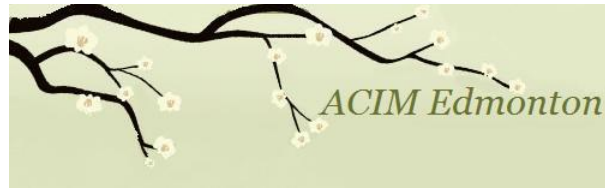


ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 47 God is the Strength in which I trust.

Sarah's Commentary:

So much of our lives we live in a state of apprehension, anxiety, and fear. Jesus says it is because no matter how much we think we can control and manage the events of our lives, we can never be certain about anything. We can never be aware of all facets of any problem, circumstance, or situation, such that only good will come from them. Is it any wonder we are anxious and fearful? Is it any wonder we have trouble making decisions? Everything we try to do in the world is tinged with fear. We become so used to this underlying anxiety that we generally don't even notice it, or we may have become very good at covering it over with positive thoughts. Yet notice it we must, if we are to bring about healing that will lead to deep peace.

"No one can escape from illusions unless he looks at them, for not looking is the way they are protected. There is no need to shrink from illusions, for they cannot be dangerous. We are ready to look more closely at the ego's thought system because together we have the lamp that will dispel it, and since you realize you do not want it, you must be ready. Let us be very calm in doing this, for we are merely looking honestly for truth. The 'dynamics' of the ego will be our lesson for a while, for we must look first at this to see beyond it, since you have made it real. We will undo this error quietly together, and then look beyond it to truth." (T.11.V.1.1-6) (ACIM OE T.10.VI.39)

I was going through the to-do list for my day, and there were a myriad of things on this list I wanted to accomplish. When I tuned into my feelings, I noticed a low level of fear around everything. Even small daily things like what I should make for dinner, how to write this commentary, how to be helpful to my ailing mother, questions about my diet and health, what to pack for my trip, how to invest my money, and what priorities were essential to attend to today, were all tinged with anxiety. All of it brings a level of apprehension about my inability to know what to do in order that only good would come from it for all. Jesus addresses this when he asks us this series of questions: **"What can you predict or control? What is there in you that can be counted on? What would give you the ability to be aware of all the facets of any problem, and to resolve them in such a way that only good can come of it? What is there in you that gives you the recognition of the right solution, and the guarantee that it will be accomplished?" (W.47.1.2-5)** We try hard to maintain confidence in our strength and ability, but deep down, when we get honest with ourselves, we realize we can't know and predict positive outcomes in any situation with perfect trust and confidence. Thus, we are anxious and fearful all the time.

Jesus says, **"It is necessary for the teacher of God to realize, not that he should not judge, but that he cannot." (M.10.2.1) "In order to judge anything rightly, one would have to be fully aware of an inconceivably wide range of things; past, present and to**

come. One would have to recognize in advance all the effects of his judgments on everyone and everything involved in them in any way. And one would have to be certain there is no distortion in his perception, so that his judgment would be wholly fair to everyone on whom it rests now and in the future. Who is in a position to do this? Who except in grandiose fantasies would claim this for himself?" (M.10.3.3-7) While we try to predict and control outcomes, as long as we put trust in our weakness, which is to rely on our separate selves, we will feel fear, anxiety, depression, anger, and sorrow. **"Who can put his faith in weakness and feel safe?"** (W.47.2.3)

We work hard to shore up our self-image and our confidence; and when we fail at managing the events of our lives, we do everything we can to enhance our skills and abilities so we can have more confidence in ourselves and feel more capable in the future. If we aren't doing well with this, we look for books and tapes, therapists, and supporters, who will assure us of our abilities and enhance our skills to manage our lives better. Yet what Jesus is basically doing here is undermining our abilities and asking us to question them. He wants us to realize we can't rely on our own strength with any confidence. Instead of inflating our self-confidence, maintaining we can handle it all, relying on our own strength, and denying all our insecurities, he asks us to acknowledge our fears and bring them to the light. When you admit your fears and recognize your own frailties, he says you have taken **". . . a necessary step in the correction of your errors."** (W.47.6.1) However, while this is a first step, **". . . it is hardly a sufficient one in giving you the confidence which you need, and to which you are entitled. You must also gain an awareness that confidence in your real strength is fully justified in every respect and in all circumstances."** (W.47.6.1-2)

When we look at our fears and frailties and bring them to the healing light of the Holy Spirit, His strength replaces our weakness. His strength is always there in our right minds and always available. When we stop putting our trust in the ego and turn to the Holy Spirit as our Teacher, we release our dependence on our limited self that feels all alone in the world, believing it can only rely on itself, trusting no one. When our minds are aligned with the Truth in us, we can look at our frailties from above the battleground and smile at the silliness of believing our own strength has any power. **"Who would attempt to fly with the tiny wings of a sparrow when the mighty power of an eagle has been given him?"** (M.4.1.2.2) This seems to be what we are trying to do all the time but at a high cost to our peace of mind. We dismiss the true Power always available in our own minds and instead give power to people, objects, and circumstances to shore up our lives. This makes us feel weak, frail, and fearful.

We lack the sense of certainty and safety that can only come from God. **"His Voice speaks for Him in all situations and in every aspect of all situations, telling you exactly what to do to call upon His strength and His protection."** (W.47.3.2) Further, we are told there are *no exceptions* in this. There is nowhere God is not. Why would I withhold any aspect of my life and continue to believe in my strength and my ability to handle everything on my own? Don't we take pride in our independence and in our control? Isn't that something we have nurtured and nourished over a long time? Don't we believe we can somehow manage, manipulate, and control everything on behalf of our happiness? Let's look honestly and courageously at the outcomes that our way has brought.

We are called to be humble and admit we have been wrong in the way we have set things up. We are given an alternative by replacing our own sense of confidence with an infinitely stronger foundation. God is our safety in *every* circumstance. There are absolutely no exceptions to this, but to realize this, we have to bring our dark ego thoughts to the light. We need to look at situations in our lives, which we have invested with fear. Only by admitting our fear, our anxiety, our

weaknesses, and our deep uncertainty, can they be dismissed. When we are joined with the Holy Spirit, everything we do will be aligned with His strength. Everything we do will be an expression of His Love. His guidance is always there, but as long as we are listening to the voice of the ego, the guidance of the Holy Spirit will not be heard.

When we are aligned with Him, we move easily through every seeming challenge. Work no longer feels like such an effort. Our confidence now is warranted. It is based on trust. Every challenge becomes an opportunity to learn peace. Every grievance becomes an opportunity to choose love. This is consistent with the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel of John, where he says, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me . . . apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:4-5)

Unless we surrender to His strength in us, we will rely on our own strength. We will stubbornly insist we know. We will continue to trust in our own ability, to stand on our own two feet, to proudly take personal responsibility, and place all of our focus on our self-reliance. Haven't we all had that reinforced in us in our upbringing? Does it feel like we are now asked to give up what we have so carefully nurtured and applauded all of our lives---our self-sufficiency?

Yes, we have come to accept our individuality as a prized possession. It is what the separation is all about. To be born again is to realize that our way has brought us anxiety, depression, fear, stress, and, ultimately, a sense of aloneness, sadness, and meaninglessness. "What is it all for," we ask? "Why can't I experience success no matter how hard I try?" Or, "Why does happiness constantly elude me?" Or, "Why don't my relationships bring me joy?"

This Lesson makes it clear that peace and joy can never be apart from our connection with God. Strength is in us, covered over by our false beliefs held in the mind that thinks it knows something.

It is such a relief when we finally admit that we don't know and accept there is Something in us that does know. We don't have to do this alone. The thing is, we never make any decision alone. We make it either by turning to the ego or relying on the Holy Spirit. It is one or the other. One keeps us in the cycle of birth and death and the other takes us to the recognition of eternal life. The strength of God in us *can* be trusted. What it takes is a willingness to look at our ego thought system and bring our anxieties, depression, expectations, needs, lacks, desires, and problems to the light, so we can experience the power of the Holy Spirit working in us. Recognizing our weakness is a necessary start. **"There is a place in you where there is perfect peace. There is a place in you where nothing is impossible. There is a place in you where the strength of God abides."** (W.47.7.4-6)

In the practice periods, **"Today we will try to reach past our own weakness to the Source of real strength. Four five-minute practice periods are necessary today, and longer and more frequent ones are urged. Close your eyes and begin, as usual, by repeating the idea for the day. Then spend a minute or two in searching for situations in your life which you have invested with fear, dismissing each one by telling yourself: *God is the Strength in which I trust.*"** (W.47.4.1-5)

Now sink down in your mind, beneath all your worry thoughts which are based on your sense of inadequacy. Reach down below these thoughts to the quiet place where God's strength lives in you. Imagine sinking down beneath the noisy thoughts on the surface of the mind to the peaceful depths where all is still. **"You will recognize that you have reached it [this place] if you feel a sense of deep peace, however briefly."** (W.47.7.2) With any disturbance that comes

up today, remind yourself, "**God is the Strength in which I trust.**" (W.47) It is a great antidote to fear and a great way to refuse to listen to the ego's fears.

Love and blessings, Sarah
huemmert@shaw.ca

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