

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 28

Above all else I want to see things differently.

Sarah's Commentary:

This Lesson follows up on the Lesson yesterday, but now he is asking us to make **". . . a series of definite commitments."** (W.28.1.2) Jesus is not asking us to be concerned right now as to whether we are going to keep them; only that we make them, and it is only the willingness to make them that starts us on the way to keeping them. **"The question of whether you will keep them in the future is not our concern here. If you are willing at least to make them now, you have started on the way to keeping them."** (W.28.1.3-4) He recognizes that this is just a beginning step. You may wonder, "Why would I make this commitment if I won't keep it?" Think about it. When you make a commitment, even if you don't keep it right away, it is still there, waiting for completion. It is setting an intention. We are simply asked to take this first step. Clearly, we have made a commitment to our false identity, and now, we are taking a step toward committing to seeing differently. What that does is it helps us to recognize that we have been wrong in the way we have seen everything. Now we make this commitment to open to another way of looking at the world. Jesus recognizes our resistance and is just asking us to look at our willingness to make this commitment today as a beginning step. He does not want us to feel guilty when we break the commitment that we set today. He continues to make this an invitation to us, and in no way does he want us to feel coerced.

What are we making a commitment to do? We are committing to withdrawing our preconceived ideas about everything we see. It is a recognition of how wrong we have been about our perceptions. Incredible as it may seem, if we are able to withdraw our preconceived notions about just one thing, then **". . . you will see all things differently."** (W.28.2.7) For example, if we withdraw all the ideas we have about a table based on our past associations, then it can reveal the truth to us. How is that possible? Well, it is our ideas about everything that clouds our mind. We have our ideas about what everything in this world is for. This harkens back to Lesson 25, which affirms that we don't know what anything is for. The purpose of the world is to obscure the truth. It was made as an attack on God. Everything in this illusory world was made to hide the truth of who we are as eternal beings. It is to keep us focused on the forms of this world, investing them all with our meaning. Thus, everything in the world serves the purpose of keeping us invested in the illusion. When the veil that is drawn across our minds is lifted, we see everything through His eyes and not our own. Now we can use everything in the illusion for a different purpose, which is to heal our minds.

Right now, we don't see that all forms share the same purpose. We think that everything is different from everything else. Thus, we have different names for everything in the world and all with different purposes. Yet when given to the Holy Spirit, the purpose for everything becomes unified. When we see differences, we make the separation real. **"You see a lot of separate things about you, which really means you are not seeing at all."** (W.28.2.5) Strange as that may sound, we don't need to understand it. He just asks that we commit ourselves to seeing.

How much do I want to see things differently? How much do I want to let go of all my past associations, all my ideas, and all my thoughts about tables or anything else in this world?

It is thinking that we know what everything is for that keeps us from the truth. What is the truth? The truth is that God is in our minds, and when the beliefs, values, and concepts that we hold are given over to the Holy Spirit, our way of seeing will be replaced by His vision. Nothing changes outside, but what does change is how we see everything. When we look with the ego, what we see is a world of vengeance. When we turn to our inner Teacher, our interpretation will be shifted, and we will see with vision. Vision is a way of seeing that has nothing to do with the eyes. It is more of an attitude of accepting and embracing all that is. It is how we see when there is no judgment.

We are all invested in being right about the way we see things and the way we have set up reality. We have convinced ourselves of the truth of what we have learned to see and believe. We resist giving up our hard-won meanings and opening our mind to what some call a "beginner's mind", which is like the mind of a child--- open, innocent, and full of awe and wonder. **"You are asking what it is, rather than telling it what it is."** (W.28.3.3) When we look at a table or anything else in that way, he says, **"It has something to show you; something beautiful and clean and of infinite value, full of happiness and hope."** (W.28.5.2) When we look at it that way, we are asking to see the purpose, not only of the table but of everything! All forms in the world are different to the ego mind and all have different purposes, but they all have the same purpose on the level of content, which is to reveal to us what lies beyond what our eyes show us.

The ways of the world have not encouraged us to seek the ultimate truth. Instead, we are taught by our family and by our culture how to view the world and what the meaning is of everything we see. This becomes our reality, but it is all made-up concepts that we hold to be true. Billions of people may share in those beliefs, but it does not make them true. It just becomes part of the shared illusion that has made this world. Our way is different.

I recently watched a movie, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, that reflects so beautifully the pressures of the group to maintain the status quo. Jonathan would not go along with these pressures but responded to a deeper calling to soar and to go beyond the traditional life of the sea gulls whose whole goal was for scraps of food in the garbage. He wanted instead to experiment with new and daring flying techniques. He did not fit in with the clan so the elders expelled him, but his quest for wisdom was more important to him than fitting in. Of course, there is always a price to pay when we choose to follow our calling. When I initially read this book by Richard Bach many years ago, I really resonated with it. I felt deeply lonely in the recognition that I really did not want to fit into the world. Today, thankfully, we have so many mighty companions who walk this journey with us. We no longer have to feel alone on this quest.

As I look around me today, I ask in everything I look upon to **". . . let its purpose be revealed"** (W.28.6.3) to me. To do this I have to withdraw all my judgments and look with openness and innocence. Of particular importance in doing the Lessons today is to apply **"equal sincerity"** (W.28.7.2) to everything we look at. Everything that we look at is equal in the contribution it makes to our seeing. Everything I have learned about this world and what it is for obscures the truth. It is my conditioned mind, full of facts and information, that sees in this way since it has been programmed by everything I have learned so far. Letting it go is what humility is about. It is about recognizing that maybe what I have learned is precisely that which keeps me from really knowing Truth.

As I look around me, I see my computer, my calendar, my chair, the gray sky, a picture of me standing on a mountain top, a bookshelf, and my Course book. In each thing I look at, I see a separate purpose, but this Lesson is taking us to the recognition of a shared purpose for everything. It is about stepping back and giving up my usual and automatic responses, which I think I know, and releasing these preconceived ideas. My thoughts are all about sifting, sorting, categorizing, and labeling everything. If I can commit today to withdraw these preconceived notions, then I have started the process of opening my mind to be taught.

In fact, you might look at this Lesson as a prayer. When he says, **"In using the table as a subject for applying the idea for today, you are therefore really asking to see the purpose of the universe."** (W.28.6.1) We can ask for help to see it differently. We can say, "Father, I am willing to withdraw my ideas from what I am seeing. I am willing to withdraw my ideas from any situation or relationship so that You can show me how to see it. What is its purpose? Show me that I may achieve vision and see the truth. Show me that I can see beyond the forms of this world, which block my vision."

Jesus challenges us with the question, **"Would God have left the meaning of the world to your interpretation? If He had, it *has* no meaning. For it cannot be that meaning changes constantly, and yet is true."** (T.30.VII.1.1-3) (ACIM OE T.30.VIII.82) Our experience is constantly changing meaning because we give everything our interpretation and it is a constantly changing one. Is it not? We get new information, and what we thought before, we no longer think. **"The Holy Spirit looks upon the world as with one purpose, changelessly established."** (T.30.VII.1.4) (ACIM OE T.30.VIII.82) And that purpose is that everything in the world we currently see and experience can be used as a classroom for awakening. It is no wonder we experience great instability in this seemingly shifting world, where even the meaning of a table keeps shifting in our experience. Stability comes from only one purpose as does meaning, which is established by purpose.

In the practice period today, we are asked to repeat the idea and then look randomly at each subject, letting our eyes rest on it long enough to affirm, **"Above all else I want to see this _____ differently."** (W.28.8.2) In doing so, remind yourself that the reason you want to withdraw your purpose from it and see the purpose God has given is so that you may achieve vision. If I could withdraw all my ideas from this object and look at it with a completely open mind, it has something beautiful, clean, and of infinite value full of happiness and hope, to show me. Our purpose is to forgive, which means clearing away our judgments. That is where happiness and hope come from---not from the table itself but from the purpose. When we choose Jesus as our teacher, then we choose to bring our preconceived ideas to the light of truth. We are asking to give up being right about who we are and how we have determined what reality is. Make this a sincere and profound prayer.

In the movie, *The Last Samurai*, the wise man said to his protégé that if he really *saw* the lotus blossom, then he would be enlightened. All we see now are our thoughts about lotus blossoms. We are asked today to release our perceptions about what we are looking at and to do this Lesson for six times for two minutes each time, as thoughtfully as possible, rather than hurrying through it.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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