

What It Means to Be a Teacher of God

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Part XII

What Are the Characteristics of God's Teachers? Open-Mindedness (M-4.X)

The final characteristic is *open-mindedness*. Basically, open-mindedness means that my mind is not closed to anything or anyone or any part of the Sonship. It is open-minded in the sense that "all things are lessons God would have me learn" (W-pl.193), *without exception*. All that I perceive outside me is part of the same Sonship of Christ that I am. So my mind is not closed to any forgiveness lesson, and it is not closed to any part of the Sonship.

(1:1-2) The centrality of open-mindedness, perhaps the last of the attributes the teacher of God acquires, is easily understood when its relation to forgiveness is recognized. Open-mindedness comes with lack of judgment.

And that, of course, is what forgiveness does. It undoes judgment.

(1:3) As judgment shuts the mind against God's Teacher [the Holy Spirit], so open-mindedness invites Him to come in.

My original shutting of my mind against the Holy Spirit was my judgment that I have sinned. I first made a judgment against the Son of God: he is a sinner and he is guilty. I then made a judgment against God: He is wrathful and vengeful, and therefore He is no longer a Being of perfect Love. From that judgment came my next judgment: the ego and not the Holy Spirit is my friend. And from all those original judgments the world came, along with all the judgments that go on here in the world.

(1:4) As condemnation judges the Son of God as evil, so open-mindedness permits him to be judged by the Voice for God on His behalf.

The original judgment was that the Son of God is evil and sinful because of what he did. And open-mindedness is like opening up my fist that I closed when I placed evil and sin in it. That was the judgment against myself. Open-mindedness is opening up to the judgment of the Holy Spirit, which simply says, "Nothing has happened. The innocence that you had as God's Son is still yours, and it has never been taken from you."

(1:5-6) As the projection of guilt upon him would send him to hell, so open-mindedness lets Christ's image be extended to him. Only the open-minded can be at peace, for they alone see reason for it.

When I project my guilt onto you as a symbol of the separated Son of God, my projection is damning you to hell. I am saying, "You're a miserable sinner and you deserve to be punished." On the other hand,

when I let go of all judgment of myself, then the image of Christ—an image of perfect love and innocence—extends through me to you.

(2:1-2) How do the open-minded forgive? They have let go all things that would prevent forgiveness.

This is another of those very clear statements of what the whole process of the Course is, of what forgiveness is. Forgiveness does not *do* anything. It *undoes* or lets go of what the ego has put there. The purpose of the Course is to remove the interferences to the awareness of love's presence. There are a few lines in one of the sections on special relationships that say the same thing: "Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. It is not necessary to seek for what is true, but it is necessary to seek for what is false" (T-16.IV.6:1-2). So we do not have to worry about finding God or the Holy Spirit or truth and love. They are already there. If we seek for Them, we are saying They are not there, and we have to find Them. That is what the ego tells us. So we do not seek for God or the Holy Spirit or truth. We seek for the interferences within our minds that prevent us from accepting the love that is already there. Our task is to seek and find the barriers we have built against love.

We forgive by simply looking at all the things that have stood in the way of forgiveness, things like judgment, attack, guilt, etc. And then we let them go by opening up that closed fist and saying, "I don't want to protect these anymore. I don't want to be afraid of them anymore. I don't want to feel guilty about them anymore." And then the light of truth shines them away.

(2:3) They have in truth abandoned the world, and let it be restored to them in newness and in joy so glorious they could never have conceived of such a change.

This is referring to the real world. It does not mean that the world will disappear. The world that disappears is a world of sinfulness, guilt, and suffering. That is what we abandon. And then the world is restored to us in a newness and a glorious joy. This does not mean that the world has changed physically. What has changed is that we now look at this world through eyes of light, love, and peace, rather than eyes of darkness, attack, condemnation, and suffering. So the real world is not a change in the world. It is a change in the mind of someone who is looking at the world. If we think of Jesus on the cross, his world did not change, the physical world around him did not change. But there was only light within his mind and so that is what he perceived.

(2:4-5) Nothing is now as it was formerly. Nothing but sparkles now which seemed so dull and lifeless before.

It was dull and lifeless because *guilt* is dull and lifeless, and guilt is really death.

(2:6) And above all are all things welcoming, for threat is gone.

All things are welcome because everything is seen as a classroom. So I do not say, "This is a terrible thing that's going to happen; therefore, I have to stop it." Nothing in the world is seen as a threat because I realize there is nothing in the world. How can I be hurt by something that does not exist? I can only be hurt by my belief that there is something that can hurt me, but believing that does not make it true. So, in a sense, this is another way of stating the Atonement principle: I am free to believe I separated from God, but I am not free to have made it happen.

(2:7-8) No clouds remain to hide the face of Christ. Now is the goal achieved.

The "face of Christ" is used in the Course as a symbol for forgiveness. It is not something that we actually see. We don't see the face of Jesus in someone. We don't see the other person's physical face change. What changes is the way that I look at your face. To see the face of Christ in my brother is really an expression of forgiveness. It means that I look at you through the eyes of innocence, and I no longer see you as guilty or sinful. And so you shine and radiate and look beautiful, not because of anything physical about you, but simply because I now see you without all the projections of hatred, guilt, and attack that I had placed there.

The "clouds," as I mentioned earlier, are frequently used in the Course as a symbol of the ego's illusions, and often specifically of guilt, as the "cloud of guilt" (e.g., T-13.IX.h) that hides the light of the Holy Spirit.

(2:9) Forgiveness is the final goal of the curriculum.

The final goal of *A Course in Miracles* is not God or Heaven. The final goal is peace. And forgiveness is the means of attaining that peace. So the curriculum of the Course is quite specific—it is a curriculum in undoing. Forgiveness undoes. The miracle undoes. And when we undo all the things that the ego has placed in our mind, only the Love of God is left.

The Course has a kind of basic formula: I see the face of Christ in my brother and then I remember God. To see the face of Christ in my brother is to forgive. That is the whole process. When it has occurred and is complete, the Course has completed its purpose. What remains is the memory of God, which now dawns on our minds. The memory of God is held in our minds by the Holy Spirit. In fact the Holy Spirit is the memory of God's Love in our separated minds within the dream. So when we have totally undone the ego's dreams, all that is left is the memory of God.

(2:10) It paves the way for what goes far beyond all learning.

And that is the Love of God.

(2:11-13) The curriculum makes no effort to exceed its legitimate goal. Forgiveness is its single aim, at which all learning ultimately converges. It is indeed enough.

The Course does not talk about love or teach love. That is not its goal. That is beyond what can be taught. What can be taught is how to undo what we have taught ourselves. We have taught ourselves the whole ego thought system, a thought system based on attack, separation, sickness, etc. And so we need another thought system that undoes that, that teaches us something different. Forgiveness does that. When forgiveness is complete and we have undone all that the ego has taught, then all learning disappears. Learning has now fulfilled its purpose, and what remains is the memory of God.

This completes our discussion of open-mindedness. The remaining part of this subsection is like a summary of the whole section.

(3:1-3) You may have noticed that the list of attributes of God's teachers does not include things that are the Son of God's inheritance. Terms like love, sinlessness, perfection, knowledge and eternal truth do not appear in this context. They would be most inappropriate here.

The focus here is on the undoing of the ego's thought system. And so the characteristics are really not the characteristics of Heaven. They are what characterizes living in this world in the absence of the ego's

thought system. When the Holy Spirit's thought system has totally corrected and undone the ego's thought system, all that remains are the attributes of Christ. But the attainment of those attributes is not the goal of the Course. Again, the goal of the Course is to attain what it calls right-minded thinking, which embodies the characteristics of the teacher of God. In other words, the goal is to teach and to learn forgiveness. When that process is complete, it wipes the slate clean and what is left are the characteristics of Christ: love, sinlessness, perfection, etc.

(3:4) What God has given is so far beyond our curriculum that learning but disappears in its presence.

What God has given is His Love, His Self, which is what we are as Christ. Once we have completed our learning and we see the face of Christ, everything of the split mind disappears. And what dawns on our mind is the memory of God. At that point everything else disappears.

(3:5) Yet while its presence is obscured, the focus properly belongs on the curriculum.

In other words, while the presence of God is obscured, while we are still afraid of the perfect love that we are, we still have to learn the undoing of fear. And that, again, is what forgiveness does, which is the whole thrust of the Course.

(3:6) It is the function of God's teachers to bring true learning to the world.

But it is not we, as God's teachers, who bring the true learning to the world. It is brought to the world *through* us. Our split minds, and therefore our bodies, simply become the instruments through which this perfect love extends itself.

(3:7) Properly speaking it is unlearning that they bring, for that is "true learning" in the world.

Again, this whole Course is a course in unlearning and undoing—removing what the ego has placed in our minds. Now the Course says, "The ego always speaks first" (T-6.IV.1:2), but it is wrong. And the Holy Spirit is the Answer that cancels out the ego's statement.

(3:8-9) It is given to the teachers of God to bring the glad tidings of complete forgiveness to the world. Blessed indeed are they, for they are the bringers of salvation.

Again, we are not the ones who bring this message. We are the ones who are the instruments through which it comes. We are not the ones who do it. Our job is simply to get ourselves out of the way. As we will see later when we discuss healing, we are not the ones who heal. A teacher of God does not heal. He simply lets the healing extend through him.