

## What It Means to Be a Teacher of God

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### Part IX

#### What Are the Characteristics of God's Teachers? Generosity (M-4.VII)

The major theme of this characteristic is the important idea in the Course that giving and receiving are the same. In the world's terms, of course, when I give something I no longer have it. In the Course's understanding of giving, the only way I can truly give is to give through the Holy Spirit, which means that I give love. And the more that I give love, the more I am sharing love and making love real, which means the more I accept love. So giving and receiving are the same.

Giving and receiving are also the same with regard to the ego, although with totally opposite content. The more that I give guilt away by projecting it onto others and attacking them, the guiltier I feel and therefore the more I receive guilt.

**(1:1-2) The term generosity has special meaning to the teacher of God. It is not the usual meaning of the word; in fact, it is a meaning that must be learned and learned very carefully.**

This theme—that when we give we do not lose—is highlighted over and over again in the text, workbook, and teachers' manual. In fact, from the Course's perspective, rather than losing what we give, the exact opposite is true: giving is how we receive. Similar to our earlier discussion that the characteristics of a teacher of God are not defined in positive terms, we really would not call a teacher of God "generous" as the world defines that term; i.e., someone who has a lot of money or time and gives it to a charity or devotes it to others.

From the Course's point of view that is sacrifice. True giving is simply giving of yourself and receiving of yourself. It has nothing to do with anything material or measurable.

So a teacher of God is not generous according to the usual definition of the word. A teacher of God is generous in the sense that what is being given is also being received, which has nothing to do with anything tangible or material. We simply let the Love of God and the love of our real Self extend through us to others—that is what we are giving. And, of course, there is no loss at that point.

**(1:3) Like all the other attributes of God's teachers this one rests ultimately on trust, for without trust no one can be generous in the true sense.**

I really cannot give unless I give from the Love of God within me, which means I must trust that the Love of God is my friend rather than, as the ego tells me, my enemy. Thus, as it says throughout this whole section, all the characteristics rest on trust. Once we trust in God's Love, all the rest follows.

**(1:4-8) To the world, generosity means "giving away" in the sense of "giving up." To the teachers of God, it means giving away in order to keep. This has been emphasized throughout the text and the workbook, but it is perhaps more alien to the thinking of the world than many other ideas in our curriculum. Its greater strangeness lies merely in the obviousness of its reversal of the world's thinking. In the clearest way possible, and at the simplest of levels, the word means the exact opposite to the teachers of God and to the world.**

What makes the striking difference between the Course's and the world's understanding of giving and receiving clear is that the world believes that the world is real and that everything is material and quantifiable. Thus, for example, I cannot be in two places at the same time, I cannot love two people at the same, I cannot give something and expect to have it still. This all makes perfect sense if we believe in the reality of the material world. When we recognize that the material world is simply an expression of thought and thoughts are qualitative, not quantitative, and that they can be shared, then the whole meaning of the term shifts. Then what I give is what I keep, because I am only giving to myself—there is nothing outside me anyway.

**(2:1-2) The teacher of God is generous out of Self interest. This does not refer, however, to the self of which the world speaks.**

The "Self" here is the Christ in us.

**(2:3) The teacher of God does not want anything he cannot give away, because he realizes it would be valueless to him by definition.**

In other words, if I want anything to keep for myself then I am making it real. And if I have it, that means you do *not* have it, which, again, is true of the world, but not of God. If I value anything of the world, I am using it as a substitute for God, and so it becomes an idol or a special-love object—something that I want and need. And if you have it, that means that I do not. And therefore I have to take it from you. But all that I really have and need and want is the Love of God. And if you do not have it, that means I do not have it because love is total. All the children of God must share in this same love. So it is not anything that I would want to keep for myself.

The original separation occurred when the Son of God perceived that he and God were different: God was the first and prime Creator and the Son was the created. The Son evaluated that difference and decided it was not fair: "God has something I don't have and I want it." And so the Son stole it from God, usurping His place. That is what is known as sin. But when we realize that God is only Love, which is what we are as well, and that there is no difference between us on that level, then there no longer is anything that we need or lack or feel we have to steal. But while I believe there is something I must steal, then I have to protect it to prevent your stealing it back from me.

These ideas about giving and receiving ultimately cannot be understood without recognizing their metaphysical basis.

**(2:4-7) What would he want it *for*? He could only lose because of it. He could not gain. Therefore he does not seek what only he could keep, because that is a guarantee of loss.**

In other words, what would he want to keep anything for? A teacher of God does not seek for what would be only his and no one else's. If I cannot share what I have and what I am with all of creation, it is not worth having. This is the exact opposite of what the world teaches.

**(2:8-9) He does not want to suffer. Why should he ensure himself pain?**

I would suffer and I would be ensuring myself pain if I were grasping at something and saying, "This is salvation for me." I would be excluding the Love of God, the only thing that can save me. And so from that point on, I would be reinforcing the ego's thought system, which is based on suffering, pain, and guilt.

**(2:10-12) But he does want to keep for himself all things that are of God, and therefore for His Son. These are the things that belong to him. These he can give away in true generosity, protecting them forever for himself.**

The term "protect" is not meant here as the ego uses it. Rather, it means that I ensure that I will always remember that I am a child of love by allowing that love to extend through me. When we get angry and attack, we clearly are giving up our love and peace. My anger at myself, my self-hatred—which is my guilt—is what I try to give away by getting angry at you, magically hoping that by giving you my anger and guilt I will be free of it.

It may be helpful to distinguish between what the Course means by giving away and what has been attributed to Jesus in the gospels. In one gospel account, Jesus tells a young man who has come to him that he should sell everything he has and give it to the poor. The common interpretation has been that Jesus meant material things. Now we do not know what Jesus really said or did not say in the gospels, but if we want to assume he did say something like this, then he could not have been referring to anything material. He really means we should give our *ego* away and follow him.

Jesus also supposedly said that it would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter Heaven. I think these words have been attributed to Jesus because poor people probably wrote the gospels, and I am not being funny about that. That would have to be the case. And, unfortunately, that passage has led to a tremendous separation between the rich and the poor, where the rich are seen as evil and the poor are seen as hopeless victims. This makes the world very real, and material wealth or its absence very, very real.

Embracing poverty is the same mistake as embracing materiality. When the Course talks about poverty and abundance, it is not talking about material things. Poverty is the ego state in which we have deprived ourselves of the riches of God. And abundance has nothing to do with the size of our bank account. Abundance refers to the Love of God that we have accepted as ours.