

Workbook Lesson Support Notes

by Allen Watson

Lesson 269 • September 26

“My sight goes forth to look upon Christ’s face.”

Practice instructions

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: You may want to apply this idea specifically to people in your life. Say, “My sight goes forth to look upon Christ’s face in [name].” You might then imagine a giant luminous face of Christ looming behind the body of this person as a symbol of what true perception will show you.

Commentary

Today’s lesson is about forgiveness; about choosing in advance to see innocence in others. Let’s recall a few things that earlier lessons have taught us about forgiveness.

Lesson 126: *Giving forgiveness is how I receive it.*

How is this lesson on “giving is receiving” related to forgiveness? It discusses how, in the world’s understanding of forgiveness, there is no room for us to receive anything from forgiveness. “When you ‘forgive’ a sin, there is no gain to you directly” (W-pI.126.3:1). If I believe in the reality of someone’s sin but “forgive” it, it is just an act of charity to someone unworthy of it. I am giving him a gift he does not deserve. It could easily appear that I in fact am losing something, not gaining anything. There is no release for me in doing something like this.

Only when I have truly received forgiveness for myself can I give it; and only in giving it do I recognize I have received it. I don’t even know what it is! How could I recognize it? So in order to know what forgiveness is, and to know that I have it, I have to give it away. I have to see it “out there” to recognize it “in here.” When I do I will also begin to understand that there is no difference between out there and in here.

The idea that giving is receiving, that the “giver and receiver are the same” (W-pI.126.8:1), is a necessary preparation for releasing our minds from every bar to what forgiveness really is. Judgment is based on separation and differences: the sin is in someone else and not in me. He is bad, I am better. Forgiveness is based on unity and sameness: there is no “other” to be done to or to do it to me. We are both innocent. There never was any sin. We are all part of the same Heart of Love.

Lesson 134: *True forgiveness forgives illusions, not real sins.*

Here we learn that the major obstacle to learning true forgiveness is the belief that we must forgive something real. We believe that sin really exists, that injury has really been done. It is impossible to forgive a sin that we believe is real. “It is impossible to think of sin as true and not believe forgiveness is a lie” (W-pI.134.4:2). “Guilt cannot be forgiven” (W-pI.134.5:3).

This is really a major obstacle. I can testify that it is possible for something you once thought of as sin

to be seen as no more than a mistake, a call for love. I've experienced that. I didn't make the shift myself. We can't do it ourselves. But we do need to be willing to have the shift occur. I know there are many things that, consciously or unconsciously, I still judge and condemn as sin, as evil. Every time I encounter judgment in my mind, I need do nothing but recognize that it is there and believe that there is another way to perceive it. I affirm I am willing to see it differently. I ask for help in understanding forgiveness through this experience. And I wait.

I allow myself to look at the anger, the fear, the resentment I may be feeling. I don't hide it; that just perpetuates the wrong-mindedness. I am willing to see my own feelings differently as well. I recognize that perhaps I am judging myself for feeling them. So, as I did with the external judgment, I do with the internal: I affirm I am willing to see it differently and ask for help. And I wait.

What happens then is of God. A shift occurs in my mind. It may occur first in regard to the other, the "sinner"; it may occur first in regard to myself. Since the other and myself are one and the same it doesn't matter how it is experienced, or in what order. In the shift, I come to see something I am judging, in the other or in myself, as a call for love. I come to see that regardless of the appearance it takes, innocence lay behind the act. I may see that I was angry because I wanted to be close to the other person and they pushed me away; I wanted joining, oneness. There is nothing to be guilty of there. I thought I saw attack and attacked back. Now I see there was no attack; we both want the same thing, so I let go of my attack and respond with love. Or I may see how the other person was fearful, felt threatened by me somehow (and I know I am not a threat), and so flipped out. My return attack was just the same mistake. I see there was no sin in what happened, and the whole thing can simply be dropped from my mind.

Today's lesson: *We see innocence when we choose to see it.*

"My sight goes forth to look upon Christ's face." "Today I choose to see a world forgiven" (1:5). Seeing the "face of Christ" is a symbolic way of saying we see innocence, we see a world forgiven.

In this lesson we see that forgiveness is a choice. When we decide that what we want to see is innocence, we will see innocence. The Holy Spirit will give us the gift of that sight. "What I look on belongs to me" (1:5). If I see mistakes out there, they are my mistakes. If I see innocence, it too is my own. If I can see innocence—and I will if I choose to, I will if I ask to—it is the proof of my own innocence. Only the innocent can perceive innocence. Only those who perceive innocence in others know their own innocence. The guilty will always perceive guilt. Perceiving innocence in others is the means God has given us to discover our own innocence. We can't find it if we look directly. It's like trying to see your own face; you must have a mirror. The world is my mirror; it shows me the state of my own mind. The image in the glass is only an image, only an illusion, but in this world it is a necessary illusion, and will be until there is a knowing that exists without perception.

What Is the Body?

Part 9: W-pII.5.5:1-3

What was pointed out in Lesson 261 is echoed here: "You will identify with what you think will make you safe" (5:1; see W-pII.261.1). If we think our physicality and individual identity are what make us safe, we will identify with them; if we understand that being the love that we are is what gives us safety, we will identify with that, rather than the body and ego. If we identify with the body, our life becomes a cramped, futile attempt to preserve and protect it. If we identify with love, the body becomes simply a tool used to express our own loving being, which is God expressed through us.

"Your safety lies in truth, and not in lies" (5:3). The body is a lie about us; it is not what we are. The truth about us is that we are love: "Teach only love, for that is what you are" (T-6.I.13:2). That is where our true safety lies, and that is what we must learn to identify with.

What seems "more real" to me today? My body, or my loving Self? Where does my emphasis lie? On what do I center most of my time and attention? What takes most of my care and concern? The practice of

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the Workbook lessons can be very revealing in this regard, as I begin to realize that rarely, if ever, do I fail to take care of my body, giving it food, clothing, cleansing, and sleep. How well do I care for my spirit? When my attention to my spiritual needs and to the expression of my inner nature has become paramount, when I would rather miss breakfast than miss my quiet time with God, I will know that I have begun to shift my identity from lies to truth.

If in observing myself I realize that this is not yet the case, let me not make myself guilty about it. Guilt accomplishes nothing positive. My identification with the body is not a sin. It is simply a mistake, and an indication that I need to practice unlearning that identification, and learning to identify with love instead. When I practice guitar and notice that I am missing a certain chord, I do not feel guilty about it; I just intensify my practice of that particular song until I learn it.

I can even use my habit of identifying with the body to help me form a new focus. When I shower or wash my face I can use the time to mentally repeat the day's lesson and think about its meaning to me. (What other more valuable thing is occupying your mind at those times, anyhow?) When I eat, I can remember to give thanks, and let it be a trigger to remember God. If I am alone, perhaps I can read a page from the Course, or a lesson card, while I eat. I can make the body into a tool to help me walk the road to God.

Lesson 270 • September 27

“I will not use the body’s eyes today.”

Practice instructions

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

Of course this does not mean I will walk around with a blindfold on, crashing into things. I will not, however, let my sight stop at the physical. I won’t “use” the information of the eyes, I won’t depend on that.

Christ’s vision...has the power to translate all that the body’s eyes behold into the sight of a forgiven world. (1:1)

There’s that word “translate” again. What I want to see, today, my Teacher, is a forgiven world. I want to see the truth behind all appearances. My function, the function of every Son of God, is that of a translator. We are here to heal the world by seeing it differently, and thus we also heal ourselves.

One of the chief components of that different vision is *lack of judgment*. No condemnation. No making wrong. No demand for outward changes. Seeing that everyone and everything is worthy of love, exactly as they are. No comparisons or evaluations, no making of differences, but seeing everything as part of one whole.

To forgive is to overlook. Look, then, beyond error and do not let your perception rest upon it, for you will believe what your perception holds. Accept as true only what your brother is, if you would know yourself. Perceive what he is not, and you cannot know what you are, because you see him falsely. (T-9.IV.1:2–5)

You do not understand how to overlook errors, or you would not make them. (T-9.IV.2:2)

We are told to overlook error. Then we are told we don’t know how to do it. Instead, we are to turn to the Holy Spirit. It seems to me a fundamental lesson of the Course is “Don’t trust your perceptions.” Don’t use the body’s eyes. Don’t think that seeing begins and ends with physical sight and our own mental interpretations.

What we do as we go through the world is something like this: We perceive something. Our mind may interpret it, almost certainly will, and nearly always with some evaluation, some judgment. At that point, what we need to do is recognize that judgment is impossible for us, and just let it go. We abandon our perception. We don’t think of it as dangerous, or fearful, or sinful; we just recognize that it is meaningless (see M-16.10:8). That giving up of our own perceptions is the crucial step. “And for this ‘sacrifice’ is Heaven restored to his awareness” (M-16.10:10).

We step back and take what appears to be a very inferior position. We say, “I do not understand what this means.” This is the *very first lesson* in the Workbook, “Nothing I see...means anything” (W-

pI.1.Heading).

And then we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit. “I am willing to see things differently.” That’s it. If you get this far, you will become hooked, because God will answer that prayer. You *will* see things differently. Maybe not at once, not in that instant, but it happens. How? I don’t know! Understanding the *how* of the Atonement is not our job, not our function, but His.

What Is the Body?

Part 10: W-pII.5.5:4–8

Love is your safety. Fear does not exist. (5:4–5)

When I do not use the body’s eyes, this is what I will see. When I let go of my unquestioning trust in my perception of things, I will see love. My body’s eyes were made out of fear and made to see fear. I need to end my reliance on this mechanism of perception, and ask for a new one: Christ’s vision.

The statement “Fear does not exist” may seem incredible to me, particularly as I advance in my practice of the Course, because one of the consequences of practicing the Course is that all kinds of buried fears bubble up in my mind. The Course teaches me, however, that what has happened is this: In order to hide my own true nature of love from me, my ego invented all kinds of fear; then I found them so terrifying that I repressed or denied them and covered them over with deceptive disguises, supported by my perception of the world. Now, as I let go of my confidence in my perception, the disguises are dissolving, and the fears I have buried are surfacing. This simple message, then, is an antidote to those surfacing fears: “Fear does not exist.” In other words, what I am seeing is not real; it is an illusion I have made.

How can I escape from my fears?

Identify with love, and you are safe. Identify with love, and you are home. Identify with love, and find your Self. (5:6–8)

As I begin to look within, I see all these different forms of fear. Rather than fighting the fear, or running from it, or burying it again, I need to learn to see past it to the love it is hiding. We have to go through what the Course calls “the ring of fear” in order to reach our Self, our home (see T-18.IX, especially paragraphs 3 and 4). This is where most of us get stuck. The fear seems too real.

Let me, today, allow the Holy Spirit to show me that this seemingly impenetrable wall of fear is really nothing. It is made of clouds that cannot stop a feather. Let me take His hand and allow Him to lead me past it to the truth, to my Self, and to my home. Let me choose to identify with love, and find my safety.

Lesson 271 • September 28
“Christ’s is the vision I will use today.”

Practice instructions

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

Once again the Workbook faces us with the fact that we *choose* what we want to see, and see it. It tells us this process is going on continuously, constantly: “Each day, each hour, every instant, I am choosing what I want to look upon, the sounds I want to hear, the witnesses to what I want to be the truth for me” (1:1). The latter part of that sentence is significant because it gives us the *reason* for our choice: we choose to see what we want to be the truth for ourselves. For instance, if I am constantly seeing people who are victims, it is because there is a part of me that wants to be a victim. I may think that I do not want to be a victim, but if the alternative is to be responsible for everything that happens to me—it sounds pretty good! Every time I see a victim, I am secretly wanting to be able to blame someone else for my faults.

The main point of this lesson is not our negative choices, however. The point is that there is a choice. There is an alternative. If I listen to the ego my choice will be to see sin, guilt, fear, and death. If I listen to the Holy Spirit, however, I will want something different to be the truth about myself, and therefore I will want to see something else in the world—and I will see it. Seeing it in the world is how I will know it is the truth about myself. Instead of wanting to see witnesses to sin, I will want to see witnesses to the truth, and what I look for I will find.

As my perception merges more and more with Christ’s vision, I will approach the point where perception will entirely disappear (1:3). The changed perception will show me what the Course calls the real world; the disappearance of perception refers to the end of the world and our awakening to Heaven.

How do I want to see myself? If I want to see myself as love, let me seek today to see love in my brothers and sisters. If I want to see myself as innocent, let me look for innocence in others. If I want to see myself as without guilt, let me seek to see others without guilt. Today, let me remember:

When you meet anyone, remember it is a holy encounter. As you see him you will see yourself. As you treat him you will treat yourself. As you think of him you will think of yourself. (T-8.III.4:1–4)

Each one you see in light brings your light closer to your awareness. (T-13.VI.10:3)

Teach no one that he is what you would not want to be. (T-7.VII.3:8)

What Is the Christ?

Lesson 272 • September 29
“How can illusions satisfy God’s Son?”

Practice instructions

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 comments: Notice the response to temptation instructions in paragraph 2. They ask us to watch our minds today for any instance in which we hear some earthly thing “call to us to stay and linger in a dream” (2:2). Instead of answering this call, “we turn aside and ask ourselves” (2:2), “*How can illusions satisfy God’s Son?*” I recommend trying this practice now. Think of an earthly thing that is calling to you. See your mind going toward it, but then turn aside and ask yourself, “*How can illusions satisfy me, when I am God’s Son?*”

Commentary

The Course, like some TV commercials, is telling us to accept no substitutes. We want “the real thing” (Classic version, of course). The irony of it is that most of the time we allow ourselves to be satisfied with illusions: illusions of love (special love relationships), illusions of safety (financial security), illusions of meaning (fame, worldly rewards and recognition). We allow ourselves to be content with dreams, and sometimes even dreams within the dream, such as drugs and fantasies.

We do need lessons like these. We need to ask ourselves, “Can illusions bring me happiness?” (1:4). We know the answer if we are willing to ask the question. A Christian writer and missionary, Jim Elliot, once wrote, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” Another missionary, Amy Carmichael, wrote, “It is the life that has no time for trifling that tells.” When the glitter of the world attracts us, when a special relationship seems to promise us meaning and fulfillment here, in the world, let me remind myself: “I will accept no less than what You have given me” (1:6).

We may find temporary pleasure and satisfaction in some of our illusions. Ultimately, however, nothing can satisfy us but the memory of God (1:5). Nothing can bring complete contentment except the knowledge that “I am surrounded by Your Love, forever still, forever gentle and forever safe” (1:7). Today, will I pursue yet another illusion? Or will I use my time wisely, and choose Heaven and the peace of God?

What Is the Christ?

Part 2: W-pII.6.1:3–5

Christ is “the Thought Which still abides within the Mind that is His Source” (1:3). The Course teaches us that our reality is a Thought within the Mind of God. Over and over the Course insists that ideas do not leave their source. They remain within the mind that is thinking them. An idea cannot be

separate from a mind; it is a part of the mind, a function of the mind that thinks it. And we are just like that in relation to God. Separation between our Self and the Mind of God is no more possible than separation between an idea and the mind that thinks it.

My true Self, your true Self, our true Self, is the Christ. Our Self has never left our holy home (1:4) in God's Mind. That is fact. Based on that fact, anything that appears to be contrary to it must be a lie, an illusion. We are not wandering, lost, in this world, we are "at home in God, dreaming of exile" (T-10.I.2:1). Our separation is only a dream, not a reality; this is why the Course is so certain of the final outcome.

We have not left God, and because we have not, we have not lost our innocence (1:4, also W-pI.182.12:1). All the awful things we may think we have done or said have no reality in truth; they are part of the dream of exile. We are still at home. Have you ever had a dream in which you did something terrible or embarrassing, and then wakened, terrified, horrified, only to experience a sudden relief? "It was only a dream!" All of us, one day, will have that experience on a grand scale; we will awaken to realize that this whole world was a dream that never happened. Despite all that we have imagined, we will awaken and find ourselves "unchanged forever in the Mind of God" (1:5).

Lesson 273 • September 30

“The stillness of the peace of God is mine.”

Practice instructions

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 comments: Today’s lesson again provides instructions for response to temptation. Whenever you give way to a disturbance today, tell your mind with certainty, “*The stillness of the peace of God is mine.*” You then might add some related thoughts based on this lesson’s teaching, such as “*Nothing can intrude upon the peace God gave His Son,*” or “*Nothing can rob me of what He would have me keep.*”

Commentary

I love the way the Course makes room for all of us, whatever our level of attainment. Some of us, it says, may be “ready for a day of undisturbed tranquility” (1:1). And for some of us, this may not yet be “feasible” (1:2). If we have done the Workbook lessons from the beginning, we have already done 272 lessons. Yet a day of undisturbed tranquility may not yet be feasible. “Feasible” means “possible” or “doable.” There is no sense of putdown in this, no tone of saying, “Some of you haven’t been doing your work.” It simply says it isn’t possible for you—yet. Even the “yet” has meaning, because it clearly states that it *will* be possible for us eventually.

The author of the Course has total confidence in every one of us. Not just those of us doing the Course, but every one of us. One day, it will be possible for me, for you, and for everyone to spend a day in “undisturbed tranquility.” Isn’t that wonderful to think about, if you aren’t at that place yet?

Do you want a quietness that cannot be disturbed, a gentleness that never can be hurt, a deep, abiding comfort, and a rest so perfect it can never be upset?

All this forgiveness offers you, and more. (W-pl.122.1:6–2:1)

The lesson suggests to us that if we are not yet ready to spend a day in perfect peace, we can still be “content and even more than satisfied” (1:2). The way *to* peace is also a way *of* peace. There is no need to be upset because we cannot yet be perfectly peaceful! To lose what peace we have because we are not *perfectly* at peace is not a productive state of mind to be in. We can be at peace about not being at peace. That is where we begin. We are content and satisfied to learn how a day of undisturbed tranquility is possible.

We need to be happy learners, happy to be learning how to be peaceful, even while we are not yet peaceful. And how do we learn that?

If we give way to a disturbance, let us learn how to dismiss it and return to peace. We need but tell our minds, with certainty, “The stillness of the peace of God is mine,” and nothing can intrude upon the peace that God Himself has given to His Son. (1:3–4)

In other words, we simply instruct our minds that peace has been given us by God. When disturbance

arises, we “dismiss it.” This is the practice of mental vigilance so often taught in the Text. We do not allow the disturbance to remain undisturbed; we recognize it as something we do not want, and instruct our minds to return to peace.

It says we do this “with certainty.” This is not a striving, trying to shout down the ego. It is gentle but firm, calm and not anxious. We are telling our minds, “Peace, be still.” There is no stressed-out way to peace. The words “The stillness of the peace of God is mine” come from a place within us that is always at peace. In speaking them to ourselves with quiet certainty, we have already connected with that place of peace within us.

And so the peace You gave Your Son is with me still, in quietness and in my own eternal love for You. (2:4)

What Is the Christ?

Part 3: W-pII.6.2:1–3

Christ is the link that keeps us one with God (2:1). If we have any awareness at all of the Christ within us, it seems as if He is only a part of us, perhaps a small part or an obscure part. That is not the reality (3:2), but that is how it seems. And yet every one of us is aware of *something* in us that is more than what we appear to be, something that links us to God. We probably would not be reading this Course if we did not have that awareness. And this part, small and obscure as it may seem, links us to God. Somehow we know that.

If that link is real, then the separation is not real. It is “no more than an illusion of despair” (2:1). If we are linked with God, one with Him, then we are not separate, and everything that seems to tell us we are must be illusion. In every one of us, in the Christ within us, “hope forever will abide” (2:1). Something in us knows that this is true. The link with God has not been broken. Each of us has this hidden ally in our hearts. Within me, within you, there is the Christ. The Course relies on this fact totally because Jesus, who remembered his Christ Self fully, *knows* that it is so.

Your mind is part of His, and His of yours. (2:2)

He is there, in you. And you are in Him. All we are doing is, as the Bible says, to let the mind of Christ be in us. We are recognizing this part of our minds we have denied and doubted. His mind is in us, and this is our salvation. It is part of us; we cannot be rid of it, even if we want to.

In this part of our mind, “God’s Answer lies” (2:3). The Answer to separation. The Answer to pain and suffering. The Answer to despair. The Answer to every problem. The Answer is in you. The Answer is *part of you*. It is not outside, not to be found in something in this world, nor in someone else. You already have it. You already *are* it. The Answer is *in you*.

In this part of your mind, “all decisions are already made, and dreams are over” (2:3). What this is saying is so wonderful we can scarcely believe it. There is a part of our minds in which we all, every one of us, have *already decided for God*. We have already chosen peace. We have already relinquished all attack and judgment. And all of our dreams are already over. Armed with this knowledge we can be absolutely certain that we will “make it.” Because the Christ in us has already made it.

All that remains to be done is to recognize that this “part” of us is really all there is. All that remains is to let go of everything else but this. We do not need to attain enlightenment; we need only accept that it is already accomplished. This is the truth, and all we are doing in this world is learning to “*deny the denial of truth*” (T-12.II.1:5), to let go of all the “blocks to the awareness of love’s presence, which is your natural inheritance” (T-In.1:7).

Lesson 274 • OCTober 1

“Today belongs to Love. Let me not fear.”

Practice instructions

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: Pick someone whom you expect to deal with today, but whom you’d rather avoid. Say to him or her:

I let you be as God created you.

I give you the honor due your sinlessness.

I love you like a brother and like a friend.

Commentary

Give this day to Him, and there will be no fear today, because the day is given unto Love.
(2:2)

Fear is what happens when we shut off our awareness to Love. It is nothing but the illusory absence of Love—“illusory” because Love is never absent. Nothing but Love exists. Like the physical sun, Love is always shining. We say sometimes that “the sun isn’t out today.” In fact, of course, the sun is out, but there is interference, clouds, something in between which is blocking our awareness of the sun. We then experience darkness, which is no more than the absence of light. Darkness is nothing in itself. When the interference is removed, light is there, just as it always was.

So too, when we remove the interference to our awareness of Love, Love is there and fear is gone. If we give this day to Love, there will be no fear.

It is easy to see how we can understand any form of fear as no more than a call for Love. “Fear is a symptom of your own deep sense of loss” (T-12.I.9:1). Fear is how we feel when Love appears to be absent; therefore, it is simply an automatic cry for Love’s presence. It is a call for Love, and nothing more. Fear can take many forms—anger, worry, sadness, jealousy, sickness, or an addictive desire for a thing or for a person—but all of these are just forms of fear. When I am aware of them in myself, let me bring them to the Holy Spirit so that He can reinterpret them (see T-12.I.8:8–9), so that I can understand that all forms of fear are nothing but an unconscious call for Love (see T-12.I.8:13), and therefore they are nothing to be guilty about.

When I was a child I believed that all sickness was caused by germs. I had a pretty clear understanding that some kind of invader bugs got into my body and messed things up; I could understand that. Even if metaphysically this is not a true picture, nor even wholly true scientifically, it was what I believed to be the truth. That was what real sickness was for me.

One day I was riding in the back seat of the car on a long drive, reading a comic book. I started to feel sick. I guess I had never experienced motion sickness before, so I must have been quite young. I thought I was “getting sick,” and told my parents to stop the car because I was going to be sick. I went into a service station restroom. As I walked in I felt less sick. I used the toilet, and after a few minutes, I felt fine. I was utterly baffled; what had happened to the sickness?

When I returned to the car and told my parents, they said, “Oh! You must have been feeling carsick.” They explained to me that sometimes motion can make you feel sick, but that it isn’t the same as having the flu. I remember clearly saying something like, “You mean I’m not really sick? I just feel sick?” They more or less agreed with my interpretation. They told me it had to do with the mind being confused because my eyes were looking at something motionless while the rest of my body felt motion. In effect, they told me the sickness was caused by false perception in my mind!

In my young mind, something clicked. I wanted to read that comic book! Even though my parents advised against it, I went back to reading it. I started to feel sick again. But I now knew the truth that I wasn’t really sick! This was a false sickness. There was no real reason (i.e., germs) to be sick. My mind was doing it to me, so my mind could undo it. So, despite the nausea and pain in my stomach, I went on reading. “I’m not really sick,” I told myself. And the nausea went away, and I never had motion sickness again in my life, except one time on an ocean liner in a very heavy storm, after all eleven hundred people on the ship had thrown up except for me and another dozen or so—I guess the “evidence” was just too overwhelming.

Just as that day I convinced myself that my sickness was not real—a very clear lesson in my life of the power of the mind—the Holy Spirit wants to convince us that our fears are not real. Just as I realized that day that nothing was truly wrong with my body, He wants us to know that when we are feeling fear, nothing is really wrong with our minds. Despite what we perceive in the world, the Holy Spirit wants us to know that the fear is being manufactured by our own minds; it is not real, because Love is never absent and therefore there is no real reason for fear. You may feel fear in one of its many forms—He never asks us to deny that, instead He asks us to look at it and recognize it very clearly—but He does ask us to realize that what we are feeling is false. It has no cause. It is just something manufactured by a mind that has blinded itself to the truth. We don’t even need to cure our fear, because the sickness isn’t real!

We will either love our brothers or fear them; those are the only two emotions in this world, according to the Course (see T-12.I.9:5). To give the day to Love means, then, that we will not react with fear to our brothers. We will “let all things be as You created them” (1:1), and therefore we will honor our brothers in their sinlessness. We will give each of them, as the Son of God, “the love of brother to his brother and his Friend” (1:1).

The path of the Course lies here, in learning to let go of our fears and to respond to one another with love instead, honoring what we all are in truth, instead of fearing what our brothers or sisters appear to be. This is how we are redeemed (1:2); this is how light replaces all the darkness in the world (1:3).

Today belongs to Love. Let me not fear.

What Is the Christ?

Part 4: W-pII.6.2:4,5

The Christ is the part of our mind in which God’s Answer lies (2:3). This part of our mind “remains untouched by anything the body’s eyes perceive” (2:4). Our mind, as we are aware of it, is more than merely touched by what our eyes perceive; it is dominated by it, controlled by it, and tossed about like a leaf in the wind (as advertisers well know!). But there is something in us, somewhere in us, according to this statement, that is untouched and unmoved by our physical perceptions. It remains perfectly calm no matter what seems to be happening around us. It remains perfectly loving, no matter what assault is made upon our love. This is the Christ, our true Self.

It is this part of ourselves we are practicing to become aware of. This is the quiet center of our being that we are seeking to connect with in the holy instants we spend, quietly listening. This is the Voice that we attempt to hear, a Voice of majestic stillness and complete tranquility. The Christ is not some alien being, something apart from us that we must learn, somehow, to emulate. He *is* our Self. He is like the eye of the hurricane. When our minds are agitated and seemingly out of control, we can, if we are willing to

leave the objects of our turmoil behind, enter that eye of the storm and find the peace within ourselves that is always, always there. The moment we do, the change is so startling it is unmistakable. The howling of the wind ceases. The blast of the elements suddenly stops. There is nothing but peace. In this still center of our being, all of the events of our lives that have driven us to and fro, helpless in their grip, have absolutely no effect whatsoever. And in that moment we know, "This is Who I am."

Because of our confusion of mind, because we have made a seeming problem where there is none, the Father has placed in Christ the "means for your salvation" (2:5), the Answer to our illusions. And yet this Christ remains untouched by the "problems" themselves, pristinely pure; He "knows no sin" (2:5). The Answer to sin is incorporated within Him, and yet in Him the problem being answered does not even exist. Christ's perfection has not been sullied by our madness. He is still as perfect as the day he was created. And *He* is *me*. "I am the holy Son of God Himself" (W-pI.191.Heading). Here, in the stillness of Christ's being, I know that all my "sins" are nothing, and without effect of any kind. Here I am more than guiltless; I am holy. All things are holy. And nothing unreal exists.

Lesson 275 • OCTober 2

“God’s healing Voice protects all things today.”

Practice instructions

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

Jesus tells us in this lesson that we need to join him in hearing the Voice for God (1:3). “For the Voice for God tells us of things we cannot understand alone, nor learn apart” (1:4). Notice that the joining Jesus urges on us here is not primarily with one another, with other people, although that is certainly implied; it is joining with him that is called for.

If the problem is a belief in the reality of separation, that problem cannot be healed alone and apart. Being alone and apart is the problem! Any healing, any salvation, any enlightenment that the Voice for God brings to us will be something that is shared.

I can join with Jesus in hearing the Voice for God; that is something I can do now, in the privacy of my home, with no other people around. What I hear—which is always some form of the message “God’s Son is innocent”—is something that applies to Jesus as well as to me, and to me as well as to Jesus. I share it with him. Peace, safety, and protection come in letting go of any mental defenses I have against Jesus and allowing his presence to be with me. I own and acknowledge that Jesus and I share a common goal and common interests. I see that he has no attack in his heart toward me, and I have none toward him. “It is in this [joining] that all things are protected” (1:5).

As I move out into the world, to meet with other people, I can extend what I have found in Jesus’ presence to everyone I meet. What he and I have heard together is shared, not only between the two of us, but also with the Son of God in everyone. I hear the Father’s healing Voice, and it protects all things, so that “I need be anxious over nothing” (2:2). All beings share this common interest and common goal. We are all in the world for this one purpose. Any perception of competition or attack on my part, or on the part of another, is merely a mistake in perception, and is not anything to be afraid of.

“The safety that I bring is given me” (2:4). I bring safety from my companionship with Jesus to the world, and as I give it, it is given to me. “Everyone I meet is safe with me today,” I can say. “And I am safe with everyone I meet.” Each encounter is holy because I am holy. When the purpose of the day is thus set as it begins, I can be sure of full direction. We will be given very specific directions for our activity here within this world, even if the world is only an illusion: “For Your Voice will tell me what to do and where to go; to whom to speak and what to say to him, what thoughts to think, what words to give the world” (2:3).

It is a healing Voice I hear, a healing that consists in sharing, in joining, in having no separate interests. The joining is the healing. “The healing of God’s Son is what the world is for” (T-24.VI.4:1), and the healing of God’s Son in myself and everyone I meet is what this day is for. Nothing else. Let today be a day when I especially listen for the Voice. Let me “seek and hear and learn and understand” (1:2).

Alan Watts wrote a book called *The Wisdom of Insecurity*.¹ As I remember, it speaks about how

¹. Alan Watts, *The Wisdom of Insecurity* (New York: Vintage, 1968).

seeking security is unwise because security for the ego and the body simply is not possible. If you are constantly seeking security you will drive yourself nuts. It is much better and wiser to accept the fact of insecurity and to simply go with the flow of the universe.

When this lesson speaks of how listening to the Voice protects all things, it is really saying the same thing. We recognize that we don't know the answers, we can't figure everything out. We don't know "what to do and where to go; to whom to speak and what to say to him, what thoughts to think, what words to give the world," but He does. Instead of constantly trying to acquire the answers for ourselves, we stay in relationship with the Answer Himself, the One who does know. Instead of having millions of our own in the bank, we trust that what we need will be given as we need it, and don't worry about it. We leave the running of the universe in God's Hands.

Our safety and protection is not something that resides in us, alone and apart. It comes only from listening to the Voice moment to moment. We don't know the road to heaven, but we walk with One who does.

What Is the Christ?

Part 5: W-pII.6.3:1-3

Christ, our Self, is "Home of the Holy Spirit" (3:1). The Course often refers to the Holy Spirit as "the Voice for God"; this Voice emanates from our Self, the Christ. This is His Home, where the Holy Spirit "resides," so to speak. When we sense an inner prodding in a certain direction, or, as was the case with Helen Schucman (who wrote down the Course), we seem to hear actual words spoken within our minds, it is the presence within us of this "part" of our mind that makes this possible. Christ is "the link that keeps you one with God" (2:1). If the Christ did not exist within us, we would not be hearing these messages, because the link with God would be nonexistent. (To go a bit further, if there were no link with God we would not exist at all!) Therefore, the fact that we *do* sense these inner messages moving us in the direction of God and of love proves that a link to God must still exist within us. That, in turn, validates what the Course is saying: we are not separated from God.

Secondly, Christ is "at home in God alone" (3:1). Again this is borne out in our experience. The feeling of not being at home in this world is almost universally acknowledged; at one time or another, it seems that everyone has felt this way, some more strongly than others, perhaps, though we have all felt this to some degree. Where does that feeling come from? Is it not possible that we *are not* at home in this world? Given the widespread nature of this experience, is it not likely that there is some part of us, at least, which actually is not at home here at all, but only in God? The Course advises us to listen to this inner voice that seems to be calling us to come home to a home we cannot clearly remember, but which, somehow, we know to be real (see especially "The Forgotten Song" in the Text [T-21.I], or "I will be still an instant and go home" [Lesson 182]).

Christ remains "at peace within the Heaven of your holy mind" (3:1), as we have already discussed in the last day or two. Whatever may be happening externally, the Christ part of our minds stays eternally peaceful.

This is the only part of you that has reality in truth. The rest is dreams. (3:2-3)

This is really a key statement. For most of us, this eternally peaceful part of our minds seems very distant and hidden, something which, perhaps, we connect with in times of deep meditation. The "real" part of our consciousness seems to be the agitated and confused part. The Christ within we may acknowledge to be real, but it seems to be only a small part of what we are. In reality, this lesson says, that deeply tranquil and holy "part" is the *only* real thing about what we think we are; the rest is only dreams.

Workbook Commentaries by Allen Watson

I think this is often the source of fear for many of us. The idea that most of what we think of as ourselves is not real at all, but only a dream, is rather terrifying. We have so identified with these aspects of ourselves, and have become so convinced of their reality, that the idea that they might dissolve and disappear if we really got in touch with the Christ within ourselves is frightening. It seems like some kind of death, or personal annihilation, as if the bulk of our person were simply going to be erased in some kind of cosmic lobotomy. The Text speaks often, and strongly, about our fear of finding our Self (see, for instance, T-13.II-III). One such statement is:

You have built your whole insane belief system because you think you would be helpless in God's Presence, and you would save yourself from His Love because you think it would crush you into nothingness. You are afraid it would sweep you away from yourself and make you little, because you believe that magnitude lies in defiance, and that attack is grandeur.
(T-13.III.4:1-2)

Consider this from the other side of the question for a moment. What if the bulk of what we believe ourselves to be *is* only a dream? What would we lose if we lost it? Nothing. Nothing but dreams of pain and suffering, nothing but our profound sense of loneliness.

Enlightenment does not destroy individual personality. It does not destroy anything at all; it only removes dreams and illusions. It takes away what is not and never has been true in the first place. The Christ is the only "part" of ourselves that has any reality at all, and the only loss we will ever experience is the loss of things that have never been.