



LESSON 66

My happiness and my function are one.

Sarah's Commentary:

Jesus tells us, "**Today's idea is another giant stride. . .**" (W.66.10.5) We heard the same thing in Lesson 61. He said that to accept our function of forgiveness allows us to know the truth about ourselves as God's Son and to be a light in this world. This will take us "**. . . far beyond the ego's petty views of what you are and what your purpose is.**" (W.61.7.1) This phrase is also used in Lessons 94 and Lesson 135. Jesus is encouraging us to really commit to our function of forgiveness on behalf of our own happiness. These Lessons are building a strong foundation for our advancement.

There are many spiritual paths and wonderful spiritual teachers, but I don't know any teaching that has laid out a path as specifically as the Course has done in helping us remember who we are. It does a wonderful job of providing us with a step-by-step process and a spiritual technology that transforms our lives. It literally changes our perspective on everything, but we have to let this door be opened.

"You have a Guide to how to develop them, but you have no commander except yourself." (T.6.IV.9.4) (ACIM OE T.6. V.53) **"The door is not barred, and it is impossible that you cannot enter the place where God would have you be. But love yourself with the Love of Christ, for so does your Father love you. You can refuse to enter, but you cannot bar the door that Christ holds open. Come unto me [says the Christ] who hold it open for you, for while I live it cannot be shut, and I live forever. God is my life and yours, and nothing is denied by God to His Son."** (T.11.IV.6.3-7) (ACIM OE T.10.V.36)

In this Lesson, we are being asked to see the connection between our function and our happiness. We increasingly recognize that fulfilling our function of forgiveness leads us to happiness. In fact, forgiveness is the only way to happiness. When we release thoughts of guilt, hate, pain, grievances, distress, grief, condemnation, needing to be right, worry of any kind and all the false beliefs and concepts we hold, what remains is happiness. Any illusion we hold in our minds that we are not willing to bring to awareness for the purpose of healing holds us in bondage to the ego and the world. It is not about indulging our emotions, but it is about bringing awareness and expression to them so that they are no longer hidden and can be healed.

The ego has no power except the power we give it. As long as we do give it power, it has a strong hold on us. The beautiful thing is that behind every problem there is a miracle, but we need to clear all that blocks it. When our minds are clouded with our own thoughts, there is no space made for the miracle. It takes willingness on our part to bring discipline to our minds through the practices that are offered in these Lessons. Sometimes we hold thoughts that we are simply unwilling to release. We justify why we need to hold onto them. For example, we believe that if we don't hold onto our grievance about someone who has wronged us, we are "letting them off the

hook." Or we believe that if we don't hold onto our grief, it means that we have stopped loving the person who died. We give ourselves all kinds of reasons for holding onto the thoughts that keep us from our happiness. Now we are called to forgive these thoughts so happiness can be revealed to us. As long as we stubbornly hold onto whatever thoughts are more important than our happiness, we will be keeping it at bay.

I was recently upset when a friend, whom I trusted with some confidences, seemed to betray me by sharing what I had said. I wanted to be right about the way I saw this, and we went back and forth in our emails defending our positions, needing to be right about the way we saw this situation. Did I want to be right or did I want peace? I realized that, in the end, there is only one ego. We all lie. We all betray confidences. We all want to be right, but in defending and needing to be right, there can be no peace and no happiness. It is in being willing to be wrong and recognizing we are all the same that we can let it all go. When we are willing to ask for help to see the innocence in our brother, we take a step in letting go of our position. It means we want peace more than we want to be right. The Holy Spirit knows how this situation can be used for the highest good for all. I just need to entrust everything to His care; and in that, there is immediate relief, as attack thoughts fall away and peace prevails. It is such a gift to ourselves. It is how our function is fulfilled.

Why do we stubbornly resist our function of forgiveness? It is because we resist and fear God's love. Crazy as it sounds, in the end, we are afraid of losing ourselves. That is why we prefer our own thoughts, even if they bring us pain because that is how we hold onto our separate identity. It is the reason that **"The ego does constant battle with the Holy Spirit on the fundamental question of what your function is."** (W.66.2.1) To the ego, it is all about its survival separate from God. Holding onto attack and condemnation ensures its survival. We make others responsible for our condition. **"If your brothers are part of you and you blame them for your deprivation, you are blaming yourself. And you cannot blame yourself without blaming them. That is why blame must be undone, not seen elsewhere."** (T.11.IV.5.1-3) (ACIM OE T.10.V.35)

We battle God though He does not engage in this war but simply waits for us to change our minds. We stage our battle with Him by blaming Him for our unhappiness, asking questions like, "God, how could you let this happen?" Or we may believe He brings us hard Lessons to test our character. Or we feel we deserve the punishment we are experiencing in our lives because of our past sins. Yet our battle with God is not a two-way battle. The ego attacks and the Holy Spirit does not respond. To the Holy Spirit, there is no opposing force because the ego is nothing so there is nothing there to attack. It is illusory. It does not even exist! It is literally just a thought in our minds. It only has the power we give it. However, to us it does seem to be a battle between what the ego tells us will make us happy and what is being offered by the Holy Spirit.

The ego is constantly engaging us in conflict, making sure we keep projecting responsibility onto others for our unhappiness and keeping us invested in the illusion. The ego sends us out to battle and then makes us feel guilty for what it had us do! As long as we continue to project our guilt onto others, it keeps us in the ego's game; and the ego's game is to make sure we don't renege on our decision to maintain allegiance to it as our primary guide. When we choose the Holy Spirit instead by choosing to forgive, the ego lashes out because the power of our minds to choose against it is its biggest threat. Thus, it knows its days are numbered.

We think we know where to look for our happiness, and we do have moments of happiness, yet they are elusive. They don't last because we are constantly casting about wondering what will make us happy. We may think it is a change of job, a new relationship, more money, or a holiday,

yet when these things come about, we are still left with our thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, which is the real basis for our unhappiness. Happiness that comes from getting what we want in external circumstances, arranged the way we think we want them, always comes at someone's expense. Happiness comes at the opponent's loss. In the ego world, everyone is an opponent, as the thought system of the ego is based on "one or the other." It comes from our belief in separation and differences. Our needs take precedence in our minds over that of others, but true happiness can never come at anyone else's expense. Jesus says our function of healing is the only thing that makes us truly happy. Any happiness that comes from getting our way will ultimately bring guilt and pain.

Jesus lays out for us a very logical framework in which to look at what God is. He starts by saying, "**The first premise is that God gives you only happiness.**" (W.66.6.1) Clearly, we are ambivalent about this premise. Our greatest obstacle to peace is still the fear of God. We see God as dualistic just as the Bible describes Him where He gives both good and evil, love and destruction. Jesus assures us He is not like that. If He were like that, there would have to be evil in Him as well as love. Is this possible? No. He offers us only His Love. There are no tests, no lessons He brings, and no hoops to jump through. He does not even ask us to worship Him. "**God cannot give what He does not have, and He cannot have what He is not.**" (W.66.6.4) If you accept that Love cannot deliver us evil, then God cannot be the dualistic God of the Bible. If evil did exist, then God would have to be the source of it. Since, "**Ideas leave not their source, and their effects but seem to be apart from them,**" (T.26.VII.4.7) (ACIM OE T.26.VIII.49) we are an idea in God's Mind and we have never left our Source. Therefore, there can be no evil in us as there is none in God.

Now we have two choices in this world. We either choose the Holy Spirit and with it comes our happiness, or we choose the ego, and then fear, pain, and suffering are the results. It is a simple choice, but in this complex world, nothing seems simple to us. We don't always see how we are choosing against our happiness. The ego has duped us into thinking that if we pursue the things of this world, that is where our happiness is. We have all tried that with little success. This is when disillusionment sets in. Everything we choose to do in pursuing happiness in the world holds the content of fear. When we choose with the Holy Spirit as our Guide, He shows us our true source of happiness. It is when we choose to forgive what stands in the way that peace prevails. It is that simple, no matter how complex the problems that show up for us seem to be. When we choose with the ego, we will always experience pain, even if it initially appears as pleasure.

God created us and the only thing about us that is real is His nature, which is pure peace, joy, and love. He brings no lessons. He offers only His Love. We do not have to sacrifice anything when we choose for God's love because He only wants our happiness. Jesus asks us to give up this meaningless battle and not indulge ourselves in needless efforts to define happiness or indulge the ego in senseless arguments about how to achieve happiness. When the ego guides our search for truth, it makes sure we never find it. Philosophers have debated what truth is and have found no real answers, but Jesus says, "**We will merely be glad that we can find out what truth is.**" (W.66.3.5) It is available to us behind every circumstance and every problem when we are willing to look clearly at the ego. That is all we need to do, which is to see it in operation. We need to stop listening to its lies. We have made it real, but now we need to dispel it by looking at it with the light of truth inside us. It does not love us. In fact, it wants us dead while masquerading as our protector.

What do you think you need in order to be happy? Think of the things that you wish for, plan for, and try to manifest in your life that you believe define your happiness: a relationship, a car, a trip, a vacation, money, a new job, better sex, a more confident self-image, special powers, more

expertise, better coping tools, more control, a nicer ego, more power, more attention, or more love. We seek for what we think we are lacking, yet God specified our nature, which means that nothing is lacking. He asks us to think of the many ways we have tried to find salvation (happiness) under the ego's guidance. We can obviously fool ourselves into thinking we have found it. That is why we are told, "**We need great honesty today,**" (W.66.9.6) to admit the truth. We do not have to do without any of the things we are currently attached to for our happiness. We are not asked to sacrifice anything. We only need to appreciate that we are truly not free until we awaken to our reality, which is our freedom and our joy. With that, everything will be provided. It requires trust, the first characteristic of the Teacher of God. (Manual for Teachers)

I had a dream that someone had stolen my purse because I had left it unattended. I was extremely unhappy because I was somewhere overseas, far from home, and my airline tickets, cash, credit cards, and everything were gone. Then I had a moment where I said to myself, "This is a dream. Therefore, it is not happening, and I don't have to buy into this scenario" My mind did not completely believe it because I was not yet awake, but the awareness was there that it was a dream, and I could let go of the fear. What a wonderful metaphor for our lives. We feel lost. We experience lack. We feel far from home. We lose hope that we will ever find our way back to our true happiness and peace. Yet Jesus assures us that the outcome is certain for us all. We on the road to awakening, recognizing that this world is a dream too, and our sins have had absolutely no effect.

"On one side stand all illusions. All truth stands on the other." (W.66.10.6-7) **"You will listen to madness or hear the truth."** (W.66.10.1) **"Let us try today to realize that only the truth is true."** (W.66.10.8) We realize only truth is true by becoming more and more vigilant in watching our minds for ego thoughts that block the truth. When they are brought to truth, they dissolve into the nothingness from which they came. We don't need to listen to the false. When we do listen, we are choosing against our happiness.

There are only two guides available to us. One brings fear and the other brings love. How do I know which guide I am following? When I follow the insanity of my ego, I try to control everything about my life. I believe in my separated state, the body, and the world. I see the world as real. I stay busy and focused on my plans and protect myself through projection, attack, and defense. The function I give myself is all about my body, getting what I think I want and need from other bodies. I feel weak, lacking, needy and vulnerable. I let nothing slip past my awareness without my judgment.

We may be experiencing turmoil. We may be faced with a problem. We may feel confused, and then we ask for help and suddenly there is a jolt or nudge of inspiration. We get an idea that seems to come out of the blue. We have a moment of clarity, or someone says something to us that inspires us and connects with something in our own minds, which validates our internal guidance. Or there are synchronicities in terms of events, people, or messages, which show up that take us in new directions. Or we observe some meaningful patterns or common themes that show up that bring some new perspectives. Inspiration may come in meditation, but to hear the Holy Spirit means that the ego must be seen as a lie. **"You will listen to madness or hear the truth."** (W.66.10.1)

When I met Don, I was not sure about this relationship. I had been widowed for ten years and felt that a single lifestyle was the option that best met my needs. I resisted getting into the relationship and was very confused. I sat down and asked for guidance. What I got from the Holy Spirit was, "I will guide you every step of the way. No one can lose. You have known each other before. Trust. Your uncertainty is an act of faithlessness. All blocks will be removed. You are opening your heart. Love is the only pathway home." It felt like the truth to me and I chose to listen to this message,

rather than to my haranguing ego, which gave me all kinds of reasons why this relationship was not for me. I knew I could trust what I was given because my trust was now stronger in the Holy Spirit due to past experiences where His promises were always delivered. I recognize more and more that I don't know my own best interests, but Someone in me does know. This kind of guidance comes to me when I sit down with a pen in hand and go into meditation with a question. The answer comes when I ask and write down what comes to me. I am always intrigued by how loving and helpful it is.

The important thing about guidance is discernment. The ego can fool us so that, while we may get guidance, the ego will use it to inflate itself with its own specialness or inflate itself with pride or arrogance. It can be a mixed bag until we get better at mind training and discernment. This is where great honesty is called for. It is not always easy to see where the ego has snuck in.

It is all a process. Be gentle with yourself as you sort through the wishes and dreams of the ego and bring awareness to its game of seeking and never finding. The ego is in secret alliance with the body and it is working against us. It is working against our true happiness. The Kingdom of God is truly within, and when we seek outside of ourselves, we will always stay on this hamster wheel. The only way out is to undo the false beliefs and concepts in the mind and release them by acknowledging that we don't know where our happiness lies, and we are now opening our minds and expressing a willingness to learn.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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