



**LESSON 236**  
**I rule my mind, which I alone must rule.**

**Sarah's Commentary:**

With separation came the decision to identify with the wrong mind and with it the false self. This is the mind ruled by the ego. Now, "**It seems to triumph over me, and tell me what to think, and what to do and feel.**" (W.236.1.3) The kingdom of the ego is one based on sin, guilt, and fear which constitute linear time. This means that we think we sinned in the past, feel guilty in the present, and fear the future. The thoughts that reflect this unholy trinity of sin, guilt, and fear are so intolerable to us that the ego has devised a plan for us to project them out. How we know we are projecting is that we have a reaction to what we perceive, and we see the cause of our distress outside of our own mind. It is the reversal of cause and effect. We have forgotten that cause is always in the mind and not anything in the world. Thoughts do not leave our minds, and as long as we are in the service of the ego, we are tortured by our thoughts that seemingly rule us.

Now it seems the ego triumphs over us. We feel at the mercy of our body or of other bodies that affect our state of happiness. We feel victimized by situations and circumstances that seem to be coming from outside our own minds. Yet Jesus is saying that we are not at the mercy of these thoughts. We can serve whatever purpose we choose. We are the rulers of our kingdom. In other words, we can put our minds in the service of the Holy Spirit, rather than the ego thought system. We are the decision makers, and we are the ones who decide for God or the ego. "**I thus direct my mind, which I alone can rule.**" (W.236.1.7)

How do we rule our minds? We do it by taking responsibility for our projections. We make space for the Holy Spirit to come through the right mind when we bring our thoughts and feelings to His healing light. We accept the Atonement for ourselves by accepting His Love as the only truth. We step aside from our own wishes, fantasies, fears, desires, and judgments and surrender to the One that knows our true will. Now our minds are open to His Thoughts. We deny the power of our own thoughts to rule over us. What can bring us pain or sorrow except for our own belief in our unworthiness?

In the passage, "**The Little Garden**," (ACIM OE "The Purpose of the Body") Jesus talks of how cruelly the ego rules within its kingdom, which is a part of our minds dominated by the ego. The ego-dominated mind sees its kingdom as the body. "**It draws a circle, infinitely small, around a very little segment of Heaven, splintered from the whole, proclaiming that within it is your kingdom, where God can enter not.**" (T.18.VIII.2.6) (ACIM OE T.18.IX.72)

**"Within this kingdom the ego rules, and cruelly. And to defend this little speck of dust it bids you fight against the universe. This fragment of your mind is such a tiny part of it that, could you but appreciate the whole, you would see instantly that it is**

**like the smallest sunbeam to the sun, or like the faintest ripple on the surface of the ocean. In its amazing arrogance, this tiny sunbeam has decided it is the sun; this almost imperceptible ripple hails itself as the ocean. Think how alone and frightened is this little thought, this infinitesimal illusion, holding itself apart against the universe." (T.18.VIII.3.1-5) (ACIM OE T.18.IX.73)**

What we are doing is keeping out of our awareness the vast unknown—the Call in our minds to remember who we are. When we join, we experience the holiness of our One Self. We recognize that we are not these little ripples on the ocean, but, in fact, we are the ocean itself—One with all there is. We recognize our Oneness with all of our brothers. This is where our peace, joy, and freedom reside. We have a choice. We do not have to be at the mercy of our baser instincts, drives, hormones, emotional patterns, and habits that seem to rise up and tell us what to think and feel and do. We fight against certain urges and addictions, doing things against our own better judgment. These things may seem to plague our lives, as we try to overcome these urges and addictions with willpower, yet our own will is mostly powerless against them. It is our fight with fear. We cannot heal ourselves without Help from outside of this matrix. When we give it over to the Holy Spirit, healing happens on its own. None of what we experience as having power over us has any real effects. **"Who could be made fearful by a power that can have no real effects at all?"** (T.30.IV.5.7) (ACIM OE T.30.V.53) We are called to deny the power of the ego over us. It is not our enemy. We just need not give it any power. It cannot be sustained if we do not invest belief in it.

The only power is the power of love. The ego will never undo itself. We will never change ourselves without help from outside of this seemingly closed system of the ego. The only real change comes from bringing our thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and concepts to the Holy Spirit. Through forgiveness, our true power is felt. This is the kingdom that is always available to us. There is nothing else to choose, as it is the only reality. To choose anything else is to choose nothing. The power of decision is the only true power we have. We are not limited by the body and our experiences in this world. Our reality is boundless. **"The body is a tiny fence around a little part of a glorious and complete idea."** (T.18.VIII.2.5) (ACIM OE T.18.IX.72)

Jesus is telling us in this Lesson that the decision-making mind is in charge. The purpose being served is whatever we decide. Either our purpose is to continue to be rooted in the body and the world, or our purpose is to wake up. We are not at the mercy of the drives that seem to rule us with such persistence. We can choose the Will of God instead of our own will. We are not the victims of our bodies or the world. We are under no laws but God's. We have heard the Call, and love has entered at our weak request.

As we watch our thoughts and turn them over to the Holy Spirit, we loosen the bricks of this wall of protection that we have built around the part of the mind ruled by the ego. Our own decision-making mind chose the ego, and now we can make a choice for the Holy Spirit. Thus, we are still in charge and can give up the belief that we are at the mercy of the body and the world.

Everything is about purpose. If we decide to awaken from this dream, everything in the dream can serve that purpose. If we choose to serve our interests and bodily needs as defined by the ego, everything serves the purpose of keeping us rooted in the world of illusion. Today, we are asked to put our minds in the service of the Holy Spirit, and when we do, everything we have made to serve the ego can be used for our awakening.

Jesus tells us, "**You have a Guide to how to develop them** [your abilities], **but you have no commander except yourself.**" (T.6.IV.9.4) (ACIM OE T.6.V.53) The Holy Spirit can only guide. We are the ones who must choose. We are the ruler---the king. No one has power over us but ourselves. A guide merely invites, leaving us to choose whether to follow or not. In this Course, God is described as a loving Father of infinite tenderness and patience. He has no power over us. This is where the Course is not in line with traditional religious thinking. It is up to us to freely choose to accept what is being offered us through guidance. God's power is Love. His Love only affirms one thing---we cannot change the truth of who we are as God's Son. We have been created with all of our Father's attributes. Thus, the only thing that we cannot change is the truth about ourselves, which is that we are holy, innocent, pure, and perfect in our creation. Thank goodness for this restriction placed on us through the Atonement Principle.

The place where no one can enter, not even God, is the secret, untouchable place we rule with our thoughts. It is protected by our judgments. All of our self-concepts, beliefs, and values are formed here. In our work with the Course, we are urged to bring these judgments forward to awareness and raise them to doubt. "**If you raise what fear conceals to clear-cut unequivocal predominance, fear becomes meaningless.**" (T.12.I.9.9) (ACIM OE T.11.III.12) We are releasing our need to be right in this process and thus raising to doubt the ego mind that thinks it knows everything. In other words, we are willing to give up the "I know" mind.

Our part in the process of releasing the ego is simply to look at what we have denied. We have denied the truth about ourselves, but it is given to us when we truly want it. "**And do I want to see what I denied because it is the truth?**" (T.21.VII.5.14) (ACIM OE T.21.VIII.75) Jesus calls this the last unanswered question because we are still afraid of God's Love. We are not yet ready to make a total commitment to the truth. Yet since there is only this one decision to be made, it can be made anytime. Everything leads us to this place of readiness.

The ego tells us, if we look at the truth, we will be destroyed. The ego wants to maintain the separation. The road to Heaven, to the happy dream, will not circumvent the darkness of our personal hell, since we cannot heal what we hide from ourselves. Our minds can be very deceptive. Today, let us take the hand of our beloved friend and elder brother, look at the judgments, and be willing to question them. Our bodies and the world have no effect on us. They have no power to take away our peace, nor to destroy the love in our minds. By ruling my mind, which I alone can rule, I come to know the love I am as my only reality.

Today, we direct our minds in a holy direction and give them to the Holy Spirit to use. I choose today which voice I shall follow. I decide today which teacher my mind serves. I need not be ruled by the ego, and its identification with the body, to tell me what to feel. It is up to me what purpose I give to everything in my day. When the choice is for the ego, we cannot know the love, joy, and peace that are our natural inheritance. In fact, in our confusion, we are constantly reaching out for pleasure, yet ultimately getting pain. Today, we take charge and consciously acknowledge our power to choose. Let us not pretend that we are powerless. Today, we choose to open our minds to His Thoughts and close them to every thought but His.

Love and blessings, Sarah  
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