

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 240 Fear is not justified in any form.

Sarah's Commentary:

To identify with the body and the world, brings fear and it certainly does seem to be justified. There are many dangers where we feel we need protection. We fear being hurt by others, getting sick, losing money, losing a job, aging, and dying. We are afraid of germs, pollution, and insects. We fear losing our material goods, our friends, those we are attached to, and ultimately, we fear death. I could go on and on, but you get the point. We have thousands of fear thoughts. Our lives are all about fear. Fear is the content of the ego mind. In fact, all the ego is, is a fear thought. It is the imposter, the false self, that seems to have invaded our pristine home. It is deception because, although we have bought into it, it is not real. And now, **"It attests that you have seen yourself as you could never be, and therefore look upon a world which is impossible."** (W.240.1.2)

In Lesson 153, Jesus says that this sense of threat we live with is much deeper than we even realize, but we cover it up with many distractions. The ego needs to keep us from seeing how much fear is in the mind. When we become aware of the deep level of threat, we become motivated to investigate its source and bring it to the light. All fear comes from the belief we have sinned and done something terribly wrong and deserve to be punished.

The core of our learning today is, **"Not one thing in this world is true."** (W.240.1.3) If that is so, what is there to fear? All our fears would be seen to be foolish because if there is nothing true in this world or about this world and all the forms of this world (including our bodies) are false, then our fears are about nothing. In fact, the ego is nothing but a false belief. Now we can choose to withdraw our investment in it. Whatever it has to say is not the truth, yet to hear what is running in the mind, we must tune in to the dirge we sing to ourselves. Otherwise, we continue to listen, without awareness, to what the ego is telling us about ourselves. We can choose not to listen to the ego but turn to the clarity available in the mind. We are not the victim of the ego. We are not trapped in its grasp. Because we chose it, we can take responsibility for giving it up. How we experience the world depends on which voice we follow—the ego or the Holy Spirit.

The Course is summed up by the words, **"Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God."** (T.IN.2.2) (ACIM OE T.IN.4) This is it in a nutshell. It is all there is to recognize—no more than that. Jesus says the same thing in any number of ways in the Course. We seem to need all these words given us in the Course to become motivated to come to the recognition that indeed nothing real can be threatened and nothing unreal exists.

The world of form is all an illusion, but it is valuable for our learning because **"It witnesses but to your own illusions of yourself."** (W.240.1.5) In other words, we can see the guilt and self-attacking thoughts reflected from the situations we experience in the world. It mirrors to us what is in the mind and is thus very helpful as a classroom for healing. Everything starts in our own

minds and all effects are the result of our own thoughts. The guilt in the mind is projected on people and situations in the world. Now the world delivers what we think we have coming to us. The punishment that is delivered by the world reinforces the belief in our bodily existence. We believe we have caused pain to others. We believe there is a real world that has real effects on us. It all witnesses to the thought system of the ego based on sin, guilt and fear.

Increasingly, we recognize **"How foolish are our fears!"** (W.240.2.1) With our dedication to the truth, we gain faith in our true reality as the Son of God, unlimited, eternal and **"each a part of Love Itself."** (W.240.1.8) What can we fear when we accept our reality as the magnificent, changeless, completely innocent, eternal beings of light and love we are? Nothing we think we have done has happened in reality. As we start to accept the truth of this for ourselves, our sense of safety, security and certainty is enhanced so that even when we are going through difficult times, we know we are safe. When we put this teaching to the test, we gain faith in the strength and power within.

When I am afraid, I don't think I am deceiving or fooling myself. I think there is something real, threatening my well-being, so my defenses go up, and I put strategies in place to protect myself. When we look honestly at our experiences, we become aware we are afraid all the time. Oh, we might have moments of peace and release from fear in the holy instant, but mostly we are reminded daily of our fears. We look out at a world that we think has the power to hurt us. By valuing anything outside of ourselves, we give it power. We feel manipulated and controlled by forces seemingly outside of our own minds, and we build defenses against them and try to control the outcome. Thus, we keep reinforcing our fears. Yet Jesus reminds us that through forgiveness fear is released because guilt is released. He assures us that when we accept our innocence, we know nothing can harm us because we no longer identify with the body. When our minds are healed and we live in the happy dream, we are no longer controlled by anything outside the mind.

Recently, I picked some stinging nettles in my garden. Unfortunately for me, I was not wearing gloves. The pain felt very intense. My immediate reaction was to look to magic for relief. I checked on the internet for remedies and went through any number of options, only to experience continued discomfort. It was when the remedies had no effect that I realized I could put my mind to a higher power, rather than relying on my own attempts at addressing the pain. I realized that I did not have to see this situation as a problem, nor did I need to identify with the pain. I reminded myself that I am not this body and the pain I was feeling was a projection of my mind. I inquired further and noticed I had recently made a judgment about which I felt guilty. I reminded myself that a healed mind would not be upset but simply be willing to release the mistake. I inquired why I thought this punishment was warranted. What I uncovered when I went deeper was a feeling of unworthiness, or the "I am bad" thought. I recognized that this could not be the truth about me. I gave this thought over to the Holy Spirit. With this deeper work, the pain eased considerably, and I gave it no more attention. I was grateful for this experience, as it was an invitation to inquire more deeply into the source of the pain in the mind and my belief in the body as real.

We do think our bodies and our personalities define us, but as we progress on this journey and continue to apply these Lessons to the situations in our lives, we experience more and more clarity. Our trust in the elusive, changeable, and temporary things of this world is diminished.

In the Manual for Teachers, Section 16 **"How should the teacher of God spend his day?"** we are reminded, **"There is one thought in particular that should be remembered throughout the day. It is a thought of pure joy; a thought of peace, a thought of limitless release, limitless because all things are freed within it. You think you made a place of safety for yourself. You think you made a power that can save you from all the fearful things you see in dreams. It is not so. Your safety lies not there. What you**

give up is merely the illusion of protecting illusions. And it is this you fear, and only this. How foolish to be afraid of nothing! Nothing at all! Your defenses will not work, but you are not in danger. You have no need of them. Recognize this, and they will disappear. And only then will you accept your real protection." (M.16.6.1-14)

We can continue to lock our doors and take our medicine when we are sick if we are still too fearful to put our faith in God. Nor should we deride ourselves for not being further along in our healing. As a friend and teacher reminded me, "The slow way is the fast way." In other words, we may wish to be further along in the undoing process than we are, but this is not helpful because it is a self-judgment that brings more guilt. It is better to be in acceptance of where we are, which allows us to stop and look more deeply at the roadblocks we are setting up. It is not unlike the tortoise and the hare. Slow and steady will get us to our goal, but we must be clear on our goal. What is it we want? If we want to wake up, we must continue to use each situation that arises in which there is fear and bring it to our attention for healing. **"By not supporting them, it [salvation] merely lets them quietly go down to dust."** (W.PII.Q2.3.3)

When we engage in healing, we give healing to the world. **"The song of our rejoicing is the call to all the world that freedom is returned, that time is almost over, and God's Son has but an instant more to wait until his Father is remembered, dreams are done, eternity has shined away the world, and only Heaven now exists at all."** (W.PII.Q2.5.2)

Remember to be content with your learning and not to be impatient with yourself, which is just another form of self-attack. We have chosen to heal the belief in separation. The entire Course is one of making this choice over and over with each problem, with each seeming difficulty, with each fear that comes up, and with all grievances. This choice seems to be spread over a long period of time, but time, too, is an illusion. We are already what we are seeking, but we now use time for healing and to remember the truth of what we already are.

To remember God is to see innocence in each brother and thus accept our own Every attack we make reinforces guilt and keeps us unaware of our Oneness. It is what the ego would have us do to keep us locked into the cycle of guilt and fear. We have been given a way out. Jesus is the way-shower. He tells us that in giving up grievances and attack thoughts, we can return to the truth of what we are, and thus fear dissipates because there is no longer any justification for it. In other words, we no longer see any basis for fear. It is simply a thought to which we have given attention and power it does not have.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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