



LESSON 61

I am the light of the world.

Sarah's Commentary:

This is the first of the seven "**giant stride**" (W.61.3.3) Lessons in the Workbook. The suggestion is that if we get these Lessons, we can make significant progress by using them ". . . to build a **firm foundation.**" (W.61.7.4)

Here, we are already two months into the year for those of us who started the Lessons on January 1. You may recognize more resistance coming up as the Lessons take you deeper and deeper into the mind because the ego starts to recognize that its days are numbered. Conflict may now increase because we are more and more aware of the right-minded thought system. There are two choices in every situation---the choice for the ego or the choice for the Spirit. Jesus talks about this in describing the first Lesson of the Holy Spirit, where he says, "**This step may appear to exacerbate conflict rather than resolve it, because it is the beginning step in reversing your perception and turning it right-side up. This conflicts with the upside-down perception you have not yet abandoned, or the change in direction would not have been necessary. Some remain at this step for a long time, experiencing very acute conflict.**" (T.6.V.A.6.4-6) (ACIM OE T.6.V.a.69)

While you may notice the resistance, perhaps determination has also increased as benefits are noted and you experience more witnesses to the miracle. We can increasingly see it is ourselves we crucify when we project our guilt, blame, and attack. Why would we want to continue to hurt ourselves when we can see we have the power in our own minds to make a better choice?

With this first review that we have now completed, we have been helped with the integration of the thought system. We have been encouraged to let our minds come up with related thoughts. The Lessons have taken on a deeper meaning, and we increasingly recognize that the thoughts presented in the Lessons are already in our right minds. "**Yet as long as you prefer to be something else, or would attempt to be nothing else and something else together, you will not remember the language of communication, which you know perfectly.**" (T.15.VI.7.8) (ACIM OE T.15.VII.63) This is the language we know because it comes from what we are as God created us. It is our first language and it is perfectly shared by us all. This is the language that reflects the real thoughts in our right minds. That is why we recognize the truth even if there is still resistance and interference. The resistance is simply our fear of love. It is our fear of who we really are. We have taught ourselves a foreign language, and now believe we have made something else of ourselves other than what we truly are.

We have become comfortable with the separate self and with the thoughts we hold that are familiar to us, regardless of the pain and suffering we experience. Yet Jesus assures us, tolerance for pain is not without limit. "**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." (T.2.III.3.5-6) (ACIM OE T.2.II.48) We are learning to see more and more that we can never find the happiness we are seeking in the things of the world. Jesus keeps asking us why would we want to continue to hurt ourselves when peace and happiness are available behind every problem we perceive. Increasingly, we become more aware that no matter what pleasures we seek in the world, we are ultimately seeking more pain and experiencing more guilt and fear.

There is still confusion in our minds because of the two thought systems we hold. "**You speak two languages at once, and this must lead to unintelligibility,**" (T.14.VI.7.5) (ACIM OE T.14.III.22) but increasingly, we will learn to discern the difference between the language of the Holy Spirit and the ego.

This is a very important Lesson, as "**This is the first of a number of giant steps we will take in the next few weeks. Try today to begin to build a firm foundation for these advances.**" (W.61.7.3-4) Each Lesson contributes to letting go of "... the ego's petty views of what you are and what your purpose is." (W.61.7.1) With each Lesson, we are taking steps daily to undo the concept we have made of ourselves and building instead a new concept that reflects the truth. The steps we take are gently laid out. There is nothing to fear. Jesus holds our hands throughout and never leaves us on our own when we call on him. We do not need to go alone into the darkness of our false beliefs but can take him with us.

Jesus says you are the light of the world as God's Son, which "**is merely a statement of truth about yourself.**" (W.61.1.2) Here arrogance is redefined. If we do not accept that we are the light of the world, Jesus says, "**It is only arrogance that would assert this function cannot be for you, and arrogance is always of the ego.**" (W.61.2.5) God assigned us this function. If God tells us we are the light of the world, our response should not be, "Sorry God. You must be wrong because I am a miserable sinner." The reason His statement is true is that we are God's Son, which is a fact, and as such, our nature is light. This light shines through us to the world through our Being and is experienced every time we let go of the dark thoughts of the ego. By radiating this light, we are fulfilling our function. We are extending this light through our Being, which is reflected in our behaviors and our words. No matter what else we might be doing in this world, it is only a backdrop for our true function, which is to forgive our dark thoughts and heal our minds. The light of our Being cannot shine through us unless the darkness in our minds is released.

The ego is entirely about self-glorification. This Lesson says it is not humility to insist you can't be the light of the world. Indeed, it is arrogance. We are saying, we are right about the way we have defined ourselves and that God is wrong. Arrogance is about claiming something for yourself that is not really yours. It is arrogant for me to think I know better than God. To be humble is to admit, no matter what I think is right about me, I do not know. I submit that only God knows. We are told here that we are the light of the world. This must be so, but what does this really mean? It means God is with us because He is in our minds, and we are in Him. The light of the world is the light of Christ, shining in our minds.

Humility requires that we accept the truth of this because of Who it comes from. It is not this self I define as me---the one that thinks it is a body and personality---that is the light that shines on everything. It is my Being, which is covered over by the personality and my identity with the body. God is the Source of my Being. All my self-concepts, all my personality characteristics, and all the ways I describe and define myself are wrong. To be the light of the world "... **does not describe the self-concept you have made. It does not refer to any of the characteristics with which you have endowed your idols. It refers to you as you were created by God. It simply states the truth.**" (W.61.1.4-7)

From the perspective of the ego mind, this thought seems grandiose; and it is grandiose if we take this idea and use it for our own spiritual aggrandizement by thinking we are more important for the salvation of the world than anyone else, and believing we are more advanced, with special characteristics others don't have. That is just another way the ego glorifies itself. This is not a special characteristic about Sarah, or Jack, or Joe. It gives us no special status. It is what God has given to everyone. It is like the sun that shines on everyone equally. It is the truth about all of us. To take it for myself and think my special little self can bring you the gift of light you don't have, is only spiritual arrogance. This light can only be reflected through me when that which blocks it is addressed. Thus, the main function I have and the reason for being here is to learn to forgive.

Jesus tells us, to be the light of the world is in our original specifications as we were created. It has been determined by God. It is not about how we feel. It is about our reality---who we really are. In the Bible, only Jesus is called the light of the world. In the Bible, in John 8:12, Jesus is said to have declared, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." From this perspective, only Jesus holds that status as the light of the world. He came to illuminate this dark world and came to save everyone, but now he tells us in the Course, "**You are the light of the world with me.**" (T.5.II.10.3) (ACIM OE T.5.IV.28) He says we have the same power and "**My mind will always be like yours, because we were created as equals.**" (T.5.II.9.1) (ACIM OE T.5.IV.27) He goes on to say it was his decision to listen only to the Voice of the Holy Spirit that gave him this power, and he is now helping us to make "... **the same decision.**" (T.5.II.9.3) (ACIM OE T.5.IV.27)

This does seem grandiose to us when we think about it. Yet we are told that to accept this "... **is a positive assertion of your right to be saved, and an acknowledgment of the power that is given you to save others.**" (W.61.3.4) "**Do the Holy Spirit's work, for you share in His function. As your function in Heaven is creation, so your function on earth is healing. God shares His function with you in Heaven, and the Holy Spirit shares His with you on earth. As long as you believe you have other functions, so long will you need correction. For this belief is the destruction of peace, a goal in direct opposition to the Holy Spirit's purpose.**" (T.12.VII.4.6-10) (ACIM OE T.11.VIII.64)

We are here to be a savior to our brothers, which can only be accomplished as our minds are healed. As we do the healing, we demonstrate to others that they too can make the same choice we have made. In other words, we become an example of the Atonement. All our self-attacks and misperceptions we hold must be brought to the truth. When you bring "... **all the images you have made about yourself to the truth,**" (W.61.4.3) Jesus says, it "... **helps you depart in peace, unburdened and certain of your purpose.**" (W.61.4.3) This is the goal of healing. This is the acceptance of the Atonement.

Teach only love, for that is what you are. As we teach through demonstration, we will know that the light is in us. That is the only way we *can* know it, but it requires that we continually do the work of bringing our darkness to the light. Extending love to others is not done by us but through us. It is important that we always remember that it is not these characters in the dream who know anything about bringing salvation to anyone. The light in us extends on its own. That light is of the Holy Spirit, not of us, and it is in everyone.

"This quiet center, in which you do nothing, will remain with you, giving you rest in the midst of every busy doing on which you are sent." (T.18.VII.8.3) (ACIM OE T.18.VIII.70) While it is true there is no one out there and the world is an illusion, as long as we believe in its reality, we have a function here. It is not just about our own awakening. There are

many busy doings to which we will be called, and it is there the light of our Being can serve and support others. We do the healing so we can be the conduit to extend this light to our brothers and sisters and undertake this as our only function here.

It is our "... **real function on earth.**" (W.61.3.2) "**It is the perfect answer to all illusions, and therefore to all temptation.**" (W.61.4.2) What is the temptation? It is the temptation to forget our function of forgiveness by holding onto grievances. We are tempted to get caught up in the belief we are here for our own comfort, the goodies of this world, to achieve, get ahead, compete and win at the expense of others, and build our self-esteem. Are these things wrong? Should we feel guilty? No. They are simply a meaningless waste of time and energy. We are still free to engage in them as long as we wish, but we increasingly recognize they are distractions that keep us tied to the illusion. They distract us from the gifts given us by God and waiting for us to claim them. These are the gifts of peace, joy, innocence---all gifts that are eternal.

The practice instructions for the Lesson tell us to think about this idea as often as possible. Do as many practice periods as possible today. Set a goal for this. Determine in advance how often you will try to remember the truth that: "***I am the light of the world. That is my only function. That is why I am here.***" (W.61.5.3-5)

Think about what this statement means, preferably with your eyes closed, and let some related thoughts come to you. Let the thoughts come in such a way that you make the idea your own. Speak to yourself about what it means to you. If your mind wanders, just repeat the idea. Remember, you are taking a giant step here in doing this Lesson.

Start the day and end the day with the thought. You may want to take more time for the morning and evening sessions. Affirm the truth about yourself and take the idea into your day and into your sleep, asking the Holy Spirit to walk with you and channel His light into everything you think and do. As you wake, take the idea into the day, and as you go to sleep at night, affirm it again in your mind. With every circumstance, every event, and every person that tempts us to give away our peace, we remind ourselves we must be mistaken in our perceptions and there must be another way of seeing this situation.

Love and blessings, Sarah
huemmert@shaw.ca

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