

Understanding Your Soul
Transcript of a Youth Talk and Q&A
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Denver: Why don't we go ahead and start? And we'll just spend the first few minutes doing a review. I've written up on the board some of the same kinds of information that was up there last time. I hope you listened to that so that the continuation of that makes sense.

The definition is given about what the soul consists of, and there are two components to the soul of every individual: The body and the spirit are the soul of man. And we talked last time about how the body has a variety of weaknesses that are associated with the body of flesh that's essentially appetite-based.

- Every body has to be fed. If you deprive the body of food, its weakness and need for food will become readily apparent: first, by hunger; later, by starvation; and ultimately, by death.
- The body has to have rest. If you deprive the body of rest, it will experience exhaustion. Ultimately, if you don't allow a body to sleep, it will eventually lose sanity, and eventually, you can die from that, as well.
- The body requires a whole lot of periodic maintenance.

It's like buying a 1945 Ford and expecting that thing to run for an indefinite future. With modern oils, you might keep it going (maybe even a '45) maybe even 150,000 miles, but eventually that '45's gonna wear out; it just isn't gonna hang around. That's what you're walking around in right now: vulnerable, weak, filled with appetites, and susceptible to anger, rage, a whole lot of problems that are associated with the body of dust. And I've written a list of some of the things that the Apostle Paul includes in his letter that describes what the flesh is all about [adultery, uncleanness, idolatry, hatred, envy, drunkenness].

Then there is a spirit which has a coexistence that goes right back to God Himself. That spirit is composed of intelligence or light and truth, which is a big deal as we get into the topic again today. The spirit does not have the same kinds of vulnerabilities as does the body. Therefore, if you can link up to the connection within you of the spirit, you will not be vulnerable to many of the weaknesses of the flesh—because the spirit is fortified and capable of enduring through all kinds of things that the body would succumb to.

As it turns out, in the religious and intellectual traditions of the world, Christianity and the West have largely focused upon the body. But in the East, the religions and the philosophies have largely focused upon the spirit. Buddhism does not claim to be a religion; it claims to be a way of life and a way of understanding life. Its focus is primarily upon overcoming the weaknesses of the body and getting into connection with the spirit. Assuming I can impose upon her to do so, I'm gonna ask my wife to talk a little bit about that topic as I finish up today.

But if you were to look at—carefully—at both the teachings of Christ and the T&C revelations given through Joseph Smith, what you would find is that Christ’s doctrines and the teachings of the Restoration marry together both the body and the spirit. It is a kind of religion that Christ taught that expected you to come into the flesh, do battle with the flesh, overcome those temptations, subdue the appetites, and ultimately, win a battle so that you are not tempted to do, succumb, or submit to the appetites of the flesh, but instead, you make the **flesh rise up** to live and contemplate, exist, and enjoy the fruits of the spirit. Because few things are as rewarding as having the opportunity to have spiritual experiences while occupying a body of flesh. It is enlightening. It is enlivening. It is (according to the description given by both Nephi and Alma) a fruit that is most white and most delicious and more to be desired than anything else that there is. There is no thrill that you can have in the body that is equal to the thrill of overcoming and connecting with the things of the spirit. It’s called the “search for enlightenment.” It’s called “attaining to the Church of the Firstborn.” It’s called “enjoying the fruits of the spirit.” That’s the religion that Christ taught. That’s the thing which Joseph Smith was in the process of restoring.

Unfortunately, the converts that came aboard the Restoration while Joseph Smith was alive were drawn largely from Protestant Western Christianity and Catholicism (largely Protestants, but some Catholics). The problem with that is their basic orientation (when they came aboard) was: “If you can circumscribe your physical appetite, then you’re a good guy. And if you’re a good guy, you get to feel proud of yourself, and you get to look down your nose at everyone else that succumbs to that.” It kinda worked, and it kinda held together—until you got to Nauvoo, and then:

- They discovered the whole imported “spiritual wife” system,
- Which gave rise to adultery,
- Which, in turn, gave rise to conspiracies to commit murder (which succeeded in the case of Joseph and Hyrum),
- Which, in turn, gave rise to lying and deceit and ambition and the desire to displace Joseph and to engage in submission to the appetites of the flesh.
- And after that, the vote was held. The Twelve ostensibly won the vote, but in fact, it was Brigham Young. They come west, and it turns into a religion that is holding up adultery as a sacrament, and
- It’s all downhill from there.

You’re emerging from, basically, either Mormonism or Christianity into a continuation of the Restoration which has extraordinarily high ambitions for what **you** are supposed to be. One of the reasons why I wanted to talk about this subject with the **youth** is because if you can figure this out early in life and if you can engage in this struggle early in life, you stand a far better chance of developing into the “full measure of the person of Christ” than does someone who has basically spent their life looking at things through the lens of basic Western-orientation without understanding the difference between the body and the spirit and the **significance** of connecting to the spirit.

So, with that introduction and brief reference back to what went on before, I want to take a look at a statement that is made. (This is actually Enoch, but it’s found in the book of

Genesis.) Enoch recorded this about Father Adam. So, he's describing Father Adam's experience accompanying the baptism of Adam, okay?

You are baptized with fire and with the holy ghost.

...is stated to Adam. This fire in the Holy Ghost,

This is the record of the Father and the Son, from henceforth and for ever. And you are after the Order of him who was without beginning of days [and so on]... (Genesis 4:10 RE)

It is given to abide in you: the Record of Heaven, the Comforter, the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, the truth of all things, that which quickens all things — which makes alive all things, that which knows all things, and has all power according to Wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment. (Ibid. vs. 9)

That's what the spirit includes. So, among other things, it is the Record of Heaven; it is the truth of all things; it is that which maketh alive. That's **the spirit**.

How on Earth can the Record of Heaven and the truth of all things be embedded in you [pointing to audience members]? You are walking around with that **in** you! And think about that for a moment: how on Earth can it be that you possess something that reaches back into "the truth of all things"?

Well, before you got here, you lived somewhere else in something that is called a "first estate." It's called the first estate because it was "before this one." It may not have been your first estate: It may have been your 100th; it may have been your 10,000th; it may have been your 100,000th. But as to here, it was first—before here. How much went into that beforehand? It's not important; we aren't told about that. It's not included in the Scriptures, and it's anyone's guess. However,

...the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was, and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones.

"Intelligences" are spirits, and it includes you—because if you got here in this cycle of creation, the only way you got **here** to experience **this life** is because you were part of **that group** there. And within **that group there** (which were organized before the world was), **within** that group, there was another group:

*And among all these there were many of the noble and great ones. ...God saw **these souls**... (Abraham 6:1 RE, emphasis added)*

So, these "souls" [the noble and great] were good. Intelligences are spirits. What are souls? The vocabulary that Joseph Smith was using by the time he translated the Book of Abraham already had acquired the definition of what it meant to be a soul. So, among the group of people (the spirits that were there), there was a subgroup from among that group that were

“souls.” If they were souls, then they have already been through an experience that involved **this** kind of an existence. And they were **good**.

How do you know someone is good? Because as Alma writes, “In the first place, they were allowed to choose between good and bad, and having chosen good, they were foreordained according to the foreknowledge of God” (see Alma 9:10 RE), so that those souls would come down, and they would exhibit goodness—so that people could look at their example and understand the kind of example that would be set by the Savior. (It’s in Alma. It’s the old Alma chapter 13, verse...which I would have to look up in order to tell you where it is in Alma in the Restoration Edition, but it’s the chapter about Melchizedek priesthood and who gets chosen in order to be an example.) They were chosen according to the foreknowledge of God, because God knew—based upon their past experience—that they had already stepped behind a veil; they had already been tested and proven, and they had already risen up to the point that they could be trusted. But now, we’re all the way back to preparation for another cycle of creation—in which we’re organizing a creation, and we’re determining who will be born when and where, and how this cycle of creation is gonna go down.

...the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was, and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones. And God saw these souls, that they were good...he stood in the midst of them and he said, These I will make my rulers. For he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good. And he said unto me, Abraham, you were one of them; you were chosen before you were born. (Abraham 6:1 RE)

The word “ruler” doesn’t mean king, and it doesn’t mean president, and it doesn’t mean boss. Abraham was chosen to be one of them: Abraham lived and died with almost an insignificant number of people who gave heed to him. He lived, essentially, as a family man, but he was going to be made a ruler [Denver drew a ruler on the whiteboard—a measuring stick]. He would set a standard; he would be someone by whom you could measure the truth. In the Book of Mormon, the word “ruler” is equated with “teacher.” That’s who Abraham was. That’s the rule that Abraham marked out as the plan or the pattern, the example, the baseline—the very thing that, if you follow, will bring you closer to God.

(Hey, there’s a chair up here. Go through the kitchen.)

So, go back now in your mind to the idea that the spirit, the holy ghost, the thing that you possess (in particular, when you connect up with it following baptism) includes the Record of Heaven or the truth of all things, and realize that that is connected to what went on before this world was.

- You’re standing there when **this** Creation was planned.
- You **saw**, and you **heard** what went on in the Councils of Heaven preliminary to the commencement of the Creation of this world.
- You **knew** what the plan was.
- You knew who the **Redeemer** would be.
- You knew who the **opponent** of that was.

- You **knew** about the rebellion, and you **chose** not to participate in that.
- You **elected** to come here and to take on all of the risks and vicissitudes, the troubles and the trials of mortality because you **trusted** that Christ would deliver on His promise to come here and to redeem and reverse from the blows of death that are inflicted through the fall of man by Adam and Eve, our first parents.
- You trusted that you would **get out** of the predicament that you're in presently because the Savior stood up and said He would go, and He would do as the Father commanded.
- And another one argued that, "Not so fast! Let me go down. I will destroy the agency of man, and I will make it possible for everyone to be saved without regard to whether they are good or bad, virtuous or unvirtuous, whether they are kindly or whether they are murderers. I'll just redeem them all, and we'll repack Heaven with that same crew that goes down (after they go down, and they indulge themselves in the flesh)."

Kind of a messy plan. It might get everyone back there again, but once you brought them back there, they're even **less** suitable for occupying the halls of Heaven than they were before they came down here in the first instance. And the objective is to come down here to be **added** upon—that is, to experience things and to make war against them; to let your conscience control your fleshly appetites; to reign in, not to give vent to licentiousness and worldliness and body-ness and ambition and hatred—all of the appetites that drag you down. And every one of you who's here, if you've ever engaged in an internal debate in which you were tempted to do something and you held yourself back from doing so, every one of you have been added upon. And the more you do that over the course of a lifetime and the more you connect to the Record of Heaven, the more you are able to understand and see and comprehend the truth of all things. It's what you're here to experience. It's what you're here to do. And every time you make a move in that direction, you're added upon.

This gives definition to what Christ was telling His apostles about when He described the coming Holy Ghost that would fall upon them. He says,

*But the Comforter, who is the holy ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you **all things**, and bring **all things** to your remembrance... (John 9:9 RE, emphasis added)*

How can you possibly remember the truth of all things? It's because it **resides** within you, and you can access that **by your heed and diligence**. Those are the very words that are used to describe how it was that Christ overcame the world: by His heed and diligence. The more heed and diligence that you give to the commandments of God, the more the light within you grows. It's already there. You're just permitting it to invade the body of flesh and to inform you by triggering your memory.

Now, before I got here today, a fellow who's a student up at Boise State University sent me an email that asked about a series of Scriptures (Ether 1:13, T&C 86:4, and T&C 93:10) about... Essentially, he's a physics student at Boise State University. And Dallin provoked

some thoughts that I thought were worth repeating here. So, indulge me for a moment about...

It also fits in with what's on the board because you might be asking yourself, How can a soul—already has an experience—how can a soul then revert back to being a spirit? (...which is one of the things that Christ says in that Ether 1:13 verse when He appears to the brother of Jared, and He's talking about, "Hey, that same body that you see me in is the kind of body that I will appear in in the flesh when I come into the world"). Okay? It also ought to make you think about the virgin birth and about how if Christ was a **soul**, then He already had the capacity to come into the flesh with a body. On occasion in the Scriptures, you find barren women conceiving and having children. Mary's example is the most astonishing because, in the case of Christ, it's a virgin birth. But it's no less improbable a pregnancy than Samson's or John the Baptist's or Isaac's. If a woman cannot conceive a child and yet she bears a child, it's a pretty strong indication that this is one of the souls that were sent into the world that had proven themselves before. And in each instance, they performed in this world in a way that justifies capturing their story and recording it in Scripture as instruction, as a lesson, or as a parable for us to understand how to choose the right and avoid the wrong.

Well, if you were to draw a graph of the hottest temperature that we know about... In our neighborhood, it's not the hottest that there is—but there's a 20 million degrees temperature in our local neighborhood on the corona of our sun. If you go into space, there is a temperature at which you reach absolute zero, which means that atoms and molecules turn solid, and they cease to be moving. That is called absolute zero. And absolute zero is something like, I don't know, something less than 400 degrees below zero, okay? So, in the universe, we have temperature variation from 20 million degrees to -400 degrees in our little niche of the Milky Way. Mankind can only survive in a little place (I've been really generous in drawing the little red line there) in a little place that is capable of sustaining life. If you get too much colder than that, we die. If you get too much hotter than that, we die. But here in the temperate zone (that's what it's called)—in the temperate zone, we can live and move.

Well, one of the differences between what's going on at 20 million degrees and what's going on at -400 degrees, the difference between those two is how **animated** the elements are or how **fast** things are moving or how **quickened** the things are moving in this Creation. "Quickening" is the word that gets used in Scripture, and oddly enough, quickening is actually a pretty good word to use to describe what happens when something approaches such power, such glory, such temperature, such heat that if you and I were exposed to it for even a second, it would destroy us—because we're living at a level in which we're tangible, we're hard.

So, when you hear a dialogue in an LDS Temple Endowment (which some of you have probably been through, and some of you may never go through), there's a colloquy that takes place behind the veil in which angelic ministers are gonna come and check on the man Adam and the woman Eve, and they say, "Come, let us go down" [Denver points to "decreasing temperature" on the thermometer he has drawn on the whiteboard.] Going

down and engaging in physicality is a way of reducing the glory, reducing the temperature, reducing the elements so that it assumes a physical form. Those souls who have been here before have acquired the competency, through a physical experience, to know how to exist in this solid form. Solid, liquid, gas, plasma—at some point, what happens to the elements in the quickening is that they become pure energy, or they become a glorious being of such capacity that they approach (ultimately reach) infinite. If you had the ability to be quickened beyond the speed of light, all of our mathematical formulas suggest that, at that point, the amount of energy involved is infinite (meaning: it wouldn't be but a small exercise for you [pointing to the audience] with infinite power to move planets around).

All of the Scriptures where Christ is talking about “the body you see me now have is like the body that I will get when I come into the flesh” is Him explaining that “There won't be much difference, but I won't have to quicken you in order to **abide** in the flesh. I'm going to lay aside My Glory, and I am going to descend into the world, and I will take up my abode in the flesh—with all of the weaknesses that are associated with living here in this environment—and I will dwell among you. And while I'm here, I'll pray to the Father, ‘Father, let Me come back to the glory I had with You before the world was,’” because He longs to get back into that state.

Well, all of those Scriptures are talking about this kind of subject. We get a kind of peek into it with what we know about the physical Creation, so far as we've been able to calculate it, examine it, measure it, and look at it. But everything that physics is attempting to talk about is already built into and embedded within the language of Scripture, and it's describing not just spiritual phenomenon. It's describing actually what God is up to and how this Creation reflects those kinds of realities.

Now, one of the challenges that we all face is trying to get in touch with this [the spirit] in order for that to subdue and to control what's going on in the body. You never want to wind up in a position in which this side [the body] is controlling that side [the spirit]. But you have the ability to check that from time to time and to reel in the body and to say, “Not so, I won't go there. I won't be that. I will submit only to the counsel of the spirit.”

There's this saying that mental health folks have that if someone comes and tells you “they're God,” they're probably crazy. But if they tell you “they're God, and you're God, and you're God, and you're God, and everyone's God,” they're probably not crazy; they probably just caught a keen insight into what it means to have dwelt in the presence of God at one time and to bring with you from His presence the Record of Heaven and the truth of all things. You already know it. The purpose of the Holy Ghost is to bring that into your remembrance. The purpose of that is to search for and to find a connection to God, and that connection is not on the other side of the world, up a mountain in Tibet. It's here, it's now, and it's accessible by you. But you have to give heed and diligence in order to find that.

In a very real sense, God the Father and God the Son have a mind that you share with them. That mind you share with them **is the Holy Ghost**, and that Holy Ghost, as far as each one of you is concerned, **is** the third member of the Godhead who dwells within you and can be accessed by you. And when you do that, it will lead to companionship with angels, and

ultimately, it will redeem you from the fall and bring you back into the presence of the Beings from whom you originated.

That ends my part of this. I've asked Steph if you'll [directed to Stephanie] come up and say a few words about ideas that may help you connect to the spirit. I'm gonna stand up here, but you come join me.

Stephanie: If you want that [the notes on the whiteboard], take your pictures now, 'cuz I'm erasing it. [inaudible]

Denver: Oh, I should probably get out of the way.

Stephanie: I thought about just erasing it, but then I know, "No, Steph...!"

Denver: I'll erase everything except this. I wanna keep that up here.

Stephanie: The -400?

Denver: Yeah.

Stephanie: Okay. So, I am a "how" person. All of this stuff is great. And then there's this gigantic disconnect about, "Okay, yeah, it all **sounds** really good. Now, what are we supposed to do?"

I'm not an expert, by any means, but I have recently embarked on a new journey which is full of all kinds of interesting and edifying things. And one of them is that the language of "good mental health" is basically just Scriptural, written in secular terms—so people who are not religious can understand the same concept. There is a universality about God and about connecting to God. And so, if the soul is the body and the spirit, then you want to connect with the spirit, right? Okay. Connecting to the spirit can be accomplished by learning about and practicing **mindfulness**, okay? So, I'm gonna give you a few things to think about so that as you think about his talk and start reading the Scriptures again from a new paradigm, you have in your mind this idea of mindfulness.

So, at our basic level, human beings are down here to do five things, pretty much consistently. We are down here...

Audience Member: Can you use the black [marker]?

Stephanie: Oh, yeah—oh, I like color! Okay, we are down here to:

1. Seek pleasure,
2. Avoid pain,
3. Increase our social standing, self-esteem (or in the words of social media), "be liked," okay? We like to be liked, right? and
4. Protect our loved ones, and

5. Think constantly about how to accomplish 1-4, okay?

Does that sound about right? Okay, these five things are pretty much the reason all human beings suffer—okay?—‘cuz we do; we suffer. It is why and how we find ourselves emotionally upset, emotionally dysregulated (these are therapy words; sorry, I got a new job), and there are a million reasons why we do this, okay? These are the basis upon which we do this (I’m not gonna write these down). So, here are a few of the ways we suffer as human beings:

- We worry about the future—yeah, all of the time, right?
- We regret our past: “Oh gosh, shoot, I shouldn’t have done that! I can’t believe I did that!”
- We are angry or we’re sad for any number of reasons.
- We suffer from guilt and shame because of the things that we do.
- We enjoy physical pain: hips, knees, joints, gallbladders, kidney stones—you know, whatever.
- We find ourselves often bored and stressed.
- We have anxious thoughts, or we’re depressed, or we worry all the time, or
- We engage in addictions or other kinds of things that really bring us down.

So, lesson number one: “Being human” is really hard; “being human disconnected from our spirit” is even harder—it makes everything harder. So... Just I’ll get this out here; this is words to live by: **Pain is inevitable**, okay? You are down here in your human form (dust, flesh)—you are going to be in pain. Any number of these things are gonna cause you pain, just like I said. But **suffering is optional**, okay? We do not have to make our pains worse by making them our focus. We **can** let go of some of this. So, the question then is: How do we avoid **suffering** when we are in pain?

So, the way to do that is to connect to your spirit and set aside our preoccupation with our bodies, okay? That stuff that you took a picture of [on the whiteboard before Stephanie started talking], that’s exactly what I’m talking about: body, spirit, all right? So, we want to separate ourselves from that.

So, here’s a couple of definitions of mindfulness. Mindfulness means “relaxed, embodied awareness.” (Whatever.) It means “paying attention—on purpose—in the present moment without judging (as if your life depended on it),” okay? So, what does all that mean? Well, at the root of mindfulness—which is not sitting cross-legged in a room on a cozy cushion with your legs crossed, ohming and ahming or whatever—mindfulness is awareness, okay? It is being aware of the present moment.

So, you’re all sitting here, and I would venture to say that most of you are thinking about something else other than what’s going on here, okay?

- “Crap, I can’t believe I was late.”
- “I wonder if I’m gonna get out of here soon enough to do something with my friends.”

- “I think there’s food in the kitchen.”
- “It’s Friday—is it Friday?—I don’t have homework on Friday.”

Denver: It’s Saturday.

Stephanie: “Oh, it’s Saturday. Holy crap! I’ve lost a whole day!”

Denver: That’s life.

Stephanie: “Oh, my gosh! I’m stressed out.” Right? Yeah, okay, exactly. I can’t remember what I was thinking over there... Oh, I do know: I was thinking, “Pretty good! That was pretty good.”

Denver: You were here “in the moment”??

Stephanie: I was! That’s what I was thinking.

Okay. So, there are some very specific things you can do to bring yourself into the present moment—whatever that present moment is—because “present” is **now**.

Oh, it’s gone.

Oh, nope—it’s now.

Oh, it’s gone again.

See? You only have one moment—ever. Anything in the past is gone, anything in the future hasn’t happened yet.

Oh, there we go! Another one’s gone. (See? It’s kind of mind-blowing, actually.)

So, there are some actual skills, exercises, and things you can do to bring yourself into the present moment. There’s something called breath awareness, okay? Breath awareness is literally exactly what it sounds like: you **just** pay attention to your breathing. You don’t have to “not think of anything,” because your brain is absolutely **incapable** of not thinking of other things—but you can, “In, out; in, out,” and just pay attention to your breathing. You’ll be doing that, and you’ll get one breath in, and you will think about whether there’s food in the kitchen. You will get two breaths in, and you will think about, “Shoot, I didn’t text that kid back!” You will get three breaths in, and your little “puppy brain” will be all over the place. And that’s fine! Notice your puppy brain, and bring him back, and go, “In and out...”

My favorite breathing exercises go like this ([picking up a red marker and then changing to a black one] Okay this... Fine, fine, fine). There’s visuals you can do. This is actually called “square breathing,” but I prefer to turn it into a baseball diamond. And I go home to first (and I breathe in), and then I go first to second (and I breathe out), and then I go second to third (and I breathe in), and I go third to home (and I breathe out). And in my mind, I have

this little diagram where I go up and over and down—and that helps me keep my brain at least focused on something else. Okay?

There's another one called "infinity breathing," and if you start to pay attention to your breath, you will notice that you breathe in, and you breathe out—and in the "in and out," there's a hitch—okay?—[breathing in...] and you kind of pause, and then you breathe out. Infinity breathing is working on breathing in a way where there's no hitch, so your breath looks like that [infinity sign] instead of like that [infinity sign with straight lines]. Okay? It's a really kind of interesting exercise because when you get here [to the pause] in your breathing (I'll just leave this to you to figure out), you want to make it smooth.

Now, I don't really care how you breathe. I mean, the object is not **how** you breathe; the object is to give your mind something to think about for the breath awareness. If this doesn't work, fine; whatever. Say "in and out," picture a tide, blow up a balloon, whatever—you know, just get something going in your mind so that you're focused on breath awareness. It actually calms you down, it changes the way your amygdala is activated, it puts you back in your prefrontal cortex, and it makes everything better immediately—even if just for a short time.

The other awareness is a body-scan awareness, where you literally sit in a chair, and you start at the top of your head, and you think about your head: "Can I feel anything in my head? Do I have a headache? No, I feel pretty good. What about my neck, my shoulders..." Just go all the way through your body, however you want: arms, elbows, fingers, toes. And then, when you get all the way down to the bottom, you come back up to the top. And your mind is all over the place, and pretty soon you forget that you were at your elbow, or you don't realize how you got to your abdomen, or whatever. And you just bring it back, and you just do it again.

All of this is designed to do is just keep you **aware** of what's going on without being **everywhere** in your puppy mind or monkey mind, which is what we also call it. "Sensory awareness," same thing. Finish your body-scan awareness or finish your breathing meditation or mindfulness, and then say,

"What do I hear?" A kid. A fan. I was sitting by Chris; I could hear his thing go in and out, his... Okay? So, literally, what ~~are~~ [do] you hear?

What do you see? I see people. Pink. Just that simple.

What do you smell?

Can you taste anything?

I meditate in my car right after I get a Diet Coke. You would be shocked at how noisy Diet Coke is—just bubbles like crazy; carbonated Diet Coke. Very noisy.

Denver: Devil's brew.

Stephanie: ...very noisy when you're listening to it in your car.

Emotion awareness. This is... We don't like this one, **nobody** likes this one because **nobody** likes to think about how they **feel!** 'Cuz sometimes we don't feel very good. Sometimes we're sad. Sometimes we're scared. Sometimes we're angry (which is usually because we're sad or scared). Sometimes we're, you know, we feel depressed. Sometimes we feel like school sucks. Sometimes we feel like, "If I have to put a mask on, I'm gonna rip someone's freaking eyes out!" Okay? We feel ways that we are uncomfortable with because we're not good at feeling our emotions. So, emotion awareness is exactly that: being aware of how you feel at any given time, okay?

All of this is designed to keep you in a present moment. I'm gonna say it again: The present-moment awareness takes us out of what we call our monkey mind or our puppy mind (the part of us that is usually disconnected from our spirit). That's what disconnects us from our spirit. It disrupts our connection with the Divine or the Heavenly because it's all over the place thinking of things that are **not divine**. "Oh, I think there's food in the kitchen." "Damn, I'm **not** gonna get out of here before it's...in time to do anything with my friends," okay? The present moment is all we ever have because the past is literally gone, and the future has not arrived. It's pretty mind-blowing, actually, when you start to think about it.

So, mindfulness is the antidote to being consumed in mind and heart by the natural man (the part of us that **creates** our suffering). This is an element of Eastern religious practices that focus on the soul and the spirit (or the spirit instead of the body). At its highest and best, mindfulness practices are designed to create a **path** for us to experience enlightenment, which is the connection to God ([addressing Denver] you used a whole bunch of different phrases)...

Denver: Oh, the truth of all things, the Record of Heaven...

Stephanie: Yeah, that's what it is. And if you read other things, honestly, like mental health books, the language is all over the place: Christ consciousness, enlightenment, they call it a mil... Oh, connecting with the universe, you know. I mean, there's a lot of non-godly words used to describe exactly the same thing, okay? This journey includes yogic traditions, as well, because yogi (or yoga) is not just stretching and contorting our bodies, okay? The word "yoga" actually comes from the Sanskrit root yuge or yuj (y-u-j), which means "to yoke or unite oneself with God," okay? So, yogis are the enlightened ones; yoga is what we do when we contort our bodies, but it is also uniting or yoking with God, okay? So, it's uniting or yoking with God, and it also refers to the practices and principles that are used to create this union.

So, mindfulness practices and yogic traditions have many benefits, the most important one being the ability to open ourselves up to higher states of spirituality, to have more direct experiences with God, and to begin to see things as God sees them. This is how we're

making the connection. This is how we're moving (from his [Denver's] diagram) from the body to the spirit.

One of the obstacles of Western culture and Western Christianity is that we come from a "deficit model," meaning that Christianity in the Western world talks about mankind as deficient, all right? We are carnal, sensual, base; we have lust; we have appetite...

Denver: Enemy to God.

Stephanie: We are an enemy to God. We are a natural man, okay? And we need Christ as our Redeemer (who is the only perfect being to do all the heavy lifting, so that from our state of deficiencies, we can be redeemed). This kind of thing is offset by Mormon teachings where we learn that we are divinely created in the image of our Heavenly Parents, and we can actively participate (to some degree) in our salvation by repenting, being obedient, and living righteously. So, we **can contribute** to that.

The yogic tradition, on the other hand (which is the Eastern traditions), believe that human beings are whole and divine at their very core. Mormons tend to believe that, too—so Mormon teachings include the idea that we're born of Heavenly Parents, and we can live by that divine parentage—but we're down here in this cesspool of a mess pool (hah...that's funny), and we're disconnected from the divinity that is actually in us (again, which goes to the whole thing). So, the yogic tradition says that the Redeemer, our Savior, isn't necessarily **pulling** us from the depths of our deficiency, but He is **revealing** to us the true nature of God—which is the Record of Heaven, intelligence, light and truth, same thing that it says in the Scriptures, okay?

So, how do we tap into this principle of divinity and connection and awareness so that we can **pull ourselves** out of our natural state? Well, we begin by understanding the Scriptures. *Men have become carnal, sensual, and devilish, and are shut out from the presence of God* (Genesis 4:7 RE), which he [Denver] explained in the last talk (so, you can go find that). Understand this Scripture about being *the natural man is an enemy to God* (Mosiah 1:16 RE)—because it's not an enemy to God; it is just disconnected from God. We are at odds with God. So, understand those two Scriptures, and then begin to practice mindfulness to quiet your monkey mind, to find the light and truth and intelligence, which is the glory of God which is **in you**—you just can't hear it or find it or see it because we're too busy trying to seek pleasure, avoid pain, be liked, protect our loved ones, and think **constantly** about how to make those happen.

So, I'm gonna end with recommending one thing—'cuz if I can recommend one thing to help you get in touch with your spirit, it would be to practice quieting your mind. Because the One whom we worship says, *Be still and know that I am God* (T&C 101:3).

That's my part.

Denver: Okay, now that you've heard from me and my therapist wife...

Stephanie: Who did you like best?

Denver: I liked you—because I wasn't talking. Any questions for her to answer? Any questions? Any questions at all?

[Inaudible audience question.]

Stephanie: I am a therapist.

Audience Question 1 (continued): You're certified?

Stephanie: Yeah, I am. Yeah.

Denver: Yeah, she finished her Masters and now is a licensed clinical therapist, which I think her marriage drove her to.

Audience Member: I was gonna say that, but...

Audience Question 2: Yeah, so in my studies and trying to understand the Scriptures, it kind of seems like most perfect beings are kind of identical in personality in kind of every trait that they have. Because you have to be a perfect being. You have to be just like Christ. And yet, it seems like you kind of stated that our differences should be celebrated. So, can you explain maybe how the Gods, maybe, are different and how that is?

Denver: Yeah, the question basically is "Does exaltation result in uniformity and sameness?" And I would say that exaltation results in remarkable diversity. The Creator has never in this Creation made two people that are the same. There are no two snowflakes that are the same. If God goes to all the trouble of making unique snowflakes—all of which are patterned after the same crystalline structure, and yet, no two of them are alike—then why would God expect **that** kind of uniformity? Now, set that on one side for a moment, and...

A lot of disagreements that exist between people are based upon their background, education, and experience, okay? If all of us read the same library, if all of us grew up in the same household, if all of us had the same basic education, shared the same friends, went through the same kind of socio-economic experiences, if all of us shared all of those things, there would be a whole lot of disagreements that would go away, and we would find ourselves agreeing on a whole lot more than we agree on now.

However, we would still disagree with one another. We would still find differences of opinion. We would still find ourselves really preferring different hues and shades, and you would buy an ugly-colored car, and I would buy a beautiful-colored car, and I would be so glad I wasn't driving that ugly thing you're driving around in. (But we would certainly all have four-wheel drive pickups; they just wouldn't have the same color.)

Christ's experiences completed a circuit that attained to the resurrection, that took him through an experience that allowed Him to attain to the resurrection of the dead. But after

that experience was over—you can read it in the Teachings and Commandments—following that, the Lord was **absolutely exultant**, as was Mary when she met Him on the morning of the resurrection—never saw a happier being more so than the Lord on the morning of the resurrection. How He coped with that feeling and how you will cope with that feeling eventually and how all of us will cope with that will be uniquely experiential, uniquely yours, uniquely His. Even the same experiences are gonna lead to differences. No one is going to be uniform except in education, background, experience, knowledge; but their attitudes are gonna be uniquely yours, uniquely his, uniquely hers. It's all gonna be different.

Okay, so, now we're done, right? Yeah, no more questions. Go Jazz! Yeah, yeah. Okay, we're done.

Audience Member: We're done.

Denver: We're done. **Now** you can get the cookies!

[Crosstalk]

Denver: Why? What, what? Okay, here's someone:

Audience Question 3: Okay, so in the talk, you were kinda talking about how, like, people can develop spirituality in isolation, but that's not the same as developing it in community. So...

Denver: Right.

Audience Question 3 (continued): ...like, what would it look like to develop that in community and how can we do that?

Denver: One of the ways in which we develop in community is by sharing in fellowships, contributing tithing in order to relieve people's basic needs (shelter, food, education, medical care, transportation) **and**, when you are a person in need, **receiving** that. And in that dynamic, the giver needs to do it cheerfully (and that requires some amount of learning), and the receiver needs to do so cheerfully. And no one should think of themselves as "better than" and no one should think of themselves as "less than"—because we tend to develop unhealthy attitudes.

Fellowships in which tithing gets used locally is a vivid example of how resentments or jealousies or insecurities and feelings of inferiority can develop. And we're supposed to interact with one another in a way that puts that on display **to you, internally**, so that you can reflect upon **why** you're feeling that and whether that is godly or ungodly.

We have to cooperate with helping one another because there are all kinds of needs. There are people who are socially retarded, in that they're obnoxious, they're overbearing... They need to come to realize that, in some respects, that's ungodly. And then there are people

who **notice** that someone is obnoxious and overbearing, and they need to come to grips with the fact that that too is ungodly. Because in a perfect society, everyone's inadequacies are accepted and noticed by **that** person, and tolerated and endured by the others, as **they work through their deficiency**. And to the extent that you can help them do so, it's a kindness to tell them so. (I tell Louis all the time about his deficiencies [laughter].) Yeah, yeah, there we go—you need to work on that, too—because he's a target-rich environment.

Yeah, there was another hand right here.

Audience Question 4: Why do you need to connect to your spirit?

Denver: Because your spirit is composed of intelligence, and intelligence is the glory of God, which is also light and truth. That's what your spirit is, all those things. It gets called a bunch of other stuff in the Scripture that I read today about the Record of Heaven, the truth of all things, and all that. That's **in you**. Now, if you can connect to that, God is absolutely able to talk to **that** on an ongoing basis (God has a real hard time talking to this [the body]). A whole lot of accommodations have to be made to talk to this [the body], including the power of God necessarily quickening the body in order to have it endure the presence of God.

But the spirit within you doesn't have those defects. Your spirit will not be destroyed by the glory of God being revealed. Joseph Smith once said that when God manifests Himself to someone, He does so precisely as if there were no body at all. Well, that's because God can do more with revealing Himself to the spirit without destroying it than He can to the body, because revealing Himself to the body requires Him to go to a lot of trouble in order to make this [the body] capable of **enduring** the glory of God: you have to be transfigured; if it's permanent, translated. You have to be glorified; you have to go through something. That's why when Moses descends from the mountain and the children of Israel see him, his face is glowing—because he still bears some of the glory of God on his countenance; and Israel says, "Put a mask on, and stay six feet apart from us, and hide the glory of God that's manifesting itself on your countenance." Because it hurt, it frightens; it's off-putting.

Yeah, you had a hand up.

Audience Question 5: Yeah, if your spirit left your body, would the body perish?

Denver: Yeah.

Audience Question 5 (continued): ...and is the spirit ever **required** to leave the body in order to be quickened or...?

Denver: Yeah, let me... I got that. The answer to that question is T&C 147:12. Someone tree that. T&C 147. This is Joseph commenting on some claim of someone. 147, oh yeah...

Audience Member: Can you repeat the question?

Denver: Okay, what happens when the spirit leaves the body? ([flipping through the Scriptures] Oh, that's 146. Now I've gone backwards.)

*Joanna Southcott professed to be a prophetess, and wrote a book of prophecies in 1804; [and] became the founder of a people that are still extant. She was to bring forth, in a place appointed, a son that was to be the Messiah, which thing has failed. Independent of this, however, [we do not] read of a woman that was a founder of a church, in the word of God? Paul told [that] the women of his day "to keep silence in the church, ...that if they wished to know anything, to ask their husbands at home." He would not suffer a woman "to **rule**, or to usurp authority in the church"; but here we find a woman [who's founded the] church, a revelator and a guide... (emphasis added)*

...and so on. Then he talks about Jemima Wilkinson, and then, in verse 13:

...the idea of her soul being in Heaven while her body was living on earth is also preposterous. When God breathed into man's nostrils, he became a living soul, before that he did not live, and when that was taken away his body died; and so did our Savior when the spirit left the body, nor did his body live until his spirit returned in the power of his resurrection. But Mrs. Wilkinson's soul (life) was in Heaven, and her body without the soul (or life) on earth, living (without the soul or) without life.

So, he's saying, "Can't happen." Just so happens that **that** question is in the Scriptures.

Yeah?

Audience Question 6: So, we really wanted the LDS Church in primary, we would always have the description of, like, our hand being our spirit and the glove being the body. Now, I had a question on my mission of actually pointing out Christ was resurrected—he had a physical body—but he could also basically walk through walls. He could appear and reappear. He could come and go. So, would the attaining to the resurrection be the way I see it have our soul, our spirit and body be one substance? Or will it be a temporary spirit and a body?

Denver: One. One with the absolute capacity to manifest itself in any condition—from blinding glory destructive to the physical elements, at one end, or the retained capacity to go down and to say, *Handle me and see, for a spirit [hath] not flesh and bones as you see me have* (Luke 14:6 RE), and then to ascend (which a body can't do... Ahh, there's some carnival acts where they use a cannon, but they need a net, or it's gonna end badly)—but it's one; it's one. But it's—at that point—it's connected in a way that all of the capacities that existed in the physical body, all of the capacities that exist in glorious exaltation are combined into one being who is a being of glory and holiness.

Unfortunately (well, fortunately—I don't know; make your own judgment on it), the Father who is sitting on the throne emanating glory that sustains the whole of the Creation (and the word "the Father" is a title which, after the resurrection, applies to Christ) in that state of glory, sustaining all things while possessing the responsibility to sustain the whole of

Creation, you really can't descend. The Father has to appear in glory. And at the Second Coming (when the Lord appears in glory), it will be in part because of certain rules that apply to how things work in eternity when you become the Father. But that's neither here nor there.

What's this?

Stephanie: I have a question.

Denver: Really?

[crosstalk]

Stephanie (Audience Question 7): [reading from a text message] "What does it mean to fear God?"

Denver: Respect.

Audience Member: Will you repeat the question?

Denver: The question is, "What does it mean to fear God?" It means to respect Him, to stand in awe of Him, to recognize the great gulf between you and Him, and to realize that you're dependent upon Him.

Stephanie: Okay, one more (which you'll probably have me answer). How do you... Okay, now that you've moved out of the LDS... Oh, I'll just read it exactly: Now that I have found a new perspective of the gospel in this movement, how am I supposed to find an eternal partner that will also have the same perspective on the church/gospel as I do?

Denver: You probably don't need to. Yeah, you probably don't need to. Find a spouse that you love, find a spouse that is a good companion for you, find someone that shares the kind of values you have, and eventually develop into the kind of unity and love in which that won't matter. Values are more important, according to my therapist wife.

Stephanie: No, no. Values are more important than interests, than religion, than activities. I mean, all this stuff is nice, and it will come. But values...! And if the language of God can be spoken in all kinds of languages, the values... Let's not mention it; I don't know.

Audience Question 8: Stephanie, there's a question that came in on the chat, and it is: "Could struggles with inherited mental illness and addictions, etc. be a way to learn (for the noble and great ones) how to quiet oneself when it's biologically challenging? And how does being still work with struggles in the body?"

Stephanie: Yes, and it's... I mean, it's the same thing just...

Denver: Yeah, they can't hear you.

Stephanie: If you want to strengthen a muscle you have to lift a weight, okay? If you want to run a marathon, you have to run a block or, you know, a mile. If you want to increase your connection to the spirit through mindfulness, you have to practice mindfulness every day for some amount of time, and the **distillation** of the **improvement** will go more or less unnoticed **except that** you will find **connection**; you will find **peace**; you will find that you have **quieted** even your **inherited anxious tendencies**. You will find that you have risen above even your **legitimate** physiological/biological depressing thoughts or depression. It doesn't make it go away, it just makes **suffering less interesting**. That's about it

Denver: Yeah, and inherited mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of. It's something to be confronted and dealt with.

Eventually, if you're **really** lucky, you will live long enough to find out that you're dying from an incurable disease—that's who's lucky. Because then you get to reflect upon the transition that's coming. And you don't arrive there abruptly and without reflection. Someone contracts a disease that requires them to face the reality of coming death, you oughtta visit them, and they oughtta be cheerful, and you oughtta talk about what comes next. Because what comes next is better than what we got here.

Stephanie: "Nearly as important as the Red Sox"? [referencing something Denver wrote on the whiteboard].

Denver: Well, yeah, I was trying to talk about what **really** matters, although Pedroia retired, and they traded Benintendi and I'm not so sure. Today's game of the Twins—it was on the MLB channel—got rained out. I don't even know what we're doing this year. But Chris Sale's gonna be back, and he had Tommy John surgery, and in a good pitcher, that adds like five miles per hour, so we have that to look forward to. (You don't even need an offense if you got Chris Sale on the mound; just bunt a guy around until you score one, and let Sale close it out.)

Yeah, hey!

Audience Question 9: Since sacrifice is essential for part of this journey, if... Is it essential because when one is sacrificing in their right mind, it is slowly detaching them from the natural man or our carnal state? Is that why it's so important?

Denver: Yeah, you've nailed it, yeah. Because the sacrifice, it's **this** thing [the body]. Yeah.

Yeah, yeah?

Audience Question 10: So, when you have the baptism of fire, or like, most of the time when it's talking about, like, fire in the Scriptures is that talking... Is that like connecting to the quickening that we're talking about?

Denver: Yeah, it's talking about letting that emerge. It can emerge abruptly and suddenly. Joseph talked about how you can have come to your mind sudden bursts of insight and ideas such that, shortly thereafter, you will find the thing come to pass. So, that's the principle of revelation; that's the beginning of the path. Revelation begins with stirring up from deep within you the power of that light, that truth, that glory of God so that it intrudes into your consciousness; it intrudes into your body. You grasp things that you could not previously have attained to. That principle of revelation grows and grows brighter and brighter (as it says in the Scriptures) until the perfect day. In the perfect day, you're actually standing—although in the body—you're actually standing with the Heavens opened unto you. It... The light shines forth so that you comprehend and you find companionship with the folks in Heaven, the ministering angels, the Son. The purpose of angels is to fulfill and do the works of the covenants. Purpose of the covenants is to lead you along until you have an audience with Christ. The purpose and ministry of Christ is to bring you to the Father. And the purpose of all of that is to reunite **you** back to that family that you were part of before you ever got here and to become, you know, one with them again. But...

There's ice cream on the counter! We gotta close! Hey!

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Now go eat, drink, and be married.