



LESSON 167

There is one life, and that I share with God.

Sarah's Commentary:

Like Lesson 163, "**There is no death. The Son of God is free,**" this Lesson says the same thing, but now the focus is more on the nature of our one life. Life does not have degrees. It is like truth. Since God is Life, what He creates can only be life, as there can be no opposite to God. Certainly, in this world, there seems to be an opposite to life, and we call it death. As was said in Lesson 163, death is apparent to us, as we see it all around us and it seems so very real. The illusion of the body and the world seem more real than Oneness, which has no opposite. Yet Jesus says, "**There is no death because what God created shares His life.**" (W.167.1.5) Nothing outside of God exists. If this is the case, death must be illusory and thus has no reality. Life is all there is. What to us depicts life is quite simply illusion. "**There is no death because the Father and the Son are one.**" (W.167.1.7)

There are those who hold the belief that when we die, we go to Heaven; for some, there is the belief we go to hell, and for others, it is the end of everything. The truth is that we can only know the state of Heaven through awakening. As said in the discussion on death in Lesson 163, nothing happens when we die because it is all part of the dream. Dying is of bodies, but bodies are not real. Our reality is eternal. There is only life. The hereafter is only the present eternal now. When we accept the unreality of death it assists us to see that awakening from this dream is a decision we can make now.

"In this world, there appears to be a state that is life's opposite. You call it death." (W.167.2.1-2) Death seems to show up in many forms, as we learned in Lesson 163. Yet whether it is the death of the body, or death in the form of sorrow, loss, anxiety, sickness, pain, weariness, anger, or suffering of any kind, none of it is true. Indeed, any state where we are not supremely happy cannot be real. The experience of the individual self, seemingly living in a body, is an illusory state of a character in a dream. Our true state is perfect joy and peace. (W.167.2.5) When we respond to anything in this world with anxiety and fear or even "**. . . a slight discomfort or the merest frown,**" (W.167.2.6) Jesus tells us that we are actually denying the life we are. If God is all there is and He is Life, what we experience, including death, simply cannot be true.

Ultimately, death is a thought in the wrong mind. If our natural state of extreme happiness can be changed to a state of sadness, misery, and suffering, it must be because we are holding onto a false belief. In fact, it can be said that all our problems are a result of the wrong-minded thoughts, values, concepts, and beliefs we hold. These wrong-minded thoughts have come about with the seeming separation from the truth of what we are. With separation comes our separate identity as a body and personality, but it is an identity that is illusory. It is just an image projected onto the screen of the world. If that is the case, then who we think we are does not live, and therefore, does not die. Our reality is outside of this dream.

Whether we experience sickness, pain, sorrow, or fear, they all come from the choice for the wrong mind and are non-existent. They start with the belief that the ego is true, the body and the world are real, and problems we experience are caused by events and circumstances outside the mind. In response to our perceived problems, we try to fix them with remedies that can never work. This is because we try to fix problems that don't exist when we see them outside the mind and on the screen of this world. All problems originate in the mind and this is where the solution is. For example, I may be holding thoughts of conflict and distress in my mind, but now I see the conflict in my relationships because what is in my mind will be manifested in the world.

Working with the outside picture of my inward condition will not solve my problems in my relationships. The only solution is to take responsibility for the inner conflict in me and bring it to the healing light of the Holy Spirit. Then my seeming external problems will not be experienced as conflict regardless of what seems to be happening. I will see everything as love or a call for love, and I will experience joy and peace. Healing requires that I return to the real source of my problem, which is the guilt in my mind. **"Ideas leave not their source."** (W.167.3.6) This is a central idea in the Course, meaning, to understand anything in the Course, we must understand that everything originates in the mind. Therefore, it only makes sense to go back to the mind, which is the only place healing can occur. We have the power within to choose to see every situation, including death, differently.

When we are not supremely happy, peaceful, and joyful, we have denied the life we are. We have denied God. We have affirmed death. We have affirmed that there is something other than God and other than His perfect Oneness. We hold the belief that there could be something other than Life and that there could be something other than Love. How could there be something other? We need to see that anything unlike supreme happiness is not the truth. However, when we don't experience happiness, it is important not to deny our feelings and emotions. In fact, to sit with our feelings and investigate what we must be thinking and believing is very important to our healing. To ignore our feelings is an inappropriate form of denial and not helpful. Nevertheless, Jesus invites us to see the unreality of our experience.

We have the power to choose to see everything from a different perspective. We are not victims of external circumstances. While we experience the many forms of death on a regular basis in our seemingly human condition, we have an opportunity to bring our thoughts and feelings to awareness and to go through fear to the love within. When we change the cause (our minds), the effects are gone.

All feelings, whether anxiety, sadness, anger, any kind of suffering, or feelings of loss and pain, can be traced to the beliefs we hold. It is not helpful to just dismiss these feelings with the statement, "It is all an illusion." It is true that these feelings are part of the dream of death, but as long as we experience pain, suffering, and loss, our minds are still attracted to guilt. By denying our thoughts and feelings, we choose to keep them. They are calling for our attention, and to do the healing, we must not run away from them. Bringing them to the loving light of truth is how healing happens. Holy Spirit is the Healer in our minds. We don't do the healing. He does it all. Anything we conceal or deny, we are actively choosing to hold back from healing and to insist that we are right about the way we see the situation and that our thoughts and feelings are justified.

I often stubbornly hold onto anger and justify my suffering. Jesus says that this is what our attraction to death and our investment in being right is all about. These thoughts seem to have a life of their own, but this is not so, since, to experience them, they need our consent and agreement. The thoughts we hold can feel tenacious and obsessive as if we do not have a choice about what we are experiencing. They seem to have quite a hold on our minds especially when we

experience events that are distressful. Yet the events are, in and of themselves, just neutral. It is our thoughts about them and the interpretations we give them that bring the distress. The whole point of this teaching is to recognize that we have the power within us through the Holy Spirit to change our minds about the way we see anything that seems to be happening to us. The miracle is behind every seemingly distressing situation, waiting for our acceptance. And with the miracle, our perception of the events we previously found distressful is shifted.

Our distressing thoughts are the veil keeping us from knowing the truth about ourselves. The truth is already in us. Our own dark thoughts keep the truth of who we are from our awareness. When we are willing to be honest and have the courage to look at them, only then can they be released. This undeniably requires tremendous honesty, openness, non-defensiveness, courage, and most of all, willingness. We are masters at denial. As long as we identify with the self that we think we are, we will continually defend this character in the mistaken belief that we need to protect this false image.

We have not left the mind of God since we are still an idea in His mind. It is not possible that we can take on different characteristics than those of God, except in the illusion. We think we can take on qualities apart from our Source (God) and that we can be different from our original design specs. It seems to us that we have qualities that God does not. We experience ourselves as a body and personality, separate from God, but this cannot be. We cannot be victims of outside circumstances. There are no outside circumstances. Everything originates in our minds. By the same token, we originate in God's Mind. Therefore, we cannot be anything He is not.

Jesus tells us that we can't really be asleep in this dream since God is awake. How could we be something God is not? Yet we seem to be asleep, unaware of the truth of our Being. Thus, the whole journey is about awakening from this sleep into which we seem to have fallen. Yet because we are in God's Mind, which is not asleep, our seeming state of sleep cannot be true. Since ideas leave not their source, and God is awake Mind, this must be our state as well. To be in a state of sleep is to take on properties God does not have.

Jesus says that ideas **". . . can go far beyond themselves. But they can not give birth to what was never given them."** (W.167.5.4-5) Ideas in the mind can only seem to wander beyond the mind and seem to exist outside the mind. In this dream, ideas seem to have gone beyond themselves by making this world, but that does not make them real. The ego has no life and cannot give birth to life. This is not easy for us to understand. Our experience seems different from this, yet the reality is **"It [the mind] cannot make a body, nor abide within a body."** (W.167.6.3)

We experience ourselves as separate from God, seemingly living in a body and living in the world. We believe that all of this is real but thinking this does not make it so. We can think what we want, but we cannot establish reality. Within the dream, the mind can make a body, but it cannot make the body real, any more than we can make the characters real that show up in our nighttime sleep. When we are dreaming, the figures and the situations in the dream seem real. If we never woke up from our nighttime dream, it would seem to be our reality. When we awaken, we know that the people and events in the dream were not real, even though we thought they were while we were dreaming. The source of the body is the ego, but it is not a real source. What seems to die is the body, but the body is just a thought in the mind. Since the body and the physical world were not made by Spirit, which is the only real Source there is, they can have no reality.

"The opposite of life can only be another form of life." (W.167.7.1) The body is just the symbol of the sleeping mind. Through forgiveness, what has been made that is untrue is released.

When forgiveness is complete, we experience the real world, which reflects Heaven. Forgiveness is still part of the illusion, as there is nothing that needs to be forgiven in truth. Yet it is a helpful illusion, as it takes us to the end of illusions. The truth is there is nothing to forgive because nothing has happened.

"What seems to be the opposite of life is merely sleeping." (W.167.9.1) We have simply fallen asleep, dreaming of what has never occurred. This is why forgiveness is about seeing that what you think your brother did to you has never happened. Nothing here is real. What forgiveness does is reflect God's Love in this world. In the world of time, things seem to happen, and people seem to hurt us, but when we realize that nothing real has happened and it is only our dream, then all forms of death are put in perspective as having no real meaning. They are all nothing. It means everything we think and believe about our lives and what we are is wrong. Admitting that we know nothing and we are wrong in the way we perceive is a big step in learning.

Jesus asks us to accept our heritage. **"Let us today be children of the truth, and not deny our holy heritage. Our life is not as we imagine it."** (W.167.10.1-2) This is such an encouraging thought. All our seeming problems are just imaginary. All our sadness, suffering, and distress of any kind is not the truth. He asks us not to let **". . . imagined opposites to life abide even an instant where the Thought of life eternal has been set by God Himself."** (W.167.10.5) Our practice today is all about remembering this truth and keeping our minds in a state of holiness as **"He established it."** (W.167.11.1) With vigilance, we can watch the thoughts that are forms of death and be willing to have them released, remembering that they are not the truth about us, and that they do not define who we are. The ultimate goal is to know our own perfection that mirrors **"the Lord of Life"** (W.167.12.3) until the illusion is no more.

Today, when you are tempted to see anyone as separate and to believe that the thought system of the ego is real, recognize that you are mistaken. When you attack, criticize, get angry, or blame anyone, it is just an attempt to see your guilt outside of your mind, believing ideas can leave their source. Today is another opportunity to choose to release the blocks that hide the truth of what we are.

"The song of freedom, which sings the praises of another world, brings to it hope of peace. For it remembers Heaven, and now it sees that Heaven has come to earth at last, from which the ego's rule has kept it out so long. Heaven has come because it found a home in your relationship on earth. And earth can hold no longer what has been given Heaven as its own." (T.21.IV.7.4-7) (ACIM OE T.21.V.47)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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