

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 155 **I will step back and let Him lead the way.**

Sarah's Commentary:

"I will step back and let Him lead the way." (W.155) This is a favorite Lesson for many, including myself. It is a way of living where we are in tune with Spirit, where the ego is out of the way, and we are in the flow of divine guidance. The burden of making it on our own has been lifted, even though it may be only for the moment. Clearly, making decisions and deciding what to do on our own is a burden as we are always deciding on the basis of very limited information and are thus always uncertain. When I am in the flow, when I experience holy encounters, and meet anger and frustration with peace, then I know I am in sync with Him and have stepped back and followed His way. Just knowing there is nothing we must do and nowhere we must be, and all is perfect now in this classroom for our healing, allows us to be in a state of acceptance. Our brothers and sisters who we will meet, and those in our lives now, are perfect mirrors for our awakening when we choose to do the healing. **"Forget not He has placed His Hand in yours, and given you your brothers in His trust that you are worthy of His trust in you."** (W.155.13.4) When we realize whose Hand we hold, our pathway is certain and our goal secure.

And what does He ask of us? **"And now He asks but that you think of Him a while each day, that He may speak to you and tell you of His Love, reminding you how great His trust; how limitless His Love."** (W.155.14.1) Can you imagine not taking the time to listen to someone who wants to let you know how absolutely perfect and loved you are? Yet we do just that! We get so involved in the distractions of the world that we ignore the song of love we can hear only when we take the time to still our minds. The resistance still in the mind, and our investment in our identity, is what keeps us from consistent practice of the Lessons. We may still find ourselves compartmentalizing our lives into all kinds of activities that keep us occupied with family, friends, recreation, job, finances, body, health, children, and general interests and then we add another component called spirituality. In other words, we are attempting to bring truth into the illusion, rather than our misperceptions to the truth, when we make the world our priority. When we go within where truth resides in the right mind, we connect to the inner wisdom available to us all. It is not about giving up other activities but more about looking at what the purpose is for what we do. When everything in our day becomes a backdrop for forgiveness, the world becomes a personal guru and classroom for undoing our wrong-minded perceptions.

Jesus is not saying that we should give up this world as this would seem like a sacrifice because we still value it. Sacrifice is not being asked of us, **"For sacrifice and deprivation are paths that lead nowhere, choices for defeat, and aims that will remain impossible."** (W.155.7.2) Jesus wants us to understand that when we follow the dictates of the ego, we are spinning our wheels and going nowhere. All we are doing is living a self-defeating cycle of sin, guilt, and fear. When we listen to what the ego says we need for our happiness, it always ends in defeat and despair although this may not be immediately apparent to us.

Jesus does not ask us to renounce the world **"while still believing its reality."** (W.155.4.2) He does not ask us to give up the things we still value, but only invites us to turn our minds to the Holy Spirit for guidance rather than listening to the ego. He knows where our happiness lies although we are confused.

This is not about renunciation. To renounce something means to believe it is real and has value. If we give up things that we still believe can bring us happiness, thinking it is spiritual to do so, is to sacrifice. Thus, if the pleasures we still enjoy in the world are seen as wrong or bad, rather than seen as leading nowhere, we will feel that sacrifice is being asked of us. We would feel as if we were giving up something we still value. **"If truth demanded they give up the world, it would appear to them as if it asked the sacrifice of something that is real."** (W.155.4.1) God asks no sacrifice of us. We are not asked to fight ourselves. **"It is extremely difficult to reach Atonement by fighting against sin."** (T.18.VII.4.7) (ACIM OE T.18.VIII.66)

It is interesting to learn that the sense of loss is even deeper for those who have **"chosen nothing but the world."** (W.155.4.4) When the world is seen as a wonderful place, and we attempt to make our lives a substitute for Heaven on earth, at some point, it all ends. Yes, for a while everything might look perfect, and we experience happiness, but it can never be counted on because it won't last. All things here change. Furthermore, if what we truly value in the world is taken away or lost, there is an immense feeling of deprivation, pain, and deep disappointment. These substitutes for love, where we seek for our salvation in this world and in our special relationships, can never deliver the deep peace and happiness we seek in them. Looking to the body to bring us what we think we want can only end in disappointment. As Jesus says, **"The body can bring you neither peace nor turmoil; neither joy nor pain. It is a means, and not an end. It has no purpose of itself, but only what is given to it. The body will seem to be whatever is the means for reaching the goal that you assign to it. Only the mind can set a purpose, and only the mind can see the means for its accomplishment, and justify its use."** (T.19.IV.B.i.10.4-8) (ACIM OE T.19.V.b.69)

The way appointed for us is the path of moderation. It stands between the paths of renunciation of the world and that of seeing the world as a wonderful place. On the path of moderation, the body is simply regarded as a tool for the mind's chosen purpose. It is neither an object of pleasure nor pain, but simply a vehicle for communication. The world is seen as a classroom for waking up from this dream, where the body is simply the means to this end, as is everything in the world. When we make the body the focus of all our activity, we put many demands on it which makes it sick. Jesus asks, **"What plans do you make that do not involve its comfort or protection or enjoyment in some way?"** (T.18.VII.1.2) (ACIM OE T.18.VIII.63) He asks us to **"make a place within you where the activity of the body ceases to demand attention."** (T.18.VII.7.7) (ACIM OE T.18.VIII.69)

Jesus says that we came to this illusory world to avoid our reality and to reinforce our concept of ourselves as a body. **"Yet when they find their own reality is even here, then they step back and let it lead the way."** (W.155.2.3) It is the only choice to be made because he says, **"To let illusions walk ahead of truth is madness."** (W.155.2.5) Our happiness is in accepting the Self we are and thus the only choice to make. While it is a simple choice, it does seem to take us a while to come to the place where we decide for God as our only goal, and thus, it is a process for most of us. As we forgive more and more and experience the results, we are more and more willing to make this decision. We are not being hurled into Heaven, where fear would overwhelm us. While **"The mad illusion will remain awhile in evidence,"** (W.155.3.2) eventually, with practice and vigilance, we willingly release all that no longer serves us.

As we read in the Lesson yesterday, we are being called to be among the ministers of God, but not in the traditional sense. This Lesson elaborates this further by saying, **"There is a way of living in the world that is not here, although it seems to be."** (W.155.1.1) It is knowing that the world is nothing but a dream and that our reality is outside of this dream. Jesus says it is neither about outward appearances, as reflected in many spiritual paths and religions, nor is it about behavior. It is only about an inner change where there is recognition that nothing in this world need be taken seriously. We appear "normal" and fit in, rather than stand out. We have no need to call special attention to ourselves. Our lifestyle is one of looking like everyone else. We have no outward appearance that signals to others that we are walking a spiritual path. While the content of our minds is one that reflects the truth, what we do in the world of form only becomes a backdrop for the expression of that content. The difference is all inward. We trust more, manage less, worry less, plan less, let go of trying to control all aspects of our lives, and give everything over for His guidance. We know we are exactly where we are supposed to be and will meet who we are to meet. We have less interest in the things of the world, and increasingly experience peace. Regardless of what the circumstances of our lives look like our fear is increasingly diminished and instead we see opportunities for healing.

Those who are ready to receive the message we have received feel something in us that draws them to us. It is a gentle call they hear through us. As His messengers, we only bring His message of love and acceptance, rather than our own. The choice we have made is a demonstration of the peace and joy available to everyone, and it is recognized. **"And the ones who walk the world as you do recognize their own."** (W.155.1.4)

"We walk to God. Pause and reflect on this. Could any way be holier, or more deserving of your effort, of your love and of your full intent?" (W.155.12.1-3) We let Love lead the way. It is a time of faith because **"You know not where you go. But One Who knows goes with you. Let Him lead you with the rest."** (W.155.10.4-6) **"The mad illusion will remain awhile in evidence, for those to look upon who chose to come, and have not yet rejoiced to find they were mistaken in their choice."** (W.155.3.2) Thus, we are called to be messengers with a ministry. We teach through demonstration of the love, the joy and peace in us; and those who are meant to be in our lives are brought to us, not by God, but through the script that we have chosen.

Jesus recognizes the path is new to us and we will be **"tempted still to walk ahead of truth, and let illusions be your guide."** (W.155.9.2) When temptation arises to listen to the ego and walk with guilt and fear as our companions, we are called to step back, reevaluate how we feel, and choose again to let Him lead the way. To do this, we must be vigilant when we become aware that we have chosen the ego as our guide. It is a process. We will find that we fall back daily into the ego thought system, as we proceed on this path. It can be very subtle and requires vigilant mind watching to see how we are still tempted to believe that the illusion has something to offer us.

Jesus reminds us that many are looking to us for the guidance and support to **"lead them out of it [illusion], for they mistake illusion for the truth,"** (W.155.7.5) just as we do. Yet we can be an example of having made a choice for the Holy Spirit, which is the same choice available to all our brothers. Our brothers are given to us in trust, as we walk with Him whose Hand we hold. We lead our brothers **"from the ways of death, and set them on the way to happiness."** (W.155.7.3) And this requires we recognize: **"Their suffering is but illusion."** (W.155.7.4) When we are able to see their suffering as not real, we can know this for ourselves. We recognize that we are the same as our brothers. This recognition of shared interests is a

reflection of the Oneness of Heaven. Thus, we can walk together with **"certainty of purpose to the truth."** (W.155.9.3)

Jesus challenges us by asking what we would rather do? Is anything but this worth our effort? Are we willing to give it our full intent? What else would offer us what this path offers? The ego warns us that we have to give up something, pay a ransom, or experience sacrifice to walk this path. Yet all that is sacrificed is the ego's thought system, which has only brought guilt and not the happiness we seek.

To be an advanced teacher of God is to be far enough along this path to be increasingly unaffected by the events and circumstances of the world. It is to be above the battleground, outside of the dream seeing the unreality of the world. Jesus asks, **"What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up? What if you realized that those who seem to walk about in it, to sin and die, attack and murder and destroy themselves, are wholly unreal? Could you have faith in what you see, if you accepted this? And would you see it?"** (T.20.VIII.7.3-7) (ACIM.OE T.20.IX.73) The advanced Teachers of God are those whose minds have been mostly healed, but it is not apparent in their appearance. It is those who still appear to be here, but know they are just figures in the dream. It is to be in the world, but unaffected by the events and circumstances of the world.

To experience inspiration in your day, step back and let Him be your guide today. Remember that practice instructions were given to us in Lesson 153 for these twenty Lessons. We begin each day by giving our attention to the Lesson for as long as possible, for at least five minutes and up to fifteen or longer. And in the evening we again turn to Him in gratitude and joy. We try to remember the Lesson hourly and ask for guidance for the next hour while thanking Him for the gifts of the previous hour. **"Your practicing will now begin to take the earnestness of love, to help you keep your mind from wandering from its intent."** (W.153.20.1) These Lessons invite sincere attention as a natural expression of the heart. Let us take this step forward in confidence. Jesus asks us to **"Be not afraid or timid,"** (W.153.20.2) because we simply cannot fail. The end is certain. We will achieve our goal to return home to God.

Practice vigilance today in watching your thoughts so you can see how much the ego thought system rules your day with thoughts of guilt, fear, vulnerability, anger, attack, and specialness. Today, we practice gladly with this thought:

***"I will step back and let Him lead the way,
For I would walk along the road to Him."*** (W.155.14.3)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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