

**October 2017**

**From the Desk of Rev. Chuck**

Unity Church of Bakersfield

1619 E Street, Bakersfield CA 93301

[www.ucob.org](http://www.ucob.org)

Church: 661-327-8614

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Dear Friends,

Maybe it's me, but have you ever noticed how the marketeers and advertising agencies try and sell us on: what is good for us, what will make us happy, what will make us rich, what will give us longer life, what will make us look better, what will get us attention, and of course what will help us attract and get a special someone in our lives? That got me thinking, when was the last time I saw a commercial or an advertisement directing my attention to something within myself?

In this day and age, with all the social media outlets that vie for our attention, I try to stay focuses on the positive side of life and the offerings that life has for me, as I strive to live a spiritually fulfilled life. And sometimes a question will come to mind that asks, *"What makes for a great spiritual life?"*

I'm sure each of you has a different perceptive and opinion on what a great spiritual life is best for you, but for me it comes down to this very simple and basic premise: *"Those things I can do for myself that I can share with others."* And when I have shared that concept with others, some have responded, *"It sounds pretty selfish to me."*

I once read a book, The Portable Therapist by Dr. Susanna McMahon. She writes:

*There is a danger in putting others first on a consistent basis. Our western model (and most religions) have taught us, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The focus is nearly always on the "Do unto others" part and rarely on the second half of this saying. How do we know what we would want them to do for us if we are not aware of our own needs and wants? And if they did unto us, could we accept it and be worthy of their gift? Most people have focused all their energy on giving out and have no awareness of what they want or need for*

*themselves. They are hoping that someone else will read their minds and know what is the right thing to do for them. People who have learned to give this way give to get something back and their presents always have strings attached.*

*People who give this way are doing so in order to get their own needs met by others. By putting others first, they are hoping to get love, respect, adoration, security, acceptance, back from those they are giving to. None of these things can be bartered or bought. By putting others first, people are relinquishing their own rights and responsibilities along with the gifts they give.*

*Putting others first is a present you give to them. As with all presents, it is only meaningful if you, the giver, want to give the gift with no ulterior motives. This is the only good reason to give a present. It is of no consequence what the receiver does with the gift. The reason for giving is to bring joy to you, the giver. And that is enough.*

*The only way that you can give gifts without strings is to first take care of your own needs. In order to do this, you must put yourself first. You must recognize what you need and want and you must do the work to meet your own need.*

How can we live a fulfilled spiritual life if we can't give ourselves the gift of taking care of our needs first? If we can't advocate for ourselves, who is going to do it for us? After all, Jesus taught that it was our Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom, and that God knew what our needs were before we even asked. Each of us has the opportunity to live a fulfilled spiritual life where we get to share our gifts of self with others.

As the old saying goes, Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him to fish and he eats for a lifetime. The gift of teaching and sharing of ones gifts can only be done if that person has had the opportunity to take care of themselves first in order to obtain those gifts that they are so freely able to share now as part of a fulfilled spiritual life.