

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 42 God is my strength. Vision is His gift.

Sarah's Commentary:

As we do these Lessons, we are now using our time for its intended purpose, which is to wake up from this dream. Jesus tells us in this Lesson nothing is at random and our passage through time and space is not chaotic or accidental. We have chosen this life, and what happens in it is our script by our own choosing. It has been chosen with the ego to support our individuality, our specialness and uniqueness. We have established, through the choice for the ego thought system, that we are victims of a world that seems to cause us pain, suffering, challenges, and difficulties of all sorts. When we make the choice to wake up from this dream of pain and suffering, all aspects of our lives can become a classroom for opening to our true Identity.

We are not at the mercy of outside forces that cause us difficulties. We are only at the mercy of our own mistaken perceptions, based on our interpretations. Someone says or does something we think is directed at us and we get upset. **"This is shown by the fact that you react to your interpretations as if they were correct."** (T.12.I.2.3)(ACIM OE T.11.I.2) Yet we are given an opportunity to learn none of it is personal. **"It is always an interpretation that gives rise to negative emotions, regardless of their seeming justification by what appears as facts."** (M.17.4.2) When our interpretations are turned over to the Holy Spirit, He will reinterpret everything for us as love, or a call for love, because that is all there is. **"For truth is true and nothing else is true."** (W.PI.138.4.5) He reminds us the only truth is who we are as the One Son. Everything in our lives is just a means for us to learn to forgive everything that is not true.

"You cannot but be in the right place at the right time. Such is the strength of God. Such are His gifts." (W.42.2.4-6) Everything can be used for our awakening when we are willing to use every situation as a classroom for learning to undo what we are not. Everything can be used as a lesson for forgiveness. Yesterday I experienced a seemingly minor event where Don accused me of something I had not done. It was a minor accusation and "no big deal" from an outsider's perspective, but I turned it into a "big deal" by bringing all kinds of other grievances into it. This seemingly 'minor' irritation showed me the extent of the rage in me. Looking from above the battleground helped me to see the play of the dream and to watch the character in the dream believe she was being unfairly treated. The ego calls for retaliation but I am not the ego. It constantly beckons us to justify anger and punishment. Now we have a decision to make--Heaven or hell? Which will it be? We are always given an opportunity to be at these choice points. When the decision is made for forgiveness, it is a choice for Heaven, and when the decision is made for retaliation, it is a choice for hell. The power of choice is always available to us. When we choose with the strength of God in us, vision is ours.

Jesus tells us we will not refuse His gift of vision forever. **"God is indeed your strength, and what He gives is truly given. This means that you can receive it any time and anywhere, wherever you are, and in whatever circumstance you find yourself."** (W.42.2.1-2) At some point, we will agree to cooperate with him, but when we choose to is still our choice. This is where free will comes into play. The circumstances we find ourselves in don't matter. What has been given is already there. There is nothing to seek. It is only a journey of undoing, and that is why Jesus says we need do nothing. There is nothing we can do but accept what we already are. It is to accept the Atonement. We have not changed ourselves. We are simply unaware of the reality of our Being, which is complete, perfect and holy. We can't go against His Will, because there is nothing we have done to change ourselves. Our power comes from His strength, not our own. Our vision comes from His gift, and His gift has no conditions. It can be received by us wherever we are, in whatever place and whatever time. The gift is freely given by God. The goal of the Course is for us

to accept His vision. It is His gift to us and comes from His strength. Vision allows us to see past the illusion to the truth.

It seems that striving and worrying are thus totally needless. We simply can't mess up! Even our mistakes can be used for our benefit. When we bring our issues to the Holy Spirit for healing, He responds with His gifts, which extend to all. When we willingly release ourselves from any hell we have made for ourselves with the help of the Holy Spirit Who is always there, we become saviors through our demonstration that this is available to others as well. We become an example of the choice available within. This is what true leadership is about.

Yes, we can delay, yet **"Nothing is ever lost but time, which in the end is meaningless."** (T.26.V.2)(ACIM OE T.26.VI.31) It is a matter of our readiness, and is up to each of us when we will say 'yes' to God. It is when we recognize on our own we can't resolve anything. It is to recognize we have been wrong about everything. **"What happiness have you sought here that did not bring you pain?"** (T.30.V.9.7)(ACIM OE T.30.VI.65) Until the pain becomes unbearable, we will still keep trying to do life our way. Yet whatever we try to do, we simply can't change the truth about ourselves. That is what the Atonement principle is all about. While we can refuse the truth for a while, we can't change the very fact we did not separate from God and still are his holy Son.

Why the resistance? We continue to want to do it our way. We still fear the power of our minds to choose love. We have run away from who we are in truth, and have chosen our separate, individual selves. We continue to rely on our little efforts when we can be carried by His strength. Yet the outcome of this struggle is inevitable. Jesus tells us our tolerance for pain has a limit. **"Tolerance for pain may be high, but it is not without limit. Eventually everyone begins to recognize, however dimly, that there must be a better way. As this recognition becomes more firmly established, it becomes a turning point. This ultimately reawakens spiritual vision."** (T.2.III.3.5-8)(ACIM OE T.2.II.48) All of us are at this turning point. We are undertaking to do this Course because we have made the decision to use time to awaken from this dream. Now we have come to a branch in the road, and we can go forward or nowhere at all.

We can't give ourselves vision. Our job is to clear away the dense clouds and reach the quiet place within. Vision is a gift. It is a gift available to us anytime we choose. **"Those who are certain of the outcome can afford to wait, and wait without anxiety."** (M.4.VIII.1) Let's be gentle but firm with ourselves in doing the Lessons. If we truly want vision, we have to do the work in mind training. An undisciplined mind truly cannot accomplish anything, but as we do this work, we open up to who we really are as we were created. No matter how much we think we have changed ourselves, it is an impossible feat. We can't be something we are not. We truly are holy because that is how we were created. We hide from that reality by judging how things should be, finding fault, wishing things were different, trying to find happiness in the world, and pretending we know what is good for us. When that does not work, we play the victim. "How could this happen to me?" We hold God responsible for our condition, asking why He has abandoned us. In truth, we have abandoned Him, but we don't want to take the responsibility for this, so we deny our power.

"There are two teachers only, who point in different ways. And you will go along the way your chosen teacher leads. There are but two directions you can take, while time remains and choice is meaningful. For never will another road be made except the way to Heaven. You but choose whether to go toward Heaven, or away to nowhere. There is nothing else to choose." (T.26.V.1.7-12)(ACIM OE T.26.VI.30) This makes our choice really simple. Every time we choose the ego, we are wasting time. When we choose God's strength, we choose His vision, and thus we gladden ourselves. The power to choose is ours.

This Course can take us all the way home. There is nothing we need for our awakening. These Lessons, together with our understanding of the text, provide a complete thought system. Jesus says the idea today is **"teaching you that you are studying a unified thought system in which nothing is lacking that is needed, and nothing is included that is contradictory or irrelevant."** (W.42.7.2) This is an important point. Once you have decided on the Course as your path, mixing it up with other paths will only confuse you. Recognize it is a unified thought system with nothing lacking. The Course offers us everything we need to go home. One way we resist waking up from this dream is to distract ourselves with all kinds of spiritual pursuits. It can become just another ego distraction.

Our motivation to achieve vision is determined by how much investment we give to each Lesson. **"The more often you repeat the idea during the day, the more often you will be reminding yourself that the goal of the course is important to you, and that you have not forgotten it."** (W.42.8.1) This can be said about most, if not all, of the Lessons. We need to remind ourselves of the truth, so the Voice of truth becomes the Voice we listen to more and more consistently. The chatter of the ego is what we have come to identify with in this world, and it does not have our best interests in mind. The ego is not who we are, but it is with whom we have come to identify.

We do not fight it, because to fight it is like fighting darkness. Instead, we recognize, with God as our strength, **"you cannot fail in your efforts to achieve the goal of the course. You will see because it is the Will of God."** (W.42.1.2-3) If it were by our will, or by our strength or determination, that we had to overcome the ego and achieve vision, we would certainly not have the power to do so. The ego would never undo itself. We need to rely on the Holy Spirit within. He is the light that shines away the darkness. Our part is simply to look at the darkness without judgment. It sounds simple, but it requires great vigilance. It requires that we take responsibility for our projections and get honest and courageous in looking at the ego.

Today in our morning and evening practice, repeat the idea slowly with your eyes open, looking about you, then close your eyes and repeat the idea again even slower than before. Allow related thoughts to come to mind. Do not strain or actively try to think them up. **"Try merely to step back and let the thoughts come."** (W.42.6.2) Also, remind yourself to do this frequently throughout the day, the more the better.

Love and blessings, Sarah

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