

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 147 Review IV Lessons 133 and Lessons 134

Sarah's Commentary:

What is it that I give value to? What bodily concerns do I have that seem important to my well-being, my safety, and my image? What do I believe will bring satisfaction? Today, we not only evaluate such things in our lives, but we also evaluate what draws our attention. Why we do what we are doing? What is the purpose? How do we choose to use our time? What do we strive for? What do we really want? What do we believe will make us happy? Where are our attachments? What do we deem important? Most of all, what is it all for?

These and other questions are part of how we examine our lives when we are not on autopilot, simply putting one foot in front of the other and never asking about the purpose behind anything and everything. It is our questions that got us on this path in the first place. It is our searching that motivated us to question what is valuable and what is valueless for our awakening. Everything can be used to contribute to awakening from this dream. Our disappointments, hurts, and heartbreaks contribute to our journey as much, or perhaps even more, than our deemed successes. Jesus teaches that we don't know the difference between what is helpful and what sets us back. We think our heartaches are defeats when, in fact, they can offer the greatest gains in our spiritual advancement. Acceptance of it all can alleviate our suffering. Only the ego insists, **"I want it thus!"** (T.18.II.4.1) (ACIM OE T.18.III.17) Everything that serves the ego's purposes can be used by the Holy Spirit when we choose to turn it over to Him for healing.

How many trivial things occupy your mind today? Jesus says that being drawn into the things of this world is to ask for sorrow. We ask for too little of life. We are not asked to sacrifice what we value but only to realize that it is indeed valueless. There can never be satisfaction in seeking the valueless. The power we have is in the choices we make, but there are not many choices to be made. There are only two choices. We choose the valuable or the valueless with each decision we make. We choose everything or nothing. Everything offers us the eternal where no one loses, there is no compromise, and there is no guilt. Guilt is the measure by which we can tell what we have chosen. When we gain at our brother's expense, we too feel that we should have nothing. We give loss and get loss for ourselves. We receive what we give because we always only give to ourselves.

We now have criteria, where we can apply these four tests and ask, **"What purpose does it serve?"** (W.133.8.4) Is my goal to know the Eternal Self where I have everything with no guilt, or for the world of the ego where guilt is reinforced? This choice is there for us in every situation. Do I want to know my Eternal Self and ensure benefit for all my brothers, or do I want to look only for my personal benefit, which is always at the expense of my brothers. It is important to look honestly at our motives as we may be deceived about them in our effort to maintain an image of innocence.

Jesus asks us to consider carefully why the choice we make has value to us and what attracts our minds to it? What purpose does it serve? Unless we are able to really look at these questions honestly, we will be deceived. The ego is devious and a liar. We do everything we can in order to look innocent and pretend that our intentions are noble and honest when, indeed, they are anything but when guided by the ego. The guilt in our minds is protected by our projections. Thus, we blame others for our lack of peace that we ourselves have chosen to throw away. Though we threw the peace away ourselves, we blame others for taking it from us.

We are cautioned by Jesus not to make mistakes into sins, but just to notice that **". . . the one who is deceived will not perceive that he has merely failed to gain"** (W.133.9.3) by the choice he has made for the ego. The ego is maintained through guilt, which leads to our punishing ourselves, accepting ourselves as unworthy, and attacking ourselves and others. Thus, the cycle of guilt and fear is continued. Jesus reminds us that nothing real has happened, and thus, there is no cause for guilt. Each time we choose attack, we have merely failed to gain. It is just a mistake. The ego wants us to condemn ourselves and feel guilty, but Jesus asks us to be gentle with ourselves and simply notice our mistakes and correct them. When we recognize that our plans for our happiness will always fail, we are ready to turn to the Holy Spirit to be taught the nature of true happiness. **"How could this readiness be reached save through the sight of all your misery, and the awareness that your plan has failed, and will forever fail to bring you peace and joy of any kind?"** (T.24.II.14.2) (ACIM OE T.24.III.25)

Through forgiveness, Jesus teaches that all thoughts not of God can be undone. This involves looking at the ego without judgment and recognizing the cost to us in holding onto what it tells us to think and feel. They are thoughts of fear, guilt, anxiety, depression, hate, special love, anger, upset, vulnerability, and anything that keeps us separate from the love we are. Any blame we project on others for how we are feeling is an indication that we are not prepared to take responsibility for our own minds as the cause of our distress, whatever form it takes. Forgiveness requires that we look at the thoughts that show up in our experience without judging ourselves for them. When we are willing to recognize, **"I am never upset for the reason I think."** (W.5) we are shown that all our upsets originate with ourselves. Behind any upset is some kind of wound. Radical inquiry is helpful in uncovering the wound. To inquire is to look beyond the surface of the story of our upset, recognize that a healed mind would not be upset, and wonder what thoughts, beliefs, self-concepts, and values are being held in the mind that are creating the upset. When the beliefs are uncovered, they can be questioned and released.

"I am responsible for what I see. I choose the feelings I experience, and I decide upon the goal I would achieve. And everything that seems to happen to me I ask for, and receive as I have asked." (T.21.II.2.3-5) (ACIM OE T.21.III.15) When we recognize our responsibility for the guilt in our minds, we are given an opportunity to make a choice to let the Holy Spirit take our misperceptions and offer us a new interpretation for the ones we have made. He shows us that no one is guilty, including ourselves. He shows us that, in letting go of guilt and blame, peace returns to our minds. Thus, with forgiveness, we are making a choice for happiness. Now we feel worthy of Heaven's Love. Only this love is true. Our thoughts about everything are false. Holy Spirit, help me to recognize that what I see is always my wrong interpretation. The Son of God is innocent. Nothing he thinks he has done is worthy of condemnation. ***"Let me perceive forgiveness as it is."*** (W.134) To forgive is to overlook the error.

All behavior either reflects love or is a call for love. It is in our own call for understanding where we recognize we are all the same. Our brother is our Self. We forgive in order to release ourselves from the judgments we have placed on ourselves and projected onto our brothers. When we

project guilt on our brother, we see our sins in him. It is just our own self-condemnation that we are seeing in him. Forgiveness removes the chains we have laid on ourselves. By our willingness to release our brothers, we free ourselves because only the mind is making it all up. Thus, I ask for help in forgiving myself for projecting my own unconscious guilt on you, which keeps me from knowing the truth about myself as a being of light and love.

Forgiveness is the only way out of the suffering that is incurred every time we judge something as not the way it should be. When we have expectations of how a situation or an event should be, or how others should meet our requirements, we are railing against our reality as the light and love of God. We are saying we are right about the way we see things and right about the way we require things to be to be happy. We are telling God that His Love is not enough, and that there is something else we require for our happiness. It is this we need to bring to mind and see that we are wrong about the way we have judged the situation. Now we are called to bring our misperceptions to the Holy Spirit and choose to see them differently. When we agree to surrender our way and give over our positions, we have taken an important step in forgiveness.

A friend was speaking to her daughter about an incident that had happened a few years ago when her daughter was much younger. My friend had taken her daughter to a dance rehearsal and judged the teacher for being unnecessarily harsh and domineering with the young students. She chastised the teacher in front of the students. The teacher was very upset and quit her job and told my friend to take over if she felt she could do it better. My friend was not about to take this role and apologized profusely for what she had done. Her daughter expressed how embarrassed she was regarding what had happened. Sometime later when the daughter was older they were again recalling this situation. The daughter shared how much she had loved the structure and the discipline, having been raised in a home where there were few restrictions. What came to light was how mistaken my friend was in her perception of the teacher. She was dealing with her own unhealed wound of her past by trying to change things in form that she believed were hurtful to her daughter. Now she had another opportunity to look at this situation with new awareness. She was able to recognize that she was projecting her own unhealed past onto the present situation.

When we experience uncomfortable feelings, the ego immediately wants us to be rid of them as quickly as possible. It informs us that there is nothing wrong with us, there is something wrong with the other person, and we are being unfairly treated and victimized. In our anger the ego counsels us to attack the other person and make them the guilty ones. Our wish is that their guilt will result in their willingness to change their behavior so we will feel better. For example, if they will at least apologize to us, it declares their fault, which is what we desire. All the time, though, we know our attack on them is never justified. Thus, it is a dishonest act on our part. The person we have chosen to attack is actually showing us the guilt and self-attack we are holding in our own minds. Thus, they are doing us a favor!

Forgiveness recognizes that if love is the only reality, anything distressing or disturbing to our minds cannot be real. When we insist on holding onto distressing thoughts and justifying them, we suffer. Yet through our decision to take responsibility for them, we can choose again. Thus, we can see that our self-induced decision to suffer need not be. We can now bring all thoughts, that keep us in a state of suffering, to the light. Forgiveness makes space for the love that is in us but is being blocked by our choice for the ego.

We continue our practice as before, beginning and ending the day with time devoted to the preparation of our minds to learn what each idea can offer us in freedom and in peace. Let us commit today to raising every judgment, every belief, and every concept we hold, to doubt. Open your mind and clear it of all thoughts that would deceive. Continue with the hourly remembrance

and whenever you feel triggered by anything today, do the practice of letting go of the false and remembering the truth.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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