

## **What It Means to Be a Teacher of God**

Excerpts from the workshop held at the  
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*Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D.*

### **Part II**

#### **What Are the Characteristics of God's Teachers? Trust (M-4.I)**

We will begin with *trust*, which, as the Course explains, is the most important characteristic, because all the others are based on it. As we go through the characteristics we will see that the Course almost always describes them in terms of denying or undoing a characteristic of the ego. In other words, the ten characteristics are not so much positive in and of themselves—rather they are the negation or the denial of what the ego has made real.

An important line in the text—which actually is a principle that helps to clarify the Course's whole thought system—says that "the task of the miracle worker... [is] to deny the denial of truth" (T-12.II.1:5). This extremely important idea is expressed in many different ways throughout the Course, but this is the clearest and most succinct statement of it—our task is to deny the denial of truth. Our task is not to affirm truth. As the Introduction says, the aim of the Course is not to teach or explain the meaning of love. It is to help us in "removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence" (T-in.1:6-7).

So our task is not to affirm truth. It is not to keep saying how wonderful we all are, like a mantra. The idea is to look at the ego's denial of truth, to understand the ego's thought system, and then to say, "This is not the truth." We look at the ego's denial of truth, then deny that its denial is the truth. The ego says its denial of the truth is true—it says that God is not love, but that God is hatred, God is vengeful, and God is to be feared. And that is the denial of truth.

Of course we all have accepted the ego's denial as reality. And that denial is what sets into motion, as I mentioned earlier, the making of the world. The whole world is made as a defense against, and therefore as an attack upon God's Love. So we want to look at the ego thought system, which denies that God is Love, denies that we are children of love, and denies that everyone else is a child of love, and then say that it makes no sense. We do not necessarily do this by confronting the seeming enormity of the ego thought system all at once. That enormity is reflected in each and every choice we make to be angry, to be guilty, to be fearful, to be anxious, to be sick. And so we can look at the denial of truth that the ego has made real in each of these instances and say, "There is another way of looking at this." And that is the whole process of *A Course in Miracles*.

For example, if I have murderous thoughts towards you because I believe you have treated me unfairly, that is the denial of truth. My ego might say, "It is true—you do deserve to be murdered because you are so sinful, etc." But another part of me might say, "Not only do you deserve to be murdered, but I do as well because I deserved what you did to me because I'm so terrible." So the idea is that we simply

look at these thoughts and say, "This makes no sense." In other words, we do not take them seriously—and then they disappear.

So when the Course discusses these ten characteristics, very often it really talks about their opposite. A clear example later on is the section on *gentleness* (M-4.IV), which begins by talking about *harmfulness*. The truth is that God is gentle. The denial of truth is that God is harmful, that God is going to hurt us, and that we have to be harmful to protect ourselves. So we look at this line of thinking and we say, "This is silly." When we let go of the harmfulness of the ego, what is left is the gentleness of God. Basically, then, the ten characteristics are all the denial of the denial of truth.

The first and most basic characteristic is *trust*. Trust is the denial of the ego's denial of truth. The truth of course is that God can be trusted. The ego tells us, "Don't trust God. Don't go anywhere near Him because He will destroy you because of the terrible thing that you have done to Him." The ego has taught us not to trust in God's Love. And it has also taught us not to trust in the Holy Spirit's presence in our minds, because, the ego tells us, "If you get too close to the Holy Spirit, He will bring you back to God, Who will destroy you." The ego continues, "Don't trust the Holy Spirit. He tells you He's your Friend. He tells you that He loves you. He tells you that the idea that God is angry and wants to destroy you is all made up. Don't believe Him." And we all have believed the ego. We have accepted the denial of truth as true—that God and the Holy Spirit are not to be trusted, but that we should trust the ego instead. So when we speak of *trust*, we are really talking about looking at what the ego has told us—that we cannot trust God. And then we say, "But that's not true. I can trust Him." That is what these paragraphs are going to address.

**(1:1) This is the foundation on which their ability to fulfill their function rests.**

"Their" of course refers to the advanced teachers of God.

**(1:2-3) Perception is the result of learning. In fact, perception *is* learning, because cause and effect are never separated.**

This principle of cause and effect is a key one in the Course, so let me say a little more about it. On the level of Heaven, God is the first Cause and we, as Christ, are His Effect. If cause and effect are never separated, then we have never left God. And if we have never left God, then the whole separation thought system is wrong. The ego has told us right from the beginning that we did indeed leave God—that the effect has left its cause—and therefore that the separation is real. And because our leaving God constituted an attack on Him, God is angry at us. The principle of the Atonement, which the presence of the Holy Spirit in our mind represents, states that the separation never happened. It is just a silly, mad idea that has had no effect whatsoever. And so, in effect, the Atonement principle says that cause and effect are always one—effect has never left its cause. The ego tells us just the opposite.

The same principle of cause and effect applies to the world. The Course says, "Projection makes perception." In fact, it is stated twice (T-13.V.3:5; T-21.in.1:1). It means that I first look within and establish what is real. From the ego's point of view, I look within and establish that separation and guilt are real, and then I project them out. And then I seem to perceive outside me what I really have first perceived inside me. So if I feel guilty and separated, I will look out on a world in which I judge everybody else as guilty—obviously I am seeing a world that is separate from me. But the problem is not what I am perceiving outside me—that is nothing more than the projection of what is within me.

Therefore, I do not want to change the *outside*. I want to change my *mind*—that is where the problem is. In other words, I want to change what I learn within myself, which really means I want to change the *teacher* I choose. That is why the Course says that the process is simple—there are only two teachers in our minds. And the only choice we ever have to make is which teacher we are going to choose to learn from—the ego or the Holy Spirit.

Our problem is that we cannot tell them apart. The whole thought system and the practice of the Course is learning how to tell these two teachers apart. Once I choose whom I am going to learn from, I will perceive and experience the world—that is really what the Course means by *perceive*—I will experience the world through the lens of my teacher. When I learn from the ego, I perceive and experience the world of separation and attack. When I learn from the Holy Spirit, I experience the world as a classroom in which everyone—victims and victimizers, good guys and bad guys—are here to learn the same lesson: how to awaken from this nightmare dream. And so that is what "perception is learning" means.

**(1:4-5) The teachers of God have trust in the world, because they have learned it is not governed by the laws the world made up. It is governed by a power that is *in* them but not *of* them.**

When the ego is my teacher, I believe in the power of the laws that the ego's world was made by. And these are always laws of separation, attack, loss, pain, guilt, and death. When the Holy Spirit is my teacher, I look through His eyes at a world operating under another set of laws—the laws of forgiveness. This means that although I am not in control of what you do or what the world does, I *am* in control of the way that I experience it. Therefore, if I choose to identify with the Holy Spirit, I will feel peaceful regardless of what happens. That is the law of the world as interpreted by the Holy Spirit: No matter what happens in the world, I am not a victim because I am only a victim of my own thoughts. I cannot change what the world does, but I can change how I *think* about what the world does.

The laws of the ego that made up the world are the laws of victims and victimizers. Under these laws, I am not responsible for how I feel, because somebody else has done it to me. The Holy Spirit's law—forgiveness, which is the correction for the ego's laws—says no one is a victim in this world unless one chooses to be. At this point, the problem is not what the world has done to me—rather it is the way that I have chosen to look at what has happened.

And I recognize that this power of God is in my mind, but it is not of my mind. It is not of my ego mind, not of my split mind—it comes from God. And the Holy Spirit is the Presence of that love in my mind.