

Workbook Commentary

LESSON 168

June 17

“Your grace is given me. I claim it now.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Purpose: To ask God to give us His grace, by which He takes His final step, giving us first the gift of vision, and then eternal knowledge. This step will lift us into Heaven, restore all forgotten memories and give us certainty of Love. This is a new and holy day.

Morning/Evening Quiet Time: 5 minutes—at least; 10—better; 15 even better; 30 or more—best

To God we pray, using the words He gave us: “Your grace is given me. I claim it now. Father, I come to You. And You will come to me who ask. I am the son You love.”

Hourly Remembrance: as the hour strikes, for more than 1 minute (reduce if circumstances do not permit)

Sit quietly and wait on God’s grace.

Frequent Reminder: Repeat idea.

Response To Temptation: Whenever you feel tempted, acknowledge your mistake, and let God give you the means to lay it down and rise to Him.

COMMENTARY

What is grace?

This lesson answers, not in the impassive terms of a formal definition, but in the picture of a warm, personal conversation with God. “God speaks to us. Shall we not speak to Him?” (1:1–2) Grace is the concomitant of God’s love, something that comes along with it as part of the package. He has always loved us (1:7–11). Grace is the effect or application of that love which guarantees His Love will be fully recognized and received. Grace is whatever it takes to bring us out of our sleep. It is the movement of love that woos us back to Him, the quiet whisper of His Voice in our minds that will not let us go, the careful planning of our curriculum to help us unlearn everything we have taught ourselves of fear, the activity of Spirit that works constantly to win back our trust, restore our joy, assuage our guilt. It is His answer to our despair. It is the means by which we recognize His Will (2:3–4).

His grace is given me. His grace is “a given,” a certainty, part of what it means that God is Love. It is a gift, always available, always being given, awaiting only my acknowledgment (2:5). It is “the gift by which God leans to us and lifts us up” (3:2). And ultimately, grace is that aspect of His Love in which “finally He comes Himself, and takes us in His Arms and sweeps away the cobwebs of our sleep” (3:4).

Shall I not, then, today, sit down for a few minutes of quiet conversation with this God of Love? Can I not take the time even to ask Him to grant me this grace, which He has already granted? Can I not express my willingness to receive it, to allow this sorry world to disappear from my sight, replaced by true vision? Can I not tell Him that I long, at least in part of myself, to be

swept into His Arms? I may feel as though I am making some kind of surrender or concession; I may believe I am giving something up, or losing something dear to me. Yet if this opening to grace is surrender at all, it is surrender only to love. It is a sigh of lost resistance to what I have always, always wanted. It is a loss of pretense, a falling back into what I have always been. It is surrender to my Self. It is capitulation to my Beloved; nothing more than that, and nothing less. It is the ultimate manifestation of “falling in Love.”

Do I doubt my own capacity to love, and to respond adequately to God’s immaculate, eternal Love? “Our faith lies in the Giver, not our own acceptance” (5:2). It is not the power of my choice or my faith that works the miracle, it is the power of Him Who gives it. His grace gives me the means to lay down all my errors (4:3), even when I doubt my own ability to do so. That is what grace is for. Grace supplies everything I think I lack. As God once said to the Apostle Paul, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (II Cor. 12:9). What is grace? Everything we need to bring us home to God, whatever form that might take.

LESSON 169

June 18

“By grace I live. By grace I am released.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Purpose: To ask for grace, and the temporary experience of Heaven that comes from grace. And then to return and bring to others the gifts that you received from grace.

Morning/Evening Quiet Time: 5 minutes—at least; 10—better; 15 even better; 30 or more—best

Use this prayer: “By grace I live. By grace I am released. By grace I give. By grace I will release.”

Hourly Remembrance: as the hour strikes, for more than 1 minute (reduce if circumstances do not permit)

Sit quietly and wait on God. Thank Him for His gifts in the previous hour. And let His Voice tell you what He wants you to do in the coming hour.

Frequent Reminder: Repeat: “By grace I live. By grace I am released. By grace I give. By grace I will release.”

Remarks: In time you will never cease to think of God, not even for a moment, not even while busy giving salvation to the world.

Response To Temptation: Whenever you feel tempted, repeat idea.

COMMENTARY

Grace, Jesus tells us:

“...is an aspect of the Love of God which is most like the state prevailing in the unity of truth” (1:1).

I suppose one might say that to live by grace means to live with full, conscious awareness of Love’s Presence while in the world. In that sense, it is equivalent to living in the real world. This fits in with the rest of the first paragraph. The state of grace, or living by grace and constantly receiving grace, is something beyond learning. Learning only prepares us for it, for learning is purely in this world. Really, what we are doing is un-learning all our denial of the

truth about our Self.

“It is...the goal of learning, for grace cannot come until the mind prepares itself for true acceptance” (1:3).

Learning prepares us to accept grace. It does not give us grace, but it prepares us to receive it, to accept it, which implies that grace is already available but we are not able to accept it.

“Grace becomes inevitable instantly in those who have prepared [a place in themselves where it can be] willingly received” (1:4).

Grace is simply there, instantly, whenever we are ready to receive it. Learning is necessary to produce the state of willingness; then the grace just pours in. We don't have to do anything to bring it, but we do have to progress through (un)learning to remove our unwillingness to receive.

There then follows what is perhaps the best definition of grace in the lesson:

“Grace is acceptance of the Love of God within a world of seeming hate and fear” (2:1).

Grace means seeing through the illusion. I am still in this world of “seeming hate and fear” and yet, somehow, I accept the Love of God. I accept that He is wholly love, not angry and vengeful, not something to be feared because of my sin, not someone to be blamed for the seeming ills of the world: God is Love. Instead of seeing the world as solid and real, and wondering how God can be loving when all this is going on,

“...those whose minds are lighted by the gift of grace can not believe the world of fear is real” (2:2).

Those who know grace know that God is real, love is real, and it is the world of fear that is the illusion.

Grace is not learned. The final step must go beyond all learning (3:1–2).

This is not something you learn. It cannot be learned. It must come from outside the context in which learning occurs, which is purely the ego context. The Course often says there is no learning in Heaven, or in God. How could there be learning where everything is known?

Grace is not the goal this course aspires to attain. Yet we prepare for grace in that an open mind can hear the Call to waken. It is not shut tight against God's Voice. It has become aware that there are things it does not know, and thus is ready to accept a state completely different from experience with which it is familiarly at home (3:3–6).

So, since learning is the goal of the Course, grace is not; it is beyond what the Course teaches because it cannot be taught. But the learning of the Course, which is really unlearning, prepares us for grace by loosening the tight grip of the ego on our minds. The goal of the Course, as seen in this paragraph, is an open mind and an awareness there are things we don't know.

We do not realize the extent to which our minds have been closed, “shut tight against God's Voice.” That is what we must learn. What we learn is all the ways we shut God out. When we learn that completely, there is nothing left to shut Him out and He is simply there, as He has always been.

The lesson then goes on to talk of the state of Heaven or oneness. I don't have time to comment on it here; the lesson speaks for itself when it says “We cannot speak nor write nor even think of this at all” (6:1).

“Yet forgiveness, taught and learned, brings with it the experiences which bear witness that the time the mind itself determined to abandon all but this is now at hand” (7:2).

In other words, forgiveness is what we now teach and learn, not grace. Forgiveness is the learning process, the preparation for grace, and it gives us witness experiences, foretastes of what it is like to live in grace.

“Now we have work to do, for those in time can speak of things beyond, and listen to words which explain what is to come is past already. Yet what meaning can the words convey to those who count the hours still, and rise and work and go to sleep by them?” (10:3,4)

We are still in time. Let's be real and practical here. Talking about “things beyond” and trying to understand how “what is to come” (enlightenment or awakening which is in our future, as we perceive it) “is past already” (that is, the journey is already over, we're already enlightened, and oneness is a constant state which is here now, forever as it always was)—talking about these things can be fascinating, a little encouraging perhaps, but how on earth can we understand it? We can't! The words convey very little meaning to us while we live and order our lives by time, by counting the hours.

It is good to think of these things a little, but to do so is not our main task. In fact, it can be a waste of time if it distracts us from the fact that “we have work to do” here, now. Forgiveness work. Sitting around discussing what it means to live constantly by grace, in the Real World, or what follows in the experience of Heaven, is meaningless without that very real and practical work of forgiveness going on in our lives.

We won't understand Heaven until we get there. Grace foreshadows Heaven, and we can't even understand that yet, not fully. We can have tastes of it, though, in the holy instants in which we connect with God and with Love in our minds. So,

“...now we ask for grace...Experience that grace provides will end in time...[it does] not replace the thought of time but for a little while” (12:2–3).

The experiences of grace come, and they go. We experience being outside of time “but for a little while.” These experiences, which come in moments of true forgiveness, are all we need for now. “The interval suffices” (13:1).

The holy instants, the “little while” of each forgiveness experience, is enough. It is all we need. “It is here that miracles are laid...” (13:2).

In other words, the holy instant opens us to miracles. It is the way that miracles flow into our lives.

“...to be returned by you from holy instants you receive, through grace in your experience, to all who see the light that lingers in your face” (13:2).

When you “come back” from the holy instant, there is a light that lingers in your face. Other people see it, and to them, you bring the miracles you received in that moment.

“What is the face of Christ but his who went a moment into timelessness...” (13:3)

This is talking about you and me. The face of Christ is your face, my face, when we have received a holy instant and “return” to the world of time; our faces glow with the light of Heaven.

“...and brought a clear reflection of the unity he felt an instant back to bless the world?” (13:3)

That is our function here in the world: to bring a clear reflection of Heaven's unity back to bless the world. To ask for grace, to open our mind to receiving grace from God, to choose, as often as

we can, to “go” into that holy instant in which we feel the unity of Heaven, and then to return with a reflection of that to bless the world. Notice that the unity is “felt” and not just intellectually accepted and understood. It is felt. That is what happens in a holy instant. We hear about living the in the Real World, or what it must be like to live in a constant state of oneness (Heaven), and we want it. We want it now. We get frustrated because the holy instants come and go, they last “but for a little while” and we find that disappointing. Jesus is explaining here that the learning stage is absolutely necessary, and we should not feel frustrated, we should not think we are failing in our work if the holy instants don’t last.

“How could you finally attain to it forever, while a part of you remains outside, unknowing, unawakened, and in need of you as witness to the truth?” (13:4)

Your brothers around you in the world, “unknowing, unawakened,” are your own thoughts in form. They are “a part of you” which “remains outside.” You have a mission here, a purpose to fulfill. Awakening must be communicated. You want a steady state of holy instant-ness, but Jesus asks how could you attain that if part of you is outside that state of oneness, unknowing, unawakened, unaware? Your oneness must include them.

Jesus says we should actually be grateful to “come back” from these holy instants, back to the world of time. Listen:

“Be grateful to return, as you were glad to go an instant, and accept the gifts that grace provided you. You carry them back to yourself” (14:1).

If the holy instant is a moment in which you are aware of oneness, in a sense you have to come back. Because you are aware of your oneness with those who haven’t seen yet. They are part of you, and so you have to “go back” to bring the gifts of grace to that part of yourself that is still not awake, as you see that reflected in your brothers.

Jesus tells us clearly to be content with this. To “not ask for the unaskable” (14:7). To want Heaven for myself while leaving my brothers behind is to fly in the face of what Heaven is: the awareness of oneness. A private salvation is unaskable. We go together or we go not at all. Some might react to this as though the mass of humanity is holding us back and preventing our full enlightenment. Such a thought is still based on a consciousness of separation and so is totally alien to grace and Heaven. The world you see is not a force separate from you, restraining you. It is a reflection of your own self-restraint, your own resistance which has yet to be overcome or unlearned. The world is not outside your mind, but in it. You are the world, that is what you are learning.

You become what you always have been by accepting your role as savior to the world. Your salvation is the world’s salvation. They are not two things, they are the same.

We “come back” to save the world. That doesn’t mean that we have our little moment of bliss and then come back to preach to the world about it and tell them how enlightened we are, and why don’t they get with it? If your salvation is the world’s salvation, the reverse is true: the world’s salvation is your own. You save the world by working on yourself. “The sole responsibility of the miracle worker is to accept Atonement for himself.” (T-2.V.5:1) You save the world by changing your own mind, because that is where the world is, in your mind. There is only one mind, only one of us here. When you are at a movie, if there is a problem on the screen you don’t run to the screen to fix it; you find the projector and fix that. Those “unenlightened

people” you see out there are parts of your own mind that you haven’t recognized as part of you; you don’t bring them with you by trying to work to fix the screen (those separate people out there), you do it by working with the projector, the cause (your own mind). Be glad to go an instant, and be grateful also to return, to bring the light of God to the world. You bring it to yourself. It is in seeing that fact that you will be saved. The returning is not a step back into time. No, it is a step forward in your own awakening, the means by which you bring all the world with you into timelessness, there to be the Oneness you have touched and known.

LESSON 170

June 19

“There is no cruelty in God and none in me.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Purpose: To look dispassionately upon the god of cruelty and choose to call it god no longer, and so to give your eyes to Christ and your voice to God.

Morning/Evening Quiet Time: 5 minutes—at least; 10—better; 15 even better; 30 or more—best

Hourly Remembrance: as the hour strikes, for more than 1 minute (reduce if circumstances do not permit)

Sit quietly and wait on God. Thank Him for His gifts in the previous hour. And let His Voice tell you what He wants you to do in the coming hour.

Frequent Reminder: Repeat idea.

Response To Temptation: Whenever you feel tempted, repeat idea.

COMMENTARY

The basic thought today’s lesson contains is that our attempts at defending ourselves are what make external attack seem real to us.

We fear because we believe, somewhere deep in our hearts, that we have attacked, and deserve punishment for our attack. We sense within ourselves a belief that “to hurt another brings you freedom” (1:4). This belief lies behind every attack we attribute to self-defense. No matter how hard we try to justify our attacks, something in us knows that our intent is to hurt the other person because we believe that hurting them will somehow free us from something. In a nutshell, we believe that we are inherently cruel.

We project our belief into attack onto something external; we see the attack as coming from outside of our own mind (but there is nothing outside of mind). We are the ones who attack ourselves by our guilt, but we believe we see the attack external to ourselves, justifying further attack on our part. Thus fear and defense become the means of preserving ourselves. And “love is endowed with the attributes of fear” (5:3); that is, because love would counsel us to lay down our defenses, it becomes something to fear. Love becomes dangerous.

From this perspective, fear and cruelty become a “god,” an idol, something to be preserved at all costs. To let go of fear becomes the ultimate danger. We fear being without fear more than anything else; we cling to our fear, believing that it protects us.

Taken to the extreme, this “worship” of fear and cruelty ends up being projected onto God Himself; we see Him as a vengeful God, breathing fire, threatening us with hell, ready to dupe us

with His talk of love, laughing with savage glee as we go down to defeat. In fact, it is our fear of God, buried as well as we can, disguised in many forms when it leaks out of our unconscious, but ever present, that is “the basic premise which enthrones the thought of fear as God” (9:4). Ultimately, all our defenses are defenses against God. Buried deep in our psyche is our conviction that the universe is out to get us. Most of our lives, if we look at them with honesty, are spent in butressing our fortifications against “things” that seem to threaten us. The Course calls on us to lay down our defenses as the only way of discovering that the threat is unreal (2:6–7). God is not angry. The universe is not out to get us. If God appears to us to be separate from us, only the walls we have erected make it seem so. We are the victims only of our own defenses.

We have no reason to fear. We are not cruel; we cannot be, for God Who created us has no cruelty in Him. There is no punishment hanging over our heads. We are the innocent Son of God, the Son He loves. Without that primal fear, there is nothing to project upon others; when we cease to project our fear, there is no perception of attack from without; when no attack is perceived without, there is no need for defense.

If we assess our “god” of fear and defense honestly we have to see that it is made of stone. It has no life; it cannot save us. Fear begets fear; attack begets attack. The wars of the world testify to this endlessly. Hurting others *never* makes us safe; it only adds to the cycle of fear and attack. To realize that our trusted method of securing safety is worthless, that our champion warrior is a traitor, can be a terrifying moment. The missile silos in which we have placed all our trust are pointed at our own hearts! “This moment can be terrible. But it can also be the time of your release from abject slavery” (8:1–2). To think of giving up defense entirely can momentarily paralyze us with fear. But it can be the moment in which we are free to recognize that what we fear does not exist, and the “enemy” we have striven to keep out is allowed to enter, bringing His peace with Him.

LESSON 171 (REVIEW V)

June 20

Review V.

“God is but Love, and therefore so am I.”

Another review! As you read through the Introduction to the Review, you will notice that there are no detailed practice instructions. The summary, given in Paragraph 11, is the only reference to the actual practice we are meant to follow. A morning time, an evening time, and keeping the idea in our remembrance throughout the day—that’s all the instruction we are given. Actually, the full instructions were given in Lesson 153, paragraphs 15–18. There, the instructions were said to be “a form we will maintain for quite a while.” That “while” is still continuing. The daily practice is well summarized by Robert Perry along with this lesson, and every day’s lesson, in case you have forgotten what it is.

In the ten days of review, I will be commenting mainly on the Review Introduction, rather than the daily ideas being reviewed. Today I’ll cover the first three paragraphs, and then one paragraph a day for the remaining nine review lessons. The theme idea for the review is: “God is but Love, and therefore so am I.” We are told (4:2) that each of the twenty thoughts we are reviewing clarify some aspect of the theme thought; I will also attempt to point out some ways

the theme is connected to each day's two thoughts.

The Introduction to our review opens with a powerful appeal to us to take our practicing seriously, to “give more effort and more time to what we undertake” (1:2). Once again, as in Review IV, we are reminded that this series of lessons is meant to help us in “preparing for another phase of understanding.” Review IV made it clear that this is a reference to the second part of the Workbook: “...this time...we are preparing for the second part of learning how the truth can be applied” (W-rIV.In.1:1). The realization that we are preparing for something more, a shift into another phase, is meant to motivate our efforts so that we “take this step completely, that we may go on again more certain, more sincere, with faith upheld more surely” (1:4). One gets the sense that the effectiveness of the second half of the Workbook depends, in large measure, on how much time and effort we are willing to put into our practicing right now.

I remember the first few times I did the Workbook, I always felt the second half was a bust.

Anticlimactic. I also remember that I made no serious effort to follow the practice instructions; I just read the lesson every morning. I am absolutely certain that there is a direct connection between those two facts: my feeble practice, and my sense of anticlimax.

The Workbook recognizes that we have been wavering, and that we have had doubts that caused us to be less than diligent in practicing. It does not berate us over this, but it does make clear that if we want the results, we have to follow the program. The reward will be “a greater certainty, a firmer purpose and a surer goal.”

The prayer in paragraphs 2 and 3 would be good, in my opinion, to use every day during this review. It needs no comment; the meaning of every line is quite clear. It is a prayer for diligence in practicing. It is an affirmation of faith that, even if we forget, stumble, or wander off, God will remember for us, raise us up, and call us back.

Lesson 171

“God is but Love, and therefore so am I.”

“All things are echoes of the Voice for God.”

“The power of decision is my own.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Review V

Purpose: To prepare for part II of the Workbook. To give more time and effort to practicing, that you may hasten your slow, wavering and uncertain footsteps, and go on with more faith, certainty and sincerity. Make this review a gift to Jesus and a time in which you share with him a new yet ancient experience.

Central Thought: “God is but Love, and therefore so am I.” This thought should start and end each day, start and end each practice period, and be repeated before and after each thought to be reviewed. Each of these thoughts, in turn, should be used to support this central thought, keep it clear in mind, and make it more meaningful, personal and true.

Morning/Evening Quiet Time: 5 minutes—at least; 10—better; 15 even better; 30 or more—best

- Repeat and dwell on central thought and review thoughts.

- Let go of the words, which are only aids. Try to go beyond their sound to their meaning. Wait for experience, place your faith in it, not the means to it. If your mind wanders, repeat the central thought.
- Close with the central thought.

Hourly Remembrance: as the hour strikes, for more than 1 minute (reduce if circumstances do not permit)

(Suggestion) Repeat the central thought and the review thoughts slowly enough to see and receive their gifts. Spend a quiet moment with them.

Frequent Reminder: Recall the central thought or one of the review ideas as often as possible.

Response To Temptation: Repeat the central thought.

COMMENTARY

Today's two thoughts connect easily to the theme idea. If God is only Love, and I am also only love, then everything echoes His Voice. Everything is nothing but an aspect of Him. The decision I face, today and every day, is whether or not to accept this fact. Will I live today as an expression of the Love of God, or will I choose to attempt what must be impossible: to be something else?

Lesson 172 (Review V)

June 21

“God is but Love, and therefore so am I.”

“In my defenselessness my safety lies.”

“I am among the ministers of God.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Review V

Purpose: To prepare for part II of the Workbook. To give more time and effort to practicing, that you may hasten your slow, wavering and uncertain footsteps, and go on with more faith, certainty and sincerity. Make this review a gift to Jesus and a time in which you share with him a new yet ancient experience.

Central Thought: “God is but Love, and therefore so am I.” This thought should start and end each day, start and end each practice period, and be repeated before and after each thought to be reviewed. Each of these thoughts, in turn, should be used to support this central thought, keep it clear in mind, and make it more meaningful, personal and true.

Morning/Evening Quiet Time: 5 minutes—at least; 10—better; 15 even better; 30 or more—best

- Repeat and dwell on central thought and review thoughts.
- Let go of the words, which are only aids. Try to go beyond their sound to their meaning. Wait for experience, place your faith in it, not the means to it. If your mind wanders, repeat the central thought.
- Close with the central thought.

Hourly Remembrance: as the hour strikes more than 1 minute (reduce if circumstances do not permit)

(Suggestion) Repeat the central thought and the review thoughts slowly enough to see and receive their gifts. Spend a quiet moment with them.

Frequent Reminder: Recall the central thought or one of the review ideas as often as possible.

Response To Temptation: Repeat the central thought.

COMMENTARY

“This is the thought...” (W-rV.In.4:1). The words refer to sentence 3 of the paragraph, the theme thought for the review. As we review, we are to dwell on this thought first, every day, every morning and evening, and often through the day. Each additional thought from the previous lessons “clarifies some aspect of this thought, or helps it be more meaningful, more personal and true, and more descriptive of the holy Self we share and now prepare to know again” (4:2). It would be good, in our reviewing, to meditate on how this central thought relates to the other two ideas. The focus is on the theme thought; the additional thoughts are meant to clarify it or expand on it.

Notice the word “prepare” used again in sentence 2. The new “phase of understanding” that we are preparing for will have something to do with once again coming to know our true Self. The first half of the Workbook has concentrated on undoing our old thought system; the second half will move us on into reclaiming the knowledge of the Self we thought we had lost.

The holy Self we are is simply an extension of God. He is Love; so are we. We are what He is, extended. That is what we are preparing to remember; more than simply to remember, to *know*. That one word implies worlds. I can write the words, I can agree with them, but do I *know* what I am saying? Knowing that I am an extension of God’s Love will change everything about my life, banish all fear, and give me a sense of holy purpose unparalleled by anything I have every before experienced.

What is this Self, which I am, like? It is “perfectly consistent in Its thoughts; knows Its Creator, understands Itself, is perfect in Its knowledge and Its love, and never changes from Its constant state of union with Its Father and Itself” (4:5). This is a description of me and you as God created us. This is what our practicing is preparing us to “know again.”

Isn’t this a goal worth “more effort and more time?” Try to imagine what it will be like (not “would be” but “will be”) to be perfectly consistent in all your thoughts. Try to get a sense of what it will be like to know God and yourself perfectly. Try to imagine living in a constant state of union with the Father, and with your Self, without variation or change in that state of union. Today’s two review ideas help us to see the way to our goal, negatively and positively. If I am Love, how can I be defensive? To be what I am in truth, I must lay down my defensiveness. And if I am Love, what can I be but a minister of God? What can my purpose here be but to extend His Love, to reach out and touch my brothers with the touch of Christ?

LESSON 173 (Review V)

June 22

“God is but Love, and therefore so am I.”

“I will step back and let Him lead the way.”

“I walk with God in perfect holiness.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Review V

Purpose: To prepare for part II of the Workbook. To give more time and effort to practicing, that you may hasten your slow, wavering and uncertain footsteps, and go on with more faith, certainty and sincerity. Make this review a gift to Jesus and a time in which you share with him a new yet ancient experience.

Central Thought: “God is but Love, and therefore so am I.” This thought should start and end each day, start and end each practice period, and be repeated before and after each thought to be reviewed. Each of these thoughts, in turn, should be used to support this central thought, keep it clear in mind, and make it more meaningful, personal and true.

Morning/Evening Quiet Time: 5 minutes—at least; 10—better; 15 even better; 30 or more—best

- Repeat and dwell on central thought and review thoughts.
- Let go of the words, which are only aids. Try to go beyond their sound to their meaning. Wait for experience, place your faith in it, not the means to it. If your mind wanders, repeat the central thought.
- Close with the central thought.

Hourly Remembrance: as the hour strikes more than 1 minute (reduce if circumstances do not permit)

(Suggestion) Repeat the central thought and the review thoughts slowly enough to see and receive their gifts. Spend a quiet moment with them.

Frequent Reminder: Take one of the review thoughts and surround it with the central thought (“God is but Love, and therefore so am I.”). Use the review thoughts to keep the central thought clear in our memory throughout the day.

Response To Temptation: (Suggestion) When tempted, respond with a review thought, the central thought, or both.

COMMENTARY

Paragraph 5 of the Review Introduction:

The Self that is only Love, perfectly consistent in Its thoughts, is What “waits to meet us at the journey’s ending” (5:1). I often need to remind myself of what it is I am “going for” in this spiritual walk. Sometimes it seems like such a long journey—“countless situations...through time that seems to have no end” (T-24.VI.7:2). Keeping the goal in view, in the forefront of my mind, is a necessity for me. “This,” with a capital “T,” “is promised us” (5:4). I am on a journey to find my Self, and at the end of the journey, it is promised, I will find It. A Self in constant union with God. A Self at perfect peace within Itself. This is worth “going for.”

The journey seems long, but every step brings me a little nearer (5:2). Each time I pause for a minute to remember brings me nearer. Each time I open my heart in love to a brother brings me nearer. Each morning or evening I take the time to practice, sitting in silence, listening, brings me nearer. The path offered by the Course is not a flashy one. It is not, sometimes, a very exciting one. But it works. It is so clear to me that this work *must* be done somehow; the twisted thoughts of my ego must be undone and replaced with something else. The multitude of fear’s disguises must be unmasked and replaced with love. Sometimes I wish it could happen overnight.

Sometimes I wonder why it seems to take so long and proceed so slowly. And then I catch my own thoughts, turning me away, delaying me, and I know why. Occasionally I even feel gratitude that God does not force anything on me against my will, because when, at last, I end the journey, there will be not one shred of uncertainty that it is my will, as well as His. And I return to the steady work the Course sets forth, knowing that—for me, at least—this is the only way I have found that works.

“This review”—done as we are asked to do it, of course—“will shorten time immeasurably” (5:3). So if I feel impatient, here is the means to shorten the time it takes. The means are being given to me, handed to me on a silver platter, put before my eyes day after day. Will I take them? Will I use the means given me to shorten time? I say so often that I want the journey to proceed more quickly. Yet if, given the means to shorten the time, I do not use them, what does that say about my wanting? My regularity in practice is the measure of my true desire. If I practice with the goal in mind, if I remember why I am doing it, the benefit will be there. If, however, I trudge through the practice as if it were some kind of duty being imposed on me, a tedious chore, it will probably not have much benefit.

Today let me raise my heart from dust to life as I remember (5:4). Let me lift up my eyes and recall the glorious goal, the completeness of my Self that awaits my remembering. Let the inner hunger that never leaves me have its way and draw me onward.

“...this course was sent to open up the path of light to us, and teach us, step by step, how to return to the eternal Self we thought we lost” (5:5).

Thank You, Father, for this course. Thank You for its step by step instructions. Thank You for this time of review, for the times I can spend with You, quietly, listening, waiting, knowing that every minute draws me nearer to my goal, every minute saves immeasurable time. Thank You for opening up the path of light.

LESSON 174 (REVIEW V)

June 23

"God is but Love, and therefore so am I."

"Into His Presence would I enter now."

"Today I learn to give as I receive."

PRACTICE SUMMARY

REVIEW V

Purpose: To prepare for part II of the Workbook. To give more time and effort to practicing, that you may hasten your slow, wavering and uncertain footsteps, and go on with more faith, certainty and sincerity. Make this review a gift to Jesus and a time in which you share with him a new yet ancient experience.

Central Thought: "God is but Love, and therefore so am I." This thought should start and end each day, start and end each practice period, and be repeated before and after each thought to be reviewed. Each of these thoughts, in turn, should be used to support this central thought, keep it clear in mind, and make it more meaningful, personal and true.

Morning/Evening Quiet Time: 5 minutes—at least; 10—better; 15 even better; 30 or more—

best

- Repeat and dwell on central thought and review thoughts.
- Let go of the words, which are only aids. Try to go beyond their sound to their meaning. Wait for experience, place your faith in it, not the means to it. If your mind wanders, repeat the central thought.
- Close with the central thought.

Hourly Remembrance: as the hour strikes more than 1 minute (reduce if circumstances do not permit)

(Suggestion) Repeat the central thought and the review thoughts slowly enough to see and receive their gifts. Spend a quiet moment with them.

Frequent Reminder: Take one of the review thoughts and surround it with the central thought ("God is but Love, and therefore so am I."). Use the review thoughts to keep the central thought clear in our memory throughout the day.

Response To Temptation: (Suggestion) When tempted, respond with a review thought, the central thought, or both.

COMMENTARY

Comments on the Introduction, paragraph 6.

In this paragraph, Jesus speaks in the first person: "I take the journey with you." One aspect of the Course that seems to get less attention than many others is the personal presence of the author in our lives. No doubt many of us, having "escaped" from restrictive Christian backgrounds, many of which emphasized a "personal Savior" and the actual worship of Jesus as God's only Son, find ourselves uncomfortable with the notion of having Jesus by our side as we make this journey. It is too much like what we left behind.

In the Clarification of Terms section in the Manual for Teachers, we are reminded that, "Some bitter idols have been made of him who would be only brother to the world" (C-5.5:7). One relationship that may need healing is our relationship with him; we may carry with us many "shadow figures" from the past that distort our perceptions of him. We are asked, here in the Manual, to, "Forgive him your illusions, and behold how dear a brother he would be to you" (C-5.5:8). Yet the Course takes this issue, as all such issues, gently. "It is possible to read his words and benefit from them without accepting him into your life. Yet he would help you yet a little more if you will share your pains and joys with him" (C-5.6:6). So if you find this idea of relating with him a little unsettling or even distasteful, be at peace; it's OK.

Jesus offers to share our doubts and fears in order to make himself accessible to us. We can know he understands what we go through because he has been this way before. Even though he has reached a place where uncertainty and pain have no meaning, he understands them when we experience them. We don't have to feel that we are approaching some remote figure, high and mighty, who will dismiss our uncertainty as irrelevant with a wave of his hand. He sees what we see. He is aware of all the illusions that terrify us, and the reality they seem to have to us. But he holds in his mind "the way that led him out, and now will lead you out with him" (6:5). He is like an elder brother who has finished the journey, but has come back now to lead us home with him. He knows that the Sonship is not complete until we have walked the same way he walked. He is with us now, leading the way for us.

In my quiet time today, then, let me be aware of his presence. As I enter into God's Presence, let me be conscious of one who is at my side, perhaps holding my hand if I feel fearful. Let me be willing to bring my uncertainty and pain to him, so that he can help me overcome them. As I receive the grace from him enabling me to set aside my fears and doubts, let me come forth from this time with him to share what I have received with those around me. Let me act as God's representative in the world, to forgive the "sins" of those around me, ease their minds, and offer them the peace that has been given me.