



LESSON 146

Review IV Lessons 131 and Lessons 132

Sarah's Commentary:

These two thoughts in Lessons 131 and 132 go together because to seek the truth is to stop looking to the world for what we seem to be seeking: love, safety, immortality, permanence, and satisfaction. I thought that the world was a place for me to achieve goals, which would bring me a great deal of satisfaction and a strong sense of purpose for what I considered to be important. My theme song when I was a young professional was, "Dream the Impossible Dream." I loved what that song conveyed about the world being my oyster. Later, I came to realize how impossible it really was with regard to the achievement of the things I thought would bring me satisfaction and achieve my dreams. It isn't that I didn't achieve goals I had for my life because in many ways I did. It is just that, ultimately, I did not achieve that deep experience of happiness and peace I thought would come with each achievement. Any euphoria I felt was short lived. Instead, in the end, I was left with the feeling that there had to be more.

As Jesus reminds us, "**You do not really want the world you see, for it has disappointed you since time began. The homes you built have never sheltered you. The roads you made have led you nowhere, and no city that you built has withstood the crumbling assault of time.**" (T.13.VII.3.1-3) (ACIM OE T.12.VII.61) Later in this chapter, he says, "**Everything the ego tells you that you need will hurt you. For although the ego urges you again and again to get, it leaves you nothing, for what you get it will demand of you.**" (T.13.VII.11.1-2) (ACIM OE T.12.VII.69) He tells us, "**Leave, then, your needs to Him. He will supply them with no emphasis at all upon them.**" (T.13.VII.13.1-2) (ACIM OE T.12.VII.71)

This reminds me of the teaching in the Bible that says, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all else will be added unto you." The point of the Lesson is that we will seek because that is what we came here to do, but if we seek the things of this world, we will become disenchanted and left disappointed. However, when we seek for the Kingdom, everything will be given us. To seek for the Kingdom is to seek for what can never be found in the world as it is already given us. It is the truth that is in us. We can't know it until we stop looking outside of ourselves. Either we seek for nothing of value in what the world has to offer, or we seek for what we have already been given, which is our innocence and the peace and joy within.

When we follow the dictates of the ego, our time is spent on always seeking but never finding. Regardless of what we seem to be doing in the world, in terms of our jobs or the roles or activities in the world, the only really important use of time is for our awakening---for recognizing the truth of who we are and why we are here. When we come to that realization, we will no longer wish to seek for what has no value, but instead, we will seek for truth. It is the only purpose here and the only one that will bring us what we really desire. The irony is that what we are seeking is what we already have and what we already are.

Does this mean we have to give up on our dreams? Does this mean we can't have any goals in the world? Does this mean we shouldn't make money? Does this mean we can't pursue a special relationship? Jesus does not lay down any rules or dictates about what to do. The Course does not provide rules for how we should behave. It only helps us to look at what we are thinking. Jesus is simply showing us, in a very gentle loving manner, the results of our endeavors in the world and helping us to see where our real happiness lies.

This teaching is not about what we do but what is in our minds, as we go about our day. As we undertake our pursuits in the world, we are encouraged to increasingly recognize these things are substitutes for our real search. What is under all our searching is our desire for peace and for joy. We all want to be happy, and we think we know where our happiness lies, but we are deceived. Jesus reminds us that we don't know our own best interests. Yes, we can still do everything we choose to do in the world as long as we still feel there is value here. We are not asked to sacrifice anything. Eventually, we will come to the place where we realize that there is nothing of value here. Then there is no sacrifice because the things we thought we valued simply drop away. They no longer hold our interest. In the end, we are only sacrificing our fear, guilt, anger and belief in lack, and how can that be a sacrifice?

If our deep desire is to awaken from this dream and remember who we are, we must undertake the mind training to bring about the deep peace we seek. We must question what everything is for. Purpose is such a big part of this teaching. The purpose of our worldly goals is to keep us invested in the world. The Holy Spirit's purpose is to teach us that there is nothing we seek in the world that has value because nothing here is eternal. In fact, the world is illusory and thus has no reality. Yet he shows us that everything here can be used for a different purpose when given to the Holy Spirit for His interpretation and for His use.

Jesus urges us to ask in everything, what is it for? When we entrust our happiness to the Holy Spirit, He will use everything in our lives to benefit our awakening. In other words, when we give over to Him our special relationships, our jobs, our talents, and our bodies, they can serve a mighty purpose. Whatever we do in the world can become a backdrop for that purpose. For example, our special relationships can now be used by the Holy Spirit for the undoing of the guilt in our minds. We do this by taking responsibility for the guilt we project onto others and place it on the inner altar for healing.

Yesterday, I was thinking of a friend who is estranged from me. It has been painful for me to lose this friendship. Over the years I have made several attempts to connect, but all to no avail. I recognized that our falling out was as a result of my giving her feedback about what I saw as her issues. I had at one time been very open and honest with her, and she was offended by my comments. She became angry, defensive and ended the relationship. It was painful for me, as we had been exceedingly close for many years. On reflection, I saw that what I hated about her were her self-pity and weakness. She had a lot of fear about her future and complained and worried excessively about money. I admired her for her strength and her abilities, as she had a very senior position and was very capable in that role. In many ways, she was my mentor and my role model. Clearly, her fears reflected my own. I was not aware, at that time, of my own self-attacking thoughts, and instead, I projected them onto her. I did not want to experience my own fears and thought I could fix them in her. What I saw as helpful feedback was all my own self-attacking thoughts that I projected onto her. I had rationalized that I was being helpful to her, but it was not the truth. I had not been willing to look at my own mind and take responsibility for my own thoughts. I find it takes great courage and honesty to look within, but our safety lies in our defencelessness. Only then can we know our own invulnerability.

The Holy Spirit clearly brought to my mind that what I judged in her was what I was afraid of in me. All He needed from me was my willingness to look. I hated my own weakness, my own fears, and my own victimhood. This is where the healing needed to be. All the time I spent trying to re-establish a

relationship with her, I had never looked within. Forgiveness requires the willingness to take responsibility for our own guilt. There is no one outside our own minds. In spite of all the awareness that is brought to me through this Course, I had hidden from myself what the real problem was. The guilt must be seen for what it is if healing is to occur. No, the relationship may never be established again in form, but the real cause of the problem must be seen for what it is and not the way the ego has set it up. Whatever the situation, it all starts in our own minds. ***"I am responsible for what I see. I choose the feelings I experience, and I decide upon the goal I would achieve. And everything that seems to happen to me I ask for, and receive as I have asked."*** (T.21.II.2.3) (ACIM OE T.21.III.15)

Jesus recognizes that we are seekers. **"For this you came, and you will surely do the thing you came for,"** (W.131.3.2) but we have a choice. The choice is to search in the world for our happiness or to pursue the goal of seeking truth. We cannot fail. No one can fail. The end for all of us is certain. It is our ultimate awakening to what we truly are. Why does he tell us that it is certain? He tells us this because it has already been accomplished. All that is required is our acceptance. In the meantime, Jesus says we should be glad that we are searchers. It is this restless desire to know the truth that keeps us seeking for the answers to our questions. In each of us is the echo of a forgotten song, no matter how hidden it may seem to be. When we tune in to it, we will want the whole melody. It is the Call in our minds to remember our magnificence.

Yes, we all dilly-dally on this journey. We get off track. We deceive ourselves. We continue to believe there is something in the world that we still want. We delay. We think the next job will make us happier. We believe more money will do it, or a new car, or a new relationship. Each of these choices that we make can be the impetus for correction of our misperceptions when we realize the answers to our lives are not in the things of this world. For some of us, it may take longer, but time is irrelevant. We all reach a turning point in our lives. Some call out to God in the depths of despair. Others call out when nothing in the world seems to be working for them. Some call out as a result of a crisis, and for others, it is just a lifelong longing for a deeper, fuller understanding of who we are and why we are here. In other words, it is a deep search for meaning. That is what it has been for me. It was not that things weren't working in the world, or that I wasn't achieving my goals, but I was lacking in the deep peace that comes from the surrender of my own way. I valued my independence, my street-smarts, my ability to survive all manner of setbacks, my achievements, and my certainty that I was right in how I saw things, but it was always at the cost of the deep peace that only surrender could bring. We must become as little children and be willing to be taught. It means coming with totally empty hands unto our God, asking to be shown the way. It means giving up the "I know" mind.

What keeps us in the world and seeking for our happiness "out there" is our fear of God, which is the final obstacle to peace. All our defenses are established to keep us from the love we are. Our fear is based on the belief that we will be punished by God for leaving our home. The reality is that our minds hold only what we think with God. **"Lack of forgiveness blocks this thought from his awareness,"** (W.RIV.IN.2.7) (ACIM OE W.RIV.4) but we have the power of choice. While we can and do rebel, delay, and uphold the belief that our happiness is in the world, we all have the freedom and, eventually, the desire to change our minds. With our change of mind, all our thoughts change. This is a process. Because of our fear of God, we seemingly need to take time to undo the guilt in the mind until we recognize that God is only love and there is nothing to fear. In the meantime, we will not be hurled into Heaven. The process is under our control. Jesus tells us, **"Tolerance for pain may be high, but it is not without limit. Eventually everyone begins to recognize, however dimly, that there must be a better way. As this recognition becomes more firmly established, it becomes a turning point. This ultimately reawakens spiritual vision, simultaneously weakening the investment in physical sight."** (T.2.III.3.5-8) (ACIM OE T.2.II.48)

He goes on to say, "**The alternating investment in the two levels of perception is usually experienced as conflict, which can become very acute.**" (T.2.III.3.9) (ACIM OE T.2.II.48) You may be noticing this in your own life. As my friend Nouk Sanchez describes it, you can't have one foot in one boat and the other foot in the other boat without eventually falling on your face. When we make a commitment to truth, our conflict in trying to live in two worlds is diminished. "**Until they achieve this, they waste themselves and their true creative powers on useless attempts to make themselves more comfortable by inappropriate means.**" (T.2.III.5.2) (ACIM OE T.2.II.50) The means to reach the real world are constantly being offered to us. All that is required is our decision. He needs our willingness and our dedication to the truth. We can't fail because the truth is already in our minds. There is nothing to seek. We can't fail because we haven't lost anything. We just need to realize this fact. In other words, there is nothing we can do to change what we are. That is what the Atonement Principle is about. We can only be unaware of our reality. Now we are learning to release all that is not true that we have deceived ourselves about.

I was driving to an appointment yesterday. I had started out late and was hoping that all the traffic lights would be green and I would have no obstacles to delay me further. On the contrary, not only was I hitting every red light, but then I made the wrong turn off the freeway and was going in the opposite direction of my appointment. The stress was increasing as I berated myself. Then I remembered, "**My mind holds only what I think with God.**" (W.RIV.2.2) (ACIM OE W.RIV.3) Would God be concerned about time? Would God give value to the valueless? Would God have thoughts of unworthiness and self-judgment? Did getting there on time really matter? John Mark Stroud calls these "wonder" questions. They are helpful in releasing the mind from the grip of the ego. In my questioning, I realized how I was giving meaning to the meaningless and with that came the release of the grip that the ego had on my mind. Ah. . . "**My mind holds only what I think with God.**" (W.RIV.2.2) (ACIM OE W.RIV.3) The funny thing was that my appointment was for a massage in order to help me relax and de-stress! Ultimately, only the mind can lead us to deep relaxation.

To open to the truth, we need to bring our mistaken thoughts for correction. As we release the blocks to love in our minds, the awareness of our true Self, as the love we are, reveals itself to us. Everything is then flooded by divine love that comes through us. We are conduits for that love. There is no limit to it. Time and space are irrelevant to it. When the misperceptions in our minds are corrected, the power available to us is absolutely immense and beyond our ability to understand. There are no limitations on it. That is why order of difficulty in miracles doesn't exist. There is nothing too big or too small for a miracle to address. All problems are equal in magnitude when it comes to the miracle. There is no problem bigger than any other problem because it is not about the outside condition. It is only about a change of mind. The miracle is internal. Yes, it can be reflected in the world, but it all starts with an inner shift.

The beauty of it is that salvation is very simple. It comes right down to a decision we make right now. We do not have to look far. Our brothers are all around us. We forgive what is within by forgiving what appears to be without, which is just our hidden hates and secret sins. As we do so, we clear the channel of the mind so it truly can be a beautiful conduit of God's Love. What a glorious thing it is!

Love and blessings, Sarah
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