

LESSON 195 • JULY 14

“Love is the way I walk in gratitude.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: To “learn to think of gratitude in place of anger, malice and revenge” (9:1). To let true gratitude replace our ungrateful attitude (in which we feel pushed about by the world) and our unloving gratitude (in which we thank God that we’re better off than others).

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

Again we are given no specific instructions. We are only told that today is a day for learning gratitude. This means replacing both our ungrateful attitude (see 9:3) and our unloving gratitude with true, *loving* gratitude. Unloving gratitude means being thankful because we are better off than others. This obviously involves comparisons, which are essentially competitive and therefore unloving. “Love makes no comparisons” (4:2). Loving gratitude thanks God for blessings that He has bestowed on everyone, not just on us. It also means being thankful for *all* our brothers, even those “who walk the way of hatred and the path of death” (5:2).

Given this, you may want to spend the longer practice periods trying, in some way, to replace your ungrateful attitude and your unloving gratitude with true gratitude. You may want to thank God for the items on the list below. According to the lesson, we should be grateful:

- “to Him alone Who made all cause of sorrow disappear throughout the world” (1:7)
- “to One Who offers you the certain means whereby all pain is healed” (2:2)
- “to God our Father that in us all things will find their freedom” (4:4)
- for “the sick, the weak, the needy and afraid, and those who mourn a seeming loss or feel apparent pain, who suffer cold or hunger, or who walk the way of hatred and the path of death” (5:2)
- “that we are separate from no living thing, and therefore one with Him” (6:1)
- for our brothers (7:2) and “for every living thing” (6:3)
- “that everything has earned the right to love by being loving, even as your Self” (8:6)
- that “We have been given everything” (9:2)
- that “God has cared for us, and calls us Son” (9:5)

You can also thank God for specific blessings you have received, but you must choose to view these as windows onto the nonspecific blessings He bestows on everyone.

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 let each one go by repeating, “*Love is the way I walk in gratitude.*” Imagine yourself walking the pathway of love, without a care in the world, filled with gratitude toward your Father for the gift of everything.

Response to temptation: Whenever you feel mercilessly pushed about by the world.

Repeat the idea, replacing your exasperation with true gratitude, which is justified, since God has given you everything.

Commentary

Gratitude is viewed in this lesson both from a dark side and a light side. The lesson first considers how, so very often, when our thinking is aligned with our egos, our gratitude is really a kind of attack on others. Then, it goes on to consider sincere gratitude, which can only occur when joined with love (4:3).

The dark side of gratitude comes from an ego perspective. This is the “gratitude” that prays, “Thank God I am not as others; thank God I am better off.” It is the kind of gratitude based firmly on comparisons. It is the thankfulness we feel when we have a bigger house than others, a better car, a more attractive spouse. It is a kind of thankfulness that depends on others who have less, who suffer more than we do. It comes from a view that sees our brother as the rival for our peace (3:1), and rejoices when he is in distress. This kind of “gratitude” is really nothing more than a form of vengeance. And if we examine ourselves honestly we will find ourselves indulging in this kind of false gratitude far more often than we realize.

True gratitude is something far different. “We thank our Father for one thing alone; that we are separate from no living thing, and therefore one with Him” (6:1). “We offer thanks to God our Father that in us all things will find their freedom. It will never be that some are loosed while others still are bound” (4:4–5). This gratitude gives “thanks for every living thing, for otherwise we offer thanks for nothing” (6:3).

Today I am joyful that the gifts I have received belong to everyone. I am grateful for every living thing, every person I meet. I rejoice that everyone goes with me, that no one is excluded. I am grateful that each of you who reads this is a part of me, that none of you can ever lose your inheritance and so diminish me. I recognize that if anyone is diminished, I am diminished, and I thank God that “everything has earned the right to love by being loving,” for all is part of my Self (8:6).

Today, if I feel badgered by the world, or pushed about without any thought or care for me, I will choose to replace such foolish thoughts with gratitude (9:1–4). “God has cared for us, and calls us Son. Can there be more than this?” (9:5–6).

Another word for gratitude is “appreciation.” I offer you these thoughts about appreciation from the Course:

Only one equal gift can be offered to the equal Sons of God, and that is full appreciation. (T-6.V(A).4:7)

Only honor is a fitting gift for those whom God Himself created worthy of honor, and whom He honors. Give them the appreciation God accords them always, because they are His beloved Sons in whom He is well pleased. (T-7.VII.6:1–2)

There are no idolaters in the Kingdom, but there is great appreciation for everything that God created, because of the calm knowledge that each one is part of Him. (T-10.III.6:1)

God knows His Son as wholly blameless as Himself, and He is approached through the appreciation of His Son. (T-11.IV.7:2)

Only appreciation is an appropriate response to your brother. Gratitude is due him for both his loving thoughts and his appeals for help, for both are capable of bringing love into your awareness if you perceive them truly. (T-12.I.6:1–2)

In the holy instant we share our faith in God’s Son because we recognize, together, that he is wholly worthy of it, and in our appreciation of his worth we cannot doubt his holiness. And so we love him. (T-15.VI.2:5–6)