

## ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



### **LESSON 287** **You are my goal, my Father. Only You.**

#### **Sarah's Commentary:**

The peace of God, true happiness, and love instead of fear are set before us when we make God our goal. When I think of the ways I spend my life and see all the distractions that divert me from this goal, I know I cannot truly and honestly say my goal is only God. Yet when I experience shifts, miracles, and holy instants where I enter His presence and feel the distractions fade away, I redouble my efforts and put more of my attention on God and will do so until the time when He becomes my only goal.

When anger, frustration, financial concerns, expectations, hopes, dreams, material requirements, various pleasures, and daydreams occupy my thoughts, I recognize how I am choosing this small self as my reality. There are no rewards in this choice, even though it appears to the false self as if the things that occupy the mind are important. They keep the false self invested in a never-ending series of options. A friend calls these options, "selections from the pain buffet line." We can choose as many as we like, but they will never satisfy, and ultimately, they bring pain. They glitter with the possibility of bringing the happiness we seek, but they only deliver disappointment and more suffering.

We try to convince ourselves that these things, which Jesus calls "idols," are where our happiness lies. Yet, increasingly, we see this is not the case. The only choice, which brings rewards, is the goal to uncover the deep peace and joy that come from the inner knowing that we are forever One with God. When I keep my focus on my purpose to know my Self, then no matter what tribulations and challenges seem to confront me in my day, they are all opportunities for undoing the ego. I recognize that I cannot judge anything as good or bad. All things truly do work together for our awakening when we use them for undoing the guilt in our minds. The temptations of the ego that divert our focus on God are there to keep us from true peace.

Why do we choose these temptations and distractions? Why do anger and judgment, for example, seem so compelling to us? We justify anger by saying someone or something is responsible for how we feel, but the real motivation for choosing anger and judgment is to use them as a defense against the truth. Anger maintains separation by keeping our focus on forces outside of our own minds as the cause of our distress. We believe what someone has said, or what someone has done, or not done, is what upsets us, but the truth is that we have decided how to interpret what we see. We are responsible for throwing our peace away in the face of a situation that has no power to take it from us.

Taking responsibility for our minds as the cause of our distress, rather than anything outside of ourselves, puts the ego in jeopardy because it knows that we can choose against it anytime we want. The ego needs our allegiance for it to continue to exist because its existence depends on the power of belief that we invest in it. Our allegiance to it requires that we see the cause of how we feel as coming from outside of our own minds. When we justify our anger and tell stories of why we feel the way we do, we are making others responsible. This is a reversal of cause and effect, which is how the ego has set it up. We see ourselves as the victim of the world. When we get too close to love, we actually invite conflict. We will choose a fight as a way to maintain the separation. We don't want love to threaten our establishments---our chosen identity. Anger serves the ego's goal of maintaining the separation, as does sickness, judgment, and all the other ego strategies that keep us committed to the dream.

We think we know what happiness is, but it is a fleeting experience in the world of the ego. There is no substitute in this world for the happiness and peace of God. The gifts we think we prefer and the treasures we seek in the world cannot begin to compare with the gifts of knowing the Self and the confidence this brings. Ego existence is one of fear. Everything in our lives is tinged with fear until we realize that our identity is not that of a body and personality. Our belief that we are the body, the personality, and the little self we call the "I" and "me" keeps us safe from God's Love. But now our minds have been opened to the possibility that who we think we are is not the truth. As long as we identify with the body and the personality, we will keep chasing the illusory forms of this world, all the while hoping that, finally, we have found the answer to our unhappiness. The ego will never reveal to us that this is all a lie. We have been duped. Now Jesus reveals to us exactly how the ego has set it up so we can make another choice and make God our goal. The means are given us for the goal for God to be reached. It requires that we watch our thoughts and forgive our misperceptions.

We are as God created us, which is Spirit. When we accept this, what is there to fear? All the attention and effort we put into keeping ourselves happy in the dream simply delay the dawning of the real world on our minds. This is a world where everything is seen through the eyes of love. We become a clear and spotless mirror, reflecting God's Love in this world.

Should we feel guilty that we have other goals? The answer is no because guilt is the ego's game to keep us feeling bad about ourselves. All we are asked to do is to recognize that our ego goals will never bring peace and happiness. It does not make our pursuits wrong. We can go shopping, have special relationships, and take vacations, yet this can all just be a backdrop for watching our thoughts and using every situation for healing. What is important is not what we are doing in the world, but what every situation is for. We can use it to keep us invested in the ego or for waking up. It is all about our purpose. The world was made to distract us with problems. As long as we focus on the screen (the world) and try to fix things "out there," we play the ego's game.

Let us focus on making today about true happiness and not look to futile substitutions. It is not about sacrificing what we think we still want. My experience is that these things increasingly lose their value. My interest and attachment to these idols diminish as I do this work. They no longer hold the value they once did. They no longer hold the hope of happiness. Instead, I increasingly recognize true peace can only come from recognizing the Self I really am. There is a deep yearning in us all for the hush of Heaven, to rest in God, and to have peace that "passeth" all understanding.

But yearning is not enough. We say we want this peace, but we must look at how we resist doing the work. A clear path has been laid out for us in this Course, but do we follow it? Forgiveness has been given us as the means for undoing the ego thought system, but how often do we persist in holding onto grievances? If the means that we have been given to reach the goal are not accepted, the goal cannot be achieved. If we truly are serious about the goal, we must be serious about being helped to reach it. I have a friend who prays very sincerely for God to show him the way, yet he says he does not have the interest or patience to do the Lessons. The Lessons are there so we can find the way to God because the ego mind will never undo itself. We need the help of the Holy Spirit and our mighty companions every step of the way. We need the safe space where we can express all that stands in the way so we can clearly see and release the ego strategies.

**"You are my goal, my Father. Only You."** (W.287) Speak these words in confidence and remind yourself of the goal often today. Even if we accept this statement as partly true with many reservations, eventually we will consider it more and more seriously until it is finally accepted as the truth. (W.P.II.284) We speak these words as honestly as possible for ourselves, even if they are not yet totally true for us so that the brain can be rewired. These words are a true expression of the Christ Self that we are in truth. No "gifts" in this world can substitute for happiness. **"What gift could I prefer before the peace of God? What treasure would I seek and find and keep that can compare with my Identity. And would I rather live with fear than love?"** (W.287.1.3-5)

Today is a day to stay vigilant in staying alert to the temptation to get angry and judge. When such temptations arise, be willing to ask for the Correction. The Holy Spirit will always give us another way to see every situation. The answers are all within.

Love and blessings, Sarah  
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