

REVIEW IV INTRODUCTION

If you will recall, back in the Workbook introduction we were told, “The workbook is divided into two main sections, the first dealing with the undoing of the way you see now, and the second with the acquisition of true perception” (W-In.3:1). Although Part II does not begin for another eighty lessons, the introduction to Review IV announces that we are entering a transition stage of the Workbook, “preparing for the second part of learning how the truth can be applied” (1:1). Part II of the Workbook, if you will look at it, consists of lessons that are a half page long, or less. They give very few specific practice instructions, and offer us a great deal more latitude in exactly how we practice. They are geared to students who have begun to make the truths of the Course their own, and who are ready to apply them independently. This review gives us some preliminary exercises in that kind of independent practice. In Lesson 153, shortly after we complete this review, there will be a major shift in practice, as we shall see, which will set the pattern for the practice during the rest of Part I of the Workbook.

Therefore, following the practice instructions for this review is quite important, if we want to be prepared for what is to come. You’ll notice that the reviews give us nothing but the theme thought for the review and the two theme ideas being reviewed; there is no additional commentary. In a sense, we are meant to supply that commentary for ourselves. We are meant to take the ideas and let the Holy Spirit open their meaning in our own minds, without the prop of printed words to help us. “Let each word shine with the meaning God has given it, as it was given to you through His Voice” (7:4).

Perhaps you do not feel ready for this. I confess that when I first did the Workbook I pretty much lost interest after Part I; I did the lessons but really all I did was read them, think about them for a minute or two, and then forget them. The reviews such as this one seemed particularly pointless to me. Two or three sentences wasn’t enough to stimulate my mind, and I was not ready, apparently, to allow the Holy Spirit to “let each word shine” in my mind. You may find yourself in the same boat. Still, I would say, try to follow the instructions. Take the few lines given for each day, and ruminate on them. Chew them over. Think about what you know of their meaning, and ask to be shown more. If it works for you, try to initiate a dialogue with the Holy Spirit about the ideas. Turn them into prayers. Think how they can apply to your life. Be still before God and let the *feeling* of the ideas wash over you. Do whatever seems to work for you.

Maybe you won’t feel that you’re doing very well, but what is the purpose of practice, if not to learn to do something you don’t know how to do well?

Notice the theme thought for the review: “My mind holds only what I think with God” (2:2; 5:3). The instructions tell us to spend five minutes letting this one thought, and this alone, engage our minds, and remove all other thoughts. What we are doing is clearing the stage, making way for the Holy Spirit to teach us. The five minutes spent with this idea each day is our warm-up period. We are making ourselves ready to receive the thoughts of God, through His Holy Spirit. We are preparing ourselves to hold communion with God.

Only *after* this five-minute warm up are we instructed to take the two thoughts for review, and let their meaning illuminate our minds. There is no time limit given here; we are to review them “slowly” (7:2) and with “no hurry” (7:3). Surely this will be more than a few seconds! More like several minutes, at the least. The best way is to be able to do this review without concern about time; if we take five minutes or twenty-five, it does not matter. The important thing is that we commune with God, and let His Thoughts fill our minds. As the review says of our hourly review sessions, we should take “time enough to see the gifts that they [the two ideas] contain for you, and let them be received where they were meant to be” (8:2). The exact amount of time you spend is left to you.