

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 131

No one can fail who seeks* to reach the truth.

Sarah's Commentary:

Isn't it reassuring to know that we can delay our journey to truth, wander off, procrastinate, or have an ego fest, but ultimately, we will be led back because it is certain we will all return home. It is a certainty because we are already home! We are just not aware of the truth of this in our present mindset. As we take this journey, it is reassuring to know that nothing will be taken from us. We determine the pace of our awakening. In the process, we increasingly become aware that we no longer want to hold onto many things we once thought were important. They simply fall away.

The ego is about seeking and never finding, which has been our experience in the world. Jesus tells us that to seek and never find is an experience of frustration and despair. I am certain we can all attest to that. All our seeking is to minimize pain and maximize pleasure. We do this by trying to solve perceived problems in our lives, but Jesus reminds us that neither the problem nor the solution can be found in the world. Therefore no matter what we do, or how hard we try to achieve happiness in the world, it is an impossible situation. Ultimately, we all come to a place of disillusionment and depression. **"Failure is all about you while you seek for goals that cannot be achieved."** (W.131.1.1) We have all followed the ego's mantra of "seek and do not find."

Jesus says we have all come to this world to search for experience. So that is what we do, but what we search for can change since ". . . **the world can not dictate the goal for which you search, unless you give it power to do so.**" (W.131.3.3) We search for things of the world until one day we come to the realization, "There must be a better way." This was the realization that the scribes of the Course, Helen Schucman and her partner Bill Thetford, came to, which started the whole process of dictation of this Course. It was their agreement to find the way out of their conflict together that led to the Course being brought to the world.

While the goals we set for ourselves in the world can certainly be reached, Jesus says that even when they are achieved, we still won't find what we are looking for. What we all are looking for is peace, love, safety, security, and happiness. The problem is we think peace and happiness can be found in the things we pursue in the world; but they can only be found within the mind. Until we recognize this, we will always feel like there is something missing that we can find outside of ourselves. Until we look to the true source—the place in our minds where peace abides, looking for it in the world is all to no avail.

"Goals that are meaningless are not attained." (W.131.2.1) Nothing we strive for here will ever work to bring us real happiness. So are we being asked to give up our goals? No, Jesus is not saying our goals are wrong. He is only saying that they won't bring us the happiness we seek, and we will ultimately experience a sense of failure because we have found nothing of real value

through our own efforts. We have put a lot of energy and attention in trying to achieve our goals in the world. It can be discouraging to learn that they won't bring us what we most want. We just keep trying and trying, thinking that the next time will be different. It never is. The ego will never reveal this to us. The world has programmed us to think there is something of value to pursue here, but nothing here will ever work. Nothing will ever satisfy us in bringing the deep peace and happiness for which we all yearn.

Our lives are programmed by our past learning and past conditioning regarding what we deem as success in the world. We may indeed experience success in achieving goals we have set. What we won't experience, however, is the deep peace, joy, and safety we actually seek. Our goals will fail in achieving what we really want. With each failure, we think that the next time will be different. The next relationship will be better. The next job will fulfill my needs. The next home I buy will make me happy, and the expectation of a big financial win is all I need to be secure. In the background is the ego, cheering us on to stay invested in these pursuits and thus committed to the ego. The ego has set it up so we will keep seeking and never find. Of course, this is hidden from our awareness.

If we were to tune into the ego, we would hear its constant message telling us that we don't deserve to be happy and are not worthy of love. Jesus says that this is the dirge we sing to ourselves and listen to all day long. **"Healing occurs as a patient begins to hear the dirge he sings, and questions its validity."** (Psychotherapy Pamphlet.2.VI.1.5) It is running in the unconscious mind 24/7.

"Pursuit of the imagined leads to death because it is the search for nothingness, and while you seek for life you ask for death. You look for safety and security, while in your heart you pray for danger and protection for the little dream you made." (W.131.2.6-7) The ego says punishment and death are what we deserve because we have sinned against God. We can get in touch with this only when we look honestly at what we believe about ourselves. When we do, we get in touch with feelings of unworthiness, abandonment, and deep loneliness. These are the feelings we work hard to avoid and to compensate for, and thus, we involve ourselves with distractions to keep the sadness away. The world offers us many distractions, which is what its function is. It keeps us from connecting with these kinds of feelings that we deny, repress, and defend against.

On a conscious level, we all want happiness, peace, safety, and security, but in the unconscious mind we are actually asking to be hurt, punished, victimized, and betrayed. The ego has convinced us that we don't deserve happiness but that we deserve punishment for having separated from God. We don't want to hold this thought, so instead of seeing ourselves as deserving punishment, we see others as punishing us. They are the ones dispensing God's punishment for Him. We don't like the unconscious guilt in our minds. It is distressing to hold onto that much guilt, so we project it on others and see them as the guilty ones instead of ourselves. It is the solution the ego has given for getting rid of our mountain of guilt. The only problem is that it does not work. We just gather more guilt and now expect punishment from an attacking world.

Our wish is to be betrayed by others so we can establish our victimhood and our hope is that the victimizers will be punished by God. This way we believe we can maintain our innocence and avoid responsibility for our condition. Thus, we have a great investment in seeing others guilty. It maintains the belief that they will be the ones who will ultimately be punished as the evil-doers rather than us. We prefer to take the role of the innocent victims of others' wrongdoing. We hope this will allow us to escape God's punishment in the end. Of course, this is mostly not apparent to us. If we really saw how this was all set up, we would have no difficulty giving it up. It is buried in the mind, and without Jesus exposing it to us, we would never see it and just keep trying harder

and harder to find peace and happiness in the world. When we are willing to see that maybe we have it all wrong and perhaps there is another choice, we can refuse the ego's program. Now we can turn to the Holy Spirit within the right mind where the truth abides. It requires that we turn away from the voice of the ego and tune into the Holy Spirit channel. While we are making this transition, there will be a lot of static just like a radio when the dial is between two stations. When our goal is to seek nothing but the truth, we will find what we are looking for because it is already in us. Jesus keeps reminding us, ". . . **the world cannot dictate the goal for which you search, unless you give it the power to do so.**" (W.131.3.3)

"Yet searching is inevitable here. For this you came, and you will surely do the thing you came for." (W.131.3.1-2) It is good we came here to search because it will ultimately lead us to search for what is true. We are free to make the choice anytime we are ready ". . . **to choose a goal that lies beyond the world . . .**," (W.131.3.4) which is calling to us from ". . . **an echo of a heritage forgot, yet holding everything you really want.**" (W.131.3.4) This is the echo of the Forgotten Song, which Jesus says is ". . . **a hint of an ancient state not quite forgotten.**" (T.21.I.6) (ACIM OE T.21.II.8) We have a deep yearning to hear again the beautiful notes of this song that sings to us of what we have forgotten.

Ultimately, we all realize the things of this world only bring pain because of their transient nature and their lack of permanence. The alternative to **"its painful pleasures and its tragic joys"** (W.131.7.1) is Heaven. We think it takes time to find the eternal stillness within. We may get discouraged along the way, believing that we will never succeed. We may sense we are making progress and then experience a major setback when the ego becomes vicious. We wonder if we will ever arrive at certainty, where peace and joy reign at least most of the time. Today, we are assured of this in the Lesson when he says, **"God's Son can not seek vainly, though he try to force delay, deceive himself and think that it is hell he seeks. When he is wrong, he finds correction. When he wanders off, he is led back to his appointed task."** (W.131.4.4-6) We do not have to wait for some time in the future to make the decision for peace. With every decision we make we are choosing Heaven or hell. We are making progress even if it is not always apparent to us. It sometimes feels like two steps forward and one step back, but as Jesus says, **"Now you must learn that only infinite patience produces immediate effects."** (T.5.VI.12.1) (ACIM OE T.5.VIII.81)

The closer we get to the real world, the more the ego resists, gets vicious, and makes a last-ditch effort to dissuade us from this journey. When we achieve our worldly goals, it can be compelling to side with the ego, but our pleasure at achieving our goals doesn't last, and in the end, we experience more pain. We have been on this worldly merry-go-round for millennia, according to Jesus, and now this teaching has found us because we are ready for it. We have delayed, and we have deceived ourselves, but when we realize that we have not found what we really seek, we are **"led back to his [our] appointed task."** (W.131.4.6) It is very comforting to know we have a Guide and will be called back. When we have had enough of our special relationships, our painful pleasures, and disappointments, we are happy to get back on track.

While we might dip into frustration, despair, anger, and discouragement at times, most of us have had sufficient reinforcement in our journey, up to this point, to see that there is no other road we would rather be on. Certainty of outcome makes for patience and contentment along the way. We have a way out, and we know how to find it. We are increasingly turning away from the ego's raucous demands. We are being asked to **"Remember often that today should be a time of special gladness, and refrain from dismal thoughts and meaningless laments. Salvation's time has come."** (W.131.15.1-2) There is a door in our minds that we can enter and go beyond the incessant demands of the ego. Through that door is the radiant inner altar where we can lay our fears, doubts, and dark thoughts to be dissolved in the light. It is a holy place where:

"Angels light the way, so that all darkness vanishes, and you are standing in a light so bright and clear that you can understand all things you see." (W.131.13.2) Yet it is up to us to bring awareness to these dark thoughts and be willing to surrender them to the holy light. What we don't acknowledge cannot be healed.

"No one can fail who seeks to reach the truth." (W.131) The end is certain, and together, we can find our way home. There is no need to wait. Heaven is here today. This Lesson speaks of time as the great illusion. **"How could the Will of God be in the past, or yet to happen? What He wills is now, without a past and wholly futureless. It is as far removed from time as is a tiny candle from a distant star, or what you chose from what you really want."** (W.131.6.5-7) The separation from God never happened. We are unaware of this in our dream, but we will find Heaven because Heaven has never left us.

"Why wait for Heaven?" (W.188.1.1) We made time, and we made it to keep ourselves from eternity. In other words, time is the hell we made and the suffering we experience here. Time is based on the belief that Heaven was in the past and that we threw it away. Now the ego tells us that if we are good and atone for our sins, we *may* get to Heaven at some future time. Of course, it is contingent on our being willing to sacrifice so we can pay God back for what we have taken from Him. This is *not* what God wills. It is impossible that the Will of God be in the past. It is *now*. Jesus teaches that the separation never happened. **"You cannot fail today. There walks with you the Spirit Heaven sent you, that you might approach this door some day, and through His aid slip effortlessly past it, to the light. Today that day has come. Today God keeps His ancient promise to His holy Son, as does His Son remember his to Him. This is a day of gladness, for we come to the appointed time and place where you will find the goal of all your searching here, and all the seeking of the world, which end together as you pass beyond the door."** (W.131.14.2-5)

As we accept his message, our awareness of time as illusion becomes more apparent and we begin to experience the fact that perfect love is available *now*. While our self-concept and bodily identity seem to be here, the true mind is always available to us in the holy instant. It is filled with light, innocence, peace, and eternal joy. **"Atonement might be equated with total escape from the past and total lack of interest in the future."** (Manual for Teachers.24.6.3) We think it will take time for us to return to Heaven, but it is all about our choice. The will of God is all-powerful. **"What He wills is now, without a past and wholly futureless."** (W.131.6.6) We don't have to wait.

The extent of our willingness to do the practices as the Lessons describe is the extent of our willingness to know the truth about ourselves. Lack of practice does not mean that we are bad, nor that we won't achieve our goal, but only that we are choosing to delay. As Jesus assures us, **"Ultimately, every member of the family of God must return."** (T.I.V.4) (ACIM OE T.1.I.59) The speed by which we reach our goal only depends on our willingness; so, while we can delay, we can't fail. Having said that, forcing ourselves to practice is not a good idea. Watch your mind for resistance without judging or condemning yourself. **"And if you find resistance strong and dedication weak, you are not ready. Do not fight yourself."** (T.30.I.1.6) (ACIM OE T.30.II.2) This does not mean we should just give up. It only means we can pick up where we left off and keep moving forward. It may take years to prepare ourselves for serious study, as it did for me. It does not matter.

We live in a world of contradictions, of painful pleasures, and tragic joys where we seem to be split in two—sometimes experiencing ourselves as beautiful and loving and at other times attacking and angry. Heaven does seem elusive to us, doesn't it? While it does not exist, this world does seem very real to us. Jesus calls these thoughts nothing but foolish, and he reminds us that once

we set Heaven as our goal, we will achieve it, as it is right here, right now. Only one side of the contradiction must be true. Which side will you pick? Consistency requires that we go all one way or all the other way. God did not make two minds. He did not create the good and the bad.

"He thinks he made a hell opposing Heaven, and believes that he abides in what does not exist, while Heaven is the place he cannot find." (W.131.9.4) "Leave foolish thoughts like these behind today, and turn your mind to true ideas instead." (W.131.10.1) It is foolish to think that our experience here is real and that this world actually exists. God did not make this world. This entire world of time and space is an illusion. It is a projection of the split mind. The Atonement principle assures us that we have not changed ourselves from our creation. We are still a thought in the mind of God. We can't abide in a world that does not even exist! And so, we are asked to try to reach truth today by replacing our foolish images with the truth.

Today, ***"I ask to see a different world, and think a different kind of thought from those I made. The world I seek I did not make alone, the thoughts I want to think are not my own."*** (W.131.11.3-4)

"For several minutes watch your mind and see, although your eyes are closed, the senseless world you think is real. Review the thoughts as well which are compatible with such a world, and which you think are true. Then let them go, and sink below them to the holy place where they can enter not. There is a door beneath them in your mind, which you could not completely lock to hide what lies beyond." (W.131.11.5-8)

"Seek for that door and find it. But before you try to open it, remind yourself no one can fail who seeks to reach the truth." (W.131.12.1-2) Make this request today. Realize that **"Nothing but this has any meaning now; no other goal is valued now nor sought, nothing before this door you really want, and only what lies past it do you seek."** (W.131.12.4) See yourself putting out your hand, and **"see how easily the door swings open with your one intent to go beyond it. Angels light the way, so that all darkness vanishes, and you are standing in a light so bright and clear that you can understand all things you see."** (W.131.13.1-2)

As **"dismal thoughts and meaningless laments"** (W.131.15.1) cross your mind today, remind yourself, **"Today is set by Heaven itself to be a time of grace for you and for the world."** (W.131.15.3) Then identify the thoughts that block the truth. Look at them. Don't deny them, or you won't be able to let them go. And **"If you forget. . . remind yourself with this: Today I seek and find all that I want. My single purpose offers it to me. No one can fail who seeks to reach the truth."** (W.131.15.4-7) Notice any resistance that comes up, recognizing how much fear we have of letting go of the ego.

Love and blessings, Sarah
huemmert@shaw.ca

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~ Course in Miracles Society chose their title for this Lesson from the scribe's original notes:
"No one can fail who asks* to reach the truth".