

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 141 Review IV ~ Lesson 121 and Lesson 122

Sarah's Commentary:

These Lessons are now a preparation for Part II of the Workbook, coming after the next 80 Lessons. Part I of the workbook is described as ". . . **undoing of the way you see now,**" (W.PI.IN.3.1) while Part II deals with the ". . . **acquisition of true perception.**" (W.PI.IN.3.1) Jesus says that we need these next eighty Lessons to prepare our minds for the acquisition of true perception, which is not how we see now. In other words, it is about ". . . **preparing for the second part of learning how the truth can be applied.**" (W.RIV.IN.1.1) The Lessons to come are all about making this transition to acquiring true perception. It is a very important part of our practice.

The focus of Part I of the Workbook is on the undoing of the ego thought system of sin, guilt, and fear. It is about removing the blocks to the presence of love. It is about mind training by taking a disciplined approach to watching our thoughts and bringing them to the inner altar. It is all about the willingness to undo the defenses that block the light within the mind. It is why we are reminded, in the final Lesson of the Holy Spirit, to "**Be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom.**" (T.6.V.C.2.8) (ACIM OE T.6.V.85) The meaning and interpretation we give to all the people, circumstances, and situations in our lives are what create pain and suffering. These are all our unforgiving thoughts, which block our awareness of the Kingdom within, where our peace, joy, and happiness are at every moment. To know this peace, we must bring our unforgiving thoughts for healing so that we can know the truth. "**My mind holds only what I think with God.**" (W.RIV.IN.2.2) (ACIM OE RIV.3)

Defenses protect our unforgiving thoughts. We justify our attacks and our way of seeing a situation, person, or event. Our stories become the "truth" for us. Jesus says that the ego makes every attempt to try to prove that the illusion is true and thus truth is meaningless. "**Analyzing to attack meaning the ego succeeds in overlooking it and is left with a series of fragmented perceptions which it (ego) unifies on behalf of itself. This, then, becomes the universe it perceives. And it is this universe which, in turn, becomes its demonstration of its own reality.**" (T.11.V.15.2-4) (ACIM OE T.10.VI.55) In other words, we take bits of evidence, make up a story, and insist on being right about it.

Looking at the darkness is required for our healing. When we deny the dark thoughts we hold, we are deceiving ourselves about who we are. Our self-deception keeps us stuck in pain and suffering, but we get satisfaction from being right about the way we have set things up, even though we are deeply unhappy. Jesus is now asking us to "**Let us begin our preparation with some understanding of the many forms in which the lack of true forgiveness may be carefully concealed.**" (W.RIV.IN.3.1) (ACIM OE RIV.5) Jesus wants us to understand the many ways we defend ourselves against the truth. These defenses are not generally apparent to us, as they are mostly unconscious. They are all about the guilt in the mind and our belief in

suffering and the sentence of death as punishment for guilt. They are ". . . **defenses that protect your unforgiving thoughts from being seen and recognized.**" (W.RIV.IN.3.2) (ACIM OE RIV.5) That is why we need our mighty companions to help us see what is not apparent to us and not to join in our deceptions nor agree with our stories.

In our willingness to be deceived, we look outside ourselves, instead of looking within the mind, for the cause of our difficulties, believing our problems exist outside of ourselves and the solutions are there too. As long as we put our attention "out there" instead of looking at how we have chosen to defend against the love we are, we will be deceived by the illusion of the body and the world. Because we are deceived by what we see, we need reality to dispel our fears. **"Their purpose is to show you something else, and hold correction off through self-deceptions made to take its place."** (W.RIV.IN.3.3) (ACIM OE RIV.5) When we realize our mistake, we will choose the Atonement, which is the correction of our mistaken perception.

Jesus reminds us, **"And yet, your mind holds only what you think with God. Your self-deceptions cannot take the place of truth."** (W.RIV.IN.4.1-2) (ACIM OE RIV.6) Nothing we think about ourselves can change the truth of what we really are. No matter what we think we have done, how guilty we feel, or how much shame we hold, we have not affected the truth of what we are as holy, innocent, and eternally divine beings of light and love. We can no more change our reality as God's Son **"than can a child who throws a stick into the ocean change the coming and the going of the tides, the warming of the water by the sun, the silver of the moon on it by night."** (W.RIV.IN.4.3) (ACIM OE RIV.6) We can throw as many sticks into the ocean as we want, but we won't change the ocean. Accordingly, we can have as many thoughts of anger, shame, attack, frustration, impatience, and fantasies of any kind that we want, but we can't change who we are.

While we can believe that we are no longer the innocent Son of God, Jesus says we are only deceiving ourselves. Our minds still continues to be holy, created by God and thus holds only what we think with God. The belief we have contaminated our minds is as grandiose a thought as a child thinking he has changed the ocean by throwing a stick into it. It is simply a fantasy. We don't have the power to change the truth about the Self we are. We only have the power to believe that what is false is true. We have the power to choose to be unaware of the truth by denying our Identity.

In this review, there is a central theme said over and over again: **"My mind holds only what I think with God."** (W.RIV.IN.2.2) (ACIM OE RIV.3) This means that only thoughts that reflect the Oneness of God are true. Jesus affirms that this as a fact, but we don't believe it. We still believe that the thoughts we think, separate from God, are not only true but have power. These are thoughts in the wrong mind. Our true mind is where the truth resides. When we are not thinking with God, we are not thinking at all. He tells us it is impossible to have thoughts we don't think with God. **"For in his mind no thoughts can dwell but those his Father shares."** (W.RIV.IN.2.6) Any thought but what we think with God is not thinking at all.

Our unwillingness to forgive is the only block to what we are thinking with God. This is our unwillingness to take responsibility for our dark thoughts and bring them to the Holy Spirit's healing light. Jesus tells us there are ". . . **many forms in which the lack of true forgiveness may be carefully concealed.**" (W.RIV.IN.3.1) (ACIM OE RIV.5) They are concealed behind defenses that keep us from seeing and even recognizing our unforgiving thoughts. In other words, while we think we are being honest with ourselves, our unforgiving thoughts are so carefully concealed behind our defenses, we deceive ourselves. **"No one can escape from illusions unless he looks at them, for not looking is the way they are protected. There is no**

need to shrink from illusions, for they cannot be dangerous." (T.11.V.1.1-2) (ACIM OE T.10.VI.39)

Illusions are deceptive, meaning that we tell ourselves that we are well-intentioned, concerned, and just being helpful, while all the while we are concealing our unforgiving thoughts. They are, in fact, actually meant to hurt and to attack. We polish our halo with its tarnished edges and its rusted core. **"It does not even tell the truth as it perceives it, for it needs to keep the halo which it uses to protect its goals from tarnish and from rust, that you may see how 'innocent' it is."** (W.133.8.7) In our intent to remain innocent, we maintain that we never attack unless provoked, we are innocent victims of attacks from others, and we keep our unforgiving thoughts carefully defended, which allows us to keep them. They are not as obvious to us as those thoughts that make us feel guilty, where we have attacked, told lies, gossiped, and have been insincere and hurtful.

We do hold thoughts unlike those of God. They are those thoughts that we defend as part of our self-concept and that we don't see, as well as those that are more apparent to us. We may think of ourselves as kind, helpful, and compassionate, but if these qualities are developed as part of our self-concept and are not guided by Spirit, they will not be helpful and may even inflict pain and guilt in others. Still, it is all like the sticks a child throws in the ocean. While none of these thoughts have changed our reality, they nevertheless block our awareness of who we truly are. Still, our holy minds can't be made unholy. In this practice, we affirm, again and again, **"My mind holds only what I think with God,"** (W.RIV.IN.2.2) (ACIM OE RIV.3) while watching our thoughts that are not in alignment with God's Thoughts.

Our defenses are there to keep our individuality and our specialness intact. We need to pay attention to how much we resist the truth. Mind watching is part of our process in **". . . readying our minds to understand the lessons that we read, and see the meaning that they offer us."** (W.RIV.IN.4.4) (ACIM OE RIV.6) We must recognize the value of this practice to our peace and happiness. Our investment in doing these Lessons will reveal the beauty of our true Self. We need the Holy Spirit's help us in this, so He can reinterpret our way of seeing any situation in our lives and provide His translation for us. It is imperative that we stay very vigilant regarding how we hide our true motives from ourselves. Jesus will go into the darkness with us if we invite him. He says, **"We are ready to look more closely at the ego's thoughts system because together we have the lamp that will dispel it, and since you realize you do not want it, you must be ready."** (T.11.V.1.3) (ACIM OE T.10.VI.39) He asks that we be very calm, quiet, courageous, and honest with ourselves. There is no need for fear.

People in our lives are not who they seem. They are just our own thoughts reflected back at us. If I take things personally, as if they were directed at me, I will see betrayal and hurt and respond with anger. Do I condemn this person and mentally distance myself from him, or do I use this as a call to accept an inner correction for myself? The only thing lacking in any situation is what I have failed to give. Or, as Richard Dreyfus says in the movie *Always*, "The only pain we carry here is the love we withhold."

We have many opportunities for healing throughout the day when conflicts surface. Jesus cautions, **"Beware of the temptation to perceive yourself unfairly treated."** (T.26.X.4.1) (ACIM OE T.26.XI.88) We want to see ourselves unfairly treated so we can reclaim our innocence at the expense of a brother. We need to recognize victimhood as another defense with which we come into this world and hold others responsible for our situation. It provides us with a justification for our stories and for our attacks.

Only our interpretation of any situation is the source of pain. We project our own guilt onto the world, and it is given back to us as a reflection of the unhealed parts of our own mind. **"You cannot be unfairly treated. The belief you are is but another form of the idea you are deprived by someone not yourself."** (T.26.X.3.2-3) (ACIM OE T.26.XI.87) As Jesus reminds us in Lesson 5, **"I am never upset for the reason I think."** (W.5)

We all deceive ourselves. We have taught ourselves that the world is real, yet it has let us down by what it has done to us or what it hasn't done to meet our expectations. We have not been willing to take responsibility for everything that seems to happen to us. We use defenses in order to pretend that we are innocent so we can blame the world for all our disappointments and misfortunes; but as Jesus reminds us: **"I am responsible for what I see. I choose the feelings I experience, and I decide upon the goal I would achieve. And everything that seems to happen to me I ask for, and receive as I have asked."** (T.21.II.2.3-5) (ACIM OE T.21.III.15)

This can be a challenging thought to take in, as we resist this kind of responsibility. Jesus tells us that it is impossible that events and situations come to us without our choice. Recognizing that we have chosen it all is actually a very powerful thought because then we have the ability to change our perceptions. **"You did this to yourself."** (T.21.II.5.4) (ACIM OE T.21.III.19) The ego screams, "No way!" Yet if we reject the power of our minds, we have no power to change our minds. Then, we truly are victims. We have invested faith in the idea that we are victims of the world, but by taking responsibility for our condition, we can bring our misperceptions to the truth. Now, space is opened up in our minds, where truth can shine forth. When we practice the Lessons by really doing so with faith and desire, we **"Let each word shine with the meaning God has given it, as it was given to you through His Voice."** (W.RIV.IN.7.4) (ACIM OE RIV.10) By looking at our unforgiving thoughts with honesty and courage in a non-defensive way and by turning them over for healing, the miracle can be experienced.

When we see everything in our lives as just another opportunity to look at the situation as a mirror for our own healing, we can see it as a loving, divine correction forever, offered us in each moment. When I can release the fear within by bringing it to the light of truth, I can become a reflection of the light of God in this world. **"Today we will begin to concentrate on readiness for what will follow next."** (W.RIV.IN.1.2) This means we really commit to looking at **". . . defenses that protect your unforgiving thoughts from being seen and recognized."** (W.RIV.IN.3.2) (ACIM OE RIV.5)

When we stop blaming the world for our pain and its failure to make us happy, we will be ready to release our grievances and thus connect with our own inherent happiness and remember, **"My mind holds only what I think with God."** (W.RIV.IN.2.2) (ACIM OE RIV.3) Any other thoughts are just illusions, and thus, we use each day for forgiveness so we may experience **". . . happiness and rest, and endless quiet, perfect certainty, and all our Father wills that we receive as the inheritance we have of Him."** (W.RIV.IN.9.2) (ACIM OE RIV.11) Jesus reminds us of God's Love and gratitude as we open our minds to receiving His gift. **"And as you give your mind to the ideas for the day again before you sleep, His gratitude surrounds you in the peace wherein He wills you be forever, and are learning now to claim again as your inheritance."** (W.RIV.IN.10.2) (ACIM OE RIV.12)

Let this thought alone engage your mind fully for five minutes: **"My mind holds only what I think with God."** (W.RIV.IN.2.2) (ACIM OE RIV.3) Repeat the two ideas for today: (121) **"Forgiveness is the key to happiness,"** and (122) **"Forgiveness offers everything I want."** Close your eyes and say them slowly to yourself. **"Let each word shine with the**

meaning God has given it, as it was given to you through His Voice." (W.RIV.IN.7.4) (ACIM OE RIV.10) Take your time. Let the Holy Spirit open the meaning for you, and "**Let each idea that you review . . . give you the gift which He has laid in it for you to have of Him.**" (W.RIV.IN.7.5) (ACIM OE RIV.10) Bring all your thoughts of guilt and judgment today to His healing light. Today, let any interfering thoughts be transformed by forgiveness into gifts of happiness and peace.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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