



LESSON 51 ~ REVIEW I

[Review Lessons 1-5]

Sarah's Commentary:

The general instructions for all the review Lessons are clearly articulated for us in the second paragraph of the introduction to this review. While this describes the approach we should take to the review periods, the content of the ideas presented is more important. This helps us think about the Lesson throughout the day and focus on the content of the Lesson that has the most meaning for us.

"After you have read the idea and the related comments, the exercises should be done with your eyes closed and when you are alone in a quiet place, if possible." (W.PI.RI.IN.3.3)

"This is emphasized for practice periods at your stage of learning. It will be necessary, however, that you learn to require no special settings in which to apply what you have learned." (W.PI.RI.IN.4.1-2)

This is really important. Clearly, in the initial stages of our practice, it is valuable to have a quiet setting to the extent this is possible. Jesus speaks here about the early stages, yet ultimately, **"It will be necessary, however, that you learn to require no special settings in which to apply what you have learned."** (W.PI.RI.IN.4.2) The reason is that we will really need these Lessons when we are in situations that are difficult, challenging, and upsetting to our peace of mind. Whichever Lesson most resonates with you, and you feel would be most helpful to you, should be the one applied in these challenging situations.

This helps us to recognize we can always draw on the strength of the Holy Spirit in any situation and not only when we are in our meditation time with Him. It is important to remember for now that we are in an early **"stage of learning,"** (W.PI.RI.IN.4.1) which Jesus recognizes and understands. Until this thought system becomes what we draw on in every moment and in every situation, we will still need the quiet times for practice. However, **"The purpose of your learning is to enable you to bring the quiet with you, and to heal distress and turmoil. This is not done by avoiding them and seeking a haven of isolation for yourself."** (W.PI.RI.IN.4.4-5)

I feel a wonderful sense of achievement whenever I am in a situation of conflict or distress of any kind and can remember the truth. Recently, I was at a function where there were plenty of opportunities to make judgments and hold grievances. As I took a moment to remember my Lesson and my purpose, I found I could stand aside from the ego and look at the situation with quiet amusement. As such, I was able to look at the characters in this dream from outside the dream without judgment. It is very empowering not to get sucked into the drama, to be free of judgment, and yet recognize our Oneness with each other.

For me, it has taken years of work and practice and continues to do so. Sometimes, I get caught in the situation, but rather than looking at myself as having failed, I know it is just another opportunity to choose again. When we judge ourselves for our perceived "failures" instead of just taking responsibility, we make the error real in our minds, and that is not helpful. Jesus reminds us we are not responsible for the error, only for the Correction.

While we still identify with this dream, we will have work to do in applying these Lessons to get to the place where we can truly feel peaceful, even in situations where everything seems to be falling apart around us. At such times, there is a temptation to respond with anger and judgment. When we ask for help to set aside the temptation to react from the wrong mind, we have taken the first step toward peace. Thus, every situation we are in provides us another opportunity to choose forgiveness and peace.

The ego immediately wants to go to the story, to justify why we should feel, and react as we do. We think we can solve the problem or resolve the situation on our own. But Jesus is showing us that when we try to resolve our fear with the wrong mind, which means we are turning to our own resources for solutions, it just brings more unconscious guilt. The reason is that it is the very same mind that projected the problem in the first place! The only answer is with the Holy Spirit. Only when we turn to Him do we see there is only one problem, which is the separation and the guilt that came with it.

At the very early stages of our mind training, we need to do the practice in a quiet place in order to connect with the peace within. Then we learn to take that peace everywhere we go so that we are no longer fearful of distress and turmoil. Finally, in the later stages of our development, we will recognize peace as no longer conditional on things going right "out there." We will see peace everywhere, regardless of how things appear to be. All attack is now seen as a call for love.

I was recently watching a movie where a mother was listening to her son's abusive comments directed at her. She approached him with great tenderness and said she had x-ray eyes and those eyes could see into his heart. She told him that despite his angry words, she was feeling the tears in his throat. He melted into her as he cried. Our peace can also give us such "x-ray eyes," which in the Course is called vision. Vision can see behind the behavior and hear any seeming abuse or pain as a cry for love. Our goal is to come to a place where we bring our peace and love to every situation without exception or exclusion. We don't rely on our own assessment of any situation. We call on God for guidance on how to respond.

Finally, we are told that the ideas given in the review are not given in their original form; so instead of going back to the original Lesson, we should use the current descriptions. Jesus tells us we should not apply the ideas in the same way as suggested originally. We may wonder why he might be saying this. I am thinking that he does not want us to ritualize our Lessons as he told us in the Introduction to the Workbook. He does not want us to focus on form, but to focus instead on the content. The idea is to look at the relationships among these ideas and see "**... the cohesiveness of the thought system to which they are leading you.**" (W.PI.RI.IN.6.4) In other words, we should not focus on getting the form right but on going to the meaning. I suspect he does not want us to become good students of the Course and become rigid about following rules and prescriptions, but rather, we should focus on the content of the Lesson. We are basically being asked to let go of:

The meaning we have given everything
Our judgments

Our understandings
Our thoughts
Our justifications for how we see things

If we want to see with vision, we have to cease letting judgments, attack thoughts, fears, worries, and unworthiness govern our sight. We have been wrong about everything, and now we must accept our humility so we can be taught. It is all about willingness and readiness to learn. We are currently protecting our individuality and separate, unique selves. Thus, with every wrong-minded thought, we are defending against the love we are. Our judgments have hurt us and we no longer want to see and feel the pain and suffering that come from our self-attacking thoughts. By letting the Holy Spirit interpret for us instead of turning to the ego, we release ourselves from the pain of our judgments.

If there is a particular Lesson that appeals to you in this Review, take it into your day. What I particularly like is, "**I do not understand anything I see,**" (W.3) and "**I have given what I see all the meaning it has for me.**" (W.2) My intention today is to focus on how my judgments have hurt me and have kept me from vision. Also, I am getting that I really don't understand anything I see. The mind that thinks it knows is blocking real seeing.

The other one that has an impact for me is, "**I am never upset for the reason I think.**" (W.5) It is a recognition that the ego thought system brings me pain. Jesus teaches that our only problem is the separation from God, regardless of whatever form our problems show up. The separation is painful because with it has come the idea of sin, guilt, and fear.

Whenever I feel bad, guilty, angry, defeated, bored, scared, inferior, self-conscious, annoyed, lonely, condescending, or superior, I know I am attacking myself. How I see myself leads to how I interpret everything in the world. Every response that comes from the ego interpretation reinforces the sense of separation. To remind ourselves that we are never upset for the reason we think is to remember the reasons we give ourselves for our upsets are not true. The stories we tell about them are not true. There is only one reason for any upset. It is the belief we are separate, guilty, and alone. This is not the truth! It just means I am trusting in my own wrong-minded idea of myself when I feel any sadness, confusion, anger, conflict, or apprehension of any kind.

This is definitely not about denying our feelings. We need to be aware of our thoughts and feelings and bring them for correction. In choosing to do so, we will experience the miracle. For only in this way will we give over our hold on any situation and trust in God's strength and not our own. Only in this way do we open up a space where the love we are can come through. Right now, the ego rushes in to give its meaning in every situation. It rushes in to give us its view on everyone and everything, so no space is left open for Love to come in. Because we want to be in control, we maintain our judgments. Our fear is we will dissolve into love if we don't maintain control. Until that fear is looked at for what it is, which is nothing at all, dark clouds of our mistaken thoughts will obscure the truth. Which will you choose today? Our false self or the Christ self?

Love and blessings, Sarah
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