

What It Means to Be a Teacher of God

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Part III

What Are the Characteristics of God's Teachers?

Trust (M-4.1.) (cont.)

(M-4.1.1:6-7) It is this power that keeps all things safe. It is through this power that the teachers of God look on a forgiven world.

Now according to the laws of the world—which are where we have put our trust—certain things in the world protect us and keep us safe. Defenses keep us safe. Attack keeps us safe. Specialness keeps us safe by insuring through its laws that manipulating, cajoling, seducing, and attacking others will get us what we want and need from them. We hold dear all these laws that work within the ego framework. I get what I want from you in this world by making you feel guilty so that you will give it to me. Thus I believe that what keeps me safe is knowing how to control the world around me.

When we identify with the Holy Spirit and with His Love, we do not concern ourselves with questions of safety in the world. That does not mean, however, that we do not do what everybody else does, but rather that our inner peace does not depend on anything that is external. If I keep my mind focused on God's Love, I am always safe because my perception of danger and threat have nothing to do with the outer world. I perceive threat in the world only because I feel guilty over my separation from God and from the Sonship. It is because of that guilt that I believe I should be punished—guilt always demands punishment. All my fear and sense of vulnerability come from my ego thought system, which teaches me that I am guilty. Because I am so guilty and terrible and inadequate and sinful and wretched, I deserve to be punished.

Further, if some aspect of my guilt comes from my attack thoughts against you, I must then believe that you are justified in attacking me in return. And once I believe you are going to attack me in return, then I must believe that I need a defense against your attack and that I am not safe unless I have one. But if I choose to identify with Who I really am as God's Child and as an extension of His Love, there is no guilt, which means there is no fear and no threat of punishment. And I know I am perfectly safe.

Jesus knew this on the cross. Despite what the world would have said was a tremendous threat, he knew he could not be harmed because he knew Who he was. Despite what was being done to his body, he knew he was not his body. He had no guilt in his mind that demanded that he be punished, and therefore he did not perceive the world as threatening and punitive, despite what the body's eyes were seeing. The whole idea is not to believe the body's eyes because, just as with a puppet, eyes simply see what the puppeteer, or the mind, tells them they should see.

Almost any of us in the situation in which Jesus found himself on the cross would say, "I'm in great danger." And underneath that thought is the thought, "I'm in great danger because of the great harm that I have done." Our mind—at that point a mind of fear and of guilt—would dictate that the body should react accordingly. In other words, the body should be fearful and guilty, it should attack and it should be sick and injured and die. Since Jesus' mind was identified only with thoughts of love, his mind gave his body only a message of love. And that is why he says in the Course that the message of the crucifixion is: "Teach only love, for that is what you are" (T-6.I.13:2). That is what he taught—there were no thoughts of guilt, attack, suffering, sickness, or death within his mind.

And so that is what *trust* means. Jesus trusted that the Holy Spirit's Love is the Love of God and that he was that Love. At that point then, he knew that anything else—any other thought—was a part of a dream that was unreal. In the Course he does not ask us to learn or to teach that lesson in the same form he did, but he does say we should take him as our model. We should learn from what he taught us about how to be defenseless, peaceful, and totally loving, and how to feel totally safe and secure in a situation that to the world appears to be overwhelmingly fearful and threatening.

Fear, thus, does not come from anything external—fear comes from our own guilt. And trust means I trust in the love within me, that it will not punish or crucify me, but that it will protect me simply by being what it is. Because of this power—God's Love, or the Holy Spirit, in my mind—I look on a world that is forgiven. There is no sin within my mind that I have the need to project onto anybody else. In this sense, Jesus had no need to forgive anyone from the cross—nothing in him was attacking anyone. Forgiveness is merely undoing. To look on a forgiven world is to see a world in which there are no thoughts of sin or attack. What we see outside us is simply the mirror of what is inside, in our minds. So if I see only love within, then I will see only love outside, in the form of the correction or the undoing of the ego's attack.

(2:1) When this power has once been experienced, it is impossible to trust one's own petty strength again.

Once we have had at least an inkling of the experience of God's Love within us, every other thought that we have is totally undone. Even if we have the experience for only an instant, that instant will be enough—we will nevermore, one hundred percent of the time, believe in the ego. With just one experience of God's Love, we truly know, even for an instant, that we have been forgiven. Then no matter how much we may try in the future to block or screen out that experience, the memory will always remain within us.

(2:2) Who would attempt to fly with the tiny wings of a sparrow when the mighty power of an eagle has been given him?

The "sparrow" obviously is the ego and "the mighty power of the eagle" refers to the Holy Spirit. Those same images are used in the text: "Ask not the sparrow how the eagle soars, for those with little wings have not accepted for themselves the power to share with you" (T-20.IV.4:7). In this world, we are always asking the ego to tell us about God and salvation and happiness and peace, instead of asking the Holy Spirit, the presence of God's Love in our minds. This is the same idea: once we begin to allow ourselves to have the experience of letting God's Love be our safety in the world, instead of all the little things the world tells us will make us safe, it will be very difficult to totally trust the things of the world ever again. That does not mean that we will not go back and forth between the ego and the Holy Spirit,

or that we will not be tempted to rebuild our ego's life. But there will always be a part of our minds that has had the experience of God's Love that will be a reminder to us that when we let go of our investment in our egos, when we really let go of a grievance that we had been carrying around for years, we felt better. So when we are tempted in the future to hold on to a grievance, we at least now have a memory within us, within this lifetime, that tells us, "You know, I let go of a grievance one time and it worked."

(2:3) And who would place his faith in the shabby offerings of the ego when the gifts of God are laid before him?

A line in the text says that the Holy Spirit teaches through contrast (T-14.II.1:2-3). Any good teacher knows that contrast is always a helpful way to get a lesson across. And the Course, in one way or another, always uses the contrast between what the ego offers us and what the Holy Spirit offers us to make its point. Jesus' goal for us in the Course is that, with each situation that confronts us, we will be able to see the contrast in our minds more and more clearly over time so that we may recognize what the ego is really offering us. So if I really proceed with the tack that I am on—mainly that I am angry and I want vengeance—what will come from that is more guilt and fear, but certainly not peace, and *no* sense of safety.

But if I proceed—and this has nothing to do with the form, but rather with an attitude—without vengeance and without anger, and I am peaceful, then the Holy Spirit's offering to me will be peace. At that point, why would I choose the shabby gift of the ego, which would be discomfort, anxiety, fear, guilt, etc., when I can have the gift of God, which would be His peace? So the purpose of *A Course in Miracles* is to help us learn to differentiate between these two gifts all the time. And they are always the same—the gift of fear or the gift of love. And again, we are not talking about behavior, we are talking about an attitude.

So if we have an experience of this power and then feel that we are going back to trusting in our own petty strength, it would reflect a choice not to have the Love of God. It is extremely helpful, when we find ourselves tempted to be upset, angry, guilty, anxious, fearful, furious, sick, or whatever, to realize at that point we have devalued the Love of God and basically have said, "I don't want this." We have traded God's gift for the gift of the ego. This will manifest itself in our anger, guilt, fear, etc.—there are no exceptions to that. It is impossible to have a thought, an emotion, or a reaction that is not what we have chosen. Impossible, because no mind has the power to do anything to us, no body has the power to affect us in any way—unless we give that mind or that body the power. And that is the problem.

If I am upset, it is because I gave you my peace. Now most of the things that upset us are relatively trivial. If we could see that and then say, for example, "You know, I gave my peace of God away to this ten-year old kid who got me upset. That was the *peace of God* I gave away! I turned it *over* to him." That is nonsensical, but that is what we do. Or I am driving along the highway, blissfully sitting with God and feeling His Love, and all of a sudden I get annoyed at another driver. I have given up my experience of peace and love to that driver. Now if I could be really clear about what I have chosen to do, then it would be very difficult to justify blaming all the things in this world that I have held responsible for making me upset.

In a sense, we could boil the whole *Course in Miracles* down to just that teaching. We would do very, very well if we really understood that anytime we are upset, it is because we deliberately and

resolutely—even though we may not be aware of it—made a decision that we no longer value God's Love and peace. We place more value on being angry or sick or anxious. But because we chose the ego, we can just as easily change our minds back again. And so that is the meaning of "Who would attempt to fly with the tiny wings of a sparrow when the mighty power of an eagle has been given him?"