



LESSON 103 God, being Love, is also happiness.

Sarah's Commentary:

We have had two previous Lessons that say happiness is our natural inheritance. In other words, it is our very nature, given us by God. When we don't experience happiness, we are actually choosing against our nature and thus against God. We are choosing against God's Will for us. Now we see that we can actually choose happiness. We do it by looking at all the thoughts and beliefs that keep us from our inner joy, none of which are true.

It goes back to our belief that suffering can bring us something we want, as discussed in our previous two Lessons. We have associated fear with love. **"Fear is associated then with love, and its results become the heritage of minds that think what they have made is real. These images, with no reality in truth, bear witness to the fear of God, forgetting being Love, He must be joy."** (W.103.2.1-2) God is Love; yet we fear Him and His Love in the belief that we must sacrifice for Him, giving Him what we think He wants or He will destroy us. The God of the ego is the God described in the Bible that is loved and worshiped, but he makes demands of us and judges us in the end.

This God, made by the ego, demands suffering and punishment for what we have seemingly done. The ego myth is that we have smashed reality, left God, and made up our own kingdom. Now we feel dreadfully guilty and afraid. The ego tells us we have committed a mortal sin. We associate love with fear and suffering. We see God as a terrifying figure. That is why all of our experiences in this world are tinged with fear. We believe that our lives are contained in the body which is a state of vulnerability. Our bodies don't protect us from the elements, or from aging, sickness, and death.

Think of someone you love and all the fear and worry you have associated with your love for them. Think of how many of your activities are based on fear of consequences, worrying about how you might be letting someone down if you don't meet their perceived expectations. We try to please others to defend against our fear of rejection. This is what keeps us from feeling abundance and joy. If you really think deeply about it, isn't every happiness you experience in this world tinged with pain? It is the pain of loss; it is the pain of the transient nature of happiness. It takes willingness, surrender, honesty, courage, deep inquiry and mind training to get in touch with our fear. We spend a lot of our lives covering it over. Imagine a life motivated only by love and nothing else. Because of our fear, we do not experience the consistency of joy that comes from experiencing the truth of the Christ Self.

Our reality is love, and happiness is an attribute of love. In other words, happiness and love go together. **"Nor can it be experienced where love is not."** (W.103.1.3) Without love, there can be no happiness, because a state of fear is a state separate from God. To be in a state separate

from God is to be in the illusion, which is not real. This is a state of lack and limitation, which defines our condition in the world.

We have made an adjustment to the world, and we have substituted our own definition of love for God's Love. In truth, love has no limits. In this world, there are limits on our love. It is not a consistent state. The nature of this world and our separate identities are, in themselves, limits. **"Love has no limits, being everywhere. And therefore joy is everywhere as well."** (W.103.1.4-5) Clearly then, our true state is unlimited joy, but in this illusion, that is not what we experience. The ego's notion of happiness is about getting, having, keeping, avoiding, defending, planning, and controlling. When we limit love to certain people, it is not real love as it is about having our needs met. When they are not met, we feel unloved and unappreciated.

Jesus says that when we deny our happiness, we are denying God. We do this by thinking God can't make us happy, so we seek substitutes instead that we think can bring us happiness. When we pursue these substitutes, we suffer. Looking outside of ourselves for happiness means happiness is dependent on circumstances over which we have no control. Happiness comes and goes but is never constant. Sometimes we experience tremendous joy, but we don't believe it can last. It seems to be situational. Yet if happiness is our nature, it is there all the time. Until we experience this, we are suspicious of what we are being told. The ego's range goes from suspicious to vicious. It becomes vicious when it appears we are ready to release its hold on us. We don't believe we deserve to be happy all the time, and while we hold onto guilt and fear in our minds, the happiness that is always there is not in our awareness.

Jesus says we believe ". . . **there are gaps in love where sin can enter, bringing pain instead of joy.**" (W.103.1.6) In other words, love is a very inconsistent experience for us because we have seemingly separated from that love. We say things like we were once in love but no longer are. Yet where can the love go? If it goes, it never was love. That is why this inconsistent kind of love that we believe in is called a strange belief. **"This strange belief would limit happiness by redefining love as limited, and introducing opposition in what has no limit and no opposite."** (W.103.1.7)

We love some people some of the time when they meet our needs, but we turn away from that love when those needs are no longer met. We see ourselves as lacking and incomplete and believe we need others to complete us. The lack we experience in ourselves is the reason we continually seek for something to fill it. Love needs no completion. Love simply is; it holds no one apart from it. When we recognize ourselves as the love we are, then the gap we hold between ourselves and God is healed. That healing is experienced when forgiveness of our brothers is complete. Forgiveness could perhaps be said to be the most perfect reflection of love in this world because we have healed what stands between ourselves and our brothers. Now we know our sameness.

Jesus reminds us that special love has never made us happy. We can see from our own experiences of love in this world that with it comes a huge amount of pain, loss, fear, and disappointment. When we feel the pain sufficiently, we are more motivated to be shown another way. This was my experience when my special love partner left me and I was devastated. The gift in it was that it motivated me to search for answers and brought me to this Course.

If love, joy, and peace are in us and in everyone all the time, are we willing to accept it as the truth? Are we willing to let go of our grievances, our expectations, and our judgments that block the love we are? Do we walk through life expecting things to go wrong? When we are willing to see the unconscious guilt we project on others and take responsibility for it, healing can happen. We can watch the news and see a world of death and destruction and get very depressed; or we can ask

for help to see through the "eyes" of the Holy Spirit and bring our judgments and fears to Him to reinterpret what we see. He helps us to see everything as either love or a call for love.

Healing requires us to bring awareness to anything that triggers us. When we project the conflict in the mind, we experience conflict with others. The unconscious guilt in our minds results in self-attack in the form of suffering, depression, disease, pain, and unworthiness. Our job is now to bring these painful thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and concepts that we hold to awareness and recognize they are not of God because God brings only happiness. He has placed the Holy Spirit in our minds. He will heal our pain when we place it on the altar within the mind, where He abides. If we resist taking responsibility for our suffering and try to control, manage, or defend against it, this reflects a decision to keep the pain and make someone else responsible for it.

Jesus reminds us that God did not make this world of illusion, so the world of suffering and pain cannot be true. Today, we can take each unhappy thought, each disappointment, all impatience, fear and guilt, to the Holy Spirit to be released. The truth is that we were created happy by Happiness Itself. Anything less is a denial of our Self and of our Creator. We literally shut off this happiness with each grievance we hold. It may be a grudge we have against someone because of a past issue. It may be a fear that there may be a crash in the market. It may be a worry about our kids or our aging parents. It may be distress about the world situation. There are many ways we keep ourselves from happiness. In the bigger picture, of course, we keep ourselves from happiness by identifying with the character in the dream that we think we are, as a unique and special self, housed in a body, and living in an illusory world.

In Chapter 10, we read the god of sickness demands our depression as a sign that we are committed to him. **"Joy is never permitted, for depression is the sign of allegiance to him."** (T.10.V.1.2) (ACIM OE T.9.XI.93) We then project responsibility for our depression on others, thus holding them responsible for our sadness. We **". . . cannot see the spark in them that would bring joy."** (T.10.V.2.4) (ACIM OE T.9.XI .94) **"It is the denial of the spark that brings depression, for whenever you see your brothers without it, you are denying God."** (T.10.V.2.5) (ACIM OE T.9.XI.94)

"You do not realize how much you have denied yourself, and how much God, in His Love, would not have it so. Yet He would not interfere with you, because He would not know His Son if he were not free." (T.10.V.10.1-2) (ACIM OE T.9.XI.102) No matter how much joy and happiness we deny ourselves, and no matter how much God does not want this for us, He loves us enough to value our freedom to choose our own experience. It is up to us to choose to give up our sadness. It will never be removed from us without our agreement. Our freedom of choice is our own and will not be taken from us, not even by God.

The choice we make as to what we want to see is the choice between our brother's body or his holiness. Peace and happiness are dependent on the choice we make. It is a choice to see our brother's holiness, rather than his guilt, for that is the choice we are making for ourselves as well. **"He is the mirror of yourself, wherein you see the judgment you have laid on both of you."** (T.24.VI.8.6) (ACIM OE T.24.VII.56) To the extent we fear our brother, we also fear God. It is in every brother that we can know our Self. It is in everyone we encounter that we can choose to see him as our savior by seeing in him a reflection of our unhealed or healed mind. The decision is ours to make, and with each decision we make, our choice for joy or suffering is reflected. Be very honest with yourself to see what you might be projecting onto your brother that is your own unconscious guilt so it can be brought to light to be healed. Today, we accept that **"God being Love is also happiness."** (W.103) We learn this by releasing our judgments and grievances.

Today, we start our longer practice periods with the thought **"God, being Love, is also happiness. To fear Him is to be afraid of joy."** (W.103.2.4-5) We do this each waking hour, always bringing our false beliefs to the truth. Then sit in silence, welcoming all the happiness it brings, as truth replaces fear and joy becomes what you expect to take the place of pain. God, being Love, wants to give us everything.

Throughout the day, stay vigilant of any fear thoughts, any triggers you experience in your relationships, and any conflicts that show you what is in your mind; and bring these to the inner altar. **"God, being Love, is also happiness."** (W.103.3.5) Remind yourself often, **"And it is happiness I seek today. I cannot fail, because I seek the truth."** (W.103.3.6-7) Whenever you are aware of fear, anxiety, guilt, or pain, bring awareness to this condition and ask Holy Spirit, how would you have me look on this?

Love and blessings, Sarah
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