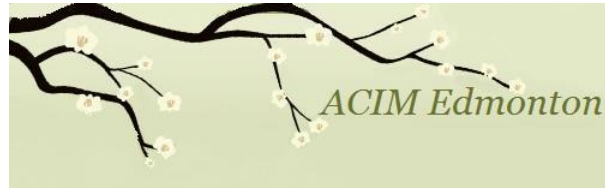


ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 290

My present happiness is all I see.

Sarah's Commentary:

Happiness is our natural inheritance and always available in each moment no matter what seems to be happening. It is what we have been given by God and therefore reflects our true identity as His Son. So, if this is the case, why don't we experience the peace and happiness that is ours all the time? According to this lesson, it is because we are blocking it by seeing what is not there. **"Unless I look upon what is not there, my present happiness is all I see."** (W.290.1) Unless that is all we see, we are not seeing at all. What we are doing is hallucinating! We are no different than someone who is insane! We are projecting the thoughts in our mind and seeing them outside of ourselves and believing in their reality. And these thoughts are frightening and painful to us. Yet they all originate in our own mind. It is an outward picture of our painful inward condition.

Our perceptions are all based on past associations. We hold a thought system in our mind based on guilt from the past and now we fear punishment in the future, and thus we don't experience the eternal present, which is where happiness is. So, we need to connect with the Holy Spirit in the right mind to remember the truth, where the past and future do not exist. We do our part by bringing our wrong-minded thinking to awareness and asking for His interpretation to substitute for our own. As our minds are healed, we see with Christ's vision rather than believing what our eyes show us. The eyes were made by the ego to bring back evidence that reinforces our belief in the reality of this world. We made this dream, but we can decide not to be misled by it **"an instant longer."** (W.290.1.5)

"What I perceive without God's Own Correction for the sight I made is frightening and painful to behold." (W.290.1.4) We see a world that is frightening and painful when we see it from the perspective of the ego. It is a world of suffering and pain, sickness, and death. It consists of all the thoughts we "think we think" reflected back at us. They are our dreams, our fantasies, our judgments, our wishes, our worries, and our individual stories and dramas. To free ourselves from this nightmare of despair and depression, based on the stories we tell ourselves, we must first recognize we are not deeply happy nor are we consistently at peace. When we recognize this, we become willing to seek another way. We start to question our lives and wonder what has happened and where have we gone off track.

With readiness, willingness, and desire, everything we think we know can be translated by the Holy Spirit and seen differently. He translates it all for us, so what we saw as painful and distressing, we now see beyond the limitations of our own perception and reconnect with the truth in our right minds. In essence, we stop investing in our own thinking mind. In other words, we lose interest in what the ego has to say. We simply stop listening to its take on everything. We stop justifying its version of events. Instead, we turn within to the Holy Spirit, and in the silence, we connect to truth. Instead of seeing others as sinful for their apparent attacks, we can now see in

them the call for love, which is our own call. **"This day I seek my present happiness, and look on nothing else except the thing I seek."** (W.290.1.6) We overlook what someone is saying or doing and recognize that we are all innocent.

We can't do this alone. We need the help of the Holy Spirit---God's Own Correction. Our part is to come to Him with a willingness to ask for His strength to hold us up and have the confidence He will hear and respond to our requests. This means we need to stay vigilant of our thoughts whenever we start rehearsing past issues or future dilemmas and plans. **"Learn of His happiness, which is yours. But to accomplish this, all your dark lessons must be brought willingly to truth, and joyously laid down by hands open to receive, not closed to take. Every dark lesson that you bring to Him Who teaches light He will accept from you, because you do not want it."** (T.14.XI.4.5-7) (ACIM OE T.14.VII.62)

Some time ago, I received a call from the nurse at the senior's residence that my mother, who recently turned 102, was in great pain and it was imperative I get a certain kind of medication to alleviate the pain. When I called the doctor's office, I was told there was no way I could see him. Since he would not talk with me, I asked his assistant if she would please convey to him the urgency of my request. She did as I asked but then indicated the doctor continued to deny access. My mind immediately went to other ways I might solve this problem. Then I was reminded that the ego can never solve any problem without creating another one. I spent time in the quiet of my mind, releasing my grievance with the doctor. I continued with some daily activities in peace, and when I felt the guidance to check back with my mother, I learned that she had turned a corner and the pain had subsided. It was another opportunity for me to recognize that reacting to perceived problems, without first connecting to peace and receiving guidance from the Holy Spirit, means I am relying on limited information.

Today, we are reminded that our goal is to see everyone through Christ's vision. What does this kind of seeing require? It requires that we take responsibility for our projections and release our judgments to the Holy Spirit. It is important that we don't suppress our shadows, but own them. These may be parts of the self we are most afraid to accept, yet these suppressed feelings need to be faced. We look within and forgive ourselves for our judgments and attacks on ourselves as well as others.

What we don't own, owns us. As Jung stated, we need to make the darkness conscious, which means looking at all we pretend not to be and all that brings shame and embarrassment. What we hate, resist, and disown about ourselves takes on a life of its own. While these feelings and thoughts try to emerge, so often we try to push them back down, believing we need to live up to some kind of spiritual role, rather than being authentic with what is coming up for us. Healing requires that we take responsibility for all parts of ourselves without blame or self-condemnation. Only then can we know happiness. We do not need to seek for it because it is always there, obscured by our own thoughts.

When we no longer see through the past, all we see is our present happiness. With resolve and certainty, we come to Him and ask for His strength to hold us up. When we rely on our own strength, we remain uncertain, confused, and unhappy. As we read in **"What is the Holy Spirit?"** (W.PII.Q7) He is our bridge to happiness. He is the Call in our minds to allow Heaven to be restored to us. When our minds are restored, we realize the past is no longer there. The world we see has been replaced by the real world, which is our present state, free of sin and guilt. It is the end of our journey, where we have forgiven the world. The real world ends the fear of death because we that see life is all there is or ever was.

A friend, whom I have always admired for his dedication to the Course and who could quote it so impeccably, was recently diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. He asked the Holy Spirit what this was for? Why was he experiencing this sickness? And for the first time in his many years of study of the Course, he heard, "You are perfectly cared for." In spite of years of study, it was the first time he deeply felt the truth of God's Love that had always been there. He recognized that life was not about the body, but about choosing the experience of the eternal truth of our Being.

This is a time to apply what we are learning and move away from intellectual understanding and concepts toward living this truth. When we see attack, pain, suffering, and specialness, we can't know, in every moment that we are perfectly cared for. Thus, we can't know that our happiness is always available to us and has always been there. But we can resolve to turn to God to help us and ask for His strength to hold us up. ***"With this resolve I come to You, and ask Your strength to hold me up today, while I but seek to do Your Will. You cannot fail to hear me, Father. What I ask have You already given me. And I am sure that I will see my happiness today."*** (W.290.2.1-4)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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