

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 330 **I will not hurt myself again today.**

Sarah's Commentary:

Today, I will comment on the Lesson line by line. The overall message in the Lesson is for us to be aware of how we hurt ourselves when we attack and hold grievances, or when we focus on our specialness, pleasures, and perceived needs. We suffer when we want something, and we suffer when we get it because then we fear losing it.

Jesus reminds us we are not the victims of anything in this world and when we suffer it is because it is our choice to do so. Why? Our suffering is the "proof" we exist as separate, individual identities, and we can make others responsible for our pain. We insist that people and events outside us are the cause of our suffering. To invite pain into our lives, which may be under the guise of pleasure, is a way to establish we exist as bodies and personalities in the world. We set up defenses against aging, disease, decay, and death and try to control events to keep ourselves safe.

Jesus reminds us, **"Truth cannot deal with errors that you want."** (T.3.IV.7.2) (ACIM OE T.3.VI.48 -> *"Truth cannot deal with unwilling error because it does not will to be blocked out."*) In other words, as long as we want to hang onto and defend the separate self and hold onto the belief that we are victims of the world, no Correction is possible. We must want the Atonement/Correction to receive it. It establishes our innocence. We must be willing to release the blocks we hold against the truth if we want to know our reality as created by God.

"Let us this day accept forgiveness as our only function." (W.330.1.1) Jesus reminds us that the only way to escape the pain of our lives is to accept forgiveness as our only function. To refuse to forgive is how we hurt ourselves, as forgiveness is always for ourselves. In Lesson 328, Jesus said that by choosing our independent will, we bring about sickness, suffering, loss, and death. Our independent will reflects the desire to gain at someone's expense. By bringing our unloving thoughts to the light of truth, we see our brother's guiltlessness. This is salvation's simple formula because when we see our brother as innocent, we come to know our own innocence and thus our own divine nature that has never left its Source.

"Why should we attack our minds, and give them images of pain?" (W.330.1.2) This raises the question of "how" we attack our minds. Every time I attack someone, defend myself, make a judgment, make myself better or more righteous, hold onto anger, hold grievances, hurt anyone, blame anyone, or obsess about my fears and expectations, I am attacking my mind. The Course is clear that anything I do to my brother I am doing to myself. If I hurt you in any way, I am hurting myself. If I expect or demand anything from you, I am seeing myself as lacking. Our

attacks on our brothers reflect the guilt in our own mind. When we attack, we believe we deserve punishment in return. If we clearly saw this was the case, would we want to continue to attack?

"The secret of salvation is but this: that you are doing this unto yourself. No matter what the form of the attack, this still is true. Whoever takes the role of enemy and of attacker, still is this the truth. Whatever seems to be the cause of any pain and suffering you feel, this is still true. For you would not react at all to figures in a dream you knew that you were dreaming. Let them be as hateful and as vicious as they may, they could have no effect on you unless you failed to recognize it is your dream." (T.27.VIII.10.1-6) (ACIM OE T.27.IX.86)

"Why should we teach them [our minds] they are powerless, when God holds out His power and His Love, and bids them take what is already theirs?" (W.330.1.3) Jesus reminds us again in Lesson 329, we are already One with God. We can't change our reality as His Son, but we can remain unaware of who we really are. We have chosen to forget. Our minds are as powerful as God's. What we have done is made a choice for the ego and interposed a second will as powerful as God's. God can't overpower our will. His gift to us is the freedom to do as we want. We are the ones who made the body to suffer and die to prove we really aren't the unlimited, powerful, and eternal beings God says we are. Who is right—God or the ego?

Jesus tells us, the only source of happiness is to know our own true will. When we attack, we feel guilty, and guilt demands punishment we believe we deserve. Thus, we fear the future. The ego has set up a cycle of sin, guilt, and fear. As long as we are caught up in this loop, we can never be free. We never experience the present moment. We feel powerless and victimized by the seeming reality of the human condition. We feel at the mercy of the world. The truth is that we are only at the mercy of our own thinking. What we experience all starts in our own mind. We are the only ones who can choose to break this cycle.

Jesus invites us to do that by realizing we are not the characters in this dream who seem to suffer and die. We are, in fact, the dreamer of the dream. Healing happens when we take responsibility for everything that seems to happen to us, recognizing it all starts in our own minds. Now we have a choice. We can choose to see with the ego or with the Holy Spirit. We either allow the ego to interpret events for us, or we turn to the Holy Spirit for His interpretation. When we release our mistaken perceptions and give them over to the Holy Spirit, our minds are healed. The world has not hurt us. All our suffering comes only from our own wrong-minded choices. **"To place your hopes where no hope lies must make you hopeless. Yet is this hopelessness your choice, while you would seek for hope where none is ever found."** (T.25.II.2.5-6) (ACIM OE T.25.III.13)

"The mind that is made willing to accept God's gifts has been restored to spirit, and extends its freedom and its joy, as is the Will of God united with its own." (W.330.1.4) Our minds are made willing through forgiveness. Every time we resist the temptation to defend ourselves, every time we resist the temptation to attack, every time we show willingness to release grievances, and every time we extend love, surrender our way and ask for help, we make the mind ready and willing to accept the gifts God holds out to us. We can't take hold of these gifts while we still justify our anger, see ourselves as victims, and continue to hold onto judgments.

Every time we bring images of pain back to the mind and make another choice, the mind is restored, and we are united with God's Will. It is all about willingness. Notice how much resistance there is. Notice how we relish our resentments and even nurture them, and how we hurt ourselves in doing so. Studies have shown that people initially experience revenge as sweet. It ignites the same pleasure sensors in the brain as does eating chocolate. However, it is only a temporary high because with it comes more self-attack and more guilt. We hurt ourselves again and again when we retaliate. We do it all to ourselves as we actively keep ourselves from the peace and joy that is our inheritance!

"The Self which God created cannot sin, and therefore cannot suffer." (W.330.1.5) Only in this dream do we hold the belief in sin and, as a result, suffer the consequences. But Jesus asks, **"How can a misperception be a sin? Let all your brother's errors be to you nothing except a chance for you to see the workings of the Helper given you to see the world He made instead of yours."** (T.25.III.7.1-2) (ACIM OE T.25.IV.28) When we accept forgiveness into the mind, we demonstrate we are not powerless, and there is another way to perceive. We suffer when we attack. When we forgive and experience our innocence, we connect with the Self behind the image of this seeming body and personality, and our suffering is released. This is the way out of the ego cycle of sin, guilt, and fear.

The door is open, and Jesus invites us to choose to enter the holy sanctuary. The means are offered us in every person and situation we encounter in the classroom of our lives. We always make the choice to condemn or forgive. **"The time he chooses can be any time, for help is there, awaiting but his choice. And when he chooses to avail himself of what is given him, then will he see each situation that he thought before was means to justify his anger turned to an event which justifies his love."** (T.25.III.6.4-5) (ACIM OE T.25.IV.28) As we forgive, we are using time for its intended purpose, and now our relationships and the world have new meaning.

"Let us choose today that He [the Self that God created] be our Identity, and thus escape forever from all things the dream of fear appears to offer us." (W.330.1.6) While we believe we deserve to be hurt and punished because of what we have done, Jesus keeps reminding us we can escape this dream by making another choice in this instant. We need not wait. There is nothing we need to atone for. We are innocent now, no matter what we think we have done wrong. We don't always want to forgive, and we delay because we resist letting go of our way of seeing. The temptation to attack is very strong in us. We want to gain at the expense of others. While it may look like we have gained at the expense of our brothers, all we have acquired is more pain and suffering. We think we can buy our innocence by projecting guilt on others and thus making ourselves feel more righteous or superior. This is our perceived payoff, but it is a false innocence.

Our motivation to forgive is strengthened through application. Motivation becomes stronger when, through forgiveness, we feel redeemed. Our happiness and our peace are established when our attack thoughts are released. When we forgive, we are choosing the miracle. We are choosing to see with the eyes of Christ. We are choosing to accept the Atonement (the Correction) for ourselves. We are choosing to know the truth of who we are as unlimited, pristine, eternal, and divine beings of light and love. We are choosing to know ourselves as the powerful, eternal beings we are and thus we **"escape forever from all things the dream of fear appears to offer us."** (W.330.1.6)

"Father, Your Son can not be hurt." (W.330.2.1) The "me" who seemingly can be hurt is the identity I know as Sarah—a body, a concept I hold about myself, and a personality that holds a bundle of values and beliefs. What can't be hurt is the eternal Self that I have blocked with images I have made of myself and the mistaken thoughts and beliefs I hang onto. The truth is that we can awaken to the reality of our Self as pure love, at One with all that is, and forever changeless. We need to recognize that, by our own decision, we limit and hurt ourselves. Now we can take responsibility for this decision. We can choose to surrender our way and to forgive our misperceptions. It is a process. We will not be hurled into Heaven. We will only go as slowly or as quickly as our fear will allow.

"And if we think we suffer, we but fail to know our one Identity we share with You. We would return to It today, to be made free forever from all our mistakes, and to be saved from what we thought we were." (W.330.2.2-3)

Healing requires a willingness to be very honest with ourselves about our hurts and allow whatever feelings that surround them to be brought to awareness. We acknowledge them fully and investigate them without allowing ourselves to be distracted from what we feel. We need to express what we feel without going into indulgence where we enjoy the drama. If the charge is still there, there is something to release. It is not enough to manage the feelings that hurt us. We are good at protecting ourselves from pain, but that is how we keep it. What is important is to acknowledge what we are feeling and investigate the thoughts we are holding and the beliefs and values that accompany them. Thus, we can go deeper into the mind each time we are triggered. I acknowledge that I don't know what is best for me. I don't know what anything is for, and I don't know what God's Will for me looks like in this situation. Thus, I see that my attachment to outcomes makes me blind to what is always possible—the miracle.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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