



LESSON 133 I will not value what is valueless.

Sarah's Commentary:

This Lesson, "**I will not value what is valueless**," (W.133) is eminently practical as it sets forth very clear criteria for what is valuable and what is valueless. After all the metaphysical teachings in the Lesson yesterday about the world not being real, it seems like a positive assurance of more clarity and practical application here. Nevertheless, this Lesson is also quite challenging, with significant metaphysical teaching included here as well.

The main point of the Lesson is the contrast between the nature of love and truth and the seeming reality of this world. The point is that only what is of God has value while everything that keeps us invested in this world is valueless. While the metaphysical teachings of the Course can sometimes seem very difficult, the truth is simple. Yet the process can be difficult, as we go through the undoing process. It need not be painful but usually is because the plan often calls for changes in external circumstances that are always helpful but not necessarily experienced that way. Then comes a period of sorting out, which is "**. . . always somewhat difficult**," (Manual for Teachers.4.I.A.4.2) because now we are looking at what is keeping us invested in the illusion and what will be helpful or will hinder our journey. It is the third stage in the Development of Trust, as described in the Manual for Teachers, which is a period of relinquishment where there is enormous conflict. All these stages are about this sorting out process where we are sorting out the valuable from the valueless. This Lesson speaks about this process.

Jesus starts off by saying: "**You do not ask too much of life, but far too little**." (W.133.2.1) In fact, even more startling, he is saying we are actually asking for sorrow and not happiness in the world. Who would think that? Certainly, it is not a conscious request, but the ego has set it up so we don't realize that this is what we are actually doing at an unconscious level of the mind.

When we pursue the things of the world, we are literally going after nothing because we can't be satisfied by anything we pursue. When you look to whatever you believe will address your "**. . . bodily concerns, to things you buy, to eminence as valued by the world, you ask for sorrow, not for happiness**." (W.133.2.2) Clearly, what is said here is not about this Course attempting "**. . . to take from you the little that you have**." (W.133.2.3) Nor is Jesus asking us to "**. . . substitute utopian ideas for satisfactions which the world contains**." (W.133.2.4) He is only bringing our attention to the reality, "**There are no satisfactions in the world**." (W.133.2.5) In fact, Jesus goes on to say that when we pursue these seeming satisfactions, all we are getting is more guilt. His interest is to show us how we are hurting ourselves, pursuing the things that can't bring us true happiness.

Is he asking us to stop pursuing what we think will make us happy? Should we feel guilty when we go shopping, look for special relationships with people, or look to food, objects, money, careers,

fame, and attention for happiness? Clearly not. This Course is not about behavior. It is about what is going on in our minds. Certainly, as we change our minds, behavior will follow. What Jesus is showing us is that we are making choices based on fear. The thing is, we don't realize this. We think we are pursuing pleasure when we are actually choosing fear. This does not make us sinful. We need not feel guilty about our choices. He does not want us to judge ourselves for our wrong-minded choices. We certainly don't need to take on more guilt. He is just helping us to look at how we spend our lives, seeking for what can never be found in the world. We all want peace, love, and happiness, which we already have in us. The things we pursue in the world are substitutes for the real thing. We seek outside of ourselves for the happiness and peace that are already within. We will never find satisfaction there. As we become more aware that searching for anything outside of ourselves is a futile search, we become more motivated to look for the answers where they truly are, which is within.

Do not judge yourself for looking for status in this world or trying to find that special relationship you think will be the answer to all your dreams or for pursuing material things you think will fulfill you. What Jesus is asking of us is to look at the content of our minds and not at the forms we are pursuing. In other words, it is about looking at the cause rather than at effects. When we look at effects, we see the problem is in the world and we think the solution is there too. And so we are constantly trying to solve what can't be solved. However, when we look at the thoughts in our minds, change can happen. And when our minds are changed, the effects are changed as well.

All he wants us to see is that what we pursue to meet our needs, as we see them, will not make us happy nor bring us peace. It is not sinful to pursue something in the world. It is only misguided because, even when we get what we want, we will not achieve consistent peace and happiness. When we see that our pursuits bring nothing of value and only more pain, our motivation will change and our focus will be on what is important for our happiness, which is the healing of our minds. As we continue on this path, we will increasingly realize nothing outside our own minds can bring us the happiness we want. Again, it is a process and we need to be patient with ourselves, just as Jesus is patient with us.

In this Lesson, we are given the two laws that govern choice. Fortunately, we are not confronted with a zillion alternatives to confuse us about our choices. We are told there are only two alternatives. **"The laws that govern choice you cannot make, no more than you can make alternatives from which to choose."** (W.133.3.3) We are choosing either love or fear, God or the ego. We are making a choice between everything and nothing. Therefore, every choice we make is between Spirit and the ego, between truth and illusion, between the miracle and a grievance, and between everything and nothing. There are no other alternatives. It is impossible for us to make any more alternatives because these two are governed by laws we did not make.

The first law affirms there are only two alternatives in front of us. The second law says there is no compromise between these two alternatives. Again, he says this is **"Another kindly and related law. . ."** (W.133.5.1) There is no compromise on what our choice brings us. One brings everything and the other brings nothing. It is one or the other. The decision becomes simple. When I judge or attack or hold a grievance, I need to remind myself that I am choosing hell. I need to remember that I am valuing attack, but in the process, I am hurting myself and choosing against my own peace and joy.

Now, we have four tests he wants us to run our decisions through so we can distinguish whether we are choosing either everything or nothing, our two alternatives. They are all interconnected.

I know I have chosen the valueless if:

1) I choose something **". . . that will not last forever. . ."** (W.133.6.1) He reminds us that only the permanent and changeless is real. Everything in this world fades and dies, including our bodies, which will not last. All of the stuff we seek, the self-aggrandizement, and even our ecstasies are temporary. Nothing lasts, and if it does not last, it can't have value. **"A temporary value is without all value."** (W.133.6.2)

2) If I **". . . choose to take a thing away from someone else,"** (W.133.7.1) I will have nothing left. When we deny a thing to someone else, we ourselves will feel that we don't deserve it, and so we will deny it for ourselves. It seems only fair to us. We have given loss, and so we get loss. Even if what we take is there for us, we will feel like we should not have it. This relates to the fourth law of chaos. **"This seeming law is the belief that you have what you have taken. By this, another's loss becomes your gain, and thus it fails to recognize that you can never take away save from yourself."** (T.23.II.9.3-4) (ACIM OE T.23.III.27) If I believe I have something you don't, it serves my specialness, but I will feel guilty. The treasure I now hold is nothing if it means my brother is deprived of the gift. When you look at what real gifts are, they are everything that comes from God. These are peace, love, joy, truth, changelessness, holiness, and oneness, all of which are in everyone. But if I think I can have them at your expense, then I will not be aware of these gifts in myself. God's love is given to all with no special favors. Can Heaven's loss be my gain? Of course, we do think we have gained at God's expense, having taken our individual existence separate from Him.

3) The next criterion is about what purpose is being served by the choice I am making. **"Why is the choice you make of value to you?"** (W.133.8.2) Whose goals are being served by your choice---those of the ego or of the Holy Spirit? Gaining at someone else's expense serves ego goals. Does the choice you are making support your specialness and individuality or contribute to your healing? Jesus says that this is where we are easily deceived because we lie to ourselves. We tell ourselves that we have the best of intentions and are well-meaning in what we are doing, but we deceive ourselves about this. We smile as we attack and pretend we are just being helpful. Yet he says that we can only deceive ourselves if we are **". . . content to be deceived."** (W.133.9.1) When we are willing to look, we will see our intentions are less than benign. We hide this even from ourselves, polishing our halo of innocence while lying to ourselves about our true motives. This is the rusted core he talks about in this Lesson. When we get very honest with ourselves and are willing to look at our anger and our attacks without judgment, then we have started the healing journey to uncovering the blocks to the love within us.

The final test is:

4) **"If you feel any guilt about your choice, you have allowed the ego's goals to come between the real alternatives."** (W.133.11.1) Do I feel any guilt about my choice? We will feel guilty when we have benefited at someone else's expense. Now we think of ourselves as a guilty sinner, with a corrupt core, but Jesus wants us to see it differently. While we may have benefited at the expense of our brothers, when we get honest and have the courage to look at all the people we may have hurt and all the pain we have caused, it is not a sin but only a mistake. The only way to know our innocence is to take off the halo (the face of innocence) and be willing to look. The ego would have us believe that we have sinned and this requires punishment. The ego's existence depends on our continued belief in having committed an unpardonable sin. It wants us to keep holding onto shame and guilt, as the ego's existence depends on it.

We are being called to look at our intentions with great honesty. How are we serving the ego's goals while pretending to be doing our best in a hostile world? We try to maintain the face of innocence, claiming we would not attack if the attack were not justified. Yet deep down, when we are willing to lift the curtain of denial, we know where we are gaining at someone else's expense, feel guilty, and believe we are sinners. Jesus assures us that our guilt is not the truth about us. When we try to gain at our brothers' expense, he says we are simply failing to make the real gains available to us. Now we have the criteria where we can apply these four tests and ask: **"What purpose does it serve?"** (W.133.8.4) Am I going for the stuff of the world and all the guilt that goes with it or for the eternal where I get everything with no guilt? This choice is there for us in every situation. Do I want to know my Eternal Self and receive the benefit for all my brothers; or do I look for my personal benefit while lying to myself about my motives and working hard to maintain and defend my false image, covering over my unconscious shadow with the face of innocence?

Jesus asks us, **"Why is the choice you make of value to you? What attracts your mind to it? What purpose does it serve?"** (W.133.8.2-4) Unless we are able to really look at these questions honestly, we will be deceived. The ego is devious. Under its guidance, we try our best to look innocent and pretend that our intentions are noble and honest when, indeed, they are anything but noble and honest. When there is guilt, we know we have chosen the valueless. Guilt will always come from valuing anything in the world. It reenacts once again our choice for more than God's love, which was the basis for the separation, where we chose our specialness as a substitute for that love.

In every moment, we make a choice for Heaven or hell. In every moment, we hold thoughts of attack, grievances, and specialness. We defend our self-concept, trying to fill our perceived lacks and needs, but another choice is always available to us. The important thing is not to judge ourselves. If we do, we take on even more guilt. We came to this world for the purpose of getting what we can from it, and we will do what we came here for until we realize it no longer holds value for us. Eventually, disillusionment and depression show up and with them comes a sincere desire to wake up to the truth of what we are. The important thing in this process is radical self-honesty.

"Love is not an illusion. It is a fact. Where disillusionment is possible, there was not love but hate. For hate is an illusion, and what can change was never love." (T.16.IV.4.1-4) (ACIM OE T.16.V.33) When I first read this, I was really upset to be told I never knew what love was, but from the Course perspective, **"Love's meaning is obscure to anyone who thinks that love can change."** (W.127.2.1) Though I was initially affronted by this, slowly I started to recognize the truth of it. Instead of trying to be more loving, Jesus showed me that the only way to love was by removing the blocks. This Lesson is another step in seeing how the blocks to love are defended by our focus on the externals of our lives, always choosing what truly has no eternal value.

So today, let's recognize we can be the observer of the one that has chosen to make mistakes in the misguided notion that it knows where our happiness lies. It is the false self we have given allegiance to and not what we are. **"He who would still preserve the ego's goals and serve them as his own makes no mistakes, according to the dictates of his guide."** (W.133.10.3) In other words, the ego wants us to feel guilty by having us identify with our mistakes so we would feel like failures---unworthy of love and guilty for the "sins" the ego would have us believe we have committed. Jesus says, they are not sins but only mistakes to be corrected, and the mighty help of the Holy Spirit, already present in our minds, is the One we can turn to for that

Correction. The ego tries to make us responsible for our mistakes but Holy Spirit tells us we are only responsible for accepting the Correction.

The only guiltless choice we can make is to choose love, which is to choose the eternal, where no one loses and where there is no compromise. Jesus acknowledges that we don't know how to do that, as he tells us **"Heaven itself is reached with empty hands and open minds which come with nothing to find everything and claim it as their own."** (W.133.13.1) **"We will attempt to reach this state today. . .with an honest willingness,"** (W.133.13.2) which means we need to look at what we are valuing. We think we know our best interests and what will bring us happiness. We make judgments about how others aren't serving our needs and are guilty of neglecting us. We try to control and manipulate others, attacking and judging them. We get disappointed and depressed when things are not going our way. These are all indications that we are choosing what is valueless. Now we can choose instead what is eternal and truly has value, which is the love we are. We do this by not seeing our interests as separate from our brothers. We do this by watching our thoughts today, and being willing to let them go and have them washed clean and returned to us as blessings.

"I will not value what is valueless, and only what has value do I seek, for only that do I desire to find." (W.133.13.4) Then look at what you are valuing in the world. Look at the needless burden of maintaining your ego and release it so you can truly come ***". . . unencumbered, to the gates of Heaven,"*** (W.133.14.1) which swing open as you come. See yourself lifting the burdens of past "sins" and feeling your own innocence, as you release the places where you have been trying to polish your halo and recognize, with great, unflinching honesty, the areas where you have simply failed to gain.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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