



LESSON 118
Review III ~ Lesson 105 and Lesson 106

Sarah's Commentary:

We have made many substitutes to take the place of the happiness and peace given us by God in our creation. We are attached to what we have made and what we now value in place of what has been given us. It is not easy to let go of things outside ourselves that we are convinced are important to our happiness. This world was made as a substitute for God's love. We value our uniqueness and our specialness more than His love. What we have substituted in the place of His love ultimately leaves us feeling empty. We have God's gifts of peace and joy right now, at this very moment, yet we keep wanting more. The ego is always about more of everything. **"What way could give you more than everything, or offer less and still content the holy Son of God?"** (W.155.12.4) Our wholeness is dismissed, and we lose sight of our divine identity by our desire for substitutes. These are the things outside ourselves that we think we need in order to be happy. Yet when we get them, we realize that they still leave us feeling empty because they are not the real thing.

Jesus urges us, **"Seek not outside yourself. For it will fail, and you will weep each time an idol falls."** (T.29.VII.1.1-2) (ACIM OE T.29.VIII.43) Idols are substitutes for love. The only way we can be content and truly know peace is by remembering the truth of our creation, and this is where we find our true happiness. **"Seek not outside yourself. For all your pain comes simply from a futile search for what you want, insisting where it must be found."** (T.29.VII.1.6-7) (ACIM OE T.29.VIII.43)

We still don't totally believe that there is no happiness to be found in the things of this world. We still think we know where our happiness lies, and so we keep seeking for it in the substitutes we have decided are important to our well-being. It is not easy for us to give up our belief that there is something here that will fulfill us, and when we get it we will be happy. Thus, we place our happiness outside ourselves and keep seeking and seeking, hoping everything we want will eventually come to us, and then we will be in bliss. Jesus tells us, **"No one who comes here but must still have hope, some lingering illusion, or some dream that there is something outside of himself that will bring happiness and peace to him."** (T.29.VII.2.1) (ACIM OE T.29.VIII.44) We came here for this experience, and we will do what we came to do. There is no need to feel guilty or bad that we still hold some hope for happiness in the world.

As long as the Son of God goes ". . .in search of something he cannot find, believing that he is what he is not," (T.29.VII.2.5)(ACIM OE T.29.VIII.44) then, **"The lingering illusion will impel him to seek out a thousand idols, and to seek beyond them for a thousand more."** (T.29.VII.3.1) (ACIM OE T.29.VIII.45) Isn't that what our lives are about and where all our attention goes? The relationships, the jobs, the houses, the careers, the material things, and the immaterial things like recognition, power, and pleasures, are all idols. We not only think our

happiness lies in getting everything we want; but when our external world does not measure up to our expectations, it can throw us into feelings of sadness, anger, great despair, and depression. When we can accept that all events and circumstances are perfectly orchestrated opportunities to look at places in ourselves where healing is called for, we become happy learners. Then this world of separation can become an essential classroom for looking honestly at how we are using these idols to cover over what lies beneath.

When we have expectations of how things should go in the world and they don't go the way we had hoped, it puts us in a tailspin. When things we value are lost, stolen, or broken, we can get very upset and distraught. When things do not work out according to the plans we made, we can get depressed. Being right about the way things should go becomes much more important to us than acceptance of the perfection of everything that shows up for us. **"Whenever you attempt to reach a goal in which the body's betterment is cast as a major beneficiary, you try to bring about your death. For you believe that you can suffer lack, and lack is death."** (T.29.VII.4.1-2) (ACIM OE T.29.VIII.46)

How do we let go of all we have substituted for the love we are? How do we connect with the peace and joy already in us? To do so does not mean we must give up our attachments to what we still value, for that would be sacrifice and sacrifice is not called for. We can continue to pursue what we think we want, but as we increasingly apply these Lessons to our lives, our goals and priorities change very naturally. They change because our thought system is changing. Behavior simply follows what we hold in our minds. We start to lose interest in what held our attention before. In other words, we increasingly see that our idols don't deliver anything that can satisfy our deep desire for contentment and peace. There is no real fulfillment in these pursuits.

We are not being coerced into giving up anything in the world that we still want. We will eventually see there is nothing of value here to be given up. All we are being asked to do is to look at our attachments and recognize our happiness is not in any of these things. There is a true source of happiness within and always available to us. As we release our wishes and demands through forgiveness, we begin to experience the internal peace and joy Jesus talks about. As we trust this process more and more, we recognize how much more satisfying and reliable it is than pursuing the shifting things of the world.

Eventually, we will let go of everything in the world we thought would bring us happiness and peace. It is generally a process, but for some, it has come in a moment. I think of Byron Katie or Eckhart Tolle, both of whom experienced an instant of awakening from this dream as a result of their state of deep despair from which came an instant of total surrender. At one time, I thought this was the end of the ego. I saw enlightenment as more of an event and the end of the journey. Now I have come to understand that the ego continues on, but eventually, it has little significance or power. It moves into the background of our lives.

When we determine, on our own, how things should be and what we need to make us happy, we are actually in agreement with the ego and relying on our own personal will. We are choosing to be in control. We plan and organize our day and determine what needs to happen in order for us to be happy. We think we know what is needed. We make lists. We dream dreams. We make plans. We hold expectations. And when things don't go according to our plan, we experience anger, anxiety, distress, and grievances. The voice of the ego appears to us as incessant, loud, raucous, and relentless. Jesus says that it is actually feeble because ultimately it carries no power of its own. Let us today be willing to question this feeble voice and bring its ramblings to the truth. It does not define us. What it does is block the mighty Voice for Truth that is constantly speaking of what we are. The mighty Voice has one message that assures us, ". . . **I am God's perfect Son.**" (W.118.(106).2.2)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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