

LESSON 86 • MARCH 27

(71) “Only God’s plan for salvation will work.”

(72) “Holding grievances is an attack on God’s plan for salvation.”

Practice instructions

Longer: Two times (once for each of the ideas), for about fifteen minutes.

- For three or four minutes, slowly read over the idea and comments (repeatedly if you wish) and think about them.
- Close your eyes and spend the remainder of the practice period listening for the message the Holy Spirit has for you. We can see this time of listening as having the following components:
 1. Listen “quietly but attentively” (3:1)—listen in stillness and with all your attention.
 2. Hold an attitude of *confidence* (“this message belongs to me”), *desire* (“I want this message”), and *determination* (“I’m determined to succeed”).
 3. Listening for ten minutes can easily be one big invitation to mind wandering, and so the majority of instruction for this exercise deals with this issue. For out-of-control mind wandering, go back and repeat the first phase. For more minor wandering, realize the distracting thoughts have no power and that your will has all the power, and then replace the thoughts with your will to succeed. Do so with firmness. “Do not allow your intent to waver” (4:1). “Refuse to be sidetracked” (5:2).

This is not mentioned in the instructions, but you may find it helpful to actually ask for the message, at the beginning and then periodically throughout. You may say, for instance, “What is Your message for me today?” You may even want to use this request as the specific vehicle for dispelling wandering thoughts.

Frequent reminders: Frequent.

Repeat the idea as a way of reaffirming your determination to succeed.

- First half of day: first lesson
- Second half of day: second lesson

Response to temptation: Whenever you are tempted to be upset.

Repeat some variation on the idea, modified to apply to this particular upset.

- You may use one of the three “specific forms” (W-pI.rII.In.6:1) suggested after each lesson. Notice how they are directed at a specific upset. Virtually every one is aimed at an upsetting “this” or an upsetting “name.”
- Or you may generate one of your own specific forms, by using a variation on the practice of letting related thoughts come. Simply lean back and let your mind come up with a sentence that applies the essence of the idea to your current upset. For examples, see the specific forms suggested after each lesson.

Commentary

I find it really interesting how the lessons seem to alternate between seeing grievances, and where we look for salvation. I’m beginning to get the idea, I think: When my ego wants to keep me from finding God’s salvation within my own Self, it distracts me with some kind of grievance outside myself. Seeing the cause of my distress outside, I naturally look for the solution outside. I seek salvation outside myself.

It’s never what is outside that is the problem. “Those whom you see as guilty become the witnesses to guilt in you, and you will see it there, for it *is* there until it is undone. Guilt is always in your mind, which has condemned itself. Project it not, for while you do, it cannot be undone”

(T-13.IX.6:6–8). What we are seeing out there, the object of our grievances, is only the projection of self-condemnation. We may change the name of the sin to protect the guilty (ourselves), but it is our sin we are seeing out there in the world. That is why seeing grievances *outside* keeps us from finding salvation *inside*.

As the review says, we have sought salvation in many different places and things, and it was never where we looked (1:3). We can't find it out there because it isn't out there, anywhere. There is no hope for salvation in the world—and that is *good* news. It's good news because we no longer have to depend on someone or something outside of ourselves to play its proper role, to arrive at the right time to meet our needs, or to do anything. We can let go of expecting someone else to save us, and we can turn to the only thing we can absolutely depend on: ourselves, our real Self. We can let everyone else off the hook we've been holding them on for our entire lives. We can tell the world, "You are no longer responsible for me. I no longer hold you accountable for my unhappiness. I've realized that is my own job, not yours."

I remember how odd I felt, but how happy, to tell my dear friend Lynne, years ago, "I've realized that I don't need you." She was delighted, being far wiser than I was at the time. I was afraid she would be insulted; how "unromantic" a thing to say to a partner in love! "I don't need you." She understood exactly what I meant, though. I was telling her that she was no longer expected to make me happy; she was no longer saddled with the unbearable burden of my happiness. Thinking that our love partner is responsible for our happiness is exactly what makes special relationships into hell, because when I am not happy, I have a grievance, just like in a labor union: "Hey! You're not living up to your part of the bargain. You're supposed to make me happy." And the grievance against our partner keeps us from seeing the salvation in our own hearts.

I've always liked the last line in today's lesson: "This calls for salvation, not attack" (4:4). It reminds me of the old line in the ancient Superman TV series (the one with George Reeves—guess I'm really dating myself here!). Clark Kent looks at some crime or disaster in progress, and says, "This is a job for...[in a totally different, 'super-sounding' voice] Superman!" Instead of looking at the events in our lives and thinking, "This is a job for the ego. Let's attack! Let's form and hold a grievance," we can look at the situation and say, "This is a job for God! Let's forgive! Let's respond with love to the call for love." When some need arises around me, which power will I call on: God, or the ego?

The choice is "between misperception and salvation" (4:2). The only alternative to salvation is something unreal, an illusion, a misperception. The only way I can avoid being happy is to misperceive my brother; if I see him or her truly, I will always find salvation. "By holding grievances, I am therefore excluding my only hope of salvation from my awareness" (3:4). What a silly thing to do! I think I'll stop!

"I would accept God's plan for salvation and be happy" (3:6).