

## Our Gratitude to God

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the  
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### Part XXIII

#### **"It can be but my gratitude I earn" (W-pl.197) (cont.)**

**(W-pl.197.4:1-2) It does not matter if another thinks your gifts unworthy. In his mind there is a part that joins with yours in thanking you.**

This is really the point of our discussion. It does not matter what your response is. If my response is loving and minds are joined, there is a part of your mind that has received it. That is the same idea I mentioned earlier in terms of healing. If my mind does not perceive you or experience you as being sick, as being a body, as being separate from me, and minds are joined, then your mind is healed along with mine. The healing has already occurred. You may not choose to accept it, but that does not mean that the gift has not been accepted on another level. It does not matter what you do with my gift.

**(W-pl.197.4:3-4) It does not matter if your gifts seem lost and ineffectual. They are received where they are given.**

They are given on the level of the mind, and they are received on the level of the mind. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the body.

**(W-pl.197.4:5) In your gratitude . . .**

The gratitude again is the gratitude that you are not separate from me. Remember the theme from Lesson 195 that we saw earlier: "We thank our Father for one thing alone; that we are separate from no living thing, and therefore one with Him" (W-pl.195.6:1). So my gratitude is that you and I are one. We are not separate. First I have the illusion of our being separate, which is the basis of the ingratitude I felt. Then I have the illusion that we are not separate, and I feel grateful for that. It is still an illusion that we are friends. The ultimate truth, of course, is that we are not separate in any way.

**(W-pl.197.4:5-6) In your gratitude are they [the gifts of love and peace] accepted universally, and thankfully acknowledged by the Heart of God Himself. And would you take them back, when He has gratefully accepted them?**

Obviously this is not meant literally. It is a metaphor. I realize that you and I are one and there is no one out there who has been attacking me. It is really myself I have been attacking: "It can be but myself I crucify" (W-pl.196). Likewise, I have changed my thinking and no longer feel ungrateful for you because I believe you are attacking me. I feel gratitude, because it was through that misperception of your attacking me that I can recognize it was myself I was attacking—that you and I are one. I am not only joining with you in the love of the Holy Spirit or the love of Jesus; I am also joining with the Love of God. That is what "the Heart of God" expresses. When this passage says that the gifts are acknowledged gratefully by the Heart of God Himself, it simply means that by my joining with you in love, I must be

joining with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and I must be joining with God. It is all one love; it is all one heart; it is all one mind; and there is nothing that is separate. Then Jesus asks us whether, given that, we would really want to take our gift back, when that goes directly against God's Love? Of course the answer is "Yes, I do want to take it back, precisely because it does go against God's Love, and I am afraid of God's Love."

Thus, when I feel the beginning signs of ingratitude again, and feel justified in not being grateful to you because of what you have done, what I am really doing is not turning my back on you, because ultimately there is no you out there. I am turning my back on the Love of God, and I am saying I do not want to be in the Heart of God; I want to be in the heart of my ego, which of course is the original ego mistake. The perfect way, then, of keeping me outside the Heart of God, a Mind that is totally unified in Love, is to keep myself angry, to keep myself separate, to keep myself ungrateful, and to feel perfectly justified in doing so. That is why I would choose to withdraw those gifts and say, "Why should I give you those gifts? Why should I throw pearls before swine? My love is too wonderful and too pure to be wasted on the likes of you." Obviously, what I am really saying is that God's Love is too wonderful and too pure to be wasted on the likes of *me*. I blot all of that out, however, and say it is *your* fault.

**(W-pl.197.5:1) God blesses every gift you give to Him, and every gift is given Him, because it can be given only to yourself.**

Again, this idea is absolutely crucial in understanding the whole thought system of *A Course in Miracles*. The gift I give you is the gift I give myself is the gift I give God, because it is all one. The gift I believe God gives to me is the gift I believe He gives to you, because it is all one. It cannot be that I can give something to you and not receive it myself. That is why the Course says giving and receiving are the same. What is really important is that if I believe you are giving me a gift of hatred and fear, I must be believing that is a gift I have given you; I must believe it is a gift God is giving me, because it must be the gift I believe I have given God. It cannot be that I give to you without having it given to me.

Remember, everything is the same; nothing is different, because it is all one mind. It is all an act, a drama that is being acted out in my mind. It has nothing to do with separate bodies. The ego always tries to fragment, separate out, say something is true there but not here. It is all one. So the way I perceive you is the way I perceive me is the way I perceive God.

**(W-pl.197.5) God blesses every gift you give to Him, and every gift is given Him, because it can be given only to yourself. And what belongs to God must be His Own [we are part of God; we are God's Own.]. Yet you will never realize His gifts are sure, eternal, changeless, limitless, forever giving out, extending love and adding to your never-ending joy while you forgive but to attack again.**

Jesus is describing what *The Song of Prayer* pamphlet calls "forgiveness-to-destroy" (S-2.II), which is also described both in the workbook and the text, but not by that name (see for example, T-30.VI.1-4; W-pl.126.1-7; W-pl.134.1-5). The idea is that if my forgiveness and gratitude are based upon what you do in return, and whether you accept my offering or not, then I will never know that God's gifts are sure, eternal, changeless, etc., because my gifts are not sure, eternal, changeless, or limitless. My gifts are always contingent. They are always based upon whether you appreciate them or not, whether you accept them or not. That is the way we usually give gifts-certainly the way we give psychological or emotional gifts to each other.

Whatever I am doing is reinforcing within itself when it comes from love, whether it is a job, project, or a relationship. In other words, I do not need anyone's gratitude or anyone telling me that it is wonderful-I know within myself that it comes from love, and so it is an expression of love. What the world or other people do with it is their choice, but that has nothing whatsoever to do with the choice that I have made. That is not how the world gives gifts; that is not how people usually work in the world; that is not how people live in relationships. The world's view is very much that what we do and say and how we feel about it is contingent upon what other people do in return. That would be false gratitude, false forgiveness, or false giving.

**(W-pl.197.6:1) Withdraw the gifts you give . . .**

My motivation for withdrawing the gifts I have given is that you have not accepted them the way I think they should be accepted-these were wonderfully holy and loving gifts and you should have given me that kind of appreciation!

**(W-pl.197.6:1) . . . and you will think that what is given you has been withdrawn.**

This, of course, is crucial. If I withdraw my gifts to you, it is only because I believe that God has withdrawn His gifts to me. And if I believe that is what God has done, I am denying that I am the one withdrawing my gifts. In other words, I tell God I am not going to love Him anymore because of what He has done to me. That is the original withdrawal of which I am accusing myself. That is the Course's version of original sin. Then I turn it around and it becomes that God has withdrawn His gifts-I believe God has moved away from me. In reality, I am the one who has moved away from God, but I forget that. All that I am aware of is that there is a difference now-there is a separation between me and God. I have forgotten that I am the one who moved away. I see there is a difference, a separation, and conclude that it must be that God has moved away from me. That is why I am not feeling so wonderful and peaceful and happy. It is God's fault! So I accuse God of loving me one day and kicking me out of His home the next day.

If that is what I believe, that is what I will relive over and over again. I will do that with everyone else. This is reflected in the common experience of abused and battered children becoming abusing and battering adults and parents themselves. They end up doing to their children exactly what was done to them. It is very common. That is exactly what we all have done. We believe we had abused God. We then deny that and believe God has abused and battered us. So we go out in the world and do the very same thing, feeling unfairly treated, feeling that we are the innocent victims of the world. We put on the face of innocence, because we have forgotten we are the ones who did it.