

LESSON 194 • JULY 13

“I place the future in the Hands of God.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: To accept today’s idea, and so pass countless obstacles and set your foot on the lawns before the gate of Heaven. This is the last of the Workbook’s giant strides.

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

Today again there are no specific practice instructions for morning and evening. I would suggest beginning by going through the various situations that are causing you concern (see W-pI.47.4-5) and, with each one, repeating, “*I place the future in the Hands of God.*” Then, after about ten minutes of this, spend the rest of your time in meditation, resting untroubled in God’s Hands, sure that only good can come to you.

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

Review the happenings of the previous hour that are still weighing on you, and with each one, release the pain it appears to thrust on you by repeating, “*I place the future in the Hands of God.*”

Response to temptation: Whenever you feel tempted to become upset.

Quickly react by repeating today’s idea, realizing that this is an appeal to God to choose for you to abandon temptation. And as you leave temptation behind, the world does as well.

Remarks: If you really see the value in today’s idea, you’ll give consistent effort to making it part of your thinking, both today and afterward. Do your utmost to make it a rule of thought, “a habit in your problem-solving repertoire” (6:2), a key device in your response-to-temptation toolkit.

Commentary

The block to remembering our Self that is dealt with in today’s lesson is the “fear of future pain” (7:6). Again, the holy instant is a major part of the remedy. All the references to “in no one instant” (3:1; 3:2; 3:3) and “the instant in which time escapes the bondage of illusions” (5:2) are indirect references to the holy instant, which is directly referred to in 5:3: “Then is each instant which was slave to time transformed into a holy instant.”

The idea is a simple one: placing the future into God’s Hands. Yet it is referred to as another “giant stride” toward quick salvation (1:1; the other “giant strides” were in lessons 61, 66, 94, and 135). This giant stride is said to take us all the way to the lawns that welcome us to Heaven’s gate. It is the remedy for anxiety, pits of hell, depression, thoughts of sin, and guilt. How can this simple idea be so powerful?

Think, for a moment, how your life and your mental attitude would change if you deeply and fully knew—not just *believed* but *knew*—that your future was wholly in the Hands of a loving God. Isn’t it fairly easy to see how this would remove anxiety, fears of hell, depression, temptation, and even guilt? Simple as it is, this is an extremely powerful idea, and a powerful one to practice.

Once again we are not expected to suddenly shift from a state of near-constant anxiety (Ernest Becker, in his book *The Denial of Death*,¹ refers to man’s so-called normal state as one in which there is “the rumble of panic underneath everything”) to one of blissful trust in God. We are being asked to practice having *instants* of such trust, free of panic. For a moment, just for a moment, “let the future go, and place it in God’s Hands” (4:5). In so doing, we will understand that by

¹. Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: Free Press, 1997).

doing this we have given past and present to God as well. In that holy instant we will be free of grief and misery, pain and loss. The light within us will be free to shine and bless the world.

In any particular instant, when we take that instant for itself, without past or future, we cannot feel depression, experience pain, or perceive loss; nor can we experience sorrow, or even die (3:1–3). Every such experience depends on our awareness of the past or future to sustain it and give it the illusion of reality, but none of them exist in the present moment.

Take grief, for instance. Grief is so clearly based on the past that it hardly requires explanation to say that if the past were momentarily put out of our minds, grief would vanish. The mind is calling up memories of our loved one, and then insisting that the absence of that loved one now demands emotional pain. Yet when the loved one was part of our life, there were thousands of moments in which they were not physically present with us, and we were still happy; why, then, cannot we be happy now? Grief is really nothing more than a cruel mental trick we are playing on ourselves. The future enters into grief because we envision an endless string of moments that lack the beloved. But those moments are not now; again, it is a mental trick. Grief does not exist when we are wholly in the present moment, in the holy instant.

As we learn to give the future into God's Hands, one instant after another, we are released. "And so each instant given unto God in passing, with the next one given Him already, is a time of your release from sadness, pain and even death itself" (3:4). Note the similarity to yesterday's practice of applying forgiveness at the end of each hour to all that has passed in the hour, freeing the hour that follows. This kind of thing, says the lesson, needs to become "a thought that rules your mind, a habit in your problem-solving repertoire, a way of quick reaction to temptation" (6:2). That is what all this practice is about: developing new *habits* of spirituality that break the pattern of our deranged thinking, freeing us for a new experience. The more we experience, the more we will want it, until eventually it takes over our minds entirely.