

# Workbook Lesson Support Notes

by Allen Watson

## LESSON 226

August 14

**“My home awaits me. I will hasten there.”**

### PRACTICE SUMMARY

(See Part II Practice Summary, and also Part II Introduction)

### COMMENTARY

*Home.* What an evocative word that is! “I’m going home.” Sometimes just thinking about going home, even in an abstract sense, can cause deep emotions to rise up in us—happy ones, I hope, although for some the word has been tainted by an unhappy home life. Even then, when our “real” home is unhappy, most of us are still filled with a deep longing for home *as it ought to be*. Our original home and our real home is in God. All our longings for home find their roots in our longing for this spiritual home in God.

How can I “go home?” There are many songs that say we go home to Heaven when we die. I think of spirituals like “Goin’ Home” and “Deep River,” for instance. It is a common idea. But the Course here is extremely clear. It speaks of departing this world, and says, “It is not death which makes this possible, but it is a change of mind about the purpose of the world” (1:2). As long as we think that the purpose of the world lies within itself, that somehow happiness, freedom and contentment are to be found here, in the world, we will never leave it. Not even when we “die.” The chains that bind us to the world are mental, not physical. Our valuing of the world is what holds us to it. If I value the world “as I see it now” (1:3, also 1:4), it will hold on to me even when my body crumbles. But if I no longer see anything in this world “as I behold it” that I want to keep or search for, I am free.

There is a world of meaning—literally!—in those phrases “as I see it now” and “as I behold it.” In the ego’s perception this world is a place of punishment and imprisonment, and simultaneously a place where I come to seek for what seems to be “lacking” in myself. As long as I somehow value that punishment and imprisonment, perhaps not for myself but almost always for others upon whom I have projected my guilt, I will be bound to the world, and I will not go home. As long as I think there is a lack in myself and continue to search for it outside myself, valuing the world for what I think it can give to me, I will always be bound to the world, and I will not go home.

“My home *awaits* me.” Our home is not under construction. It is ready and waiting, the red carpet rolled out, everything is ready, and God’s “Arms are open and I hear His Voice” (2:2). Home is available right now, if I only choose it. Let me be willing to look at what keeps me from choosing it, because those are the hindrances that keep me from finding it. Do I still wistfully long for my prince to come (or my princess)? Do I still have things I want to do before I am

ready to go? Do I still find secret pleasure when the “wicked” (in my sight) suffer? If this world could vanish an hour from now, what would I regret? Would I be ready to leave? If a shimmering curtain were to appear in the doorway and a Voice proclaim, “Pass this portal and you will be in Heaven,” would I go through? Why not?

This is not a fantasy. The Voice *is* calling us, and Heaven is here and now. We can pass the portal any time we choose to. If we are not experiencing Heaven, we *must* be choosing not to do so, and finding out what holds us back is the work we are assigned to in this classroom. This is what the world is for—to teach us to let it go.

“What need have I to linger in a place of vain desires and of shattered dreams, when Heaven can so easily be mine?” (2:3)

### **WHAT IS FORGIVENESS? (Part 6)**

We do not realize the extent to which our unforgiving thoughts distort the truth (W-pII.1.3:3).

Unforgiving thoughts twist our perception of things which are not in accord with how forgiveness wants to see things. They overlook any evidence for love, and find evidence of guilt. In “The Obstacles to Peace” and in the subsection on “The Attraction of Guilt,” (T-19.IV(A).i), our unforgiving thoughts are compared to scavenging messengers “harshly ordered to seek out guilt, and cherish every scrap of evil and of sin that they can find, losing none of them on pain of death, and laying them respectfully before their lord and master.” In a few words, we find what we are looking for, and the ego is always looking for guilt.

But distortion is not only the *method* used by the ego; distortion is also the ego’s *purpose*. In other words, the purpose of unforgiveness is to distort reality. Unforgiveness furiously aims “to smash reality, without concern for anything that would appear to pose a contradiction to its point of view” (W-pII.1.3:4). Reality is the hated enemy, the intolerable presence, because your reality, and mine, is still the Son of God, never in the slightest separated from Him. Reality exposes the ego as a lie, and cannot be tolerated. So the way our minds work, when dominated by unforgiving thoughts, is designed from the outset to distort and twist reality beyond all recognition.

In contrast to this, the Course asks us to dream of our brother’s kindnesses instead of his mistakes, and to not brush aside his many gifts just because he isn’t perfect (T-27.VII.15). It asks us to look for love instead of looking for guilt, and rather than finding fault, to try finding love instead. To begin with, we can simply start to question the way we see things, in awareness that our thought processes and our methods of making judgment have been severely impaired and simply are not reliable. It isn’t that we *should not* judge, it’s that we *cannot* judge (M-10.2:1). We are operating at diminished capacity; we need a healthy mind to judge on our behalf. And that mind is the Holy Spirit.

## LESSON 227

August 15

### **“This is my holy instant of release.”**

#### **PRACTICE SUMMARY**

(See Part II Practice Summary, and also Part II Introduction)

#### **COMMENTARY**

Today’s lesson is another reminder that these practice times are meant to be holy instants for us. Not every one will be a dramatic experience of wordless bliss, of course. Remember that simply being willing to turn your mind to God can be considered a holy instant, whether or not you consciously experience anything special. The seminal holy instant, from which the Course sprang, was simply a time when Bill Thetford said, “There must be another way,” and Helen replied, “I’ll help you find it.” The mental shift into alignment with God’s purpose is what really counts. If we faithfully practice, the direct experience of truth spoken of in the Workbook will come, not by our efforts, but by God’s grace, when we are ready to receive it.

Consider the effect it has on our mind to focus on today’s idea, “This is my holy instant of release,” and then to sit in quiet stillness, open and receptive to whatever is given to us. We should enter each such time expectantly, waiting to hear what God’s Voice will speak.

I am already free; now, today. My thought of separation had no effect on my reality, so the imprisonment I have imagined never happened. “Nothing I thought apart from You exists” (1:3). How wonderful to know that the thoughts I believed were apart from God don’t exist! How healing it is to give them up, lay them down at the feet of truth, and to have them “removed forever from my mind” (1:5). This is the healing process of the Course: to take each thought that seems to express a will separate from God’s, and bring it into this Presence to be removed from my mind, with God’s own assurance that it has affected nothing. I am still His Son.

This is how my mind is restored to me. This is how my awareness of my Identity is returned to my awareness.

#### **WHAT IS FORGIVENESS? (Part 7)**

Paragraph 4. “Forgiveness, on the other hand, is still, and quietly does nothing” (4:1). If we can understand these first few sentences we will have a clear grasp of what forgiveness really is. The words, “on the other hand,” refer to the preceding two paragraphs which described an unforgiving thought, especially to 3:1: “An unforgiving thought does many things.” Forgiveness, on the other hand, does nothing. Unforgiveness is highly active, anxiously trying to make things fit into its picture of reality; forgiveness does nothing. It does not rush to interpret or to attempt to understand. It lets things be as they are.

Notice once again the heavy emphasis on stillness and quiet. The practice of the holy instant, as the practice of forgiveness, is practice at being still, being quiet, doing nothing. The product of the ego’s training, our minds are habitually active, constantly working. We need *practice* at being still and doing nothing. It takes a lot of practice to break the habit of frantic activity and form a new habit of being still and quiet.

One trick of the ego I notice, frequently, is that it will try to make me guilty about being still and quiet! When I try to take ten minutes to sit in stillness, my ego floods my mind with thoughts of what I ought to be doing instead.

The mental state in which forgiveness occurs is one in which we simply allow all of reality to be as it is, without judging anything. “It offends no aspect of reality, nor seeks to twist it to appearances it likes” (4:2). The appearance my ego usually likes is some form of, “I am right and they are wrong.” Or, “I am good and they are bad.” Or simply, “I am better than he/she is.” Even more simply, “I am not like him/her.” All of these thoughts share one theme: I am different from others, and therefore separate from them. Any such thought is twisting reality, because the reality is that we are the same, we are equal, we are one. Forgiveness stills such thoughts and abandons all efforts to mash reality into a “more desirable” shape.

“It merely looks, and waits, and judges not.” It does not deny what it sees, but it puts no interpretation on it. It waits to be told the meaning by the Holy Spirit. “My mate is having an affair.” Forgiveness looks, and waits, and judges not. “My child is sick.” Forgiveness looks, and waits, and judges not. “My boss just fired me.” It looks, and waits, and judges not. We are so quick to think we know what things mean! And we are wrong. We do not know. We leap to an understanding based on separation, and such understandings understand nothing.

The most salutary thing we can do when any such upsetting event occurs in our lives is— nothing. Simply to let our minds become still and quiet, and to open ourselves to the healing light of the Holy Spirit. To seek a holy instant. Let this become the ingrained habit of our lives, and we will see the world in an entirely different way, and Love will flow through us to bring healing instead of hurt to every situation.

## LESSON 228

August 16

### **“God has condemned me not. No more do I.”**

#### **PRACTICE SUMMARY**

(See Part II Practice Summary, and also Part II Introduction)

#### **COMMENTARY**

It takes great courage to let go of our self-condemnation. We are so afraid that if we stop condemning ourselves we will go berserk, the evil in us will be unchecked and will break out in some terrible disaster. But what if there is no evil in us? What if God is right? Is it so very likely that He is wrong and we are right? What God knows, the lesson says, makes sin in us impossible; “Shall I deny His knowledge?” (1:2)

The lesson is asking us, quite simply, to “take His Word for what I am” (1:4). Who knows what something or someone is better than its Creator? And what does God know about me? “My Father knows my holiness” (1:1). Every time I read such statements I watch my mind struggle to oppose the idea, cringing in a pseudo-humility that cries out, “Oh, no, I can’t accept that about myself.” If I dare to ask myself, “Why not?”, my mind immediately comes up with a whole list of reasons. My flaws, my lack of total dedication to the truth, my addiction to this or that pleasure of the world. Yet every one of those things, brought into the light of the Holy Spirit, can be seen as nothing more than a misdirected prayer, a cry for help, a veiled longing for God and for Home.

“I was mistaken in myself” (2:1). That is all that has happened. I forgot my Source, and what I must be, coming from that Source. My Source is God, and not my dark illusions. My mistake about myself is not a sin to be judged but a mistake to be corrected; it needs not condemnation, but the healing of love. “My mistakes about myself are dreams” (2:4), that is all, and I can let these dreams go. I am not the dream; I am the dreamer, still holy, still a part of God.

Today, as I still my mind in God’s Presence, I open myself to receive His Word concerning what I am. I brush aside the dreams, I recognize them for what they are, and let them go. I open my heart to Love.

#### **WHAT IS FORGIVENESS? (Part 8)**

In the last two sentences of this paragraph (4), notice that a contrast is made between judging and welcoming the truth exactly as it is. The opposite of judgment is the truth. Judgment, then, must always be a distortion of the truth. This section has already pointed out that unforgiveness has distortion as its purpose. If I do not want to forgive, I must distort the truth; I must judge.

Judgment here clearly carries the meaning of condemnation, of seeing sin, of making something wrong. Forgiveness does not do that; forgiveness makes right instead of wrong, because “right” is the truth about all of us.

None of us are guilty. That is the truth. God does not condemn us. If I do so, I am distorting the truth. Judgment is always a distortion of the truth of our innocence before God. When I judge another, I do so because I am trying to justify my unwillingness to forgive. I have gotten very

good at it. I always seem to find some reason that justifies my unforgiveness. But what I do not realize is that every such judgment twists the truth, hides it, obscures it. It “makes real” something that is not real.

Furthermore, in obscuring the truth about my brother or sister, I am hiding the truth about myself. I am substantiating the basis of my own self-condemnation. That is why the last sentence of the paragraph switches from my unforgiveness of another to the forgiveness of myself: “he who would forgive himself” (4:5). If I want to learn to forgive myself, I must abandon my judging of others. If their sin is real, so is mine. Instead I must learn to “welcome truth exactly as it is” (4:5). Only if I welcome the truth about my brother or sister can I see it for myself. We stand or fall together. “In him you will find yourself or lose yourself” (T-8.III.4:5).

To a mind habituated to seeing itself as a separate ego, abandoning all judgment is frightening. It feels like the rug is being swept out from under our feet; we don’t know where to stand. How can we live in the world without it? We literally do not know how. Judgment is how we have ordered our lives; without it, we fear chaos. The Course assures us this will not happen: “You are afraid of this because you believe that without the ego, all would be chaos. Yet I assure you that without the ego, all would be love” (T-15.V.1:6,7).

When we let go of judgment, when we are willing to welcome the truth exactly as it is, love rushes in to fill the vacuum left by the absence of judgment. It has been there all along, but we have blocked it. We don’t know how this happens, but it happens because love is the reality, love is the truth we are welcoming. Love will show us exactly what to do when our judgment is gone.

**LESSON 229**

**August 17**

**“Love, Which created me, is what I am.”**

**PRACTICE SUMMARY**

(See Part II Practice Summary, and also Part II Introduction)

**COMMENTARY**

Many of these lessons in Part II of the Workbook may seem to be expressing a state of mind that is beyond where I am as I read them. In reality, they express my *true* state of mind, the state of my right mind. It is this state of mind we can reach in the holy instant. Right-mindedness is not some future state I am trying to reach. There is an aspect of my mind that already knows these things and already believes them. It is this part of my mind that is leading me home. “Now need I seek no more” (1:2) is the truth right now. It is the part of my mind that doubts this, that denies it, which is unreal.

Love *is* what I am; It is my Identity. Let me look honestly at what I believe I am instead, because it is in discovering what Love is not that I will come to know Love.

“Love is not learned. Its meaning lies within itself. And learning ends when you have recognized all it is *not*. That is the interference; that is what needs to be undone” (T-18.IX.12:1–4).

Love waited for me, “so still” (1:4). Love is still because that is what forgiveness does; it is “still, and quietly does nothing” (W-pII.1.4:1). My own Love waits to forgive me all I think I have done, all that I have believed I was other than Love. I actually “sought to lose” my Identity (1:5), but God has kept that Identity safe for me, within me, as me. “In the midst of all the thoughts of sin my foolish mind made up” (2:1), my Father kept my Identity untouched and sinless. Let me turn to that Identity now. Let me give thanks, and express my gratitude to God that It has never been lost, even when I was sure it was. I cannot be anything other than what God created me to be. “Love, Which created me, is what I am.”

In my heart, in my mind, in the still and tranquil core of my being, lies everything I have ever been seeking for. Let me now remember.

### WHAT IS FORGIVENESS? (Part 9)

Paragraph 5:1–2. Faced with this stark contrast between forgiveness and unforgiveness, what then are we to do? “Do nothing, then” (5:1). We are not called upon to *do*, we are called upon to cease doing, because there is nothing that need be done. To the ego, to do means to judge, and it is judgment we must relinquish. If we feel there is something that must be done, it is a judgment that affirms lack within ourselves, and there is no lack. That is what we must remember. To believe that something must be done is a denial of our wholeness, which has never been diminished.

“Let forgiveness show you what to do, through Him” (5:1). To forgive ourselves means to take our hands off the steering wheel of our lives, to stop trying to “make things right,” which only affirms that something is wrong. To forgive others means we stop thinking it is our job to correct them. The Holy Spirit is the One Who knows what we should do, if anything, and His guidance will often surprise us. Yes, there may still be something for us to “do,” but we will not be the ones to determine what that is. Our doing is so often deadly, quenching the spirit instead of affirming it, imparting guilt instead of lifting it.

The Holy Spirit is my Guide and Savior and Protector. In each situation where I am tempted to do something, let me stop, remember that my judgment is untrustworthy, let go, and give it into His hands. He is “strong in hope, and certain of your ultimate success” (5:1). How often in a time when I am judging, whether myself or another, am I certain of my ultimate success? Let me then give the situation into the care of One Who is certain. He will show me what to do.

“He has forgiven you already, for such is His function” (5:2). Each time I bring Him some terrible thing I think I have done, let me remember: “He has forgiven you already.” I do not need to fear entering His Presence. His function, His reason for being, is to forgive me. Not to judge me, nor to punish me, nor to make me feel bad, but to forgive. Why would I stay away an instant more? Let me fall gratefully now into His loving arms, and hear Him say, “What you think is not the truth.” He will still the troubled waters of my mind, and bring me peace.

LESSON 230

August 18

**“Now will I seek and find the peace of God.”**

**PRACTICE SUMMARY: (See Part II practice summary, and also Part II Introduction)**

**COMMENTARY**

“In peace I was created. And in peace do I remain” (1:1–2). Jesus, in his Course, never tires of reminding us that we remain as God created us. He repeats it often because we so obviously do not believe it. We may believe that God created us in peace. How, indeed, could we believe otherwise? Would a God of Love have created us in pain and agony, in turmoil and confusion, in conflict and strife? So the first sentence isn’t really a problem to us; we can accept that God created us in peace.

The problem arises, in our minds, with the second sentence: “In peace do I remain.” Quite simply we don’t believe it. In fact we are firmly convinced that we know otherwise. Perhaps this morning I am distraught by something that happened yesterday, or worried about what may happen today, or next week. I can look back on a lifetime that, in my experience, has had very little, if any, peace. Some days it seems as though life is conspiring against me to rob me of peace. It seems as though, in most of my busy days, that I rarely have a moment of peace. So how can I accept this statement: “In peace do I remain?”

It seems incredible to us, unbelievable, when the Course insists that since God created me in peace, I must still be in peace. God’s creation of me took place, the lesson says, “apart from time, and still remains beyond all change” (2:2). It tells me, “It is not given me to change my Self” (1:3). My experience of life in this world tells me otherwise.

The question is, which one will I believe? God’s Voice, or my experience? One of them must be false. And it is earth-shattering, mind-blowing, even to consider that my entire experience of this world has been a lie, a mistake, and an hallucination. Yet what is the alternative? Shall I believe, instead, that God is a liar? Shall I believe that His creation was flawed, and capable of corruption? Shall I believe that what He willed for me was overcome by my own independent will? Yet this is what I *must* be believing if I insist that I am not at peace, in this very moment.

If God is not a liar and His creation is not flawed, then what must be true is that my own mind has deceived me and has manufactured an entire lifetime of false experience. If I am willing to listen, this is not as far-fetched as it sounds at first. In fact, if I simply watch my mind, I can catch it in the act of doing that very thing. I can watch and observe how I see what I expect to see. I can notice how different people perceive the same events quite differently. I can remember times when I was quite sure I understood things clearly, only to have the whole situation turned on its head by some new fact that I had been unaware of. I need only watch the sun rise, move across the sky, and set, to realize that my perception is faulty. It is not the sun that moves; it is me, as the earth turns. When night comes and the sun is “gone” in my perception, the sun shines on; it is

my part of the world that has turned its face from the light.

What if my apparent lack of peace does not mean what I think it means? What if the peace of God has never left me, but shines on, while I have turned my face from it? In the holy instant I can find that this is the truth. Simply by turning my mind away from its mad belief in unrest, I can discover the peace of God shining in me now.

### **WHAT IS FORGIVENESS? (Part 10)**

There is another part to forgiveness. Since the Holy Spirit has already forgiven me, carrying out His only function, I now “must...share His function, and forgive whom He has saved” (5:3). Consider what we have said about the way the Holy Spirit interacts with us, how we can come to Him with our darkest thoughts and find them absorbed and dissipated in His Love. The utter lack of judgment. His gentleness with us, His acceptance of us, His knowledge of our sinlessness, His honoring us as the Son of God, unchanged by our foolish thoughts of sin. Now, we are to share His function in relation to the world. Now, we are to be His representatives, His manifestation in the lives of those around us. To them, we offer this same gentle kindness, this same conviction of the inner holiness of each one we deal with, this same quiet disregard for thoughts of self-condemnation in everyone we see, or speak to, or think about. “It is the privilege of the forgiven to forgive” (T-1.I.27:2).

What we reflect to the world is what we believe in for ourselves. When we judge, condemn, and lay guilt on those around us, we are reflecting the way we believe God is towards us. When we experience the sweet forgiveness in the loving Presence of the Holy Spirit, we reflect that same thing to the world. Let me, then, enter into His Presence, allowing Him to look upon me, to find Him quietly doing nothing, but simply looking, and waiting, and judging me not. Let me hear Him tell me of His confidence in my ultimate success. And then, let me turn and share this blessing with the world, giving what I have received. Only as I share it will I know, for sure, that it is mine.

LESSON 231

August 19

**“Father, I will but to remember You.”**

**PRACTICE SUMMARY**

(See Part II Practice Summary, and also Part II Introduction)

**COMMENTARY**

This lesson is talking about our will. When the Course uses the word “will” in this way, it is talking about a fundamental, unchanging part of us, the permanently fixed goal of our Self. It isn’t talking about our wishes and our whims, but our *will*. Jesus speaks to us directly in the second paragraph and says, “This is your will, my brother” (2:1). It is a will we share with Him, and also with God our Father.

What is our will? To remember God; to know His Love. And that is all. Not many of us, as we began reading this Course, would have answered the question, “What do you want out of life?” with the words, “To remember God and know His Love.” A lot of us probably don’t feel those words fit us even now. The lesson recognizes that: “Perhaps I think I seek for something else” (1:2).

What is the “something else” you are seeking? It might be wealth, or fame. It might be some form of worldly security. It might be romance. It might be hot sex. Or a good time. Or a quiet family life, in the tradition of the American dream. We’ve called it by many names. We *think* these things are what we are seeking for. Yet no matter what we may think, these things are not what we truly will for ourselves. They are all forms, forms that we believe will give us something. It isn’t the form we are really seeking, it is the content, it is what we believe these things offer to us.

And what is that? Inner peace. Satisfaction. A sense of completion and wholeness. A sense of worth. An inner knowing that we are essentially good; loveable and loving. A feeling of belonging, of being valuable. Ultimately these things come only from remembering God and knowing His Love. They are something inside of us, not something outside of us. Only when we remember the truth about ourselves, only when we remember our connectedness to Love Itself, will we find what we are seeking. And we will find that we *are* what we have been seeking, and always have been.

“To remember Him is Heaven. This we seek. And only this is what it will be given us to find” (2:3–5). Remembering God is the *only* thing I am really looking for. Let me then, today, spend time, morning and evening, reminding myself of this fact: “Father, I will but to remember You.” Let me stop briefly every hour to recall it to my mind. And each time I find myself thinking that I want “something else,” let me gently correct myself: Remembering God is all I want.

**WHAT IS SALVATION? (Part 1)**

To begin with, it will help to realize that the Course does not attach the same meaning to this

word as does traditional religion. “Salvation” carries, for most of us, the connotation of some impending disaster from which we are “saved.” From hell, for instance. From some terrible punishment. From the consequences of our wrong-doing. The picture often used in traditional Christianity is of a drowning man being thrown a life-preserver; “Throw out the life-line,” the old Gospel hymn says. The Course directly refutes this idea:

“Your Self does not need salvation, but your mind needs to learn what salvation is. You are not saved *from* anything, but you are saved *for* glory” (T-11.IV.1:3,4).

Salvation in the Course *is* a “life preserver,” but not in the same sense. It does not save us from death; it preserves us in life. It is a guarantee that death will never touch us: “Salvation is a promise, made by God, that you would find your way to Him at last” (1:1). We are not in danger of destruction, never have been, never will be. The Course’s version of salvation does not reverse a disaster; it prevents the disaster from ever happening.

Before time began, God made His promise, a promise that “cannot but be kept” (1:2). That promise guaranteed that time, and all the mess we appear to have made in time, would have an end, and ultimately be without any effect at all. It guaranteed that life cannot end, that holiness cannot become sin, that Heaven cannot become hell. It guaranteed that there could never be more than an *illusion* of separation and a *dream* of suffering and death. It promised that the ego could never become real, that no will independent of God could ever arise. It defined the end from the beginning, and made it perfectly secure. We *will* find our way to God at last, because God has promised that it will be so.

LESSON 232

August 20

**“Be in my mind, my Father, through the day.”**

**PRACTICE SUMMARY**

(See Part II Practice Summary, and also Part II Introduction)

**COMMENTARY**

When I wake, God is in my mind; His Presence is with me and in my awareness. His Love, and the joy and peace of knowing God are with me; they take precedence over any other thoughts. Physical discomfort, and concerns about scheduling the day arise, but none of these displace the peace of God; it is my bedrock, my foundation, and my first concern. It is a constant awareness, like the background hum of an air conditioner, always there, often unnoticed, but ready to be noticed any time I turn my attention to it.

“Let every minute be a time in which I dwell with You.” Here *is* my desire! To dwell with God every minute of the day. It reminds me of John 15 in the New Testament: “Abide in me, and I in you.” Or the Old Testament expression of the same idea: The eternal God my resting place, and underneath me, the everlasting arms (Deut. 33:27). Let me remember today, each hour, to say, “Thank You for being with me today. Thank You for *always* being with me.”

“As evening comes, let all my thoughts be still of You and of Your Love. And let me sleep sure of my safety, certain of Your care, and happily aware I am Your Son.” Sure of my safety. Thus, free of all fear. For the most part, our lives are run by fears of various kinds; the ego is driven by fear. Peace is the absence of fear. And since fear is only the absence of love, peace and love are interdependent. When I am loving, I am peaceful. When I am peaceful, I am loving. Where I am sure of my safety, knowing the Presence of God in every moment, I am at peace and love flows through me.

“This is as every day should be.” This is the goal for life in this world: to live every day with God in my mind. To wake in His Presence, to walk in His shining Love, and to sleep in His care and protection. To so live that His Presence becomes our foreground and all else, the hum and bustle of the world, becomes background.

What is a day like for someone who has learned what the Course is teaching? Simply this: To constantly practice the end of fear. To walk with faith in Him Who is my Father, trusting all things to Him, letting Him reveal all things to me, and in everything to be undismayed because I am His Son (W-pII.232.2).

**WHAT IS SALVATION? (Part 2)**

How does salvation work? The essence of it is stated here in a single sentence: “God’s Word is given every mind which thinks that it has separate thoughts, and will replace these thoughts of conflict with the Thought of peace” (1:4). The instant our mind had a thought of conflict, God’s Word was implanted in our mind as well. Before disaster could even begin, the Answer was given.

You and I, who think of ourselves as separate entities, are such minds, which think that they have separate thoughts. But God’s Word has been implanted in us; the Truth lies beneath all our self-

deception. From within, the Thought of God is quietly working, waiting, moving to replace all our thoughts of conflict. The thoughts of conflict are myriad, taking thousands of forms, each in conflict with the universe and most in conflict with each other. The Thought of peace is one. It is the one remedy to every thought of conflict, whether it be hatred, anger, despair, frustration, bitterness, or death. The Thought of God heals them all.

The remedy lies within me, now. This is salvation: To turn within to the Thought of peace, and find it there within myself.

LESSON 233

August 21

**“I give my life to God to guide today.”**

**PRACTICE SUMMARY**

(See Part II Practice Summary, and also Part II Introduction)

**COMMENTARY**

One thing I find very interesting about the Course is that it is not terribly picky about its theology. There are places in the Course that make it quite clear that God does not even hear the words of our prayers, and that, knowing only the Truth, He does not know of our errors. “Technically,” then, prayers “ought” to be addressed to the Holy Spirit or to Jesus, who are specifically spoken of as intermediaries between truth and illusion, or a bridge between us and God. Yet here in the second half of the Workbook we have 140 lessons, each of which contains a prayer addressed to “Father.”

In today’s lesson, the Father is asked to guide us. Yet elsewhere, being Guide is defined as the function of the Holy Spirit. So I get the feeling that Jesus (the author) isn’t particularly concerned with strict theological correctness. I think he is a good example for all of us to follow. Would he be teaching us to pray to the Father if it were some sort of substandard spiritual practice?

If we gleaned nothing more from the Course than the practice of daily giving our lives over to God’s guidance, we would be quickly taken home. We can ask Him to replace our thoughts with His own, and to direct all our acts during the day, all we do and think and say. To act or think on our own is, literally, a waste of time. His wisdom is infinite, His Love and tenderness are beyond comprehension. Could we ask for a more reliable Guide?

The first step in following God’s guidance is a stepping *back*, releasing our tight hold on our lives and deliberately placing them under His control. The guidance will come. Sometimes, perhaps rarely, we will hear an inner Voice. In my personal experience this is very rare. Other times, things will happen around us that make our way plain. Or an inner conviction will build for no apparent reason. We will “just happen to notice” something someone says, or a song on the radio, or a line in a book. If we are *listening* for it, we will hear it.

Another key is giving our day to Him “with no reserve at all,” that is, holding nothing back. Sometimes we are so fixated on what we think we want or need that we are not willing to hear any guidance to the contrary. And if we aren’t willing to hear it, we won’t. We’re like a broken shopping cart that always wants to steer left or right; we just don’t respond well to guidance. We have to be willing to let go of all our preferences, all our investment in the outcome, and become completely malleable, completely open to whatever direction He wants to give to us. An old Christian hymn says:

“Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way. Thou are the potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me, After Thy will, While I am waiting, Yielded and still.”

That is what stepping back means. That is how we give our lives to God to guide. He guides. We follow, without questioning (1:7).

**WHAT IS SALVATION? (Part 3)**

The Thought of Peace that is our salvation “was given to God’s Son the instant that his mind had thought of war” (2:1). No time intervened at all between the thought of war and the Thought of peace. Salvation was given instantly when the need arose. In a beautiful image, the Text says that “not one note in Heaven’s song was missed” (T-26.V.5:4). The peace of Heaven was completely undisturbed. And having been answered, the problem was resolved for all of time and all eternity, in that microsecond.

Our discovery of salvation, however, takes time. Or at least seems to. A poor analogy: Imagine that you are suddenly burdened with a \$10,000 tax bill for a hitherto unexpected reason, but at that very instant, someone deposits one million dollars in your checking account. You could spend a lot of time trying to raise the needed money if you didn’t know about the deposit, but actually all you need to do is nothing, because the problem is already solved. Your only need, then, is to stop trying to solve the problem, and learn that it has already been answered.

Before the thought of separation (or war) arose, there was no need for a “Thought of peace.” Peace simply *was*, without an opposite. So in a certain sense we could say that the problem created its own answer. Before the problem, there was no answer because there was no need of one. But when the problem arose, the answer was already there. “When the mind is split there is a need of healing” (2:3). It is the thought of separation that makes the thought of healing needful, but when the healing is accepted, or when the thought of separation is abandoned, healing is no longer needed. Healing is a temporary (or temporal, related to time) measure. There is no need of it in Heaven.

As the Course says of forgiveness, because there is an illusion of need, there is need for an illusion of answer. But that “answer” is really simple acceptance of what has always been true, and always will be. Peace simply is, and salvation lies in our acceptance of that fact. Salvation, as the Course sees it, is not an active divine response to a real need. It is, instead, an apparent response to a need that, in truth, does not exist.

This is why the Course calls our spiritual path “a journey without distance” (T-8.VI.9:7) and, indeed, “a journey that was not begun” (W-pII.225.2:5). While we are in it, the journey seems very real, and often very long. When it is over, we will know that we never left Heaven, never travelled anywhere, and have always been exactly where we are: at home in God. The journey itself is imaginary. It consists in learning, bit by bit, that the distance we perceive between ourselves and God is simply not there.