

What It Means to Be a Teacher of God

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Part VIII

What Are the Characteristics of God's Teachers? Defenselessness (M-4.VI)

To be defenseless obviously means to be without defenses. Remember, this started with the ego telling me my mind is filled with darkness, evil, and sin, and so it must be closed up tightly to protect it because it is so awful. And then I build a defense around it—the world—so that I never look at it again. The ego tells me I am not there anymore. I have escaped from my mind out into the world, which is the fortress around my mind. That is the defense. And as long as I believe I am guilty and sinful, I will be afraid of God's punishment, which means I will need a defense against it. When I can begin to let go of my investment in guilt as a way of keeping God's Love away, I will have less guilt and therefore less need for a defense against it. Then I will be able to begin the process of letting go of my defenses. Jesus was a perfect example of someone who could live in the world totally without any defense, because he had no guilt that had to be protected. Another definition of "defenselessness," then, could be "to be without attack," because defenses are attacks.

(1:1) God's teachers have learned how to be simple.

The ego's thought system is anything but simple—that is why the Course appears to be so complicated. But when we get to the bottom of what it is saying, the Course is really very simple. It seems to be complicated because the ego is so complicated. As the Course says, "Complexity is of the ego" (T-15.IV.6:2). It is the unraveling of the ego's complexity that appears to make the Course so difficult to understand. When it is crystal clear that everything about this world is the same illusion, then what the Course is saying is also very clear and very, very simple. The ego took a very simple truth—God is Love—and covered it over with darkness and sin. The ego then quickly complicated things by making up a world as a defense. And this world is very complicated.

From the dawn of our existence as *homo sapiens*, as we began to develop brains that could observe, we have tried to unravel the mysteries of life, biologically, physically, chemically, socially, psychologically, politically, economically. All we can do is try to understand this incredibly complex physical world and universe that we made. And by doing this, we fell headlong into the trap again, trying to analyze something that is not there—that makes absolutely no sense. The Course repeatedly tells us that what we are doing makes no sense. We are analyzing something that was made to trap and confuse us, to complicate everything. Truth is very simple. "We say 'God is', and then we cease to speak" (W-pl.169.5:4), because there is nothing else. The ego says, "There is something else. And I'm going to protect it. I'm going to make a world that comes from this something else. And I'm going to spend the rest of time—eons and eons—trying to understand and unravel the ultimate mystery of what life is all

about." And, of course, we will never do it. In studying the origin of the universe, scientists claim that they can get back to the split second in which the universe appeared. But they can never get beyond that split second, because that split second is guilt, located in a mind of which they know nothing.

Again, "God's teachers have learned how to be simple." Only defenses against the simplicity of God's truth are very complicated. The Course repeatedly says how simple it is. The last chapter of the text begins with a section called, "The Simplicity of Salvation" (T-31.1). It is very simple to say that only God is real, that only the Holy Spirit's presence in our mind is real. Everything else is made up—that is simple. And so the choice is always between illusion and truth, regardless of the myriad number of forms that illusion appears to take.

(1:2) They have no dreams that need defense against the truth.

The dream that needs a defense against the truth is the dream of sin, guilt, and fear. That is the original dream of being separate that has been locked in our minds and protected by the world as a defense.

(1:3) They do not try to make themselves.

That, of course, is what the ego always does. Our being here in a body, with a personal self—physically, emotionally, psychologically—is the ego making itself.

(1:4) Their joy comes from their understanding Who created them.

And we can add, from not being afraid of Who created them. It was not the ego who created me. It was God.

(1:5) And does what God created need defense?

Obviously, the answer is no. That is what Jesus demonstrated, as a workbook lesson says, "*the Son of God needs no defense against the truth of his reality*" (W-pl.135.26:8). That lesson was written at Easter time. It obviously is a reference to Jesus. But it also refers to all of us, since we are all the Son of God. We need no defense to protect us from Who we are.

(1:6) No one can become an advanced teacher of God until he fully understands that defenses are but foolish guardians of mad illusions.

The original mad illusion is that I separated from God—that is the ego's "truth" that I hide in my mind. From that point I have to be protected, for otherwise God will come crashing into my mind, where my sin is, and destroy me. So the ego very cleverly takes me elsewhere, into the world, which is now separate from the mind. And the world then becomes a defense where God cannot enter (W-pl.3.2:4).

(1:7) The more grotesque the dream, the fiercer and more powerful its defenses seem to be.

If we think of the original grotesque dream of having attacked and murdered God and Christ, setting ourselves up on the throne of creation, that is pretty horrid. So we need a fierce and more powerful defense, which is what this world is. Now hatred and murder are out there in the world, and not within my mind. That is the ego's defense. The horror of the battlefield in my mind dictates that it is either my blood or God's. A passage we will read later in the manual talks about "kill or be killed" (M-17.7:11). So rather than see that battle within my mind, I close it up like a steel trap and I make up a world where all the blood now spills. But it is no longer within me—I am not responsible for it.

(1:8) Yet when the teacher of God finally agrees to look past them, he finds that nothing was there.

The Course refers to the world as clouds of guilt (T-19.II.6). The clouds of guilt are really meant to obscure from us the light of God's Love and truth. When we finally agree to go past all the defenses of the world and realize they are all smokescreens, we will look within our minds and find that nothing is there.

(1:9) Slowly at first he lets himself be undeceived.

So this is a process—we do it step-by-step. The ego has told us that if we look within our minds, we will be struck dead. God is not to be trusted, the ego tells us. So we have to do it gradually, step-by-step, unlearning our fear of God's Love. Gradually we begin to build up trust that God and the Holy Spirit are our friends and we can turn to them for help. That is the value of asking for the Holy Spirit's help in the world even if it is something as limited and specific as getting parking spaces. The Holy Spirit does not literally get us parking spaces, for all the reasons that we have already discussed. But at least at the beginning stages, His seeming answers to our limited requests are helpful for breaking down our fear that God does not care about us, that God hates us. So we can at least begin to have the idea that the Holy Spirit does help us. Not that He is the one who finds us parking spaces. But the illusion that He finds us parking spaces is much more helpful than the illusion that He doesn't give a damn about us, that, in fact, He is going to damn us.

As "The Song of Prayer" pamphlet describes, "asking-out-of-need" is the lowest level of the ladder (S-1.II.2-3). Asking the Holy Spirit to do things for us in the world is the bottom rung, but we have to start someplace. And that is a helpful place to start—not because of the form of believing He finds us parking spaces, but because of the content, which is that we now are beginning to doubt what the ego has told us, that we cannot trust the Holy Spirit. So we are beginning to build up a relationship of trust that He will help us. And He will help us because He loves us. But because of our fear, we do this gradually.

(1:10) But he learns faster as his trust increases.

As I learn more and more that I can trust the Holy Spirit and God's Love, I become less afraid of going back home, which means I now go much more quickly.

(1:11) It is not danger that comes when defenses are laid down.

The ego tells me that if I lay down the world as a defense, along with all the defenses I have made real in the world, God will destroy me because I have returned to the mind where the danger is, where God's wrath is. So my learning process lets me see that as I let go of my defenses, I am not destroyed. Psychologists, for years, have played into the ego's fear, asserting that if we let go of our defenses, we will become psychotic.

In truth, when we lay down our defenses, we become sane—not psychotic. But if we do it too quickly, our ego screeches: "Don't get too close, because if you come without any of your defenses, God will destroy you." So we have to do it gradually.

(1:11-15) It is not danger that comes when defenses are laid down. It is safety. It is peace. It is joy. And it is God.

That is what we find when we finally open up our hand—not all the darkened thoughts of sin the ego told us we would find, not the bloodied battlefield on which God will destroy us. All we find is the peace and the Love of God. As we will see repeatedly, as we identify with and experience that peace and Love of God within us, it automatically extends through us. That is what is meant by saying that a teacher of God does absolutely nothing. As we let go of all the barriers and veils, the gentle Love of God simply extends through us.