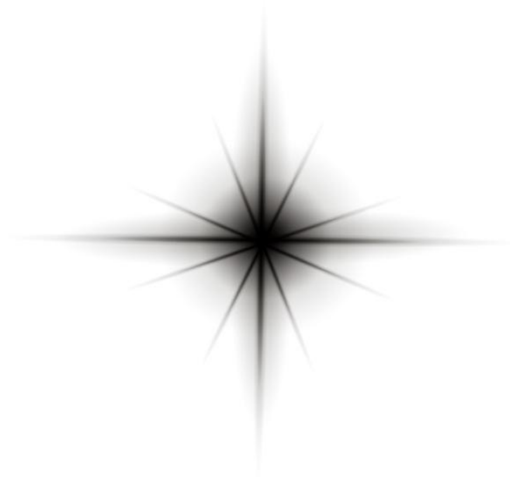


# **A Course in Miracles**



## **Workbook II**

**Lessons 151-365**



**Gongarola Version**

**Modern English Edition with Commentary**



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## **LESSONS 151-365**



## LESSON 151

### All Things Are Echoes of the Voice for God. <sup>I</sup>

1. No one can judge based on partial evidence.

<sup>2</sup>That is not judgment.

<sup>3</sup>It is merely an opinion founded in ignorance and doubt.

<sup>4</sup>Its apparent certainty is no more than a veil concealing uncertainty.

<sup>5</sup>It requires an irrational defense because it is irrational.

<sup>6</sup>And its defense appears firm, persuasive, and beyond question only because of the underlying doubt.

2. It does not seem that you doubt the world you see.

<sup>2</sup>You do not truly question what your body's eyes show you.

<sup>3</sup>Nor do you ask yourself why you believe it, even though you long ago learned your senses deceive you.

<sup>4</sup>That you believe your senses down to the last detail they present is all the more strange when you pause to recall how often they have, in truth, been unreliable witnesses.

<sup>5</sup>Why do you trust them so blindly?

<sup>6</sup>Could it not be because of the underlying doubt you are trying to hide beneath a show of certainty?

3. How, then, can you judge at all?

<sup>2</sup>Your judgments are based on the testimony your senses offer you.

<sup>3</sup>Yet no witness could be more false than this.

<sup>4</sup>But how else could you judge the world you see?

<sup>5</sup>You place pitiful faith in what your eyes and ears report.

<sup>6</sup>You believe what your fingers touch is real and true.

<sup>7</sup>This is what you perceive, and you consider it more real than what is witnessed to you by the eternal Voice for God Himself.

4. Can this be called judgment?

<sup>2</sup>You have often been urged to refrain from judging, not to deprive you of a right. **II**

<sup>3</sup>You truly cannot judge.

<sup>4</sup>All you can do is believe the ego's judgments, which are all false.

<sup>5</sup>The ego carefully directs your senses to show you how weak, helpless, and fearful you are; how sinful, miserable in guilt, and afraid of righteous punishment.

5. The ego tells you that this thing it speaks of and claims to protect is what you are.

<sup>2</sup>And you believe it with stubborn certainty.

<sup>3</sup>Yet deep within lies the hidden doubt that even it does not believe what it so convincingly shows you.

<sup>4</sup>The ego condemns itself alone.

<sup>5</sup>And it sees guilt only within itself.

<sup>6</sup>And what it sees in you is its own despair.

6. Do not listen to its voice.

<sup>2</sup>The witnesses it sends to prove to you that its evil is your own, and who speak with certainty of what they do not know, are false. **III**

<sup>3</sup>You trust them blindly because you do not wish to recognize the doubts their master cannot entirely dispel.

<sup>4</sup>You believe that to doubt its minions is to doubt yourself.

7. But you must learn to doubt that its witnesses can help you know yourself, and let the Voice that speaks for God be the only one to judge what is worthy of your faith.

<sup>2</sup>He will not tell you to judge your brother by what your eyes see in him, nor by what his mouth tells your ears, nor by what your fingers report of him.

<sup>3</sup>He disregards those useless witnesses, who give false testimony of the Son of God. **IV**

8. He sees only what God loves, and in the holy Light of what He sees, all the ego's dreams about what you are vanish before the splendor He beholds.

<sup>2</sup>Let Him judge what you are, for His certainty is free of any shadow of doubt, resting as it does upon a Truth so vast that before His Face doubt makes no sense. **V**

<sup>3</sup>Christ cannot doubt Himself. **VI**

<sup>4</sup>The Voice for God can only honor Him and delight in His perfect and unchanging sinlessness.

9. Let Him judge what you are, for His certainty is free of any shadow of doubt, resting as it does upon a Truth so vast that before His Face doubt makes no sense. **VII**

<sup>2</sup>This is how He judges you.

<sup>3</sup>Accept His Word about what you are, for He bears witness to the beauty of your creation and to the Mind Whose Thought created your reality.

10. What could the body mean to One Who knows the Glory of the Father and the Son?

<sup>2</sup>How could He listen to the ego's whispers?

<sup>3</sup>What could convince Him that your sins are real?

<sup>4</sup>Let Him also judge all that seems to happen to you in this world.

<sup>5</sup>His lessons will enable you to bridge the gap between illusions and the truth. **viii**

11. He will remove all the faith you have placed in pain, disaster, suffering, and loss.

<sup>2</sup>The Holy Spirit will give you a vision that can see beyond such dark appearances, and behold the gentle Face of Christ within them all.

<sup>3</sup>And you will no longer doubt that only good can come to you, who are so deeply loved by God.

<sup>4</sup>For He will judge all happenings, and teach you the one lesson each of them contains. **ix**

12. He will select in them the elements that represent the truth, and disregard those aspects that reflect but idle dreams.

<sup>2</sup>And all you see, all events, each circumstance, and every happening that seems to touch you, He will reinterpret in the light of His one frame of reference, which is wholly unified and sure.

<sup>3</sup>And you will see Love beyond the hate, the constant in the change, the pure in sin, and Heaven's blessing resting on the world.

13. This is your resurrection, for your life is not a part of anything you see.

<sup>2</sup>Your life is beyond the body and the world, beyond all witnesses of the profane, within the holy, and as holy as Itself. **x**

<sup>3</sup>His Voice will speak to you, in everyone and everything, of your Self and of your Creator, Who is One with Him.

<sup>4</sup>And so you will behold the holy Face of Christ in all things, and hear in everything the echo of the Voice for God.

14. Today we practice without words, except at the beginning of the time we spend with God.

<sup>2</sup>We begin these times by slowly repeating once the idea with which the day begins.

<sup>3</sup>Then we watch our thoughts, calling silently upon the One Who sees the elements of truth within them.

<sup>4</sup>Let Him evaluate each thought that arises in your mind, remove the dream-like elements, and return it to you as a pure idea that does not contradict the Will of God.

15. Give Him your thoughts, and He will give them back as miracles, joyfully proclaiming the fullness and happiness God wills for His Son as proof of His eternal Love.

<sup>2</sup>And as each thought is thus transformed, it takes on the healing power of the Mind that saw the truth in it and was not deceived by what was falsely added.

<sup>3</sup>All trace of fantasy disappears, and what remains is unified into a perfect Thought, extending Its perfection everywhere.

16. Give this fifteen minutes when you wake, and gladly give another fifteen more before you go to sleep.

<sup>2</sup>Your ministry begins when all your thoughts have been purified.

<sup>3</sup>Thus are you taught to teach the Son of God the holy lesson of his holiness.

<sup>4</sup>No one can fail to hear you when you listen to the Holy Spirit honor the Son of God.

<sup>5</sup>And all will share with you the thoughts He has reinterpreted in your mind. **XI**

17. This is your Easter.

<sup>2</sup>And thus you lay upon the world the gift of lilies white as snow, to take the place of witnesses to sin and death.

<sup>3</sup>Through your transfiguration is the world redeemed, and joyfully released from guilt. **XII**

<sup>4</sup>Now we raise our resurrected minds with joy and gratitude to Him Who has restored our sanity.

18. And every hour we will remember Him Who is our salvation and our freedom.

<sup>2</sup>And in our gratitude the world will join with us, and gladly take our holy thoughts, which Heaven has corrected and made pure.

<sup>3</sup>Now at last our ministry begins, to carry throughout the world the happy news that there are no illusions in the truth, and that through us the Peace of God belongs to everyone. **XIII**

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<sup>1</sup> After concluding the Fourth Review, this lesson marks a turning point in the pedagogy of the *Workbook*. In a sense, the preceding lessons have been preparatory for what is to come. These earlier lessons explain and undo the old thought system, and prepare the mind for a new way of thinking: right-mindedness, or miracle-mindedness. Thus, you will see that what is now being told to you has an assertive and purely positive tone. It is assumed that you have

already purified and trained your mind, and that you are now ready to claim your true condition and exercise your new ministry. Now we get down to work.

**II** The biblical warning “Judge not” (Matthew 7:1) is repeated many times in the *Course*. See, for example, T-25.VIII.13:3: “Judge not, but NOT because you are a miserable sinner, but because you cannot.”

**III** The witnesses the ego sends you are the appearances of the world as interpreted by itself.

**IV** Exodus 20:16 “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” Matthew 19:18 “Jesus said, ‘... You shall not bear false witness.’”

This lesson begins by putting a definitive end to the ego’s interpretations of what you call “reality.” It is not that; that is not reality, but only the interpretations the ego has fabricated out of perception, and which you have accepted without question. None of that is true. It is all false. And not only false, but counterproductive as well.

Those interpretations are making your life bitter; they serve no good purpose, and it is absolutely essential that you discard them completely. Pay no attention to them ever again. Whenever you feel bad, realize that what you are thinking is not true: it is the ego’s voice seeking to deceive you. You need no other criterion than this: your heart will tell you with certainty whether what you think is true or not.

Remember that the only thing you know—the only thing you relate to—are your own interpretations. Life, for you, is nothing more than a story you tell yourself. Sometimes you tell yourself that you are happy, and at other times that you are miserable, and all of it is based on premises, on rules of the game that you yourself—your ego—have established.

Well, you are not that, and those rules mean absolutely nothing. Let go of it all and begin a new life. You are now being offered the opportunity to think, decide, and act in a new way. Do it. Put this new thought system to the test. You have nothing to lose. Well, yes—you will indeed begin to lose the mental illness that has gripped your mind, and you will learn the meaning of love and freedom.

**V** Along these lines appear two figures: the first is the Holy Spirit, and the second is the Christ in you, which is what the Holy Spirit beholds in you and in all your brothers.

**VI** And here it is speaking of the Christ in you.

**VII** And here it speaks of you at the beginning of the line, and of the Christ in you at the end.

**VIII** That gap is the imaginary space where illusions seem to occur, giving rise to an illusory world.

**IX** There is nothing—absolutely nothing—that happens to you that is not for your good. The world is a school in which the deranged mind learns to regain sanity. See it this way, and everything will take on a new meaning for you. If you view it thus, you cannot help but be permanently grateful for everything you encounter along the way. Surely, what you face will not meet your expectations.

But wake up! Your expectations were sheer madness! You have never known what was best for you! You have had a dreadful teacher—one who also hates you. He has always misled you, if you understand and accept that the goal must be happiness. That malevolent teacher has never truly made you happy, precisely because that was not his goal. He has led you only, and with firm steps, toward despair and death.

It is important that you understand and accept this fundamental idea: everything happens for your good. You are still dreaming, and your mind still retains a powerful inertia that leads it to cling to old interpretations and expectations. You will have to be very alert and put all your will into sustaining your new resolve, with the confidence that you are now being correctly guided. Your spiritual vision is still weak and faint. But that will change, and little by little a new way of seeing will emerge within you, based on very concrete and real achievements. You are healing, and you are becoming a healer.

All learning takes time and requires some effort. But realize that if learning—that is, changing—seems difficult, it is because you are fighting against yourself. There is no one in your mind but you. You have no need to struggle against anything, nor, in truth, do you need any time at all to change. So what you must decide is how much time you will give yourself to be, at last, free and happy. You hold all the power... but that is tomorrow's lesson.

**X** Exodus 26:33 “And you shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and bring in the Ark of the Covenant there, within the veil. The veil shall serve you as a separation between the holy place and the Most Holy.”

**XI** Pay attention to these last four lines, for here begins the discussion of your task as a miracle worker. Notice how the seventh principle of miracles is repeated: “Everyone is entitled to miracles. But before this is possible, purification is necessary.” And here it becomes clear what that purification consists of: “... that (the Holy Spirit) remove the elements of dream, and return them to you as pure ideas that do not contradict the Will of God [...] each thought is thus transformed [...] he saw the truth it contained and was not deceived by what had been falsely added [...] All traces of fantasy disappear, and what remains

is unified in a perfect Thought that offers Its perfection everywhere.” And then, when you speak with a purified mind, “no one can fail to listen to you...”

**XII** Matthew 17:2 “And He was transfigured before them; His face shone like the sun, and His garments became white as the light.”

**XIII** Remember: now your new ministry truly begins; now, at last, you begin to fulfill the role God assigned you in the plan of salvation; now, at last, you begin to be happy.

## LESSON 152

### I Have the Power to Choose.

1. No one can suffer any loss unless it is by his own decision.
  - <sup>2</sup>No one can experience pain unless he chooses it.
  - <sup>3</sup>No one can grieve, feel fear, or think he is ill unless that is what he desires.
  - <sup>4</sup>And no one dies without his own consent.
  - <sup>5</sup>Everything that happens is a reflection of your wishes. **I**
  - <sup>6</sup>And nothing you desire is denied to you.
  - <sup>7</sup>Behold your world, complete in every detail.
  - <sup>8</sup>This is the only reality it holds for you.
  - <sup>9</sup>And it is here alone that salvation lies.
  
2. You may believe this is a radical position, and that it reaches too far to be true.
  - <sup>2</sup>But can truth have exceptions?
  - <sup>3</sup>If all has been given you, can loss be real?
  - <sup>4</sup>How can pain be part of peace, or sorrow of joy?
  - <sup>5</sup>How can fear and sickness enter a mind where Love and perfect Holiness abide?
  - <sup>6</sup>Truth must include all things if it is true.
  - <sup>7</sup>Accept no opposites and no exceptions, for doing so is to contradict the truth entirely.
  
3. Salvation is the recognition that truth is true, and nothing else is true.
  - <sup>2</sup>You have heard this before, but you may not yet accept both parts. **II**
  - <sup>3</sup>Without the first, the second has no meaning.
  - <sup>4</sup>But without the second, the first is no longer true.
  - <sup>5</sup>Truth cannot have an opposite.
  - <sup>6</sup>This cannot be emphasized too often or remembered too frequently.
  - <sup>7</sup>For if what is not true were as real as what is, then part of truth would be false, and truth would lose all meaning.
  - <sup>8</sup>Nothing but truth is true, and what is false is false.
  
4. This is the simplest of distinctions, yet the most difficult to grasp.
  - <sup>2</sup>Not because it is hard to see.
  - <sup>3</sup>But because it is hidden beneath a vast array of choices that seem to be beyond your control.
  - <sup>4</sup>And so, truth appears to have some aspects that deny its consistency.
  - <sup>5</sup>But they are not what they seem to be: contradictions that you yourself have projected upon the truth.

5. Because God created you, you must be changeless forever.

<sup>2</sup>And transient states are false by definition.

<sup>3</sup>This includes your shifting feelings, changes in the conditions of your body or your mind, and every alteration in your awareness and behavior.

<sup>4</sup>This is the universal condition that distinguishes truth from illusion.

<sup>5</sup>And it is what separates the true from the false, so that the false may be clearly seen for what it is.

6. Does it not seem strange to you to believe it is arrogant to think that you made the world you see?

<sup>2</sup>God did not make it.

<sup>3</sup>Of this you can be sure.

<sup>4</sup>What could He know of the ephemeral, the sinful and guilty, the fearful, the suffering and the lonely, or of a mind that lives within a body doomed to die?

<sup>5</sup>To think that God created a world where such things seem real is to accuse Him of madness.

<sup>6</sup>God is not insane.

<sup>7</sup>But only madness could have made a world like this.

7. To believe that God made chaos—contrary to His Will—invented the opposite of truth, and allows death to triumph over life, is nothing but arrogance.

<sup>2</sup>Humility would at once perceive these things could not have come from Him.

<sup>3</sup>And how could you see what God did not create?

<sup>4</sup>To think you can is merely to believe you can perceive what God did not will to be.

<sup>5</sup>And what could be more arrogant than this?

8. Let us today be truly humble and accept what we have made as it is.

<sup>2</sup>We have the power to choose.

<sup>3</sup>Simply choose to accept your rightful place as co-creator of the universe, and all you think you made will disappear.

<sup>4</sup>Then all that always was will rise to your awareness, eternal in its present state.

<sup>5</sup>And reality will replace the illusions with which you tried to deceive yourself, as you sought to usurp the altar of the Father and the Son.

9. Today we practice true humility, laying aside the false pretense through which the ego tries to prove that humility is arrogance.

<sup>2</sup>Only the ego can be arrogant.

<sup>3</sup>But truth is humble in acknowledging its power, its changelessness, and its eternal wholeness that encompasses everything: the perfect Gift of God to His beloved Son.

<sup>4</sup>We set aside the arrogance that claims we are sinners, guilty and afraid, and ashamed of what we are. **III**

<sup>5</sup>And instead, we lift our hearts with true humility to Him Who created us immaculate, like Himself in power and in Love.

10. We have the power to choose.

<sup>2</sup>We accept from God what we are, and humbly recognize His Son.

<sup>3</sup>To recognize the Son of God is also to abandon all the concepts we have made about ourselves, and acknowledge them as false.

<sup>4</sup>We have seen they are arrogant.

<sup>5</sup>And with humility, we joyfully accept as ours the splendor of the Son of God, his gentleness, his perfect sinlessness, his Father's Love, his right to Heaven, and his release from hell.

11. Now we join in the joyful recognition that lies are false and only truth is true.

<sup>2</sup>As we awaken to the day, we think only of the truth and devote five minutes to the practice of its path, comforting our fearful minds with this:

*<sup>3</sup>I have the power to choose.*

*<sup>4</sup>Today I will accept myself as my Father's Will created me.*

<sup>5</sup>Then we wait in silence, setting aside all the ideas with which we have deceived ourselves, as we humbly ask our Self to be revealed to us.

<sup>6</sup>And He Who never left will return to our awareness, grateful to restore to God His home, as it must be.

12. Wait patiently throughout the day for your Self, and invite Him every hour with the words with which you started the day.

<sup>2</sup>And end the day with that same invitation to your Self.

<sup>3</sup>The Voice for God will answer, for He speaks for you and for your Father.

<sup>4</sup>He will replace all your frantic thoughts with the Peace of God, your deceptions with His truth, and the illusions you hold about yourself with the truth of the Son of God. **IV**

I Everything that happens is the manifestation of your desires, Son of God. You may tell yourself that this is not true—that you did not make the sun, the earth, or the stars; that you are not responsible for the world’s happiness or misery; that you did not choose to become ill of your own will. Well, in a sense, you are right. The person you believe yourself to be certainly cannot do such things; in fact, it can do nothing. It has never done anything, because it is an effect—a manifestation through which your fragmented mind expresses itself, affected by the belief that you are separate from God. You, Son of God.

If that person believed it had such powers, it would be considered insane in the world that you—you, Son of God—have conceived in your holy mind. Yet you, Son of God, do have the power your Father gave you when He created you, to create as He does: by extending His Love. But, as you have heard many times, you can also misuse your mind to believe in fantasies that are real only to you, Son of God. It is you who have made that person appear to act on its own. You have always been behind the curtain, commanding everything and deceiving yourself by failing to recognize it.

Now you have transferred your identity to your illusions and think they are as real as you are, because you believe they are you. But they are not: your illusions are not real, because you have made them by infinitely limiting your infinite condition. Your illusions are precisely the myriad things you cannot be; they are the opposite of you in every way. For the world you see is the opposite of Heaven, which is your home and what you are.

You are real. You are an idea. You are not material. Matter is an idea you have conceived and projected outward. That does not mean you have cast it out of yourself, for there is nothing outside you; you have simply projected it there, considering in your consciousness that it was outside you. Nothing more.

Now then, once you have become enthralled with the idea that you are so-and-so, there is no other way to deal with you than to go along with your dream in order to lead you to a happy awakening, which, of course, will depend entirely on you. For remember: your will is always fulfilled. Jesus speaks to you in such terms because it makes little sense to insist on the ontological reasons that justify your true identity and the delusional nature of your hallucination, although at times it is essential to remind you of them, as right now.

Simply hold to this: while you are dreaming, you can only believe, and it is to your advantage to believe in things that lead you to awakening, because to some degree they are aligned with the truth. Yet there are other beliefs that will make your dream even deeper. Therefore, you will have to select and choose. But do not worry: you have with you unsurpassable Help, a magnificent Guide,

a Teacher who will help you emerge from all this confusion. Listen to Him and trust Him.

One thing you can be sure of—whether you believe yourself to be a person or the Son of God—is that you always, always have the power to choose. Your will is fully operative, always. When you say that you have no will to do something or make a certain decision, it is because your will has voluntarily decided that it be so. The same occurs when, seemingly involuntarily, you do, refrain from doing, or forget something: be sure that all of it has been absolutely voluntary. Nothing happens without your express will. Again, whether you believe yourself to be a person or a celestial being, your will is always fulfilled, and everything in your mind is there because you have placed it there. Now, you may believe this or not. That too depends on your will.

If you decide to be ill, that person with whom you have identified will become ill. If you decide to punish yourself and suffer great pain, that person will suffer. If you decide to resolve that apparent conflict by placing your will in nothing, that person will surely die. You will not. You are the Son of God and cannot die. But if you wish to be yourself, and nothing but yourself, you will continue identifying with that person, or with another, or with anything else to which you decide to lend your imaginary consciousness of being separate from God.

To begin with, what now serves you best is to take the reins of your imaginary personal life and assume that you have the power to decide and to command your will. Please, recover a little sanity. How could you not have the power to decide!? Deceive yourself no longer.

**II** T-14.II.4:3-4: “Truth is truth. That is all that matters, only that is real, and everything else does not exist.”

W-138.4:6: “For only truth is true, and nothing else is real.”

**III** Stop thinking all those foolish things about yourself. Pause for a moment and reflect: why do you do it? What purpose does it serve? What do you intend to achieve with it? For what is quite evident is that you will not manage to become a better person or a better anything. You do it only to punish yourself. That is the sole purpose of harboring a poor idea of yourself. Nothing else. It serves only to suffer. The fact is that you are addicted to the pain produced by guilt, and for some utterly insane reason, it gives you a perverse pleasure. Do not go on with it.

Realize that at every instant you are born completely new and innocent into the eternal present. You have placed your will in making tremendous efforts to rescue the past and link it to the present, and thus you mortgage your future with all those distorted and guilty interpretations of what you did or failed to do.

All that keeps you from exercising your will in the present and taking responsibility for your decisions now. The past is robbing you of your present. Do not allow it. You now have the power to decide. Do it. Be reborn to your true will.

**IV** Notice well how this work operates. It is not your little self that builds fantasies of childish vanities, no matter how spiritual or lofty they may seem; no, you remain awaiting the sure, humble, and infinitely magnificent guidance of your own Self. It has nothing to do with your person; it has to do with the limitless, with the real. And reality is something that does not depend on you, nor on your efforts to attain it, for it has always been there. In that equation, the only thing that has been in excess is the false idea you hold of yourself and from which you distort what you perceive and what you think. Nothing you think is true. Stop thinking about reality, for that only hinders your ability to experience it. Reality is simply what you are.

## LESSON 153

### In My Defenselessness My Safety Lies.

1. You who feel threatened by this ever-changing world, by its turns of fortune and its bitter ironies, by fleeting relationships and by all the “gifts” it lends only to take back again, pay close attention to this lesson.

<sup>2</sup>The world provides no safety.

<sup>3</sup>It is rooted in attack, and all its “gifts,” which seem to offer you security, are but deceptions.

<sup>4</sup>The world attacks relentlessly, again and again.

<sup>5</sup>There can be no peace of mind where danger lies so close.

2. The world makes you inevitably defensive.

<sup>2</sup>For to feel threatened leads to anger, and anger makes attack seem justified and reasonable in the name of self-defense.

<sup>3</sup>But a defensive posture carries a double threat.

<sup>4</sup>For it bears witness to your weakness and sets up a system of defenses that cannot work.

<sup>5</sup>Thus, the weak are made even weaker—betrayed without, and even more betrayed within.

<sup>6</sup>The mind becomes confused, no longer knowing where to turn to escape what it imagines.

3. It is as if the mind were trapped within a circle surrounding it, chained to another inside, and still another further in, until all hope of escape or release is lost.

<sup>2</sup>The mind’s hours and days go by in endless cycles of attack and defense, defense and attack, which press upon it like heavy bands of reinforced steel that yield only to begin again.

<sup>3</sup>There seems to be no pause nor end to the tightening grip that binds the mind.

4. The cost of defenses is the greatest price the ego demands.

<sup>2</sup>Madness hides within defenses in a darkness so deep that the hope of sanity appears to be a vain and impossible dream.

<sup>3</sup>The sense of threat the world promotes is so intense, and of such frenzy and depth, that you cannot even imagine the devastation it has wrought within your mind.

<sup>4</sup>You are its slave.

<sup>5</sup>You do not know what you do because of the fear you have of it. **■**

<sup>6</sup>You do not understand how great a sacrifice it has demanded of you to feel its iron grip upon your heart.

5. You do not see how deeply your defensive posture has sabotaged the holy Peace of God.

<sup>2</sup>For you are looking upon the very Son of God as victim to the attacks of fantasies, dreams, and illusions he himself has made.

<sup>3</sup>Yet he sees himself defenseless against them and must defend himself with still more dreams and illusions of safety to comfort him.

6. Defenselessness is strength. **II**

<sup>2</sup>Your defenselessness bears witness that you have recognized the Christ in you. **III**

<sup>3</sup>You may recall the Text of this Course teaches that you always choose between the strength of Christ and your own weakness when you see yourself as separate from Him. **IV**

<sup>4</sup>Defenselessness can never be attacked, because it recognizes a strength so great that attack is folly, or a childish game a tired child might play when he has fallen asleep and forgotten what he wants.

7. A defensive posture is a sign of weakness.

<sup>2</sup>It proclaims you have denied the Christ and are afraid of God's just wrath.

<sup>3</sup>What can now save you from your delusions of an angry god, whose terrifying image you believe you see in all the evils of the world?

<sup>4</sup>And how can you defend yourself except with illusions, when it is but illusions that you fight?

8. Today we will not play such childish games, for our true purpose is to save the world, and we will not trade the infinite joy our function brings for foolishness.

<sup>2</sup>We will not lose our happiness because a fragment of a senseless dream crosses our mind and we confuse the figures in it with the Son of God, and that fleeting dream with eternity.

9. Today we look beyond all dreams and recognize we need no defense because we have been created invulnerable, with no thoughts, desires, or dreams in which attack can find a foothold.

<sup>2</sup>Now we cannot fear, for we have left behind all fearful thoughts.

<sup>3</sup>And in defenselessness we stand protected, with the quiet assurance that we are safe, certain of salvation, and fully confident that we will fulfill the purpose we have chosen, as our ministry extends its holy blessing over the world.

10. Be still a moment and contemplate how holy is your purpose, how secure you rest, invulnerable in the light of your defenselessness.

<sup>2</sup>The ministers of God have chosen that truth dwell with them. **V**

<sup>3</sup>Who could be holier than they?

<sup>4</sup>Who could be more certain that his happiness is fully guaranteed?

<sup>5</sup>And who could feel more powerfully protected?

<sup>6</sup>What defenses could they need now, who are among God's chosen?

<sup>7</sup>For that was His Will, and now it is theirs as well. **VI**

11. The function of God's ministers is to help their brothers make the same choice they have made.

<sup>2</sup>God has chosen all, but few recognize that His Will is also theirs. **VII**

<sup>3</sup>And until you teach what you have learned, salvation waits, and darkness keeps the world in its grim imprisonment.

<sup>4</sup>Nor will you recognize the light that has already come to you, or know that your release is fully accomplished.

<sup>5</sup>For you will not see the light until you offer it to all your brothers.

<sup>6</sup>When they receive it from your hands, you will recognize that it is your own.

12. Think of salvation as a game that happy children play.

<sup>2</sup>It was designed by One Who loves His Sons and wants to take away their fearful toys and give them joyful games instead, games that teach them the game of fear is over.

<sup>3</sup>His game instructs in happiness because in it no one loses.

<sup>4</sup>All who play will win, and what they win is shared with everyone who played.

<sup>5</sup>The children gladly drop the game of fear when they perceive the benefits salvation brings.

13. You who have played at losing all hope, at being abandoned by your Father, and at believing He has left you alone and terrified in a fearful world, crazed by sin and guilt, rejoice now.

<sup>2</sup>That game is over.

<sup>3</sup>A time of quiet has now come, in which we lay aside the toys of guilt and put away forever the quaint and childish thoughts of sin from the pure and holy minds of Heaven's children and the Son of God.

14. We pause but for a moment more to play our final happy game upon this earth.

<sup>2</sup>And then we go to take our rightful place where truth abides, and games are meaningless.

<sup>3</sup>And so the story ends.

<sup>4</sup>Let this day bring nearer the final chapter in the world's long tale, that all may learn the tales they read of a terrifying destiny, of broken hopes, of

pitiful defenses against a vengeance they cannot escape, are but their own deluded fantasies.

<sup>5</sup>The ministers of God have come to waken them from the dark dreams this story has evoked in their confused, bewildered memory of that distorted tale.

<sup>6</sup>At last, the Son of God can smile, realizing it was not true.

15. Today we practice in a form we will maintain for quite some time. **VIII**

<sup>2</sup>We begin each day by giving our attention to the thought for the day as long as possible.

<sup>3</sup>Five minutes is the least we give to prepare ourselves for a day in which salvation is our only goal.

<sup>4</sup>Ten would be better, and fifteen better still.

<sup>5</sup>As distractions cease to hold our interest, a half hour will seem too short a time to spend with God.

<sup>6</sup>And we will be grateful and filled with joy each evening that we gave Him more, rather than thinking we gave too little.

16. Our peace increases with each hourly remembrance of the Will we share with God.

<sup>2</sup>Sometimes only a minute, or even less, will be the most we can afford when the hour comes.

<sup>3</sup>At other times we may forget.

<sup>4</sup>And still other times the business of the world will close upon us, and we will be unable to withdraw our minds from worldly things to turn to God.

17. Yet whenever we can, we will remember our commitment as ministers of God

<sup>2</sup>And we will quietly sit and wait for Him and listen to His Voice, and hear what He would have us do the hour that follows, while we give thanks for all the gifts He gave us in the one before.

18. With time and practice, you will never cease to think of Him, and hear His loving Voice guide your footsteps on quiet paths where you will walk in true defenselessness, knowing Heaven goes with you.

<sup>2</sup>You will not let your mind depart from God even for an instant, though time is spent in offering salvation to the world.

<sup>3</sup>Do you believe He will not make this possible for you, who chose to carry out His plan for the salvation of the world and yours?

19. Our theme today is our defenselessness.

<sup>2</sup>We clothe ourselves in it as we prepare to face the day.

<sup>3</sup>We rise up strong in Christ, and let our weakness disappear as we remember that His Strength abides in us. **IX**

<sup>4</sup>Throughout the day we will remind ourselves that He remains beside us, and that His Strength upholds our weakness always.

<sup>5</sup>And we will call on it whenever we feel the temptation to defend ourselves is undermining our certainty of purpose.

<sup>6</sup>Then we will pause a moment and hear Him say: "*I am here.*"

20. Your practicing will now begin to take the fervor of Love, to help you turn your mind away from distraction.

<sup>2</sup>Do not be afraid or hesitant. **X**

<sup>3</sup>There is no doubt you will attain your final goal.

<sup>4</sup>The ministers of God can never fail, because the Love, the strength, and peace that shine from them to all their brothers come from Him.

<sup>5</sup>These are His Gifts to you.

<sup>6</sup>All He asks in return is your defenselessness.

<sup>7</sup>Just lay aside what never was real, so you may behold the Christ in you and see His sinlessness.

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**I** Luke 23:34 "Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'"

**II** There is no force more powerful in the universe than that which comes from peace, and every sense of weakness arises from fear. Cease to fear and you will be strong.

Do you know anyone stronger than Jesus, whose strength was omnipotent? Do you know anyone more peaceful than he? His life is the testimony that the words you are reading are true. His defenselessness changed the world and drew multitudes who multiplied over time, proclaiming his message: "The Kingdom of God is within you, and the Son of God is innocent." It was a new idea in a world suffering from fear and guilt, breaking through the history of mankind's dream. Would you not like to take part in that work? It is easy: believe in him, follow his teachings, and you will acquire his very attributes. He is your brother, he is like you, and then as now he does nothing but remind you of this. Jesus is the epitome of defenselessness, the living proof that meekness is but another word for strength.

Look at the world around you. Wherever you see many flags, you will know there is much fear. Wrapping yourself in a flag is to proclaim that you are afraid because you do not know who you are and desperately need someone to lend

you a false identity. Then, without a doubt, you will have many enemies whom you feel threaten you and from whom you must defend yourself. Fear and hatred are two sides of the same coin that will lead you steadily toward disaster.

Breathe; you are not that. Your fears are imaginings you entertain in your mind, with which you frighten yourself and make your dream still deeper. That is not the way; that is not the path to your awakening. Defenselessness is.

Do not be afraid; trust. It has already been clearly explained to you who you truly are and what your condition is. You dream that you are in time, but you are in the Heart of God in eternity. Still, as long as you believe in your perception, believe also that what serves you best is not to build defenses that only strengthen your fears.

Perhaps now you find yourself too afraid to embrace this idea wholeheartedly. Do not worry. Begin with simple things. Start by letting go of your smaller fears, and little by little you will learn to release your greater ones as well. In the world you can hold only beliefs; therefore, you will have to rely on them to strengthen your faith.

Trust is built through achievements, which will make evident that your beliefs are aligned with truth. It is only a matter of willingness and honesty in your practice. Always tell yourself the truth. Look with clear eyes at your mind, your heart, and your behavior.

Do not deceive yourself. This will be enough to make you realize that, when you practice the teachings of this *Course* well, your life in this world improves. And do not be afraid to see that you often make mistakes and fall back. That does not matter in the least. It only causes you to lose time, but perhaps it will help you rise again and walk your path with greater determination.

**III** You are very fortunate. Be aware of it. You have begun a journey hand in hand with the best teacher possible. Jesus walks beside you and asks that you not defend yourself. Listen to him, and you will find that not responding to the attacks you now perceive makes you stronger. Soon you will learn that, in truth, you are not being attacked; you are merely surrounded by frightened brothers who, in their terror, are desperately asking you for help in the only way they know. You are their only hope. Do not abandon them. When they see your strength, they will learn to relinquish their own fears and build theirs as well.

There is nothing a human being longs for more deeply than to know that he is accepted just as he is. Accept your brothers as they are, and have no doubt whatsoever that no one—absolutely no one—will be able to defend themselves against your acceptance and love. It is impossible to resist the irresistible power of feeling accepted and loved. All those whom you accept and love will

follow you unconditionally. You will have a new student who will offer you the opportunity to learn for yourself all that you teach him.

The destiny that awaits you lies far beyond anything you can imagine. You need only your faith to set forth on the way. You are infinitely fortunate to be given the perfect key to escape the sinister labyrinth of the world, which ends in a fictitious death. Do not defend yourself, and turn often to inner silence to strengthen your resolve. You need do nothing more.

**IV** T-31.IX.2:3: “You always choose between your weakness and the strength of Christ in you.”

2 Corinthians 12:9 “And he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will most gladly boast in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

**V** The term “ministers of God” is used only in this lesson and the next, and there only in the idea for the day. The term “ministry” is also mentioned in Lessons 106, 151, and 157. This lesson emphasizes that the ministers of God have been entrusted with the mission of awakening their brothers, which they accomplish by extending to them “the love, the strength, and the peace” of God (20:4). The following lesson stresses that the ministers of God are the “messengers” of God, who first accept His messages for themselves, that they may then “give them everywhere they were intended to be given” (W-154.6:3).

**VI** Psalm 105:6 “O offspring of Abraham His servant, children of Jacob, His chosen ones!”

Luke 18:7 “And will not God vindicate His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night?”

**VII** Matthew 20:16 “So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen.”

T-3.VIII.18.2 “‘Many are called, but few are chosen.’ SHOULD be: ‘ALL are called, but few choose to listen.’”

**VIII** We will practice in this way for forty-eight lessons, until the beginning of the Sixth Review at Lesson 201. This form includes one long session in the morning, considering the idea for the day, and each hour a brief moment in which we remember the idea, thank God for His gifts in the past hour, and ask His guidance for the next. At night, we again consider the idea for the day or simply rest in God.

**IX** 1 John 3:24 “And he who keeps His commandment abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us.”

Ephesians 6:10–11 “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” The *Course* gives its own turn to the image: instead of putting on armor, you are clothing yourself in defenselessness.

✠ John 6:20 “But He said to them, ‘It is I; do not be afraid.’”

Matthew 14:27 “But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Take heart; it is I; do not be afraid.’”

## LESSON 154

### I Am Among the Ministers of God.

1. Let us be neither arrogant nor falsely humble today.

<sup>2</sup>We have moved beyond such foolishness.

<sup>3</sup>We cannot judge ourselves, nor is there any need to do so. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>4</sup>These are merely attempts to delay the decision and commitment to our function.

<sup>5</sup>It is not our place to judge our own worth.

<sup>6</sup>Nor can we know what role is best for us to play, or what we are capable of in a plan far beyond our understanding.

<sup>7</sup>Our part was created in Heaven, not in hell.

<sup>8</sup>And what we think is weakness may be strength, and what we see as strength is often arrogance.

2. Whatever role has been assigned to you was chosen by the Voice that speaks for God, whose function is also to speak for you.

<sup>2</sup>He sees your strengths exactly as they are, and knows as well where, when, how, and to whom they can best be applied.

<sup>3</sup>The Holy Spirit chooses and accepts your role on your behalf.

<sup>4</sup>He does not act without your consent.

<sup>5</sup>But He is not deceived about what you are, and listens only to His Own Voice in you.

3. It is through His ability to hear but one Voice—His own—that you at last become aware there is a Voice in you.

<sup>2</sup>And this single Voice assigns your function, tells you what it is, and gives you the strength to understand it, carry it out, and succeed in everything related to it.

<sup>3</sup>God joins His Son in this, and thus His Son becomes His messenger, proclaiming his unity with Him.

4. This joining of Father and Son through the Holy Spirit is what distinguishes salvation from the world.

<sup>2</sup>This Voice speaks of laws the world does not know.

<sup>3</sup>It is the Voice that promises release from every sin and the end of guilt in a mind God created sinless.

<sup>4</sup>Now this mind becomes aware again of Who created it, and of the everlasting union of its Creator with itself.

<sup>5</sup>Thus its Self becomes the only Reality where its will is joined with God's.

5. A messenger does not choose the messages he brings.

<sup>2</sup>Nor does he question the right of him who gives the message, or ask why he has chosen those who are to receive it.

<sup>3</sup>It is enough that he accepts it, brings it to the ones for whom it is intended, and fulfills his role in its delivery.

<sup>4</sup>If he insists on determining what the messages should be, what their purpose is, or where they should be delivered, he is no longer acting as the bearer of the Word.

6. There is a crucial difference in the role of the messengers of Heaven that sets them apart from those the world appoints.

<sup>2</sup>The messages they bring are meant first for themselves.

<sup>3</sup>And only if they accept them for themselves are they able to bring them further, and deliver them to all those for whom they are intended.

<sup>4</sup>Like worldly messengers, they did not write the messages they carry. But without question, they are the first to receive them, for they accept them in order to prepare themselves to give them.

7. A worldly messenger fulfills his role by delivering all the messages.

<sup>2</sup>God's messengers fulfill theirs by accepting His messages as meant for themselves, and showing they understand them by giving them away.

<sup>3</sup>They do not choose any role that has not been assigned by His authority.

<sup>4</sup>And so they, too, benefit with every message they deliver.

8. Do you want to receive the messages of God?

<sup>2</sup>For that is how you become His messenger.

<sup>3</sup>You have already been appointed.

<sup>4</sup>But you delay in giving the messages you have received, and so you do not know that you have them, or recognize them.

<sup>5</sup>No one can receive or know he has received something until he gives it.

<sup>6</sup>For only in giving can he prove to himself that he has accepted what was given him.

9. You, who are now God's messenger, receive His messages, for that is part of the role that has been given you.

<sup>2</sup>God has already given you what you need, and you have accepted it.

<sup>3</sup>But you still must fulfill the other part of your task.

<sup>4</sup>He who has received the messages of God for you desires that you receive them fully now as well.

<sup>5</sup>For in this way you identify with Him and recognize as yours the gifts He gives.

10. This union is what we seek to recognize today.

<sup>2</sup>We will not try to keep our minds apart from Him Who speaks for us, for it is our very own Voice we hear when we listen to Him.

<sup>3</sup>Only He can speak to us and speak for us, joining in one Voice the giving and receiving of God's Word; the giving and receiving of His Will.

11. Today we practice giving Him what He would have, so that we may recognize the gifts He has given us.

<sup>2</sup>He needs our voice, that He may speak through us.

<sup>3</sup>He needs our hands to bring His messages to those He points out.

<sup>4</sup>He needs our feet to lead us where He wills, so that those who wait in misery may at last be released.

<sup>5</sup>And He needs our will, united with His Own, that we may truly receive the gifts He gives.

12. Let us learn but this today:

*<sup>2</sup>We do not recognize what we have received until we give it.*

<sup>3</sup>You have heard this in a hundred ways, a hundred times, yet you still do not believe it. **II**

<sup>4</sup>But know this: until you do, you will receive a thousand and then ten thousand miracles, yet you will not know that God Himself has left no gift but that He gave it to His Son, nor has denied the slightest blessing to His one beloved Son.

<sup>5</sup>What meaning would this hold for you, unless you identified with him and with all that is his?

13. Our lesson for today is stated thus:

*<sup>2</sup>I am among the ministers of God.*

*<sup>3</sup>And I am thankful that I have the means by which to recognize that I am free.*

14. The world recedes as our minds are lit with this truth, and we acknowledge that these holy words are true.

<sup>2</sup>They are the message our Creator sends today.

<sup>3</sup>Now we will demonstrate how His Word has changed our minds about ourselves, and about our function.

<sup>4</sup>For by refusing to accept any will we do not share, the countless gifts of our Creator become visible before our eyes, flow forth from our hands, and we clearly recognize all that we have received.

¶ Probably the most difficult thing for every student of this *Course* to accept and embrace in its teaching is the relinquishment of their own judgment for evaluating anything that crosses their mind. It is normal for this to arouse great apprehension and resistance. And this is because it completely contradicts what the world constantly urges you to do: to take control of your life and be responsible for your own decisions.

It may seem as though this *Course* intends to restrict your freedom, impose upon you a will not your own, and turn you into a mindless zombie in the service of an entity you do not know, which offers you illusory rewards for your servitude. You may think that this *Course* is brainwashing you.

In a sense, you are not far from the truth. This *Course* is indeed attempting to wash your brain. But as for turning you into a zombie—no; that is impossible. You already are a zombie.

Perhaps you think that now you are free, that you make your decisions with complete independence, and that you do whatever you please. Nothing could be further from the truth. What actually happens is that you have no idea what you are, you do not know what the mind is, and you are totally unaware of how it functions. In fact, you usually refer to it as “my mind,” as if it were some sort of instrument at your service for your own purposes, which you control at will.

How confused you are!

You do not *have* a mind. *You are* your mind!

There is no one and nothing that controls your mind, for the simple reason that there is nothing apart from your mind. Your mind is all there is. Notice how absurd it is to think that you control your mind, for that would imply that this “you” is another mind controlling your mind—which is utter nonsense.

Think instead in these terms: your one mind—which is the only thing that exists and which is what you are—can function well or can function poorly. It can believe it is alone and separate from everything, within a fragile and mortal body, and in a dangerous world in which it must struggle to survive... for a while. Or it can believe that this is a bad dream from which it must awaken to its glorious condition.

These are the only two alternatives you can believe in. And the very fact that you believe you have alternatives shows clearly that you are still dreaming, for when you cease to dream you will have the certainty of true knowledge, in which one cannot believe in alternatives, for it is a state of perfect certainty. The condition of that state you cannot even imagine, precisely because you are dreaming; if you could see it, you would already be awake.

In your current dream state, your only freedom is to decide which dream you choose: the dream of the world or the dream of the Atonement. It does not matter which you choose—you will still be dreaming. But your dreams will, indeed, be very different. Understand that both dreams are automatic, in the sense that they unfold on their own without your intervention. You are not at all responsible for what happens in either of them, for once you choose one, it unfolds according to its own dynamic. Yet what you can and must do is firmly choose between the two. You already know where the ego's dream leads.

The dream of the Atonement is still unknown to you, but have faith in Jesus, believe his words, and trust: it will not be long before you are convinced that he speaks the truth. To waver between these two alternatives will weaken you, plunge you into uncertainty, and cause you to waste your precious time.

Today's lesson urges you, as they all do, to choose well. But since you have already come a certain distance, you are now invited to take on decisively the role of messenger of the Word you already know. It is yours now. You are being asked to communicate it, to reinforce it in your mind so that you may make your own the infinite gifts it contains. You are strongly reminded that you will enjoy them only when you give them wholeheartedly to others. Then you will see that you already have them.

That does not mean you should take to the streets with the blue book in your hand. No. The Voice of your Teacher will tell you precisely what to do, through the people and circumstances placed before you so that you may express your truth to them. And the only testimony you can offer is that of your gentleness and your certainty of being happy and safe in your Father's arms.

**II** The idea that giving and receiving are the same is one of the *Course's* most frequently repeated themes. For example, in the *Workbook for Students* we find the following references to this principle in the group of lessons preceding the Fourth Review:

W-121.9:1: "A mind that cannot forgive cannot believe that giving and receiving are the same."

W-122.6:4: "As you give, so shall you receive."

W-126: "All that I give is given to myself." This idea is crucial for achieving the reversal of thinking that this *Course* proposes.

W-126.7:5: "And true forgiveness... must heal the mind that gives, for giving and receiving are the same."

W-134.8:5: "For if a brother has received this gift from you, the door is open to you."

In the *Text*, too, there are countless references to the idea that giving and receiving are the same.

Here a greater truth is revealed: you are not here by chance. You are not lost. You have been chosen. And a holy function has been entrusted to you. That does not make you special, but it does make you responsible. All have been called, but only those who respond begin to awaken.

This world is not your home, but it is here that you must fulfill your mission. And that mission is to remember who you are, by teaching it. For teaching is nothing but remembering. And remembering is healing. But you will not heal alone; you will heal by giving. Each time you give a true thought, that thought is strengthened in you. Only what is not given is lost.

Today you are told that you are a minister of God. What does that mean? That you have accepted to carry the messages of Love—not because you fully understand them, but because you yourself need them. You give them because they are for you. And in giving them, you receive them. You do not have to convince anyone. You only have to be the clear channel through which the message is transmitted. And for that, you are asked but one thing: trust.

Trust what you do not understand. Trust the Voice that speaks for you. Trust that everything will be given to you when you need it. Your part is minimal: be willing. He will take care of the rest.

## LESSON 155

### I Will Step Back and Let Him Lead the Way.

1. There is a way of living in the world that is not of it, though it seems to be. **I**

<sup>2</sup>You do not appear to change, although you smile more frequently.

<sup>3</sup>Your face is calm, and your eyes are quietly lit.

<sup>4</sup>And those who walk the world as you do recognize you as one of their own.

<sup>5</sup>Yet those who have not yet found the path you walk will also recognize you, and will believe you are still like them, just as you were before. **II**

2. The world is an illusion.

<sup>2</sup>Those who choose to come here are seeking a place where they can be illusions, and thus escape their own Reality.

<sup>3</sup>But when they find their Reality is also here, they step back and let It lead the way.

<sup>4</sup>What other choice do they really have?

<sup>5</sup>To let illusion go before the truth is madness.

<sup>6</sup>But to let illusion fall away before the truth, allowing the truth to shine as it is, is simply sanity.

3. Today we make this simple choice.

<sup>2</sup>The mad illusion will continue for a while, so it may be seen by those who chose to come and have not yet rejoiced to find they were mistaken in their choice.

<sup>3</sup>They cannot learn directly from the truth, for they have denied it.

<sup>4</sup>They need a Teacher who perceives their madness, but who can look beyond illusion to the simple truth that dwells in them.

4. If truth required them to give up the world, it would seem to them as if it asked them to sacrifice something real.

<sup>2</sup>Many have given up the world while still believing in its reality, and have felt a sense of loss without being truly released.

<sup>3</sup>Others have chosen nothing but the world, and have suffered a deeper sense of loss they did not understand.

5. Between these two paths, there is another, one that leads past all sense of loss, for sacrifice and deprivation are quickly left behind. **III**

<sup>2</sup>This is the path assigned to you now.

<sup>3</sup>You walk this way as others do, and though it does not seem you are different from them, you are indeed.

<sup>4</sup>Thus you can help them as you help yourself, leading them on the path God cleared for you, and for them through you. **IV**

6. It still seems that illusion touches you, but only so that you may reach to them.

<sup>2</sup>Yet illusion has already receded in you.

<sup>3</sup>And you do not speak to them of illusions, nor do you offer illusions for them to see or ponder.

<sup>4</sup>Now truth, which goes before you, can speak to them through illusions.

<sup>5</sup>For the path you now propose they walk with you still passes through illusion for a time.

7. All roads will ultimately lead to this.

<sup>2</sup>Sacrifice and deprivation are paths that lead nowhere—choices that end in failure and goals that cannot be reached.

<sup>3</sup>All this fades before the truth that shines in you, to lead your brothers from the paths of death and guide them toward the happiness that waits.

<sup>4</sup>Their suffering is but illusion.

<sup>5</sup>But they need a guide to lead them out, for they mistake illusion for the truth.

8. Such is the call to salvation, and nothing more.

<sup>2</sup>It only asks that you accept the truth and let it go before you, lighting up the path that frees you from illusion.

<sup>3</sup>It is not a costly rescue.

<sup>4</sup>For it costs nothing, and only yields reward.

<sup>5</sup>Illusion only seems to bind the holy Son of God.

<sup>6</sup>He is freed from illusions only.

<sup>7</sup>And when they fall away, he finds himself again.

9. Now you can walk in safety, though cautiously, for this is a new path to you.

<sup>2</sup>And you may still be tempted to step ahead of truth and let illusion be your guide.

<sup>3</sup>You have been given your holy brothers to follow in your steps, as you walk certain of your purpose toward the truth.

<sup>4</sup>Now truth goes before you, that they too may see something they can understand and recognize to lead them on. **V**

10. At the journey's end there will be no gap, no distance between the truth and you.

<sup>2</sup>And all illusions that you walked through will vanish as well.

<sup>3</sup>Nothing will remain to keep the truth apart from God's completion, holy as Himself.

<sup>4</sup>Step back in faith and let the truth lead you.

<sup>5</sup>You do not know the way.

<sup>6</sup>But One Who knows walks with you.

<sup>7</sup>Let Him lead you, with all your brothers, to the goal.

11. When dreams are done, when time has closed the door on all things that pass and miracles have lost their use, the holy Son of God will make no more journeys.

<sup>2</sup>There will be no wish to be illusion rather than the truth.

<sup>3</sup>And we are moving toward that end, along the path the truth directs.

<sup>4</sup>This is our final journey, made for all.

<sup>5</sup>We must not lose our way.

<sup>6</sup>For as the truth goes before us, so it goes before our brothers who will follow us.

12. We are bound for God.

<sup>2</sup>Pause and reflect on this:

<sup>3</sup>What road could be more holy, or deserve your effort, your love, and your wholehearted dedication more?

<sup>4</sup>What other way could offer more than everything, or give less and still satisfy the holy Son of God?

<sup>5</sup>We are bound for God.

<sup>6</sup>The truth that goes before us now is One with Him, and leads us to where He has always been.

<sup>7</sup>What other path could you choose but this?

13. Your feet are firmly set upon the way that leads the world to God.

<sup>2</sup>Do not seek other roads that seem to take you elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup>Dreams are not fit guides for you, the Son of God.

<sup>4</sup>Forget not He has taken your hand, and given you your brothers in His trust that you are worthy of it.

<sup>5</sup>He cannot be deceived.

<sup>6</sup>His Trust has made your pathway certain and your goal secure.

<sup>7</sup>You will not fail your brothers or your Self.

14. And now He asks but this:

<sup>2</sup>Think of Him a while each day, that He may speak to you and tell you of His Love, reminding you how great His Trust, how boundless His Love.

<sup>3</sup>In His Name, and in your own, which are the same, we practice gladly with this thought today:

*<sup>4</sup>I will step back and let Him lead the way,  
<sup>5</sup>For I would walk the road that leads to Him. VI*

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**I** John 17:16 “As I do not belong to the world, they too do not belong to the world.”

**II** Today brings a delightful lesson about manners and ways, in which Jesus explains how the teachers of God walk through a world of illusions. The Holy Spirit makes use of both what makes them similar to their brothers and what distinguishes them. They are ordinary people with whom anyone can identify, yet they interpret what they perceive in a radically different way. Apparent attacks are to them calls for help; the difficulties they encounter are opportunities to manifest their perfect invulnerability and the power of God within them; sickness, pain, and suffering are calls for a miracle.

The teachers of God are meaningless without their brothers in need, for no one can be a teacher of anything unless he can teach. Their spiritual vision enables them to recognize that they gain only as they give; therefore, the gratitude of these messengers of God toward their brothers is boundless: in healing, they themselves are healed; in setting others free, they achieve their own freedom; and in guiding those who are lost, they come together to God. This *Course* is a purely relational spiritual path; it makes no sense in solitude. How else could the idea of separation be healed?

Jesus was the perfect example of how the life of an exalted messenger of God's Word unfolds in the world. Brother to all, ever joyful and with a heart torn between truth and the impossible, through his crucifixion he made ours unnecessary, for by his glorious resurrection he proved that death does not exist. Jesus is the timeless teacher who guides your soul through a useless dream. He is the elder brother who accompanies you and to whom you can always turn in any tribulation. Jesus is the one thing that will never fail you while you believe yourself to be in this world of illusions. He is the light that guides your mind and the love that kindles your heart. He is as much you as your very Self.

**III** Both rejecting the world and embracing it are attitudes founded upon the same error: believing that the world is real. The teachers of God know it is not, and they use the world to awaken from it by seeing it for what it is: an illusion. This is the fundamental difference between a teacher of God and the rest of the world: he treats everything he perceives as an illusion, because he knows it is only an illusion, and nothing more.

A teacher of God is as asleep in the world's dream as are all his brothers, but he knows that he is dreaming, and he also knows what awaits him upon awakening. This knowledge transforms everything he perceives, everything he

considers, and consequently, all his behavior, for he knows Who he is, Who his brothers are, and Who his Father is.

**IV** Isaiah 42:16 “I will lead the blind by a way they do not know; I will guide them along paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them and crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, and I will not forsake them.”

Matthew 20:28 “For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

**V** You are that which they understand. You are the translator of the Word of God. That is your role. In you they see something with which they can identify, for they see that you are like them; yet your testimony resonates in their hearts, and that makes them feel moved to imitate and follow you. It is a relationship similar to the one you are forming with Jesus. Without him, the distance to reach God would be too great for you to bridge on your own.

Jesus serves as the bridge to God, just as you serve as guide and bridge to your brothers. The testimony of Jesus’s life and his words inspired you, and now Jesus needs your body to communicate his gospel. But remember: you do not act according to your own initiative and judgment; you step aside and allow him to guide you. Be very careful not to undertake anything on your own. Quiet your mind and await His Voice.

**VI** This lesson is a surrender. A deep and final surrender. It is no longer about understanding, or struggling, or trying to do things right. Today you are asked only to step aside. To stop interfering. To withdraw humbly and allow something greater than yourself to guide you.

Your character knows nothing. It knows only how to repeat what it has learned, to project fear, and to reinforce separation. Your personal story, your opinions, your judgments, your interpretations—all of this is part of the barrier that keeps you from seeing. You do not have to destroy that barrier; it is enough simply to stop feeding it. It is enough to step back.

To step aside is an act of true humility. It is to cease pretending that you know who you are or what is best for you. It is to trust that there is a wisdom within you that knows everything, and that this wisdom will speak if you allow it. You do not have to know where you are going. You do not have to understand the way. You need only take a step back and allow it to be shown to you.

Today you are asked for one thing only: trust. Not in your own strength, but in the Strength that dwells within you. Not in your ideas, but in the Voice that speaks for God. Today you are offered a new way of living: guided, accompanied, sustained at every moment. Surrender to that Guidance with gentleness. Walk slowly, not knowing, but with the certainty that you are not alone and that the path shown to you is the only one that makes sense. And then miracles will begin to occur all around you.

## LESSON 156

### I Walk with God in Perfect Holiness.

1. Today's idea is nothing more than the simple truth that makes the notion of sin impossible.

<sup>2</sup>It states that guilt has no cause, and being causeless, does not exist.

<sup>3</sup>It is the natural consequence of that fundamental idea so often stated in the Text: ideas leave not their source. **I**

<sup>4</sup>If this is true, how could you be separate from God?

<sup>5</sup>How could you walk the world alone and apart from your Source? **II**

2. The ideas we present in our curriculum never contradict each other.

<sup>2</sup>Truth must always be true to be true.

<sup>3</sup>It cannot contradict itself, nor be true in some instances and false in others.

<sup>4</sup>You cannot walk the world apart from God, because you could not exist without Him.

<sup>5</sup>He is your life.

<sup>6</sup>He is where you are. **III**

<sup>7</sup>There is only One Life.

<sup>8</sup>And that is the Life you share with Him.

<sup>9</sup>Nothing can be separate from Him and still live. **IV**

3. But where He is, there must also be Holiness, along with Life.

<sup>2</sup>Everything that lives shares all His Attributes.

<sup>3</sup>All that lives is as holy as He is, for what shares His Life is part of Holiness, and it is as impossible for it to harbor sin as it is for the sun to choose to be made of ice, for the sea to be apart from water, or for the grass to grow with its roots suspended in the air.

4. There is a Light in you that can never go out, and Whose Presence is so holy that the world is blessed because of you.

<sup>2</sup>All living things offer you gifts and lay them at your feet in gratitude and joy.

<sup>3</sup>The fragrance of flowers is their gift to you.

<sup>4</sup>The waves bow down before you, the trees stretch out their arms to shield you from the sun and let their leaves fall gently at your feet, that you may walk in softness, while the wind surrounds your holy head with whispers.

5. The Light in you is what the universe longs to see.

<sup>2</sup>All living things become still before you, for they recognize the One Who walks with you. **V**

<sup>3</sup>The Light you carry is their own.

<sup>4</sup>And thus they see in you their holiness, and greet you as their Savior and the Son of God.

<sup>5</sup>Accept their reverence, for it is given to the Holiness Itself that walks with you, transforming all things gently in Its Light into Its likeness and Its purity. **VI**

6. This is how salvation works.

<sup>2</sup>When you step back, the Light in you goes forward and embraces the world.

<sup>3</sup>It does not proclaim the end of sin through punishment and death.

<sup>4</sup>Sin simply disappears in silence and in peace, when it is seen as nothing more than a foolish misperception.

<sup>5</sup>The idea of sin is insane, a silly dream, perhaps ridiculous, but never to be feared.

<sup>6</sup>And who would choose to delay even a moment his approach to God for such a foolish whim?

7. Yet you have spent many years in just such foolishness.

<sup>2</sup>The past is gone, with all its fantasies.

<sup>3</sup>They no longer hold you.

<sup>4</sup>Your approach to God is near.

<sup>5</sup>And in that brief remaining space of doubt, you may forget your Companion and mistake Him for the foolish dream that now is over.

8. "Who walks with me?"

<sup>2</sup>You should ask this question a thousand times a day, until certainty dispels all doubt and brings peace at last.

<sup>3</sup>Today, let there be no doubt.

<sup>4</sup>God speaks for you in answering your question with these words:

*<sup>5</sup>I walk with God in perfect holiness.*

*<sup>6</sup>I light the world, I light my mind,*

*<sup>7</sup>And all the minds that God created one with me. **VII***

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**I** T-19.I.8:7 "The RESULT of an idea is NEVER separate from its source."

T-26.VII.16:2–3 “God’s Will is that you learn what has always been true: that He created you as part of Himself. And this must forever be true, FOR ideas do not leave their source.” (See also the note on Lesson 132.)

**II** Today’s lesson is very simple and very powerful. It consists simply in removing all that does not exist, because it is not true, leaving only what is truly there. To do this lesson well, you need only withdraw from your mind all the ideas you have placed there on your own. You need do nothing more. You must withdraw them for the simple reason that they are not true, they are in the way, and they prevent you from perceiving the truth in yourself and in everything.

You may think that this *Course* is asking you to believe in a series of wonderful ideas that contradict what the world teaches you about reality, and whose truth cannot be proven. It is not so. What this *Course* proposes is almost the opposite: it asks you precisely to stop believing in all those stories you tell yourself. They are not true. You cannot even imagine how you would see the world if you stopped constantly telling yourself what it is.

Realize that you spend your life talking to yourself. This obsessive internal dialogue has as its purpose fixing in your mind a description of the world that is false, and, precisely because it is a great lie, it must be constantly sustained by that incessant chatter. If you stopped talking to yourself, you would see a different world.

It is very important that you become aware of why, and how, you see the world as you now believe it to be. You do not realize the enormous effort you make to maintain that world in your mind. Have you ever asked yourself why you cannot stop your internal dialogue, and what its effects are? Well, now you know. When the thought crosses your mind that this *Course* is trying to wash your brain and convince you of some fanciful illusion, ask yourself whether that is not exactly what you are doing all the time to yourself.

Do not be discouraged when you find yourself unable to stop your inner dialogue. Although it is ideal to learn to quiet your mind and bring it into silence, you will not be able to restrain that tendency of yours to tell yourself stories constantly—at least at first. But you can redirect their theme.

You may remember how the *Text* explains that the Holy Spirit can use the ego’s resources for His holy purpose. This is exactly what you are asked to do when you are told to consider and apply the daily ideas of this book to the world you know. Watch your inner dialogue, become aware of it, and do not allow it to run wild with thoughts of sin, guilt, and attack. Learn to take the reins of your interpretations and guide them along gentler paths. In any case, they will be

equally fanciful and unreal, but they will no longer hurt you, and they can help prepare your mind for forgiveness.

By their fruits you shall know them. By now you must be quite clear on what the fruits of the world taste like. Do you like their flavor? Do they nourish your soul? Do they make you happy and joyful and bring you peace? If not, why do you keep eating them? Try something else—you might like it better.

You walk the world in perfect holiness for the simple reason that God created you holy, although, as you now know, you make enormous efforts to convince yourself otherwise.

Stop believing. Clear your mind and look upon the world anew. Remember that you do not have to make any effort to establish in yourself another way of seeing; you need only stop striving to impose upon yourself a sickly vision. That is all. Nothing more.

Do not be troubled if, after half a year of doing these exercises, you are surprised to discover that you did not understand the first lessons. “My thoughts do not mean anything.” But not only that: besides having no real meaning, your meaningless thoughts are blocking your vision.

You walk the world in perfect holiness. Now you need only realize that this is truly so. It always has been, and it always will be.

**III** John 14:3 “And when I go, I will prepare a place for you. I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”

**IV** Acts 17:28 “For in Him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are indeed His offspring.’”

**V** It is worth noting that the original English expression here is living things. It appears forty-six times in the *Text*. However, the much more usual English expression living beings never appears even once. The FIP version of the *Course*, however, always translates it as “living beings.” Jesus refers to the illusions of the world as “things,” not as “beings.” It is very important to keep this in mind, for it represents an absolute shift in paradigm regarding the nature and condition of the concept of “person.” Persons are not “beings” that cause anything; they are not causes, but effects. Your condition as a “being” does not arise from that “personal” idea you have of yourself, but from your condition as the Son of God.

**VI** Genesis 1:26–27 “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.’”

**VII** This lesson affirms something the ego cannot tolerate: that you walk with God, in perfect holiness. Not as a distant promise, not as a future possibility, but as a present fact. And that changes everything.

Your mind may still resist. It may say: "It's not true. I am not holy. I do not walk with God. I don't feel it, I don't see it, I don't believe it." And yet, you are doing so. Even if you do not know it. Even if you do not feel it. Even if your thoughts say otherwise, the truth has not changed. Holiness is your natural state. It does not depend on your actions, on what you believe, or on your personal history. It is the reflection of what you are, and what you are has never ceased to be united with God.

Today you are told: let the light within you go before you. You do not have to push it, nor manufacture it. You need only allow it to guide you. And you will see how the world begins to recognize you. Not because you say anything, but because they will see in you what is in themselves. They will see their own light reflected. And then they will know.

This is not about doing. It is about allowing. It is not about changing anything. It is about seeing from another place. Your light has nothing to prove. It need only be. And when it is, everything is transformed. This is the key: step aside, and let the holiness that walks with you transform the world as you pass. So simple. So powerful.

## LESSON 157

### I Would Be in His Presence Now.

1. This is a day of quiet and of trust.

<sup>2</sup>It is a time especially promising in the calendar of your days.

<sup>3</sup>It is a time Heaven has appointed to cast a timeless Light upon this day, where echoes of eternity are heard.

<sup>4</sup>This day is holy, for it marks a fresh beginning, a new experience, a different kind of feeling, and a renewed awareness.

<sup>5</sup>You have spent many days and nights in celebration of death.

<sup>6</sup>Today you will learn to feel the joy of Life.

2. This is another turning point in the curriculum. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Now we introduce a new dimension.

<sup>3</sup>A fresh experience that sheds Light on everything we have already learned, and prepares us for what remains to learn.

<sup>4</sup>This experience leads us to the threshold where learning ends, and we catch a glimpse of what lies beyond the highest levels of what can be learned.

<sup>5</sup>It leaves us there for an instant, and then we move beyond—certain of our direction and of our one intent.

3. Today you will be given a glimpse of Heaven, though you will return again to the ways of learning.

<sup>2</sup>But you have come far enough along the road to alter time, to rise above its laws, and walk for just a while into eternity.

<sup>3</sup>You will learn to do this more and more, as every lesson well practiced brings you more quickly to this holy place and leaves you for a moment in the arms of your true Self.

4. He will direct your practice today, for what you desire now is but to do His Will.

<sup>2</sup>And as you join your will with His today, what you ask will be given you.

<sup>3</sup>You need but today's idea to light your mind and let it rest in quiet expectation and in joyful peace, by which you swiftly leave the world behind.

5. From this day forward your ministry will gain a real devotion and a glow that touches all whom you encounter, blessing all those you look upon.

<sup>2</sup>And a vision will reach everyone you meet, or think of, or who thinks of you.

<sup>3</sup>For what you experience today will so transform your mind that it will become the touchstone for the holy Thoughts of God.

6. Your body will be sanctified today, for its only purpose now is to bring the vision of what you experience today to light the world.

<sup>2</sup>An experience like this cannot be directly conveyed.

<sup>3</sup>Yet it leaves a vision in our eyes which we can give to all, that they may come a little closer to the time when they will share this same experience—one in which the world is gently left behind and Heaven is remembered for a while.

7. As this experience intensifies, and all goals but this become of little worth, the world to which you return becomes a little closer to the end of time—more like the Heaven in its forms and nearer to its release.

<sup>2</sup>And you, who bring the light, will see that light more clearly.

<sup>3</sup>There will come a time when you will not return in the same form you now appear to have, for you will have no need of it.

<sup>4</sup>But for now it has a purpose, and it will serve it well.

8. Today we undertake a journey new to you—one that you cannot even imagine.

<sup>2</sup>But the Holy One—The Giver of the happy dreams of Life, the Translator of perception into Truth, the Holy Guide to Heaven given to you—has dreamed this journey for you now, that you might have this day's experience. **II**

9. Now we enter in the Presence of Christ serenely, with nothing else on which to focus but His radiant Face and His perfect Love.

<sup>2</sup>The vision of His Face will stay with you, but there will be a moment that transcends all vision, even this—the holiest of all. **III**

<sup>3</sup>This you cannot teach, for you did not learn it.

<sup>4</sup>Yet the vision speaks of your remembrance of what you knew in that instant, and will surely know again.

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**I** The previous turning point in learning is the one that occurs when you truly learn to forgive. "It begins with hope, for we have come to a turning point from which the way becomes much easier" (W-122.10:2). First you forgive, and then you are lifted into an ecstatic vision of Heaven.

**II** Psalm 16:10 “For You will not abandon my soul to hell, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.”

Mark 1:24 “Saying, ‘Leave us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God.’”

Here, the Holy One is the Holy Spirit.

**III** Today’s lesson is very special. It is not a lesson to be done, but to be experienced. Today you are invited to a deeper silence, to a more radical trust. You are not asked to understand anything, nor to make any effort. You are only asked to be available. Only to say yes. This is a holy day.

Today you are asked to go, without expectations, to the meeting with an experience that transcends all that the world can offer. It is the mystical experience of union with Reality. Nothing more and nothing less. The same one referred to at the end of the *Course*, in the Introduction to the *Glossary*: “A universal theology is impossible, but a universal experience is not only possible but necessary” (G-1.2:5).

This entire *Course* has been designed to lead you here: to the gates of the Presence. All your training, all your inner work, had no other purpose than this: that you remember who you are. That you cease identifying with a personal story and once again recognize your eternal, invulnerable, perfect Self. That is awakening.

You cannot force this experience, but you can desire it. You can create the space for it to occur. You can step aside, grow still, and open yourself. Even if it lasts only an instant, that instant is enough. For it is not an instant of the world: it is a remembrance of what has always been.

Approach it in peace and devotion. Expect nothing. Seek no sensations. Simply offer your small will so that your true Will may be shown to you. For all your time in this world, all that you seem to have lived, has been only the preparation for this. To remember. To return. To awaken.

## LESSON 158

### Today I Learn to Give as I Receive.

1. What has been given you?

<sup>2</sup>You have been granted the knowledge that you are a mind, that you are in a Mind and are pure mind, forever free from sin and wholly without fear, because you were created by Love.

<sup>3</sup>Nor have you left your Source, for you remain exactly as you were created.

<sup>4</sup>This was given you as knowledge that cannot be lost.

<sup>5</sup>And that same knowledge was given to all living things, for it is by that knowledge alone that they live.

2. You have received all this.

<sup>2</sup>Everyone who walks the world has received it.

<sup>3</sup>You do not give this knowledge, for it was given by Creation itself.

<sup>4</sup>It cannot be learned.

<sup>5</sup>What, then, are you to learn to give today? **I**

<sup>6</sup>Yesterday's lesson returned to a theme found at the very beginning of the Text. **II**

<sup>7</sup>Experience cannot be directly shared, as vision can.

<sup>8</sup>The revelation that the Father and the Son are One will come in due time to every mind.

<sup>9</sup>But that moment is determined by the mind itself; it is not something that can be taught.

3. That time is already set.

<sup>2</sup>This may seem quite arbitrary.

<sup>3</sup>But no one takes a single step by chance along the way.

<sup>4</sup>That step has already been taken by everyone, though they have not yet begun to walk the path.

<sup>5</sup>For time only seems to move in one direction.

<sup>6</sup>We but undertake a journey that is already over.

<sup>7</sup>Yet it appears that there is a future we do not yet know.

4. Time is a trick, a sleight of hand, a vast illusion in which figures come and go by magic.

<sup>2</sup>Yet behind the appearances there is a plan that does not change.

<sup>3</sup>The script is written.

<sup>4</sup>The moment in which you will experience the end of all your doubts is already set.

<sup>5</sup>For we are merely reviewing a journey that has ended, looking back on it as if we are doing it again, going over what has already happened. **III**

5. A teacher cannot give his experience, for it is not something he has learned.

<sup>2</sup>His experience was revealed to him in due time.

<sup>3</sup>But vision is his gift.

<sup>4</sup>A teacher can give his vision directly, for the knowledge of Christ has not been lost.

<sup>5</sup>For Christ has a vision He can give to anyone who asks.

<sup>6</sup>The Will of the Father and the Will of Christ are joined in knowledge.

<sup>7</sup>Yet there is a vision the Holy Spirit sees, because the Mind of Christ beholds it too.

6. There the world of doubt and shadows meets the intangible.

<sup>2</sup>It is a quiet place within the world, made holy by forgiveness and by love.

<sup>3</sup>There all contradictions are resolved, for there the journey ends.

<sup>4</sup>There is simply an experience that cannot be learned, nor taught, nor even seen.

<sup>5</sup>It is beyond our learning goal, for it lies beyond what we can accomplish on our own.

<sup>6</sup>We are concerned only with attaining the vision of Christ.

<sup>7</sup>For that is something we can reach. **IV**

7. The vision of Christ obeys a single law.

<sup>2</sup>It does not see a body, nor does it confuse the body with the Son whom God created.

<sup>3</sup>It beholds a light beyond the body.

<sup>4</sup>It sees an idea beyond what can be touched.

<sup>5</sup>It sees a purity untouched by error, unharmed by foolish mistakes, and untainted by fearful thoughts of guilt that come with dreams of sin.

<sup>6</sup>It sees no separation.

<sup>7</sup>And it looks on everyone, and everything, with eyes that see the Light undimmed.

8. All who seek to reach this vision must—and will—teach it.

<sup>2</sup>All that is required is the recognition that the world can offer nothing of value to compare with this.

<sup>3</sup>Nor can it propose a goal that does not fade before this vision.

<sup>4</sup>And this is what you will offer to the world today: to see no one as a body.

<sup>5</sup>Greet your brother, then, as the Son of God he is, acknowledging that he is one with you in holiness.

9. Thus are his sins forgiven him, for Christ's vision has the power to overlook them all.

<sup>2</sup>In His forgiveness they disappear.

<sup>3</sup>For since Christ does not see them, they simply cease to be.

<sup>4</sup>And in their place comes the vision of the holiness that lies beyond them.

<sup>5</sup>It does not matter what form they took, how great they seemed to be, or whom they seemed to harm.

<sup>6</sup>They are no more.

<sup>7</sup>And all the effects they seemed to have are gone with them.

<sup>8</sup>They are undone and never were.

10. This is how you learn to give as you receive.

<sup>2</sup>And thus the vision of Christ also beholds you.

<sup>3</sup>This lesson is not hard to learn, if you remember that in your brother you but see yourself.

<sup>4</sup>If he is lost in sin, then so must you be.

<sup>5</sup>But if you see light in him, then you have forgiven yourself your sins.

<sup>6</sup>Each brother you meet today gives you another chance to let Christ's vision shine on you and bring you God's Peace.

11. It is irrelevant when the revelation comes, for it has nothing to do with time.

<sup>2</sup>Yet time still holds a gift for us.

<sup>3</sup>It is an experience in which true knowledge is so perfectly reflected that the images we see share in its invisible holiness, and all things like them shine with its immortal Love.

<sup>4</sup>Today we practice seeing all things with Christ's vision.

<sup>5</sup>And through the holy gifts we give, Christ's vision looks on us as well. **V**

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**I** Today's lesson teaches us once again that we receive exactly what we give, and that this happens at the very moment we give it. And it cannot be otherwise, for everything we give we give to ourselves, since there is nothing that is not our own reality. If we understand and accept that we are mind, and that the ideas our mind conceives must always remain within it and cannot go anywhere else—because there is no such place—we clearly understand that everything we give we give to ourselves, and within us it remains.

Today we apply this idea in a very specific way to the vision of Christ, which is true vision. When we see through the eyes of Christ, we simply see the truth, and what we see is what we are.

The lesson begins by explaining that to know and to be are the same, and that this is precisely what it means to live; therefore, the knowledge of being is substantial with all that lives. It could also be said that the joy of being is the love that impels the extension of that same Being in Creation. To live, to know, to be, to love, and to create are One and the Same, and that is Heaven—the Creation of God. In the dream of time, however, this is something that must be remembered, for the dream itself was the desire to forget that condition.

The fragmented mind of the Son of God, which believes it lives in time, can occasionally experience the revelation of Reality, though this cannot be sustained, for it is knowledge antithetical to its false, fragmented, and temporal existence. This revelatory experience is ineffable and cannot be transmitted to others, but the vision of Christ can. And each time we see anyone with those eyes, we are learning it, teaching it, and beholding our own holiness. This is how we truly forgive the sins of our brothers and our own.

**II** T-4.XII.9:4–6 “God does not need Revelation to be returned to Him, which would clearly be impossible, but He DOES want Revelation to be shared with others. This cannot be done with the Revelation itself, since its content cannot be expressed and is extremely personal to the mind that receives it. Yet it can still be extended to other minds through the attitudes that the knowledge of the Revelation brings.”

**III** The idea expressed in these two paragraphs may be difficult to grasp. Look at it this way: think of the history of humanity as a novel that tells the adventures of countless characters over a vast stretch of time. The novel has many pages, but it is bound within a single large volume and indeed has a beginning and an end. It is a novel that you, the Son of God, wrote and are now reading, identifying yourself with each of those characters. You believe that you are all of them, and that everything that happens to them is happening to you.

This novel tells a story of fear, for it began with a dreadful premise: that you, the Son of God, succeeded in separating yourself from your Father. In truth, you do not know how or why such a thought ever crossed your holy mind, but you developed that fearful initial idea, and now look what you hold in your hands. The script is already written. The world of time has a happy ending. Your story ends well, though you still have a few pages left to read.

**IV** Remember that Revelation comes from God to you and is something bestowed upon you, but the vision of Christ is something you can and must learn

and teach, for it is what ends the dreams of fear and turns them into happy dreams. The vision of Christ leads you to see the real world.

Today's lesson defines precisely the sphere of work of the teacher of God and miracle worker. Today you are told exactly the extent of your responsibility. The teachers of God strive to see the world in a different way; they seek to see it through the vision of Christ. This is something they can achieve, for it depends on their will. They ask for this, and it is granted them. Indeed, the teachers of God ask only for this, and this alone is what is granted. Yet in this vision are all miracles. What else would a teacher of God desire?

This *Course* trains your mind—or rather, it trains your will—so that you seek only this: to see your brother as a spirit having nothing to do with the forms of the body and its attributes, for that is what he truly is, and so are you. You now look upon the world with innocent eyes that do not know what the things they behold mean, and you wait to be told how to interpret them.

This *Course* constantly urges you not to assign your own meanings to the forms you think you see, for doing so merely incites you to build your own fantasies with them. And because you are afraid, do not know what you are, and believe yourself to be alone and separate from everything, your fear leads you to invent fearful tales of guilt and punishment. Put very simply, that is what is happening in your mind now.

You are asked only to stop dreaming and begin to see, for you have never truly seen—you have only imagined things. This new way of seeing the *Course* calls the vision of Christ, and it will lead you to see a happy world: the real world. And this is indeed something you can achieve—if that is truly what you want, and all that you want.

▼ Jesus reminds us today of a fundamental law of how the mind works: the mind takes on the form of whatever it contemplates intently. If it joins with hate, it becomes hateful. If it joins with love, it becomes loving. The mind is pure capacity for adaptation, a moldable potential that, like a chameleon, blends with what it fixes upon. This is a powerful idea, deeply practical. For if you understand this, you can use it to heal.

When you feel trapped by a loss, a betrayal, an accident, or any situation that has generated a painful interpretation, what has actually happened is that your mind has become fixed upon a symbol of chaos, of disorder, of threat. You cannot stay there without consequences. But you do not need to struggle against the image or the thought; it is enough to replace that symbol with another—one of peace, of order, of beauty. Redirect your attention with firm but gentle will.

Turn your gaze—and with it your mind—toward something that expresses harmony.

A very concrete way to do this is to devote yourself completely to a simple task. Cleaning, for example. Not as an escape, but as an act of full presence. To clean a floor, to arrange a drawer, to wash the dishes—not for the sake of a result, but to allow your mind to contemplate order while it acts. If done with mindfulness and devotion, this is a form of prayer. For you are not scrubbing—you are redirecting awareness. You are choosing peace.

This principle can be applied to many things: to silence, to a serene melody, to a spacious and uncluttered place. Anything that reflects order can help you remember inner order. For the mind becomes like what it contemplates with love. This is a beautiful teaching of immense practical value. Do not forget it.