



LESSON 84 Review II ~ Lesson 67 and Lesson 68

Sarah's Commentary:

We are so invested in the reality of the body that our entire identity is based on the belief that it defines us. We therefore also believe that we die when the body dies. The truth is, **"I am in the likeness of my Creator. I cannot suffer, I cannot experience loss and I cannot die."** (W.84.1.2-3) I see death all around me and look on it as a certainty, but I am not what I think I am. My body is not my reality. We have the same characteristics as our Creator. We are love, eternal, formless, unlimited, magnificent and forever as we were created. We experience a glimpse of this truth in the holy instant—a moment where we are lifted out of time and space. It comes when we accept forgiveness into our minds and experience miracles that are our natural inheritance. When forgiveness is complete and the ego's offerings, that substitute for the truth, are finally released, we have true perception or what is called the real world. Jesus tells us that the happy dream is what awaits us.

The belief we hold that Jesus could have suffered on the cross is our projection of the belief in the reality of the body. A healed mind feels no pain because there is no guilt in the mind to project onto the body. When guilt is no longer projected onto the body, it is not sick or in pain. When the guilt in the mind is healed, our reality as the Christ Self is known.

We are reminded of the truth through these Lessons, but the only way to experience this is through forgiveness. Thus, we are called to continually bring our misperceptions to the truth. We bring our self-concepts, which include all the beliefs about who we think we are, both the "good" and the "bad," to the light of truth. All of the concepts we hold in the mind do not define us. **"I will worship no idols, nor raise my own self-concept to replace my Self."** (W.84.1.6) When we are willing to empty our minds of past learning, no longer attempt to control life, and do not grasp for certainty, we remember our Creator. Whatever is troubling me today, I affirm **"My Creator did not create this as I see it."** (W.84.2.4) That can only mean that it was of my own making.

"Love created me like Itself." (W.84.1.1) I will not lean on my own understanding, but turn to Him. Fundamental to this process is trust. Radical trust requires that we get out of our own way and let Him lead. It means giving up our fixed ideas about everything and asking to be shown how to respond in truly helpful ways.

We still don't completely understand what forgiveness is, but when we use the world as our classroom, everything that shows up is for the undoing of the illusion of ourselves. **"Let me not see an illusion of myself in this."** (W.84.2.2) It is important that we understand we can know our reality only when we are ready to choose it. Choosing depends on diminishing our fear of the Atonement by recognizing the false as false and the true as true. We willingly let go of the false.

The love we seek is what we are, but we have been living with what is false for so long that we have come to think it is true. To forgive is to be willing to remove the interference to the love we are. It is our fear of love that keeps us in resistance. Resistance keeps us defending what is false and keeps us invested in the illusion. It is the guilt in the mind that keeps us invested in the body and the world, yet what we feel guilty about has no basis in truth. What keeps us from God's love is our attack thoughts, judgements, evaluations, blame, accusations, and defenses.

Simply affirming the truth has limited value if we don't apply this teaching to the events of the day where we see ourselves victimized by what someone has said or done. The Course is ultimately practical, and when we apply the Lessons, the results show up in our experience. We are called to apply forgiveness to any situation that makes us feel vulnerable, anything that seems to hurt us psychologically or physically, anything that makes us feel angry or afraid, expectations we hold, or even anything that makes us feel excited with anticipation. The idea is that in any of these circumstances, we give our power to what is outside our own minds. We have forgotten we must first have chosen to see ourselves as vulnerable and as an effect of things outside of the mind. We have allowed our peace to be affected by outside circumstances. When we have reactions to what seems to be going on around us, the idea is to use these situations as opportunities for forgiveness rather than to hold grievances.

When we hold grievances, we are saying no to the love we are and denying our reality. **"This is no justification for denying my Self."** (W. 84.4.2) We are seeing in our brothers and sisters our own lack of love and accusing them of taking it from us. Jesus urges us to, **"Let him [our brother] be what he is, and seek not to make of love an enemy."** (T.19.IV.D.13.8) (ACIM OE T.19.V.d.102) What an important line that is! Every time we attack a brother or hold a grievance against him, we are making him an enemy, and we become blind to the love. **"I will not use this to attack love."** (W.84.4.3) When I attack my brother I no longer know what I am. **"My Self thus becomes alien to me."** (W.84.3.5)

We can never know the truth about ourselves as long as we hold grievances in our minds, see ourselves as separate from others, and hold the belief that our interests are separate. We will only remember who we really are as we release our grievances and recognize our sameness. We do this by acknowledging our ego perspectives and turning our dark thoughts over to the Holy Spirit, not by spiritual bypassing or spiritual ghosting, which is a product of the spiritual ego, but by taking responsibility for them.

It takes a high level of honesty and courage to take responsibility for everything we perceive as starting in our own minds. Our reluctance to do so is based on our wish to make others responsible for our condition and to declare our innocence at their expense. However, in order to heal, we must see that everything starts in our own minds. Our minds are the cause and the world is the effect. Our problem is that we have reversed cause and effect. Cause and effect are never separate. We see what we project, and what we project are our own self-attacking thoughts. When I see ugliness, lack of love, and evil in my brother, I am seeing the same thing in myself. It all starts in my own mind.

"You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and your brothers totally without judgment." (T.3.VI.3.1) (ACIM OE T.3.VIII.63)

"If you but knew the glorious goal that lies beyond forgiveness, you would not keep hold on any thought, however light the touch of evil on it may appear to be. For you would understand how great the cost of holding anything God did not give in minds"

that can direct the hand to bless, and lead God's Son unto his Father's house." (T.29.V.6.1-2) (ACIM OE T.29.VI.35)

The realization that everything we have learned, and have been conditioned to believe is wrong, leads to humility. When we surrender our control over our lives and no longer constantly grasp for certainty, we learn to lean on Him and follow Him in trust. Yes, we may know much about the ego's world of separation and how to "succeed" here, but what do we know about a lasting joy and peace that is not dependent on anything in this world? As I learn to let go of my way and become willing not to know and to be taught, I allow the presence of the Holy Spirit to guide me out of my dream of separation and back to the awareness of my spiritual reality.

"You do not know the meaning of anything you perceive. Not one thought you hold is wholly true. The recognition of this is your firm beginning. You are not misguided; you have accepted no guide at all. Instruction in perception is your great need, for you understand nothing. Recognize this but do not accept it, for understanding is your inheritance. Perceptions are learned, and you are not without a Teacher. Yet your willingness to learn of Him depends on your willingness to question everything you learned of yourself, for you who learned amiss should not be your own teacher." (T.11.VIII.3.1-8) (ACIM OE T.10.VIII.76)

"If you are willing to renounce the role of guardian of your thought system and open it to me, I will correct it very gently and lead you back to God." (T4.I.4.7) (ACIM OE T.4.II.11)

Temptation is nothing more than a desire to hold onto our way of seeing a situation and to justify our grievances. We must have actively chosen to hold the grievance. When we hold someone else responsible, we refuse to recognize that everything is a function of our own decision. When we made the decision to throw away our peace and project responsibility for that decision onto someone else, we have descended into a state of conflict. This is what makes us alien to ourselves. **"Grievances are completely alien to love."** (W.84.3.2) We now think of ourselves as attacking egos instead of spiritual beings. However, judging ourselves is not helpful. It is important to look at how we have become entangled in the conflict and be willing to open our minds to the possibility that our way of seeing is wrong. Now we can turn to the Holy Spirit and ask to be shown how to see our brother.

We have daily opportunities to forgive. God has given us many holy ones to help us with this task, and these holy ones are all those whom we think of, who cross our path every day, whom we talk with, and even those we have not yet met. Jesus appeals to us to use the power of our minds to take responsibility for our decisions and be willing to bring our darkness to the light of truth.

"The course does not aim at teaching the meaning of love, for that is beyond what can be taught." (T.IN.1.6) (ACIM OE T.In.2) It is beyond what can be taught because it is beyond the world entirely. The term "love," when used in this strict sense, does not apply to our earthly lives at all, but it does apply to who we really are—the Son of God, living in joyous communion with our Father in our heavenly home. Although love, as it really is, cannot exist on earth, it can be reflected here, and the form it takes is forgiveness. **"It is the reflection of God's Love on earth."** (W.60.1.5) Forgiveness is a bridge between the world of illusion and the reality of God's Love. As such, forgiveness itself, unlike love, is an illusion and **"might be called a happy fiction."** (Clarification of Terms.3.2.1) Yet as an illusion, **"Forgiveness is the means by which the truth is represented temporarily."** (T.27.III.5.5) (ACIM OE T.27.IV.33) It is **"a way in which the unknowing can bridge the gap between their perception and the**

truth." (C.3.2.1) "Forgiveness is an earthly form of love, which as it is in Heaven has no form." (W.186.14.2) It is a way in which the formless love of Heaven can be expressed in a world of form.

When we talk of loving everyone unconditionally, it might be more correct to talk of forgiving everyone unconditionally. To believe we must love everyone unconditionally will make us feel more guilt because it is not possible in our current state. The result will be a feeling of failure because no one here can love in that way until the ego is released. When we bring our darkness to the light and clear the way for love to shine through, there is no effort involved in reflecting love as it happens through us and not by us. True love awaits us at the top of the ladder. It does not matter what rung of the ladder we are on as long as we are devoted to awakening.

While teaching the meaning of love is not the aim of the Course, teaching forgiveness is its aim. Jesus goes on to say, **"It does aim, however, at removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence, which is your natural inheritance."** (T.IN.1.7) (ACIM OE T.In.2) We must be willing to do the work. Forgiveness is the means by which the blocks to the awareness of love's presence are removed. **"No one who learns to forgive can fail to remember God. Forgiveness, then, is all that need be taught, because it is all that need be learned. All blocks to the remembrance of God are forms of unforgiveness, and nothing else."** (Psychotherapy Pamphlet.2.II.3.1-3)

This path takes us from grievances to forgiveness and then to the remembrance of God's Love in Heaven. **"It [Forgiveness] will bring me near enough to Heaven that the Love of God can reach down to me and raise me up to Him."** (W.60.1.6) The bottom line is that kindness and gentleness to all people, regardless of their situation, should be our guiding principles in all our encounters.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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