

LESSON 72
March 13

“Holding grievances is an attack on God’s plan for salvation.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Purpose: To stop attacking salvation through identifying with the body. To accept salvation instead by seeing the body as separate from and outside your Self. And so to become aware that God’s plan has already been accomplished in you.

Longer: 2 times for 10–15 minutes

Lay aside judgment about what God’s plan is. Ask: “What is salvation, Father? I do not know. Tell me, that I may understand.” Be certain God will answer. When you feel this confidence wane, repeat the question, remembering Who it is you ask it of.

Shorter: 1 or 2 times per hour, for a minute or so

- Say: “Holding grievances is an attack on God’s plan for salvation. Let me accept it instead. What is salvation, Father?”
- Wait in silence and listen for His answer, preferably with eyes closed.

COMMENTARY

This is a long lesson, and a tough one. The scope of ideas presented here is daunting even to an experienced student of the Course (including me). There is no way I can give any detailed explanation of all the ideas in this brief commentary, so I am mainly going to focus on a few interesting ideas.

The general thrust of the argument here is that holding grievances is always concerned in some way with the behavior of a body. Grievances thus confuse the person with his body; they are based on the assumption that bodies are what we are, and bodies are what God created. Since bodies die, God is a liar when He promises life. Death is the ultimate punishment for our sins, and that is what God gives us.

The ego then comes into the picture in the role of “savior,” telling us, “OK, you’re a body. So take the little you can get” (6:6). We see salvation as some kind of bodily function. Either we hate our bodies and humiliate them or we love them and try to exalt them (7:2–3).

As long as “the body stands at the center of your concept of yourself, you are attacking God’s plan for salvation” (7:4). Because God’s plan has nothing to do with the body; it concerns the mind, the being you are.

One primary thing the lesson is trying to get across is that we are not bodies. “It is the body that is outside us, and is not our concern. To be without a body is to be in our natural

state” (9:2–3). This flies in the face of our common perception. The nearly universal assumption of man is that we are *inside* our bodies. To say the body is *outside* us seems to make no sense at all. But actually, it isn’t an entirely inconceivable idea. There is a way of understanding how our awareness can *appear* to be in the body when in fact it is elsewhere.

You are all, to some degree, computer folks, so probably you are at least familiar with the idea of virtual reality. My son, Ben, is getting his Ph.D. at Georgia Tech in virtual reality. Not long ago he visited VR laboratories in Japan, where they were experimenting with VR in connection with robots. He put on a VR helmet (so his eyes and ears now beheld and heard what was projected on the screen of the helmet or played through its speakers); he wore a VR sleeve on his arm and hand. These were connected to a robot, which had a camera and microphone on its “head” and whose mechanical arm and hand responded to the movements of Ben’s arm and hand. He was seeing what the robot “saw,” hearing what it “heard,” and picking up objects with its hand.

Then, he had a very odd experience. He turned his (the robot’s) head, looked across the room, and saw his fleshly body sitting on the other side, wearing all this weird-looking gear. Ben’s awareness was inside the robot, although his body was on the other side of the room. He seemed to be separate from his body.

Our bodies, I believe, are very much like that VR robot. Our minds receive only the input of the body’s eyes and ears, and so we are fooled into thinking we are inside of it. In reality we are “somewhere else,” not inside the body at all. What we are seeing in our bodies is, in truth, only “virtual reality.” The body is “outside” of us in fact, and being without a body is our natural state.

One of the aims of the Course is to help us “see our Self as separate from the body” (9:5). I hope these thoughts provide a little help in conceptualizing that possibility.

The practice periods have us focusing on asking, “What is salvation, Father? I do not know” (10:6–7). The intent is to get us to let go of our existing ideas of “salvation,” which are all focused on the body, either exalting it or abasing it, so that something else can take the place of those ideas. Salvation lies in acceptance of what we are—and what we are is *not* a body. The lesson leaves the answering of the question about salvation to our inner listening. If we ask, it says, something will answer us (11:3; 12:5).

Explanatory note: The logic behind the first two sentences of paragraph five is particularly difficult to grasp. Why, if God is a body, must His plan for salvation be death? Robert and I puzzled over this one morning and decided that the meaning seems to be that, if God is a body as we are (in the ego’s eyes), then any plan of salvation such as God’s real plan which involves dis-engaging from the body and identifying with spirit must, in the ego’s eyes, really be an attempt to kill us—to remove us from our bodies which are our identity. God’s plan seems to be death, as the ego sees it.

LESSON 73
March 14

“I will there be light.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Purpose: To reach the light of the real world.

Longer: 2 times for 10–15 minutes

- Remind yourself that God’s plan for salvation is totally in accord with your will. It is what you really want because it is your happiness. Determine to keep this clearly in mind.
- Then, with gentle firmness, say: “I will there be light. Let me behold the light that reflects God’s Will and mine.”
- Then let your true will, united with God, take over the rest of the practice period.

Shorter: several per hour

Say: “I will there be light. Darkness is not my will.”

Response To Temptation: When tempted to hold a grievance, say immediately: “I will there be light. Darkness is not my will.”

COMMENTARY

This is a lesson about our will, “the will you share with God” (1:1). I’d like to focus just on what is specifically said in this lesson about our will.

First, it is a will we share with God. That is, what the Course calls our will is identical to God’s Will. We want the same thing God wants for us, because we were created as extensions of His Will; what else could our will be except the same as His?

“Your fatherhood and your Father are one. God wills to create, and your will is His. It follows, then, that you will to create, since your will follows from His. And being an extension of His Will, yours must be the same” (T-11.I.7:8).

Our “true” will (which by the Course’s definition is our only will) is not the same as the ego’s wishes, the manifold variety of thoughts that seem to conflict with God’s Will and with each other. From the Course’s standpoint these are *not* our will, just ego wishes. A desire to attack, no matter how strongly we may consciously identify with it, cannot be our will; it can only be an idle wish of the ego. Our will represents our Self as God created us; anything that seems to come from a different source is not *will* but *wish*. What this means in practical terms is that our ego thoughts are not part of our true Self, and in reality we do not will them.

“The will you share with God has all the power of creation in it” (1:3). Our will therefore must be realized; nothing can oppose it. We will have what we truly want because our will

has all the power of creation, while the ego’s wishes have no power at all. We exist in the illusion that our ego’s wishes are almost all-powerful, and our “higher” will often seems weak by comparison. This is simply not true. It can only appear to be true for a limited time; eventually, inevitably, the will of our Self must be done.

“Your will is lost to you in this strange bartering” (3:1). Our conscious awareness is out of touch with the will of our Self. Our ego’s need for grievances has created shadow figures in our minds (“figures that seem to attack you,” 2:2), images from the past that we superimpose over our perceptions in the present, so that we react to people in the present as if they were these figures from our past. This traffic in grievances has blocked our real will from our awareness, covering it with the wishes of the ego until those wishes seem to be our will. We are no longer aware of what it is we really want.

“Can such a world have been created by the Will the Son of God shares with his Father?” (3:2) The obvious answer is, “No.” How could we have willed a world of attack and judgment? This is obviously not something anyone would want. The world we see reflects the ego’s wishes, not our will.

“Today we will try once more to reach the world that is in accordance with your will” (4:1). This is the “real world,” as the Course defines that term. There *is* a world in accord with our will. We are not seeing it now, but we can.

“Yet the light that shines upon this world reflects your will, and so it must be in you that we will look for it” (4:6). The real world reflects our true will, what we truly want in our eternal Self. The light that shines on it is in us, and we can find that world by looking within ourselves for the light.

“Forgiveness lifts the darkness, reasserts your will, and lets you look upon a world of light” (5:4). Forgiveness lets go of grievances, thus removing the dark spots on our mind that are being projected as black blotches of darkness on the world, just as a dust mote in a movie projector throws a black spot on the screen. Forgiveness allows us to see the world as our Self truly wants to see it; it reasserts our will.

“Suffering is not happiness, and it is happiness you really want. Such is your will in truth” (6:5). It seems silly to say something like, “Suffering is not happiness,” and yet we often treat it as if it were happiness. We seem to prefer our pain over risking something new; at least we *know how* to suffer, and we are oddly afraid that we won’t know how to function if we are happy. But we don’t really want suffering; how could we? How could anyone? Our will, in truth, is happiness.

“And so salvation is your will as well” (6:7). If we want happiness, we want salvation, because salvation is happiness. Salvation means happiness. We want to be relieved of suffering; we want to be happy.

It amazes me sometimes how powerful a message this can be. Most of the time it seems as if I have a split mind; part of me wants to be happy, and part of me sabotages my every effort. Isn't it peculiar how common is this thought: "It's too good to last"? Or, "Nothing lasts forever." "Into each life a little rain must fall." Something in us tells us that we *can't* be happy all the time, that we don't deserve it, or even that we couldn't stand it. Ridiculous ideas! The will of our true Self, with all the power of creation behind it, is that we be happy. Therefore—we will be. It must be so.

"You want to accept God's plan because you share in it. You have no will that can really oppose it, and you do not want to do so" (7::2-3). I really do want the Will of God; my will is the same as His! I want to accept salvation. There is no part of my will that opposes it; only idle, paltry ego wishes seem to. So I can't miss; I can't fail. My will is NOT different from God's.

"Above all else, you want the freedom to remember Who you really are. Today it is the ego that stands powerless before your will. Your will is free, and nothing can prevail against it" (7:5-7).

The power of your will and mine can bring light to this world if we simply choose to assert it. We simply realize what we truly want, and say, "I will there be light." And there will be light. Just as God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. Because our will is creative, as His is.

<p style="text-align: center;">LESSON 74 March 15</p>
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"There is no will but God's."

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Purpose: To find the peace that comes from the fact that, since there is no will but God's, conflict is impossible.

Longer: 2 times for 10-15 minutes

- Repeat several times, slowly, determined to hold this in mind and understand it: "There is no will but God's. I cannot be in conflict."
- Then for several minutes add relevant thoughts, such as: "I am at peace," or "My will and God's are one." If any conflict thoughts arise, say immediately: "There is no will but God's. These conflict thoughts are meaningless." If one conflict area is persistent, think about it briefly and specifically identify the person(s) or situation(s) involved, saying: There is no will but God's. I share it with Him. My conflicts about ___ cannot be real."
- Then close eyes and try to sink into and be enveloped by peace. If you succeed you will feel a deep joy and alertness. If instead you feel yourself slipping into withdrawal—if you feel drowsy or weakened—repeat idea and try again. Do this as often as you need.

Shorter: at regular predetermined intervals (suggestion: every half hour) 1 or 2 minutes

- Say: "There is no will but God's. I seek His peace today."
- Then try to find that peace, with eyes closed, if possible.

COMMENTARY

The lesson states that this idea "can be regarded as the central thought toward which all our exercises are directed" (1:1) The Course makes similar claims about ideas that seem quite different from this one, for instance, "There is no world" (W-pl.132.6:2,3). All of the ideas so identified, however, boil down to what we can call "non-dualism." That is, God is unopposed; nothing apart from Him and His creations exists. There is no devil, no power that opposes God, nothing that exists independent of Him and therefore capable of having a differing will.

To say that nothing can have a will that differs from God's must include ourselves. The result of believing this is that conflict leaves our minds. How could our mind be in conflict if we have no will that can conflict with God's?

What, though, can we say of our common experience of wanting things that we think are opposed to God, or of wanting to do what He does not want us to do? Or even more down to earth, the experiencing of being torn between conflicting desires? If there is no will but God's, how is such experience possible?

The real answer is, it is not possible, unless there are illusions involved: "Without illusions conflict is impossible" (2:4). Conflict exists only between two illusions. In Reality there is no conflict, and Reality does not conflict with illusions, either. "The war against yourself is but the battle of two illusions...There *is* no conflict between them and the truth...Truth does not fight against illusions, nor do illusions fight against the truth. Illusions battle only with themselves" (T-23.1.6:1-2, 7:3-4). When there seems to be a will opposed to God, whether outside of us or within us, we are seeing illusions.

"There is no will but God's. I cannot be in conflict" (3:2-3). This is the truth. I have often found that conflict thoughts in my mind can be defused simply by recognizing that they are meaningless, and that the conflict cannot be real. No peace is possible if I believe that my mind can be in conflict, but when I realize I cannot be in conflict, incredible peace results.

There is a very interesting observation about discerning the reality of peaceful feelings as opposed to false peace resulting from withdrawal and repression. True peace brings "a deep sense of joy and an increased alertness." False peace brings "drowsiness and enervation." (5:3-4) In our attempts to enter the quiet and feel our peace, we are admonished to avoid withdrawal and to pull ourselves back to alertness by repeating today's idea. "There is definite gain in refusing to allow retreat into withdrawal, even if you do not experience the peace you seek" (6:5). From this we can surmise that

even conscious conflict is better than repressed conflict, although the goal is to realize the unreality of the conflict and thus experience peace. Another thought: These are really very detailed meditation instructions, and demonstrate that students are really expected to be trying to do these exercises for ten or fifteen minutes twice daily.

LESSON 75 March 16

“The light has come.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Purpose: To happily offer thanks for the passing of the old world and the acceptance of the new world. To look upon the real world.

Longer: 2 times for 10–15 minutes

Tell yourself: “The light has come. I have forgiven the world.” Forget the past and realize you do not yet know what the world looks like. Merely wait for it to be shown you, while repeating slowly and patiently: “The light has come. I have forgiven the world.” Realize that because you have forgiven, the Holy Spirit will certainly give you vision. He will join you as you watch and wait. Tell Him and yourself that you cannot fail to see the world He promised. For you will see it.

Shorter: every 15 minutes

Joyfully remind yourself: “The light has come. I have forgiven the world.” Rejoice in God’s Love, the power of forgiveness, in the fact that today is a new beginning warranting special celebration.

Response To Temptation: Whenever someone seems to pull you back to darkness, say: “The light has come. I have forgiven you.”

COMMENTARY

In this lesson, as in several others, the Course speaks of me as though I have accepted its message and have forgiven the world; as though I am ready, this very day, to see the real world; as though I have attained its goal of peace. Perhaps today I do not feel quite worthy of such confidence. Yet, if what we have been reading the past two days is true, any impression that I may have that my will differs from God’s is only an illusion. My true Self, which in my right mind I am aware of, is exactly as this lesson depicts me. This lesson is the truth about myself, whether or not I have yet recognized it.

If I feel a little hypocritical in practicing this lesson exactly as instructed, so be it. If I have self-doubts that arise when I say, “I have forgiven the world,” I let them be there; I attribute no power to them to disturb me. I am simply affirming the truth about myself. Today, I am at peace, and I bring peace with me wherever I go (1:5). “The light has come.” I let myself believe it; I let myself enter into knowing that frame of mind.

Whatever my experience today, this lesson is the truth. I cannot stand against what is within me; I cannot be other than what God created me to be. “The outcome is as sure as God,” as the Text says (T-2.II.3:18). “Our single purpose makes the goal inevitable” (4:3). I *will* see the real world; I will see Heaven’s reflection everywhere.

Do I feel I lack the certainty of this lesson’s words? That is exactly why I need to practice saying them. Perhaps if I give my little willingness to speak them, affirming that this is what I want to be true, the Holy Spirit will add His strength to my words and make them true for me. Perhaps even today. “The light has come.” It is here, right now, with me, available to me.

The Holy Spirit “will be with you as you watch and wait. He will show you what true vision sees. It is His Will, and you have joined with Him. Wait patiently for Him. He will be there” (7:5–9). So I wait. I wait “patiently” and not anxiously. It may take time to manifest, but I wait patiently, confidently, knowing that His promise cannot fail. The vision I seek will come to me. “He will be there.”

We are told to “tell Him you know you cannot fail because you trust in Him” (8:1). So I say it; I pray, “Holy Spirit, I know I cannot fail because I trust in You.” I affirm my confidence in my Self; I affirm the truth about me, and put aside the lies I have believed. I can be confident that this day is a new beginning for me. Something has shifted within me and I know that I want the peace and the light this lesson speaks of; I know that if I want it, because of what I am, and because I am joined with the power of the Holy Spirit in wanting it, in agreement with the Will of God, I cannot fail.

Today is dedicated to serenity (11:1). Today is for celebration of the beginning of my vision. I accept myself as God created me. “The light has come.”

LESSON 76 March 17

“I am under no laws but God’s.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Purpose: To rejoice that only God’s laws exist, to no longer hide from this fact. To realize that magic imprisons and God’s laws set free.

LONGER: 2 times for 10–15 minutes

- Review the different “laws” you believe in (physical: nutrition, medication, economics; social: reciprocal relationships; religious: relationship with God).
- Dismiss these “laws” with the thought there is no laws but God’s.
- Then wait in receptive silence to hear God’s Voice, repeating the idea until you have heard and understood His message. He will tell you that only God’s laws exist;

that they just give, instead of asking for loss in exchange for gain. He will also tell you about the Love and joy God has for you, His channel for creation. Today you open His channel to Him.

- Conclude by repeating idea.

Shorter: 4 or 5 per hour (at least)

Repeat idea as a dedication, a statement of freedom from all danger, an acknowledgment that your Father has saved you.

Response To Temptation: Repeat idea whenever tempted to see yourself as subject to other laws.

COMMENTARY

This is perhaps one of the most challenging lessons in the Workbook. It confronts, head on, a whole panoply of security blankets and substitutes for salvation that we have developed, and that we have convinced ourselves we depend on. It shocks us by its radical assertions. If we are open to what it says, we will begin to see that the Course is challenging all of our basic assumptions about life and about ourselves. We are far more entrenched in the ego's illusions than we have heretofore realized.

The following scenario forms the background to this lesson:

1) We are perfect, formless mind, each of us parts of a seamless Whole, but we have wished to separate off and fragment a small piece of mind to call "me." Moreover, we have not only wished to do so, we have convinced ourselves that we have actually done it. Our sense of identity has become restricted to this little fragment of mind. Our mind has felt enormous guilt because of this belief, which is false.

2) We have made up a world filled with bodies for two reasons: first, to support our illusions of separateness; and second, to escape from the guilt in our minds by projecting that guilt onto the world and the "others" who fill it. We have become primarily identified with our own body, rather than even with the fragment of mind we perceive as being "within" the body.

3) Believing we are the body, and that we (our bodies) are endangered by many things in the world, we have devised an endless list of means for protecting and preserving our bodies. These are the "laws" of the world spoken of in this lesson.

Lesson 76 begins (1:1) by referring to an earlier statement, in Lesson 71, the first three paragraphs, that pointed out how many senseless things we have looked to for our salvation (which can be understood as protection, or safety, or even happiness). In Lesson 71, the key factor about each of these things was the thought, "If this were different, I would be saved" (W-pl.71.2:4). Lesson 76 now adds the thought that, "Each (of these things) has imprisoned you with laws as senseless as itself" (1:2). For example, if we look to good physical health to "save" us, we become bound by a

myriad of laws governing health: nutrition, medicine, and so on.

The lesson identifies many of the so-called laws we believe ourselves to be subject to: the need for money (paper strips and metal discs); the use of medicine to ward off disease; the need for physical interaction with other bodies (sex, companionship); laws of medicine, economics, and health (nutrition, exercise, sleep, vitamins); any way we try to protect the body; "laws" of friendship, of "good" relationships, and reciprocity (being fair); even "religious" laws.

We are not actually bound by any of these laws. That is a stunning and almost unbelievable statement (1:3). In order to understand our freedom from these laws, however, we "must first realize salvation lies not there" (1:4). In other words, we have to realize that our bodies and our egos are not what need preservation. We have to undo the mistake we have made in identifying what and who we are. That undoing, of course, is what the entire Course in Miracles is all about.

In saying that we "bind" ourselves "to laws that make no sense" (1:5) as long as we are seeking for salvation by attempting to change something—anything—other than our minds, the Course is telling us that our subjugation to these laws of the world is something that we have *chosen* and are continuing to choose, moment to moment. Following the dictates of our own ego in its attempts to preserve itself at the expense of our reality, we blindly continue to look for salvation outside of ourselves. That blind pursuit is what binds us to the laws of the world. By implication, ending that mistaken pursuit will *free* us from the laws of the world.

We think "miracles" means sudden healing of the body, or the arrival of money from an unexpected source, or the appearance of someone or something we believe will bring us happiness. To believe this is still to seek for salvation from outside of our own minds, and will continue to bind us to the laws of the world. What's worse, it also continues to make our separated, ego identity seem real to us.

The idea of living without any need for money, or medicine, or physical means of protection appeals to everyone. That state can be ours, but paradoxically, not by seeking for it. The world and its laws is not where freedom lies. Having all the money we need magically provided is not freedom. Having perfect physical health is not freedom. Having "good" relationships is not freedom. Freedom has nothing to do with our bodies. Freedom can be found only within ourselves.

"The body is endangered by the mind that hurts itself" (5:2). All of our physical lack and suffering is unconsciously engendered by our minds, in an attempt to keep the mind from consciously realizing that it is its own victim (5:3-5). Because of our primal guilt, caused by our belief in the reality of separation, our mind "attacks itself and wants to die" (5:5). This is why we think we are bodies (which do die). The "laws" we think we must obey in order to save our

bodies are just the mind's attempt to camouflage the real problem, which is its own thoughts of guilt and separation.

"God's laws forever give and never take" (9:6). The "laws" we see are not like this; therefore they cannot be real, because they do not come from God. And "There are no laws but God's" (9:1). In today's practice we are asked to consider our foolish laws, and then to listen, deep within, to "hear the Voice That speaks the truth to you" (9:2). This Voice will tell us of God's undying Love, His desire that we know "endless joy" (10:5), and His yearning to use us as channels for His creation (10:6). If we hear this message of Love within ourselves, our thoughts of guilt and separation will vanish. We will realize Who we are. And in so doing, our insane desire to attack and kill ourselves will be over. The *cause* of our false seeking will go, and with it, our bondage to the "laws" that govern these idols we have made.

By bringing our imaginary "laws" into direct confrontation with what the laws of God must be—laws in which there is no loss, no giving and receiving of payment, no exchanges nor substitutions, but only God's unconditional Love—we are bringing our illusions to the truth. (See the Text, 14.VII.1-4, for an excellent discussion of just why our two systems of belief need to be brought together so that the falsehoods will vanish in the light of the truth.)

LESSON 77 March 18

"I am entitled to miracles."

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Purpose: To claim the miracles that are your right.

Longer: 2 times for 10-15 minutes

- Repeat idea with real confidence. Close eyes and remind yourself (1) that you are asking for what is rightfully yours and that (2) in accepting them you take from no one and uphold the rights of everyone.
- For remainder of exercise, wait quietly for the assurance your request is granted. You will receive this assurance.

Shorter: frequent

Repeat idea. Do so whenever miracles are called for. You will recognize when.

Response To Temptation: Say: "I will not trade miracles for grievances. I want only what belongs to me. God has established miracles as my right."

COMMENTARY

What we celebrate today is our true Identity as beings who are one with God (1:3, 5, 6). The key to what the Course calls "salvation" is simply remembering what we are. I like the

three-fold summary that opens the lesson. Just rearranging the words a little, the three items are:

- What we are entitles us to miracles.
- What God is guarantees we will receive miracles.
- Our oneness with God means we will offer miracles to others.

Nothing we think about ourselves, no special powers we may believe we have, and no rituals we observe bring miracles to us. They come to us because of what we are, because of something inherent in our being. The qualifications for miracles are built in at creation; we don't have to earn them.

The Holy Spirit "will never ask what you have done to make you worthy of the gift of God. Ask it not therefore of yourself. Instead, accept His answer, for He knows that you are worthy of everything God wills for you. do not try to escape the gift of God He so freely and so gladly offers you. He offers you but what God gave Him for you. You need not decide whether or not you are deserving of it. God knows you are" (T-14.III.11:4-10)

The lesson affirms that we have been "promised full release from the world [we] made," from all the darkness, pain, suffering and death resulting from our attempts at separateness. Beyond that we have been "assured that the Kingdom of God is within you, and can never be lost" (3:2, 3). Today we are deciding not to question those premises, but to accept them as given facts. The darkness *can* be escaped, and the light has never been lost. And so, today, we set our minds in determination "that we will not content ourselves with less" (3:5).

The longer practice periods begin with a brief time of affirmation, reminding ourselves that we have a *right* to miracles, and that miracles are never given to one at the expense of another; they benefit everyone equally. In asking for myself, I am asking for everyone. After that brief reminder, the time of practice is to be spent in quiet, waiting for an inner sense of assurance that the miracles we have asked for *have been given*. Since we are asking exactly what God's Will is, for the salvation of the world, there is every reason to believe that He will respond favorably to our requests.

Actually, asking for miracles isn't really asking for anything. It is a statement of fact. It is an affirmation of what is always already true. The Holy Spirit can't help assuring us our request is granted! (6:1-3) How can He possibly respond differently? He cannot deny our prayer without denying the Truth, and He speaks *only* for the Truth. "Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists" (Text, Introduction). That is what this kind of prayer affirms.

In describing the short practice periods, we are told to ask "whenever a situation arises in which they are called for" (7:4). And then it says, "You will recognize these situations."

There is no question here, not even a need to give a reason or to explain how. “You *will* recognize these situations.” Something in us simply *knows* when it is appropriate to ask for a miracle. Notice also that we are not trying to generate the miracle ourselves, out of our own resources; we are asking the Holy Spirit. We are turning with our need to the Source of miracles; we are not trying to take the place of the Source. We do depend on what we are as our entitlement to miracles, but we are not relying on ourselves to find them (7:6).

Let’s remember that a “miracle” as the Course understands it does not necessarily mean any kind of visible changes. Miracles are thoughts (T-1.I.12:1). They are shifts *away* from the bodily level, a way in which we recognize our own worth and our brother’s at the same time (T-1.I.17:2; 18:4). A miracle is a correction of false thinking (T-1.I.37:1). Miracles are always expressions of love, “but they may not always have observable effects” (T-1.I.35:1).

Let’s remember, also, that “may not always” does not mean “will never.” If I say, “I often eat Wheaties for breakfast but I may not always eat them,” the implication is that a lot of the time I *do* eat Wheaties. So when the Course says that miracles may not always have observable effects, it clearly implies that most of the time they *do* have observable effects. We should not mistakenly think a miracle has not happened if there are no observable effects, but neither should we mistakenly set aside *any* expectation of observable effects. The essential ingredient, however, is not anything in the material world, but the freeing of our minds from illusions.

LESSON 78 March 19

“Let miracles replace all grievances.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Purpose: To lay down your grievances and see the miracle they hide. To see God’s Son instead of your grievances.

Longer: 2 times for 10–15 minutes

- Select one person with whom you have grievances: someone you fear or hate; someone you love who has not fulfilled the role you gave him. In the longer exercises you will see beyond his grievances and let him fulfill his true role, that of your savior.
- Hold him in your mind as you now see him: Review his faults, the ways in which he hurt you, his body with its flaws and better points, his mistakes and “sins.”
- Then ask the Holy Spirit in the Name of God and His Son: “Let me behold my savior in this one You have appointed as the one for me to ask to lead me to the holy light in which he stands, that I may join with him.” With eyes closed, let your mind be shown the light in him beyond your grievances. Be very quiet and look on your shining savior.

Remarks: Your request cannot be denied. Your savior yearns to assume his function. The Holy Spirit wants to express through him in order to save you. God, Heaven and all the world thank you for laying your grievances aside and looking on the Son of God.

Shorter: Do whenever you meet or think of or remember someone. Give him the role of savior. For him and yourself pray: “Let miracles replace all grievances.”

COMMENTARY

If I did not have grievances everything would be miraculous to me. The contention of the Course is that the truth is obvious, and only seems difficult to see because we block it from our awareness with our grievances. The very purpose of grievances is to conceal the miracle hiding beneath it (1:2). The miracle is still there, nevertheless.

Today we want to look on miracles. “We will reverse the way you see by not allowing sight to stop before it sees” (2:2). That is what we are in the habit of doing—allowing our sight to stop at the external appearance, without moving our perception beyond that to what the appearance is hiding. What we see at first, the external appearance, is our “shield of hate” (1:2, 2:3). It always shows us things that bring us grief in one way or another. We do not want to stop at that today; we want to lay down the shield and “lift our eyes in silence to behold the Son of God” (2:3).

The Son of God is hidden in every one of us. Only our grievances prevent us from seeing him everywhere.

Some of us may be very aware of grievances; others of us may wonder what on earth is being talked about. But if we look honestly at the thoughts in our minds, unless we live in perfect true perception already, free from all suffering, wholly joyful always, we will find grievances there. We often do not recognize them for what they are. There is a real need for honest self-assessment to recognize the shields in our minds that block the light from our sight.

Look at some of the suggestions for picking a person with whom to practice this lesson (4:5). Someone we fear and even hate is probably obvious to us, if we have such a person in our lives; we can recognize this as a grievance easily. “Someone you love who angered you” is probably also quite clear; yes, that is a grievance. A friend “whom you see as difficult at times;” is *that* a grievance that blocks light from me? Yes, indeed. Someone “hard to please?” Someone we see as demanding? or who we view as being “irritating?” Are these grievances? Yes! And even someone “untrue to the ideal he should accept as his, according to the role you set for him.” How many of us, who tend to view ourselves as spiritual students of the Course, would have recognized this subtle judgment as a grievance?

Yes, that opinion you hold about that person who hasn’t lived up to his or her potential, the one you think you love and care for and show so much concern about—that is also a

grievance, blocking the light of the Son of God from your vision.

I love the way Jesus says, “You know the one to choose; his name has crossed your mind already.” He so often seems to be intimately familiar with the inside of our minds, doesn’t he?

This exercise is a powerful one. It is also very practical and down to earth, dealing with one specific person in our lives. “Let him be savior unto you today” (5:5).

Him? Savior? You want me to let *that person* be savior to me? How can I possibly see him like that?

If questions like that come to me, they only demonstrate the illusory solidity of the shield of grievance in my mind. The Son of God is evident in “that one” if I am willing to let go of my grievances.

Now remember: We’re just doing an exercise here. Maybe you don’t feel ready yet to entirely let go of all grievances, to relinquish your judgment of this person forever. OK. How about just practicing it for ten or fifteen minutes? Just try it on for size, see what it feels like. That’s all that is being asked.

This is how we save the world—by just this kind of practice. Christ is waiting in each of us to be released. You have the power to release him in everyone around you today, simply by looking past your grievances and seeing Christ in them. The Holy Spirit in your brothers and sisters “leans from [them] to you, seeing no separation in God’s Son” (8:4). By allowing your brother to play the role of savior in your mind, you have “allowed the Holy Spirit to express through him the role God gave Him that you might be saved” (8:8). You have seen him as he is, and that vision in your mind will awaken his to see the truth about himself. You will call it out of him through your faith. This is how we play the role of savior ourselves; as you draw it forth from your brothers, their gratitude will teach you the truth about yourself, and you will realize that something in you has manifested in saving grace to lift your brother. What you have given, you must have had in order to give it. The salvation you have given him is yours, and you recognize it because you gave it. That is how this process works. We can practice it even in our minds with people from our past (10:3).

So I take the role assigned me by God. I choose today to let miracles replace all grievances in my mind. Whenever I notice a grievance, I will ask that a miracle replace it. Let me see you, my friend, as my savior today. Thank you for being there. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to give.