



LESSON 160

I am at home. Fear is the stranger here.

Sarah's Commentary:

This Lesson describes, in a very stark manner, the insanity of the choice made by the Son of God for the ego that is identified here as the stranger. With this choice to let the stranger into our pristine home, came an invasion of fear. Now, we are a stranger to the Self that is still at Home with God. We have identified with fear so we no longer know our reality as Love. We are confused about our identity and wonder, "What am I?" **"Who could be sane in such a circumstance?"** (W.160.1.5) When we align with the ego as our identity, insanity and confusion reigns. Once you have made a choice for the ego, you automatically become a stranger to the Christ Self that you are. **"And thus you are unknown to you."** (W.160.1.3) Who I really am is now alienated.

With the stranger in our pristine home, we have invited sin, guilt, and fear to accompany him and bring fear of God's punishment. We feel lost in the world so we keep searching for a place where we can feel at home. Jesus asks us to consider what we are searching for. **"What can he find? A stranger to himself can find no home wherever he may look, for he has made return impossible."** (W.160.6.2-3) Like the Prodigal Son, we now think we are so guilty, return home is not possible so we just keep hiding from God believing He has punishment in store for us for what we have done. We keep desperately searching for the love we think we have lost, so we keep looking for it in the world where it can never be found. The peace, fulfillment, and happiness we search for, can't be found in the world because it doesn't exist there. When we follow the ego's mantra, we keep seeking but never finding. Until we seek where our happiness is, which is within, we go on a futile search, looking for happiness where it can never be found.

When I hold thoughts of fear in the mind, I say, "I am afraid," as if the fear thoughts were me. When I have thoughts of anger, sadness, and jealousy, I say that I am angry, sad, worried, or jealous, yet these thoughts are not descriptive of anything true about me. They are just thoughts I have chosen to believe, and when I hold onto them, I become a stranger to the Self that is in a constant state of peace and indescribable happiness.

Why do we choose to identify with thoughts that are not true? **"What could the reason be except that you had asked this stranger in to take your place, and let you be a stranger to yourself? No one would let himself be dispossessed so needlessly, unless he thought there were another home more suited to his tastes."** (W.160.3.2-3) Yes, we still believe the world and body give us what we want, and as long as we think this, we continue to pursue spiritual goals, but still hold onto the belief that there is something to be gained from the world.

This reflects our split minds and contradictory goals. True, we suffer because of the egoic thoughts and beliefs we hold, but there is a payoff or we would not continue to hold these thoughts. First

and foremost, it keeps us invested in the separate self that we still value. Secondly, we believe we can make others responsible for our suffering and let them take the anticipated punishment for the separation, while maintaining our innocence. We give the attributes of fear to love, meaning that we now look to fear to keep us safe. We give our allegiance to our body, our individuality, and our independence where we believe our happiness lies. We think we know our own best interests and what will keep us safe. And thus, we stay addicted to the egoic programming believing our thoughts and keeping us in a self-defeating cycle of sin, guilt and fear.

And it is how the ego has convinced us that we can be protected from God's wrath. We have become convinced that the world is our playground and a place to hide from God. In fact, he describes it as a place where God could enter not. **"The 'attack on God' made His Son think he was Fatherless, and out of his depression he made the god of depression."** (T.10.V.4.2) (ACIM OE T.9.XI.96) What a sad substitute for true happiness, yet until we see what we have done, we will not know there is another way to see. But through this teaching the veil we have drawn across our sight is slowly removed and we come to see how the ego set all this up. It is not our friend. In fact, it is the stranger that has taken over our pristine home and made himself comfortable at our invitation. This is the height of insanity.

The stranger we have invited into our home is fear. As a result, we no longer feel safe. We feel dispossessed from ourselves. We live with a sense of underlying anxiety, worry, anger, depression, restlessness, frustration, unworthiness, helplessness, confusion, sadness, and hurt. These, and a myriad of other feelings, are what have taken up residence in our wrong minds. Truth regards these feelings as senseless. They are alien to our real nature. We have chosen littleness over magnitude, but this need not be. All that is required is to recognize that we have the power to tell the madman to leave. **"What reason is there for not saying this?"** (W.160.3.1) Why do we continue to entertain thoughts of fear? Why do we continue to listen to the counsel of the ego that does not know our best interests? Until we recognize what we have done and release our allegiance to the thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, we remain a stranger to ourselves. We don't have to listen to the ego any longer, but to realize we don't want the ego thought system, we must be very vigilant in seeing its game. Jesus helps us by unveiling the deceptions in the mind and the cost to our peace and happiness. He shows us how we have been duped and how we will continue to live in a state of underlying fear until we choose against it and turn to the Holy Spirit Who shows us the way out.

On a practical level, we must be vigilant in watching our thoughts, since we can't heal what we don't see. It means bringing awareness to our beliefs, our values, our feelings, our thoughts, and our self-concepts. We hold a myriad of false beliefs. We think it is up to us to figure out our lives and to know what to do, to know our own best interests, to fulfill our belief we are lacking, unworthy, abandoned, and attacked. These, and other beliefs we hold, must now all be brought to question. We have been wrong about everything we value and believe. All of our self-concepts are part of the stranger's identity.

Jesus asks us to consider, **"Who is the stranger? Is it fear or you who are unsuited to the home which God provided for His Son?"** (W.160.4.1-2) How could fear have any part in God's creation. We have all the attributes of God and fear is not part of Him. If fear is not part of God it cannot be real, even though it seems real to us only because we have made it real in our minds and have given it power over us. When we identify with the fear, it does seem like it is love that is the stranger because the love in the mind is not apparent to us. Fear seems more real. In other words, the dream of this illusory world seems more real than God's reality, which to us seems more like an illusion.

But we don't have to give fear a safe place to exist. This stranger (fear) has become comfortable to us. We no longer recognize it as fearful, as we have become very familiar with our fear-based thoughts and feelings. We may not like them, but they are familiar, and thus we know what to expect. As Byron Katie asks, "Who would you be without this fear?" **"Fear is a stranger to the ways of love."** (W.160.1.1) Fear and love can't coexist. **"There is no home can shelter love and fear."** (W.160.4.5) **"If you are real, then fear must be illusion. And if fear is real, then you do not exist at all."** (W.160.4.7-8) Thus, it is one or the other. Both can't be true.

"As God created you, you must remain unchangeable, with transitory states by definition false. And that includes all shifts in feeling, alterations in conditions of the body and the mind; in all awareness and in all response." (W.152.5.1-2) Anything other than a state of love, peace, and joy is our own contribution and not given by God. What is created in the image and likeness of God is love, not fear. If we are real, then fear *must* be unreal. If we are fear and it is illusion, not given by God, then it is nothing and does not exist. Yet while we can seem to abandon the Self that we are, it has not left us. This is the Call within our right minds that we have heard and responded to by coming to this Course. While we feel lost, a miracle has searched us out and is showing us that we are not this stranger. **"No stranger can be interposed between His knowledge and His Son's reality. He does not know of strangers. He is certain of His Son."** (W.160.7.7-9) **"The miracle will come."** (W.160.6.5-9)

As a result of our decision to invite the stranger in, we think our home is denied to us and that someone else is to blame for our condition. But because we are the ones responsible, we can now make another choice in each situation and every circumstance we encounter. We are choosing to no longer listen to the stranger. Love is in us waiting for our acceptance. The memory of who we are has never left. We can reverse our decision for separation every time we choose to forgive our misperceptions and ask for a new interpretation from the Holy Spirit. We have so many opportunities in the situations and events of our lives to choose forgiveness instead of attack. Why would we continue to hurt ourselves when there is a way out of our pain? Our happiness depends on our decision to watch our minds and let fear thoughts be placed on the altar where they are exchanged for the miracle. We need not be stuck in fear, nor hang onto our stories of pain and betrayal.

We can distance ourselves from the stranger by looking at what it is up to. When the thoughts and feelings that no longer serve us are identified, we can look at them without judgment. We do this by stepping back from them and looking from outside of this dream where Jesus stands with us. We become the observer. We become the investigator of our feelings and emotions. We continue this process until we no longer identify with the stranger at all and attend more and more to the Holy Spirit's Voice within us. **"Hear His Voice assure you, quietly and sure, that you are not a stranger to your Father, nor is your Creator stranger made to you."** (W.160.8.4) God knows us as the Christ Self that we are and does not see the ego at all. He does not know of this illusion. How could He when none of it is real? **"His vision sees no strangers, but beholds His Own and joyously unites with them."** (W.160.9.2)

We can be truly thankful that **"Christ has come to search the world for what belongs to Him."** (W.160.9.1) He does not see anything but the truth of who we are. All of our fears, our worries, our feelings of aloneness and separateness, our angst and our sadness have been answered in His Call. Now we willingly follow our pathway home to the Self that is nothing but love. We no longer need to continue to identify with thoughts of fear. We can know this stranger is not who we are. Our identification with this stranger lessens with each step that we take on this path. It is through forgiveness of our brothers that we come to know the love that we are.

"But you will not remember Him [the Christ Self] until you look on all [your brothers] as He does." (W.160.10.4) When we accept our brothers as part of our one Self, seeing no differences, the love we are is extended through us, and we experience our Oneness on our journey back to our true home where we all belong. We all share the same wrong-minded thought system. Now the world can become a classroom where the Christ Self we share can be born again and reflect the Oneness of Heaven. In the world, Oneness is reflected by seeing everyone the same.

Let us be determined to reclaim our true home today. It is not here. Our home is **"complete and perfect as it was established."** (W.160.10.2) We have not been forgotten by Him, as He is in our minds, awaiting our acceptance. Let us today distance ourselves from the craziness of our ego thoughts and the insanity of the world and choose forgiveness in every situation. We have asked for the light, and we are determined to see. We cannot fail to know the truth. Keep watching your thoughts and see the reflection of your mind in everything and everyone. Take responsibility for what you are projecting and bring all fear thoughts and concepts to the Holy Spirit for healing. Notice how much of the time you do not accept your brothers, judge them, or are insensitive to them. Do not judge yourself in this. Simply be the observer. This world is a classroom where we can be set free as we use every opportunity for healing.

"Today we offer thanks that Christ has come to search the world for what belongs to Him. His vision sees no stranger, but beholds His Own and joyously unites with them. They see Him as a stranger, for they do not recognize themselves. Yet as they give Him welcome, they remember. And He leads them gently home again where they belong." (W.160.9) No one is forgotten.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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