



LESSON 246
To love my Father is to love His Son.

Sarah's Commentary:

We may think that we can love God without loving our brothers, but it is clear that the only way to God is by extending love to our brothers. Extending love to our brothers means to forgive them for what they have not done to us. This will only make sense in the context that the world we seem to live in is illusory. It is only in the dream that what has been done seems to have effects because nothing here is real. **"How weak is fear; how little and how meaningless. How insignificant before the quiet strength of those whom love has joined,"** (T.22.V.4.1-2) (ACIM OE T.22.VI.48) and love has joined us all. Now we must come to recognize our sameness.

To forgive is to release our judgments and interpretations so love can be extended through us to everyone we encounter or even think about. It is the only way our belief in guilt can be released. Forgiveness is the only way to recognize that what we think we have done has had no real effects, and thus we are forever innocent. We believe that we separated from God and left His Love and thus abandoned Him to make it on our own. We project this belief onto God, and now we see Him as having abandoned us! We do not want to take responsibility for what we have done so we blame God for not being there for us. We feel lost and alone in the world, thinking that we can never find our way back to our home in Him where we are safe and connected.

We can find our way back and reclaim our connection to God through forgiveness of our brothers; and we do so by taking back our projections onto others of everything that we had condemned in ourselves, but now see in our brothers. With vision, we see the innocence in our brothers, regardless of their behavior. In other words, we see who they really are. Jesus says that when we see one brother as innocent, we will generalize this to others. Then we come to realize that we are all the same. We all share the same one Self. Through forgiveness, we bring to awareness the love we are and thus remember God. We have not left our home in God, except in dreams, but we don't know that, and now believe that this existence we seem to be living is real and solid and that the truth is what seems to be illusory.

Jesus reminds us, **"Never forget that the Sonship is your salvation, for the Sonship is your Self."** (T.11.IV.1.1) (ACIM OE T.10.V.31) Our current experience is one of separation and, with it, the feeling that we are entirely on our own. We can only break this isolation through joining. To join is to recognize that we are One Mind. When we join with our brother, we are joining with God. It is not something we do, but something we are. We are already joined, but we must heal the judgments standing in the way of our Oneness. Jesus goes on to say, **"Yet if you hate part of your Self** [meaning another brother] **all your understanding is lost, because you are looking on what God created as yourself without love."** (T.11.IV.1.6) (ACIM OE T.10.V.31) Thus, we are making ourselves homeless by denying our Father. We project that denial onto God and believe He is denying us. We come to the Father today by offering gratitude and

forgiveness to our brothers, which is how we find our way back to Him. Anything else keeps us in pain and keeps the love, which is always in the mind, from our awareness.

The only way we will ever know the love that is already in us is by extending it. Each time we extend forgiveness to a brother, we recognize the love we are. So how we think about ourselves is not how others see us but, indeed, how we see others. When we see them with vision, past all form, we come to know the Christ Self we are. The behavior they have exhibited toward us may still be there, but now the interpretation that we have given it has changed. We no longer see their attack as having anything to do with us. We no longer take any offense. What we saw as an attack, we no longer take personally. Their attack on us can only create a reaction if we already believe or fear that they are right about what they are saying about us. When our own self-attack is healed, we now see any attack as a call for love.

We can assess the kind of relationship we have with God through our relationships with our brothers. Any grievance I have with a brother is a grievance I have with God. Any betrayal I experience is my belief that God has betrayed me. Any separation I experience with a brother reflects my separation from God. When we attack anyone, it is based on our belief that we have attacked God and have succeeded. The ego is all about attack. Jesus teaches that the range of the ego is from suspicious to vicious. **"The ego is therefore capable of suspiciousness at best and viciousness at worst."** (T.9.VII.3.7) (ACIM OE T.9.VI.40) It only knows of attack because it is actually a thought of the original attack on God when we chose the ego thought system. We made the decision to hide from God in the body and in the world. Now we do not know what love is because it seems we have separated ourselves from love. Now, through healing with our brothers, we heal our mistaken thoughts about ourselves and about God.

Love cannot be known in this world. The closest reflection we have of love in this world is forgiveness. When we are the ones trying to love our brothers, we have put the ego in charge of the process. This is special love, which is the ego's most boasted gift and based on using the other to meet our perceived needs. In our special relationships, we extend love to our brothers in order to extract love from them in return.

We can easily see that this is not real love but only a socially accepted pseudo-love, which is actually special hate. How can we tell? **"The ego establishes relationships only to get something. And it would keep the giver bound to itself through guilt. It is impossible for the ego to enter into any relationship without anger, for the ego believes that anger makes friends."** (T.15.VII.2.1-3) (ACIM OE T.15.VIII.65) It cannot be otherwise, for our anger and resentment comes from belief in sacrifice. Look at the evidence in situations of divorce or separation. What once looked like love now becomes open hatred, distrust, and attack. Or look at how egos go on a rampage when the vestiges of civilized living break down as is the case of human tragedy on a wide scale. "Nice" people become survivors at any cost.

The seemingly "small" irritations, the angry thoughts, and the desire to retaliate are what we need to look at throughout the day. We need to look at the little scraps of hatred we direct at others and ourselves, which keep us from knowing the Christ Self we are. Salvation is in our minds, but we can only heal through our decision to watch the mind and stay vigilant against the thoughts that obscure the love we are. We need to be very honest with ourselves and willing to look behind our defenses at what we are hiding from ourselves. There are no small irritations. They cover over a deep level of self-attack.

The way we come to know the truth about ourselves is through healing our special relationships. Yes, there are other ways to God, but in this Lesson, Jesus tells us that this Course is the way chosen for us. ***"I will accept the way You choose for me to come to You, my Father."*** (W.246.2.1) It is His Will I come to Him, but notice that He does not impose His Will on us. He has given us the freedom to choose. Yet, when we come to see His Will is actually our will too and the source of our happiness, we will gladly surrender our investment in the separate self. When we commit to God, we accept His Will as ours and indeed choose to love the Son, who is our Self. As we release our brothers from the bondage of our grievances, we release ourselves. Healing through relationships is our chosen way home when we choose this Course as our path.

Today, let us set our intention for healing with any brother or sister who shows up in our thoughts, or those we encounter. Allow the light of holiness to shine on them through your forgiveness. Remember to start your day with the intention to ask for help to see each brother who crosses your mind, or your path, with the eyes of Christ. Notice any hatred you hold in your heart against them. Ask for God's help and affirm your decision to choose love today with every brother you meet or even think of. Connect with the silence within where the Holy Spirit dwells. Ask how you can be truly helpful to everyone you meet or think about. Remember your commitment each hour, and as often as you can in between, so that you can have a day of joy and peace. And when grievances show up, remind yourself that you are making a choice in that moment not to remember your love for God, which is not to remember your Self. Now we are called to choose again to surrender the blocks to love. To be afraid of love is not a sin but a mistake that can be corrected when we are ready.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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