



LESSON 174 Review V ~ Lesson 157 and Lesson 158

Sarah's Commentary:

[157] Into His Presence would I enter now.

[158] Today I learn to give as I receive.

We continue the Review with the important reminder, "**God is but Love and therefore so am I.**" (W.RV.4.3) Anything God creates is like Himself—holy, sinless, innocent, an endless spring of love, and immortal. We are not human beings who are desperately seeking our spirituality. We *are* spiritual beings, who *think* we are having a human experience, having forgotten who we are and dreaming that we are in the body and the world.

The truth is we are pure awareness believing we exist separate from God and as a separate self we think we must defend against the assaults coming at us. We are guided on this journey by the Holy Spirit, Who is the quiet presence in our right minds. As long as we stay in control of our lives and believe everything is up to us, we will continue to take the lead ourselves. When we are willing to step back and let Him lead the way, we give over our separate will and agree to have our Father, ***"Lead our practicing as does a father lead a little child along a way he does not understand. Yet does he follow, sure that he is safe because his father leads the way for him."*** (W.RV.2.5-6) The truth is always available to us as that is what we are as we have not and cannot change our reality. A state of happiness and peace is not possible to achieve by our own efforts, no matter how hard we try. When we think we know our own best interests, we are constantly reaching out for pleasure, but instead experience pain because that is the way the ego set it up and keeps its strategy from our awareness.

We take this teaching on faith until we have experienced the gifts of following Spirit instead of ego. Since the truth is already in our minds, we resonate with what we read even though we don't readily understand it all. When we defend against it, we do experience resistance to this teaching because of the extent of fear in the mind. The fear is actually fear of love. The first obstacle to peace is our desire to be rid of it strange as that may sound. But Jesus does not coerce us or place any demands on us and is always patient and gentle. We are in charge of how quickly we accept the truth, thus, we don't have to be afraid we will be hurled into Heaven. Our awakening is a gentle process, even though to the ego the events of our lives are often not to our liking. But since everything that seems to happen is by our own choosing, we are not victims of these events and circumstances as it is all part of the script that we have chosen and always for the purpose of awakening.

As we apply the Lessons, we increasingly experience a shift into greater peace and freedom. We have all had experiences of being in the right place at the right time, of meeting people who we

are meant to meet, of feeling in the flow where everything works easily, and of having things work out when we take our hands off of the steering wheel of our lives or when we give up control even a little. Alternatively, when things seem not to be moving in this kind of flow and challenges arise, we can remember to ask for help to choose peace. Everything made by the ego can be used by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of undoing what does not serve us. Nothing the ego has made will ever bring happiness.

We are reminded that we don't know our own best interests and that our greatest setbacks, as seen by the ego, can be our greatest advances. When we let all things be exactly as they are and not fight and resist what comes, we become happy learners. **"You are not a happy learner yet because you still remain uncertain that vision gives you more than judgment does, and you have learned that both you cannot have."** (T.21.I.3.7) (ACIM OE T.21.II.5) Until we step through this conflict, there will be resistance to the Lessons. When the conflict becomes sufficiently painful, we become motivated to take the giant strides to our freedom by focusing all our efforts on the Holy Spirit's Lessons.

How do we learn to hear the guidance? The approach taken in the Course to help us with daily decisions is different than what we have learned in the world. No specific tools are given us in this Course that will help us make better, wiser, or more effective decisions. Jesus says very bluntly we are incapable of good decisions, so we need to let the Holy Spirit decide for us. This means we must make room for Him in our minds to guide our lives. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in everything we do. We might complain we don't hear His Voice, which is actually speaking to us throughout the day. If we are listening to our own voice, which is the voice of the ego and following our own advice we won't hear the guidance. The voice of the ego is loud, boisterous, demanding, and raucous. To be guided is to listen to the prompts within. The important thing is to ask in everything and follow what we 'hear.' The hearing might be just a prompt or intuition to take a step in the direction of our highest vibration. The important thing is to pause and ask before taking action. That is enough as it shows us that there is a willingness to step back from our reactive minds and trust the direction given.

When we have the desire and willingness to hear and the confidence that the answers will be provided, we can trust in the perfection of everything that shows up for our healing. When we don't hear, it is because our minds are cluttered with guilt and fear thoughts. We want to stay in control, and thus, we resist guidance. With time and practice, our trust grows, and increasingly we find that we release control over our lives, day-by-day, step-by-step. When we do so, the guidance becomes clearer, if we keep remembering to step back and let Him take the lead.

Jesus reminds us, **"We sing the song of thankfulness today, in honor of the Self that God has willed to be our true Identity in Him."** (W.123.4.2) **"And we give thanks that in our solitude a Friend has come to speak the saving Word of God to us. And thanks to you for listening to Him. His Word is soundless if it be not heard."** (W.123.5.2-4) Thus, our ability to listen comes when the obstacles in our minds are seen and brought to awareness and released to the Holy Spirit.

Today, we enter a day of silence and of trust. We remind ourselves that we can be wholly unafraid and thus completely trusting because of our invulnerability as Spirit. As we walk in trust and unafraid, we choose Christ's Vision. **"It sees no separation. And it looks on everyone, on every circumstance, all happenings and all events, without the slightest fading of the light it sees."** (W.158.7.4-5) No matter what comes up as we go through the day, we recognize that there is no value in anything except to know our identity as the love that we are.

Often, I find that when a situation shows up for me that seems problematic, and if I don't try to address it on my own but live in the not knowing, the answer comes in unexpected ways. Guidance comes in many forms. We just need to stay aware and tune into the guidance, whether it shows up as an inner voice, in pictures, nighttime dreams, a gut instinct, coincidences, feelings, a stirring in the heart, or other signs or symbols.

In this journey to awakening, Jesus goes with us. He says, **"I take the journey with you. For I share your doubts and fears a little while, that you may come to me who recognize the road by which all fears and doubts are overcome. We walk together. I must understand uncertainty and pain, although I know they have no meaning. Yet a savior must remain with those he teaches, seeing what they see, but still retaining in his mind the way that led him out, and now will lead you out with him. God's Son is crucified until you walk along the road with me."** (W.RV.6.1-6)

He knows the way, and shares in our experience. He understands all that makes our progress slow and about our hesitation. He knows what lies at the end of the road. He knows our doubts and fears, and yet he sees a way out. He is our perfect teacher and holds our hand through every step of this journey to the end. He knows both the journey and the end of it as a result of his own experience. He never raises himself above us but walks beside us as an equal. It is so encouraging when we take this seriously. Can you really imagine the perfect, most loving teacher who has had the experience we have had, lovingly walking with us through each practice period and motivating us to hasten our footsteps? We ask this of God in our prayer, but we need to do our part.

"My resurrection comes again each time I lead a brother safely to the place at which the journey ends and is forgot." (W.RV.7.1) The journey began with the tiny mad idea and the choice for the ego. This led to the experience of the body and the world. The journey ends with the Correction of our mistaken choice for the ego. Jesus demonstrates that we can make the same choice he made so that we can realize our own resurrection, as we awaken from this dream of death. **"Release me as you practice once again the thoughts I brought to you from Him Who sees your bitter need, and knows the answer God has given Him."** (W.RV.8.1) He is the symbol of the awakened mind, right there with us, because he is in our minds. Indeed, he says, **"I am incomplete without your part in me."** (W.RV.8.7) There is only one Son, but we need to ask for his help, or he cannot help us because we are free to choose as we wish.

It is a journey back to our ancient home—a home that was prepared for us "before time was." It has been kept pristine, safe, immaculate, and unchanged through eons of time. It is awaiting our return, though we have never left except in dreams.

I will refer to David Hawkins, simply because I am currently inspired by reading his book, "Discovery of the Presence of God: Devotional Non-Duality." In it he says:

"The pace of spiritual evolution is not under personal control and may take sudden surprising leaps. Therefore, It is wise to prepare beforehand with knowledge of what yet may come." Certainly, that is the reason for our study of the Text. It helps us see what is yet to come. And to the question of why we sometimes feel like we are not making progress on this path to enlightenment, his words are encouraging. "There is no point to wondering how am I doing? For the compass has already been set by dedication and devotion to the highest truth. While the pace may seem slow or even arduous at times, it is best to be prepared for sudden, unexpected leaps. It is wise to

avoid pessimism, even after a seemingly long, dry period of frustration, for such periods are due to overcoming major obstacles and attachments that often presage major changes."

Today, "**We place faith in the experience that comes from practice, not the means we use.**" (W.RV.12.2) The words of the Lessons point us to the truth, but it is in their application that we receive the gifts that are promised. It is an experience of deep peace, a feeling of being connected with all there is, and a trust in our brothers and in the process.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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