

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 256 God is the only goal I have today.

Sarah's Commentary:

While Jesus reminds us to make God our only goal today, which is a vertical perspective, he reminds us that we make the goal real for us through healing relationships, which is a horizontal perspective. And just in case we may think the way to God is to retreat to a monastery to meditate and pray all day, the means given us in the Course are for healing through relationships. He says in this Lesson, **"There is no other way."** (W.256.1.2) Thus, we are urged to make this our way to Heaven through healing all our special relationships.

Jesus says that forgiveness is an illusion, but it is an illusion that ends all illusions. In the context of the discussion on sin, it is an illusion because sin is not real, and we have not sinned. We believe we have sinned because we have bought the ego's story. The only reason sin seems real to us is because Jesus says it is **"cherished by the mind."** (W.256.1.3) In other words, we actually value sin and hold onto it in the mind and yes, cherish it, strange as that might sound. Yet we have the power to release our hold on it and will do so when we recognize the cost to us of holding onto it. When belief in guilt and sin is released, we remember who we are and where we are. We are at home in God, where we have never left except in dreams. It is our fear of love that keeps us invested in sin and guilt.

We are reminded that sin is a false belief based on the belief we messed up Creation and did permanent damage so our individual identity could be established. We believe God had to be killed for us to exist. The ego convinced us we committed a horrendous crime—a thought we hold in the unconscious mind. Now we walk around feeling like we have done something terribly wrong, but we can't place our finger on what this feeling is about. There is a sense of deep unworthiness for which we try to compensate by doing our best to be good.

We are reminded of the belief in sin we hold in the mind whenever we blame and judge others for their indiscretions trying to make them feel guilty. In comparison, we present our own face of innocence. Thus, we hope in the end they will get punished by God, and we will get off "scot-free." But while the ego tells us this is the way to be rid of the guilt in the mind, it does not let us see this is precisely how we keep it. **"For it is the ego's fundamental doctrine that what you do to others you have escaped. The ego wishes no one well. Yet its survival depends on your belief that you are exempt from its evil intentions. It counsels, therefore, that if you are host to it, it will enable you to direct its anger outward, thus protecting you."** (T.15.VII.4.2-5) (ACIM OE T.15.VIII.68) We believe that the more anger we invest outside ourselves, the safer we will become. Attack and defense now become the cycle of our lives.

What this does is bury us deeper and deeper into the insanity. Jesus shows us the way out of this darkness by redirecting our senses to see innocence in our brothers instead of guilt. Now we are called to send out messengers of love instead of messengers that bring back evidence of our

brother's guilt. When we do see guilt in our brothers and condemn them for it, we can instead give those judgments over to the Holy Spirit to have them reinterpreted by Him. It requires consistent mind watching so we can see our judgments and realize we have a choice to condemn or forgive and which we do determines our state of mind.

"The sword of judgment is the weapon that you give to the illusion of yourself, that it may fight to keep the space that holds your brother off unoccupied by love." (T.31.VII.9.2) (ACIM OE T.31.VII.76) **"Every time you feel a stab of anger, realize you hold a sword above your head. And it will fall or be averted as you choose to be condemned or free."** (W.192.9.4-5) Which one will I choose? How much longer will I choose to suffer?

We are reminded that sin is insanity. The mind actually seeks to replace the truth. Why would we want to do that? What would truth reveal that makes us so afraid? Ultimately, we are afraid to lose our specialness, our uniqueness, and our identity, and thus, we hold onto sin and guilt instead. Through forgiveness, the blocks in the mind are released until we come to the realization we have never been separate from God. **"God is our goal; forgiveness is the means by which our minds return to Him at last."** (W.256.1.9) When we choose not to forgive, we are not committed to this goal to be One with all beings and with God. Having said that, our innocence is assured and not being ready for complete commitment does not make us guilty.

When we do choose to focus our lives on forgiveness, we become aware our false self is not our reality. Through forgiveness, we learn that our reality is not contained in a body and there is no death. We fear to learn this since our sense of identity, individuality, specialness, and control all seem to be threatened, as we hang onto the mythical self we think we are. The world seems very real to us because we are always looking through our senses, which bring back evidence that the world of form is, indeed, real and solid. Our eyes and ears give us the evidence of guilt in others. We see it everywhere. **"Sin gave the body eyes, for what is there the sinless would behold?"** (W.PII.Q4.1.4)

It is important to remain vigilant in looking at the interpretations we give everything we perceive and to be willing to ask for help to see our brothers through the eyes of Christ. It is why it takes so much work and discipline. It seems much easier to simply go with the "evidence" offered by the ego because we like being right about our judgments of others. These judgments are based on the "evidence" gathered by our senses. Yet it is the ego that directs those senses. Thus, the information gathered is based on the beliefs we currently hold in the mind, rather than on what is true. Therefore, we will always be wrong about how we see our brothers when we use our perceptions to guide us. It can be unsettling to acknowledge that we just don't know. It may feel like the ground is shifting under our feet, without any solid footing in this new territory we are now exploring.

Jesus says, **"The body is the instrument the mind made in its efforts to deceive itself. Its purpose is to strive."** (W.PII.Q4.2.1-2) When we strive for things of this world, the implication is they are real and have value. We have goals for which we strive because we still think there is something in the world that will make us happy, but we deceive ourselves. The more we see this, the more we are willing to give up these attempts at self-deception and instead use our striving for another purpose, which is to know the truth. Anything of the ego can be turned over to the Holy Spirit to be used for healing and awakening.

There is only one mind, but we hold the belief there are many minds, all asleep and dreaming. Why did we set things up so miserably for ourselves? We have kept hidden from ourselves the secret goal we have, which is to be the victim, so we never have to get in touch with the real cause of our misery. These are the secret vows we made. **"Unstated and unheard in consciousness**

is every pledge to sickness. Yet it is a promise to another to be hurt by him, and to attack him in return." (T.28.VI.4.6-7) (ACIM OE T.28.VII.57)

We think the world, beginning with our parents and continuing with all our other relationships, is the cause of our unhappiness. But the world and our special relationships are only a clever diversion we have made to keep the real source of our unhappiness hidden from ourselves. That source is our all-consuming desire for the separation to be real at any cost because we value the separate self we think we are. The truth is it is impossible to separate from truth. We can only be unaware of what we are. And while we made a secret vow to maintain the gap with our brothers, we made another vow to our Father. In our creation, our Father said, **"You are beloved of Me and I of you forever. Be you perfect as Myself, for you can never be apart from Me."** (T.28.VI.6.4-5) (ACIM OE T.28.VII.59) What we don't remember is that we **"replied, 'I will'."** (T.28.VI.6.6) (ACIM OE T.28.VII.59)

The world is the effect and not the cause of how we feel, no matter how much we are convinced otherwise. We can change our thoughts about the world by uncovering the blocks in the mind to the awareness of love's presence. The world is just an outward picture of our inward condition. Thus, it serves a very important purpose as a classroom. The world reflects our unhealed perceptions and thus helps us see our blocks. This is not an easy process. Learning to forgive takes practice. It is challenging when what we see as the insanity of this world all seems so real yet, again, all we are seeing starts with the beliefs we hold in the mind. Everything we see and experience in the world and all our relationships provide us with a perfect curriculum for healing. It does not matter if it comes in a movie, nature, circumstances in our lives, or people who seemingly attack us—it is all for our healing, whatever form it takes. Whatever unloving thoughts are brought up, in whatever form they appear—uneasiness, depression, anger, fear, worry, attack, insecurity, grief, and so on—we need to become aware of them and recognize it is not the truth of what we are.

We are given many opportunities to forgive. Our experience of this world has no other purpose and no other value except for healing and forgiveness. Can I simply learn to be grateful for the curriculum of this world and allow it to be the beautiful classroom it is for my awakening? There is no other purpose for our lives. When we accept this purpose, the world becomes meaningful. **"And so, our Father, would we come to You in Your appointed way."** (W.256.2.1) His appointed way is through forgiveness. In fact, this is the only way to God. No matter which path we choose to take to God, there is only one theme it must encompass. **"Its central theme is always, 'God's Son is guiltless, and in his innocence is his salvation'."** (Manual for Teachers.1.3.5) When sin is cherished, we block God out. The only way to let go of sin is to overlook it in our brother. When we forgive our brother, we can let go of our own guilt and know that we are innocent. Let us today commit to our Lesson, **"God is the only goal I have today."** (W.256)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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