

Workbook Lesson Support Notes

by Allen Watson

LESSON 175 (REVIEW V)

June 24

"God is but Love, and therefore so am I."

"I give the miracles I have received."

"I am at home. Fear is the stranger here."

PRACTICE SUMMARY

REVIEW V

Purpose: To prepare for part II of the Workbook. To give more time and effort to practicing, that you may hasten your slow, wavering and uncertain footsteps, and go on with more faith, certainty and sincerity. Make this review a gift to Jesus and a time in which you share with him a new yet ancient experience.

Central Thought: "God is but Love, and therefore so am I." This thought should start and end each day, start and end each practice period, and be repeated before and after each thought to be reviewed. Each of these thoughts, in turn, should be used to support this central thought, keep it clear in mind, and make it more meaningful, personal and true.

Morning/Evening Quiet Time: 5 minutes—at least; 10—better; 15 even better; 30 or more—best

- Repeat and dwell on central thought and review thoughts.
- Let go of the words, which are only aids. Try to go beyond their sound to their meaning. Wait for experience, place your faith in it, not the means to it. If your mind wanders, repeat the central thought.
- Close with the central thought.

Hourly Remembrance: as the hour strikes more than 1 minute (reduce if circumstances do not permit)

(Suggestion) Repeat the central thought and the review thoughts slowly enough to see and receive their gifts. Spend a quiet moment with them.

Frequent Reminder: Take one of the review thoughts and surround it with the central thought ("God is but Love, and therefore so am I."). Use the review thoughts to keep the central thought clear in our memory throughout the day.

Response To Temptation: (Suggestion) When tempted, respond with a review thought, the central thought, or both.

COMMENTARY

Review Intro, paragraph 7, comments:

You know, from the way Jesus talks in the first sentence, it sounds like this is something he has

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experienced more than once! “My resurrection comes again each time I lead a brother safely to the place at which the journey ends and is forgot” (7:1). I’d certainly like to think that there have been more than just him; it would be disheartening if he were the only one so far. I think, today, that there have probably been far more than we realize who have reached the journey’s end with him. Sometimes we wonder why there seem to be so few in this world who seem to have “made it,” but if I think about it, it seems to me that “this world” is the last place we are likely to find such people! I’m just glad that Jesus, at least, has decided to hang around and be a “savior...with those he teaches” (6:5). (Actually the Course implies that there are others as well; see Chapter 26 of the Manual, “Can God be Reached Directly?”, first two paragraphs.)

There is something uplifting about the idea that when I learn, in some circumstance, the way out of “misery and pain” (7:3), that Jesus is “renewed.” Actually, of course, that is true of all of us; every one of us is renewed when a brother learns the way out of pain. Everyone we touch with a miracle enriches us when they receive it. Everyone on this list is renewed when we read of your account of your miracles; that is what makes the sharing so refreshing. My own walk with God is strengthened every time I realize that something I have said helped someone. The Course often says that those we help help us, that our brothers see in us more than we can see in ourselves; that is how we learn to remember what we are. So I thank you all! (This gives new meaning to the famous title of Jack Benny’s theme song, “Thanks for the memory!”)

Let me remember, today, that every time I turn my mind to the light within myself, and look for Him, Christ is reborn. This is how the Second Coming happens (see W-pII.9.3:2, in “What is the Second Coming?”). When we all have given our minds wholly to Christ the Second Coming will be complete. Each time I turn to the light within, I bring it nearer. Each time today that I remember, “God is but Love, and therefore so am I,” I hasten that day. Each time I choose to give the miracles I have received, each time I remember that my Self, and not fear, is at home in me, Christ is reborn in the world.

No one has been forgotten. I love Marianne Williamson’s line, “God hasn’t lost your file.” I like to imagine the hustle and bustle in the “heavenly office,” with all sorts of entities working on my behalf, all unknown to me. Planting little clues where I’ll find them. Arranging for me to meet the right people, stumble over the right books, and go through the experiences I need to go through.

But all of this needs my cooperation. The last sentence is almost paradoxical, stating that Jesus needs *my help* to lead me back to where the journey was begun. But it makes sense, for as the Course says all along, the one essential is my willingness. He *leads* me, he doesn’t force me. My help consists in being willing to follow, stopping now and then to listen for directions. And in doing the practice he gives me to do.

I notice that he is leading me backwards (!) to where the journey began, in order that I can make “another choice.” All of his work with me is to take me back to that moment when I made the wrong choice, so that I can make it differently. Nothing, then, is irrevocable. Even the pivotal choice that began the nightmare can be undone, and will be undone, and *has been* undone. He is leading us up the ladder that separation led us down (T-28.III.1:2). Each mistaken choice that I allow him to undo today is another step back up the ladder to the memory of my original state, to the memory of the fact that, “God is but Love, and therefore so am I.”

LESSON 176 (RV)

June 25

"God is but Love, and therefore so am I."

"Give me your blessing, holy Son of God."

"I am as God created me."

PRACTICE SUMMARY

REVIEW V

Purpose: To prepare for part II of the Workbook. To give more time and effort to practicing, that you may hasten your slow, wavering and uncertain footsteps, and go on with more faith, certainty and sincerity. Make this review a gift to Jesus and a time in which you share with him a new yet ancient experience.

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- Close with the central thought.

Hourly Remembrance: as the hour strikes more than 1 minute (reduce if circumstances do not permit)

(Suggestion) Repeat the central thought and the review thoughts slowly enough to see and receive their gifts. Spend a quiet moment with them.

Frequent Reminder: Take one of the review thoughts and surround it with the central thought ("God is but Love, and therefore so am I."). Use the review thoughts to keep the central thought clear in our memory throughout the day.

Response To Temptation: (Suggestion) When tempted, respond with a review thought, the central thought, or both.

COMMENTARY

Comments on Introduction, paragraph 8.

Our practicing somehow releases Christ to the world. Opening our minds to the Holy Spirit makes us available as channels to those around us. The Holy Spirit, of course, is "Him Who sees your bitter need, and knows the answer God has given Him" (8:1). One of the things that makes the Course so unique, I think, is the way in which it both acknowledges our "bitter need" and yet affirms that in reality we have no needs. It is as if He is saying to us, "I know that the world of pain and loss is only an illusion and nothing to be disturbed about, but I also know that, to you, it

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is very, very real, and I am ready to work with you on that basis.”

Quite clearly, we are being encouraged to develop a relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We review “together.” We devote our time and effort to them “together.” We are not simply individuals practicing some kind of mind manipulation; we are engaging in a relationship, a collaborative venture.

“Healing does not come from anyone else. You must accept guidance from within. The guidance must be what you want, or it will be meaningless to you. That is why healing is a collaborative venture. I can tell you what to do, but you must collaborate by believing that I know what you should do” (T-8.IV.4:5–9).

So we are reviewing these thoughts *with him*. We are not just mulling them over by ourselves, but listening to that guidance from within as we do so.

“And together we will teach them to our brothers” (8:4). Have you noticed how nearly every time the Course talks about the process we are going through, it ends up with some aspect of sharing or extension, some kind of giving what we have received to our brothers? The Course is not a personal path of salvation. Indeed it teaches there *is* no such thing as individual salvation, because “individual” is an illusion. We are not alone. We are not separate individuals who can be individually saved. We are part of a Whole, and when we begin to receive what the Holy Spirit has to teach, we *must* share it, because sharing is what He is teaching. We teach “by actions or thoughts; in words or soundlessly; in any language or in no language; in any place or time or manner” (M-1.3:6).

We share precisely because the Whole is not Whole until everyone is included. As Jesus is incomplete without us, we are incomplete without our brothers. We, like Jesus, may recognize the wholeness in ourselves and in so doing, recognize it in our brothers. The wholeness is already there, but unacknowledged and unrecognized. Our “ancient home” is being “kept unchanged by time, immaculate and safe” (8:8). We cannot lose it, but we *have* lost awareness of it, and that awareness is what we share with each other. As we begin to accept our own wholeness we become reminders to the world of the wholeness that is also theirs, and that we share with them. There is no “preaching” quality, no spiritual elite telling the rest of the world “how it is.” It is the happy communication that, “You are whole, as I am. I am as God created me, and you are as God created you.” We come to our brothers, not as superiors, but asking their blessing on us, acknowledging them as the holy Son of God, along with us.

“Your holiness is the salvation of the world. It lets you teach the world that it is one with you, not by preaching to it, not by telling it anything, but merely by your quiet recognition that in your holiness are all things blessed along with you.” (W-pI.37.3)

LESSON 177 (RV)

June 26

"God is but Love, and therefore so am I."

"There is no death. The Son of God is free."

"Now are we one with Him Who is our Source."

PRACTICE SUMMARY

REVIEW V

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Frequent Reminder: Take one of the review thoughts and surround it with the central thought ("God is but Love, and therefore so am I."). Use the review thoughts to keep the central thought clear in our memory throughout the day.

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COMMENTARY

Comments on Review V Introduction, Paragraph 9.

Four more days of this review; four more days of our "gift" to him. Of course, every moment we connect with our right mind, every moment we taste the one holy instant, is a gift as well. This paragraph has a wonderful flavor to it: our hearing his words; us giving them to the world; Christ working through us to save the world; walking together to God with him; taking the hand of our brother as we go. A wonderful connective energy, all part of a magnificent Whole which is our Self, sourced from God. The energy flows to us and through us, from us to our brothers and from

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them to us, weaving us all together in the divine fabric.

“For this alone I need; that you will hear the words I speak, and give them to the world. You are my voice, my eyes, my feet, my hands through which I save the world” (9:2). This is the real purpose of my existence and my experience here in the world. I may feel confusion, day to day, about my purpose and the form it is taking. I may have my doubts about those with whom my life is now interacting, wondering how in Heaven’s name they could ever be part of any divine plan. I may wonder the same about myself. But Jesus speaks in these words from the Course saying, “My only need is you. I need your physical presence to reach through you to the others who are lost in the illusion of bodies.”

How can this be? How, in the mess I find myself in, can this happen? I don’t know. But I believe that the Holy Spirit knows. All I can do is to make myself available, to be willing for it to happen. Let me remember that these thoughts of anxiety, doubt, lack of trust and sadness are all just forms of the belief in death, and let them go, placing them in His hands. Let me place myself in His hands as well, remembering that I am one with Him Who is my Source; I am Love as God is, I am the extension of His Being, as are we all. If I can believe this I am free.

Donna Cary has written a wonderful song, one of her many based on her experience with the Course. The chorus of it repeats over and over, “He’s asking me to give myself to Him, Calling me to give myself to Him.” The song speaks of the fear that arises when we hear this call. Can I say, today, “He needs me. He wants my hands, my feet, my eyes and my voice. Father, I am frightened, but here I am. Use me.” Let me be the instrument of His peace. Or, in the words of a Christian poet of the last century, Amy Carmichael:

*Love through me, Love of God.
Make me like Thy clear air,
Through which, unhindered, colors pass
As though it were not there.*

LESSON 178 (RV)

June 27

"God is but Love, and therefore so am I."

"Let not my mind deny the thought of God."

"I am entrusted with the gifts of God."

PRACTICE SUMMARY

REVIEW V

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COMMENTARY

Comments on Review Introduction, paragraph 10.

The practice of the Workbook is meant to induce, not just new thoughts and new permutations of thoughts, but an experience: "a new experience for you, yet one as old as time and older still" (10:1). How can an experience be older than time? How but in being part of eternity? "The holy instant reaches to eternity, and to the Mind of God" (T-15.V.11:5). "The holy instant is a miniature of eternity" (T-17.IV.11:4). These times spent in quiet with God are occasions when we step out of time and into timelessness; what we experience here is older than time, incredibly

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ancient and yet immediately present, always present.

We are experiencing our Self. “Hallowed your name. Your glory undefiled forever” (10:2–3).

These are words that sound to us (if our background is Christian, at any rate) as if they should be spoken of God. Yet here they are spoken of *you* and of me. What is it like to experience such a thing? What is it like to know yourself as One of whom these words can be spoken? I do not think words can convey it, although many have attempted to do so. What is required is an experience; then, words become unnecessary and even unwanted.

“There is a kind of experience so different from anything the ego can offer that you will never want to cover or hide it again” (T-4.III.5:1). That is what we are seeking in these quiet times. Not desperately or anxiously, not with concern or fear it will not come to us, but peacefully, quietly, trustingly. We cannot force it to happen, we can only “let” it happen. In this moment we can experience our “wholeness now complete, as God established it” (10:4). Once you have known your own wholeness, why would you ever again want to cover or hide it? Only the lie that what you are is something you do not want to know could have ever persuaded you to hide it. Outside the holy instant our Self is surrounded by a ring of fear; we shy away from approaching the Self because we have been tricked into believing that what we will find is fearful.

The time it seems to take to find the holy instant is not because it is mysterious and inaccessible; the time is only the measure of our fear of our Self. It takes this time to gently still our fears, until we are ready to find the Self that lies outside of time, older than time itself, whole and complete as God created It. This Self is the Thought of God. Our unawareness of it is only our denial of this Thought. Our experience of it is only the ending of our denial. The Self does not change, nor come and go. It IS.

In this Self we are “completing His extension in your own” (10:5). The creative extension of God is made complete as we, in turn, extend ourselves. The Love that made us flows through us to enliven others. We are practicing what we have always known; we knew it before the ancient truth seemed to disappear into illusion, and we will know it again. In the holy instant we know it now. And what we know is this: We are entrusted with the gifts of God. Our giving of them completes His giving. “We remind the world that it is free of all illusions every time we say: *God is but Love, and therefore so am I*” (10:7,8).

LESSON 179 (RV)

June 28

"God is but Love, and therefore so am I."

"There is one life, and that I share with God."

"Your grace is given me. I claim it now."

PRACTICE SUMMARY

REVIEW V

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COMMENTARY

Comments on review Introduction, paragraph 11.

The paragraph is once again about specifics of Workbook practice. I don't mean to belabor this point, but since I am simply following the content of this Introduction, the emphasis is really not mine but that of the Course itself.

The Workbook places a great emphasis on repetition of the ideas it presents. Repetition is one of the primary techniques for mind training that it encourages. If we are doing it as directed—and I am the first to admit that I am still far short of doing so—we will be meditating on this theme

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thought for a minimum of five minutes in the morning and evening, with up to half an hour each time being even better. We will be recalling it every hour, and using the theme idea, “God is but Love, and therefore so am I,” to frame the two additional thoughts we are reviewing for the day. This is not a radical or strange idea. Repetition of spiritual thoughts is common in many religions. I even ran into it in fundamentalist Christianity. A teacher at an evening class I once attended at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, in 1959, taught his students what he called Bible meditation. The general idea was to memorize verses from the Bible so as to have them handy in one’s mind, and to meditate on them all during the day—upon arising, as you walked from place to place, whenever you sat waiting for anything, riding the bus or the train, and again at night just before sleeping. He defined meditation as, “Sharing with the Lord His own Word, prayerfully, and with personal application.” This teacher claimed that such meditation had revolutionized his life.

It revolutionized my life as well. In time I memorized more than a thousand Bible verses. I knew entire chapters by heart, word for word. I’m sure that the practice is a good part of what took me, eventually, beyond the confines of fundamentalism.

I still remember one of the first times that I set aside time right before sleeping to meditate. I sat up for five or ten minutes, ruminating on the verses for that day, turning them into prayer, communing with God over them, applying them to my life. Then I fell asleep with the words still going through my mind.

The next morning, I woke up and lay in that half-awake state just before you open your eyes. And there in my mind, like a mantra, the words were still being repeated. I believed then, and do now, that they had been playing over and over like a tape loop in my mind all during the night. I woke that morning with a joyful burst of faith, realizing that I was truly feeding my mind with nourishing thoughts.

It is a wonderful thing to find the words of the Course springing into your mind spontaneously during the day, or as you wake up. But that doesn’t happen without a lot of repetition. Without practice of these thoughts, the tape loops running in our minds are something very different, because we have already trained our minds very well, but with the wrong thoughts. It takes a conscious effort, repeated choices to remember the thoughts for the day and to repeat them, to meditate on them, and to apply them to our lives. This is a course in mind training, and “training” means “training.”

When we enter wholeheartedly into the training, there will be results. “We will have recognized the words we speak are true.” So let us remember today, and often, that, “There is one life, and that I share with God.” Let us affirm to ourselves, constantly, every time we can, “Your grace is given me. I claim it now.”

Don’t be discouraged if you forget. I still forget often. But I remember more often than I used to. If you have done nothing more before today than read over the lesson in the morning, then if today you remember just one time during the day, or take a few minutes before sleeping, thank God. Try to remember today just one more time than yesterday. If, yesterday, you forgot entirely, then resolve today to remember at least once. Every time you remember is a great step forward. The paragraph we will cover tomorrow reminds us that the words are only aids, and the practice is just a means to produce an experience. Don’t make a ritual out of the practice; the experience is what counts.

LESSON 180

June 29

"God is but Love, and therefore so am I."

"By grace I live. By grace I am released."

"There is no cruelty in God and none in me."

PRACTICE SUMMARY

REVIEW V

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COMMENTARY

Comments on review Introduction, Paragraph 12.

Yesterday we thought again about the means of practice that we are being taught, the frequent repetition of the thoughts for the day. Today's paragraph reminds us that the words are only aids. Their purpose is simply to "recall the mind, as needed, to its purpose" (12:1). The purpose is in the experience, the communion with God experienced during the holy instants we spend. "We place faith in the experience that comes from practice, not the means we use" (12:2).

What is the purpose of the mind we are being recalled to? It is remembering Who we are, and

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sharing that with the world, reminding them of their true Self, shared with us. The repetition of words only brings us back to this memory of a Self that is in constant union with Its Father and Itself, His natural extension. The goal of our practice is to experience that state of right-mindedness, even if only for a brief moment. We are remembering that what we are is only Love, because that is all that God is.

The experience of the Self is what brings conviction (12:3). The words, “God is but Love, and therefore so am I,” or, “By grace I live,” cannot bring conviction or certainty. The experience of it not only *can* bring conviction, it *does* bring conviction. The goal of practice is to go beyond the words to the experience, to their meaning, “which is far beyond their sound” (12:4).

How does that happen? I can’t tell you; no one can. But I can tell you that it does happen. It won’t happen without practice. Practice does not make it happen, but it prepares the mind. It opens the door. It washes the mind clean with crystal pure thoughts, and readies it for the experience that is always there, always waiting. And in that experience, we find our rest.

INTRODUCTION to LESSONS 181 to 200

June 30 to July 19

There's both an Introduction and a lesson today, so you get two messages from me.

You'll recall that we have twice been told we're now in preparation for the second part of the Workbook. This Introduction is telling us a little more specifically how the next twenty lessons are meant to prepare us.

First of all, the overall goal is to strengthen our commitment and unify our goals into one intent.

The immediate goal of our practicing these lessons is *experience* of the peace, liberation and freedom that unified commitment can bring; holy instants when we have a foretaste of right-mindedness.

The method of making such experience available is a focus on the remaining blocks to it, with the intent of, even if just briefly, lifting those blocks.

If the *overall goal* is to firm up our willingness to commit ourselves more strongly to the Course's path, then obviously the Workbook is recognizing that at this point, about halfway through the Workbook, our willingness is probably still a bit irresolute, and our commitment less than complete. "You are not asked for total dedication all the time as yet" (1:2). There are probably a few of us that are quite relieved to hear that :-). I think it is likely that, if the Course is not yet asking for total, continual dedication at this stage, it would be unwise and counter-productive to be asking it of ourselves. We have to bear in mind those two little words, "as yet," indicating that "total dedication all the time" lies somewhere in our future; it is where we are being led. But we should not berate ourselves for not having that total dedication *now*.

What *is* being asked of us is to practice. The experience of the holy instant at this point in our spiritual growth is not expected anything more than "intermittently" (1:3). Notice how that idea is repeated several times in these three paragraphs. We are lifting the blocks "however briefly" (2:2). We aim to go past our defenses "for a little while each day" (3:4). We are practicing, each day, to bypass one major block to the awareness of love's presence, just for a short time. We aren't supposed to be worrying about making this our permanent mental state—not yet. It is the cumulative experience of these holy instants that will provide the motivation to make that total dedication; we aren't sufficiently motivated without that. "It is experiencing this that makes it sure that you will give your total willingness to following the way the course sets forth" (1:4). "Your motivation will be so intensified that words become of little consequence. You will be sure of what you want, and what is valueless" (2:5,6). "No more than this [little while each day] is asked, because no more than this is needed. It will be enough to guarantee the rest will come" (3:5,6).

In Chapter 13 of the Text we are admonished: "Be you content with learning." And as we progress through the Workbook we need to be content with practicing—same thing. Our experience of grace at this stage may still be intermittent, just a little while each day; that's OK, and we can be at peace with its being so. Just that little while each day will be enough to *guarantee* the rest will come, so there need be no panic nor discouragement. Just do the practice and full enlightenment will surely follow; that is the promise being made here.

LESSON 181

June 30

“I trust my brothers, who are one with me.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Purpose: To go past the special block of focusing on the sins of others, and so experience your own sinlessness. This will intensify your motivation and strengthen your commitment.

Morning/Evening Quiet Time: 5 minutes—at least; 10—better; 15 even better; 30 or more—best

- Let go your focus on the sins of others. Let go your focus on your past and future goals and beliefs.
- Have only one intent: to look upon your own sinlessness. Trust in this experience for which you ask.
- If you think of a brother’s sin, causing anger to block your way, say: “It is not this I would look upon. I trust my brothers, who are one with me.”

Hourly Remembrance: as the hour strikes more than 1 minute (reduce if circumstances do not permit)

(Suggestion) Do a short version of morning/evening exercise.

Frequent Reminder: (Suggestion) Repeat idea.

Response To Temptation: If a brother’s sins occur to you, say: “It is not this I would look upon. I trust my brothers, who are one with me.”

COMMENTARY

This lesson is not encouraging naive blindness to people’s flaws. It isn’t saying that you should unlock your house and car and leave your money lying in the street, trusting no one will steal it.

It is talking about looking *beyond* their errors and mistakes (their egos) to see their sinlessness. It is speaking of being aware of a person’s mistakes (and taking them into practical account), while at the same time looking past them to their perfect innocence. Not seeing the mistakes as *sins* to be condemned and punished. As my friend Lynne once said of a man who had previously been abusive to her, “I may love a rattlesnake, but that doesn’t mean I sleep with it.”

The “block” this lesson is helping us to lift (however briefly) is our focus on the sins of our brothers and sisters. The lesson is telling us not to look for what is wrong in people, but what is right. The point behind this is that, by focusing on the sins of others, we block their true Self from our sight, and thereby block the Self within us from our sight as well. If I cannot overlook the mistakes of my brothers, I cannot overlook my own. “Perception has a focus” (2:1). We need to change our focus. “Remove your focus on your brother’s sins, and you experience the peace that comes from faith in sinlessness” (2:5). That is the aim of these twenty lessons, remember: to remove a block and thus *experience* something different; in this case, “faith in sinlessness.”

As the Introduction said, we are not trying to do this for all time! (Not yet anyhow.) Not even for all day; just for a brief period. Do you have someone you feel you cannot forgive? How about trying to “practice” forgiving them, just for five minutes? Just for a brief period, be willing to let go of your judgments about them, to forget the past and to forget the future, and to look for the

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innocence in them, to see them as a holy child of God, deserving of His Love. How about trying, even for five minutes, just to be *willing* for this kind of experience? Don't worry about the fact that for the last month, or year, or however long, you've wanted to kill them; don't worry about the fact that ten minutes from now you will be fantasizing about how they will get what is coming to them. Maybe so. "How could this matter?" (5:1). The concerns we have about the past or to the future "are but defenses against present change of focus in perception" (5:3). If we can let ourselves experience, even for a brief moment, what it feels like to see past their sins to innocence, that experience will be enough to motivate us to go all the way.

I encourage us all to bear these instructions in mind, not just for today's lesson, but for all the rest of the Workbook. When you sit down for a quiet time, put aside how you felt just before, and don't worry about how you will feel afterwards. "We do not seek for long-range goals" (7:2). All we are looking for is the experience of an instant of release, because that is all that is needed. At any moment during the day we can stop and say, "This instant is our willing one with His" (9:7). That instant is all we need.

Somehow, we seem to think that we can shift from total egoity to immediate spirituality. We think that if we spend five minutes with God in the morning, the rest of the day ought to be totally transformed, immediately. Our resistance is simply too great for that to happen; we have *overlearned* the ego's lessons, and unlearning them will take some effort. The ego tells us that, "It isn't working," because we "forgave" our brother in those five minutes in the morning and spent half the rest of the day dreaming up ways to make him, or her, suffer. But something is happening; the ego is trying to make us guilty because it *knows* something is happening. Those five minutes when we lay our judgment aside bring us an experience of inner peace that we have never known before, and we know a good thing when we see it. Our motivation to forgive will grow, and grow, and grow. The experience of "surcease an instant from the misery the focus upon sin will bring" (7:3) will be such a relief that we will seek it again and again, until it grows to encompass our entire mind, all the time. All it takes is the willingness to practice.

LESSON 182

July 1

“I will be still an instant and go home.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Purpose: To go past your special blocks and defenses. To go home for an instant with the Child Who is your Self. This experience will intensify your motivation and strengthen your commitment.

Morning/Evening Quiet Time: 5 minutes—at least; 10—better; 15 even better; 30 or more—best

Be still. Let the world recede from you. Let valueless ideas no longer have value in your mind. Let the Child Who is your Self take you home. Stay with Him there, beyond all words, in perfect, silent peace, certain you are at home.

Hourly Remembrance: as the hour strikes more than 1 minute (reduce if circumstances do not permit)

(Suggestion) Be still an instant and go home with the Christ Child.

Frequent Reminder: (Suggestion) Repeat idea.

Response To Temptation: When tempted to take up your shield and sword to defend yourself, remember that this Child is your defenselessness and strength.

COMMENTARY

Another lesson about the holy instant. Notice how the thread about “instants,” “moments,” and “intervals” of stillness, quiet, withdrawal from the world, begun in the Introduction to this series of lessons and in Lesson 181, carries through nearly every lesson up to Lesson 200, the end of this series. It wasn’t until my third or fourth time through these lessons that I realized they were all instructions in consciously setting aside short periods every day and attempting to enter the holy instant. The themes seem to differ, but all the difference lies in which block to our awareness of love’s presence is being considered. The aim is always the same: a short suspension of that block, and the experience of a new awareness that comes when the block is momentarily removed.

The block being considered today is simply the temptation to find satisfaction, or to feel at home, in this world. We spend most of our lives in an attempt to adjust to the world, or to adjust the world to ourselves. It seems quite natural to us to try to be comfortable here, and we expend a great deal of effort trying to do so. This lesson appeals to us to set that effort aside, just for a brief while, and to recognize the childlike voice within us that is crying to go home—home to Heaven. We need to acknowledge that, “This world you seem to live in is not home to you” (1:1). And, recognizing this is so, to take time each day to allow this Child within us to “rest a while” (5:3) and, for “just a few instants of respite...[to] return to breathe again the holy air that fills His Father’s house” (5:4).

This lesson is perhaps the most poetically beautiful lesson in the entire Workbook. Some of you have heard, perhaps, the poignant reading of most of this lesson by Beverly Hutchinson on the tape, “The Forgotten Song.” It is hard for me to listen without tears, and I don’t bother trying.

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Tears are fine, but not enough; we need to hear the appeal and to act upon it: “Rest with Him frequently today” (9:1). “Go home with Him from time to time today” (10:3). “Be still an instant and go home with Him, and be at peace a while” (12:9).

The thought of this lesson has had a powerful effect in my life. Sometimes when I am feeling my lowest—dry, dull, and discouraged—just quietly closing my eyes and saying, “I want to go home,” is enough to break the spell and allow the peace of God into my mind.

Another passage, towards the end of the lesson, has had an equally powerful effect on me. “You have not lost your innocence. It is for this you yearn. This is your heart’s desire. This is the voice you hear, and this the call which cannot be denied” (12:1–4). When I remember these words, I seem to be always surprised at the soothing effect they have. I had not realized, until I repeat them, how deeply I was feeling that I *had* lost my innocence, how much the source of my depression was a hidden belief in my own loss of innocence. I suddenly realize that, yes, this *is* what I am yearning for; this *is* my heart’s desire.

If you can, right now as you read this, stop, and be still and instant, and go home with me. It is so easy to do. Why delay an instant longer?

LESSON 183

July 2

“I call upon God’s Name and on my own.”

PRACTICE SUMMARY

Purpose: To go past your special defense of valuing other gods, of valuing the idols of the world, and so experience the gift of grace. This will intensify your motivation and strengthen your commitment.

Morning/Evening Quiet Time: 5 minutes—at least; 10—better; 15 even better; 30 or more—best

- Repeat idea.
- Then sit silently and repeat God’s Name slowly, over and over again. Let His Name become the all-encompassing idea that occupies your mind completely. Let it become your only thought, your only word, the only Name of anything you want.
- If any other thoughts enter your mind, respond with God’s Name, and see it replace the thousand names you gave your thoughts.

Hourly Remembrance: as the hour strikes more than 1 minute (reduce if circumstances do not permit)

(Suggestion) Do a short version of morning/evening exercise.

Frequent Reminder: (Suggestion) Repeat God’s Name.

Response To Temptation: When tempted to value the little gods of this world, when tempted to cherish an idol, repeat God’s Name, and watch the idol become a nameless and unwanted thing.

COMMENTARY

God’s Name, as the term is used in this lesson and the next, symbolizes His Identity and our identity with Him. God’s name is not Jehovah, or Krishna, or Allah. Yet any of those symbols could be used to represent Him. When this lesson urges us to “repeat God’s Name,” what, then, do we say? The actual word we use does not matter; it is the concept of His Identity that is to be foremost in our minds. We might say the word “God” over and over, or “Father,” or “Divine Mother,” or whatever word best symbolizes for you the Identity of God.

The general practice outlined in this lesson is very similar to practices in Eastern religions of repeating the Name of God over and over, and the intent is very much the same. In the Eastern spiritual practices, this often takes the form of chanting. The Hare Krishna religion, for instance, gains its name from the practice of repeatedly and seemingly endlessly chanting, “Hare Krishna, Hare Rama,” which (I think) basically means “Praise Krishna. Praise Rama,” with Krishna and Rama being names of God. A Christian group I once associated with had a major emphasis on the practice of repeating the words, “O Lord Jesus,” for extended periods of time, with exactly the same kind of intent, and with often remarkable results. Although this kind of practice is not a major emphasis of the Course, clearly it is one means offered by the Course for helping us find the holy instant. The one difference I see here is that (in 5:4) the repetitions are meant to be *silent* and done “within your quiet mind,” rather than aloud.

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By focusing on God's Identity, we loosen the hold that all lesser names have on our minds. We counter the illusion of separation in recognizing the one Name that represents everything there is: "There is one Name for all there is, and all that there will be" (8:5).

Many results are attributed in this lesson to repeating the Name of God: it reminds us of our identity with Him (1:5); it invites the angels to surround us and keep us safe, recognizing the holiness we share with God (2:2); it prompts the world to lay down all illusions (3:1); it causes all idols to fall (4:1,3-4); it calls upon our Self, the extension of God that we are (5:1); it acknowledges God as sole Creator of reality (8:1).

We are encouraged, almost as an aside, to do this practice with someone else, sitting together in silence and repeating God's Name in our minds; this seems to have particular merit, for by it we establish "an altar which reaches to God Himself and to His Son" (5:4). This is the only place I am aware of in the Course in which meditation with another person is even mentioned, but it is a very favorable mention, and indicates there is some added value in joining with others in meditation.

The primary idea of the practice seems to be that the thought of God replaces every other idea in our minds, and if other ideas enter, we can respond to them with God's Name (8:3-5). Instead of praying for any specific thing, or any specific persons (all of which have names that distinguish them from everything else), we repeat the Name of God which includes them all. "No prayer but this is necessary, for it holds them all within it" (10:2). As we repeat God's Name we can alter our mental state to experience the gift of grace (9:1); eventually we come to a place where, "The universe consists of nothing but the Son of God, who calls upon His Father" (11:4).