

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 64 **Let me not forget my function.**

Sarah's Commentary:

Is this a happy day for you? If not, can you look at what appears to be interfering with your happiness? Are you angry at someone? Is something happening that seems to justify unhappiness? Do you believe someone or something is causing you grief? Do you believe someone has wronged you? Is there some expectation you have that you believe has not been met? Do you have a relationship that seems to be off track? Or maybe there is something in the news you don't like or something that seems to be happening somewhere in the world? Are you disappointed about something? Do you feel betrayed or wronged by someone? Are you upset about something you have said or done? Do you feel stressed by the many things you feel must be done today? Are you worried about your future or about money?

This Lesson says that anything we use to hide our happiness is a choice we have made to abandon God. Another way to say this is that we have made a choice to abandon our Self—the Self we are in truth. The purpose of everything in the world is to conceal the truth of our Self. In other words, we are afraid of the love we are. We use all the forms of the world, meaning the circumstances and events in our lives, to justify why we can't be happy. That is what all our stories are about. We want to be right about the way we see things. There is a temptation to use the world and what is happening in our lives to maintain the separation. **"The purpose of the world you see is to obscure your function of forgiveness, and provide you with a justification for forgetting it."** (W.64.1.2) That is why the world was made, so we could project responsibility for our condition on others and blame them for how we feel.

Whenever we feel unhappy, worried, distressed, or frustrated, it is an indication we are thinking incorrectly about something or someone. Bob Newhart satirizes this beautifully in his humorous vignette, which can be seen on YouTube and is called *Just Stop It!* In it, he makes the point that at anytime we choose, we can stop listening to our stories of grief and pain. The longer we delay in becoming aware of the dirge we sing to ourselves and the longer it takes to stop listening to our story the longer we stay in hell. As we become aware of our thoughts, we can then choose to let them go. We don't need to turn every situation into a story and allow the mind to go where it may. We can stop it at the first attack thought we notice rather than go down the rabbit hole! It is that simple, but not necessarily that easy, because the mind tends to hang onto thoughts and justify positions we have taken. If you find yourself unwilling to change your mind, simply ask for help to become more willing. If the resistance is very high it may be a good idea just to give yourself a break until there is more willingness to release the mind from its present position.

If you say you are unhappy with someone in your life, you have judged them and determined they are not meeting your needs. You may feel sad, angry, jealous, disappointed, hurt, or even betrayed. Whatever you feel, the point is that it has nothing to do with the other person. Your interpretations of the person and situation and your reactions are about you. In each situation, you have a choice to blame, retaliate, and accuse, or you could go inward and be willing to see that you are the one

that set up this situation for your own learning and healing. If you are willing to see this is your classroom for healing your mind, then everything in your day serves this purpose. There is never anything wrong. Bring any issue to the Holy Spirit and ask for His help so He can reinterpret it for you. This is what forgiveness is about. It is not what we have learned about forgiveness in this culture, which is about forgiving someone who has done something wrong. Jesus calls this **"forgiveness-to-destroy."** (Song of Prayer 2.II.1) The definition of forgiveness, given us by Jesus, is about undoing our own misperceptions on behalf of our own happiness. It is not about forgiving anyone because **"Forgiveness recognizes what you thought your brother did to you has not occurred. It does not pardon sins and make them real. It sees there was no sin."** (W.PII.Q1.1 1-3) The problem is always with our own interpretation. All events are neutral. It is only the meaning we give them that needs to be released.

No one in the world has the power to fix what is unhealed in our own minds. Yes, we can manipulate others to address our needs, which may satisfy us temporarily, but it will never heal the guilt in the mind. Healing requires that we release our grievances so we can experience the truth of who we are. This Lesson says that when we forgive, **"happiness becomes inevitable."** (W.64.4.2) If we don't, we are choosing to remain unhappy. How insane is that? **"Therefore, every time you choose whether or not to fulfill your function, you are really choosing whether or not to be happy."** (W.64.4.4) Why would we choose against our own happiness? Certainly, we would not do it if we really understood how all this works. That is why Jesus is so patient in showing us how the ego has set it all up. When we become aware of how the ego keeps us in the cycle of sin, guilt, and fear, we become motivated to apply this teaching on behalf of our happiness.

The purpose of the world is to ensure that we never remember who we are and never take responsibility for the fact that we are the makers of this world and responsible for our own condition. It is a big smokescreen that keeps our true Self from our awareness. Now we believe that events in the world, situations in our lives, and people who annoy us, have the power to take away our peace and thus seemingly give us reasons to be angry instead of forgiving. We have conveniently forgotten that we threw away peace in the first place, and now we project responsibility for that decision onto our brothers and blame them for taking the peace, joy, and love away from us. Therefore, we justify withholding forgiveness because the ego gives us a multitude of reasons to be angry.

Our minds can become quite obsessive and looping by going over and over what someone has done. Do you notice how incessant this kind of self-talk can be? The ego is like a dog with a bone, chewing and chewing on what someone has said or done, and what we should do in return. Yet we can choose not to listen to these thoughts. The thinker of these thoughts is not who we are. I have become quite stern at times with myself in this regard. There are times I declare quite firmly that I will absolutely not listen to what the ego has to say, and when I can catch its perspectives and turn away from them or simply be amused by them, it makes for more peace and sanity in my life. I remind myself that the one observing these thoughts is the truth of what I am, not the thinker of the thoughts.

This Lesson reminds us that when we withhold forgiveness, we are actually making a choice not to be happy. We have such resistance to letting go of our grievances. Ultimately, we have come to believe we are our thoughts, and without them, we would lose our identity as we know it, and that frightens us so we stay in control. We also want to feel innocent and our way to that goal is to see others as guilty. The ego has designed it that way. It has obscured our function from us by making a world and a body we believe is our reality. **"It is the temptation to abandon God and His Son by taking on a physical appearance."** (W.64.1.3) All temptation is about seeing ourselves as bodies, which will ensure the ego thought system remains untouched. It is a

temptation to believe others are hurting us and are responsible for our pain. We are now being shown another way.

We resist acceptance of these Lessons because we would rather see sin all around us, but not in ourselves. We would rather blame others than take responsibility for our condition. The ego has made it all very convincing by giving us senses that show us what we are seeing is real. The body's eyes do not see, but we think they do. Yet we see only what the mind tells us to see. **"Nothing the body's eyes seem to see can be anything but a form of temptation, since this was the purpose of the body itself. Yet we have learned that the Holy Spirit has another use for all the illusions you have made, and therefore He sees another purpose in them. To the Holy Spirit, the world is a place where you learn to forgive yourself what you think of as your sins. In this perception, the physical appearance of temptation becomes the spiritual recognition of salvation."** (W.64.2.1-4)

It can be hard to accept this because we identify with the body and with the world. We have come to believe that what we see and what we perceive with our senses is the truth. We believe the world is exactly as we see it. Yet Jesus keeps reminding us, **"The purpose of the world you see is to obscure your function of forgiveness, and provide you with a justification for forgetting it."** (W.64.1.2) We all experience how difficult it can be to keep our minds on our function, meaning to keep focused on forgiveness and spiritual truth. We all find it easy to forget our function. Forgetting the purpose that is our calling is so easily done as we are confronted with thousands of distractions each day. Many things in our day seem to require our attention and our action. Thus, we have all kinds of justifications for forgetting our Lessons. This is what wandering into temptation is about. **"Today's idea is merely another way of saying 'Let me not wander into temptation.'"** (W.64.1.1) The temptation comes from the focus on the body, and its needs, and the problems we confront daily.

Everything in the world is just another temptation for us to forget our only reason to be here, which is to practice forgiveness. Everyone who comes into our lives and every situation and circumstance we encounter offers us another opportunity to learn that. Let's not forget that today. Make the decision first thing in the morning to remember your commitment throughout the day, and **"Prepare yourself in advance for all the decisions you will make today by remembering they are all really very simple. Each one will lead to happiness or unhappiness."** (W.64.5.3-4)

It does not seem to us that all decisions are ultimately simple. We seem to have a variety of complex decisions to make every day and many of them confound us and confuse us as to which way to go and what to do; but he says we should remember they are all very simple. The simplicity is that there is only one choice to be made in every situation. The choice is for the ego or for the Holy Spirit. It is a choice for the grievance or the miracle. That is all.

"Complexity of form does not imply complexity of content. It is impossible that any decision on earth can have a content different from just this one simple choice." (W.64.5.7-8) The only important thing is to choose forgiveness. While forms of this world are complex, the content is only love or fear. The world of form is just an ego device to distract us from this simple choice and keep us invested in the seeming complexities of the world of form. Today, let us be determined to remember our function, no matter what confronts us.

I find the prayer at the end of Chapter 5 very helpful when I am not at peace. The prayer says:

***"I must have decided wrongly because I am not at peace."
I made the decision myself, but I can also decide otherwise.
I want to decide otherwise, because I want to be at peace.***

***I do not feel guilty, because the Holy Spirit will undo all the consequences of my wrong decision if I let Him.
I choose to let Him, by allowing Him to decide for God for me."***
(T.5.VII.6.7-11) (ACIM OE T.5.IX.96)

We have the power to change our minds. We have the decision-making capacity in our minds. No one, not even God, can override the power of our decision. There are times it does seem herculean to release our bitterness, anger, and disappointments, which is why we need to ask for help of the Holy Spirit, Who is in our right minds. With our invitation and our choice for His guidance, we are freed. Without this help, we would stay on the ego's treadmill forever, having only interludes of seeming peace and respite based on outside circumstances.

I notice when I join with others in doing guilt-clearing sessions, the hardest thing for everyone to do is to take responsibility for the projections they have put onto others. It seems that the evidence we have gathered for our brothers' misdeeds is so convincing to us that we would rather keep defending our conclusions about them than to release them. Therefore, we need to start with a strong desire to change our minds and choose peace and happiness instead of our own perceptions, which are never right. It can be a challenging process, but the outcome is a state of peace and joy unshaken by outside events.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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