

## LESSON 193 • JULY 12

**“All things are lessons God would have me learn.”**

### **Practice instructions**

**Purpose:** To learn the lesson that God would have you learn in every situation: forgiveness. To “overcome a thousand seeming obstacles to peace in just one day” (10:1) by applying forgiveness to every painful, worrisome situation.

**Morning/evening quiet time:** At least five minutes; ideally, thirty or more.

Repeat the idea. Then search your mind for all the things you kept to solve by yourself, instead of giving them to the Holy Spirit. With each one you uncover, turn it over to Him by repeating, “*I will forgive, and this will disappear*” (or by saying to yourself, “*Forgive, and you will see this differently*”). Realize that any pain in the situation that seems real comes from your own unforgiveness, not from the situation itself, and that as you forgive, the pain will disappear. This is how you learn the lessons contained in each situation.

**Remarks:** Give as much time to your morning and evening practice as you can, and then “give a little more” (11:1). “Do not let the time be less than meets your deepest need” (10:6), for you can free yourself from a thousand obstacles to peace today and go in haste to your Father’s house. This is time’s true purpose.

**Hourly remembrance:** One or two minutes as the hour strikes (reduce if circumstances do not permit).

We begin a new form of hourly practice today. Search your mind for any happenings of the previous hour that have any negative feeling attached to them. Apply the lesson to each one, saying either “*I will forgive, and this will disappear*” or “*Forgive, and you will see this differently.*” By doing this, you enter each new hour free of the old one. “Thus will you remain unbound, in peace eternal in the world of time” (12:5).

**Response to temptation:** Whenever pain seems real, whenever you feel apprehension, care, terror, or distress.

Remember that “there is a way to look on everything that lets it be to you another step to Him, and to salvation of the world” (13:1). Then repeat, “*I will forgive, and this will disappear*” or “*Forgive, and you will see this differently.*” These words “give you power over all events that seem to have been given power over you” (6:3). They “release all minds from bondage” (6:2). They are the key to Heaven’s gate.

### **Commentary**

The central thought of this lesson sounds similar to things said in many spiritual teachings: There is a lesson in everything, if we are open to see it and to learn. But the meaning here is quite different. Many people believe that every event, even every adversity, carries some meaning for us. “What is the lesson in this for me?” is the natural question when something seems to go wrong. If we follow this line of thinking, we can spend a great deal of our time trying to figure out the answer to that question, over and over, and we can become quite puzzled at times when we cannot seem to find what “the lesson” is.

But this Workbook lesson is quite forthright in telling us, flat out, that the lesson is always the same in content, no matter what the form. We do not need to waste our efforts trying to figure out what the lesson is. There is only one lesson. It is always the same:

Each lesson has a central thought, the same in all of them. The form alone is changed, with different circumstances and events; with different characters and

different themes, apparent but not real. They are the same in fundamental content. It is this:

*Forgive, and you will see this differently. (3:3–7)*

Lest we miss the point, it is stated again in slightly different words towards the end of the lesson:

This is the lesson God would have you learn: There is a way to look on everything that lets it be to you another step to Him, and to salvation of the world. To all that speaks of terror, answer thus:

*I will forgive, and this will disappear. (13:1–3)*

Forgiveness is the central theme of the Course. It entails, as we saw yesterday, a radical shift in our perception, one that allows the light of Heaven to shine upon everything we see. Forgiveness is the one lesson that everything, literally everything, is teaching us. Everything can teach us this lesson because, in our madness, we have a grievance against the universe. What the Course is teaching us is a different way of looking on everything, a way that allows us to see it not as a threat, not as some kind of loss, not as an attack that deprives us of our happiness, but as a step to God, and to the salvation of the world.

When the Course tells us, as it did in earlier lessons, that forgiveness offers everything we want, that forgiveness is the key to happiness, we cannot at first understand. We are confused by the message because we do not see unforgiveness as a major problem in our lives. The lesson recognizes this:

*Certain it is that all distress does not appear to be but unforgiveness. Yet that is the content underneath the form. (4:1–2)*

The consistent direction of the Course's instruction is towards helping us to recognize, in all the wide variety of forms of distress in our lives, this same underlying content. Gradually, as we study the Course and apply it to our daily lives, we begin to recognize the one, unique problem that besets us, whatever form it may appear to take: unforgiveness. Forgiveness is the answer to every problem, the "hidden" lesson in every distressing event of our lives.

I am not saying that you had a flat tire because you got angry at the grocery clerk, nor that you suffer lack of success in your relationships because you haven't forgiven your mother or father. Although sometimes such things may be true, the lesson God is trying to teach us is more far-reaching than that. What ultimately must be corrected is our unforgiveness of everything and everyone in the world, everything that appears to be outside of our own minds. Our general attitude towards the world is at issue here.

When I first read this lesson, I thought it was saying that whenever something went wrong in my life I had to start searching my heart for what or whom I had not forgiven. Often that search was just as frustrating as trying to figure out "What is the lesson in this?" I went through a period in which, one by one, I dug up every imaginable grievance I had against anyone, and tried to let it go. That can be a useful exercise, but it is only scratching the surface of what real forgiveness means. Forgiveness is aimed at transforming my perception of everything I see.

What does the Course mean by unforgiveness, or misperception? Hear this very clear definition, and let it sink into your awareness:

*How can you tell when you are seeing wrong, or someone else is failing to perceive the lesson he should learn? Does pain seem real in the perception? If it does, be sure the lesson is not learned. And there remains an unforgiveness hiding in the mind that sees the pain through eyes the mind directs. (7:1–4)*

“Does pain seem real in the perception?” That is the sure indicator of unforgiveness, as the Course understands it. Remember that difficult Workbook lesson about choosing the joy of God instead of pain (Lesson 190)? Forgiveness is the answer. What is forgiven no longer hurts. In response to the question “How can you tell when you have really forgiven someone?” someone once said, “You know you have forgiven someone when you feel comfortable in their presence.” That is saying the same thing; when you have forgiven, there is no more pain. Another way of picturing it is that you are free to laugh with the person. God’s Will is that laughter should replace all tears (9:4–5).

Forgiveness is what time was made for (10:4). This is where our attention is best focused. This is what speeds us on the way to Heaven. In our quiet practice times, we can “think about all things we saved to settle by ourselves, and kept apart from healing” (11:4). We do not know how to look on them so that they disappear, but the Holy Spirit knows; give them to Him. We are even advised to stop every hour, review the hour that has passed, and bring each little grievance to Him for healing, so that it does not carry over into the hour that follows. “Let no one hour cast its shadow on the one that follows” (12:4). This is the way we learn to “remain unbound, in peace eternal in the world of time” (12:5).