

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 193

All things are lessons God would have me learn.

Sarah's Commentary:

This is an important Lesson and can easily be misunderstood because we are confused about the idea of God and lessons. It is helpful to look at our current thinking about God and His lessons to really uncover all our false and strange ideas about Who God is and what our beliefs are about His role in our lives in relation to what we are here to learn. The Lesson title sounds like God wants us to learn something. Yet the first line says that God does not know of learning, so we need to explore this further to understand what is being said.

We do not have to learn what we are because it is given; but, we are here to learn forgiveness as a way to remove the blocks to the love that we are. That is the function we are given through the Holy Spirit. What we are to learn is to let go of unworthiness and self-hate so we can remember what we are. We lay our unforgiving thoughts on the inner altar where truth resides. We do so by looking without judgment at our self-attacking thoughts so the Holy Spirit can dismiss them. Shining behind all appearances is the radiant Self, waiting to be revealed.

We are the ones that bring about the lessons, not God. **"And everything that seems to happen to me I ask for, and receive as I have asked."** (T.21.II.2.5) (ACIM OE T.21.III.15) The Correction the Holy Spirit reveals to us is that there is another way of looking at everything. The interpretation He gives us is always the same: we are the guiltless Son of God. While the script for our lives has been written by us outside of this dream of time and space, it can serve a different purpose when the events of our lives are given over to the Holy Spirit for healing. What this means can be summed up by the word "humility." It is to admit that I am not in control of my life and everything I have taught myself, every concept I hold, and all thoughts of good and bad are misguided. Now I humbly ask for help in receiving a new interpretation of everything I perceive. I ask how I am to see every circumstance and situation that shows up in my life.

In other words, it is to stop thinking I know and to allow room for a new perception by stepping back and following Someone Who does know. This is the Holy Spirit, Who is in the right mind as a symbol of the love we are. In every challenging situation and every difficult encounter, we have an opportunity to choose to forgive so we can see everything in our lives as serving the purpose of healing the mind.

What we have come to believe is that we are victims of the world, and we have to get from others what they have taken from us. In other words, we blame others for our condition. When the pain becomes great enough, we become motivated to look for another way, meaning another teacher; we are no longer turning to the ego for guidance. We realize that turning to the ego only brings more suffering. Jesus asks, **"Do you prefer that you be right** (about the way you see the

situation) **or happy?"** (T.29.VII.1.9) (ACIM OE T.29.VIII.43) This is what Jesus calls an invitation to the Holy Spirit. We turn to Him by giving it over to the Holy Spirit for His interpretation and realize that putting faith in our thoughts has never brought us peace or happiness.

The Holy Spirit does not send us Lessons. He knows our perfection, but He needs our cooperation so we can come to know it for ourselves. We need to be willing to bring our misperceptions to Him so we can be shown that there is a better way and a new way in which we can see everything with vision. With the separation came the belief that the world is outside of us and is the cause of how we feel. In fact, we learn through this Course that it is just a screen on which we project what is in our minds. As such, it is a helpful reflection of what we need to see within the mind that is the cause of our suffering. Mind is cause, and the world is effect. We have turned it around, believing that the world is the cause of what we feel, and as such, we feel victimized by the events of our lives.

Let's look at some of the ways we currently address the problems in our lives that come from our victim perspective. When difficulties occur in our lives, often our first thought is that God has something to do with it. This may or may not be conscious. It shows up in thoughts such as, "Why is this happening to me?" "What have I done to deserve this?" or more specifically directed at God, "Why is God punishing me?" or "What is the lesson that God is bringing me?" Jesus tells us, "**God does not perceive at all.**" (W.193.2.4) As a result, God could not possibly have anything to do with this dualistic world of perception since He only knows Oneness. But while He does not know of the dream of this world, He hasn't left us without Help. He has given us the Holy Spirit. "**Yet it is He Who gives the means by which perception is made true and beautiful enough to let the light of Heaven shine upon it.**" (W.193.2.5)

Forgiveness is the means given us by which perception is purified. When we experience problems, our usual response is to look to the ego for an answer to try to fix whatever we see as the problem. We may strategize how to solve the situations that cause us pain. We bring solutions to the problem based on past experiences, and if we successfully resolve the problem and our needs are met, we are happy. Yet the solutions we apply will never address the true source of our distress, which is the guilt in our minds. Only by releasing the guilt can we experience true peace.

We believe that we are on our own and it is up to us to try to solve the never-ending problems that show up in our lives. But they can never be truly solved because our focus is on solving them in the world when the source of every problem is in the mind. While we try to defend against outside forces, our peace and happiness are elusive because there is nothing outside of the mind. As long as we hold onto these misguided perspectives, we will continue to perpetuate the dream. The only undoing that is possible and the source of our true happiness is to turn to the Holy Spirit for His interpretation of every difficulty we encounter. This is the only Lesson to be learned.

We come to this world through birth, and we think that the game is already on and that we somehow have to teach ourselves the rules of how to play it. We feel alone in this process of learning, but increasingly, we either make adjustments to the world and learn to play the game, or we feel we have failed in successfully meeting its seeming requirements. Either way, we feel increasingly unworthy and unable to figure out how to achieve the peace and happiness we all seek. We have all learned lessons in this game of life and they form our concepts and beliefs about ourselves. Many lessons we learn through pain. If we have gone through several difficult relationships, we may learn not to trust again. If we were punished for cheating at school, we may learn not to cheat, or to get better at it. In any event, the meaning we give to each of these events

is part of how we learn to get along in the world. **"The blind become accustomed to their world by their adjustments to it. They think they know their way about in it. They learned it, not through joyous lessons, but through the stern necessity of limits they believed they could not overcome. And still believing this, they hold those lessons dear, and cling to them because they cannot see. They do not understand the lessons keep them blind."** (T.21.I.4.1-5) (ACIM OE T.21.II.6)

No matter what the form of our ego lessons, the content is always the same, which is more guilt, more unworthiness, and more despair. The ego tries to reinforce, daily, that we are separate from God, we have spoiled our perfection, our will is different from God's, we are not as God created us, we are born in a body, and we are flawed and separate. It reinforces the idea that our strength is in us alone, and thus, we can only depend on these limited, vulnerable selves that we think we are. The world is throwing things at us, and we feel it is up to us to figure out what to do. We are constantly changing, adjusting to external circumstances, and trying to be nice, but sometimes the world just pushes us too far and hatred breaks through the niceness.

As said earlier, we may also believe that God sends us lessons that we try to discern as to their meaning. Since God does not know of this illusion, the God, Who we think is sending us difficult lessons, is actually the God made up by the ego that is talked about in the Laws of Chaos, **"For if God cannot be mistaken, He must accept His Son's belief in what he is, and hate him for it."** (T.23.II.6.6) (ACIM OE T.23.III.24) In other words, God just becomes a more powerful ego. We now fear Him and see Him as the enemy Who sends us difficult lessons in order to build our character. How can we trust a God like that?

The ego has done a good job of teaching us that the world is the cause of our difficulties and that we are its effect. As a result, we have learned to protect and defend ourselves physically and emotionally. Yet Jesus shows us the only lesson we are to learn is to forgive our wrong-minded perspectives. Forgiveness is the closest we come in this world to God's Love. The Holy Spirit shows us that behind all forms of this world the content is always the same. The content behind all forms is love, but it is kept hidden until we learn to see with vision. Our eyes only show us forms of this world. To see the love behind the forms, we need to undo the way we see now. We need a new perception. That is what the miracle offers us.

When we hold thoughts of anger, distress, victimhood, demands, expectations, betrayal, lack, loneliness, and unworthiness, our self-attacking thoughts get projected onto the world. These are the thoughts we need to bring to awareness so they can be released. That is what forgiveness offers. In other words, no matter what is going on around us and no matter the nature of the problem, the answer is always to forgive. We do this by looking at our thoughts without judging ourselves for them but simply bringing them to awareness. Our stories may vary and have **"different characters and different themes,"** (W.193.3.4) but behind them all, we are called to accept the Holy Spirit's purpose of forgiveness. Forgiveness shows us that none of the seeming problems of this world are real. Thus, for all problems, the answer is always the same. It is to recognize their unreality.

All learning is about how to perceive correctly. God does not understand the condition we are in, as He knows us only as complete and whole. He wants us to return Home to Him so He has given us the Holy Spirit to be our Guide and Helper. While the events, circumstances, different characters, and different themes in our lives all seem unique and different for each of us, they all contain the same lesson. **"Forgive, and you will see this differently."** (W.193.3.7)

I had a situation in my life where I was being sued by someone. I perceived her doing something to me that brought me pain and distress. I was angry at her for the pain that I perceived was being caused by her actions. I felt victimized, betrayed, and hurt. I questioned what I had done to deserve this and how I could solve the problem. Then, the realization came that I had been given an opportunity to see how I was keeping us both bound to guilt. I was using this situation to demonstrate that I was right, as I had set all of this up to prove I could be victimized. I perceived myself vulnerable to attack. She was guilty and I was innocent. I wanted to prove that the problem really did exist out there, rather than as a result of the guilt in my own mind. I did not want to accept that my suffering came entirely from my own guilt. This situation was simply a witness to the guilt I was holding in my mind.

Jesus reminds us over and over that guilt is the content behind all problems that we experience in the world. He makes the Lesson **"so simple that it cannot be rejected in the end."** (W.193.4.3) He asks us to see that whatever we find difficult in our lives has no external cause. Our minds have set up these situations to prove the truth of the ego's lessons of guilt and fear. The problem can only be solved in the mind where it originated in the first place. If we have guilt in the mind, we will call into our lives those situations that bring the punishment we think we have coming to us. The only answer is to look at the guilt and bring it to the light. The upsets that we think are coming from the world are generated by our belief in guilt. That is why Jesus asks us to recognize, **"I am never upset for the reason I think."** (W.5)

Jesus recognizes that to us **"all distress does not appear to be but unforgiveness."** (W.193.4.1) If that is truly the content behind all events, circumstances, and situations in our lives, eventually we will learn that the sameness of the content makes our learning sure. We will get many examples of problems over and over so that eventually we will see that the only real change possible is through forgiveness. The answer is always the same no matter what the form of the problem. We will always suffer until we get this. Lack of forgiveness is where all pain comes from. Jesus says to learn this is simple. And that is because there is only one answer. We don't have to figure out a whole series of lessons to be learned. It is all the same. **"Forgive and you will see this differently."** (W.193.3.7)

Does this mean we don't take any action in the world? Of course not, but it does mean that the actions we take come from a place of peace, a place of forgiveness, and through guidance. Ultimately, Jesus reminds us that we have no control over the world we made. **"You still cannot will against Him, and that is why you have no control over the world you made."** (T.12.III.9.4) (ACIM OE T.11.IV.33) All the lessons we teach ourselves about living in this world are about learning how to get control, but this is only the illusion of control. He goes on to remind us that we do have control over our own minds. Thus, we can learn that it is never the world that causes us pain, but it is our mistaken decision to be separate and to be special. Through forgiveness, we are undoing the decision to be separate. We see that we are all the same and that our brothers' interests are our own. We are learning that we have been wrong, but that we can now turn to the Holy Spirit, Who is the Answer to all of our pain and suffering. We can learn to see everything, not as a threat, not as a loss, and not as an attack, but as a step in our own healing and thus as a step to wholeness and to God.

Jesus says that it is a simple thing to see our wrong choice in any moment. **"Does pain seem real in the perception? If it does, be sure the lesson is not learned."** (W.193.7.2-3) What is the lesson? The lesson is that there is unforgiveness still hiding in the mind. It means that I am choosing to see through the wrong-minded perception of the ego. It means that there is still guilt in the mind, calling to be undone. It is irrelevant whether I see the pain in me or in you, as it is

the same. If I see victims and perpetrators in the world, I am seeing through my own guilt. I am choosing not to be at peace. Thus, forgiveness is called for. I recognize that I am using this situation to keep myself from the love that I am, and that I need help to forgive myself for my wrong perception. Jesus says, **"God would not have you suffer thus. He would help you forgive yourself."** (W.193.8.1-2) Suffering is something we impose on ourselves. If we choose to suffer, we are renouncing our salvation (happiness).

It is on behalf of our own happiness that Jesus pleads with us, **"Let mercy come to you more quickly."** (W.193.10.2) The guilt in the mind makes us think we don't deserve mercy, but time is ours to use for the purpose of undoing guilt. Thus, **"We will attempt today to overcome a thousand seeming obstacles to peace in just one day."** (W.193.10.1) He says that we have been gone from our Father's house much too long. Why would we linger and keep our suffering apart from healing when it could all disappear with the Help available to us?

Today, whatever the situation, whether a computer breaks down, a relationship is not working, or someone steals your car, instead of looking for the lesson in the world, or trying to figure out what to do, what if we realized that **"This is the lesson God would have you learn: There is a way to look on everything that lets it be to you another step to Him, and to salvation of the world"** (W.193.13.1) Yes, the situation may still be there to be attended to, but the distress of it is gone when we forgive. Forgiveness is about looking at the ego without judgment or fear. Now the problem, as we have defined it, has disappeared. With forgiveness, the power of that situation to hurt us has now been neutralized. That is what each situation is there to teach us over and over and over until forgiveness becomes our entire focus for our time in this world.

Today, we remind ourselves, **"I will forgive, and this will disappear."** (W.193.13.3) With **"every apprehension, every care and every form of suffering,"** (W.193.13.4) and everything that bothers us, we could see it differently by looking at our thoughts about it, without judgment. Today, in watching the mind, it is important not to let the little annoyances and irritations go by without taking the time to look. The more we practice this daily, the more we make every instant a holy instant and take the steps necessary to open Heaven's gate. The words of this Lesson, **"Forgive, and you will see this differently,"** (W.193.5.1) have immense power when sincerely applied to every situation. **"Do not deny the little steps He asks you take to Him."** (W.193.13.7)

Love and blessings, Sarah
huemmert@shaw.ca

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