

LESSON 50 • FEBRUARY 19

“I am sustained by the Love of God.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: To internalize the idea that you are sustained by God’s Love, not by the things of the world, and to feel the protection, peace, and safety His Love brings.

Longer: Two times, morning and evening, for ten minutes.

Spend these ten minutes repeating the idea and really dwelling on it and thinking about it. Let related thoughts come “to help you recognize its truth” (5:2). Do all this with the goal of letting the idea sink more deeply into your mind. Bask in the idea. Feel the benefits it carries for you. Try to feel God’s Love covering you like a blanket of peace and safety.

This is not a meditation exercise, but an extended exercise in mentally reflecting on the idea. Your thoughts will tend to wander during lengthy reflection like this. When they do, see those thoughts as intruders that have inappropriately wandered into the temple of the holy mind of God’s Son. Repeat the idea to dispel them.

Frequent reminders: Often.

Repeat the idea, not just as rote words, but as a real “declaration of independence” (WpI.31.4:2)—a declaration that you are free of needing to be sustained by the empty things of this world. Try repeating it once in this spirit right now, and see the effect it has on your mind.

Response to temptation: Whenever you feel confronted by a problem or challenge.

Answer what confronts you by repeating the idea. While doing so, remember that “through the Love of God within you, you can resolve all seeming difficulties without effort and in sure confidence” (4:5).

Commentary

What sustains me? What do I turn to when I feel empty or depleted? God—my eternal Source? Or something else? I have to admit that often it is to something else that I turn for renewal. What would it be like to have a habit of turning to the Love of God? What would it be like to come to rely fully on something so utterly and absolutely dependable?

The list of items in the first paragraph of the lesson contains something that fits nearly every one of us. Whatever my personal preference for “sustainer,” the whole bunch of them is just “an endless list of forms of nothingness that [we] endow with magical powers” (1:3). When we turn to them, something in us knows that these things are not really solving anything; they are nothing but palliatives, placebos that may dull the symptoms for a while but in the end cure nothing.

I think it was Saint Augustine who said that every one of us is born with a God-shaped blank in our heart. We may try to fill it with all sorts of things, but nothing fits the blank but the Love of God. We “cherish” the other things because we are trying to preserve our imagined, independent identity as an ego in a body. We are cherishing nothingness to preserve a nothing. Wholeness comes only from union with our Source.

The Love of God can “transport you into a state of mind that nothing can threaten, nothing can disturb, and where nothing can intrude upon the eternal calm of the Son of God” (3:3). [Note: a few early printings of the Second Edition had a typographical error, substituting the word “claim” for “calm.”] I want a state of mind like that. I want that kind of inner stability, that serenity of consciousness. What else could bring it to me except knowing that I am connected to an unending supply of bottomless benevolence?

The Psalmist said it well in the First Psalm. The “godly,” those who know they are sustained by God’s Love, “shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Ps 1:3). When you become inwardly aware of God’s Love sustaining you, it is like being a tree planted by a river, its roots constantly supplied by the water that is always there, always being renewed. Or from the Twenty-third Psalm: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want....My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life” (Ps 23:1, 5–6).

Put all your faith in the Love of God within you; eternal, changeless and forever unfailing. This is the answer to whatever confronts you today. (4:3–4)

Again the practice instructions tell us to “sink deep into your consciousness” (5:1). (Notice that it is for a ten-minute period, morning and evening; the periods of meditation are getting longer.) We are to “allow peace to flow over [us] like a blanket of protection and surety” (5:2). Often I find it helps me establish that sense by visualizing something—being bathed in golden light, being embraced by my spiritual guide, or sinking into a warm Jacuzzi. I can let it be a time of rest, ten minutes in which I simply let go, physically and mentally, and allow myself to experience peace. I tell myself: “I am okay. I am safe. I am at home in God. His Love surrounds me and protects me. His Love nourishes me and makes me what I am.”