

LESSON 122 • MAY 2

“Forgiveness offers everything I want.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: “To feel the peace forgiveness offers, and the joy the lifting of the veil holds out to you” (11:2).

Morning/evening practice: Two times, for fifteen minutes.

Sink into the place in your mind where the gifts of forgiveness abide. Try to experience the happiness, peace, and joy that forgiveness offers you. Seek that place in you earnestly, and with gladness and hope. This practice seems to be an example of Workbook meditation. It seems very similar to the practice in the early 100s, where you quieted your mind and tried to experience the happiness and joy that God has placed deep within you. Based on past lessons, you probably should begin by repeating the idea for the day, and then use that idea from time to time to pull your mind back from wandering.

Remarks: Approach these practice periods filled with hope, because you have reached a crucial turning point in your journey. After this, the road will be much smoother and easier. Practice “earnestly and gladly” (9:2), with confidence that today salvation can be yours.

Frequent reminders: Every fifteen minutes, for at least one minute.

Say, “*Forgiveness offers everything I want. Today I have accepted this as true. Today I have received the gifts of God.*”

Remarks: These shorter practice periods are obviously extremely important. Practicing at least a minute four times an hour is no small feat for most of us. The purpose of these shorter practice periods is to keep in our minds the gifts we accepted in the morning practice. Those gifts will fade away unless we renew them throughout each hour. I suggest repeating these lines as a genuine, heartfelt dedication to accepting the truth of today’s idea. When repeating these lines you may want to make them specific: “*Forgiving [name] offers everything I want [happiness, peace, safety]. Today [day of week] I have accepted this as true. Today [date] I have received the gifts of God.*”

Commentary

There is a phrase near the end of this lesson that never fails to stand out to me. It speaks of how forgiveness enables me to “see the changeless in the heart of change” (13:4). For me, this phrase has become a whole other way to look at what forgiveness is.

Behind every appearance lies something that does not change. Appearances change, and rapidly. This is true both physically and in more subtle perceptions. But the spirit within us does not change, having been created by the eternal. Forgiveness is a way of looking past the appearances to the unchanging reality. It disregards the temporary picture of the ego’s mistakes and sees the Son of God. As Mother Teresa said of each one she helped, we see “Christ, in his distressing disguises.”

Forgiveness lets the veil be lifted up that hides the face of Christ from those who look with unforgiving eyes upon the world. (3:1)

Forgiveness is giving up all the reasons we have built up for withholding love. The veil of all our judgments is lifted, and we behold something marvelous, something wonderful, something indescribable. “What you will remember then can never be described” (8:4). (So I won’t try!) When forgiveness has removed the blocks to our awareness of love’s presence, we see love everywhere. Love is unchanging and unchangeable. There is no wonder, then, that forgiveness offers everything we want, bringing peace, happiness, quietness, certainty, and “a sense of worth and beauty that transcends the world” (1:4). When you see the changeless in the heart of change, distress drains right out of your heart because there is no reason for it.

Why are our moods and feelings such a problem to us? Because we identify with them, because as the moods and feelings change we believe we have changed. The Course is teaching us to learn to identify with something beyond change, with the Mind of Christ within ourselves that never changes and never will. Here is a very simple rule of thumb: *What changes is not me.* My Self is “unchanged, unchanging and unchangeable” (W-pI.190.6:5).

This is starting to take better shape in my mind as I began to see that forgiveness is simply to see the changeless in the heart of change. It is to recognize that the only thing that needs to be changed is the thought that it is possible to change the Mind of the Son of God. It is to realize that all my ego “thoughts” have changed nothing, and all my brother’s ego “thoughts” also change nothing. It is to realize that what is changeable is not me; to cease to identify with that which changes, and to cease to believe that my brother *is* my changing perceptions of him. Forgiveness means looking beyond what is changeable to that which is changeless.

Our pain comes from identifying with the ephemeral. Our peace comes from identifying with the eternal. Nothing that changes is created by God. Nothing that changes is really me. What is changeable is threatened by change, and “nothing real can be threatened” (T-In.2:2). Therefore, nothing that changes is real.

All that changes is nothing but a passing landmark on the journey to the eternal. It is nothing to be held on to. Think of a line of stones by which you cross a creek; you do not cling to each stone as you pass it. You appreciate its value in moving you toward the other side, but you do not lament its passing. Your goal is the other side. That is the only value of things in this world, things which include our own bodies and the bodies of our loved ones as well as material things, or even concepts in our thought system. Changing things are to be valued only as stepping stones to that which is eternal, to be gently released as we take the next step toward the changeless, which is always with us, always the reality of our being, even as we appear to journey towards it.