

# Workbook Lesson Support Notes

by Allen Watson

**LESSON 135**

**May 15**

**“If I defend myself I am attacked.”**

## **PRACTICE SUMMARY**

**Purpose:** To come without defense and learn your part in God’s plan. To anticipate with present confidence the time when your light, joined with the light of your followers, will light up the world with joy. A special day for learning; a giant stride for you; Eastertime in your salvation.

**Longer:** 2 times for 15 minutes

- Say: “If I defend myself I am attacked. But in defenselessness I will be strong, and I will learn what my defenses hide.”
- Then rest from all planning and all thoughts that would block the truth from your mind. Without defense present yourself to your Creator. Receive from Him so that you may give. If there are plans, you will be told. They may not be the ones you expected, nor answer the problems you saw. They are answers to a crucial question that is yet unanswered.

**Remarks:** In light of simple trust, you will wonder why you ever raised defenses, which

only defended you against what you will receive today. The light of hope will be reborn in you, for you come without defense to learn you function. You will be sure that everything you need for this function will be given you if you will just be defenseless and lay aside planning.

**Response To Temptation:** throughout the day

Whenever your defensiveness tempts you to weave plans, say: "This is my Eastertime. And I would keep it holy. I will not defend myself, because the Son of God needs no defense against the truth of his reality."

**Remarks:** Try not to shape and organize the day as you think would benefit you. Instead, learn the inconceivable happiness that comes from His plans, not yours and the whole world will celebrate your Eastertime with you.

## COMMENTARY

"If I defend myself I am attacked." The general thought that heads this lesson states that all forms of defense are actually witnesses to attack, or to your belief in attack. If you see a need for a defense, you must be perceiving an attack.

The self you think you are is something so weak it needs defense; your true Self, which is mind or spirit, needs no defense. This lesson shows that when you make plans whose purpose is to defend your small "self" (the image you have made of yourself, comprised of your ego and its expression, the body) you are indirectly attacking your true Self, because you perceive that Self as attacking "you."

The Course continually teaches us that "all attack is self-attack" (T-10.II.5:1; line not in 1st ed.). It says we are constantly attacking ourselves, but that we are blind to the fact. We think the attack is coming from somewhere outside ourselves, and never realize that it stems from our own thoughts of guilt. It advises us, over and over, to look carefully at what we are doing and thinking, to recognize the self-attack in what we do, and to choose to let go of it.

Lesson 135 applies this general principle to a particular area of our lives that we have probably never thought of as a form of self-attack: planning.

First, it points out that all defenses are a form of self-attack because they make the illusion of threat real, and then attempt to handle them as if they were real. It asks us to

look closely at what we think we are defending, how we defend it, and against what.

Second, it identifies our plans as a form of defense. Plans, Jesus says, are a form of defense against anticipated future threats. If plans are a form of defense, the reverse is true: All “Defenses are the plans you undertake to make against the truth” (Workbook, p. 247; W-135.17:1). In other words, defenses and plans are the same thing. When you set up a defense against something, you are making plans of what to do if “X” happens. All defenses are plans; and all self-initiated plans are defenses.

In sum, making plans is a form of defense, and all defenses are attacks on myself. Therefore, making plans is just another form of self-attack, to be noticed and abandoned.

Finally, the lesson discusses how “the healed mind” approaches life: not making plans, but receiving plans from the Holy Spirit, with full present trust in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with confidence in His plan. Only this approach allows for change, healing and miracles to take place in the present moment.

“A healed mind does not plan. It carries out the plans that it receives through listening to Wisdom that is not its own” (11:1, 2). This does not mean that a healed mind does not follow a plan. It follows a plan; it just doesn’t make the plan; it receives the plan through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In simple language, the healed mind listens to the Holy Spirit and does what He directs, instead of listening to the ego’s plans, which are always based on fear and take a defensive posture. The ego’s plans are always trying to protect and preserve the body; often, the plans of the Holy Spirit seem to be unconcerned about the body at all. The Holy Spirit has very different priorities.

When the Course is talking about “a healed mind” it is talking about the goal of the Course—the state your mind will be in after you graduate from the Course. This isn’t something you simply step into after reading a few lessons; this is what you will be like after working with the Course and completely integrating it into your life.

[Note from Allen: The thoughts expressed above have been taken almost directly from a booklet I wrote, “A Healed Mind Does Not Plan,” published by The Circle of Atonement. This is a 48-page booklet that deals entirely with the subject of planning and decision-making as taught in ACIM.]

## LESSON 136

May 16

**“Sickness is a defense against the truth.”**

## **PRACTICE SUMMARY**

**Longer:** 2 times for 15 minutes

- Begin with this healing prayer, to help you rise above defenses so that truth can come and set you free: “Sickness is a defense against the truth. I will accept the truth of what I am, and let my mind be wholly healed today.”
- Open your mind and let healing flash across it. The light of truth will come to illuminate all the dark corners of sickness where dim figures pursued double purposes. Your mind will be healed of all the sick wishes it directed the body to obey.

**Remarks:** If you practiced well your body will have no feeling at all, no feeling of illness or wellness, of pain or pleasure. It will have no power over the mind. Only its usefulness will remain. This releases the body from limits. Instead of being filled with needs for protection and sustenance, it will now be filled with continual strength to carry out its usefulness. But you must protect this with careful watching, responding quickly to any temptation to make the body real and so attack it with sickness.

### **Response To Temptation:**

Give instant remedy whenever you harbor attack thoughts, judgments or make plans. Say: “I have forgotten what I really am, for I mistook my body for myself. Sickness is a defense against the truth. But I am not a body. And my mind cannot attack. So I can not be sick.”

## **COMMENTARY**

Another of these lessons that will repay careful study; there is a lot of good stuff in here!

The main thought is plainly stated: Sickness is a means we use to defend ourselves against the truth. It is a decision we make, chosen quite deliberately when truth gets too

close for comfort, in order to distract ourselves and root ourselves once again in the body. On the bright side, then, when we get sick we can congratulate ourselves that we must have been letting in the truth in order for the ego to get this scared of it!

For instance, not too long ago Robert and I gave a weekend intensive on “We are the light of the world: Accepting our function.” In the course of it I found myself being deeply impressed by the message the Course was conveying to us all. The day after the intensive I got diarrhea. Now, there is little that brings you down to a body level like having to run to the toilet all the time! But I actually found myself being amused by it. “How like my ego!” I thought. “What a predictable reaction!” Instead of having the desired (by the ego) effect, it had the opposite; it served to *remind* me of the truth instead of distracting me from it. And guess what? It very quickly went away. “Defenses that do not work at all are automatically discarded” (T-13.I.9:8).

Most people react to being told that they choose sickness by flatly denying it. This is not something that is easy to discover. The lesson says our choice is “doubly shielded by oblivion” (5:2). We choose first to hide the pesky truth that has been nibbling away at our delusions of separation and of the physical nature of our identity by making ourselves sick; that is the original decision we made. We then choose to forget we did it; the first shield of oblivion. Finally, we forget that we chose to forget, the second shield. All of this happens in a split second (3:4; 4:2–5:1). In that split second we are conscious of what we are doing, but the shields are up so quickly that the whole process *seems* to be unconscious (3:3).

We need to remember what we have forgotten, the deliberate forgetting of our choice. We *can* remember if we are willing “to reconsider the decision which is doubly shielded,” that is, the decision to run away from the truth, the decision that truth is something against which we need to defend ourselves. This is why the exercise for the day is:

“Sickness is a defense against the truth. I will accept the truth of what I am, And let my mind be wholly healed today.”

The antidote to the whole process is not attempting to heal the sick body, but to accept the truth about myself, to let my *mind* be healed. Sickness is a side effect of rejecting the truth about myself; the cure is to accept the truth instead, to reconsider the original decision which, although veiled from conscious awareness, *must* be there for sickness to have occurred.

The lesson warns us, in the final paragraph: “Do not be confused about what must be

healed" (20:2). It isn't the body that needs healing; it is the mind. This agrees with the Text, which tells us:

"When the ego tempts you to sickness do not ask the Holy Spirit to heal the body, for this would merely be to accept the ego's belief that the body is the proper aim of healing. Ask, rather, that the Holy Spirit teach you the right *perception* of the body, for perception alone can be distorted" (T-8.IX.1:5, 6). It is that original decision to reject the truth of what we are, because it seems to threaten what we *think* we are, that must be questioned and reversed.

The lesson says some rather incredible things about the body of a person whose mind is healed, and whose body has been accepted as nothing but a tool to be used to heal the world. The body's strength "will always be enough to serve all truly useful purposes. The body's health is fully guaranteed, because it is not limited by time, by weather or fatigue, by food and drink, or any laws you made it serve before" 18:2, 3). If a body is not limited by time it does not age. Not limited by weather means it needs no clothing or shelter. Not limited by fatigue, it needs no sleep. Not limited by food or drink, it does not need to eat. Who of us can say this is true of us? Perhaps we have experienced a few glimmers of such brilliant light, fatigue thrown off, lack of food overlooked for a time.

But no one I know is at this stage of perfect trust. We have a ways to go, you and I. So I do not think we need be surprised when a cold attacks, or the flu gets us down, or even if something "more serious" happens. We're still afraid of the truth—big surprise! Rather than thinking, "Oh, why did I do this to myself? What is wrong with me that I am still getting sick?", let me say, "Oops! I made a mistake. I forgot what I really am and mistook my body for myself. Silly me! Let me remind myself that I am not a body; this isn't what I am." The "sickness" of the body can then become a catalyst for the healing of my mind, instead of a defense against the truth.

## LESSON 137

May 17

**"When I am healed I am not healed alone."**

### PRACTICE SUMMARY

**Purpose:** To let your mind be healed, that you may send healing to the world, aware

that you and the world are healed as one.

**Longer:** 2—morning and evening for 10 minutes

- Say: “When I am healed I am not healed alone. And I would share my healing with the world, that sickness may be banished from the mind of God’s one Son, Who is my Self.”
- Then rest in quiet. And as you rest, receive the Word of God to replace all your insane thoughts, and be prepared to give it to the world, to bless your brothers across the world.

**Remarks:** This exercise will prepare you for the hourly remembrances.

**Shorter:** every hour on the hour for 1 minute

Remember your function of letting your mind be healed so that you may extend healing to the world. Say: “When I am healed I am not healed alone. And I would bless my brothers, for I would be healed with them, as they are healed with me.”

**Remarks:** Is it not worth a minute to receive the gift of everything?

## COMMENTARY

Although this lesson has a great deal to say about healing in general, its primary message is that healing, which is our function in the world, is essentially a phenomenon that is shared, and that to heal *is* to share. Healing restores oneness. “Those who are healed become the instruments of healing” (11:1).

“Sickness is a retreat from others, and a shutting off of joining” (1:3). It is isolation (2:1). Healing reverses that; it is a move toward others, a joining, and a union. The healing being spoken of in this lesson is a healing of the mind, and not necessarily of the body. “Our function is to let our minds be healed, that we may carry healing to the world, exchanging ...separation for the peace of God” (13:1).

Whatever the state of my body, it cannot interfere with this function. My body cannot restrain or limit my mind. “Minds that were walled off within a body [become] free to join with other minds, to be forever strong” (8:6). My task today, and every day, is to allow my mind to be healed, and to allow healing to flow through my mind to other minds, carrying healing to the world. That can occur whatever state my body is in. I do

not normally realize how powerful my mind is, and how extensive the effects of its healing can be. “And as you let yourself be healed, you see all those around you, or who cross your mind, or whom you touch or those who seem to have no contact with you, healed along with you” (10:1).

As I open my mind to healing today, I realize that whatever the state of my body, “what is opposed to God does not exist” (11:3). When I refuse to accept sickness as my reality, my mind “becomes a haven where the weary can remain to rest” (11:3). Sickness is just a special case of “I am my body.” So what we are called on to do is not just to refuse the limitations of sickness, but to refuse the limits of the body altogether. Today, I choose to let “thoughts of healing...go forth from what is healed to what must yet be healed” (12:6). I set aside some time, ten minutes in the morning and evening, and a minute every hour, to give my mind over to its function of sharing healing thoughts with the world. “Reach out to all your brothers, and touch them with the touch of Christ” (T-13.VI.8:2).

Today, I want to let healing be through me (15:1). I want to be a channel, a channel of blessing to the world. What other purpose could bring me such joy?

## LESSON 138

May 18

**“Heaven is the decision I must make.”**

### PRACTICE SUMMARY

**Longer:** 2 times—the first and last moments of your day, for 5 minutes

Make the choice for Heaven. Say: “Heaven is the decision I must make. I make it now, and will not change my mind, because it is the only thing I want.” Realize you choose consciously between what is real and what only seems real. By bringing to light your unconscious illusion it will no longer seem enormous and fearful, but flimsy and transparent, a mere trivial mistake. You will not hesitate to choose Heaven when you see how worthless and powerless is its opposite.

**Shorter:** hourly, a brief quiet time

Maintain your sanity by declaring your choice again: “Heaven is the decision I must

make. I make it now, and will not change my mind, because it is the only thing I want.”

## COMMENTARY

The lesson makes some stark contrasts between this world and creation. One is a realm of duality, in which “opposition is part of being ‘real.’” (2:2) The other is a realm of unity, of perfect oneness: “Creation knows no opposite” (2:1). This is a classic discussion about what can be called duality and non-duality.

Non-duality, or oneness, is what is real. Where there is only oneness there can be no choice, because there is nothing between which to choose. If oneness is reality, then choice, any choice, is an illusion and nothing more. Choice is impossible, inconceivable. That is the reality.

Within our dream, however, choice is not only possible; it is inevitable, it is life. Within this world, truth cannot enter because it would be met only with fear; the choicelessness of oneness seems the ultimate threat to a mind that thinks duality is all there is. Therefore, in this world, we are learning to make one, final choice. It is a choice to end all choices, the choice between illusion and reality. Time exists for nothing but this choice, to “give us time” to make it. We are being asked to choose Heaven instead of hell.

Years ago, before I encountered the Course, I had been through a lot of things, read a lot of books, and attended a lot of seminars. I sat down one day to try to distill, in writing, what I had learned from life. I was writing for my sons, then in their teens. I recall quite clearly that at that point in my life, I felt I was only sure of two things: 1) You can trust the Universe. 2) Happiness is a decision I make. I won’t bother to comment on the first item here, but the second was something very fundamental to the Course, the realization that nothing outside my mind makes me happy or unhappy; my happiness is entirely the result of my own choice.

When I first read this lesson in the Workbook I was stunned by the similarity of the concept, even the very words. “Heaven is the decision I must make.” Perhaps the fact that I had arrived at this conclusion on my own was one of the reasons I took so rapidly to the Course; it confirmed what, to me, was the essence of my own personal wisdom, words that as far as I knew were entirely my own. Here was this book, saying the same thing. In saying that we must choose Heaven, and that this is “the decision” we have to make, the Course is saying that learning this is what life is all about. It is “the choice

that time was made to help us make" (7:1). It is a choice, a decision, that accepts the total responsibility of the mind for the way it perceives reality.

But the lesson is saying far more than this. The discussion of duality and non-duality in this lesson explains clearly why so many of us, indeed most of us, experience such tearing, inner conflict over accepting the simple truth. We have become convinced that opposites and conflict are not simply part of life, they *are* life. They *are* reality to us. "Life is seen as conflict" (7:4). This belief shows up, for instance, in the somewhat frivolous objection that Heaven, where nothing changes and there are no opposites, sounds boring. We are addicted to the drama, devoted to the delicious agony of indecision. To be without choices, to us, seems like death. To finally and completely resolve the conflict appears to us like the end of life itself.

Yet that is what the Course promises and asks of us: the end of all conflict. When this truly dawns on our minds, we often recoil in mortal terror. "These mad beliefs can gain unconscious hold of great intensity and grip the mind with terror and anxiety so strong that it will not relinquish its ideas about its own protection. It must be saved from salvation..." (8:1, 2). It is unconscious; we do not realize what is going on. But we literally run away from the truth, and shrink from total love, not knowing what we are doing. Virtually everyone who works with the Course over any length of time experiences something like this in their life. It seems as though we are being asked to die. And in a sense, we are: die to life *as we have known it*.

The only way out is through. Through fear to love. "Heaven is chosen consciously" (9:1). For a decision to be conscious, *both* alternatives must be seen clearly. We have to see hell in the plain light of day, as well as Heaven. Our fear of hell, our terror of destruction, our agony of guilt must be "raised to understanding, to be judged again, this time with Heaven's help" (9:3). It was our own mind's desire for an alternative to Heaven that made hell, and we must understand that duality is a beast of our own making—and that our desire had no *real* effect.

"Who can decide between the clearly seen and the unrecognized? Yet who can fail to make a choice between alternatives when only one is seen as valuable; the other as a wholly worthless thing, a but imagined source of guilt and pain?" (10:2, 3). Our making of duality has seemed like such a monstrous thing; buried in our unconscious it was "made enormous, vengeful, pitiless with hate," but when it is brought into conscious awareness, "Now it is recognized as but a foolish, trivial mistake" (11:4, 5). Our guilt over it is all that holds it in place. When we look at it again, "this time with Heaven's help," the choice to let it go becomes the only possible decision we can make. And in

that decision, we are released.

## LESSON 139

May 19

**“I will accept Atonement for myself.”**

### PRACTICE SUMMARY

**Purpose:** To accept the truth about yourself today, and go your way rejoicing in God’s Love.

**Longer:** 2—morning and evening for 5 minutes

- Begin by reviewing your mission: “I will accept Atonement for myself. For I remain as God created me.”
- Then accept the truth about yourself. You have not lost the knowledge of who you are. It is still in your memory, along with the knowledge of how dear your brothers are, how much a part of you. You can remember today for everyone, for all minds are one.

**Shorter:** hourly, for several minutes

Lay aside all thoughts that would distract you. Learn that the chains that would hide your Self from awareness are mere fragile cobwebs cluttering your mind, as you say: “I will accept Atonement for myself. For I remain as God created me.”

### COMMENTARY

What does it mean to accept the Atonement for myself? This lesson puts an end to any idea that this is a selfish notion, or that it means my only concern is myself, my personal happiness my only concern. Nothing could be clearer than this: “It is more than just our happiness alone we came to gain. What we accept as what we are proclaims what everyone must be, along with us” (9:4, 5).

To accept the Atonement for myself means to accept the truth of what I am, to decide to “accept ourselves as God created us” (1:2). And what am I? I already know, in my heart of hearts, but I resist knowing. This lesson is magnificent in its trechant dissection of the insanity of the way we question our Identity. It questions all our questioning. It raises all our doubts to doubt. It denies the possibility of denial. It belittles our thoughts of littleness. How can be be anything except what we are? How can we *not know* what we are? “The only thing that can be surely known by any living thing is what it is” (2:3).

God created us as extensions of His Love. That is our mission; it is what we are. To accept the Atonement is to accept this truth about ourselves. To accept the Atonement is to begin to function as God’s Love in the world.

Every time we refuse to see the magnificence in another we are denying our own. We look on others with less than love because we refuse to see how much *we* merit it. We are God’s representatives on earth; accepting the Atonement is to accept our mission. We are here to restore the grandeur of what we all are to every mind—not just to our own. This grandness, this magnificent inclusiveness, this divine generosity is our very being. We are the open heart that embraces the world, remembering “how much a part of us is every mind” (11:6).

In us our Father’s Love can contain them all. Our heart is big enough for all the world.

This is Who we are. Today, let me remember. Today, let me accept my holy aim. Today, let me know myself as part of this great throbbing, all-embracing Heart of God.

## LESSON 140

May 20

**“Only salvation can be said to cure.”**

### PRACTICE SUMMARY

**Purpose:** To change your mind about the source of sickness. To not seek to cure the body but to seek in your mind the source of healing, the cure for all illusions. God placed it in your mind, so close that you cannot lose it.

**Longer:** 2—beginning and end of day for 5 minutes

- Let all your interfering thoughts be laid aside as one, for there are all equally meaningless.
- With open hands, lifted heart and listening mind, pray: “Only salvation can be said to cure. Speak to us, Father, that we may be healed.”
- Then in stillness listen for only one voice, God’s Voice of healing, Which will cure all ills, making no distinctions among them. Feel His salvation blanket you with protection and deep peace, allowing no illusion to disturb your holy mind.

**Remarks:** You will succeed to the degree you realize there are no meaningful distinction among illusions. They are all unreal. That is why they can be cured.

**Shorter:** as the hour strikes, for a minute

- Say your healing prayer: “Only salvation can be said to cure. Speak to us, Father, that we may be healed.”
- Then listen in joyous silence, and hear God’s answer.

## COMMENTARY

The “cure” that the Course is talking about is a healing of the mind, not of the body. “The body needs no healing. But the mind that thinks it is a body is sick indeed!” (T-25.IN.3:1,2) “The lesson is the *mind* was sick that thought the body could be sick” (T-28.II.11:7). To seek a cure in the physical realm, by any means (even New Age means) is what the Course would call “magic.” (Calling it “magic” doesn’t mean we can’t use it if our fear level requires it; the Course advocates a compromise approach in such circumstances. See T-2.IV.4–5 and 2.V.2, which I discuss a bit later.) The Atonement heals the mind that thinks the body can be sick. “This is no magic” (6:4).

This lesson applies to bodily sickness, but it applies equally to any apparent “problem” in this material world: financial lack, loneliness, and so on. These problems all occur within the dream, and finding “a magic formula” within the dream is never the solution (2:2). We are “curing” the symptom and not the disease. The root of the problem is within the mind. “Let us not try today to seek to cure what cannot suffer sickness” (7:1). Our problems are not physical in nature. “We will not be misled today by what appears to us as sick” (9:1). “So do we lay aside our amulets [crystals? religious medallions?], our charms and medicines, our chants and bits of magic in whatever form they

take" (10:1).

Early in the Text, Jesus makes it clear that magic is not evil. It just doesn't really work. It is only a stop-gap, an attempt to rid ourselves of symptoms without really curing the disease. Yet sometimes that is the best we can do. We have a headache, and with a splitting headache it is often difficult to quiet the mind and peacefully meditate ourselves well. So we use magic. We take the aspirin; there is no shame in this. Only let us not deceive ourselves that we have really done anything to cure the disease; we have simply masked the symptom. "...if you are afraid to use the mind to heal, you should not attempt to do so" (T-2.V.2:2). If our fear level is high, a "compromise approach" may be necessary (T-2.IV.4:4-7).

Only salvation can be said to cure. The magic of this world can mask symptoms but not cure. "The mind that brings illusions to the truth is really changed. There is no change but this" (7:4,5). Today we are asked to practice just this: bringing our illusions to the truth, allowing our guilt to be removed from our minds. *This* cures, and nothing else. "There is no place where He is not" (5:5), and this includes our minds. Sin would keep Him out, but since He is everywhere, sin cannot be anywhere (see 5:1-7); sin cannot be in our minds. "This is the thought that cures" (6:1). Sin, and therefore sickness, cannot be real because God is in us; He has not left us, and what we think is sin cannot be so. In our awareness of His presence, guilt disappears, and with it, the cause of sickness.

## **LESSON 141 (rIV)**

**May 21**

### **REVIEW IV COMMENTS**

If you will recall, back in the Workbook Introduction we were told that "The workbook is divided into two main sections, the first dealing with the undoing of the way you see now, and the second with the acquisition of true perception" (W-IN.3:1). Although Part II does not begin for another 80 lessons, Review IV announces that we are entering a transition stage of the Workbook, "preparing for the second part of learning how the truth can be applied." Part II of the Workbook, if you will look at it, consists of lessons that are a half page long, or less. They give very few specific practice instructions, and offer us a great deal more latitude in exactly how we practice. They are geared to students who have begun to make the truths of the Course their own, and who are ready to apply them independently. This review gives us some preliminary exercises in that kind of independent practice. In Lesson 153, shortly after we complete this review,

there will be a major shift in practice, as we shall see, which will set the pattern for the practice during the rest of Part I of the Workbook.

Therefore, following the practice instructions for this review is quite important, if we want to be prepared for what is to come. You'll notice that the reviews give us nothing but the theme thought for the review and the two theme ideas being reviewed; there is no additional commentary. In a sense, we are meant to supply that commentary for ourselves. We are meant to take the ideas and let the Holy Spirit open their meaning in our own minds, without the prop of printed words to help us. "Let each word shine with the meaning God has given it, as it was given to you through His Voice" (7:4).

Perhaps you do not feel ready for this. I confess that when I first did the Workbook I pretty much lost interest after Part I; I did the lessons but really all I did was read them, think about them for a minute or two, and then forget them. The reviews such as this one seemed particularly pointless to me. Two or three sentences wasn't enough to stimulate my mind, and I was not ready, apparently, to allow the Holy Spirit to "let each word shine" in my mind. You may find yourself in the same boat. Still, I would say, try to follow the instructions. Take the few lines given for each day, and ruminate on them. Chew them over. Think about what you know of their meaning, and ask to be shown more. If it works for you, try to initiate a dialogue with the Holy Spirit about the ideas. Turn them into prayers. Think how they can apply to your life. Be still before God and let the *feeling* of the ideas wash over you. Do whatever seems to work for you.

Maybe you won't feel like you're doing very well, but what is the purpose of practice, if not to learn to do something you don't know how to do well?

Notice the theme thought for the review: My mind holds only what I think with God. The instructions tell us to spend five minutes letting this one thought, and this alone, engage our minds, and remove all other thoughts. What we are doing is clearing the stage, making way for the Holy Spirit to teach us. The five minutes spent with this idea each day is our warm-up period. We are making ourselves ready to receive the thoughts of God, through His Holy Spirit. We are preparing ourselves to hold communion with God.

Only *after* this five-minute warm-up are we instructed to take the two thoughts for review, and let their meaning illuminate our minds. There is no time limit given here; we are to review them "slowly" and with "no hurry." Surely this will be more than a few seconds! More like several minutes, at the least. The best way is to be able to do this review without concern about time; if we take five minutes or twenty-five, it does not matter. The important thing is that we commune with God, and let His thoughts fill our

minds. As the review says of our hourly review sessions, we should take “time enough to see the gifts that they [the two ideas] contain for you, and let them be received where they were meant to be” (8:2). The exact amount of time you spend is left to you.

## **PRACTICE SUMMARY**

### **Review IV**

**Purpose:** To prepare for part II of the Workbook, by concentrating on readiness for it and by reviewing the last 20 lessons in a way that will facilitate that readiness.

**Longer:** 2—beginning and ending of the day, for 5 minutes or more.

- Open your mind, clear it of all distracting thoughts. For five minutes let this thought alone occupy it, displacing all others: “My mind holds only what I think with God.”
- Read the day’s two ideas. Close eyes and repeat ideas slowly, without hurry, for this is what time was made for. Let each word shine with the meaning God gave it. Receive from each idea the gift God placed in it.

**Remarks:** Phase 1 will be enough to set your day along the lines God planned, making it a special time of blessing for you and for the world. It will be enough to place Him in charge of all your thoughts. Your thoughts will come from more than you. They will also come from Him and tell you of His Love. Thus will you, His completion, join with Him. And He, your completion, will join with you. He thanks you for your practicing. And as your day ends, His gratitude will surround you.

**Shorter:** hourly a quiet moment

- Say: “My mind holds only what I think with God.” Spend a quiet moment with it.
- Then repeat the day’s two ideas, slowly enough to see their gifts and receive their gifts.

## **COMMENTARY (Lesson 141)**

“My mind holds only what I think with God.”

“Forgiveness is the key to happiness.”

“Forgiveness offers everything I want.”

Forgiveness really does offer us everything we want, and without true forgiveness, happiness just isn't possible. We may not consciously and completely believe this as yet, but our right mind believes it, and always has. Forgiveness operates not just on what I think the world did to me (in reality it did nothing to me), but also on what it *did not* do that I wanted it to. The older one gets, the more disillusioned one becomes about the world. We speak of people becoming “world-weary” and cynical as they age, because despite the high hopes we had when younger, despite the brilliant promises the world seemed to make to us, it disappointed us. It did not make us happy. We discover that the world isn't fair, that good people don't always succeed, that we don't always get what we want. And even when we do, it isn't as good as we had hoped.

Forgiveness involves recognizing that we are the ones who laid these expectations on the world, and we are the ones who made it to disappoint us. We asked the impossible; nothing in this world will ever satisfy us or make us happy. Happiness is in our native state and there alone, union with God and with the Sonship. To forgive the world means to stop begrudging its imperfections. We cannot blame the world for our pain, nor can we blame it for its failure to make us happy. We cannot blame it at all. When at last our teeth unclench, our fists relax, and our breath eases as we release these deep-seated grievances, what we discover is our own inherent happiness, there all along, but masked by our unforgiveness.