

Pathwork™ Steps

Free Will

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 18

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Week 1: Free Will is Essential to the Plan of Salvation

Week 2: Paradoxes and Responsibilities of Free Will

Week 3: Will Direction and Will Power

Week 4: Discerning Inner Will

Week 1: Free Will is Essential to the Plan of Salvation

God has created this universe which consists of an infinite number of laws. He created His children and gave them free will so they could choose to keep or not to keep these laws long before this earth and this material world existed. The keeping of these laws entails happiness, love, harmony, light, and supreme wisdom because God, who is perfect, cannot create anything but perfection.

Yet if a creature would have to be forced to stay within the framework of these laws -- in other words, as if they have no free will -- the laws would neither be what they are nor would they be in accordance with the nature of God. There would be a discrepancy in the creation.

There cannot be beauty, harmony, wisdom, bliss, and love if it has to be experienced forcefully against the individual's will, against the individual's own recognition of the wisdom and perfection of the laws. Then God would not be a God of freedom, but a God of slavery, even if His creatures could be happy in an enforced system.

Thus each creature -- man or spirit -- has the possibility, by his own choosing, to live according to those laws or not.

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Common Misconceptions about Free Will

1. There is no free will whatsoever. Wherever or whenever man cannot remember or recognize the roots he has sown at a past time, he says it is fate.

2. Everything is free will. Many people think of free will as meaning that they can do or think anything they please *without it causing any effect*. This is their *conception* of free will, which is of course a gross error.

3. Some things are determined by a person's free will, and others are not. This third alternative would be logical for a person who does not believe in an existence after this life, nor in one before; who does not -- or cannot -- believe in the spiritual world, in divine law and order; who believes deep down only in this present life. For instance, you have no choice where you are born, what you are born, where, when, and how you are going to die, and even certain definite phases within this life span.

However, for the person who feels and knows and has experienced the truth of the law of cause and effect -- reincarnation -- this point of view could not possibly be correct.

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Exercise 1a: Explore your thoughts and feelings around each of these misconceptions, one at a time. Which ones attract you today? Explore what it would mean if any of these were true.

Everything IS free will – AND subject to cause and effect

Viewed from the overall picture, each individual has complete free will, even though for a temporary time, it appears that this free will cannot manifest itself -- because those facets you cannot control in this life were actually *determined by you in your previous lives*. They are only the effects you have brought about by causes you yourself have set in motion.

Example: Suppose a murderer, who has committed an act not only against divine law but also against your human law, will be apprehended. He is put into prison.

Let us further assume he has lost his memory; he has had amnesia after he has committed this act. When he comes to, he finds himself in prison and does not know why because he does not remember what he has done. He may be told he has done such and such, but he has forgotten it. However, this does not alter the fact that he has committed this crime.

Whether he knows and remembers it or not does not make any difference.

Due to his loss of memory and his failure not to believe what he is being told, he will be convinced that this is indeed very unjust fate because he only sees one part -- this present part -- and does not see the connections and the chain reactions.

The past that has led him into this present state is hidden from him but exists nevertheless as a reality. *This is free will working.*

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Exercise 1b: Do you believe that you are only responsible for what you can remember? What thoughts or feelings come up for you when you consider this explanation of ‘free will’-- that you are free within the governance of Divine Law, so are always subject to cause and effect?

How Free Will Operates

Wherever your free will is hampered or hindered working against your apparent and immediate interests, it is due to the causes you yourself have brought about even though you cannot remember it. By the same token, wherever you have the possibility to display your free will today and wherever you have advantages -- *actual or apparent ones* -- you yourself must have set the respective causes in motion at one time in the past, whether in this same life or in a previous one. This does not change the facts of this law in the least.

Your present freedom or lack of freedom depends entirely on your past deeds, thoughts, and inner reactions! At one time, you have freely chosen to act and think in such a way that a certain result ensues from it.

There is no act, deed, thought, or even feeling that remains without result. Some results occur more quickly so that their roots are still traceable; others take a longer route, but the fact remains that nothing happens in your life for which you are not responsible or have been responsible at one time or another.

Therefore the idea that free will exists only partly must be wrong or, at best, is a half-truth. Whatever you do or think today, however you react within now must have its result or effect tomorrow, next month, next year, and in many instances also in your next life.

So you actually have complete free will, my friends! Wherever or whenever man cannot remember or recognize the roots he has sown at a past time, he says it is fate.

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Week 2: Responsibilities and Paradoxes of Free Will

So many people wonder how a God of love could have created evil. But God did not create evil. As you may understand now, He gave each creature the opportunity to freely choose His laws of perfection or not.

There lies the **key** to this question: not only to an added understanding regarding the subject of free will, but also about the coming into existence of evil, darkness, and cruelty -- in short, the fall of the angels.

You may say that it is difficult to abide by these divine laws, and indeed it is so for man, in some respects. Whoever has at one time or another left divine law [= those who “fell” embraced duality in an attempt to challenge, test, or subvert divine law] indeed finds it difficult to abide by it again. (Here I should like to stress that you did not choose to leave divine law because it was too difficult to keep. For those who have never left, it is not difficult.) The difficulty lies solely in purifying yourself, step by step, back to the state wherein you once were, wherein the keeping of the law did not present any difficulty for you.

In whatever aspect of your personality you have not deviated from divine law -- and it is not necessary that this has to have happened in every aspect -- or in whatever aspect you have succeeded in your previous incarnations to purify yourself back to the state wherein you once were, it is not in the least difficult for you to keep these laws.

Thus the difficulty varies with each individual. For one, it may be difficult not to steal. For another, this presents no difficulty whatever, but for him, it is difficult not to lose his temper. For a third, it may be difficult not to be envious -- and so on.

Thus it is your aim, through development and spiritual progress, to reach a state whereby you are able to live within divine law in every conceivable respect -- and one which represents no difficulty for you at all. And this, of course, can only be accomplished through your own choosing and your own free will!

The foregoing will perhaps also clear up for you the idea of "punishment," which so many of you revolt against. There is no God who dishes out arbitrary punishment. cGod has created perfect laws and perfect conditions that His children have the opportunity to follow freely or not. If you choose the word "punishment" for that, it is your affair, but you will admit that this gives an altogether wrong slant on the facts as they truly are.

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Exercise 2a: What aspects of your personality are in alignment with divine law?

Hint: these will be perceived as harmonious, where your energies flow easily (with little or no conscious effort) and create, over time, constructive life circumstances that contribute to a feeling of spiritual well-being, purpose, and inner peace.

Notice what you really feel, vs. feedback from others or social / cultural guidelines that you do not meet.

Then notice what aspects of life seem to require great effort or feel disharmonious (even when they seem to succeed). See if you can track the cause to some aspect(s) of your personality.

Paradoxes of Free Will

God's creation is so perfect; His laws are of such supreme wisdom and love that whatever the individuals do -- even those who have deviated from His laws -- they must ultimately find their way back to His laws and thus to a state of utter bliss and perfection. The equation must come out even! This must happen one way or another.

To understand this is perhaps one of the greatest difficulties for man. However, I will try to give you a vague idea of this though it is difficult for me through the use of human speech which represents a very great hindrance for us spirits.

1. At first sight, it appears that the further you move away from God and His laws of perfection, the more difficult it is to find your way back.
2. On the other hand, the further away you are from God, the unhappier you are; therefore the nearer you must be to coming back to God ultimately through this very state of unhappiness.
3. Therefore in the breaking of the law and the resulting unhappiness lies the remedy itself, and the means ultimately to alleviate your unhappy state.

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Exercise 2b: Take some time to explore the above 1-3 step paradox, in the sense that unhappiness brings us into awareness. Recall examples where unhappiness has 'woken you up'.

The Four Stages of Spiritual Evolution

1. Automatism / blind reflex
 - Responses based upon deeply imprinted wrong conclusions and generalizations
 - Blind reflexes are rationalized and explained
 - Cannot surrender or trust, because we are disconnected from our own inner knowing
2. Awareness: *The transition to awareness is one of the most difficult that man passes through!*
 - Starts with becoming aware of the blind reflex mechanism
 - Becoming conscious of error, deviation from truth
 - Realization that we are / have been driven by false ideas
3. Understanding
 - Seeing the cause and effect of negative, destructive emotions, false ideas
 - Requires deep experience of the spiritual reality (heartfelt, rather than learning a lesson)
4. Knowing
 - Experiencing the truth
 - Knowing right conclusions from wrong ones, intuitively and instinctively
 - Connects us with a greater spiritual principle

[The Four Stages of Spiritual Evolution](#) PL 127

Exercise 2c: Make a list of a dozen or so satisfactory and unsatisfactory situations in your current life that exemplify each of the Four Stages PL 127.

Automatism is the hardest to notice – even feeling a slight sense of discomfort means that the stage of awareness has started! We gain awareness with every breath we take, and sometimes others make suggestions or comments that we might find useful one day, but are not ready for yet. As an exercise, recall suggestions others have made that you don't understand or agree with. Consider that there may be a 'grain of truth' in their observations that might be of use one day.

Paradoxically, knowing can also be hard to notice! Notice how many complex tasks you perform every day without having to think through every step. Were they always so easy?

Week 3: Will Direction and Will Power

As long as you are dependent on outer happenings over which you have no control, you will never have happiness. You may have temporary contentment, but you will be constantly afraid to lose it because you cannot control other people and their power over you or over your circumstances.

If you go about finding where and in what respect you have deviated from divine law, you will find an answer. If you really try this long and winding upward path, you will be able to begin a purification process by which you will walk out of all the darkness in which you have put yourself quite independently. No one else has put you there!

Where to have and employ will power -- and where not to have it -- is often the question. Whether your desires pertain to earthly things which do not deviate from divine law, or whether your desires pertain to your spiritual progress and self-purification, there are so many instances where you can use will power, and where it is not done often enough or strongly enough. The inner psychic forces of a person, once utilized, are much more potent than any one of you realizes at present, but when and how and in what direction it is advisable to use these powers is another question.

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Exercise 3a: When should you accept God's will and not press against it? When is it right to utilize your dormant powers?

Many people are confused about this without even being aware of it. Thus the first step is to find out if this confusion exists. Ask yourself: are you truly confused, or when Inner Will suggests a way, does Outer Will passively rebel by claiming that it does not understand?

If so, formulate your thoughts clearly and concisely. The clear-cut and concise thought-forms of anything for which you strive is the first preliminary. Anyone who has attained something in this life -- whatever it may be -- has done this.

Accepting Spiritual Reality as Truth

This, of course, is what really counts. You can only grasp all this if you view life and the world not from your human and present point of view only, but from the overall and entire point of view of creation and absolute reality.

As a starting point for the grasping of this truth, you may think of the fact that many people who live in a sort of medium state of contentment (they may have no particular problems and conflicts, and yet they certainly lack real happiness) never pull themselves up to search for more and deeper wisdom, truth, and happiness. They do nothing to progress further spiritually. Yet, when they experience a crisis or some unhappiness, it represents for them the starting point to do something so as to reach a higher degree of consciousness and therefore also of happiness.

This example may facilitate for you a way to reach the understanding of this very important factor that has not been generally recognized by mankind, except maybe for a few great people. This represents a very good subject for meditation.

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Exercise 3b: Express your reservations or protests about these concepts. Then consider that human beings are, to spirits, equivalent to toddlers. Look at your protests in that light!

Inner and Outer Will

You have all had the experience that you wish very much for something without achieving it. This is due not only to unconscious contrary will-currents that divide your will, but also to something that is vastly overlooked. It is the fact that two different kinds of will exist:

Outer Will

Tense, impatient, cramped, anxious
Doubtful; impatient because of doubt
Uncertainty; depends upon Inner Will
Arises from intellect and superficial
soul regions = what we imagine,
based on wrong conclusions
Motivated by immature feelings, desires,
reactions, reasonings: self-serving,
that create images, misconceptions
Can feel inadequate and inferior
Does not flow; angular, abrupt
Depends upon outer validation
Uncertain and divided –
it knows something is wrong
despite outward ‘rightness’
Develops defenses: self-importance, pride,
vanity, the rulership principle (winning)

Inner Will

Calm, relaxed, unhurried
Certain, knowing neither anxiety nor doubt
Patience because of certainty
No doubt; feels that it will ultimately prevail
Arises from solar plexus, 3rd chakra
= who we really are, aspire to
manifest
Motivated entirely from higher self / real self
for the highest good of everyone,
including us
Pure, healthy, without doubt
Flows slowly, quietly; ‘rounded’
Knows; remembers the world of spirit
and yet it may feel prohibited from
functioning by various layers of error
what create deviation from truth

Even if both will-currents pursue the same goal, even if Outer and Inner Will desire the same thing, the mere fact that the Outer Will functions at all in its tense impatience prohibits the Inner Will from unfolding, from floating, from affecting the cosmic forces.

[*Inner and Outer Will*](#) PL 64

Exercise 3c: Notice throughout the day when you can sense being directed by Outer Will, or by Inner Will. These may both seem to emanate from within; notice which is connected to life as a human being, with limitations to overcome, vs. feeling confidence in its own divine right.

Higher Self and Lower Self Will-Streams

You can use your will power in two very distinct ways. One is a pressing and a tension that will rob you of your peace. It leads you away from the state of detachment that is so necessary to attain for spiritual and emotional maturity. The other kind will flow freely, strongly, and vitally and will never hamper your serenity. It works deep inside and yet quite consciously; it wills strongly and yet patiently. It leaves you free and detached and yet never passive and resigned.

One will-stream comes out of your higher self; the other of your lower self. If you will something that is against divine law and will, it will never give you peace. However, it is also possible that you will something that is utterly right for you, but you do so in the wrong way, and wrong currents or wrong motives have mingled in.

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Exercise 3c: This right middle path can only be found and kept up if you meditate on this daily and test yourself in complete honesty concerning your inner motives. Ask yourself daily:

- Do you wish to do your best because you desire gratification for your vanity?
- Is your desire to do your best utterly undiluted by selfish and vain reasons?

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Are you truly ready to hear your Higher Self Will-Stream?

Now, there are many questions a personal guide can and will gladly answer if, for instance, you do not know in a particular situation what the will of God is; or if you want to find out trends and emotions within you that you are still unconscious of; or if you find yourself in a conflict, in some kind of disharmony with your fellow creatures and do not know the reason within yourself.

This and similar questions are answered if you open the door for truth. And this can only happen if you are prepared to **accept the truth under any circumstances**, even if you may hear that which you like least to hear.

If you overcome the natural resistance to hearing an unflattering or uncomfortable truth, your door is open, and we can get through. And I might add here that even if you do hear occasionally that which you have feared to hear, you will be extremely happy after you have thus established contact; not only because truth always has that effect, but also because you will then know for the first time that this spirit world with all its laws is a realit, and not a theory. And this will make you indeed very happy.

[Self-Knowledge: The Great Plan](#) PL 11

Daily Review 1.0 from The Call PL 17

You can find out your true reactions about certain things, begin to pull off certain masks and pretenses, find out where you act against a *[Spiritual Law](#)* [PL 171]. It is like a puzzle you begin, when you cannot as yet see the picture; but if you are patient, you will succeed. Thus you will uncover your hidden anxieties and complexes which of course are responsible for your disease.

Let the whole day pass in front of your eyes, in your memory, and think of everything that has happened that has given you in some way a disharmonious feeling or reaction. No matter how wrong the other person may have been, the moment you have been touched by it, there must be something wrong within you. At first these incidents will appear entirely unconnected and isolated; they will be meaningless for you at the beginning. But later on, you will begin to sense -- at first, and then clearly understand, a pattern.

If you follow this through for some time to come, really faithfully (not just once or twice -- that will not do you any good) but regularly and faithfully for some time, you will, after a while, see a clear pattern coming out of it. Pray for enlightenment and guidance every time you conduct this daily review. *[The Call](#)* PL 17

Daily Review 2.0 PL 28

<http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/028-DailyReview-Suggestions.pdf>

Track your daily experiences of disharmonies. After keeping logs for several weeks, see if you can find a common denominator.

Daily Review				
DATE	SITUATION	REACTION	BEHAVIOR/RESPONSE	JUDGMENT
	Facts/Circumstances of Disturbance	Feelings, thoughts, emotions	How You Acted (Exaggerated/Minimized)	Affirmed/Negated My Belief That...
10/01/20	Late for work	Fear/anxiety about job	Yelled at kids	I'm a bad mom
10/01/20	Fight re dinner cleanup	Felt let down by family	Didn't speak for hours	People are inconsiderate

Graphic created by Shakila F.

Week 4: Discerning Inner Will

First of all, I would like to tell you that you can will and want out of your intellect and out of your soul. The intellectual will power may also be a strong one, but it will never have the effect the soul will power has.

Anyone who lives for his ego will not develop. However, even a person who nurses a wrong, a sick, or an ignorant current. even someone who does not fulfill his destiny (which is the reason for his present incarnation) may still advance spiritually in other respects of his personality, though perhaps in quite another compartment of his soul. Perhaps such a person overcomes another fault even though he has not lived his life according to plan, and even though he furthers a wrong current in one respect. This life may still not be entirely wasted from the spiritual point of view.

A wish can come from the intellect or the brain, or from what is sometimes referred to as the soul. In the region of the solar plexus is the spiritual magnetic field -- in radiant matter and thus not seeable for your human eye -- and the magnetic field where not only all emotions exist, but where are marked and deeply inscribed all factors pertaining to the entire cycle of existence of an individual. The significance of previous lives, merits, so-called sins are contained therein, as well as everything -- the whole Book of Life. All feelings or wishes or thoughts cannot only evolve from the brain region, but also from this part.

Many people have not experienced this yet. When they want something or when they think or form ideas, it happens here in the brain. But once a certain stage of spiritual development is attained, you will feel that you can wish and even think in the region of your spiritual field. When thoughts come from this part, they have a very different quality, a very different character than thoughts coming from the brain.

The same applies to will power. Will coming from the brain region will lead to tension unless it is substantiated by will coming from the spiritual magnetic field. Of course, even the right thing can first take root in the brain, but as long as it remains in this region alone, it will never have the forceful character and will never penetrate the whole unit of the human personality. The wishing or thinking from the spiritual field entails man's higher self or divine spark.

Whoever has experienced this will confirm this. Whoever has a thought, an idea, or a wish evolving from his spiritual field will be completely filled with happiness and certainty. He will know without a shadow of a doubt that he has a true thought and that truth is living in this moment within.

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Exercise 4a: Experiment with these suggestions for determining where your thoughts and feelings actually come from. This can also be a way to differentiate Inner Will (emanating from the spiritual magnetic field) from Outer Will (tied to how the personality perceives and deals with life circumstances without full awareness of its false beliefs, misconceptions, and distortions).

Daily Review 3.0 from PL 56 Learn to investigate your reactions, and ask yourself what the meaning and further significance of them may be. What do they imply? What lies behind the emotions you register in the most casual incidents of your life? What is the emotion you register just at first, and what is behind it.

The Capacity to Wish: Healthy and Unhealthy Motives in Desire PL 56

Faith

Faith (or so-called faith) can never happen from the brain. If it is merely a question of intellectual conviction, it is a weak faith. But faith coming from here, coming from the spiritual field and the divine spark, is the conviction and experience of truth. Therefore, people who have no faith are wrong when they think belief is a matter of "it might be like this, or it might not." Faith in its true meaning is always a certainty that has been personally experience, although this experience cannot be conveyed to others who have not had this experience yet.

The fact that many people have the wrong kind of faith does not mean that faith in its true sense does not exist. In the process of uncovering a person's subconscious, not only sick, wrong, and twisted currents become apparent, not only ignorance and shortsightedness, and not only faults and weaknesses (in short, what I term man's lower self), but you also encounter a person's higher self. Sometimes it is way down, deeply hidden, first under protective masks of falseness that have really nothing to do with the person's true nature; then his lower self; and at long last that part of his higher self that was not allowed to function so far.

In this higher self or divine spark lies wisdom, truth, and love to a very large degree. So there is a very important difference in thinking and wanting in the brain or in the spiritual field.

Redirecting Conscious Motives

The higher you are developed, the stronger the subconscious handicaps you and your will power if the desire is not clean and right. So here again, the first step is to make conscious what has so far been unconscious within you. Only in that way can you examine where to let loose and relinquish your will power and where, on the other hand, you can and should use much more of it than you have done in the past.

Once you have separated these two trends in yourself -- the selfish or vain one, and that part of you wishing to serve others in your profession, whatever it may be -- you can develop the will power in the right direction; for then you are cleaned of all masks and wrong motives. Then you can train it to flow out of your solar plexus and not out of your brain.

There is a very subtle and important difference in this. I know that as long as you have not experienced to some degree this difference, these words will be merely words for you, and perhaps even meaningless. However, you can experience it by trying, and once you have experienced it, you will know and understand very well what the difference is between willing from your brain and willing from your soul.

Real and deep understanding has to be worked for. It cannot come by merely listening to a lecture once. This will never be sufficient. Begin to act now so that in every inner stream you go with the divine law instead of against it. You must begin to apply divine law within -- in your trends, in your currents, in your emotional reactions, and not only in your outside deeds. Not only your thoughts, but also your feelings have to be changed too, and this cannot be accomplished unless you view yourself as you really are.

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