

Commentary

ACIM[®] Text (CE)

Miracle Principles 25-26

Explanation of underlining, italics and footnote formats can be found at the end of the commentary. See also the note there on the effects of switching from the FIP edition to the Complete and Annotated Edition. Please note that the FIP and CE versions may differ in where paragraph breaks occur.

T-1.24-25

25. Miracles depend on timing.

Overview

The concept of timing has various aspects when it comes to performing miracles. Certainly, we need to be in the right place at the right time, which is possible when we listen to the Holy Spirit always. However, miracles also take time to unfold. If we want to become a medium for miracles, we need to dedicate substantial blocks of time for it to happen.

Notes on Principle 24

Miracles are acts of love, and acts of love sometimes demand a significant amount of time. We must be willing to invest the necessary time and ensure it is available for this purpose. In the following discussion, much emphasis is given to the ways Jesus (or the Holy Spirit) intends to save us time. This is not just to hasten our journey home, but also to make time available so that he can work miracles through our lives to awaken others.

² This is why you shouldn't waste time. ² I told you before that time would cease when it was no longer useful as a learning aid. ³ There is a way of speeding you up, and that is by leaving more and more time for me, so you can devote it to miracles.

The course advises against wasting time because we need “to dedicate substantial blocks of time” to offering miracles (expressions of love) to the world. Time, to the Holy Spirit, is useful only as a learning aid. When we've all learned our lessons no valid use for time will remain, so it will simply cease. The end of time can be accelerated, though. The more time we give to Jesus for miracles the sooner it will come, We need some way to reduce the time we spend on everything else., stuff that is unimportant as far as advancing our salvation.

3 The reason I direct everything that is unimportant is because it is no way to waste your free will. 2 If you insist on doing the trivial your way, you waste too much time and will on it. 3 Will cannot be free if it is tied up in trivia. 4 It never gets out. 5 I will tell you exactly what to do in connection with everything that does not matter. 6 That is not an area where choice should be invested. 7 There is a better use of time.

The answer is to allow Jesus to direct everything else besides miracles, and of course, he must direct miracles too. We may think we only need to consult our Inner Guide about spiritual matters, He wants to take charge of all the rest of our lives as well so that we don't have to waste our free will on it, nor our time. When we insist on doing it on our own, we waste both time and willpower.

We think we have free will when the fact is that we've trapped our will in trivia. Think how much time you spend bogged down in managing your life!

So then, Jesus makes us an amazing offer: "I will tell you exactly what to do in connection with everything that does not matter." We do not need to invest our power of choice in all the day-to-day incidentals. There is a better way to use time, rather than spending hours in comparison shopping, for instance. What is the better way? He begins to explain it to us in the next paragraph.

4 You have to remember to ask me to take charge of all minutiae, and they will be taken care of so well and so quickly that you cannot get bogged down in them. 2 The only remaining problem is that you will be unwilling to ask, because you are afraid not to be bogged down. 3 Do not let this hold us back. 4 If you will ask, I will arrange these things, even if you're not too enthusiastic. 5 I am not intruding on your will, but I am trying to free it.

This habit of asking Jesus to take charge of all minutiae will not come to us easily—we will need to remind ourselves to do it over and over and to learn from our mistakes. If we ask, he tells us, all the mundane details of our lives will just be taken care of seemingly without any effort on our part. We won't get bogged down by them. But at first, at least in my experience, establishing this habit of asking about everything will be a struggle.

Why? The truth is that our egos *like* us to be bogged down in trivia! If we listen to our egos, they will make us afraid *not* to be bogged down. The ego wants to control *everything*, and it knows that if we are freed from our constant anxiety about every part and parcel of our lives, we will discover the wonder of walking in the spirit. We'll drop our egos like a hot potato.

If we will only ask, even though we are not enthusiastic about asking, Jesus says that *he* will arrange these things! It will seem, at times, as though we are giving up our freedom of will. The truth is that our will isn't free now, and this practice will liberate it to accomplish miracles!

5 Prayer can be very specific in little matters. 2 If you need a coat, for example, ask me where to find one. 3 I know your taste well, and I also know where the coat is that you would eventually buy anyway. 4 If you do not like the coat afterwards, that is what would have happened anyway.

This sort of asking prayer "can be very specific in little matters." He uses an example of Helen's need for a coat. "Ask me where to find one," he tells us.

I'm going to deviate from my commentary now, and turn to Robert's comments in Cameo 6 (Page 1719).

Okay, back now to Paragraph 6 on Page 17.

6 I cannot save you more time than you will let me, but if you are willing to try the Higher Shopping Service, which also covers all lower-order necessities, and even quite a number of whims within reason, I have very good use for the time we could save.

The more decisions we give over to Spirit, the more time we will save that can be used in miracle-working. I love Jesus's sense of humor here in the phrase "the Higher Shopping Service." I've read stories or seen movies in which a wealthy person has a personal shopper, someone who shops on their behalf. All that person has to do is ask, "I need a winter coat for the trip I'm taking to Minnesota," and their "shopping service" goes out, finds the right thing, and buys it for them. Jesus is offering to be your personal shopper! He even says that this isn't limited to "lower-order necessities" such as clothing and food. It includes "even quite a number of whims within reason." Perhaps that could include things like a really good donut or...what are your whims?

The example in Cameo 6 gives us some idea of *how* this shopping service works. Obviously, Jesus isn't going to go to the store or place an online order for us; we'll have to do that. Jesus refers to Helen's thought process, thinking of going to Klein's, reconsidering, then "remembering" that a friend had told her about buying a similar coat there at a lower price, and this opened her mind to shopping there, where she found the right coat. Jesus was guiding her *mind* to lead her to the right choice. And that's how it will work for us. Ask His help, and he will guide our thinking without us wasting our time trying to make up our minds.

7 Remember, the specific answer you get depends on the specific question you ask. 2 The fewer limits you impose, the better the answer you'll get. 3 For example, you could ask, "Where can I find a particular brand of coat?" 4 Or, "Where is the coat I want?" 5 Or, "Where is the coat I should get?" 6 And so on. 7 The form of the thought determines the level of the answer.

The form of our question determines the level of the answer, and the fewer limits we impose, the better the answer will be. To ask for a particular brand of coat imposes a limit. A better question is, "Where is the coat I should get?" I know I could spend hours trying to configure the exact computer I think I need and want to do the jobs I believe I will use it for. How much memory? How much storage? How powerful a processor?

What ports does it need for external devices like disks, mice, trackpads, microphones, and video cameras? How much simpler to ask, "What computer should I get?" All the details will be handled by the Higher Shopping Service.

8 Do not get bogged down in distractions if they now arise. 2 They are reflections of old learning patterns, and arise because you do not like what I have said about leaving minutiae to me. 3 They merely illustrate your unwillingness to not get bogged down because you are afraid of the course. 4 So don't use them that way. 5 This course is about willingness, not unwillingness. 6 Unwillingness has to be replaced by willingness, because willingness is part of readiness, without which learning cannot occur.

So, in my example: Avoid getting bogged down in estimating storage needs for the computer, for example. That's how I used to do it, and I need to rise above those old learning patterns and leave the minutiae to Jesus. If I fall back into those old patterns, it is always because I'm afraid of the course! I am using the trivia of life to distract me from the spiritual path. I need to be willing and to remain willing, because that is the only way I can learn.

Consider this promise from later in the Text:

7 When you have learned how to decide with God, all decisions become as easy and as right as breathing. ²There is no effort, and you will be led as gently as if you were being carried along a quiet path in summer. ³Only your own volition seems to make deciding hard. ⁴The Holy Spirit will not delay at all in answering your every question what to do. ⁵He knows. ⁶And He will tell you, and then do it for you. ⁷You who are tired might consider whether this is not more restful than sleep. ⁸For you can bring your guilt into sleeping, but not into this. (T-14.V.7)

"...carried along a quiet path in summer." Imagine, all decisions being "as easy and as right as breathing." We breathe all the time without thinking about it at all! That's the way our entire lives can be!

26. A miracle rearranges the order of perception, and places the levels in their true perspective. 2 This heals at all levels, because all sickness comes from confusing the levels.

The levels mentioned here refer to the bodily level and the spiritual level. When we see ourselves as bodies we open ourselves to sickness, but when we perceive ourselves as spirits we are healed and whole. The spiritual perception puts spirit first and the body as secondary, which is the "true perspective." "All sickness comes from confusing the levels."

2 The reason for your difficulty with this is not that you doubt or distantiate or cannot believe. 2 It is more of a reaction formation against a pull which you recognize is so intense that you are afraid. 3 You think you'll be uprooted.

Jesus uses a couple of terms from psychology that were obvious to Helen but not to most of us.

Distantiate: means “to put or keep at an emotional or intellectual distance.” We do this when the priority of spirit over body seems “too abstract” or “disturbing.” We doubt the reality of spirit and the unreality of the body. We can't believe it. We think this “healthy skepticism” is our problem, but *this isn't the cause of our difficulty with the teaching!*

Reaction formation: This means “a defense mechanism by which a person at a conscious level condemns a repressed wish.” What is really going on is that accepting the unreality of our bodies and egos seems to threaten our very existence. We sense a deep, powerful pull to believe it, but we fear that to believe this means to be “uprooted” from our identity. So, in *reaction formation*, we *react* against that pull; we repress our fear. We *form* a defense. We cover it up with our pose of healthy intellectual skepticism, too smart to be fooled by wishful thinking, aloof, and above it all.

3 “Lord heal me” is the only legitimate prayer. 2 This also means “Lord atone for me,” because the only thing you should pray for is forgiveness. 3 You have everything else.

4 Now take this personally, and listen to divine logic:

- a. If, when you have been forgiven, you have everything else,
- b. and you have been forgiven,
- c. then, you have everything else.

5 This happens to be the simplest of all propositions:

- a. If P then Q
- b. P
- c. Therefore Q

If you are not familiar with formal logical propositions, we can expand that logical proposition for better clarity:

If P is true then Q is true.

P *is* true.

Therefore, Q is true.

All we need to pray for is healing, which means forgiveness. We don't need to pray for anything else, because once we have forgiveness we have *everything*. The truth, which may seem surprising to us, is that we have *already* been forgiven! Therefore, we *already* have everything. The only legitimate prayer, then, is to pray for the realization of our forgiveness.

5 Your real question is, is P true? 2 If you will review the evidence, I think you will find this inescapable. 3 I went on very personal record to this effect, and I am the only completely true witness for God. 4 You have every right to examine my credentials. 5 In fact, I urge you to do so. 6 It may have been years since you have read the Bible.

“Is P true?” Our only real question is, are we truly already forgiven? The inescapable evidence Jesus gives is himself, as seen in the Bible. He is the “only completely true witness for God,” and he has gone on “very personal record” to say that we are already forgiven. He urges us to examine his credentials in the Bible. This is why I chose last spring to teach a class about “The Original Teachings of Jesus.”

6 The purpose of the Atonement is to restore everything to you—that is, to restore your awareness of everything. 2 You had everything when you were created, just as everyone did. 3 Having been restored to this original state, you naturally become part of the Atonement yourself. 4 You now share my inability to tolerate lack of love in yourself and in everyone else, and must join the Great Crusade to correct it. 5 The slogan for this Crusade is “Listen, learn, and do.” 6 This means:

7 Listen to my voice,
learn to undo the error, and
do something to correct it.

8 The first two are not enough. 9 The real members of my party are active workers.

We already have everything. We need Atonement only to restore our awareness of that fact, not because we are guilty sinners. In fact, we never were guilty sinners. We don't actually *need* forgiveness. The Course says, “God does not forgive, because He has never condemned” (W-60.1:2). What we need is to *realize* our forgiveness. When we

realize our unity with all of God and God's creation, we have rediscovered our perfect innocence. We had everything at the moment of our creation, and we still do, along with all that God created.

We can be “restored to this original state,” the state of perfect Oneness with all that is, while still in this world. When that happens to anyone, they instantly become part of the Atonement, offering it to everyone who has not yet realized their forgiveness and oneness. We have become like Jesus. We share his inability to tolerate a lack of love anywhere, in ourselves and in everyone else. We join his Great Crusade to correct any lack of love anywhere.

How? How do you correct a lack of love? By giving love! To be intolerant of lack of love does not mean that you judge or punish those displaying a lack of love. When you know that you are forgiven and one with everything, you know that the only way to correct a lack of love is to offer love. That's what Jesus did. That's what God does. Therefore, that's what you do. When someone displays a lack of love, you don't see it as an attack; no, you see that love is lacking, which calls for love, and you offer love in response.

The slogan of this Great Crusade is “Listen, learn, and do.”

Listen to my voice,
learn to undo the error, and
do something to correct it.

His voice tells us, “You have forgiveness. Go, share it with the world.” He will tell us how to undo the error, and show us how to correct it. We must train ourselves to listen to his voice, the Voice for God within. We are learning to undo the lack of love in ourselves; that is a must before we try to correct the lack we may see around us, because miracles are always expressions of love.

It isn't enough to just listen and learn; we must become “active workers.”

7 The power to work miracles belongs to you. 2 I will arrange the right opportunities for you to do them. 3 But you must be ready and willing to do them, since you are already able to. 4 Doing them will bring conviction in the ability. 5 I repeat, “You will see miracles through your hands through mine.” 6 Conviction really comes through accomplishment. 7 Remember that ability is the potential, achievement is its expression, and Atonement is the purpose.

If we make ourselves ready and willing to work miracles, Jesus says he “will arrange the right opportunities” for us to do them. He will bring people who are hurting and needful to us so that we can express to them the love that we are and that God is. We're already able to do this. The power to work miracles belongs to us. But only as we make ourselves ready and will to do them will we be convinced that we have such a miraculous

ability. He reminds us of the first words he spoke in this Course: "You will see miracles through your hands through mine."

Our ability to work miracles is *potential*. When we express that ability, that love in whatever form, that is our achievement, the fulfillment of our purpose. The purpose is Atonement, the restoration of our awareness of and experience of Oneness.

Legend:

Light underscoring indicates emphasis that appears in the Urtext or shorthand notes.

The Text is taken from the Circle of Atonement's Complete and Annotated Edition (which I refer to as the "CE" for "Complete Edition" or "Circle Edition"). Please be aware that, even when the wording is identical to the FIP version, the division into paragraphs is often entirely different in the CE, which restores the paragraph breaks found in the original notes. This results in different reference numbering as well. I will indicate for each paragraph the corresponding sentences in the Foundation for Inner Peace (FIP) edition. You should be able to locate specific sentences in that edition if you need to, with a minimum of visual clutter in the commentary. References to quotations are from the CE unless another version is being quoted, in which case that version is indicated.

Footnotes by the commentary author are shown in this font and size. Other footnotes come from the Complete Edition itself.

Effects of Differing Editions of the Course

There were significant changes made in the CE, although for the most part there was no alteration in the meaning of the text, and the *Manual for Teachers* had far fewer changes. There are some changes in section and paragraph breaks and sentence structure that result in different numbering in references to the same text in the two editions. When there is a major difference I will indicate it with a footnote.

I have attempted for all references to add a separate FIP reference if it differs from the CE reference, but I may have missed some. If so, I apologize. Please let me know of any referencing problems you find.

I have also tried to edit my commentary so as to reflect any wording changes in the CE. For instance, the CE Text restored the plural use of "you" where the FIP had substituted the phrase "you and your brother." One such instance will illustrate the kind of change, significant in actual words but nearly identical in overall meaning:

FIP: Thus you and your brother but shared a qualified entente, in which a clause of separation was a point you both agreed to keep intact.

CE: You shared a qualified entente, in which a clause of separation was a point which you had both agreed to keep intact.