



LESSON 174
Review V ~ Lesson 157 and Lesson 158

Sarah's Commentary:

[157] Into His Presence would I enter now.
[158] Today I learn to give as I receive.

We continue today to review the Lessons with the constant reminder, **"God is but Love and therefore so am I."** (W.RV.4.3) Anything God creates is like Himself---holy, sinless, innocent, an endless spring of love, and immortal as Himself. We are not human beings who are desperately seeking our spirituality or having a spiritual experience. We actually *are* spiritual beings, who *think* that we are having a human experience, although we are dreaming that we are here.

The truth is that we are love. We defend against that love in order to maintain an existence separate from God. But now we choose to bring our defenses to awareness, recognizing how unhappy we are in our seemingly separated state.

We are guided on this journey by the Holy Spirit, Who is the quiet presence in our right minds, but as long as we stay in control of our process and believe everything is up to us, we will continue to take the lead ourselves. When we are willing to step back and let Him lead the way, we then give over our separate will and agree to have our Father, ***"Lead our practicing as does a father lead a little child along a way he does not understand. Yet does he follow, sure that he is safe because his father leads the way for him."*** (W.RV.2.5-6) The truth is within us now, and Jesus is leading us to this state of happiness and peace that is not possible to achieve by our own efforts, no matter how hard we try. When we think we know our own best interests, we are constantly reaching out for pleasure, but we always receive pain because that is the way the ego set it all up.

We take this teaching on faith until we have the experience that affirms the truth of it. Yet since the truth is already in our minds, we resonate with what is said here. When we defend against it, we experience resistance to his teaching, but he is gentle with us. We are in charge of how quickly we go. Thus, we don't have to be afraid that we will be hurled into Heaven. Our awakening is a gentle process, even though to the ego the events of our lives are often not to our liking. But since everything that seems to happen is by our own choosing, we are not victims of the events and circumstances of our lives.

As we apply the Lessons, we increasingly experience a shift into greater peace and freedom. We have all had experiences of being in the right place at the right time, of meeting people who we are meant to meet, of feeling in the flow where everything works easily, and of having things work out when we take our hands off of the steering wheel of our lives or when we give up control even

a little. Alternatively, when things seem not to be moving in this kind of flow and challenges arise, we can remember to ask for help in choosing peace. Everything made by the ego can be used by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of undoing what does not serve us. Nothing the ego has made will ever bring happiness. We are reminded that we don't know our own best interests and that our greatest setbacks, as seen by the ego, can actually be our greatest spiritual advances. When we let all things be exactly as they are and not fight and resist what comes, we become happy learners. **"You are not a happy learner yet because you still remain uncertain that vision gives you more than judgment does, and you have learned that both you cannot have."** (T.21.I.3.7) (ACIM OE T.21.II.5) Until we step through this conflict, there will be resistance to the Lessons. When the conflict becomes sufficiently painful, we will be ready to take the giant strides to our freedom by focusing all our efforts on the Holy Spirit's Lessons.

How do we learn to hear the guidance? The approach taken in the Course to help us with the decision process that we go through every day is different than what we have learned in the world. No tools are given to us to make better, wiser, or more effective decisions. Jesus tells us that we are incapable of good decisions, so we need to let the Holy Spirit decide for us. This means that we make room for Him to guide our lives. We just need to ask in everything we do. We might complain that we don't hear His Voice, which is actually speaking to us throughout the day. But when we don't, it is because we are listening to our own voice, which is the voice of the ego. That voice is loud and raucous. To be guided is to trust our intuition and choose not to listen to the fearful thoughts of the ego and all of its doubts. We bring its wrong-minded dictates to the truth by placing them on the inner altar.

When we have the desire and willingness to hear and the confidence that the answers will be provided, we can trust in the perfection of everything that shows up for our healing. When we don't hear, it is because our minds are cluttered with guilt and fear thoughts. We want to stay in control, and thus, we resist guidance. With time and practice, our trust will grow, and increasingly we will find that we are releasing control, day-by-day, step-by-step. When we do so, the guidance becomes clearer, as long as we keep remembering to step back and let Him take the lead.

Jesus reminds us, **"We sing the song of thankfulness today, in honor of the Self that God has willed to be our true Identity in Him."** (W.123.4.2) **"And we give thanks that in our solitude a Friend has come to speak the saving Word of God to us. And thanks to you for listening to Him. His Word is soundless if it be not heard."** (W.123.5.2-4) Thus, our ability to listen comes when the obstacles in our minds are seen and brought to the light of Truth.

Today, we enter a day of silence and of trust. We remind ourselves that we can be wholly unafraid and thus completely trusting because of our invulnerability as Spirit. As we walk in trust and unafraid, we choose Christ's Vision. **"It sees no separation. And it looks on everyone, on every circumstance, all happenings and all events, without the slightest fading of the light it sees."** (W.158.7.4-5) No matter what comes up as we go through the day, we recognize that there is no value in anything except to know our identity as the love that we are.

Often, I find that when a situation shows up for me that seems problematic, and if I don't try to address it on my own but live in the not knowing, the answer comes in unexpected ways. Guidance comes in many forms. We just need to stay aware and tune into the guidance, whether it shows up as an inner voice, in pictures, nighttime dreams, a gut instinct, coincidences, feelings, a stirring in the heart, or other signs or symbols.

In this journey to awakening, Jesus goes with us. He says, **"I take the journey with you. For I share your doubts and fears a little while, that you may come to me who recognize the road by which all fears and doubts are overcome. We walk together. I must understand uncertainty and pain, although I know they have no meaning. Yet a savior must remain with those he teaches, seeing what they see, but still retaining in his mind the way that led him out, and now will lead you out with him. God's Son is crucified until you walk along the road with me."** (W.RV.6.1-6)

He knows the way out, and he has shared our experience. He understands all that makes our progress slow and about our hesitation on this road. He knows what lies at the end of the road. He knows our doubts and fears, and yet he sees a way out. He is our perfect teacher and holds our hand through every step of this journey to the end. He knows both the journey and the end of it as a result of his own experience. He never raises himself above us but walks beside us as an equal. It is so encouraging when we take this seriously. Can you really imagine the perfect, most loving teacher who has had the experience we have had, lovingly walking with us through each practice period and motivating us to hasten our footsteps? We ask this of God in our prayer, but he needs us to do our part.

"My resurrection comes again each time I lead a brother safely to the place at which the journey ends and is forgot." (W.RV.7.1) This is the part of our mind where the journey began with the choice for the ego. This led to the experience of this body and the world. The journey ends with the Correction of our mistaken choice for the ego. The choice for resurrection is the same choice made by Jesus. He demonstrates for us that we can make the same choice he made so that we can realize our own resurrection, as we awaken from this dream of death. **"Release me as you practice once again the thoughts I brought to you from Him Who sees your bitter need, and knows the answer God has given Him."** (W.RV.8.1) He is the symbol of the awakened mind, right there with us, because he is in our minds. Indeed, he says, **"I am incomplete without your part in me."** (W.RV.8.7) There is only one Son, but we need to ask for his help, or he cannot help us because we are free to choose as we desire.

It is a journey back to our ancient home---a home that was prepared for us "before time was." It has been kept pristine, safe, immaculate, and unchanged through eons of time. It is awaiting our return, though we have never left except in dreams.

I will refer to David Hawkins, simply because I am currently inspired by reading his book, "Discovery of the Presence of God: Devotional Non-Duality." In it he says:

"The pace of spiritual evolution is not under personal control and may take sudden surprising leaps. Therefore, It is wise to prepare beforehand with knowledge of what yet may come." Certainly, that is the reason for our study of the Text. It helps us see what is yet to come. And to the question of why we sometimes feel like we are not making progress on this path to enlightenment, his words are encouraging. "There is no point to wondering how am I doing? For the compass has already been set by dedication and devotion to the highest truth. While the pace may seem slow or even arduous at times, it is best to be prepared for sudden, unexpected leaps. It is wise to avoid pessimism, even after a seemingly long, dry period of frustration, for such periods are due to overcoming major obstacles and attachments that often presage major changes."

Today, "**We place faith in the experience that comes from practice, not the means we use.**" (W.RV.12.2) Thus, our faith is in the experience we have when we use the words of this Lesson to point us to the truth. It is an experience of deep peace, a feeling of being connected with all there is, and a trust in our brothers and in the journey that we seem to be undertaking.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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