

## Lesson 207 • July 26

### Central theme:

**“I am not a body. I am free. For I am still as God created me.”**

### Review of:

**(187) “I bless the world because I bless myself.”**

### Practice instructions

See instructions in separate document.

### Commentary

All that I need is already within me. It is released for me when I release it to others, because in reality, there are no “others,” there is only one. We get caught up in questions such as “Do I forgive myself first, and thus release myself to forgive others? Or do I forgive my brother, and thus find forgiveness for myself?” and “Must I love myself before I can love others, or vice versa?” When we ask such questions we are trying to figure out a unified reality on the basis of duality; we can’t get a clear answer because the question is framed in the wrong terms.

To “accept His boundless Love for me” (1:3) and to accept that Love for others is the same thing, because all of us are merely fragments of the one mind we all share. There is no such thing as loving myself to the exclusion of loving others; that is not love at all. Nor is it love to “love” someone else and sacrifice myself on their behalf.

“I bless the world because I bless myself.” This doesn’t mean that meeting the demands of my ego benefits everyone else. Many people, in the wake of what ACIM teachers Hugh and Gayle Prather call “separation psychology” (in their book *I Will Never Leave You*),<sup>1</sup> think that loving yourself means such things as looking out for your own happiness at the expense of marriage partners and children. This is not what the Course is teaching here. The pendulum has swung from sacrificing yourself for the family or your partner (in the 1940s and 1950s) to sacrificing the family and partner for yourself (in the 1980s and 1990s). Both are mistaken approaches based on dualism.

“I bless the world because I bless myself” could be reversed, with equal truth, to read, “I bless myself because I bless the world.” Giving and receiving are the same thing; this is one of the major lessons of the Course, and, by its own admission, one of the hardest for us to learn.

“God’s blessing shines upon me from within my heart, where He abides” (1:2). The radiant and all-embracing Love of God is within me. When I turn to it, it engulfs me and instantly spills over to embrace everyone through me. Discovering that is what the Course is all about. “I am still as God created me.” I am still that love. How can I know that I am love without expressing it? Love, by its nature, extends to others and includes them in its heart. The marvelous discovery of my own nature as love cannot be made without the extension of that love to my brother. To bless myself and to bless the world is a single event. It is when I bless the world that I learn to love myself; and likewise, when I truly love myself, I become a blessing to the world around me. I need my brothers, not to give me what I do not have, but to be the recipients and sharers of What I am.

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1. Hugh and Gayle Prather, *I Will Never Leave You* (New York: Bantam, 1996).