

## LESSON 332 • NOVEMBER 28

### “Fear binds the world. Forgiveness sets it free.”

#### Practice instructions

See complete instructions. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** Choose a situation in which you are experiencing fear. Then say:

*My fears about [person, situation, or event] bind [people involved].*

*My forgiveness of [people doing the screwing up] will set [people involved] free,*

*And will set me free, too.*

#### Commentary

Fear and unforgiveness are very closely related. Our fear, in the Course’s understanding, is rooted in our guilt. Our primal fear is of punishment for what we believe we have done wrong. Our belief in our sin produces guilt, and that guilt produces fear. The fear “binds” us. It is a restrictive emotion. Forgiveness, which undoes guilt, thus sets us free.

The belief in sin is the ego’s foundational illusion. All that the ego makes is illusion (1:1), and not reality. Truth, by its mere presence, evaporates the illusions of the ego (1:2–5). If there is an illusion of a wall in front of us, knowing the truth (in this case, there is no wall) enables us to “walk through” the wall. There is no need to attack the wall to tear it down; we just shine it away with the truth.

The truth about us is that we are guiltless. Forgiveness does not attack sin and guilt. It doesn’t have to. It just shines them away. Forgiveness invites truth to enter the mind “and take its rightful place within the mind” (1:6).

“Without forgiveness is the mind in chains, believing in its own futility” (1:7). When I am entrenched in my own guilt my mind seems impotent, unable to accomplish anything at all. I cannot believe in my own power because I am believing in my own weakness. The power of God, given to me in creation, seems non-existent. I seem to be frail, blown about by circumstances beyond my control. But when I am forgiven, I once again realize the power of my own mind. By owning my guilt and taking responsibility for it (realizing that I made the illusion of guilt and sin), I reawaken to the inherent power of my mind to choose, and I realize that I can choose again. And choose differently, if I wish.

When I *exercise* forgiveness, the realization of my mind’s freedom and power comes even more quickly. When I realize that the picture of sin I am seeing in my brother is of my own making, and that I can choose to see him differently—that this is entirely within my power, and not at all dependent on anything outside of me—I am reclaiming my inheritance as God’s Son. By my forgiveness I release the world from guilt. I have the power to forgive sins! I have the power to free the world from its chains, and that power is the power of forgiveness.