



LESSON 65

My only function is the one God gave me.

Sarah's Commentary:

This lesson brings to our awareness the many self-appointed goals we have, the many plans we make for our perceived safety and comfort, and the many ways we try to manage this unmanageable world. It also brings to our awareness the fantasies we hold about our needs and requirements and the fantasies we hold about what we think others need and how we can help them. We have no idea about any of this. It is all just ego grandiosity. We try to pursue what will make us happy when we have no idea because we do not know our own best interests. How could I know my best interests when Jesus tells me that I don't know what I am?

Many of our goals are made to address something that we think is lacking in us. We are planning our own salvation, meaning that we are making plans for things in the world that we think will bring us happiness, comfort, and peace, yet they never do, at least not for long. Why? Because the ego's mantra is, *seek but do not find*. Its goal is to have us stay invested in this illusion and maintain our individual selves.

Our lives become a whirlwind with a myriad of "to do's" with lots of functions and activities to keep us distracted. Now it seems that we have one more thing to do, which is to focus on our salvation. Yet this Lesson says that it is not about adding one more activity but recognizing that my *only* function is the one God gave me. Everything else that I have determined to be my function is just a vehicle or backdrop for what is really my one and only function. Nothing else but our salvation (healing) is important at all. It requires a full commitment, dedication, and devotion to waking up from this dream. Even though we may not have total commitment, we need to be gentle with ourselves. There is nothing helpful about taking on even more guilt than we already feel. We are doing these Lessons because there is a certain degree of willingness, even if that commitment is not yet total. Yet we are heading in the right direction for our happiness.

That is the reason that Jesus asks us to set aside structured time for doing the Lesson. He tells us, **"Try, if possible, to undertake the daily extended practice periods at approximately the same time each day. Try, also, to determine this time in advance, and then adhere to it as closely as possible. The purpose of this is to arrange your day so that you have set apart the time for God, as well as for all the trivial purposes and goals you will pursue. This is part of the long-range disciplinary training your mind needs, so that the Holy Spirit can use it consistently for the purpose He shares with you."** (W.65.4.1-4)

The idea here is not that this is a permanent arrangement, but it is in recognition of the fact that right now we need external discipline before we can internalize what he is teaching. When we do, we will hold the right-minded mindset virtually all the time. In fact, when this happens, the right

mind, not the ego mind, will become our default position. While we set aside time for some extended practice periods, we are not being told to give up the trivial things that we attend to, the rest of the day. He reminds us that what is important is not what we do but what our mindset is with which we do it.

"This quiet center, in which you do nothing, will remain with you, giving you rest in the midst of every busy doing on which you are sent." (T.18.VII.8.3) (ACIM OE T.18.VIII.70) It is not about sacrifice by giving up what we think we want and need for ourselves. Jesus is just asking us for a little bit of our time during the day, organized in advance so that we can bring our quiet center to our day. Initially, structure is very important, but later the structure is not as essential when our minds become more disciplined. It is clearly a process.

We may wonder why we can't just be spontaneous and allow what comes to come. What is the purpose of all these requirements? The answer lies in the need for dedication, willingness, and commitment. To think you don't need this structure is the arrogance of the ego that always thinks it knows better and prefers its own organic process. Clearly, we resist being told what to do. It does seem like an affront to our independence. We resist authority and want to be authors of our own lives. We call this freedom, but what we don't realize is how we are in bondage to the cult of the ego and how our minds have been conditioned by past programming.

When we commit to setting time aside during the day to do the longer practice periods of ten to fifteen minutes, it is a way of affirming a commitment to our spiritual goal. We are arranging our day for what we say is important to us. This has been challenging for me in the past because I have always resisted structure. I have always considered myself a bit of a rebel. My process with the Lessons started in what I would call a more fluid process. What I did not admit was that this was just another form of resistance. Every day, there are certain things I commit to that I consider important, so Jesus asks us to do the same thing with this practice. I have come to see the benefit of setting aside a particular time during the day for this practice and thus establishing a habit and sticking with it. When I don't spend the time on the Lesson despite my commitment, it helps me to see how resistant I still am to awakening from this dream. In all of this, Jesus cautions us not to make our Lessons about form but content. In other words, this Course is not about ritual but about meaning and application of the teachings to our day-to-day issues and problems. It is not just about being good students to please the teacher. We are doing this for our own happiness.

He assures us that we can find peace of mind in no other way than to accept the function God has given us, thus **"This is the only way in which you can take your rightful place among the saviors of the world."** (W.65.2.1) Only when we finally relinquish all other goals and are fully committed will we really be able to say and mean that our only function is the one God gave us. If this isn't true for us now and we don't have peace of mind as a result, how do we get there? How can this be achieved? Do we have to sacrifice those functions in which we are currently involved? Should we feel guilty if we are still pursuing them? He gives us careful instructions in answer to these questions.

Before I get into them, however, note how he says we have closed the door to peace ourselves with our own hands. If we don't have peace, it is because we have chosen to close this door, although we don't think we have done this to ourselves. We think we are the victims of situations and circumstances in the world, which rob us of our peace. Now we are given a way to escape from all our perceived difficulties, and the answer that we have been seeking, since time began, (W.65.3.4) is given us in this practice. We now have the key in our hands to open this door to peace that we have locked, and we can indeed escape all our perceived difficulties. What is that answer? Is it really in this idea? How do we make it real for ourselves?

Jesus knows that we are not ready to give up our own goals. That is why he says that the full acceptance of our salvation entails two phases. Notice that he does not say two steps. He understands that we are going through a process of change starting with the first phase as, **"the recognition of salvation as your only function,"** (W.65.1.5) and the second phase as **"the relinquishment of all the other goals you have invented for yourself."** (W.65.1.5) Each phase can clearly take a long, long time though this need not be. Each Lesson in the Course, each reading of the Text, each application of the Lesson, helps in the accomplishment of each phase. We are not asked to go faster in our healing process than our fear will allow. We are not asked to sacrifice that which we still value. We are not being coerced to do anything we are not ready to do. We need to be patient with ourselves as Jesus is with us.

We are asked to watch our minds with great vigilance in our meditation time and to try to uncover the thoughts that interfere with the thought for today. Uncovering our thoughts and bringing them to awareness is the only way to heal our minds. **"It is pointless to believe that controlling the outcome of misthought can result in healing."** (T.2.VI.3.1) (ACIM OE T.2.IV.74) What this means is that if our focus is on trying to behave in a more loving way than we feel, we are trying to control the outcome of misthought. In other words, we think that if we behaved better, then that is all that is needed, and what is going on in our minds doesn't matter. If this were true, the appearance of loving behavior toward someone would override our judgment of this person. This is what happens when we cover up our thoughts while behaving in a seemingly nice and acceptable manner. We are giving mixed messages as our "loving" behavior does not match our unloving thoughts. Healing requires that we change the cause, which is to change our minds. This means we have to see what is in our minds in the first place. We have to bring awareness to our unloving thoughts and bring them to the truth.

The solution is not to keep a lid on our ego, keeping it caged, but to expose it with every thought that crosses our minds. Otherwise, its tentacles manage to reach out beyond the cage. Our smiles cannot cover unloving thoughts. Even if we stuff down our feelings, stuff down our guilt and our fear, our anger and hatred will leak out. **". . . but you cannot escape from the ego by humbling it or controlling it or punishing it."** (T.4.VI.3.8) (ACIM OE T.4.VII.88) The only answer is to release it as this Lesson advises.

We must not underestimate our fear. Our desire to control reality (meaning events in the world) comes directly from our fear. **"For the memory of God can dawn only in a mind that chooses to remember, and that has relinquished the insane desire to control reality. You who cannot even control yourself should hardly aspire to control the universe. But look upon what you have made of it, and rejoice that it is not so."** (T.12.VIII.5.3-5) (ACIM OE T.11.IX.81) Our experiences of the world and of our lives are outside of our own control. Yet we try to control them with our plans and strategies and with our confident self-image, which we try to inflate with our life skills and empowerment workshops, with our attempts at affirmations and manifestations, and with setting rules and requirements. Remember, though, that this is not a self-improvement course. It is a course in transformation.

What we are being asked is to look at our thoughts calmly and give them over to the Holy Spirit until our function can get written on a clean slate. Remind yourself as you look at your thoughts, **"This thought reflects a goal that is preventing me from accepting my only function."** (W.65.5.6) We keep looking until the interfering thoughts become harder to find. Our job is to clear our minds, so that **"On this clean slate let my true function be written for me."** (W.65.6.4) Pay attention to your ego thoughts. They are what interfere with remembering the thought for the day and identifying with it. Realize that you have chosen these thoughts to

keep salvation away. It is our way of keeping the truth away and staying invested in our specialness. We want to protect our self-image, our identity, and our story, which justifies our existence as a unique, special, and separate individual. Thus, we prefer to identify with fear (the ego) rather than to choose love.

Remember, in the Lesson yesterday, Jesus reminded us that the entire world exists in order to obscure our function of forgiveness. What is it that causes us to forget this Lesson? Well, the world exists as a defense against the truth of what we are. The world was made by the ego, not God, precisely to obscure our reality, and it does seem to do that very well. There are ample distractions to keep us occupied with the world as long as we choose! Jesus pleads with us, "**How long, O Son of God, will you maintain the game of sin?**" (W.PII.Q4.5.1) It is up to each of us to decide the answer to this question for ourselves. There is no need for guilt regardless of what we choose in this moment. It is in our best interests to be very honest with ourselves rather than pretend we are more devoted than we are. We are the commander of our own process. Jesus is our model, and the Holy Spirit is our Guide.

In our practice, he says that sometimes we close our eyes as we practice and sometimes we keep them open as we look about. (W.65.7.4) This is consistent with many of the practices in the workbook and reinforces the teaching that, "**Ideas leave not their source.**" (W.132, W156, W167) Everything is about our thoughts, which we access with eyes closed as well as with eyes open. Either way, we are still only seeing our own thoughts projected out. The world is just an outside picture of our inward condition. It is all a projection of what is in our own minds. When our thoughts are changed, what we see will be changed as well. "**It is what you see now that will be totally changed when you accept today's idea completely.**" (W.65.8.5)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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