

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 257

Let me remember what my purpose is.

Sarah's Commentary:

What is our purpose? Why are we here? What do we give our attention to? Is it about getting what we want in the world? Is it about striving for material things, recognition, relationships, specialness and power, or is it for healing our minds through forgiveness? The Course teaches over and over that the purpose of our time here, if it is to be used well, is only for forgiveness. It is our function, our purpose, and our reason for being here. The only purpose is to wake up from this dream, to remember who we really are, and to know peace and joy.

Our true purpose is already in the mind. It is the truth we have chosen to forget. The truth is fully present all the time, but while we are invested in focusing on meeting our perceived needs, we will be conflicted. Part of us wants to know the truth, and part of us wants to stay invested in the material world. When our focus is entirely on our worldly existence, we experience depression, deep distress, despair, and suffering. Even though we try to do everything we can to avoid suffering and to seek for ways to mitigate it, all this does is distract us from our feelings. None of our strategies to find happiness in the world will work because the problem is not in the world and neither is the solution. The only thing that brings distress is our identification with the ego, and the only answer is to remember who we are. When we hold grievances, we suffer. When we use the world as a classroom for helping us to learn to forgive, we are using it for the purpose of waking up to the truth.

Our focus is now on the idols we have substituted in place of our reality. Jesus describes idols as, **"Be it a body or a thing, a place, a situation or a circumstance, an object owned or wanted, or a right demanded or achieved, it is the same."** (T.29.VIII.1.9) (ACIM OE T.29.IX.52) Further, he says, **"For idols are unrecognized as such, and never seen for what they really are."** (T.29.VIII.1.3) (ACIM OE T.29.IX.52) This is the only power they have. If we saw that the idols we pursue will never deliver the happiness we seek through them, we certainly would not pursue them. We would pursue happiness where it truly lies, which is in liberating ourselves from this dream. Idols simply affirm our false identity. They prop up who we think we are, and **"In some way, you believe they will complete your little self, for safety in a world perceived as dangerous, with forces massed against your confidence and peace of mind."** (T.29.VIII.2.3) (ACIM OE T.29.IX.53)

Our goal is mixed between wanting to pursue the truth on one hand and wanting to pursue our idols on the other. This creates conflict in our minds, as we try to walk both the path of the ego and the path of the Holy Spirit. Another way to look at this conflict is that we want to hold onto a grievance against someone and justify our upsets, yet we still want to know God and to be at peace. This is a reflection of our split minds. Until we step fully into our purpose, we will be in conflict. An example in my life is that I look after my mother who is 102 and has lots of care needs that occupy a lot of my time. While I see it as an opportunity for forgiveness, there are times when I

feel imposed upon and resentful that it is all up to me. My sister lives some distance away and is rarely here to visit. Recently, she came to visit and I perceived that she questioned some of my decisions. I perceived that she thought there was more I should be doing. Not only did I express my anger to her, but I also tried to build an alliance against her with my other sister by sharing my story with her and further justifying my anger.

On reflection, I realized that I had set all of this up by not hearing my sister's cry for love. Clearly, she was expressing her concern for our mother's care, but I was choosing only to hear criticism coming at me. Jesus says, **"If he speaks not of Christ to you, you spoke not of Christ to him."** (T.11.V.18.9) (ACIM OE T.10.VI.58) Instead of hearing her call for love and seeing that **"What you thought your brother did to you has not occurred,"** (W.P11.Q1.1.1) I made the error real. I took her comments personally. The criticism would not have found a place to land if I was not judging myself for not being sufficiently available to my mother.

Jesus reminds us that to forgive something we have made real is called, "Forgiveness to destroy." Real forgiveness shows us that nothing real has happened. If I see what she did as real and true, I cannot forgive it. Now I need to bring my illusions to the truth and let the Holy Spirit give me His interpretation of the situation. This means that I must admit that I was wrong in the way I interpreted her behavior. When I remember that my mind is the cause of it all, I can change my mind about the way I see every situation. It is all my own projection of my own self-attack. Can you see how the ego gets absolutely outraged by this? It insists that what we see is a fact, rather than an interpretation. If we listen to the ego, we stay in hell. That is why our focus today is, **"Let me remember what my purpose is."** (W.257)

Jesus says that only forgiveness can bring us happiness. This is our only purpose. If I am experiencing unhappiness today, it is because I have chosen with the ego. Only I can make myself unhappy. If we were suffering in any way today, Jesus reminds us the suffering is just hiding an unforgiving thought. (W.98) There is no form of pain forgiveness cannot heal. We need to recognize that any unhappiness that we experience today can be healed through forgiveness. It is the only way we can reclaim who we really are. Trying to be loving only obscures this function. We cannot overlay lovingness onto thoughts of worry, anxiety, distress, "dis-ease," anger, and frustration. Trying to be positive in the face of these kinds of feelings simply overlays the problem with a spiritual veneer. Instead, we need to look honestly and courageously at these unforgiving thoughts, accept responsibility for them, and be willing to turn them over to the Holy Spirit.

Today, we are invited to set our intention to remember our purpose throughout the day. It is to accept the Atonement for ourselves (the recognition of our guiltlessness), by being willing to accept His Correction so that the obstacles that stand in the way of peace and joy can be removed. When we forget our goal, we get conflicted in our actions and start focusing on our own ideas of what we think will make us happy, but this can only result in further conflict. (W.257.1.1) We cannot **"serve contradicting goals and serve them well."** (W.257.1.2) When we try, it just leads to **"distress and great depression."** (W.257.1.3)

How determined are you to stay on purpose and remember your function? What would God have you do today? Yesterday's Lesson reminded us that the only way we will hear guidance is through the means given to us to hear His Voice. We each have a curriculum set up by the mind in this world. This is our script. It offers us myriad opportunities for forgiveness with the characters given us in our script. Whatever is coming in your face today, stand back and look at it as an opportunity for healing the guilt in our minds. If everything that seemingly happens is just a projection of our own minds, the movie of our lives is just what we need to see to reclaim our innocence.

If we are not living our lives on purpose, we will be confused and unsure of what we are. **"If you are to be conflict-free yourself, you must learn only from the Holy Spirit and teach only by Him."** (T.6.III.2.2) (ACIM OE T.6.IV.41) As we step on this path and let the Holy Spirit in, there will be increased conflict. **"This step may appear to exacerbate conflict rather than resolve it, because it is the beginning step in reversing your perception and turning it right-side up."** (T.6.VA.6.4) (ACIM OE T.6.Va.69) The reason for this is that we now have conflicting goals and are trying to walk on two different paths. We want what the ego has to offer---our separate identity and its seeming pleasures---while also wanting to awaken from this dream. This can be very painful. When we are split between our spiritual focus and the goals of the ego, confusion reigns. Not only that, Jesus says that we will experience **"deep distress and great depression."** (W.257.1.3)

If in one minute we are in a state of bliss, peace, and spiritual joy and in the next minute we are gossiping, angry, or attacking, we will suffer. This is an example of pursuing two paths. It is not a happy experience until we learn to step on one side more and more consistently. It is in this state of conflict, between two thought systems, that we currently live. The answer is to watch our minds constantly and apply God's chosen means for our salvation. As our awareness increases and we can see more clearly how our minds are split, we will be less and less tolerant in following the ego's religion. This means that we will be much quicker in asking for help to release our grievances and will be more willing to step back from our investment in our thoughts. The only way out is to use everything that comes up in our day for forgiveness and peace.

In Chapter 30, in the Section called **"The Only Purpose,"** Jesus reminds us that the only purpose of the world is forgiveness. Now, **"The world becomes a place of hope, because its only purpose is to be a place where hope of happiness can be fulfilled."** (T.30.V.2.7) (ACIM OE T.30.VI.58) When we see it this way, there is nothing bad happening. It is all for the undoing of our conditioned minds so we can wake up to who we really are. Everything is orchestrated by our own minds for our healing. It is all hopeful because, as we detach from the drama, watch our thoughts, and recognize ourselves as the dreamers of this dream, rather than the figures in the dream, we exert the power to choose how we see our purpose here.

We are assured that we will go beyond our function of forgiveness in this world and experience perfect happiness. This is the real world where we experience Heaven on earth. We will still see the idols, but we will have no interest in them and no longer want them. You may be noticing this more and more in your own life, where the things that seemed to hold a lot of interest for you at one time are simply falling away. I no longer have the same kinds of attachments as I have had in the past. It is not because I have given them up, but simply because they have just fallen away. These transitions are mostly gentle because, at some level of the mind, we are ready for them. We go at our own pace when we are ready to take the next step without fear. We take each step in joining with each other and releasing our separate interests.

"An ancient hate is passing from the world. And with it goes all hatred and all fear. Look back no longer, for what lies ahead is all you ever wanted in your heart. Give up the world! But not to sacrifice. You never wanted it. What happiness have you sought here that did not bring you pain? What moment of content has not been bought at fearful price in coins of suffering? Joy has no cost."(T.30.V.9.1-9) (ACIM OE T.30.VI.65)

There is an interesting piece I was reading by Byron Katie, which relates to this Lesson. She says that when we hurt, we are actually, mentally out of our business. It is important to recognize there are only three kinds of business in the universe: God's, yours, and mine. Whose business is it if an earthquake happens? God's business (Not that God created it, but it is beyond our business).

Whose business is it if your neighbor down the street has an ugly lawn? Your neighbor's business. Whose business is it if you are angry at your neighbor down the street because he has an ugly lawn? Your business. So now it is in our purview to heal our judgments.

Life is simple---it is internal. Thus, if my sister has judgments of my caregiving, it is none of my business. Only if it upsets me is it necessary for me to heal my own mind.

Check your thoughts as you go through your day and see whose business is being attended to. Maintain vigilance over your mind, and observe how quickly you judge, give advice, look for alliances, cling to grievances, and hold onto everything that ultimately brings more suffering. Our responsibility is to mind our own minds and use what comes up in our minds for forgiveness, reminding ourselves always that our will is one with God's Will, and when we choose Him as our goal, we will increasingly release the goals keeping us invested in the illusion. We will recognize that when we give up our goals, we actually give up nothing to gain everything. What goals do you hold today in competition with your only goal for God? Can you feel the tension this creates in your life? Now, we have a choice. It is to get back to our only purpose.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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