

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 102 I share God's Will for happiness for me.

Sarah's Commentary:

This Lesson is a continuation of the previous one. Here our elder brother Jesus continues to address the whole idea of suffering. According to him, we think suffering can buy us something we want. **"You may think it buys you something, and may still believe a little that it buys you what you want."** (W.102.1.2) Now that sounds totally insane, yet, when you think about it, you can see this is true. I remember as a young child all the attention I got when I was sick and the benefits I received from not having to go to school or be responsible for chores. I especially loved the special treatment I received with lots of love and attention. There was a huge payoff for me. Of course, I was not conscious that this was my motivation. At a conscious level, I was unhappy with the suffering I endured, yet there was clearly a payoff.

You may protest that you don't want the pain and suffering you are experiencing, but he asks us to bring awareness to the inherent benefits. He asks us to look at what our suffering allows us to do and not to do. The fact is that we want to suffer because we want the payoff. The payoff is to be the victim. In addition, we get things like attention, control, and the ability to manipulate others to meet our needs. To us, suffering seems like a small price to pay for what we can get from it. Through suffering, we demonstrate that others are responsible for our condition. We make them the guilty ones who will ultimately suffer God's punishment. Now they can pay for our guilt of separation from God, and we can escape from what we fear from Him.

Suffering proves I am right, and justified in my attacks because, "look at what they have done to me." It proves our reality is indeed these fragile bodies and personalities. It proves that God is wrong about who He says we are. Finally, it is a way we punish ourselves for our seeming sin. Now God need not punish us, as we have "atoned" for our sin against Him. **"Salvation thus cannot be purchased but through suffering."** (W.101.2.2) Who would have thought suffering is such a prize to the ego? The ego tells us this is how we purchase salvation. Otherwise, we are doomed!

It is important to remember that this is our dream. We made it up, so we can agree to change it whenever we take to heart what Jesus reminds us in this Lesson when he says, **"You do not want to suffer."** (W.102.1.1) Apparently, we still do, but he appeals to the decision-making part of the mind that can agree to see that there is another choice that can be made. We can give the Holy Spirit the sin and guilt in the mind that we think offers us something. When we project it on others, we think we can make them responsible for our suffering but all we do is to keep the cycle of guilt and fear.

We believe grief will bring us a reward. We believe deprivation has some kind of elevated goal, but Jesus says we are now far enough along in our understanding to see that belief in suffering has been weakened. **"Yet this belief is surely shaken now, at least enough to let you**

question it, and to suspect it really makes no sense." (W.102.1.3) Our beliefs are no longer as firmly established in our thinking as they once were.

While we are still not free of guilt and suffering, Jesus assures us **"It has not gone yet, but lacks the roots that once secured it tightly to the dark and hidden secret places of your mind."** (W.102.1.4) What this means is Jesus is confident about our ability to change our minds because we have already gone a long way in doing so. Of course, the ego does not want us to look at these dark and hidden secret places because completely releasing sin and guilt means the end of the ego. While it is indeed the end of the ego, what we fear it means is the end of us. Jesus assures us that he is walking with us through our fear to the extent we are willing to let him in.

Today, we try to **". . . realize that pain is purposeless, without a cause and with no power to accomplish anything."** (W.102.2.1) The purpose of pain is to keep us focused on the body and personality and rooted in the illusion. It keeps us separate from our brothers, feeling all alone with our pain and suffering and separate from God. But pain and suffering offer us nothing of value. **"It cannot purchase anything at all."** (W.102.2.2) It will not purchase our salvation as the ego promises. It accomplishes nothing except to bring more suffering. The idea we should suffer comes from guilt. The original guilt came about as a result of the belief we had separated from God, attacked Him, attacked and destroyed the perfection of our Being, and now deserve punishment. Obviously, this is deeply hidden in our subconscious but shows up in our lives when we experience pain, depression, grief, rage, sickness, and suffering of any kind.

Thus, the happiness God has willed for us, which is our natural inheritance, is obscured. This happiness is not something we need to look for. It is already in us. We are not trying to make ourselves happy. We just need to give up the sadness and suffering, so we can connect to the happiness within. It is to **"Step gently aside, and let healing be done for you."** (T.16.I.3.7) (ACIM OE T.16.I.3) Our part is to take responsibility for our feelings by bringing awareness to our unhealed thoughts and turning them over to the Holy Spirit, so healing can take place. It requires letting down our defenses to see what is hidden from our awareness.

Today, we try to realize any pain or distress we feel we have chosen, not because we want pain, but because of what we think it will get us. It appears to pay off our guilt. Jesus reminds us, **"And everything that seems to happen to me I ask for and receive as I have asked."** (T.21.II.2.5) (ACIM OE T.21.III.15) There are no accidents. We are responsible for our experience. Jesus reminds us that there is only God and nothing outside of Him exists. There cannot be God and something else if God is all there is. If we choose "something else," we make a choice to be on our own. By this choice, we reject God's Love.

Nothing in this world happens to me outside my will, and my will determines my perception of everything and my response to everything. It is my decision how I see everything that seems to happen while recognizing that nothing real is happening at all. In other words, the temporal happenings of this world don't exist and neither do these separate selves. Unless we include the second point along with the first, we will feel entirely at the mercy of our own mind, and we will wonder, "How in the world did I manifest this?" Then, we feel totally responsible and even victimized by our own minds. However, when we accept that the non-eternal does not even exist, we can step aside from our investment in the dream. This is perhaps one of the hardest things to accept, but God and the ego are irreconcilable beliefs. It is one or the other—truth or illusion. As was said in Lesson 98, **"We take a stand on but one side today."** (W.98.1.2)

God already knows us as the perfect Self we are, but we need to experience God as a beneficent and loving Father and not the punishing God that the mind fears. Our final obstacle to peace is the fear of God, but God doesn't understand the belief in sin that we hold in our minds. He asks nothing of us. If He did, it would acknowledge that there is something He needs of us, which is not the case.

When we recognize God's Will for us is perfect happiness and nothing else, we know that the only place where our safety lies is in Him. **"Here is your home, and here your safety is. Here is your peace, and here there is no fear. Here is salvation. Here is rest at last."** (W.102.3.2-5) It is there right now, waiting for our acceptance and acknowledgment. Our part is to simply look at our guilt, which is dispelled when we look without judgment or self-condemnation. We simply look and no longer protect the guilt with our defenses, and thus it can no longer thrive in the secret, dark places in the mind.

"Be happy. Your only function here is happiness." (W.102.5.1) When we give, rather than try to get, we are in our function and experience a deep level of happiness that is already in us. Now we can share the joy that emanates from within. When we are unhappy, we use it as our excuse for not being loving. Have you noticed the many excuses we give for being hurtful? It can be anything from, "I have a headache," to "I am tired," to "I don't feel well." From these places where we suffer, we don't extend to others. Our function is now to look honestly at our suffering and what is behind it so the pain we experience can be healed. Jesus asks us to remind ourselves in our practice today, ***"I share God's Will for happiness for me, and I accept it as my function now."*** (W.102.4.2)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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