

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 233 I give my life to God to guide* today.

Sarah's Commentary:

Today's Lesson is all about surrender and the willingness to listen and submit to His Will, rather than relying on our own will. It is about trusting in Divine Wisdom, rather than the "wisdom" of our past learning. It reminds me of one of my favorite Lessons where we must release control over our own lives. **"I will step back and let Him lead the way."** (W.155) It is about giving over the thoughts, beliefs, and emotions that block our awareness of His presence---a presence which is always in our minds, closer than our own breath. We keep His thoughts away from us when we are determined to have it our way, when we hold grievances, when we think we know what would make us happy, when we believe we know our own best interests, when we hold onto our identity as an individual self, and when we invest in our specialness, believing we can gain at our brother's expense. We attempt to take from others what we believe would make us complete. When we believe that they no longer have anything to offer our specialness, we discard them.

Separation comes from the belief that we are something that others are not, and we have seized what others could never get. Others are despised while we are praised. While others suffer, we are happy. We cling to differences, rather than recognizing the sameness in everyone. We hold the belief that if others have more, it is because they have taken what we failed to get. It is the basis for all our grievances.

When we give Him all our thoughts, holding onto none of our own, He will direct all our acts and all we do and think and say. We then naturally and easily withdraw from illusion and pleasure, from worldly anxieties and desires, from works not of God, from the glory of our own ambitions, from confusion, conflict, and competition, and from the burden of our own opinions. It does not happen all at once. It is indeed a process of being in the flow of God's eternal Love where all comes easily and naturally. There is now no more conflict between the wrong-minded voice of the ego and the Voice of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus assures us that we can fully trust the Holy Spirit's guidance while there is no reason to trust our own. With God, we can be certain. If we rely on our own "wisdom," we can never be certain. We cannot possibly know all of the outcomes, nor the impact of our decisions on everyone. We cannot rely on our own judgments because they are based on very limited information. Possibilities are infinite in number, and we cannot know them all, but the Holy Spirit can and does. We can rely on Him for everything. More and more, I notice how much I go through life, determining things on my own and simply forgetting to stop and to ask. It is a reflection of resistance and of the fear of truth, which is the fear of our own reality. We are still attached to our own captivity. We are still invested in the prison house of this world. There is still a desire for things of this world---for what is familiar to us.

As we recognize that our own pursuits have hurt us, we yield more and more to God. We stay open to His guidance in what we are to do and where we are to go. And in our daily routines, we invite

His Presence to be with us. We are not asked to detach from the world, but only from the false self by recognizing our cherished illusions and letting them go. It is not easy because we do not always see what we are valuing. For me right now, I am trying more and more to step away from having opinions about everything. When I want to speak, I stop and reflect as to whether it is important to say anything at all. Also, I am increasingly asking myself why I am undertaking an activity. What is it for? I recognize how I have used my life for experiences, for power, and for pleasure. It is not helpful to judge myself for this and feel guilty, but it is very helpful to look at it and question it all. Only in this way can we give our life to God.

If we think we are not getting the answers we are seeking, believing He is not speaking to us, it is only because we are still listening to our own specialness. Part of the problem is that we are still wrapped up in our own thoughts and not willing to surrender our way. We think we know. Our wrong minds resist the truth. Our mantra is, "Don't tell me what to do." We feel weak when we do not know, or when we surrender to another seeming will. Yet it is only through this kind of surrender that our minds are open to being taught and to being guided. We can start by acknowledging that maybe we have been wrong about everything. In fact, we can be assured that we are wrong about everything because we have relied on the wrong teacher. This is difficult for us because we are so invested in our worldly identity. We are uncertain about trusting what, to us, is yet unseen and unknown.

To be willing to ask the Holy Spirit in everything requires that we stay vigilant with noticing how much we hold onto the belief that we can handle some parts of our lives on our own. It is about trying to maintain control, but what are we trying to control? We are actually using control to resist the Will of God and resist being drawn into the unknown. This reflects the final obstacle to peace, which is the fear of God. This fear shows up in areas of our lives where we are attached to keeping things as they are. The fear shows up when we think that God will require us to sacrifice our happiness, as we define it.

How does guidance come? For each of us, it will be unique. It has been helpful for me to realize that the voice of the Holy Spirit is actually my own voice. There was a time that I actually thought it was a voice apart from me. It requires discernment to recognize whether we are hearing the voice of the ego or of the Holy Spirit. Not everyone hears an actual voice. It may be just an inner prompt that comes from inspiration. If it is of the Holy Spirit, it will feel right and true. Perhaps it was this impulse that prompted you to pick up the Course, to join a particular study group, or to call a friend. We may receive prompts from "outside" sources as well. They may come through a book, a person, a sign of some kind, an inner nudge, a TV or radio program, or even a song. It does not come through our efforts, but through synchronicity. Through it, we feel mightily helped and supported in our journey. It is a sense of living in the flow where we allow the flow without interfering with it. We receive some outward sign of the gentle communication of Spirit and with it comes a sense of the tenderness and deep sense of security in which we are held. We sense that we are not alone in the world, but we are supported by the infinite organizing power of the Divine. We connect with it when we quiet our ego chatter and enter into His Presence in the silence of our hearts and the openness of our minds.

One thing I have found helpful at times in my process is to sit in meditation with pen in hand, listen in silence, and begin to write as thoughts come up, sometimes in answer to a situation in front of me. Some of this writing makes little sense initially, and yet, on rereading the notes, there are gems of truth that are perfect to address the questions in my mind. I have also found, if I open the Course book randomly, I have been given just the right guidance in answer to a question plaguing me. I simply ask to be helped and let it fall open and read what my eyes light on. Sometimes the answers have seemed quite obscure, but other times they have totally turned me in a whole new direction and have brought me back to sanity.

The key for me has been to ask and expect an answer. Whatever works for you is what is important. The guidance may seem very subtle at times; while at other times, it will be very apparent. **"When you have learned how to decide with God, all decisions become as easy and as right as breathing. There is no effort, and you will be led as gently as if you are being carried down a quiet path in summer."** (T.14.IV.6.1-2) (ACIM OE T.13.IX.92)

"Today we have one Guide to lead us on. And as we walk together, we will give this day to Him with no reserve at all. This is His day. And so it is a day of countless gifts and mercies unto us." (W.233.2.1-2) His guidance carries not only His wisdom but His love for us, the tenderness of which we cannot comprehend. An important thing to remember about guidance, however, is that the ego can use it for its own ends, and as such, it can become a manipulative tool. I might, for example, give someone advice under the guise that it was guided, or I might want to ignore a request made by a brother on the basis it was "guidance" when, in fact, I did not want to help. I may even use "guidance" as a way to elevate my status as someone with a special relationship with the Divine. It is subtle, yet important, to recognize how the ego likes to elevate itself and use the idea of "guidance" to enhance its own specialness.

Also, it is important to remember that this Course is not about making our prison house of this world more attractive as a substitute for Heaven. Our goal is to awaken from the dream, not to try to make it more attractive. Therefore, if we are trying to bring the Holy Spirit into the dream by asking for guidance about options that will just make for a happier dream, it is serving the goals of the ego.

We are told, **"Salvation is an undoing in the sense that it does nothing, failing to support the world of dreams and malice. Thus it lets illusion go. By not supporting them, it merely lets them quietly go down to dust."** (W.PII.Q2.3.1-3) Then, the love beyond them will be revealed, which is what illusions hide. We let illusions go by looking at them. Look at the pleasures we seek that we think will make us happy and realize the pain that was brought to us instead. Be willing to accept that offerings of the body bring only guilt for which we think we deserve punishment and death. Yet by recognizing that it is only God's Love that will bring us eternal peace and joy, a new perspective dawns on our minds. Ask in everything: *What is it really for? What is being served by my pursuits in this moment? Is it to enhance the ego and my specialness, or to recognize I have been wrong about everything?* As we release our way and listen to a different Teacher, He will help us to remember what we are.

In our relationships, when we do not join with another's pain and when we do not let our peace be upset by someone's anger, we are demonstrating that we need not support anyone's dream of malice, including our own. While we are still called to act with kindness, compassion, help, and support, our minds remain at peace, remembering who our brother is in truth. And when we are not able to see our brother's innocence, we bring our own self-attacking thoughts that we projected onto our brother to the Holy Spirit for healing. It is how we bring our life to God to run today.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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