

## ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



### LESSON 42

#### God is my strength. Vision is His gift.

##### Sarah's Commentary:

As we do these Lessons, we are now using our time for its intended purpose, which is to awaken from this dream state. Jesus reminds us that nothing is random in our journey in the world. Our passage through time and space is not chaotic nor accidental. We have chosen this life, and whatever happens is in our script by our own choosing. It has been chosen with the ego to support our individuality, our specialness, and uniqueness. We have established, through this choice for the ego thought system, that we are victims of a world that seems to cause us pain, suffering, challenges, and difficulties of all sorts. When we make the decision to wake up from this dream of pain and suffering, all aspects of our lives, that are in our script, can become a classroom for awakening to our true Identity when we turn to the Holy Spirit for His interpretation.

We are not at the mercy of outside forces that cause us difficulties. We are only at the mercy of our own mistaken perceptions, based on our interpretations. Someone says or does something we think is directed at us and we get upset. **"This is shown by the fact that you react to your interpretations as if they were correct."** (T.12.I.2.3) (ACIM OE T.11.I.2) Yet we are given an opportunity to learn that none of it is personal. **"It is always an interpretation that gives rise to negative emotions, regardless of their seeming justification by what appears as facts."** (M.17.4.2) When our interpretations are turned over to the Holy Spirit, He will reinterpret everything for us as love, or a call for love, because that is all there is. **"For truth is true, and nothing else is true."** (W.138.4.6) He reminds us that the only truth is who we are as the One Son. Everything in our lives is just a means to learn to forgive everything that is not true.

**"You cannot but be in the right place at the right time. Such is the strength of God. Such are His gifts."** (W.42.2.4-6) Everything can be used for awakening when we are willing to use every situation as a classroom for learning to undo the false self. Everything can be used as a lesson in forgiveness. Yesterday, I experienced a seemingly minor event where Don accused me of something I had not done. It was a minor accusation and "no big deal" from an outsider's perspective, but I turned it into a "big deal" as it elicited in me all kinds of other grievances. This seemingly "minor" irritation showed me the extent of the rage in me. Looking from above the battleground helped me to see the drama and to watch the character of Sarah in the dream, believing she was being unfairly treated. The ego calls for retaliation, but I am not the ego. It constantly beckons us to justify anger and retaliation. Now we have a decision to make. Do I choose Heaven or hell? Which will it be? We always have an opportunity for this choice in every moment that we are triggered. When the decision is made to forgive, the choice for Heaven is made, and when the decision is made for retaliation, it is a choice for hell and for maintenance of the false self. The power of choice is always available to us. When we choose with the strength of God in us, vision is ours.

Jesus assures us we will not refuse His gift of vision forever. **"God is indeed your strength, and what He gives is truly given. This means that you can receive it any time and anywhere, wherever you are, and in whatever circumstance you find yourself."** (W.42.2.1-2) At some point, we will agree to cooperate with Him, but when that time comes is up to us. This is where our will comes into play. The circumstances we find ourselves in don't matter. What has been given in our creation is already there NOW. There is nothing to seek. It is only a journey of undoing our wrong-minded interpretations with the help of the Holy Spirit. That is why Jesus says we need do nothing. There is nothing we can do but come to full acceptance of what we already are. It is to accept the Atonement. **"Release is given you the instant you desire it."** (T.18.VII.4.3) (ACIM OE T.18.VIII.66) We have not changed ourselves. We are simply unaware of the reality of our Being, which is complete, perfect, and holy. We can't go against His Will in establishing what we are because there is nothing we can do to change the truth about us. Our power comes from His strength, not our own. Our vision comes from His gift, and His gift has no conditions. It can be received by us wherever we are, in whatever place, and whatever time we choose. The gift is freely given by God. The goal of the Course is for us to accept His vision. It is His gift to us and comes from His strength. Vision allows us to see past the illusion to the truth. It offers us consistent peace.

It seems that striving and worrying are thus totally needless. We simply can't mess up! Even our mistakes can be used for our benefit. When we bring our issues to the Holy Spirit for healing, He responds with His gifts, which extend to all. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we are released from any hell, misery and suffering we have made. **"You are prepared. Now you need but to remember you need do nothing. It would be far more profitable now merely to concentrate on this than to consider what you should do."** (T.18.VII.5.4-6) (ACIM OE T.18.VIII.67) Through demonstration, we communicate that this release from the ego's dominance in our lives so others can see it is available to them as well. We become an example of the choice available to everyone. This is what true leadership is about.

Yes, we can delay, yet **"Nothing is ever lost but time, which in the end is meaningless."** (T.26.V.2) (ACIM OE T.26.VI.31) It is a matter of readiness and is up to each of us when we will say "yes" to God. It is when we recognize on our own that we can't resolve anything. It is to recognize that we have been wrong about everything. **"What happiness have you sought here that did not bring you pain?"** (T.30.V.9.7) (ACIM OE T.30.VI.65) Until the pain becomes unbearable, we will still keep trying to do life our way. In spite of our efforts to do life on our own our true reality remains intact. Whatever we do, we simply can't change the truth about ourselves. That is what the Atonement principle is all about. While we can refuse the truth as long as we want, we can't change the fact we did not separate from God and are still His holy Son.

Why the resistance? We continue to want to do it our way. We still fear the power of our minds to choose love. We have run away from who we are in truth, and have chosen our separate, individual selves. We continue to rely on our little efforts when we can be carried by His strength. Yet the outcome of this struggle is inevitable. Our tolerance for pain has a limit. **"Tolerance for pain may be high, but it is not without limit. Eventually everyone begins to recognize, however dimly, that there *must* be a better way. As this recognition becomes more firmly established, it becomes a turning point. This ultimately reawakens spiritual vision."** (T.2.III.3.5-8) (ACIM OE T.2.II.48) All of us are at this turning point currently. We are undertaking to do this Course because we have made the decision to use time to awaken from this dream. Now we have come to a branch in the road, and we can either go forward or we go nowhere at all.

**“When you come to the place where the branch in the road is quite apparent, you cannot go ahead. You must go either one way or the other. For now if you go straight ahead, the way you went before you reached the branch, you will go nowhere. The whole purpose of coming this far was to decide which branch you will take now. The way you came no longer matters. It can no longer serve. No one who reaches this far can make the wrong decision, although he can delay. And there is no part of the journey that seems more hopeless and futile than standing where the road branches, and not deciding on which way to go. (T.22.IV.1)(ACIM OE T.22.V.38)**

We can't give ourselves vision. Our part is to watch the mind for the dense clouds of beliefs, concepts and judgments and put them on the inner altar so we can experience the quiet place within. Vision is a gift. It is a gift available to us anytime we choose. **"Those who are certain of the outcome can afford to wait, and wait without anxiety."** (M.4.VIII.1) We are called to be gentle but firm with ourselves in doing the Lessons. If we truly want vision, we have to do the work in mind training. An undisciplined mind cannot accomplish anything. As we undertake this practice, we open up to who we really are as we were created. No matter how much we think we have changed ourselves, no matter how bad we feel about ourselves or how much we believe we have corrupted ourselves, it is an impossible feat. We are as God created us. We can't make ourselves into something we are not. We are holy because that is how we were created. We hide from that reality by judging how things should be, finding fault, wishing things were different, trying to find happiness in the world, and pretending we know what is good for us. When that does not work, we play the victim. "How could this happen to me?" We hold God responsible for our condition, asking why He has abandoned us. In truth, we have abandoned Him, but we don't want to take responsibility for this, so we deny our power.

**"There are two teachers only, who point in different ways. And you will go along the way your chosen teacher leads. There are but two directions you can take, while time remains and choice is meaningful. For never will another road be made except the way to Heaven. You but choose whether to go toward Heaven, or away to nowhere. There is nothing else to choose."** (T.26.V.1.7-12) (ACIM OE T.26.VI.30) This makes our choice really simple. Every time we choose the ego, we waste time and maintain our suffering. When we choose God's strength in us and choose His vision, we gladden ourselves. This power to choose is in our decision-making minds.

This Course can take us all the way home. There is nothing more we need for our awakening. These Lessons, together with our study of the text, provide a complete thought system. Jesus says the idea today is **". . . teaching you that you are studying a unified thought system in which nothing is lacking that is needed, and nothing is included that is contradictory or irrelevant."** (W.42.7.2) This is an important point. Once you have decided on the Course as your path, mixing it up with other paths will only confuse you. Recognize it is a unified thought system with nothing lacking. The Course offers us everything we need to go home. One way we resist waking up from this dream is to distract ourselves with all kinds of spiritual pursuits. This smorgasbord approach to spirituality can become just another ego distraction.

Our motivation to achieve vision is determined by how much investment we give to each Lesson. **"The more often you repeat the idea during the day, the more often you will be reminding yourself that the goal of the course is important to you, and that you have not forgotten it."** (W.42.8.1) This can be said about most, if not all, of the Lessons. We need to remind ourselves of the truth, so the Voice of truth becomes the Voice we listen to more and more consistently. The chatter of the ego is what we have come to identify with in this world, and it does not have our best interests in mind. The ego is not who we are. It does not define us.

We are asked to not fight the ego because to fight it is like fighting darkness. It is to fight a puff of nothingness that we have given power to. With God as your strength, ". . . **you cannot fail in your efforts to achieve the goal of the course. You will see because it is the Will of God.**" (W.42.1.2-3) If it were by our will, or by our strength or determination, that we had to overcome the ego and achieve vision, we would certainly not have the power to do so. The ego will never undo itself. We need to rely on the Holy Spirit within to do the healing. He is the light that shines away the darkness. Our part is simply to look at the darkness without judgment. It sounds simple, but it requires great vigilance. It requires that we take responsibility for our projections and become very honest and courageous in looking at the ego thought system.

Today in our morning and evening practice, repeat the idea slowly with your eyes open, looking about you, then close your eyes and repeat the idea again even slower than before. Allow related thoughts to come to mind. Do not strain or actively try to think them up. "**Try merely to step back and let the thoughts come.**" (W.42.6.2) Also, remind yourself to do this frequently throughout the day, the more the better.

Love and blessings, Sarah  
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