

Workbook Lesson Support Notes

by Allen Watson

Reminder of the Practice Instructions

As we review the first fifty lessons, five per day, the instructions for your daily practice period are the same for each of the ten days. If you forget how you should be practicing, just read over the page of instructions.

Some students seem to think that the review are a time to relax and, perhaps, slack off a bit. On the contrary, they are the time to consolidate and integrate your learning. I strongly suggest, if you can, that you try reading each day's five-lesson review aloud to yourself. They are written in the first person, so make them your own. They tie the lessons together in a remarkable way.

REVIEW / PRACTICE INSTRUCTIONS

Purpose: To review the lessons and therefore let them sink in a notch deeper. Also, to see how interrelated they are and how cohesive the thought system is that they are leading you to.

Exercise: As often as possible (suggestion: every hour on the hour), for at least two minutes.

- • Alone in a quiet place, read one of the five lessons and the related comments. Notice that the comments are written as if they are your own thoughts about the idea. Try to imagine that they are. It will help if you frequently insert your name. This will set you up for the next phase, in which you generate similar thoughts of your own.
- • Close your eyes and think about the idea and the comments. Think particularly about the central point of the commentary paragraph. Reflect on it. Let related thoughts come (utilizing the training you've received in that practice). If your mind wanders, repeat the idea and then get back to your reflection. This is the same basic exercise as in Lesson 50, in which you actively think about ideas in order to let them sink more deeply into your mind.

Remarks:

- At the beginning and end of the day read all five lessons.
- Thereafter, cover one lesson per practice period, in no particular order.
- Cover each lesson at least once.
- Beyond that, concentrate on a particular lesson if it appeals to you most.

#

Lesson 59, Review of 41 to 45, February 28

I've already included the full text of Lesson 59 and Lesson 60 in last week's handout.

Except for 41, which begins with the words "God goes," today's review thoughts all begin with the words "God is." The emphasis is on God and our relationship to God. The lessons taken together describe something much more intimate than a relationship between two independent beings, something more like a union, an identity. God is the environment in which I exist: "In Him we live and move and exist" (Acts 17:28).

The three lessons from 42 to 44 emphasize our seeing, seeing what God shows us, and seeing as He wills us to see. If I am one with God, how *could* I see differently than God sees?

#

Leap Year Day -- February 29

The Workbook contains 365 lessons, but a Leap Year (like this one) contains 366 days. There are several options of how to handle the extra day. One option is simply to continue to the next lesson, and thus finish the year's lessons a day early, or by repeating the final lesson six times instead of the five times called for. This has the effect of shifting all the lessons to a different day of the calendar for the rest of the year. In this class, I have chosen not to do this, so that the lessons will fall on the same calendar day as they would for any calendar year.

Another option is simply to repeat the lesson for February 28 (Lesson 59), or the one for March 1 (Lesson 60). Since these are already review lessons, this does not seem particularly useful.

Three remaining possibilities are: 1) Choose a favorite lesson, and do that lesson for the 29th; 2) take a day off, doing no particular practice; or 3) use the day to do a complete read-through of all ten lessons in Review I.

My recommendation is Number 3, but you can choose to do whatever you like, or just take the day off. The reason I recommend doing a complete read-through of Review I is that these ten lessons, taken together, provide one of the clearest, most concise, and most readable summaries of the thoughts that the first fifty lessons have been trying to teach us. Robert Perry has made the comment that this Review is so plain and simply written that it

ends any question as to whether the author is capable of such clarity and simplicity; it also gives us reason to think that, if other parts of the Course such as the Text are written with greater complexity, there must be good reason for it.

As the review instructions themselves state, “We are now emphasizing the relationships among the first fifty of the ideas we have covered, and the cohesiveness of the thought system to which they are leading you” (W-p1.r1.In.6:4). What better way to gain a sense of the cohesiveness of the thought system than to read through the entire review at one sitting?

There are twenty pages in Review I, but with so much white space that it really amounts to little more than ten pages. The entire Review can be read aloud in under thirty minutes; I know because I have recorded it on tape. (You might even want to try this yourself, if you have a recorder. I found that listening to the entire review repeatedly as I drove to and from work was a powerful learning tool.) Try to set aside a half hour some time during the day, and read the whole thing at a single sitting. If you read fast, then read it all two or three times. Try to focus, as the Review suggests, on the relationships between the ideas, and the cohesiveness of the entire package.

#

Lesson 60, March 1, Review of lessons 46 to 50

As I write this I remind myself that you are my dearest friend.

“Who, me?” you may ask. “You don’t really know me.”

True, even if we have met, I have only a partial knowledge of your individual self, your ego, and your bodily appearance. But I do know You. I know your real Self, because It is my real Self as well. As the lesson refers to It, “my dearest Friend” (3:5). And when I look at you with the eyes of Christ that is what I see. I recognize You. To recognize is to “re-cognize”, to know again; we are ancient friends, you and I, brothers and sisters, deeply in love with one another.

I once wrote an article in which I stated that the goal of all spiritual growth is simply to fall in love with everyone. I still believe that.

#

Comments on Practice

Lessons 61–66: The “my function” series

Although we only cover the first four of these six lessons this week, it’s helpful to realize that the theme of “my function” begun in 61 runs through the next six lessons.

Teaching goal:

To teach us that our true and only function is to save the world through forgiveness and to teach us that this is what will make us happy.

Practice comments:

All of the practice periods involve simply thinking about the lesson. If you journal, you may want to write a few thoughts about each day's lesson in your journal. The first three lessons ask for practice periods of a minute or two in which we take the lesson, think about it and let related thoughts come. The following three split up into the longer/shorter pattern of previous lessons.

Lesson 61: The first of the what the Workbook calls "giant strides" (61.7:3; 66.10:5; 94.5:9; 127.6:5; 130.9:2; 135.26:4; 194.1:1). Each of these represent a turning point or foundational truth for the curriculum of the Course. Seven lessons are named as such (though this lesson suggests that there are many more).

- This first lesson after the first bank of lessons kicks off new developments in the Workbook. There are many distinctive things about it:
- It is the first lesson to focus so directly on our function. Lesson 37, "My holiness blesses the world," contained "the first glimmerings of your true function in the world" (1:1), but this lesson goes beyond glimmerings.
- In this lesson we are to build a firm foundation for the giant strides that are coming in the next few weeks. Here we can see how this lesson signals new developments in the Workbook.
- For the above reasons, we are supposed to practice this lesson as often as we can through the day.
- The practice, though, is not the kind of frequent reminder we did in Lessons 20, 27, 40 and 48. It is more like the practice we did in the preceding review lessons in which we think about the lesson for a minute or two.

Lesson 62 is only the second lesson to focus on forgiveness, and the first to teach that it is our true function on earth.

Lesson 64. The longer practice period increases to ten to fifteen minutes and stays there through Lesson 80. This is up from the longest previous exercise--ten minutes in Lesson 50.

#

Lesson 61, March 1

I am the light of the world.

Jesus said these words in the Gospel of John (John 8:12), and we often think of them as they apply to him, and not to use. Yet, in Matthew 5:14, Jesus told us, "You are the light of the world." It does not matter what you think of yourself. This is the truth about you as God created you.

It does not seem a stretch to me to realize that all the similar statements Jesus made in John, such as, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," or "I am the living bread," can and even should be uttered by us as well. We are meant to become the human vehicle for the divine content, as one of my early teachers, Major Ian Thomas, used to say--the light of the world. It's why we are here.

I ran across an interesting quote from an unexpected source today that seems to fit:

"The greatest experience is changing someone else's
experience of life." (Andre Agassi)

That is what being the light of the world can do. By being filled with God's Love we can, literally, change the way that people around us experience life.

#

Lesson 62, February 3

Forgiveness is my function as the light of the world.

What kind of light are we? We are a light of love, a light of release from guilt, a light of forgiveness. We are, by our attitude even more than our words, demonstrating to the world that they are not guilty, not exempt from God's Love, and not shut out from God's Kingdom. We are God's arms opening to the world in welcome. Through us, the father welcomes home his prodigal son.

Think for a moment of that story of the prodigal son that Jesus told. Think how the profligate, wastrel son felt as he trudged up the road, hoping only that his father would take him on a one of his servants, believing he had lost his father's love forever. Think, next, of how he must have felt as his father ran to meet him, threw his arms around him, and declared, "This son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found." What a surge of happiness must have run through him!

But imagine how the father felt at that moment. Imagine what it would have been like to watch your son, whom you love so very much, transform from gloom to glee, from despair to delight. What joy it gave the father to be able to give that kind of happiness to his son!

When you forgive, it makes you happy!

#

Lesson 63--March 4

The light of the world brings peace to every mind through my forgiveness.

You and I are here to bring blessing to the world. And there is no greater blessing than to release from guilt.

Traditional Christianity has heard the good news, the gospel, that God the Father sent Jesus into the world to forgive our "sins." But they seem to have missed the fact that Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, so send I you" (John 20.21, NRSV). We have been given exactly the same mission as Jesus: not to die for someone's sins, but to perceive them without sin and so to liberate them from guilt.

Remember that today's practice is, as often as possible, to close your eyes and repeat the thought for the day, and then, to think about it and to let related thoughts come to mind. You may want to jot down some of these related thoughts.

#

LESSON 64--March 5

Let me not forget my function.

All temptation is designed to distract you from your function of forgiveness, so this prayer is the equivalent of praying, "Let me not wander into temptation" (1:1).

Everything we see with our body's eyes is "a form of temptation" to forget our function; that's just how we use the world around us, and it is only natural because that is why we made the world of bodies! Yet there is "another use for all the illusions you have made" (2:2). Reflect on this statement: "The physical appearance of temptation becomes the spiritual recognition of salvation" (2:4). What does "the physical appearance of temptation" refer to? Whatever it is, it "becomes the spiritual recognition of salvation"--what does that refer to? And how does one become the other? What accomplishes this transformation?

Reflect also on the connection between forgiveness and happiness presented in this lesson. How are they connected? Have you had any experiences that can substantiate this connection? Would you say this statement is accurate: "To forgive is to be happy with"?

Let's try to remember to do the actual practice today (see paragraphs 5 to 7) . One thing to notice is the ten to fifteen minute practice period that is called for today (5:1); that's something new. If nothing else, try to fit that one in.