

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

Excerpts from the workshop held at the  
*Foundation for A Course in Miracles*  
Roscoe NY

*Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D.*

### **Part X**

#### **What Are the Characteristics of God's Teachers?**

##### **Patience (M-4.VIII)**

Patience is one of the more important characteristics of God's teachers simply because we all tend to be so impatient. Having made time, we then make ourselves slaves to it.

**(1:1) Those who are certain of the outcome can afford to wait, and wait without anxiety.**

This is telling us that when we find ourselves impatient about something, it is really because we do not trust in the outcome. Always. So we come back to the idea of trust again. If I am impatient, it is because I am afraid that if something I want does not happen right when I want it to happen, then it will not happen at all, or it will happen differently from how I want it to happen. And that is because I do not trust. I also believe that if something does not occur within the time frame that I have established for it, then something terrible will happen. I will be a victim of a person's coming late or a job not being finished on time, etc. All of this, obviously, is a subtle way of making the error real, making the world real, and believing that my salvation and my peace and my happiness depend on something external.

If I can truly identify with the Love of God as my identity and remember that that Love is eternal, then what difference does anything make in the world? Now that does not mean that within my specific role I do not do whatever it is I am supposed to do, but I can do it without anxiety. And if it ends up that it just does not get done, or others do not do their part, or something does not happen in the allotted time, that does not mean that I suffer as a result. I trust, knowing that my center and my source is not of this world. On that level, nothing outside me matters, because nothing outside me has the power to take away the love and the peace within me.

**(1:2-3) Patience is natural to the teacher of God. All he sees is certain outcome, at a time perhaps unknown to him as yet, but not in doubt.**

Now the "certain outcome" has nothing to do with anything material. The certain outcome is that we will all return home. The text says, "The outcome is as certain as God" (T-2.III.3:10; T-4.II.5:8), the outcome being our getting beyond our egos, awakening from the dream, and returning to the home that we have never left. That is certain, and what else matters but that? Coming late for an appointment, missing a deadline—how relevant are they to awakening from the dream and being back home with God? Only that is important. And that outcome is already certain—the Holy Spirit is already present and we have never separated from God.

The idea is to monitor our minds when we find ourselves getting impatient—impatient towards persons who do not learn as quickly as we think they should, or who are not working fast enough, etc. At that

point, we want to realize that we once again have devalued the certainty of God and the peace of Heaven, giving our peace to whomever we are feeling impatient towards. I am not upset because you are dilly-dallying. I am upset because I have not valued the Love and the peace of God—I have given it away and then blamed you for it.

.....

**(1:4-6) The time will be as right as is the answer. And this is true for everything that happens now or in the future. The past as well held no mistakes; nothing that did not serve to benefit the world, as well as him to whom it seemed to happen.**

Now this does not mean that people always make the most loving choices. As is obvious, the world demonstrates to us that this is not the case. But even the mistakes we make turn into learning opportunities, at which point they are not mistakes in a negative way. We all make mistakes. Being in this world is a mistake, a cosmic mistake—that is extremely important to keep in mind. So therefore we should not be upset because of mistakes. The fact that we are here, seemingly alive and breathing, is a mistake.

The Course is not saying that we should deny that we are here, alive and breathing. It is referring to an attitude that involves looking at things we have done "wrong" and realizing that was our fear speaking. But the Holy Spirit, the presence of Love, is still there within our minds, along with our fear, and He can help us look at our mistakes differently. It does not matter whether we are talking about something major, on the scale of the Holocaust, or something trivial, such as getting mildly annoyed at someone—everything has the same potential of teaching us that the ego's way of looking at the world is not correct. If we look at each situation properly, through the eyes of the Holy Spirit, then everything changes for us. And therefore there are no mistakes in the usual sense—they all simply become part of my learning process.

And that is what patience means. I realize that each and every moment holds salvation within it if I choose to look at it with the Holy Spirit rather than with the ego. And the form makes no difference. I may be in the process of getting really upset about something, doing all the things that upset people do—yelling and screaming and carrying on about all the horrible things going on around me. And in the midst of my upset, I still have the power within my mind to choose differently. At that instant when I do, everything disappears—everything that I was doing five minutes earlier no longer exists. So my mistake in taking an occurrence in the world seriously, and seeing victimization all around me becomes the classroom in which I am able to say, "This is what I am doing, but I want something else." My mistake then becomes holy, because it becomes an opportunity for me to learn something different. That is what this passage is talking about.

Patience then is understanding that, regardless of what is going on in the world-at-large or in my personal world, the lesson can be learned now and awaits only my deciding that I do want to learn forgiveness now instead of anger. And at that moment the whole past disappears. And so, since there is no time, the whole idea of impatience becomes irrelevant.

Sometimes people say that if the Course teaches that the whole Sonship has to return as one, then what about Jesus? He is stuck somewhere, waiting for all the rest of us. He is going to have to wait millions of years until we all change our minds. But Jesus is not in time, so there is no time in which he is waiting.

Since he is identified only with the Love and the certainty of God, there is nothing to be impatient about. There is nothing even to wait for. Within a world of time, words like "impatient" and "wait" have great meaning, but that is within the ego's world of time. Within eternity they are meaningless. And so as we grow in accepting the eternal presence of Love in our minds, we are enabled to become increasingly patient with ourselves and with everyone else.

Impatience can be understood in another way as well. If I am impatient either with myself or with someone else for not learning the process of forgiveness quickly enough, or for any other reason, I am really being confronted with the tremendous pain of my own unworthiness, my own failure, and my own guilt, and I do not want to look at it. And so my impatience is saying that I just want to get this over with as quickly as possible because the pain is too great. It is like sitting in a dentist's chair and, as the pain of the drilling is becoming too much, I just want it to be over as quickly as possible. And so the impatience I may feel about anything is really coming from my intolerance for looking at my ego, which obviously makes it very real.

Therefore, the way to get past my ego is to learn to look at it without being intolerant of it or impatient with myself. I want to be able to look at my ego without taking it seriously, to look at all the ugliness within myself—all the murderous thoughts towards myself and others—and just say, "Well, that's my ego, but I don't have to be afraid of it because there is another, gentle Voice inside me." That is the beginning of patience. I learn not to be afraid of the ugliness I think is real inside me, as I gradually build up the faith and the trust that beauty and love are inside me as well. And all I have to do is choose.

**(1:7) Perhaps it was not understood at the time.**

That is probably a mild understatement. That the past held no mistakes was most likely not understood at the time because I thought something terrible had happened. But the "something terrible" is simply my ego, alive and kicking, and making itself very painfully felt. But now I know that there is another presence in my mind that makes itself joyfully felt. And I can look through the Holy Spirit's or Jesus' eyes so that what I thought was so terrible is now seen as a helpful classroom.

**(1:8) Even so, the teacher of God is willing to reconsider all his past decisions, if they are causing pain to anyone.**

In other words, I am aware of having done something in the past that has reinforced another's guilt—that is what it means to be causing pain to anyone—or it remains a source of deep guilt within me because I am still making it real for myself right now until I change my mind. There is no past or future. It is all a made-up trick within my mind. So I always have the choice within the present moment whether to continue to hold on to my guilt, my sins of the past, and my fear of the future. And if I am holding on to them, then I must look at that choice, because that is a classroom that I have made real for myself. So I look at my past mistake—which the ego has called sin—with the love of Jesus next to me, and now it will look totally different to me.

**(1:9-10) Patience is natural to those who trust. Sure of the ultimate interpretation of all things in time, no outcome already seen or yet to come can cause them fear.**

The "ultimate interpretation of all things in time" is the Holy Spirit's. As the workbook lesson says, "All things are lessons God would have me learn" (W-pl.193)—that is the ultimate interpretation. Everything is a learning opportunity. Whether we are talking about Nazi Germany or a minor thing that happened

to me yesterday does not matter. That is the ultimate interpretation, and I am sure of it because I am sure of the Holy Spirit's presence within me. But if I am not sure of the Holy Spirit's presence inside me, that is a lack of trust. And if I do not trust His Love and His peace, I am choosing the ego, which locks me into the ego's interpretation of events.

.....

In other words, when I am sure of the outcome and I have no doubts that I am a child of God and have never left my Father's house, then absolutely nothing in this world can upset me. So then I perceive what seems to be going on in the world—whether it is my world or the world-at-large—as simply a part of the classroom that will teach me the lesson that at another level I have already learned. At that point any anxiety, impatience, or fear become irrelevant.

The key in this, as I have been repeatedly saying, is not to delude ourselves or to deny the fact that we are still learning this. In other words, simply to take this statement and use it to push down all of our anxiety and fear is not helpful. Our goal is really to know that nothing has any meaning other than as a classroom in which I learn again what I have already learned, but have not yet accepted. That principle then makes it easier to get through difficult situations. But I do not want to deny all the learning that I still have to do—I do not want to skip over steps by spiritualizing away feelings of anger, disappointment, anxiety, guilt, or any other feelings I may be experiencing.