

LESSON 29 • JANUARY 29

“God is in everything I see.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: “To begin to learn how to look on all things with love, appreciation and open-mindedness” (3:1). To see the holy purpose that resides in everything.

Longer: Six times, for two minutes.

- Repeat the idea.
- Then apply it to randomly chosen objects in your visual field, naming each one. Say, “*God is in this [magazine, finger]*” or “*God is in that [body, door]*.” Realize that you are not claiming that God is somehow physically in that object, but that God has assigned His purpose to it, a purpose which is part of Him. Remember your training in this practice. Start near to you and then extend farther out. Keep looking at each object until you are done repeating the sentence. And make sure you avoid “self-directed selection” (4:2), something that might be more challenging with this idea.

Frequent reminders: At least once an hour.

Repeat the idea slowly while looking slowly about you.

Commentary

The idea for today explains why you can see all purpose in everything. It explains why nothing is separate, by itself or in itself. And it explains why nothing you see means anything. In fact, it explains every idea we have used thus far, and all subsequent ones as well. Today’s idea is the whole basis for vision. (1:1–5)

Clearly, today’s idea is pivotal in the Course’s thought system, and not simply a nice, sentimental idea. Nor is it mere pantheism, which teaches that nature and God are the same. Elsewhere the Course clearly teaches, “There is no world!” (W-pI.132.6:2), so this is not saying that nature and God are identical. “Certainly God is not in a table...as you see it” (2:3).

As I see things, nothing means anything. A table is merely a table, a flat surface to eat on or play poker on. It has no eternal purpose; its purposes are all ephemeral. Seen like this, the table does not reveal God, but helps hide Him.

God is not in the physical table, but He can be seen through or by means of the table. If the table shares the purpose of the universe, it must share the purpose of the Creator of the universe. That purpose is our happiness, our joy, our completion, which is necessary to His. “Everything is for your own best interests. That is what it is for; that is its purpose; that is what it means” (W-pI.25.1:5–6).

“Purpose” is the key word in this and the last lesson. God is in everything I see because everything shares God’s purpose. My sight is a veil across the truth that shines in everything, but vision can shine through that veil if I allow it. The way I perceive, God is not in everything; in fact, He is in nothing. If mere physical sight were enough we would all have seen God long ago. We made our sight to obscure Him, but seen with the vision of Christ, everything can reveal Him.

Nothing is as it appears to you. Its holy purpose stands beyond your little range.
(3:4–5).

As I first read this lesson I was puzzled by the statement that the idea for the day, “God is in everything I see,” explained the earlier idea that nothing we see means anything. On the face of it, if God is in everything I see, it ought to give those things profound meaning; I would see them as

sharing the purpose of the universe, the purpose of the Creator. How can I logically proceed from “God is in everything I see” to “Nothing I see means anything?”

Finally I noticed a distinction that should have been obvious from the beginning: the distinction made between “seeing” or “sight” and “vision.” The Course makes this distinction quite consistently throughout, but because my mind still tends to think of sight and vision as the same thing, I failed to notice it here. “Sight” refers to our normal mode of seeing, our belief that what our physical eyes show us is real, instead of the result of a desire within the mind and the projection of meaning from the mind, imposed on what is seen. “Vision,” on the other hand, is another kind of sense altogether, virtually unrelated to the physical eyes.

Notice that the lesson says, “Today’s idea is the whole basis of *vision*” (1:5, emphasis mine). “When *vision* has shown you the holiness that lights up the world, you will understand today’s idea perfectly” (3:6, emphasis mine). It is vision that reveals God in everything; mere sight does not reveal Him. God is in everything I see, but sight does not show Him to me; that is why nothing I see means anything. “You do not see them [with vision] now” (3:2). God is there, but sight does not see Him; sight is overlooking the very thing that gives everything the meaning it has. We could therefore revise the earlier statement to say: “Nothing I see means anything, *the way I see it.*” Meaning is there but I am blind to it.

The world you see must be denied, for *sight* of it is costing you a different kind of *vision*. *You cannot see both worlds*, for each of them involves a different kind of seeing, and depends on what you cherish. (T-13.VII.2:1–2, my emphasis on the words “sight” and “vision”)

The idea that God is in everything is “the whole basis for vision” (1:5). It is the foundation for a “different kind of seeing” (T-13.VII.2:2). In order to see with vision I have to be willing to deny, or disregard, my current mode of seeing, which is limited to the physical and reports back to me only what my ego wants to see. If I recognize that God is in everything, yet I do not see Him with my eyes, there must be a different kind of seeing, and I will be led to desire it. I will ask for vision.

The lesson speaks of the “little range” (3:5) of our kind of seeing. Imagine, as an analogy, that God is only visible in the infrared part of the spectrum (of course He is not visible in any physical manner at all). Our eyes simply do not see infrared radiation, so even if it is present we see nothing. The range of physical sight is very narrow; there are all kinds of “light” we cannot see: infrared, ultraviolet, heat, radiation, radio waves, microwaves, and so on. God is in everything, but He is outside the range of our physical sight; we need a different kind of vision.

I think that in a sense the lesson is trying to arouse a certain discontent within us. It provokes the disturbing question: “If God is in everything, how come I don’t see Him?” It makes us aware of the limitations of what we have believed to be “sight.” It makes us aware of its limited range, and evokes within us the desire for a new kind of vision that sees beyond this limited range, and sees the purpose of the universe in everything.

Tomorrow’s lesson will continue to instruct us in finding vision.