

Lesson 297 • October 24
“Forgiveness is the only gift I give.”

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: The opening lines of this lesson are pure gold. I find them very powerful if used as a kind of practice. Here is how I have done that. Pick a particular person in your life, especially someone important to you, and apply the following to him/her:

Forgiveness is the only gift I give,

(Think of seeing past that person’s flawed body and personality and seeing the pure Son of God in him/her.)

Because it is the only gift I want.

(Think about the guilt you feel in this relationship, about how much you want to feel forgiven for all your mistakes in the relationship.)

And everything I give I give myself.

(Feel your gift of forgiveness returning to you. Let yourself feel absolved from all your own mistakes in the relationship. See past your own flaws to the pure Son of God in you.)

I highly recommend doing this practice every hour today. It will bring wonderful benefits.

Commentary

What do I want to have? Whatever it is, to give it is the way to have it. And the more I grow, the more I realize that “Forgiveness...is the only gift I want” (1:1).

What can I possibly want more than absolute freedom from the burden of self-judgment? What can I possibly want besides this? To be free of self-condemnation is to acknowledge my perfection and completion as God created me. It is to recognize that nothing I have ever done, ever thought, or ever said has ever diminished, even in the slightest, my value and loveliness in God’s sight.

If this is what I want, let me give it today, because “everything I give I give to myself” (1:2). Let me extend this recognition to everyone I meet today, that nothing they have ever done, ever thought, or ever said has ever diminished, even in the slightest, their worth and value in my sight.

Every step in my salvation is already set (2:1). Nothing has been overlooked. There is no need to be restless or anxious, concerned about whether I will make it or when I will make it. I will. That is all I need to know. It is accomplished already, and I can travel this illusory journey in peace knowing that in reality it is already over.

What Is the Real World?

Part 7: W-pII.8.4:1

The real world is the symbol that the dream of sin and guilt is over, and God's Son no longer sleeps. (W-pII.8.4:1)

The world that is seen by a mind that is at peace, having forgiven itself, is a symbol. A symbol represents something, or stands for something; it is not the thing itself, but something that indicates it or pictures it. What does the real world symbolize? "That the dream of sin and guilt is over, and God's Son no longer sleeps."

The real world is a symbol telling us that our dream of sin and guilt is already over, and in reality, we are already awake. The sight of the real world is a sign to us that what perception sees is only a dream, and there is a higher reality beyond it. When we see nothing to condemn, that sight is telling us of a higher order of reality. When we perceive only safety, love, and joy surrounding us, with no danger lurking anywhere, that perception is communicating to us that we are not these bodies, nor does life have an end. It is telling us that only love is real, and fear does not exist. Within the illusion of perception, we are seeing something that speaks of an eternal reality. What we see reminds us that we are not the dream. Our mind is already awake, because:

God creates only mind awake. He does not sleep, and His creations cannot share what He gives not, nor make conditions which He does not share with them. (W-pl.167.8:1-2)

Mind exists only awake, because God created it awake. What He creates can't be asleep if He did not give us that sleep. Nor can we make ourselves be asleep. Therefore we must be already awake. That is what the real world symbolizes to us. Within the illusion it speaks to us of our eternal reality. Within the world, the perception of this symbol is our only goal. Anything more than this takes us beyond the world of perception entirely. Our ultimate destination *is* beyond this world. But although it is our ultimate destination, what lies beyond perception is not our concern *now*. Our work lies in the realm of perception: "Perception must be straightened out before you can know anything" (T-3.III.1:2). "Instruction in perception is your great need" (T-11.VIII.3:5).

We are engaged in the process of letting our perception be straightened out, which is what forgiveness does. As we do this, we will see the real world more clearly and more frequently, until it is all we see. And then our work will be done, and God will reach down and take us home.

Forgiveness is the means by which I will recognize my innocence. It is the reflection of God's Love on earth. It will bring me near enough to Heaven that the Love of God can reach down to me and raise me up to Him. (W-pl.60.1:4-6)

Lesson 298 • October 25

“I love You, Father, and I love Your 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.

Commentary

“My gratitude permits my love to be accepted without fear” (1:1). It is speaking here of my love for the Father and His Son. As the Course often points out, in my wrong mind I am afraid of my own love for God and His Son, because it seems that if I give in to it, I will lose myself in the infinity of God. I *will* lose my “little self” in Him, but not my true Identity. It is the false identity I am afraid of losing, and clinging to it, attempting to preserve ego identification, makes me terrified of my own love of God.

“Gratitude” is what “permits my love to be accepted without fear.” Gratitude is simply the acceptance of and thankfulness for God’s gifts: “I accept instead what God establishes as mine” (1:5). When I let go of what I think I made—the ego identity—and accept instead God’s gift of my true Self, with thanks, suddenly my love for God and for His Son is no longer terrifying. All that makes it seem frightening are my vain attempts to make real what never was real and to hold on to my separateness.

Deep in my heart, I love You, Father. I let go, even if only for an instant, of what I have been trying to protect. I liberate my love, freeing it to flow unhindered. I allow myself to feel its depth. So often it seems to me that I do not love You; now, it is refreshing and cleansing to simply allow that love free course, to acknowledge its presence within me. I have the gift of my secure Identity in You; there is no need to protect a nonexistent “something else.”

Deep in my heart, Father, I also love Your Son, the Christ Who is my true Self, and the shared Self of every living thing. I accept the Son as my Self, and I accept my sisters and brothers as parts, with me, of that one Self. Your Son is Your gift to me, and is me. So often it seems to me that I do not love some aspects of the Son, some of those who seem to differ from me, or who seem antagonistic to me. Now, in this moment, I acknowledge them all with gratitude as parts of my Self. I am no longer, for this instant at least, protecting this little fenced-off aspect I have known as “me.” I embrace them all with love.

I am so glad You describe the journey as going “through fear to meet my Love” (1:5). Because there is fear. I feel frightened to let go of me. Who will I be? What will be left? How wonderful to know that what I fear to lose is not lost at all; it is expanded and uplifted into something far greater than I have ever believed possible. When I have gone through fear, what I meet is my Love. This, truly, is no sacrifice!

“I am grateful for...escape from everything that would obscure my love for God my Father and His holy Son” (2:4).

What Is the Real World?

Part 8: W-pII.8.4:2-3

As we begin to perceive the real world, we are beginning to wake up. Perhaps we have had some tiny glimpses of the real world. The Text refers to “a little flicker of your eyelids, closed so long” (T-18.III.3:4); perhaps we have known that much, at least. Each glimpse of the real world we experience is a bit like the misty images of our bedroom as we hover between sleep and wakefulness. Sometimes those images, flashed upon us as our eyes briefly flick open, become integrated into a dream that is still going on. That is what we are like. We are in that odd state halfway between sleeping and waking. The Course refers to a borderland between the worlds, in which “you are like to one who still hallucinates, but lacks conviction in what he sees” (T-26.V.11:7).

“His waking eyes perceive the sure reflection of his Father’s Love; the certain promise that he is redeemed” (4:2). We are not yet wholly awake, but we are waking. The sights of the real world reflect the Father’s Love to us. The new perceptions, given us by the Holy Spirit, bolster our confidence that we are, indeed, redeemed.

The more we see the real world, the more we realize that the need for time is over. “The real world signifies the end of time, for its perception makes time purposeless” (4:3). The purpose of time for us is nothing more than to perceive the real world. When we perceive it, there is no more need for time because it has accomplished its purpose. In Review IV of the Workbook, we are told that each time we pause to practice the lesson for the day, we are “using time for its intended purpose” (W-pI.rIV.In.7:3). Each time we stop and try to overcome an obstacle to peace, each time we let the mercy of God come to us in forgiveness, we are using time for the only purpose it has. “Time was made for this” (W-pI.193.10:4; see all of W-pI.193.10:1-5).

Let me, then, today, use time for its intended purpose. Let me remember the lesson, morning and evening, and every hour in between, and often between the hours. Let me cooperate willingly in the transformation of my perceptions. Each time I sense a disturbance in my peace, let me turn within, and seek the healing light of God. Let me realize that this is the only thing time is for, and that there is no better way to spend it. Let me seek to hasten the day when I will have no more need of time, when all my perceptions have become united with the vision of Christ, and the real world stands sparkling in beauty before my eyes.

Lesson 299 • October 26

“Eternal holiness abides in me.”

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: This is another favorite prayer of mine. I recommend praying it very slowly and intentionally, making it a genuine communication from you to God. Expect Him to hear you. Let the prayer draw you into a state of rest and quiet, in which you relax in the happy awareness that nothing you can do can change your original holiness. Let it draw you into a deep meditation, which will be far richer for having been introduced by this lovely prayer.

Commentary

This is the sort of lesson that always brings awareness of my split mind to me. One part is sighing, blissfully, “Ah! How wonderful to know that God’s creation rests intact in me.” The other part is looking around and over my shoulder while saying, “You talkin’ to me?”

Sometimes, Father, I can accept the idea that there is holiness in me. I want to accept it more often, and more deeply. I want to know that holiness is all that I am. I can relate to the first line, that “my holiness is far beyond my own ability to understand or know” (1:1). At least the “beyond my ability” part. Yet there is some part of me that knows the holiness is there; perhaps unknown, perhaps not yet understood, but still...there.

When I am aware of my union with God; when I allow that realization to leak through into my consciousness; then, together with Him, I know that it is so, that holiness abides in me.

The Course belabors this point, repeating it so frequently that I have to realize that there is enormous resistance in me to getting it:

*My holiness...is not mine to be destroyed by sin. It is not mine to suffer from attack.
Illusions can obscure it, but can not put out its radiance, nor dim its light. (2:1–4)*

I can alter my behavior, I can hallucinate and believe I have changed my essential nature, but I cannot in reality change what I am, I cannot change what God created as me. My attack on myself didn’t work, and never will. I remain as God created me: the holy Son of God Himself. Anything which seems to say otherwise is an illusion, a fabrication of my mind, desperately striving to hold on to its ego identification. Guilt is such a fabrication. No one who is holy could be guilty; therefore, if I am guilty I must not be holy. This is how the ego mind tries to prove its reality to me.

This day, I affirm that my holiness is not of me (2:1). I’m not responsible for creating it, nor can anything I do, think, or say affect it. God wills that I know it and so it will be known. I lay my cynicism aside. I allow the thought to lodge in my mind:

Eternal holiness abides in me.

What Is the Real World?

Part 9: W-pII.8.5:1–2

Once time has served the purpose of the Holy Spirit, He has no more need for it. But it is up to us whose purpose time serves. Two sections in the Text discuss the two uses of time: Chapter 13, section IV, “The Function of Time,” and Chapter 15, section I, “The Two Uses of Time.” These sections tell us, in sum, that we can use time for the ego or for the Holy Spirit. The ego uses time to perpetuate itself through seeking our death. It sees the purpose of time as destruction. The Holy Spirit sees time’s purpose as healing.

The ego, like the Holy Spirit, uses time to convince you of the inevitability of the goal and end of teaching. To the ego the end is death, which *is* its end. But to the Holy Spirit the goal is life, which *has* no end. (T-15.I.2:7–9)

We are asked to “begin to practice the Holy Spirit’s use of time as a teaching aid to happiness and peace” (T-15.I.9:4), and we do this by practicing the holy instant. “Time is your friend, if you leave it to the Holy Spirit to use” (T-15.I.15:1). There is a need for time while we are still learning to use it only for His purposes, to take the present moment, letting past and future go, and seek peace within the holy instant.

Each day should be devoted to miracles. The purpose of time is to enable you to learn how to use time constructively. It is thus a teaching device and a means to an end. Time will cease when it is no longer useful in facilitating learning. (T-15.I.15:1–4)

Sentence 2 starts with the word “now.” That “now” refers to the point at which time has served its purpose. There is nothing more to be done, nothing for Him to teach us, nothing for us to learn or to do, except to wait “for God to take His final step.” Time continues briefly, allowing us a short while to appreciate the real world, and then time and perception disappear. This “last step” is something referred to quite often in the Course; the phrase “last step” or “final step” occurs twenty-nine times (see, for instance, T-6.V(C).5 and T-7.I). It represents the transition out of perception (duality) and into knowledge (unity), out of the world and into Heaven, out of the body and into spirit. Every time it is very clear that this is something accomplished by God alone; we have nothing to do with it. Our only part is preparing ourselves for it, cleaning up our perception until all of it is “true perception,” free from fear. Or as it was put in the longer quotation above, “Each day should be devoted to miracles.” That is all that time is for.

Lesson 300 • October 27

“Only an instant does this world endure.”

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: As an additional exercise, think of some inner pattern of yours which you wish was gone, or some outer difficulty which you would like to see vanish. Imagine the thing you choose appearing as a cloud in the sky. Note how the cloud looks, what its shape, size, and color are. Then repeat:

Only an instant does this _____ endure.

Let me see beyond that tiny instant to eternity.

Then imagine the cloud vanishing.

Commentary

What a great lesson with which to end a series of ten days in which we have been thinking on the section “What Is the Real World?” The thought here is the flip side of the holy instant. This world is nothing but the unholy instant. Only two instants exist, and we are in one or the other all the time.

The idea for today could be taken negatively, with a focus on the transitory nature of life, “a brief candle,” as Shakespeare called it, where our “joys are gone before they are possessed” (1:1). On the other hand, the brevity of this world’s existence can be a very encouraging thought! “Yet this is also the idea that lets no false perception keep us in its hold, nor represent more than a passing cloud upon a sky eternally serene” (1:2).

The hallucination that is this world is nothing more than a passing cloud that is crossing the serenity of our right mind. Our false perceptions will endure no more than an instant, and then they will be gone. Like a child on a long automobile trip, “soon” can seem to us to be forever, but our Father knows the end is certain. The clouds of false perception will dissipate, the sun will come out again, having been hidden only for an instant. Our minds will recognize their own serenity once more.

It is this serenity we seek, unclouded, obvious and sure, today. (1:3)

Let me, then, seek that serenity. Let me seek it now, and every time today I can remember to do so. Let me open myself to that holy instant, and remember that beyond the clouds that seem to darken my mind, the sun shines uninterrupted. Let me be glad and grateful that “the world endures but for an instant” (2:4). Let me “go beyond that tiny instant to eternity” (2:5). Let me do so *now*. Let me reach to that other state of mind often today.

What Is the Real World?

Part 10: W-pII.8.5:3-4

“That instant,” the instant in which God takes His final step (5:2), “is our goal, for it contains the memory of God” (5:3). An analogy that comes to my mind is that of a football team trying to win the Super Bowl. The “final step” is the awarding of the trophy, so to speak. That is the team’s ultimate goal. But they actually have nothing to do with the trophy; their part is to win games and arrive at that moment in victory. The trophy then is given to them by the officials of the NFL. Although the image of striving for a victory over opponents does not really fit our attaining the real world, the general idea does. Our part is only getting to the place (the real world) in which the awarding of the trophy (the memory of God) is possible, but that last step is taken by God Himself. We are not learning to remember God. We are learning to forget everything that makes that memory impossible, to remove all the false learning we have interposed between our minds and the truth. When we have removed the barriers, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the memory of God will return to us of itself.

“And as we look upon a world forgiven” (that is the outcome of the work we have done with the Holy Spirit, learning to forgive), “it is He Who calls to us and comes to take us home” (God is the One Who takes us on this final step beyond the real world), “reminding us of our Identity Which our forgiveness has restored to us” (5:4). When we have forgiven the world, the memory of God is restored to us, and also the memory of our own Identity in Him. This latter part is not something we do; “it is He Who...comes to take us home.”

This is not just an interesting theological point. It has practical implications. Sometimes, once we have entered on a spiritual quest, the ego can distract us by getting us to try to go directly to God. We can get caught up in a struggle to try to remember God, to try to recall our Identity as the Son of God. Although this is our ultimate goal (like the trophy in the Super Bowl game), if we make it the object of our direct efforts, we will never get there. That would be like setting out to steal the trophy instead of winning it legitimately. Our attention needs to be focused on doing that which, if done, will prepare us to receive the memory of God from His own hand. Namely, forgiveness. If we make remembering God, or our Identity, our immediate goal, we are really trying to bypass the steps that are necessary to reach that goal. We cannot skip those steps:

I will forgive, and this will disappear.

To every apprehension, every care and every form of suffering, repeat these selfsame words. And then you hold the key that opens Heaven’s gate, and brings the Love of God the Father down to earth at last, to raise it up to Heaven. God will take this final step Himself. Do not deny the little steps He asks you take to Him. (W-pl.193.13:3-7)

LESSON 301 • October 28

“And God Himself shall wipe away all tears.”

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: To make this lesson more personally meaningful, I have used it in a more specific form. First, pick someone whom you are judging. Then repeat:

*And God Himself shall wipe away all tears
By giving me His world,
Which I will see when I cease to judge [name].*

Commentary

The title of this lesson is a quote from the Book of Revelation in the Bible, verses 7:17 and 21:4. We’ve all shed tears in our lives, some more than others. Back in the days when I believed in hell I used to wonder how God could wipe away my tears when people I knew and loved were in eternal torment. I used to wonder how *God* could be happy if most of His creatures got snatched by the devil. I guess wondering about that is part of why I don’t believe in that stuff any more.

But how *can* God wipe away all our tears? When we look around with our “normal” (i.e., distorted by the ego) perception, it seems impossible not to shed at least some tears over the suffering and unfairness of life and death. The Course’s answer is that we will not be looking around with that kind of perception at all; we will be looking with a new kind of vision.

“Unless I judge I cannot weep” (1:1). How will He wipe away our tears? By removing all judgment from our minds.

We look on the world and we judge it. We judge it to be unfair, unjust, and unfriendly. We judge some to be victimizers and others the victims. Most of all, we judge it all to be *real*. If sin and suffering are real in the final analysis, then tears are inevitable. “But we have learned the world we saw was false” (2:4). Not real, but false. It is an illusion I have projected; it exists only in my mind. I cannot blame my suffering on it because the only one who has attacked myself is me. The only one who has been unjust is me. I am seeing in the world a reflection of what I believe I have done in relation to God and my brothers, and nothing more than that. When I learn to forgive the world, and to accept Atonement for myself, I will no longer see the world this way.

Jesus is speaking, it seems to me, from a high place, and he is including me in that place. I’m not aware of having learned the unreality of the world yet; the world still seems pretty real to me, and I still weep. The Course assures us that a part of our mind—the only part that has reality in truth—is already awake, and already wholly knows that the world we see is false. Jesus symbolizes that part of our minds that is awake.

This, however, I do know, based on the promises of the Course: I will see the world this way. There will come a time when

I cannot weep. Nor can I suffer pain, or feel I am abandoned and unneeded in the world.

(1:1–2)

I can see it that way at any time I choose, in the holy instant, and I am learning to allow my perception to be transformed in accord with that vision, more and more each day.

If it seems hypocritical to repeat the prayer in today’s lesson, saying, “We have learned the world we saw was false” (2:4), reconsider that opinion. You may say, “But I don’t believe it, I haven’t really learned that; how can I say it?” *Of course* you don’t believe it! That is exactly why you are doing the lesson. If you believed it you wouldn’t need the lesson. Just for an instant, suspend your disbelief. Let yourself imagine how it would feel to know that all the ugliness of the world simply isn’t real, that it was nothing but a bad dream, an ugly acid trip, and that nothing really happened, nothing really was lost, and nobody was really hurt. Only the projected images died; the reality of life was totally unaffected by the dream. Let yourself slip, just for a moment, into that state of mind. Those little instants will be enough to take you all the way home.

What Is the Second Coming?

Part 1: W-pII.9.1:1–2

The Course’s understanding of the Second Coming differs drastically from the teaching of most orthodox Christian churches. Typically, the term refers to a second physical appearance by Jesus, returning (usually in a supernatural way, “in clouds of glory”) to be judge and ruler of the world. This section of the Workbook redefines the term completely. (The Course is notable for the way it redefines and gives new content to nearly every major Christian term it uses.) Here, the Second Coming is:

1. *The correction of mistakes (1:1)*

Instead of being a cataclysmic event that overthrows the devil in the battle of Armageddon, the Second Coming is a gentle correction of our mistaken beliefs in the reality of sin and separation. The old view of the Second Coming saw evil as a real force with a terrible energy of its own, a will in opposition to God, a will which had to be combated and overcome. The Course, in seeing the Second Coming as the correction of mistakes, does not see evil as a real force. Darkness is not a *thing*, a substance, it is merely the absence of light. So evil, in the thought of the Course, is not an opposite to God, but merely a mistake, merely the incorrect idea that an opposite to God could exist. The Second Coming, then, is simply the correction of that mistaken idea. Nothing needs to be overcome or overthrown. The Second Coming simply “restores the never lost, and re-establishes what is forever and forever true” (1:2).

2. *The return of sanity (1:1)*

All minds that have harbored the insane notion of separation from God will be healed of their delusions. The Second Coming, in the terminology of the Course, is a corporate event at the end of time. It is the moment when each aspect of the mind of God’s Son, which has, in insanity, believed itself to be a separate being, is fully restored to its awareness of oneness with all the other aspects of the one mind. This corporate aspect is shown by phrases later in this section: “the time in which *all* minds are given to the hands of Christ” (3:2); “the Sons of God acknowledge that they *all* are one” (4:3; my emphasis in both quotes). As long as any part of the one mind is not healed, Christ’s wholeness is not manifest. The “return to sanity” speaks of the entire Sonship being restored to the awareness of its oneness.

This “wholeness” aspect of the message of the Course is the motivation for each of us to reach out in healing to the world. Without our brothers we cannot fully know our Identity, for they all are part of It. My brother’s healing is my own. No one can be excluded from the circle of Atonement. No one is

excluded.

You are God's Son, one Self, with one Creator and one goal; to bring awareness of this oneness to all minds, that true creation may extend the Allness and the Unity of God.
(W-pI.95.12:2)

LESSON 302 • October 29

“Where darkness was I look upon the light.”

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

This is the change that a shift in perception brings. Where we saw darkness we now see light. What appeared as attack becomes a call for love. Insanity in a brother becomes an opportunity to bless. Stones we stumbled over become stepping stones. All things become lessons God would have us learn. The light is always there, but we saw darkness. “Now we see that darkness is our own imagining, and light is there for us to look upon” (1:5).

Perhaps today I can find one thing that seems dark and remember to say, “Where I see darkness, I choose to see the light.” Perhaps I can remember to look for love instead of condemnation and judgment. Perhaps I can look on something that seems like a curse and learn to count it as a blessing. Let me begin in small increments, and in lessons close to home. It may be beyond me now to look on global disasters and see light in them, but I can begin with things closer to home: my disturbed plans, the intrusive friend, the withdrawing spouse. “Let me forgive Your holy world today, that I may look upon its holiness and understand it but reflects my own” (1:7).

We are not alone as we travel this road.

Our Love awaits us as we go to Him, and walks beside us showing us the way. He fails in nothing. He is the end we seek, and He the means by which we go to Him. (2:1–3)

“Our Love,” to me, means the Christ. To me, and perhaps to others of you, He is symbolized by Jesus. Perhaps you think of Him as your higher Self. He is both the means and the end of our journey. He waits at the end, calling us toward Him, and yet He also walks alongside of us, instructing us, guiding us, and empowering us as we travel. Let us be grateful today for His help, and aware of it as we go through the day.

What Is the Second Coming?

Part 2: W-pII.9.1:3

It is the invitation to God’s Word to take illusion’s place; the willingness to let forgiveness rest upon all things without exception and without reserve.

We are continuing from Part 1 the list of descriptions of the Second Coming:

3. The invitation to God's Word to take illusion's place.

This is the Course's vision of how the world and time end. The real world precedes the Second Coming. Individually and collectively our perception is purified, so that we see Heaven's reflection. When all our minds have come into agreement on this perception, that is the Second Coming. This is "part of the condition that restores the never lost" (1:2). The purification of our perception, and the joining of our minds in that perception, "is the invitation to God's Word to take illusion's place" (1:3). Our mistaken perceptions have been corrected; our minds have united in sanity. Now the way is open for God to take His last step.

4. Willingness for total forgiveness

Of what does this united perception consist? "The willingness to let forgiveness rest upon all things without exception and without reserve" (1:3). In other words, a willingness to not see sin, but to see the perfect creation of God everywhere. Note that all four of these definitions refer to the undoing of mistakes our minds have made, not to outward change. If the mind is healed, of course the world will change, since it is only the mirror of our state of mind.

The forgiveness spoken of here is the final state of mind in which we have forgiven:

- *all things*; every person, every condition, God, ourselves
- *without exception*; nothing and no one whatsoever excluded
- *and without reserve*; wholeheartedly, exuberantly, joyously

The Second Coming is the event in time when forgiveness becomes total. No condemnation and no judgment remains in any mind.

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“The holy Christ is born in me 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

This is what it is all about: the birth of Christ in me. As I become still this morning, Heaven’s Son is being born in me. The evil self I made is passing away, and Christ is being born. What I have believed I am is not the truth; Christ is “what I really am in truth” (2:4). “He is my Self as You created me” (2:6). Let me feel the wonder of it. Let me hear the rustle of angelic wings, watching with joy as I become aware of what is happening in me.

Why does it seem so hard for us to connect with the truth of all this? As you try to sense the reality of this Christ Self as yourself, notice the thoughts that arise in opposition to it. Thoughts of guilt and unworthiness. Mocking thoughts. Thoughts of feeling foolish. Thoughts of futility. These thoughts comprise the ego; they are thoughts that form the “evil self” (2:2) you made for yourself. They mean nothing. Let them go, dancing in the wind, and allow the awareness of your true grandeur as God’s creation take their place. This noble, wondrous Self you sometimes sense, and perhaps sense now; this Self of endless love; this universal beneficence, gentleness, and kindness—this is you.

“Safe in Your Arms let me receive Your Son” (2:8). As our minds turn to the light in us and look for Christ, he is reborn in us (see W-pI.rV.In.7:3). What we are doing in each and every moment that we allow the Holy Spirit to overshadow our minds is bringing Christ into this world, giving birth to the holy Son of God in our midst. We are like Mary, saying, “Be it done to me according to your will.”

What Is the Second Coming?

Part 3: W-pII.9.2:1–2

We are continuing point 4 in the list, “Willingness for total forgiveness.”

The Second Coming of Christ is “all-inclusive” (2:1). All minds are healed together. This is what “permits” or allows it to “embrace the world and hold you safe within its gentle advent, which encompasses all living things with you” (2:1). If someone or something were excluded from forgiveness, how could there be perfect peace? Conflict would still exist. Because the Second Coming “encompasses all living things,” we are all, together, safe. Forgiveness is total and universal, from all things to all things.

“There is no end to the release the Second Coming brings, as God’s creation must be limitless” (2:2). No end; it does not stop short of including anything. All bondage, all sense of enslavement, all sense of limits is gone. How else could it be, if God’s creation must be without limitation? This is the end we hold in our sight as we do our little part, forgiving those brought to us in our daily relationships. The day will

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come when my mind and yours will no longer hold a single grievance against anyone or anything, and when no one or nothing holds any grievance against us. All guilt will be gone; all anger will be gone. “God Himself shall wipe away all tears” (Lesson 301). Where we once saw darkness, we will see only light (Lesson 302). What pure and unadulterated joy that day will bring! Then will the Will of God for us, our perfect happiness, be realized and known, and our hearts will overflow with eternal thanksgiving and gratitude, as we join our voices once again in the forgotten song of Love that fills the universe.