

LESSON 135 • MAY 15

“If I defend myself I am attacked.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: To lay aside your plans and learn your part in God’s plan; to bring closer the time when your light, joined with the light of your followers, will light up the world with joy. This is a crucial day in your awakening; it is Eastertime in your salvation. This is another of the Workbook’s giant strides (26:4).

Longer: Two times, for fifteen minutes.

- Repeat, “*If I defend myself I am attacked. But in defenselessness I will be strong, and I will learn what my defenses hide.*”
- Then rest from all planning and all thought. Your plans have been walls that you erected to shut out the Holy Spirit’s plan for your life. His plan is that you “become a light” (20:1) whose “followers” (20:3) light up the world. So let go of your ideas about your life and open your mind to His. Come without defenses and listen as He reveals to you “the part for you within the plan of God” (25:5). He may just tell you plans for today, but those plans will be part of His larger plan for you. Do not fear that these plans will ask sacrifice from you. They are the way to your release. And everything you need to accomplish them will be given you. Since this is an exercise in listening to God’s Voice, remember the training you’ve received in listening for guidance: wait in mental silence, wait in confidence, and periodically repeat your request.

Response to temptation: Whenever you feel tempted to make your own plans.

Repeat, “*This is my Eastertime. And I would keep it holy. I will not defend myself, because the Son of God needs no defense against the truth of his reality.*” This is long enough that you’ll probably need to write it on a card if you’re going to use it.

Remarks: As you go through the day, try not to shape and organize it according to what you see as your needs. Instead, if you listen to His plans and follow them, you will find inconceivable happiness, and the whole world will “celebrate your Eastertime with you” (26:4).

Commentary

“If I defend myself I am attacked.” The general thought that heads this lesson states that all forms of defense are actually witnesses to attack, or to your belief in attack. If you see a need for a defense, you must be perceiving an attack.

The self you think you are is something so weak it needs defense; your true Self, which is mind or spirit, needs no defense. This lesson shows that when you make plans whose purpose is to defend your small “self” (the image you have made of yourself, comprised of your ego and its expression, the body), you are indirectly attacking your true Self, because you perceive that Self as attacking “you.”

The Course continually teaches us that “all attack is self-attack” (T-10.II.5:1; line not in First Edition). It says we constantly attack ourselves, but we are blind to the fact. We think the attack comes from somewhere outside ourselves, and never realize that it stems from our own thoughts of guilt. Over and over, the Course tells us to look at what we are doing and thinking, to recognize the self-attack, and to choose to let go of it.

Lesson 135 applies this general principle to a particular area of our lives that we have probably not thought of as self-attack: planning. First, it points out that all defenses are a form of

self-attack because they make the illusion of threat real, and then attempt to handle “threats” as if they were real. It asks us to look closely at what we think we are defending, how we defend it, and against what.

Second, it identifies our plans as a form of defense. Plans are a form of defense against anticipated future threats. If that is so, the reverse is true: All “defenses are the plans you undertake to make against the truth” (17:1). In other words, defenses and plans are the same thing. When you set up a defense, you are making plans. All defenses are plans, and all self-initiated plans are defenses.

In sum, making plans is a form of defense, and all defenses are attacks on myself. Therefore, making plans is just another form of self-attack, to be noticed and abandoned.

Finally, the lesson discusses how “a healed mind” (11:1; 12:1) approaches life: not making plans, but receiving plans from the Holy Spirit, with full present trust in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with confidence in His plan. Only this approach allows for change, healing, and miracles to take place in the present moment.

A healed mind does not plan. It carries out the plans that it receives through listening to Wisdom that is not its own. (11:1–2)

This does not mean that a healed mind does not follow a plan. It follows a plan; it just doesn’t make the plan. It receives the plan through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In simple language, the healed mind listens to the Holy Spirit and does what He directs, instead of listening to the ego’s plans, which are always based on fear and take a defensive posture. The ego’s plans are always trying to protect and preserve the body; often, the plans of the Holy Spirit seem to be unconcerned about the body at all. The Holy Spirit has very different priorities.

When the Course is talking about “a healed mind” it is talking about the goal of the Course—the state your mind will be in after you graduate from the Course. This isn’t something you simply step into after reading a few lessons; this is what you will be like after working with the Course and completely integrating it into your life.¹

¹ The thoughts expressed above have been taken almost directly from a booklet I wrote, *A Healed Mind Does Not Plan*, published by Circle Publishing. This is a booklet that deals entirely with the subject of planning and decision making as taught in the Course.