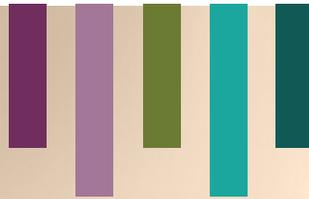


BACK TO BASICS 2023



Five Week Sunday Series

Spiritual Practices

for Healing, Thriving, and
Peace of Mind



MileHi Church

It's different here.™



Table of Contents

Introduction..... 3

Week One: Spiritual Psychology: Change Your Thinking
Change Your Life 4

Week Two: Thoughts and Prayers and Action:
Co-create Your Life with Spirit 8

Week Three: Meditation for Maniacs: Finding Peace
in Who You Are 12

Week Four: Freedom through Forgiveness: Maintaining
Relationships that Matter 19

Week Five: The Heart of Stillness: Revealing Truth
Where You Are 20

INTRODUCTION

Facilitators:

This book is a facilitators guide. It is designed for facilitators and you are at choice to encourage your group members to download it from milehichurch.org.

Group Times and Members:

Groups should be at least one hour, but no more than an hour and a half. Ideally, each group should have no more than ten participants, including the facilitators.

Opening and Closing Blessings:

A brief blessing should start and end each group session. Ideally, a facilitator will do an opening blessing, as trust grows in the group, it might be beneficial to invite a participant to say a closing blessing.

Key Points:

These key points sum up what we intend the participant to understand in each week's session. You can choose to share these points with the group, or use them as your own guide for how to use the curriculum effectively.

Discussion Questions:

These questions are designed to create meaningful sharing in your group. You can choose which, if any to ask.

Processes:

These meditations, worksheets, and experientials are designed to assist the participants inner exploration of the weekly topic. Choose the ones that you feel will be most resonant with your group.

For Next Week:

At the end of each session an idea to contemplate or suggested practice leading into next week's theme is suggested.

Sharing Guidelines:

It is recommended that you review these guidelines in your first session and refer back to them as needed.

Sacred Listening – When someone is sharing I do not just listen, but do so with the intention of not judging or trying to solve and with a loving heart.

Sharing from Personal Experience – When I share, I do so from my own personal experience, recognizing that what may be true for me, may not be true for others. I do not speak to other's experiences outside of how they resonate in my own.

Confidentiality – What someone shares in class I will not share about outside of class unless it is with the consent of the person who shared it.

Authenticity – I will be sincere with my sharing by holding myself to the present and not the past, not to someone else's, but my own vision of myself, not the role's I play but who I really am.



“Let us then approach the Science of Mind—the Science of Spiritual Psychology—with awe, but not with fear; with truly a humble thought, but not with a sense that we are unworthy. Let us approach it normally, happily, willing to accept, glad to experiment, hoping and believing that as the result of our efforts we shall each derive a great good—a sound understanding of the natural laws of Life, as they apply to the individual and his relationship to the whole universal scheme of things.”

–Ernest Holmes

WEEK ONE



Spiritual Psychology: Change Your Thinking Change Your Life

Perhaps the greatest promise of the Science of Mind is not just in the existence of a higher power, but that by improving our relationship with this power, we can change our lives for the better. This Power is present and willing, if we are willing to come present to it ready for renewal. The Power is willing, the question is can we learn to be able to make the changes in our mind, to invite a meaningful shift in our lives?

The field of psychology, one which is associated with self-improvement, has many threads, but arguable we can deduce one that reduces the individual to processes and functions in one's body, society, and environment. There is also another thread, however, that also seeks to link the individual to their potential. This is what a spiritual psychology seeks to do—to connect each practitioner to that place where their mind intersects with Divine Possibility. It is this concept that leads to the belief that indeed, "anything is possible."

Key Points of the Week:

- The Science of Mind and Spirit is a form of spiritual psychology.
- Although we don't know everything there is to know about God, we believe that our minds are connected with the Infinite, and that we can consciously co-create our lives with a Higher Power.
- By changing our thinking, we can change our lives. Small changes, can lead to big shifts.

Quotes for the Journey:



"No one can tell you what your new design for living should be, nor should anyone attempt to. This is for you to plan. You are your own architect, but some of the plans you have drawn in the past may have resulted in some structures of experience which have not been all together good. You are not going to be supplied with a new set of blue prints. Rather you are going to find out how to be a better architect."

~ Ernest Holmes



"It doesn't matter what did or did not happen then. It only matters what happens NOW."

~ Cheri Huber



"Contemporary psychology has mostly studied not-having rather than having, striving rather than fulfillment, frustration rather than gratification, seeking for joy rather than having attained joy, trying to get there rather than being there."

~ Abraham Maslow

? Discussion Questions

Icebreaker:

1. What is something you are proud of that you accomplished this past year?
2. Have you experienced a “Higher Power” act in your life, how so?
3. Where in your life would you like to change your thinking so your life might change?



Optional Process

Each group member writes something they want to shift in their lives. Be specific as possible and affirmative.

Example:

- Increase Peace of Mind
- Greater Intimacy with my Spouse
- Be Ten Pounds Lighter

Write three things you can do each month towards accomplishing this goal: (Give 3 Minutes)

Examples:

- Increase Peace of Mind
 - ◆ Get a massage.
 - ◆ Complete reading a new spiritual book.
 - ◆ Take a personal day.
- Greater Intimacy with my Spouse
 - ◆ Romantic Get Away.
 - ◆ Write a Love Letter.
 - ◆ Get them a thoughtful Gift.
- Be Ten Pounds Lighter
 - ◆ Take an extended hike.
 - ◆ Complete an inspirational book.
 - ◆ Weigh myself and do something healthy to celebrate my success.

Write five things you can do each week towards accomplishing this goal: (Give 3 minutes)

Examples:

- Increase Peace of Mind
 - ◆ Take a nature walk
 - ◆ Journal
 - ◆ Talk to a trusted source (friend, practitioner)

- ◆ Extended Meditation.
- ◆ Go to Church.

- Increase Intimacy with my Spouse

- ◆ Date Night (even if it's at home)
- ◆ Download and use a couple's conversation App.
- ◆ Text my partner what I appreciated about them this week.
- ◆ Make a list about what I appreciated about myself as a partner this week.
- ◆ Do something my partner wants to do that may not be my favorite.

- Be Ten Pounds Lighter

- ◆ Have one day with a more advanced diet.
- ◆ Weigh Myself (how will I celebrate my success).
- ◆ Healthy Grocery Shop.
- ◆ Create meal plan for week.
- ◆ Say a prayer releasing weight I don't need.

Write ten things you are willing to do each day to achieve your goal (Give 5 Minutes)

Examples:

- Increase Peace of Mind
 - ◆ When I wake up, and put my feet on the floor I will affirm "Today is going to be a great day."
 - ◆ When I lay down to sleep, I will remember what I am most grateful for that day.
 - ◆ In the morning, I will meditate for at least five minutes.
 - ◆ In the evening, I will read an inspirational book for at least give minutes.
 - ◆ I will make sure I have a moment of silence each day—be it in the car, or on a walk, or at the dinner table.

- ◆ I will respond to stressful reactions in me, with positive self-regard.
- ◆ In the morning, I will affirm what I want to experience this day.
- ◆ At least once, after I eat, I will take a walk.
- ◆ I will tell someone I love I love them.
- ◆ I will ask myself each day before dinner, “Is there someone I need to let back into my heart today?”

- **Increase Intimacy with my Spouse**

- ◆ When I wake up, I will touch my partner lovingly.
- ◆ I will consciously tell my partner I love her each day.
- ◆ When I finish my tea and reading at night and move to the couch, I will touch my partner.
- ◆ Each day, I will do something to better understand my partner.
- ◆ I will do an act of service for my partner.
- ◆ I will check in with myself to see how receptive I am to love, and how willing I am to love.
- ◆ If I am feeling needy, I will ask if there is anything I myself can do, to make myself feel loved.
- ◆ I will note how I felt loved and supported by my partner.
- ◆ I will check in with my partner.
- ◆ I will write in my gratitude journal about my partner.

- **Be Ten Pounds Lighter**

- ◆ Daily Exercise.
- ◆ Only eat healthy snacks.
- ◆ No seconds at dinner.
- ◆ Take a walk after a meal.
- ◆ Say no to bread or appetizer before dinner.
- ◆ Drink a full glass of water before lunch and dinner.
- ◆ Do something that brings me joy.
- ◆ At the end of the day, acknowledge my successes.
- ◆ Affirm, “I am lighter, healthier, and happier.”
- ◆ Respond to guilt with self-regard.

Now, identify at least one monthly and weekly habit, and three daily habits you are willing to practice this year.

Questions for Discussion:

What of your goals are you willing to share?

What do you think are the most creative, the bigger monthly or weekly behaviors, or the daily behaviors?

Weekly Affirmation:

My life is changing because I am choosing the truth of who I am.

For Next Week:

- Practice BJ Fogg’s “Maui Habit.” Each day when you wake up and put your feet on the ground, say “Today is going to be a great day.”
- Note your findings and let’s explore next week.

WEEK TWO

Thoughts and Prayers and Action: Co-create Your Life with Spirit

Affirmative Prayer is the key tool of the Science of Mind practitioner. It is by affirmative prayer that we acknowledge our relationship with a higher power, and with that knowledge, look at our life and affirm what that means.

This contributes to the health of our bodies, relationships, self-image, and vision.

Affirmative Prayer isn't just a means to manifestation, but to seeing clearly, and living authentically.

Key Points:

- Affirmative Prayer claims what you seek later, now.
- Affirmative Prayer helps us see life truly, from a spiritual perspective.
- When you can't "know the truth" for yourself, ask someone else to.

Quotes for the Journey:



"Every day, think as you wake up, 'Today I am fortunate to be alive, I have a precious human life, I am not going to waste it. I am going to use all my energies to develop myself, to expand my heart out to others; to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. I am going to have kind thoughts towards others; I am not going to get angry or think badly about others. I am going to benefit others as much as I can.'"

~ The Dalai Lama

"Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing his works good."

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson



"Learn to exchange fears, doubts, and uncertainties for faith. Faith can make you whole. Faith can convert fear into certainty, poverty in riches, disease into health. Faith can lift you from a valley of despair into a mountain of hope and certainty."

~Ernest Holmes

Discussion Questions

1. Report back on your practice of the “Maui Habit.” Was this a form of affirmative prayer?
2. How is affirmative prayer different than other forms of prayer?
3. When is a time you saw a demonstration for a prayer?



Optional Process:

Do it Yourself Prayer Request (HANDOUT)

Your Name: _____

Your Email or Phone Number: _____

Condition: What is the Current State of Affairs?

Desired Outcome: What is the highest and best you can envision taking place?

What Qualities of Spirit Would You Most Like to Be Embodied:

Ex: Faith, Love, Peace of Mind, Healing, Wholeness

Would you like to receive?

- A written prayer via email
- A call from someone at the Prayer and Care Center
- An affirmation via email

Discuss What it was like to go through each step.

Was it helpful to clearly write out the condition? Does this help us become willing to let it go?

Was it helpful to write the desired outcome? Do you resonate with the idea that “You can’t get what you want until you know what it is?”

Was it supportive to identify qualities of Spirit?
Are these things we can embody now even if
the full demonstration of our prayer has yet to
take place?

Practitioner: Gather up the prayer requests and
do a group prayer affirming the qualities of spirit
for each group member.

Weekly Affirmation:

I claim my highest and best, right here, right now.

For Next Week:

- On your prayer request, choose to receive a
written prayer or affirmation. Did you receive
one. What was it like to read or practice what
it said?

WEEK THREE



Meditation for Maniacs: Finding Peace in Who You Are

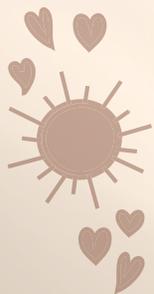
There are things about meditation that are simply not true:

- That you have to have absolute silence or that it must be free of distractions. That it must take a long time. That your mind races to fast to accomplish its purpose. That it's hard to do.
- Meditation is really the ability to appreciate in the present moment. When we do this, it anchors us in "what is," and instead of reverting back to our perceptions of what has been, opens us up to what really is and can be.

Key Points:

- Meditation is not hard.
- Meditation goes hand and hand with intention.
- Meditation can inspire greater peace in your life.

Quotes for the Journey:



"In silence we recognize the need to be at home with ourselves in order that we may go out to meet others, not just with a mask of affability, but with real commitment and authentic love."

~ Thomas Merton



"Our inner chatter isn't all bad, of course. Sometimes it's creative, generous, or funny. But if we don't pay close attention—which very few of us are taught how to do—it can be a malevolent puppeteer."

~Dan Harris



"Just practice zazen in a certain posture. Do not think about anything. Just remain on your cushion without expecting anything. Then eventually you will resume your own true nature. That is to say, your own true nature resumes itself."

~ Shunryu Suzuki

Discussion Questions

1. Do you have a morning spiritual practice? If so, what does it consist of?

2. Are there other types of meditation besides “sitting still?”

3. Did you have any results from your prayer request from last week?



Process: Meditation Practice

Begin with sharing this from Ernest Holmes:



“We should develop the practice of communing daily with the Spirit that resides within us. And such communion should be based on a deep inward sense of belonging to Life, of being a part of it, of trusting it, and having confidence in it, and of knowing that as we do so the future is certain in such degree as we make the present a time of joy, of happiness, of peace, and of good-will toward others.”

–Ernest Holmes

Now we are going to move step by step into our meditation.

Get into a comfortable position and get as straight as you can while it is still comfortable.

- Why would meditators do this? Please think of your answers and we will share after the meditation is complete.

For example: Straightening our bodies symbolizes connecting heaven and earth. Our bottom, grounds to the earth, our head rises the sky.)

- Now fold either your legs or your hands. Notice how it feels to connect the two. In prayer, one might get on one’s knees as an act of humility and surrender to God. Why

might a meditator fold her legs or hands? Again, just note what comes up for you silently and we will share when complete.

For example: To symbolize coming back to oneness from duality or “two-ness”. To symbolize connecting with ourselves—“getting it together.”)

- Shunryu Suzuki said “While you are continuing this practice, week after week, year after year, your experience will become deeper and deeper, and your experience will cover everything you do in your everyday life. The most important thing is to forget all gaining ideas, all dualistic ideas. In other words, just practice zazen in a certain posture. Do not think about anything. Just remain on your cushion without expecting anything. Then eventually you will resume your own true nature. That is to say, your own true nature resumes itself.”

- Now, close your eyes.
- What do you see? How do you feel? What does closing our eyes symbolize in meditation or prayer?

Example: A moving from the exterior reality of the senses into the inner reality of the Spirit. Going within. Turning away from “conditions.”)

- Now, bring your awareness to your breathing.
- Notice how this affects you?
- One thing, paying attention to your breath most certainly does is connect your conscious mind with something your body does without conscious effort, breathe. This can symbolize a connecting with the conscious and the

subjective, awareness and the unconscious. How amazing it is that there are so many aspects of our being, that our survival is totally dependent on, that happen with no conscious effort at all.

- What else might this spiritually symbolize? (A coming together of the outer and inner realities. A doorway between earth and the spiritual side of life. Disciplined mindfulness)
- We will now take 5 minutes to be in our posture, to keep our eyes closed or to leave them open slightly, allowing them to focus on the floor, and to continue to connect our awareness to our breathing, calling it back if



“We should develop the practice of communing daily with the Spirit that resides within us. And such communion should be based on a deep inward sense of belonging to Life, of being a part of it, of trusting it, and having confidence in it, and of knowing that as we do so the future is certain in such degree as we make the present a time of joy, of happiness, of peace, and of good-will toward others.”

–Ernest Holmes

we get distracted.

- Hearing this quote again as we complete this meditation, does it resonate in a different way at all? Does it ring truer?

When complete here are some questions to ask for sharing:

- Meaning of being comfortable?
- Meaning of posture?
- Meaning of closing eyes?
- Meaning of focusing attention on the breath?
- Can anyone think of benefits that meditation could bring them personally?
- Are there aspects of meditation that we can practice or carry with us during the day?

Example: Focusing on breath in traffic, finding a strong posture for a meeting, taking a

conscious moment to close ones eyes and breath before opening emails)

Affirmation:

As I am now, I am embrace by Spirit.

For Next Week:

Make a commitment to meditate every day this week. What did you notice?

WEEK FOUR

Freedom through Forgiveness: Maintaining Relationships that Matter

We often think of forgiveness as a grand act in response to a great offense. Certainly, this is an important aspect of forgiveness. Yet, forgiveness is also an everyday tool for even the slightest slights. When we don't practice an everyday forgiveness, those slights and nicks, may not seem to do much in the moment, but they can add up leading to a sense of victimhood, burnout, and resentment.

Forgiveness results in healing in relationships grace in those that end and don't renew, but just as much, it sets us free to be our best self. The person we want to be.

Key Points:

- Forgiveness is often not a one-time process, but a daily practice.
- Forgiveness is a vital part of healthy and successful relationships.
- Forgiveness is a profound way in which we experience God's love, our own love, and the love of others.

Quotes for the Journey:



"Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation."

~ Viktor E. Frankl



"You can ask forgiveness of others, but in the end the real forgiveness is in one's own self. I think that young men and women are so caught by the way they see themselves. Now mind you. When a larger society sees them as unattractive, as threats, as too black or too white or too poor or too fat or too thin or too sexual or too asexual, that's rough. But you can overcome that. The real difficulty is to overcome how you think about yourself. If we don't have that we never grow, we never learn, and sure as hell we should never teach."

~ Maya Angelou



"Renewing a relationship is a creative act. We make a new relationship. It is possible to build a new relationship regardless of the realities of the old relationship."

~ Desmond Tutu

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think self-forgiveness is immediate or more of a gradual process?

2. Is forgiveness as important a spiritual practice as prayer is?

3. How was your experience with meditation this past week?



Process One:

This could also take place of the discussion questions. Either cut up or email each group member a quote on forgiveness to read in your group, and share what it means to them. Open it up to other's thoughts and discussion as you wish.

"Forgiveness is not an occasional act; it is a permanent attitude." ~ Martin Luther King

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong." ~ Gandhi

"Forgiveness has nothing to do with absolving a criminal of his crime. It has everything to do with relieving oneself of the burden of being a victim-letting go of the pain and transforming oneself from victim to survivor." ~ C.R. Strahan

"The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world." ~ Marianne Williamson

"Yes, your compassion must go this deep. There is no human being who does not deserve your forgiveness. There is no human being who does not deserve your love." ~Paul Ferrini

"Forgiveness is unlocking the door to set someone free and realizing you were the prisoner." ~ Max Lucado

"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." ~Jesus

**"Experience is not what happens to you. It is what you do with what happens to you."
~ Aldous Huxley**

"We arrive in tis world undivided, integral, whole. But sooner or later, we erect a wall between our inner and outer lives, trying to protect what is within us or to deceive the people around us. Only when the pain of our dividedness becomes more than we can bear do most of us embark on an inner journey toward living "divided no more." ~ Parker Palmer

"At its core, forgiveness is an act of radical self-interest" ~ Frederick Beuchner

**"If you think something from the past is hurting you, it is the thought that is hurting you now."
~James Hillman**

**"Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day. You shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense."
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson**

"Forgiving and being reconciled to our enemies or our loved ones are not about pretending that things are other than they are. It is not about patting one another on the back and turning a blind eye to the wrong. True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the hurt, the truth. It could even sometimes make things worse. It is a risky undertaking but in the end

it is worthwhile, because in the end only an honest confrontation with reality can bring real healing. Superficial reconciliation can bring only superficial healing.” ~ Desmond Tutu

Affirmation:

I forgive. I am forgiven. I am ready to renew into a greater experience of now.

For Next Week:

Try practicing all three practices this week, Meditation, Affirmative Prayer, and Forgiveness. Does one resonate more than another? Do all equal up to a more complete way of spiritual practice?

WEEK FIVE

The Heart of Stillness: Revealing Truth Where You Are

One of the great benefits of a spiritual practice is the experience of “stillness.” This experience can be described a feeling of at-one-ment, or of being fully present, or of having an extra layer of awareness that is grounded in peace, or all of the above.

You don’t have to be absolutely still to get to the heart of stillness. All that is required is reverence for whatever is in this moment, and an ability to forget everything else. When this takes place, it as if you experience a layer of reality that is always in “stillness” and where “all is well.”

Key Points:

- Stillness isn’t absolute quite, but a soul awareness even in the midst of a busy world.
- Anyone can achieve an experience of stillness.
- In stillness we meet our true selves, over and over again.

Quotes for the Journey:



“ The grace of God means something like: Here is your life. You might have never been, but you are because the party wouldn’t have been complete without you. Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don’t be afraid. I am with you. Nothing can separate us. It’s for you I created the universe. I love you.”

~ Frederick Beuchner



“In silence we will find new energy and true unity. Silence gives us a new outlook on everything.”

~Mother Teresa



“There is no one who does not at times sense a self within the self; and in our greatest moments, in those flash like visions of mystic grandeur, we know that we are made of eternal Stuff, fashioned after a Divine pattern.”

~ Ernest Holmes

Discussion Questions

1. What spiritual practice—meditation, prayer, or forgiveness, most resonates at this time with you?

2. What does “stillness” mean to you? How do you best arrive there?

3. What is a key insight you have had in exploring this material together?



Optional Process:

“Making Silence”

Famous educator Maria Montessori would sometimes use the term for children, “Making silence.” It’s a powerful spiritual idea, that we can weave a sense of “stillness” and peace in our lives. Consider some ways you can commit to weaving stillness and “making silence” in your everyday life. One way is to identify areas where there is “noise,” and replace it with “silence.”

In the morning:

Example: Instead of watching TV news while I eat, I will eat my breakfast quietly outside.

In the afternoon:

Example: Instead of rushing back to emails, I will take a walk around the lake after lunch.

In the evening:

Example: Instead of scrolling Instagram, I will drink a glass of wine quietly by the fireplace.

It doesn’t take much to consciously weave stillness into our everyday lives and to begin to reap the benefits of an increased level of soul awareness.

Share together and see if each student when sharing is complete, can make a commitment to where they want to weave silence into their lives.

Process Two:

Honoring Circle:

Depending on time, take turns honoring each individual in your group by inviting other group members to say a quality of light they see in them. This could be one person sharing at a time, or all at once. Make sure to include yourselves as facilitators.

Affirmation:

In the heart of stillness, my heart speaks.