

The Value of Study Groups

Gard Jameson



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There are many joys associated with becoming part of a group of readers which has as its main purpose a thorough study of *The Urantia Book*. A Study Group has the potential to "expand cosmic consciousness and enhance spiritual perception." (1.2) 0:0.2 And these are the two exalted purposes of the fifth epochal revelation.

If you are considering a study group you have made a decision of great consequence. You have decided to participate with a group of fellow human beings in an endeavor which has eternal implications. We live in a society which has a difficult time discussing religious or spiritual subjects, let alone universe cosmology. The Papers of *The Urantia Book* are precious and the opportunity to share them with others provides an experience of great learning and inspiration!

An Historical Perspective

Balanced participation, shared openness, intellectual discovery, a heightened sense of values, warm fellowship and good cookies: what could be a more superb focus for study than *The Urantia Book*?

In the early years of the revelation we were asked by the revelators to form thousands of study groups to enable this great message to evolve into the consciousness of the population. There are hundreds now in existence with many more on the horizon as many foreign translations of the book find their way into the hands of souls hungry for an enlarged perspective on the meaning of our existence. The need for more study groups is great. And so are the rewards for the group, the individual, and the planet.

The Urantia Book has much to say on the value of groups:

"A social group of human beings in co-coordinated working harmony stands for a force far greater than the simple sum of its parts." (1477.1) 133:5.6

"Intellectually, socially, and spiritually two moral creatures do not merely double their personal potentials of universe achievement by partnership technique; they more nearly quadruple their attainment and accomplishment possibilities." (494.10) 43:8.11

"Social architects do everything within their province and power to bring together suitable individuals that they may constitute efficient and agreeable working groups on earth; not always do these seraphim attain their ends; not always are they able to bring together those who would form the most ideal group to achieve a given purpose or to accomplish a certain task; under these conditions they must utilize the best of the material available." (432.6) 39:3.5

"But since personality is unique--no two mortals being alike--it inevitably follows that no two human beings can similarly interpret the leadings and urges of the spirit of divinity which lives within their minds. A group of mortals can experience spiritual unity, but they can never attain philosophic uniformity." (1129.8) 103:1.1

These quotes tell us that it is certainly in our best interest to come together as groups, and that furthermore, as we come together to achieve understanding and tasks, we must appreciate that we

have little hope of achieving philosophic or intellectual uniformity! This last fact makes for a wonderful challenge that awaits you when you participate in a study group.

Study groups grow by the power of good will and intelligent organization which motivates and guides the members of the group. If people join together for study, to discover together new truths, to share their spiritual journey, remarkable things can and will happen. People who meet together for many years experience unconscious growth, a socialization and deepened friendships that are all too rare on our planet. There is a familial appreciation and regard that emerges over time when groups of interested individuals study *The Urantia Book*.

Setting Up a Study Group

Before even thinking about a group, make sure the purpose of your group is to study *The Urantia Book*. The purpose of a study group should be to study, socialize, expand personal insights, avoid isolation of religious experience and interpretation, and provide an arena for interpersonal contact and moral decision making. A study group facilitates the wonderful experience of learning how to work cooperatively as a team. "One of the most important lessons to be learned during your mortal career is *teamwork*." [\(312.1\) 28:5.14](#)

1. Making contact with potential group members.

Personal acquaintances who read the book or who are interested in the book are the best source of participants for a study group. If such individuals are not available, referrals from Urantia Foundation or the social organizations, the Urantia Association International or the Urantia Book Fellowship can be utilized. "Blind" contacts, such as an acquaintance of a friend or unsolicited phone calls should be followed up with an individual contact in a public place before inviting them to the meeting. This is especially true if you are female and are holding these meetings in your home. "Be as wise as serpents but as harmless as doves." [\(1580.8\) 140:8.13](#)

2. Consistency of time and place.

When forming a new group the time and place is most important. Try to get all the participants to agree upon the right time of the day and week. If there is a consensus it will make it easier to continue to be consistent. Consistency is imperative. People are so busy these days that calendars get filled weeks in advance. If the place changes too often, you will also see a drop in participation as readers struggle to remember which location is the right one for the date. If the situation cannot be helped, a written calendar is highly beneficial.

3. Physical surroundings.

The area must be equipped with proper lighting and with enough seating areas to be comfortable. Everyone should be able to see each other. A table is most appropriate if writing and referral to other notes are to be pursued. Coffee and tea or soft drinks with snacks can be served by the host or can be co-coordinated with the other members of the group. A little snack goes a long way to facilitating participation!

4. Attractions and Distractions.

Some Study Groups incorporate a moment of silent prayer and worship at the beginning and/or the end of the meeting. This facilitates the experience of fellowship. Some Study Groups have the members read out loud. Some groups utilize the audio version of the book in their study. It is a matter of preference and practicality.

Young children can be a distraction. The group must all agree on the policy of allowing children to be present. It will not work to allow some children and not others.

It is helpful to have the study aids that are popularly available, such as a Concordance or the Paramony (which traces Biblical references) or the Index of Subjects. It is also very useful to have a good dictionary on hand for reference purposes. Some study groups keep a computer nearby for word searches in the book.

Music or television will disturb the concentration of most readers and is another policy that must be agreed to by all.

Alcohol use by members of the group during the meeting can cause misunderstandings between readers and of the material being read. It is not recommended.

It is usually best not to allow smoking as well.

Punctuality is helpful as all readers have changed their schedules to be on time and hope to finish on time. A late arrival disturbs the concentration of the other readers and may cause some disturbance.

Continuity, particularly if the group is in the process of in-depth study, is a must. If different members are present at each meeting there can be no continuing discussion or understanding between readers. Commitment to continuity with a study group is most important. Participants should have a clear understanding of what lies ahead in the study of the book.

5. Group size considerations.

Seven or fewer can be the best size for many approaches. Informal or formal, it has the best chance for enhanced learning and social interaction.

Seven to fifteen readers will need a definite leader or moderator to initiate some structure and to ensure continuity of focus and study.

Fifteen to thirty members may necessitate prepared presentations and more order in the discussions with sensitive recognition of a member's need to speak. Recognizing that there are both introverts and extraverts among us, it is important to make sure that everyone's voice and heart is heard.

Thirty or more members may need more of a lecture format with the preparation of a leader necessary. Workshops with small break-out groups, also work with this number but must be somewhat structured and also have leaders in each group.

6. Study and social balance.

Both are essential to the purpose of a study group. The ratio should always be more study than social at the study group times and more social than study at the social gatherings, such as pot-lucks or celebrations, such as a Jesus birthday celebration.

Some typical study groups start at 7:00 PM with 15 minutes of social time while others arrive, then read until 8:45 or 9:00 with another 30 minutes for coffee and talk. It is important that on week nights people are considerate of everyone's need for getting home. This kind of group is usually once a week, or every-other week.

Other groups might meet on a weekend and have two hours of study with some socialization afterward.

7. Leadership

What degree of mastery of the book does one need in order to lead a study group? No one's mastery of the book is complete, but the leader should have read the book at least once. A good study leader should feel comfortable acknowledging that he or she does not know the answer to a given question. A study group leader is not an expert so much as a facilitator and moderator of group process. The point is for people to experience the discovery of new meanings and the lure of supernal values. Sometimes discovery flourishes most when the leader asks a question about a passage to which he or she truly does not know the answer. Sincere readers will always jump in to answer other's genuine questions.

If you have accepted responsibility of leadership of a group there are certain expectations other readers will have about your role, besides providing coffee, tea, and cookies. You must make it very clear your willingness to be responsible if you want others to participate in being responsible as well. Good study groups are a family affair. Always try to refresh your memory as to the text that will be read before each meeting.

Social control, ideally, is invisible, gracious and unconscious. Nobody, even the leader, should dominate the conversation. A healthy study group is one that maintains self-mastery over problems such as folks who wish to steer the meeting away from the book or emotionally troublesome individuals. A good group shares the responsibility of self-mastery. Individuals and groups differ in the degree to which they enjoy a more freewheeling discussion.

Many a study group limps or dies, however, due to inadequate social control.

Perseverance- the tenacity to pursue a worthy goal no matter who else cares to join, is a quality that must be practiced if a successful group is to flourish. One study group began with a husband and wife, who studied alone every week for about two years; then they were joined by another couple. After a few more years, more people joined, and after a decade there were sixty people coming to the group.

"Effort and decision are an essential part of the acquirement of survival values." (578.3) 50:6.3

"All this must be according to the Father's plan, which has predicated finite progress upon effort, creature achievement upon perseverance, and personality development upon faith." (1266.3) 115:7.2

When you are cleaning your house and setting up the chairs for your study group, keep in mind these quotes.

"Jesus always insisted that true goodness must be unconscious, in bestowing charity not allowing the left hand to know what the right hand does." (1582.7) 140:8.26

"Neither should you seek to lord it over your brethren in the kingdom. Remember, I have taught you that he who would be greatest among you should become the server of all. If you presume to exalt yourselves before God, you will certainly be humbled; but whoso truly humbles himself will surely be exalted. Seek in your daily lives, not self-glorification, but the glory of God. Intelligently subordinate your own wills to the will of the Father in heaven." (1907.2) 175:1.10

Teamwork

As early as 300,000 years ago in Dalamatia students were being taught to work, study, and fraternize with each other in teams. In *The Urantia Book* leaders are generally associated not with followers but with a team.

"In civilization much, very much, depends on an enthusiastic and effective load-pulling spirit. Ten men are of little more value than one in lifting a great load unless they lift together—all at the same moment. And such teamwork-social co-operation-is dependent on leadership." (911.2) 81:6.37

The superuniverse has its own seconaphim dedicated to teamwork!

"These are the angels who foster and promote the teamwork of all Orvonton. One of the most important lessons to be learned during your mortal career is *teamwork*." (312.1) 28:5.14

A lot has been written about groups--the different types of participation and non-participation, the ways of gaining and maintaining power, and the ways of managing groups to achieve different goals. It is a study on its own but we thought a quick look at some of the issues might be helpful.

Each group has an external boundary which determines membership and an internal boundary which determines leadership. Threats to group survival may come from within or from without.

Each person has a private, partly unconscious image of the group. These images greatly affect participation and affect how the structure of groups. The individual who functions as the leader in most of these images is the psychological leader. The person with the official responsibility may be somebody else; and the one who is the effective leader may be still a third person, the informal leader.

Groups have a rational, technical culture to get their job done, a traditional etiquette to enforce respect for each person, and an archaic emotional character as well.

If a group has only two roles, leader and follower, and two are leaders and there are ninety-eight followers, then the group is call 2% organized. A fully organized group has specific roles for each member. Increasing role differentiation promotes efficiency-the capacity to do work. If an efficient organization is neither undermanned not over manned, it cooperates more effectively--it actually gets the work done

Groups oppose irregularity, ethical or otherwise.

A crisis may be precipitated internally in a group by an individual who suddenly expresses concern for the group and brings the condition to the attention of all, calling for a change. An external crisis may be precipitated by competition or challenge from other groups. A crisis may or may not lead to renewal. The ultimate effect of any crisis will depend on the ability of the group leaders to utilize the lever of crisis for positive change.¹

Dealing with Conflict

The Fathers' sovereignty in the heart of your group is all important for the lessening of conflict.

"Freewill beings who regard themselves as equals, unless they mutually acknowledge themselves as subject to some supersovereignty, some authority over and above themselves, sooner or later are tempted to try out their ability to gain power and authority over other persons and groups. The concept of equality never brings peace except in the mutual recognition of some over controlling influence of supersovereignty." (1487.6) 134:4.9

Study groups will bring you in contact with a multitude of personalities you would probably not have as friends or even acquaintances. This is not because they are not good people, but because their interests, age, backgrounds are so very different from yours that sometimes all you have in common is *The Urantia Book*. This can cause conflict and misunderstanding. Of course, there are all kinds of people and all come with their particular expectations and needs to your study group! You must be prepared for a certain quality of tension or conflict, which is not always bad.

"New religious insights arise out of conflicts which initiate the choosing of new and better reaction habits in the place of older and inferior reaction patterns. New meanings only emerge amid conflict; and conflict persists only in the face of refusal to espouse the higher values connoted in superior meanings." (1097.5) 100:4.1

"That individuals so differ in their life performances indicates, not only the varying endowments of heredity and the different influences of the environment, but also the degree of unification with the indwelling spirit of the Father which has been achieved by the self, the measure of the identification of the one with the other." (1480.3) 133:7.11

Though there may be profound differences in personality type and temperament within a study group, a spirit of worship conduces to a quality of unity that is astounding and refreshing.

Since most of us will not have a degree in psychology when we start, or participate in a group, all we can do is either go to the library or look to *The Urantia Book*.

"Jesus loved men so much because he placed such a high value upon them. You can best discover values in your associates by discovering their motivation. If some one irritates you, causes feelings of resentment, you should sympathetically seek to discern his viewpoint, his

¹ *The Structure and Dynamics of Organization and Groups*, by Eric Berne, (New York: Grove Press, 1963)

reasons for such objectionable conduct. If once you understand your neighbor, you will become tolerant, and this tolerance will grow into friendship and ripen into love." (1098.1) 100:4.4

But what if it doesn't? What if there is a person in the group who is determined to dominate, criticize, start arguments, concentrate on other subjects or in general disturb the meeting? The papers say (and there are many who can attest to the effectiveness of this technique), that the troublesome person should be taken aside by another sympathetic reader and told of the problem. If the unruly person does not change, then can two readers take this person aside, and if this still doesn't work, then the problem is taken to the group which has the final authority. In this way, all efforts have been extended to assist this person in becoming a meaningful part of the group. Please read the "Sermon on Forgiveness" for Jesus' own words on this subject of unruly persons.

"Can you not see that on this world such responsibilities had better rest upon the group or be administered by chosen representatives of the group?" (1469.1) 133:1.2

"You cannot truly love your fellows by a mere act of the will. Love is only born of thoroughgoing understanding of you neighbor's motive and sentiments. It is not so important to love all men today as it is that each day you learn to love one more human being." (1098.3) 100:4.6

Dealing with Individual Differences

One of the greatest conflicts in your study group will be the differences between idealists and realists. Abner was an visionary idealist, Paul was an pragmatic realist. Never argue with a dogmatic idealist because they are always right. In the scope of evolutionary development it just may not be time for whatever their ideal is, to be manifested. Marry idealism to dogmatism and you have a very difficult combination. Abner was a wonderful man. He loved the truth. Paul had ideas and it was a great pity the two did not work together. Abner refused to develop an organization while Paul decided to build an organization in a practical way.

"Paul went forth to build up one of the most progressive human societies which has ever existed on Urantia." (1865.6) 170:5.16

We can love and appreciate Abner, but we must respect Paul for his real accomplishments. Abner failed to manifest his ideals; Paul's cause lived and prospered. We are in the midst of a new revelation. It is imperative that we constantly evaluate our actions as we work in our social, service and study groups.

"Someday religionists will get together and actually effect co-operation on the basis of psychological opinions and theological beliefs. Goals rather than creeds should unify religionists...it is inevitable that each individual religionist must have his own and personal interpretation of the realization of that spiritual experience. Let the term 'faith' stand for the individual's relation to God rather than for the creedal formulation of what some group of mortals have been able to agree upon as a common religious attitude. 'Have you faith? Then have it to yourself.' " (1091.6) 99:5.7

Potential Pitfalls and Problems

No matter how well meaning we are, we can never quite see what we may be doing that may negatively affect the group. Here are a few reminders on how even the best of intentions may be perceived by your fellow man.

DESIRABLE ACTIVITY	CARRIED TO AN EXTREME
Pray for the meeting	Become pious and ostentatious
Listen to others	Become non-responsive
Build morale	Become "goody-goody"
Contribute your own ideas	Dominate discussion
Share your own experience	Start an encounter group
Think	Become an intellectual snob
Inquire	Ask too many shallow questions
Cultivate friendships	Indulge in flattery or become meddlesome

The activities which occur in your study group should form an organic part of the efforts of our unseen benefactors to spiritualize humanity.

The Importance of Study

The word student comes from the Latin *studere* which means to be eager or zealous about. A student of *The Urantia Book* is eager about the facts, meanings, and values presented in its pages. The word scholar comes from the Greek *schole*, meaning leisure. A scholar of the book takes the extended, non-anxious time required for learning, free of the domination of any theological, ideological, or political purpose.

The Urantia Book itself contains a surprising amount of teaching on the subject of study. Study is one of the three main categories of activity for our morontia career.

"The activities of such a world are of three distinct varieties: work, progress, and play. Stated otherwise, they are: service, study, and relaxation." (526.4) 46:5.29

Study does not come easy for mortals, and only becomes truly voluntary later in our universe career. "Study is becoming voluntary, unselfish service natural, and worship spontaneous." (537.5) 47:7.5

Jesus engaged in intense study. (1420.7) 129:1.10 He memorized passages in early schooling. (1362.3) 123:5.2 His way in discussion was a model of "broadmindedness, fairness, and tolerance;" (1467.4) 132:7.8 and he was a patient listener. (1460.6) 132:4.2 His study group was earnest and joyous. (1533.5) 137:7.1

Perhaps the greatest revelation about reading comes at the end of the Foreword:

"We are fully cognizant of the difficulties of our assignment; we recognize the impossibility of fully translating the language of the concepts of divinity and eternity into the symbols of the language of the finite concepts of the mortal mind. But we know that there dwells within the human mind a fragment of God, and that there sojourns with the human soul the Spirit of

Truth; and we further know that these spirit forces conspire to enable man to grasp the reality of spiritual values and to comprehend the philosophy of universe meanings. But even more certainly we know that these spirits of the Divine Presence are able to assist man in the spiritual appropriation of all truth contributory to the enhancement of the ever-progressing reality of personal religious experience--God consciousness." (17.2) 0:12.12

In other words, there is a cycle of revelatory communication, beginning with the author and the original language, then translated into English, then printed and read by the human intellect, and then worked on by the Thought Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth to bring alive universe meaning and values.

We live in an age of partial illiteracy, superficial reading, and speed reading. Sometimes it is appropriate to skim material quickly, but the authors at times explicitly slow us down:

"Stop and ponder the solemn fact that God lives within you..." (39.5) 2:5.6

"Meditate on the revelation of these divine attributes which were made in loving service by your own Creator Son.." (89.5) 7:7.6

"Let the sublime knowledge of the mortal life of Jesus of Nazareth sink in to your souls..." (228.5) 20:6.1

In reading the scriptures of the world, we are to "look for those eternally true and divinely beautiful teachings." (1769.3) 159:5.1

Why study parts of the book that describe realities remote from human experience?

"Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it." (2090.4) 196:1.3 But isn't there a hidden harmony between this priority and the following idea: "The narrative of human ascent from the mortal spheres of time to the divine realms of eternity constitutes an intriguing recital....this supernal adventure should be the supreme study of mortal man." (449.2) 40:7.4 "Man's terrestrial orientation, his cosmic insight, and his spiritual direct ionization are all enhanced by a better comprehension of universe realities and their techniques of interassociation, integration, and unification.." (1162.1) 106:0.1

Jesus had strikingly high standards in that he expected others to interpret the scriptures carefully and to recall truths that they had been taught. He called his students to read not only reflectively but also responsively; in other words, what do the meanings of the passage call for in terms of a moral response? He also never tired in pointing to the worshipful aspects of scripture, especially the Psalms. Often we overlook important points by failing to read carefully and with an eye to different levels of meaning;

"...there is much in the Scriptures that would have instructed you if you had only read with discernment." (1662.2) 148:5.5

"Do you not remember that it is written...?" (1662.2) 148:5.5

"Do you not remember that I said to you once before...?" (1841.3) 167:7.4

Jesus challenged Nathaniel, one of the smartest of the apostles: "But why do you refuse to comprehend the meaning of the record...?" (1660.6) 148:4.7

Again, it is important to realize that there are meanings to be discerned at the level of the imagination, at the level of reflective thought, at the level of the heart or feeling as well as at the level of the soul. This is the meaning of loving God with all of our strength, with all of our mind, with all of our heart and with all of our soul.

Reading, like listening, is an art and a test: "Think not only of the multitudes and how they hear the truth: take heed also to yourselves how you hear. Remember that I have many times told you: to him who has shall be given more, while from him who has not shall be taken away even that which he thinks he has." [\(1691.4\) 151:3.1](#)

Sometimes a reader can only see one side of a complex text. "It is just because the gospel of Jesus was so many-sided that within a few centuries students of the records of his teachings became divided up into so many cults and sects. This pitiful subdivision of Christian believers results from failure to discern in the Master's manifold teachings the divine oneness of his matchless life." [\(1866.3\) 170:5.20](#)

We read the papers sentence by sentence, sequentially. But there is also artistry to be discovered in the structure of the composition of sections, papers, parts, and the book as a whole.

"The wise philosopher will always look for the creative design which is behind, and pre-existent to, all universe phenomena." [\(42.6\) 2:7.5](#)

Ask yourself again and again why one section precedes another; why the opening section of a paper consists of the words chosen?

Topical study

Researching a topic with a study aid is more efficient for some purposes but not as revealing as an entire reading of *The Urantia Book* devoted to this particular topic. Some topics are worth several meetings. Getting to the bottom of what *The Urantia Book* has to teach on a certain topic, like personality or love, is very satisfying. Sometimes it is helpful to consider the topic from the perspective of each part of the book in succession. It can be a lot of material, and if you find yourself and others being overwhelmed during the meeting, take a break and pause and reflect on what you have done so far. There should be no hurry. One can become very fatigued from the intellectual pressure required to go through too much material too fast.

One way to get through a large amount material is to group similar passages and ask members of the group to read them in sequence without commenting until after the series has been finished. It's a good idea to point out what it is that you want the group to look for in the series of passages. Often one passage may spark comments on diverse topics that may have little relevance to your purpose for the evening. Maintaining focus is a most important principle in running a successful study group.

How many passages are about right for an evening's study? Of course that depends on many factors. A good average is around eight. It's nice to have extra relevant passages at hand to use in case the need arises. Try to allocate time for the different parts of the discussion to keep the evening fluid.

For something different, consider using one passage as the springboard for an evening's reflection. Research other passages that will illuminate the original choice. In this way, it shows how the

whole of the book may be used to explain the part. And it is a reminder that a great gem of a sentence is will worth being the focus of an entire evening of study.

Comparative Study

If you do no more than share a list of passages that you really like, individuals in the group may benefit from simply bringing old favorites to mind on a new occasion. It is possible, however, to do much more. The highest level of study, according to Mortimer J. Adler in his *How to Read A Book*, is to compare the great thought of authors of different books. If you are interested in topical study, you might consider this path. Bring literature outside *The Urantia Book* to extend and clarify what the book contains. *The Urantia Book* draws on many human sources, and it is designed to function in a cultural civilization—interacting with the ideas and ideals of current and future generation. Correlating passages from the book with evolutionary products may be confusing for a beginners' group. Those who know the book well will find it very stimulating. One benefit is, that it helps us see the book through the others' eyes. What does anthropology say about primitive religion? What does biology say about evolution? It doesn't take much hunting in the library to come up with some material that will prove interesting to your fellows. There has been much correlative work done on the science found in *The Urantia Book* with contemporary science. This is a fascinating study. Make sure, however, that the study group stays focused on *The Urantia Book*. Comparative study is not recommended for a beginners group.

Such study groups need to be carefully guided so that they remain sessions which are primarily devoted to the study of *The Urantia Book*. Some groups try to explore *The Urantia Book* along with some other alleged source(s) of revelation. While truth is to be found in countless sources, and while an occasional reference to information and perspectives from outside *The Urantia Book* can be very helpful in a study group, it is nevertheless confusing for other sources to be given as much or more attention than the fifth epochal revelation. This is sometimes done because the leader or another participant wants to use the prestige of a *Urantia Book* study group to proselytize his or her personal convictions about other sources.

Teaching

Teachers evolve, they do not appear. A teacher must know his material very well, but most of all a teacher of *The Urantia Book* must try and live these teachings.

"You may preach a religion about Jesus, but, perforce, you must live the religion of Jesus."
(2091.10) 196:2.1

The study groups you will belong to or form will have a person who will organize, and perhaps a person who will share their expertise, and others who will lead in different ways. But all who attend meetings should be asked to read the paper on *Instructions for Teachers and Believers*. A group usually chooses its own leaders and teachers. Ideally all members should be teaching by living these great truths within the group and in their private lives. If you find yourself as chosen to serve your group; be cautious, be patient, constantly seek the Fathers' assistance, and keep these admonitions close to your heart.

"Always respect the personality of man. Never should a righteous cause be promoted by force; spiritual victories can be won only by spiritual power...Make your appeals directly to the divine spirit that dwells within the minds of men. Do not appeal to fear, pity, or mere sentiment...Be

fair; exercise self-control and exhibit due restraint; show proper respect for the personalities of your pupils...Do not lessen or destroy their self-respect...Do not wound the self-respect of timid and fearful souls...Do not indulge in sarcasm at the expense of my simple-minded brethren...Be not cynical with my fear-ridden children." "In preaching the gospel of the kingdom, you are simply teaching friendship with God...Future generations shall know also the radiance of our joy, the buoyance of our good will, and the inspiration of our good humor." (1765.4) 159:3.2

There are many great books exploring the art of teaching. Our universities are full of learned and wise teachers. But let us keep in mind; "The common people heard Jesus gladly, because he was one of them, an unpretentious layman; the world's greatest religious teacher was indeed a layman." (2090.5) 196:1.4

Conclusion

"To 'follow Jesus' means to personally share his religious faith and to enter into the spirit of the Master's life of unselfish service for man. One of the most important things in human living is to find out what Jesus believed, to discover his ideals, and to strive for the achievement of his exalted life purpose. Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it." (2090.4) 196:1.3

"The spirit of the everlasting Father is concealed in the mind of every mortal child." "Man goes forth searching for a friend while that very friend lives within his own heart." (45.1) 3:1.4

All who enter into study of this revelation with each other enter into close contact with the Divine Presence within himself and with the Divine Presence within all other members of the group. It should be considered a sacred privilege in your life. The Study Group experience should be one of the fond memories of your life on Urantia. It should be a time of sublime expectation as you open the pages of truth found within the fifth epochal revelation to our planet! Your interaction with the other members of the Study Group should evoke a profound awareness of fellowship, even the fellowship of God's family. The Study Group experience ought to in some manner inspire selfless service and the worship of God.

"Some men's lives are too great and noble to descend to the low level of being merely successful. The animal must adapt itself to the environment, but the religious man transcends his environment and in this way escapes the limitations of the present material world through this insight of divine love. This concept of love generates in the soul of man that superanimal effort to find truth, beauty, and goodness; and when he does find them, he is glorified in their embrace; he is consumed with the desire to love them, to do righteousness." (2096.8) 196:3.32