

## Lesson 241 • August 29

**“This holy instant is salvation come.”**

### Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** The following visualization may help you more fully experience the meaning of today’s lesson:

Imagine a city or town, a place where there are large amounts of people, just before sunrise.

The sun begins to peek over the horizon, but this is not the usual sun.

This is the sunrise of salvation. Now hear these lines:

“The day has come when sorrows pass away and pain is gone” (1:4).

Imagine that, wherever the rays of this sun touch, sorrows pass away.

Imagine them touching a hospital, and all pain within it is gone.

“The glory of salvation dawns today upon a world set free” (1:5).

What is dawning is not mere physical light. It is salvation.

Because of this dawning, the world will be set free today.

“This is the time of hope for countless millions” (1:6).

Imagine countless millions waking up to this sunrise.

Not as they normally do, numb with despair and dreading what the day may bring, but filled with hope.

“Watch fear disappear from every face as hearts rise up and claim the light as theirs” (W-pl.168.4:3).

“They will be united now” (1:7).

Picture people all over joining with one another. See them joining hands.

See them feeling at one.

See countless millions greeting this sunrise as one family.

Now realize that this sun is not just salvation. It is something far more specific.

It is your forgiveness of the world.

Your forgiveness has this kind of power. It has the power to set the world free.

It has the power, once unleashed, to give the world this kind of dawn.

So choose someone you have not forgiven and say to him or her,

*“This holy instant is salvation come, because I have forgiven you, [name].”*

Keep repeating it, realizing that each repetition invites this glorious dawn to illumine the world.

### Commentary

When the lesson says that today “is a time of special celebration” (1:2), I rather suspect it is using the word “special” in the same way it uses it in one place in the Text, where Jesus says, “All my brothers are special” (T-1.V.3:6). Today is special because, in the holy instant, salvation has already come. And yet, “You can claim the holy instant any time and anywhere you want it” (T-15.IV.4:4). Whenever you claim the holy instant, it is a special time! A day of joy!

This is just like telling a child that they can have Christmas every day if they want it. And indeed the

Course tells us exactly that, in the section titled “The Time of Rebirth,” written at Christmas. It tells us that Christmas is the time of Christ, and the time of Christ is the holy instant (see T-15.X.2:1); then it tells us, “It is in your power to make the time of Christ be now” (T-15.X.4:1).

And so, why not today? Why not every day? Why not now? Any time I want to, I can make it a time “when sorrows pass away and pain is gone” (1:4). The practice of the holy instant offers me this. Within my mind I can, at any instant, open a window onto the real world, and breathe its fragrant atmosphere. I can experience a united world, drawn together by my forgiveness.

I do not yet find that I experience bliss the moment I close my eyes and say, “This holy instant is salvation come.” The reality I have experienced, from time to time, is always here; I am certain of that. Yet my awareness of it remains spotty. (*Very* spotty!) But once you have tasted it, and in that instant *known* that what you are experiencing is eternal, you can never fully doubt its eternal presence. There are still many barriers blocking my awareness of it. I am still holding on to quite a few of those barriers. My grievances are still, most of the time, hiding the light of the world from me. But it is there. My forgiveness can release it (1:7–2:1).

Every time I pause to remember, every time I attempt to claim the holy instant, another barrier falls, another drop of willingness is added to my reservoir. What better way could I possibly spend my time? As Lesson 127 said: “There is no better use for time than this” (see paragraphs 7 and 8).

One aside: Notice that in 1:8, Jesus speaks of our forgiving *him*. Let me examine myself today, to see if there is something I still hold against him; something in him I mistrust; some way in which I still fear him, or blame him, or resent him. Even if I respect him as my teacher, it is very easy to feel resentful of one’s teachers.

## What Is the World?

### Part 1: W-pII.3.1:1-4

The first sentence answers the question: “The world is false perception” (1:1). The rest of the page is the explanation of this summary statement. Some of us, on first reading the Course, think that perhaps the Course is not saying that the world is unreal, but that our perception of it is false. Yet here, quite clearly, Jesus is saying that the world and false perception are the same thing. The world is a hallucination; we are perceiving something that isn’t there.

In my perception, “I” am inside my head, looking out at a world that is not me. Separate. And that is simply not the truth. There is no world outside my mind (see T-18.VI.1:1 and T-12.III.6:7). “What is projected out, and seems to be external to the mind, is not outside at all” (T-26.VII.4:9).

The world was “born of error” and it has not left our minds which sourced it (1:2). As the Course so often says, ideas leave not their source. The world is the mistaken idea of separation in our minds (1:4), and it has never left our minds. When our mind (the one mind we all share) no longer cherishes the idea of separation, the world which represents that idea will simply disappear.

Many who were raised in a religious tradition which taught that God created the world have gone through a lot of distress and confusion, wondering how God could ever have created such a mess! If He was responsible for this, we weren’t sure we wanted to know Him. What a relief it is to realize that He did *not* create it; it was born of the error of our mind, from our mistakenly entertaining the idea of separation. The misery of this world only reflects the misery brought to our mind by the thought of separation. It is as if we wondered, “What if we were separate?” and were instantly given a virtual reality tour of what would result.

An early lesson said, “I can escape from this world by giving up attack thoughts” (W-pI.55.3:1, reviewing Lesson 23). The thought is the same. Heal the attack thoughts, the thoughts of separation which I still cherish, and I can leave the world behind. The Course is helping us to do just that; to let our attack thoughts go, and solve the problems of the world at their source.



## Lesson 242 • August 30

**“This day is God’s. It is my gift to Him.”**

### Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

### Commentary

“I will not lead my life alone today” (1:1).

In a day that seems rushed and over full with things to do, it is a relief to remember that I need not lead my life alone. I can burden myself with a thousand little decisions, or I can relax into His hands. I may list what needs to be done, but I can let go of all attachment to doing any of them. In each moment, I can trust that I will know what to do next, and that my choice will be perfect.

What is important, however, is not the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but His companionship. I will not be alone today, although I may have no other human presence with me. I can consciously be with God, and God with me. Instead of talking out loud to myself, why not talk out loud to Jesus? He is a much wiser companion than my limited mind.

“I do not understand the world, and so to try to lead my life alone must be but foolishness” (1:2).

There is such resistance in me, in us all, to realizing that we do not and cannot understand the world. I understand nothing. My awareness of what is going on is about one five-billionth of just our physical planet and its people. I know nothing of other planets and galaxies, and I am nearly totally unaware of the numberless realms beyond the physical—spirit beings, angels, ascended Masters, whatever there may be. I don’t know that the clerk in the laundry may need a smile, or whatever else is going on in minds apparently separated from me. How can I even think of rationally deciding what to do, where to go, what to say, all on my own?

Some event occurs, such as an appointment being juggled around from one time to another and finally settling on the time I least wanted (by my preferences). If I think I understand what is going on, if I think my preference is all that matters, I could be upset. If I realize I don’t understand the world, I let go, I accept, I trust. And I show up at my friend’s door minutes after she has heard the news about a friend’s sudden death, present to comfort her when she needs it. And, not coincidentally, prepared by an afternoon of discussing death with another friend, when I had no idea why I agreed to take time for that discussion when I had other things I thought important to do. How foolish not to let Him lead me!

So today, again, I resign as my own teacher and settle a bit more deeply into the awareness that I do not know, I do not understand, and knowing that is wisdom. I release this day into God’s hands; “It is my gift to Him.” This is a really good deal! I let go of my day, and He makes it full of miracles! That’s what He wants it for. It takes great effort, at first, to let go of wanting to understand. But when I do, nothing but joy follows.

But there is One Who knows all that is best for me. And He is glad to make no choices for me but the ones that lead to God. I give this day to Him, for I would not delay my coming home, and it is He Who knows the way to God. (1:3–5)

“Best for me” doesn’t necessarily mean that I will get done all I think I have to do, or that everything will work out perfectly (in my eyes) in form. Often it does mean that, but sometimes not. “Best for me” means the things “that lead to God.” It means “coming home” and making progress on “the way to God.” Because that is all that life in this world is for. “The healing of God’s Son is all the world is for” (T-24.VI.4:1), and nothing else. If I give my day to God, to the Holy Spirit, I will end the day closer to God, nearer home; that is my goal every day of my life. Nothing else. All other events are stage props for this one unfolding drama.

No matter what else may happen, if I spend this day more conscious of Jesus’ companionship, a little more often at peace, a little more joyful in every minute or a few more minutes spent joyfully, it is a success.

*And so we give today to You. We come with wholly open minds. We do not ask for anything that we may think we want. Give us what You would have received by us. You know all our desires and our wants. And You will give us everything we need in helping us to find the way to You. (2:1–6)*

“Wholly open minds.” No preconceptions about what should take place. “Wholly” means totally, completely open. As for what we expect to come, anything can fail to happen and we are not distraught. As for what we do not expect, anything can come, and we are not dismayed. I recognize that my mind does not want to be wholly open. For instance, I think if I did not finish writing my article before lunch I might be upset. If I have that thought, let me see it is only my thought. Not a fact. What other things am I attached to today? Jesus, I want to be wholly open. And it isn’t easy.

How can I let go of my wants and needs? By remembering that “You know all our desires and our wants.” He knows what I think I need, and I do not need to ask Him for those things. He knows. And if the day does not bring what I think I want, it is not because He did not know, or that He lost my case file, or that He is punishing me for some imaginary guilt. It is because what I thought I wanted was not best for me. The Holy Spirit is not inconsiderate nor forgetful. He “will give us everything we need in helping us to find the way to” God. Let me let down the defenses of my planning mind, and follow this advice: “Let no defenses but your present trust direct the future, and this life becomes a meaningful encounter with the truth that only your defenses would conceal” (W-pI.135.19:2).

## What Is the World?

### Part 2: W-pII.3.1:4–5

If the world is simply the effect of the thought of separation in my mind, then obviously it is true that

when the thought of separation has been changed to one of true forgiveness, will the world be seen in quite another light, and one which leads to truth. (1:4)

The antidote for the thought of separation is true forgiveness. If the Course is a course in changing our thoughts, the thoughts that are being changed are separation thoughts, and they are being changed into thoughts of true forgiveness. The “wall” that keeps us separate is our unforgiveness, our grievances, our judgment upon one another as undeserving of love. The result of changing those thoughts to thoughts of forgiveness is that we see the world very differently. Instead of a world of judgment we see the real world. Instead of enemies we see brothers. And the vision of this real world “leads to truth,” beyond perception to knowledge; beyond the real world to Heaven.

This light “leads to truth, where all the world must disappear and all its errors vanish” (1:4). In other words, as we’ve already seen, the progression is from “the world” (the result of the thought of separation) to “the real world” (the result of the thought of forgiveness) and then to “Heaven” (the truth), where there

is no world at all.

The process we are going through in the world is the healing of our thoughts of separation. As those thoughts are healed, we begin to see the real world more and more, a world in which only love is reflected. But when the thought of separation is *entirely* healed in every part of every fragment of the mind, the world will not simply be seen differently; it will disappear. “Now its source [the thought of separation] has gone, and its effects [the world and all its errors] are gone as well” (1:5).

## Lesson 243 • August 31

“Today I will judge nothing that occurs.”

### Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** Think of some situation that has been upsetting you, and repeat the following lines:

*I do not know what this means,  
Because meaning is supplied by context,  
And I do not see the whole context for this.  
The whole context for this is the whole—totality, infinity.  
Yet I see only bits of my perception.  
I do not know what this means.*

### Commentary

If attempting to practice today’s lesson does nothing else, it will show me just how constantly my mind *is* judging. The eventual goal, of course, is to truly relinquish all judgment, and to allow the Holy Spirit to judge everything for us. Letting go of judgment is a key to transcending the ego: “The ego cannot survive without judgment, and is laid aside accordingly” (T-4.II.10:3).

“I will be honest with myself today” (1:1). The Course teaches us that letting go of judgment is simply learning to be honest with ourselves. This lesson is paralleled in the Manual:

It is necessary for the teacher of God to realize, not that he should not judge, but that he cannot. In giving up judgment, he is merely giving up what he did not have. He gives up an illusion; or better, he has an illusion of giving up. He has actually merely become more honest. Recognizing that judgment was always impossible for him, he no longer attempts it.  
(M-10.2:1–5)

So giving up judgment is simply being honest about the fact that I *cannot* judge. To judge accurately I would have to know many things that “must remain beyond my present grasp” (1:2). I would have to know “the whole” (1:3) just from what my limited perception is telling me. And I can’t do that. So any judgment I make has to be an illusion, no more valid than a wild guess.

Still—just watch yourself doing it! Our minds automatically categorize every person we see. We evaluate their clothes, their grooming, their sexual attractiveness, the appropriateness of their behavior, the way they walk, and on and on. We get up, see the sunshine, and say, “What a nice day!” or we see rain and say, “What miserable weather!” We read a book and tell a friend what a “great book” it is. We take a bite of food and instantly judge it. The ego mind seems to do little else but judge. Just watch yourself.

That isn’t going to stop overnight, if ever. What we can do, however, is to become aware of these judgments constantly going on and realize that they are without any real meaning. We can tell the ego, “Thank you for sharing,” and choose to realize that we don’t really know what anything means or how to react to it, despite what the ego is telling us. We can turn instead to our inner guidance. We can “leave

creation free to be itself” (2:1) without our constant interference. We can bring our judgments to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to heal our minds. And, perhaps most important of all, we can simply *desire* that judgment be undone. In the end, that desire is all it takes:

Vision would not be necessary had judgment not been made. Desire now its whole undoing, and it is done for you. (T-20.VIII.1:5–6)

Undoing is not your task, but it *is* up to you to welcome it or not. (T-21.II.8:5)

Don’t worry about *how* your judgments can be undone. Don’t try to undo them yourself. Just desire that they be undone; just welcome the undoing. That is all, and the Holy Spirit will do it for you.

## What Is the World?

### WpII.3.2:1–3

“The world was made as an attack on God” (2:1). That is probably one of the most shocking statements in *A Course in Miracles*. It puts to bed any idea that perhaps the world was, at least partly, created by God; God would not create an attack on Himself. The world is the ego’s attempt to replace and displace God, and to provide us with an alternative satisfaction.

In Chapter 23, Section II, the Text speaks of “The Laws of Chaos,” the ego’s laws. It tells us that these laws are what make the world real; it says, “These *are* the principles which make the ground beneath your feet seem solid” (T-23.II.13:5). The ego’s laws are what made the world.

What of the world’s beauty? What of the glitter of the stars, the fragile beauty of a flower, the majesty of an eagle in flight? Nothing but glitter, a shiny surface hiding the death-rot underneath. “Kill or be killed” is the law of this world. Beneath the lovely, glittering surface of the ocean lies a world of sharp teeth, cruel deception, and constant warfare, where life consists of eating some things and avoiding being eaten by others.

“Can you paint rosy lips upon a skeleton, dress it in loveliness, pet it and pamper it, and make it live?” (T-23.II.18:8). “There is no life outside of Heaven” (T-23.II.19:1).

The world symbolizes fear, which is the absence of love. “Thus, the world was meant to be a place where God could enter not, and where His Son could be apart from Him” (2:4). The ego made the world as a place to hide out from God, to get away from Him. Yes, we can find symbols of God in nature, and we should; true perception sees nothing but love in all things. But that means we see Him in tornadoes and earthquakes as well as in flowers and birds. It means we see Him in everything because He is in our minds. But at its root, this world is a place where God is not. That is why the ego made it. That is our purpose in coming here, as egos. And we egos did a pretty good job; people have been trying to “prove” the existence of God within the context of this world for millennia, and nobody has ever done so except, perhaps, to the satisfaction of a few who were already inclined to believe. Finding God *in* the world is quite a stretch. The world does a far better job of hiding God than it does of demonstrating Him.

What is the message in all of this for us? Remember, “The world is false perception” (1:1). It is not the truth. The picture of the world, symbolizing fear and attack, is the picture of the ego’s thoughts. “It is born of error” (1:2). This world is not what we want. We cannot attempt to cling to its “better” parts and forget about the horror all around us. We take it whole or let it all go. And so, we can learn to look upon the world with love—all of it. Loving it gives it the only value it has (see T-12.VI.3:1–3). With forgiveness, we look past the messages of hate and fear it constantly tries to give us, and see there, as well as in the more “pleasing” aspects, the universal call for love.

You do not want the world. The only thing of value in it is whatever part of it you look upon with love. This gives it the only reality it will ever have. Its value is not in itself, but

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yours is in you. As self-value comes from self-extension, so does the perception of self-value come from the extension of loving thoughts outward. Make the world real unto yourself, for the real world is the gift of the Holy Spirit, and so it belongs to you. (T-12.VI.3:1-6)

## Lesson 244 • September 1

### “I am in danger nowhere in the world.”

#### Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** Whenever you think of it, especially when you are feeling afraid, repeat the lesson in this more specific form: *“I am in danger nowhere in the world, including in this situation.”*

#### Commentary

Who I have believed myself to be is in danger *everywhere* in the world. We are assaulted constantly with signals of danger. Smoking can kill me; even residual smoke is deadly. Our water is unsafe, I need a purifier. Preservatives and coloring in foods cause cancer. Stay well away from your microwave while using it. Don't sit too close to your TV or computer screen (and watch out for carpal tunnel syndrome). Beware of computer viruses; even more, beware of HIV viruses. Don't feed bears when camping. Don't use your telephone in a lightning storm. Don't drink and drive, and watch out for those who do.

In order to even begin to accept today's idea, I have to realize that I am not who I have believed myself to be. This little identity of Allen Watson, wrapped in a very fragile body, is not the one who is in danger nowhere in the world: “Your Son is safe wherever he may be” (1:1). It is the Son Who is safe; the Son Who is beloved of God, held “in the safety of Your Fatherly embrace” (1:3). In my quiet times today I will recall that this is Who I really am, and, at least in these moments, I will let go of my sense of danger, relax my defensiveness, and enjoy the awareness of the Father's Love and protection (1:2). I will realize that Who I really am “cannot suffer, be endangered, or experience unhappiness” (1:3).

Let me attempt to feel my safety today. What would I feel like if I truly knew, to the depths of my being, that I can never suffer, or be in danger, or experience unhappiness? What effect would that have on the tension in my shoulders, the knot in my stomach, or the rapid beating of my heart? Let me thoughtfully consider this. Let me try to imagine the peace I would feel. Let me experience the softening in every part of my body, and more importantly, the melting of the hardness of my mind. I would feel, I think, like the very young child who, when Mommy or Daddy says, “Everything will be all right now,” really believes it. The shuddering stops, the little body relaxes, and the child falls asleep in Mommy's arms.

“And there we are in truth,” “in the safety of Your Fatherly embrace” (2:1; 1:3). “In God we are secure” (2:3). Yes.

### What Is the World?

**Part 4: W-pII.3.2:4-7**

The world is where perception was born (2:5). It was born because *knowledge* could not give birth to thoughts of fear; knowledge knows only the peace of God. Knowledge, in the Course, always speaks of Heaven and its oneness; perception, on the other hand, is the only means of “knowing” in this world. The two are often contrasted in the Text. Perception is inherently unreliable: “Eyes deceive, and ears hear falsely” (2:6). We all know this to be true. One has only to engage in one marital argument about what was seen and said the evening before to demonstrate it to ourselves. (Of course it is always the other person who seems to be perceiving falsely!)

Has it ever occurred to me, in all the times my senses have deceived me, that they were made deliberately to do so? “They were made to look upon a world that is not there; to hear the voices that can make no sound” (T-28.V.5:4; the rest of the paragraph is relevant also).

The body’s eyes see only form. They cannot see beyond what they were made to see. And they were made to look on error and not see past it. (T-22.III.5:3-6)

With our dependence on our eyes and ears, we have made ourselves very vulnerable to error: “Now mistakes become quite possible, for certainty has gone” (2:7).

Unreliable and deceptive perception enables the ego to make this world seem real. Perception shows us the sight of a world full of danger, demanding defensiveness and constant vigilance against attack. “The world *is* false perception” (1:1, my emphasis). Only the vision of Christ, which sees the light of God, can reveal anything different.

The purpose of the world you see is to obscure your function of forgiveness, and provide you with a justification for forgetting it. It is the temptation to abandon God and His Son by taking on a physical appearance. It is this the body’s eyes look upon.

Nothing the body’s eyes seem to see can be anything but a form of temptation, since this was the purpose of the body itself. Yet we have learned that the Holy Spirit has another use for all the illusions you have made, and therefore He sees another purpose in them. To the Holy Spirit, the world is a place where you learn to forgive yourself what you think of as your sins. In this perception, the physical appearance of temptation becomes the spiritual recognition of salvation. (W-pI.64.1:2-4)

## Lesson 245 • September 2

**“Your peace is with me, Father. I am safe.”**

### Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

### Commentary

God’s peace is *always* with me, and I am always safe. It isn’t a sometime thing. God’s peace is with me *now* and always. Unrest is always something I am superimposing on the underlying peace, which never leaves me. Unrest is a false perception; peace is reality. If I am willing to stop, to say, “Peace! Be still!” to the storm in my mind, God’s peace is always there, waiting to be discovered.

I am surrounded by God’s peace (1:1). It goes with me wherever I go (1:2). I bring it with me, and I can “shed its light on everyone I meet” (1:3). I can be, as St. Francis prayed, an instrument of His peace, bringing it “to the desolate and lonely and afraid” (1:4). Oh, I want that to be what I am today! I want to be willing to pray, “Send them to me, my Father” (1:6). Let me hear the lesson of the Holy Spirit, “To have peace, teach peace to learn it” (T-6.V(B)). As I bring peace to those “bereft of hope and happiness” (1:5) I will find it in myself (2:2–3). I will recognize my Self. I will hear the Voice for God. I will recognize Your Love.

Today, if I do not feel Your peace within me, let me bring it to someone else who needs it. In so doing, I will recognize its presence in myself.

## What Is the World?

### Part 5: W-pII.3.3:1–2

“The mechanisms of illusion have been born instead” (3:1), instead of certainty (2:7). The mechanisms of illusion include not only our eyes and ears, our physical perceptive organs, but also the mechanisms of the mind that interpret and adjust what is perceived to fit the patterns being looked for. We see what we expect to see, what we want to see. I was discussing, just last night, the very strange “blind spot” in our eyes. All of us have it. There is a place on the retina (where the optic nerve attaches to it) that does not pick up the light shining through the lens. The very strange thing is this: the mind “fills in” the blind spot with what “ought” to be there. None of us see a blank spot at the side of our vision, but it is there; the mind simply makes up what it thinks should be there! This is a “mechanism of illusion” indeed! And our mind “makes up” what “ought” to be there far more often than we realize.

The whole process of perception is a process of illusion. Our mind sends out its information gatherers “to find what has been given them to seek” (3:2). The mind tells them, “Find evidence of guilt,” and Lo! They find it. “Find evidence of attack.” They bring it back. “Find evidence of separation.” They produce it. The ego sees only what it wants to see. And the ego’s purpose in perception is to witness and make real the absence of love, to demonstrate that God is not here, and that we *are* here, apart from Him.



Lesson 246 • September 3  
“To love my Father is to love His Son.”

**Practice instructions**

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** I suggest applying this idea specifically to people in your life throughout the day. Say, “*To love my Father is to love His Son, [name].*” You might want to add, “*Let me not think that I can attack the Son and still know the Father.*”

**Commentary**

We can’t love God without loving what He created. The Apostle John, in his epistles, said very much the same thing as today’s lesson:

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. (1 John 4:20–21)

The “Son of God” in the Course refers not simply to Jesus, nor just to all our brothers and sisters; it also includes ourselves. The measure of the quality of relationship we have with God is the relationships we have with those around us, and with ourselves. Our love for our brothers and sisters reflects the love we have for God. “Let me not think that I can find the way to God, if I have hatred in my heart” (1:1). If in some way I am wishing harm to my brother, I cannot know God, nor can I even know my Self (1:2). And if I am, in my mind, diminishing *myself*, I who am God’s own Son, I will be unable to truly know God’s Love for me, or mine for Him (1:3).

The ego is a thought of attack; it believes it has attacked God and succeeded. And yet it sees that battle reflected in everyone around us, and projects its fear and its attack onto everything, often in subtle disguises, some even bearing the name of “love.”

Let me be open to discovering the “little” bits of hatred that still lie in my heart—especially those directed at myself. There are far more than I would like to believe. The Text teaches me that uncovering the hatred within myself is “crucial” (T-13.III.1:1). It tells me, “You must realize that your hatred is in your mind and not outside it before you can get rid of it” (T-12.III.7:10). The scraps of hatred I clutch to me must be seen for what they are, and chosen against. With a deliberate act of will I need to say, “I choose to love Your Son” (2:4). The choice for love is the choice for God and the choice for my Self.

What Is the World?

**Part 6: W-pII.3.3:3–5**

The “mechanisms of illusion” are what make this world seem so real. They include even our eyes and

ears, and all our physical senses:

The body's eyes see only form. They cannot see beyond what they were made to see. And they were made to look on error and not see past it. (T-22.III.5:3-5)

When we view things with the ego's perception, illusions seem solid; the separation of the ego seems to be nothing but the truth (3:4). To see with the vision of Christ, to see the oneness instead of the separation, we need to be willing to discount what our eyes are showing us, because "they were made to look on error." "Everything that they report is but illusion which is kept apart from truth" (3:5). The miracle enables us to see what eyes see not; it lifts our perception into the realm of the spiritual, away from the physical (see T-1.I.22 and T-1.I.32).

We need to be willing to question what our senses seem to make real, and to be willing to perceive, with a different kind of vision, something else entirely. We have been victims of a very clever and very successful propaganda campaign, conducted by the master of disinformation—the ego. We need to realize that nothing we have believed to be true and counted upon as solid reality can be trusted; everything must be called to question. We have been surrounded by a conspiracy of lies, emanating from within our own mind. We have misdirected our senses until we became unconscious of what we were doing, but we can, today, redirect them. We can choose to look for evidence of love, instead of hate; for peace instead of attack. We can say:

Above all else I want to see things differently. (W-pI.28.Heading)

## Lesson 247 • September 4

**“Without forgiveness I will still be blind.”**

### Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** Choose someone in your life whom you have been judging or failing to appreciate, and say to this person:

*Without forgiving you, [name], I will still be blind.*

*Brother, come and let me look on you with my now open eyes.*

*Your loveliness reflects my own.*

*Your sinlessness is mine.*

*You stand forgiven, and I stand with you.*

### Commentary

All unforgiveness is, in reality, of myself. Today I am seeing a more subtle form of unforgiveness. Perhaps I am willing to admit that my unloving or unjoyful feeling in the present is due to my own wanting and choosing *in the past*. If I am truly looking at my ego without judgment, though, I will be able to admit that I am feeling loveless or joyless now because I am choosing those feelings *now*, in the present. If I cannot do that, I am still listening to the voice of guilt.

For a brief instant, sin and Atonement must lie on the altar together. The guilt must be brought to the present to be healed.

If I avoid seeing my identification with ego in the present, if I avoid seeing my guilt in the present, then I am blinding myself. Avoiding seeing the ego in the present means, very simply—due to the perfect power of my mind—that I *never see it* in the present. I stumble through life blind to my ego in the present moment. I am always caught off guard. Again and again the ego trips me up, and I stumble and fall, saying stupidly, “Oh! That must have been my ego!”

In order to say “yes” to God, I must recognize that I am, right now, saying “no.” “‘Yes’ must mean ‘not no’” (T-21.VII.12:4). It isn’t so much that I need to say “yes” as I need to notice I’m saying “no.” When I notice that fact, I will stop. And when my “no” stops, the peace that was always there becomes conscious. To say “no” to the “no,” to deny the denial, is the way we say “yes.” But I can’t say “no” to the “no” until I admit I’m saying “no” in the first place!

One piece of unerring evidence that I have not owned my guilt is that I will still be projecting it. I will still be making excuses for myself, talking about my weakness, feeling that I’ll “never make it.” Or I’ll be caught up in wanting others to admit their own responsibility for the situation in the relationship. If someone tries to get me to see my responsibility for things, I’ll feel attacked, even if it is done in true love. I will be saying things like “I didn’t realize what I was doing,” or “I wasn’t aware of attacking you at the time.” I will still feel that, while I may have acted from my ego, so did you—and you’d damn well better admit it.

“I was not aware” or “I didn’t realize what I was doing” is not an excuse! If I was not aware, there is only one reason—I was choosing to be not aware. I have formed a habit of refusing to see my guilt in the

present, and so, in each present moment, I live in unawareness of my ego thoughts.

The terror of looking at the ego now is so great that the instant I begin to become aware I want to project my ego into the past, to push it away and deny that I am now identified with it. But healing occurs only in the present. The horror of the ego, the desire to separate myself and to murder my brother must be seen *now* in order to be healed. When I can allow that, the healing is instant. Brought into the present, guilt encounters the Holy Spirit and Atonement, for that is the only place Atonement lives, and that is all that lives in the present. The guilt is here and then gone, flashing out of existence. Guilt cannot exist in the presence of Atonement, any more than darkness can exist in the light.

If I am seeing anything but total innocence in my brothers, I am hiding guilt in myself. There is no guilt but my own. And when I see that, there is no guilt at all.

## What Is the World?

### Part 7: W-pII.3.4:1-2

Though our sight was made to lead away from truth, “it can be redirected” (4:1). The ego’s purpose for perception can be replaced with a new purpose, that of the Holy Spirit. “Yet we have learned that the Holy Spirit has another use for all the illusions you have made, and therefore He sees another purpose in them” (W-pI.64.2:2). “The Holy Spirit teaches you to use what the ego has made, to teach the opposite of what the ego has ‘learned’” (T-7.IV.3:3). So the Holy Spirit teaches us to use our eyes and ears not to see separation and the absence of God, but to see oneness and His Presence in everything.

Sounds become the call for God, and all perception can be given a new purpose by the One Whom God appointed Savior to the world. (4:2)

The preceding discussion might make us think that, since our eyes were made to see error, they are now useless. But the Holy Spirit will use everything the ego has made. He uses our bodies as communication devices. He uses our special relationships to teach us forgiveness and love and union. He uses our learning ability (made to learn error) to teach us the truth. He uses the whole world as a classroom of forgiveness and a mirror of Heaven. There is nothing the ego has done that cannot be used by the Holy Spirit. So in the end, there is no loss whatsoever, because all the ego’s energies have been “recycled” by the Holy Spirit for His own purposes.