



LESSON 172
Review V ~ Lesson 153 and Lesson 154

Sarah's Commentary:

[153] In my defenselessness my safety lies.

[154] I am among the ministers of God.

If I accept that I am Love, why would I ever need to defend myself? If I feel that I need to defend myself, it is because I am asserting that I am vulnerable and weak, that my reality is this body and personality, and that I can be attacked and hurt. The truth of who I really am is unassailable. Further, if I know myself as Love, I share that experience with the world through my example. What this means is that I must undertake the function of forgiveness so as not to use anyone or anything to attack myself and separate myself from God's Love.

As love is extended through me to my brothers, I know it is in me. Do not mistake this for preaching or proselytizing. I am simply being an example of love so others will want to make the same choice I have made. It is not something that we do, but something that comes through us, as the blocks to love are brought to the light. In other words, we simply become channels for His Love. The unifying thought, "**God is but Love, and therefore so am I,**" (W.RV.4.3) reflects the one truth of our reality as God's Son. It is a statement of the Atonement Principle, which is that we haven't changed what we are as God's perfect Son.

In the introduction to this review, Jesus appeals to us to take the practice more seriously now by giving more effort and more time, as "**We recognize we are preparing for another phase of understanding.**" (W.RV.1.3) The effectiveness of the second half of the workbook depends on this effort. We are trying to go beyond the words to the meaning. We are awaiting the experience. We place our faith in the power of this practice. When our minds wander, we bring them back with the central thought, "**God is but Love, and therefore so am I.**" (W.RV.4.3) Jesus is not pushing us. He is inviting us to make this choice on behalf of our own happiness because he knows this is our bitter need---to wake up to the glorious truth of who we are.

Our efforts are aimed at reclaiming the knowledge of the Self we thought we had lost. "**This Self alone knows Love.**" (W.RV.4.4) What would it be like to really know that we are love and nothing else? This is not possible in this world, but God's Love can indeed be reflected here through forgiveness.

The goal of the Course is to experience the real world of peace and joy. Heaven and the state of knowledge can't be known here, but we come closer to reflecting God's Love when we are willing to accept the sameness in all our brothers. We are all equal. We share the same divinity. Jesus also reminds us of our equality with him. He walks beside us, not ahead nor behind. He is our

elder brother, showing us the way home. We are called to do the same with our brothers. We share the same need to remember who we are.

Forgiveness is the closest we come to God's Love in this world. When we have the experience of this Love, we increasingly walk in trust. We have a strong sense of our purpose and our function. We recognize that nothing in the world that we have ever sought has brought us joy. We see this world as a classroom where all events and circumstances of our lives are helpful for our awakening. We live by guidance, letting Him lead the way. We recognize that there are no problems except for the one problem of separation. We give freely, recognizing that to give and to receive are the same. Our bodies are seen as vehicles for extending love, and thus they are used for a holy purpose.

"This Self alone knows Love." (W.RV.4.4) In other words, it is not the ego that knows love. Though we may try to be loving, the ego's version of love is always to get for itself. Through our special relationships, we try to get our needs met because we feel that we are lacking, and so we look to others to complete us. The Christ Self, however, is consistent and never changes; it only extends love. This is not our consistent experience right now. The personal self is about ever-changing emotions. Our self-esteem seems to rise and fall, depending on each event, circumstance, or person that we encounter. When we take any attack personally, we feel we must defend ourselves, but when we defend ourselves, we are making the attack real in the mind. It means that we have lost sight of our true Source---the Christ Self---and now we see ourselves as our own source. We are seeing ourselves as the authors of our own lives.

By the same token, when we receive praise or approval, our false sense of ourselves may feel elevated. Our self-esteem appears to come from the things that seem to happen to us in the world that send us messages about ourselves. It also comes from our own efforts to strengthen those things about us that we believe need to be given our attention. We diet, take courses, engage in training activities, work to create an image, and try to smooth out the rough edges of our personalities, but the Self that Jesus is talking about is not an image of our own making. It is not an image at all and has absolutely nothing to do with the opinions of others. When those opinions find a place to land in us, we know we are holding a judgment against ourselves, and we now have an opportunity to bring it to the light where it is dissolved.

Today, in our practice of this Lesson, we remind ourselves that our worth is not established by anything that we believe is necessary such as getting things done on time, doing things perfectly, never making mistakes, never being angry, or whatever else we hold as a virtue. My worth is established by God. As you go through your day, watch your thoughts and be willing to look at them with light of truth and be willing to maintain vigilance over the ego, since **"This review will shorten time immeasurably."** (W.RV.5.3) We remember today that an untrained mind can accomplish nothing. Our commitment and dedication to the practice are therefore very important if we want to achieve our goal of peace and joy in our lives.

We are given the curriculum and the daily practices. All we need to do is be willing to practice watching our thoughts and be willing to take responsibility for them so they can be healed. We do this by recognizing that there is no world outside our own minds. The world is simply an outside picture of our inward condition. This is what makes it such a useful classroom, which reflects the state of our minds and helps us to see our judgments.

Even though Jesus sees our wavering, unsteady footsteps on this path, he is encouraging us to move steadily forward and commit to the practice. If we knew that the practice would bring more joy, peace, and happiness until we finally opened in welcoming the Self we are, wouldn't we

commit to doing it more diligently? Yes, there is resistance, and fear still shows up, but it can all be given over to the Holy Spirit Who shows us its unreality.

None of us likes the self that feels small and defended, attacks, betrays, suffers, and feels needy and lacking. We all want the experience of the innocent, glorious Self given to us in our creation. It is still with us, having never left our minds. We are not aware of this Self because we have set up blocks to the awareness of what we are in truth. Now we must do the practice in order to undo these blocks and access the truth. This Course was given in order to show us the path of light and provide the means to return to the eternal Self we thought we lost.

Jesus says that he takes this journey with us. "**For I share your doubts and fears a little while, that you may come to me who recognize the road by which all fears and doubts are overcome.**" (W.RV.6.2) Some of us are uncomfortable with the idea of Jesus. We may have some shadow figures projected onto him because of our past. This is discussed in *The Clarification of Terms*, in which Jesus says he is not the only helper. There are others; even if, in reality, they are just one. "**Jesus became what all of you must be. He led the way for you to follow him.**" (C.5.3.1-2) He is leading us from the hell we have made. "**Some bitter idols have been made of him who would be only brother to the world. Forgive him your illusions, and behold how dear a brother he would be to you.**" (C.5.5.7-8) He offers to share all our pain and fear. He is aware of our fears and our illusions. He is a gentle guide, helper, and elder brother who lovingly leads us out of our hell because he has finished the journey.

He says he is renewed each time he leads someone to where the journey ends. This is how we are renewed---as we see anyone "getting it," moving forward, or experiencing a miracle. It enriches us all because there is only One Mind, and we all receive the gift received anywhere in the Kingdom. Jesus needs our participation if we are to be released. He is actually leading us back to the moment when we chose our individuality, but now we can make another choice. "**The power of decision is my own.**" (W.152) Nothing we have chosen is irrevocable.

"For you have barely started to allow your first, uncertain steps to be directed up the ladder separation led you down. The miracle alone is your concern at present. Here is where we must begin." (T.28.III.1.2-4) (ACIM OE T.28.IV.28) The Holy Spirit sees "**your bitter need,**" (W.RV.8.1) even though, in reality, we have no needs. Yet He knows that, for us, this world of illusion is real. Jesus, as a symbol of the Love that we are, joins us in our practice. It is a collaborative venture. "**Together we review these thoughts. Together we devote our time and effort to them. And together we will teach them to our brothers.**" (W.RV.8.2-4) There is no such thing as an "individual" salvation because to be an individual is an illusion. We are One Mind.

"Identify with Him, and what has He that you have not? He is your eyes, your ears, your hands, your feet. How gentle are the sights He sees, the sounds He hears. How beautiful His hand that holds His brother's, and how lovingly He walks beside him, showing him what can be seen and heard, and where he will see nothing and there is no sound to hear." (T24.V.3.4-7) (ACIM OE T.24.VI.42)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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