienced the journey. In the illusory hope of not missing something important, we end up missing our lives.

Here’s what we learned: don’t wait for a better world, a better time, a more perfect person, or a more perfect path. *This* is the place and the people, and the blessing. Let’s stop *looking* for our life and start really *living* it. For, as we discovered in our Maine adventure, when we commit to the opportunity that is at hand, instead of waiting for the one to come, the love revealed in what is present overwhelms our heart with awe and gratitude. ▲

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER

ABOUT ILM

INNER LIGHT MINISTRIES (ILM) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the development and balancing of the fourfold nature of the individual. Towards this goal, it provides education and services concerned with the integration of the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical aspects of the self, and also provides publications and materials that aid in this process.

Among ILM's fundamental tenets is that we truly are "temples of the Holy Spirit." As we seek and express this presence within, we find the peace, love, joy, and wisdom we all so earnestly desire. The many services of ILM are geared towards this path of individual unfoldment—such as meditation, study, and service to humanity on an individual and group basis.

ILM also offers initiation into the meditation practice of "The Path of Sound and Light," an inner path of spiritual awakening.

Please write or phone for more information about ILM.

REMASTERED TAPE by Jim Gordon

Lord, Make Me Worthy and The Master In Your Heart



An Excerpt: (This tape will be available October, 2003.)

"We live in a very small part of ourselves, in our conscious minds. But there is a lot more to us than that little conscious mind that we dwell in every day that makes up maybe 5 to 10% of who we really are. And as long as you look outside of yourself, as long as you look to this world for answers, you're going to live in that small part of you. And you're never going to find that fulfillment, that peace and that joy of being linked and lined up with the God within you as long as you come from that reference point. But if you can begin to close your eyes and go within, and begin to touch all the other realms and dimensions of yourself—that's when you're going to begin to see who you really are. You're much more than this physical body and you're much more than this conscious mind. It's up to you to go out, and go in, and find it all."

—from **Lord, Make Me Worthy**

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