

LESSON 125 • MAY 5

“In quiet I receive God’s Word today.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: To hear God speak to you, to receive His Word.

Longer: Three times (at times best suited to silence), for ten minutes.

Yesterday we were told that we needed no special instructions for our longer practice period. In keeping with this, we are told today that all we need is to still our minds. “You will need no rule but this” (9:2). The lesson, however, does tell us a little more than this. We can arrange its instructions into three steps.

1. Still your mind. Still your chaotic thoughts, meaningless desires, and all your judgments.
2. Go to that deep, “quiet place within the mind where He abides forever” (4:3), the throne of God within your mind, the quiet center.
3. Wait and listen. Once you reach that place of stillness in your mind, your task is over. You merely wait and listen, in confidence that your Father will come to you and speak His Word to you. Hearing this Word, of course, can take many different forms, from hearing actual words to receiving ideas, pictures, or just feelings.

During this time, you will need to frequently clear your mind of all those petty thoughts and desires that try to intrude. For this purpose, I suggest using today’s idea, or picking a phrase, such as “only be still and listen” (9:3). As usual, begin the practice time with a slow repeating of the idea.

Frequent reminders: Hourly, for a moment.

Repeat the idea. Realize that by doing so you are reminding yourself of today’s special purpose—to receive God’s Word. Then spend some time listening in stillness.

Commentary

All we are being asked to do today is to be quiet for ten minutes, three times during the day and for a moment each hour. Just to be quiet. “Only be quiet. You will need no rule but this” (9:1–2). “Only be still and listen” (9:3). “His Voice awaits your silence, for His Word can not be heard until your mind is quiet for a while, and meaningless desires have been stilled” (6:2).

Isn’t it amazing how much practice it takes to learn to be quiet? I can’t tell you how many times I’ve sat down to meditate and be quiet only to find myself, sometimes only a few minutes later, so distracted by some passing thought that I open my eyes and start to get up to “do something” before I’ve even realized what I’m doing. I plop back down in my chair muttering “Good grief!” to myself at the distractedness of my mind. Draw a deep breath, think to myself, “Quiet, Allen. Quiet. Peace, be still.”

The difficulties I have with being quiet, rather than standing as an insurmountable obstacle to me, have simply become indicators of how much I need this practice. Clearly, the Course is teaching us that a quiet mind is essential. “The memory of God comes to the quiet mind” (T-23.I.1:1). We can’t hear His Voice until we are quiet for a while.

The Course describes the voice of the ego in various colorful phrases: “senseless shrieks,” “raucous shrieks,” “loud discordant shrieks,” “the senseless noise of sounds that have no

meaning,” “frantic, riotous thoughts,” “raucous screams and senseless ravings,” “a loud, obscuring voice,” “a frantic rush of thoughts that made no sense.”¹

Our ego is a constant noise machine trying to cover up the Voice for God; we need to learn to still our mind, to cease to pay attention to the ego’s loudness. The ego is noise; the Spirit is quiet. There is merit, then, simply in being quiet, even if nothing else seems to happen. Let me, then, remember to take this time to be quiet, to be still, and to listen.

¹ References for the above descriptions of the ego’s voice: T-25.V.3:5; W-pl.49.4:3; P-2.VI.2:6; T-31.I.6:1; W-pl.49.4:4; T-21.V.1:6; T-27.VI.1:2; W-pl.198.11:2.