

LESSON 14 • JANUARY 14

“God did not create a meaningless world.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: To erase the interpretations you have put on the world so that you can see God’s interpretation (just as with the previous two lessons). This process will save you. In its early stages, however, you may often feel as if you are being led into terror. This is only temporary. You will be led through fear and then beyond it forever.

Exercise: Three times (unless you find more comfortable), for one minute at most.

- With eyes closed, think of all the horrors in the world that cross your mind, anything you are afraid might happen to you or anyone. For each one say, “*God did not create that [specify the horror], and so it is not real.*” Be very specific in naming the horror or disaster.
- Conclude by repeating the idea.

Response to temptation: Optional—when anything disturbs you.

Feel free to apply the idea to dispel your upsets during the day. A special form has been provided for this: “God did not create a meaningless world. He did not create [specify the situation which is disturbing you], and so it is not real.” This is a very effective practice for regaining peace of mind. You may, in fact, want to give it a try now: Choose a situation that is weighing on you and apply the practice to it. See if at least some of the weight of it does not lift immediately.

Commentary

Today’s idea should come as a welcome relief after four days of being told our thoughts are meaningless and are showing us a meaningless world that is upsetting and frightening. The meaningless world we are seeing was not created by God, and “what God did not create does not exist” (1:2).

In the book *Awaken from the Dream*¹ by Gloria and Kenneth Wapnick, Gloria wrote about how this idea first attracted her to the Course:

Hearing firsthand about the devastating effects World War II had on people personally, I concluded that if this world were the best that God could create, I wanted nothing more to do with Him...

As I read Jesus’ words explain that God did not create the world, it was as if “lightning bolts” crashed through my head. “Why hadn’t I thought of that?” I kept thinking to myself. “It is so simple; that is the answer.” Finally, after twenty-three years the puzzle in my mind was solved. The Course had supplied the missing piece, and I no longer had to blame God for a world He did not create.

To some, the message that God did not create the meaningless world we see comes as salvation; to others, it may be “quite difficult and even quite painful” (3:2). For recognizing that He did not create it entails a corollary truth: we made it up. We are responsible for the world we see. That can lead us “directly into fear” (3:3). The Course faces up to this in many different places through all three volumes. The message it is giving to us, especially in the “early steps” (3:2), can be difficult, painful, and fearful.

¹ Gloria and Kenneth Wapnick, *Awaken from the Dream*, 2nd Ed. (Temecula, Cal.: Foundation for A Course in Miracles, 1995).

Many people wonder if something is wrong because they have strong negative reactions to this line of thought in the Course. The answer is, not at all. Perhaps it is those among us who *do not* have any negative reactions who should be wondering if they are apprehending the Course's message correctly and realizing its implications. A negative reaction is far more common than a positive one: that I can say with confidence.

Be glad, however, that the lesson goes on to say:

You will not be left there [in fear]. You will go far beyond it. Our direction is toward perfect safety and perfect peace. (3:4–6)

The Course calls our path a journey “through fear to love” (T-16.IV.11:1–2). The early distress is avoided by very few indeed, but the direction of the journey is towards a warmth and breadth of love that can barely be imagined as we start out.

One word of caution about the particular form of practice today. Notice carefully that the lesson is asking you to say these thoughts *to yourself* about “your personal repertory of horrors” (6:1). It is not advocating telling another person who is going through some tragedy that it isn't real; for instance, “Cheer up! God didn't create the death of your husband, so it isn't real.” In most cases that is not a loving message but an attack, placing you in a “superior” spiritual position to the other person. The lesson is talking about giving this message to yourself.

Note also the mention here about our illusions, that “some of them are shared illusions, and others are part of your personal hell” (6:3). Things such as famine and AIDS fall in the “shared illusion” category. There is clear support here for the idea that the illusion of the world is a shared responsibility, not just your personal creation, or mine.