

What It Means to Be a Teacher of God

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the
Foundation for A Course in Miracles
Temecula CA

Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D.

Part XXII

How Is Correction Made? (M-18) (conclusion)

(3:1) Anger but screeches, "Guilt is real!"

When I am angry at you, I am saying, "You're the one who's guilty, not me." But I could not be accusing you if I had not first, on another level, accused myself. So when I attack you and get angry at you, I am saying not only that your guilt is real, but that *my* guilt is real as well, although I am not aware of that. This becomes clearer if I can understand that when I get angry at you, I obviously must believe that you and I are separate. Otherwise I could not be angry at you. And if I believe that we are separate, I am saying that separation is real, sin is real, and therefore I must feel guilty because of what I have done.

(3:2) Reality is blotted out as this insane belief is taken as replacement for God's Word.

"God's Word" here represents the principle that the separation never occurred. That is reality and truth. It is blotted out when I attack you because, again, obviously I am saying you and I are separate.

(3:3-4) The body's eyes now "see"; its ears alone can "hear." Its little space and tiny breath become the measure of reality.

Once I make sin and guilt real, and I say that you and I are separate, I obviously am making the body real. I have totally forgotten that the problem is the guilt within my own mind, and that it has nothing whatsoever to do with you. At that point, my ego mind gives my body the instruction: "Find sin, make it real, and then attack it." And so my eyes see that you have done a terrible thing, and my ears hear the terrible things that you have said. My interpretation is that you are sinful and guilty and you deserve to be punished. The implication is that I am free and innocent.

But I see it that way because I have first made a decision in my mind that that is what I *want* to see. So that is exactly what my eyes see. But if I shift my mind to have the Holy Spirit as my Teacher instead of the ego, then my eyes see and my ears hear something totally different. I see what you have done as either an expression of love or a call for love. And I know the reality is that you and I are one in Christ.

(3:5) And truth becomes diminutive and meaningless.

When we listen to the ego, the truth of God's Love is meaningless. The ego totally covers over God's Love, and it becomes threatening. The immensity and the eternity of Heaven is exchanged for this "little space and tiny breath"—namely, the body and the world—that we say is reality. And it becomes reality because I have chosen to deny the true reality, which I now fear. Thus I have thrown away the grandeur of Heaven, as the Course would say, for the grandiosity of the ego (T-9.VIII), or the magnitude of Christ

for the littleness of the ego (T-15.III). Even though I am not in touch with the choice, I have deliberately chosen not to value who I really am or Who God is. I have chosen the meager gifts of the ego instead.

(3:6) Correction has one answer to all this, and to the world that rests on this:

What follows is the correction, the only correction that works. Basically it is the message the Holy Spirit gives to us whenever we are tempted to make the error or magic real.

(3:7-8) *You but mistake interpretation for the truth. And you are wrong.*

Jesus is not criticizing us here. He is simply telling us that what we believe is not the truth. Then he leaves it up to us whether to accept his correction or not.

(3:9) *But a mistake is not a sin, nor has reality been taken from its throne by your mistakes.*

The ego tells us that we have stolen the throne of Heaven, established ourselves on it, and that what we did was sinful. Jesus says that it is not sinful; it was just a mistake, a silly thought; and it never happened.

(3:10) *God reigns forever, and His laws alone prevail upon you and upon the world.*

His laws of Love prevail upon the world through the Holy Spirit and His plan of forgiveness.

(3:11-12) His Love remains the only thing there is. Fear is illusion, for you are like Him.

This, of course, is the exact opposite of what the ego thought system says. The ego tells us that God no longer reigns; the ego reigns and its laws hold instead, and God's Love has been changed into vengeance, which we now should fear. We are choosing to deny His Love whenever we make the error real, whenever we get upset by anything, whether it is a slight twinge of annoyance or intense fury. The only problem in all the world, no matter what the shape or form, is that we have chosen to deny the truth. And so our part, as a teacher of God, is simply to remember the truth. That is all. If we truly remember, then nothing in the world can ever upset us, absolutely nothing. Truth will then automatically express itself through us.

So if I am upset by anything in the world, such as someone's magic thoughts, it means I have chosen, on another level, to deny the truth because I no longer value it. And I am saying that my anxiety, my upset, and my guilt are far more valuable to me than the Love of God.

(4:1) In order to heal, it thus becomes essential for the teacher of God to let all his own mistakes be corrected.

In order to be a healer, in order to be an advanced teacher of God, I simply must let my own ego thought system be corrected—that is all I have to do. I do not correct your mistakes.

Let me read something relevant from the "Psychotherapy" pamphlet. The question this section is addressing is how we achieve the final goal of psychotherapy, which is forgiveness. And it asks: "How is it reached?" (P-2.VI.6:2), that is, how does the therapist reach this final goal, how does therapy become successful? And the answer is: "The therapist sees in the patient all that he has not forgiven in himself, and is thus given another chance to look at it, open it to reevaluation and forgive it." (P-2.VI.6:3). This is an incredible response if we think about it. The answer to the question of how psychotherapy achieves its goal says absolutely nothing about the patient. Again, it says: "The therapist sees in the patient all that he has not forgiven in himself." This has nothing to do with the therapist's technique, brilliance, or

wisdom. It simply has to do with the healing of the therapist's mind. That is how therapy works and what healing is. It is necessary only that the therapist bring any concerns, anxieties, fears, guilt, etc., to the Holy Spirit. As those are taken away, the Love of the Holy Spirit automatically flows through, and the therapist then will do whatever is the most helpful and loving. But healing does not come from what the therapist says or does. Healing comes when the therapist's mind has joined with the patient's. And this cannot happen so long as the therapist is holding on to thoughts of fear, guilt, judgment, etc.

The line we just read from this section in the manual is saying the exact same thing: "In order to heal, it thus becomes essential for the teacher of God to let all his own mistakes be corrected." Healing is not a technique any more than psychotherapy is. It does not matter what I say or do. I can sit with a patient or someone who is in trouble and read the telephone book. The specific form does not make any difference.

There is a wonderful story about Beethoven. The husband of a good friend of his had died. And so he visited her to offer his condolences. As he walked into her home, he told her, "Tonight we shall speak together in tones." And then he sat down at the piano, played for two and a half hours, and then walked out, having never said another word. And the woman felt extremely comforted by that. He was joining with her in the way that he could join, through his music—the form did not make any difference.

He could have sat down and played the piano as he did, or he could have sat and read for her from the Bible, or he could have laid hands on her. It would not have made any difference. In that moment, he wanted to be of help and to join with his friend. And so, in a sense, he gave his body to the love of Jesus or the Holy Spirit, so that love could filter through his body which, obviously, was the body of a composer and pianist. And so the love was expressed in that way. The form is not important; it is the content alone that is important.

So to be a healer, to be an advanced teacher of God, we simply give Jesus all of the interferences that we have placed between ourselves and his love, so that his love can come through, instead of our special love. The focus has absolutely nothing to do with anything outside us because there is nothing outside us. So if I feel concern that I must do something to fix a problem in the world, I have already trapped myself.

The problem, at that point, is not what I should do to help someone else, but what I must do to allow my own mind to be healed. I must recognize that if I am seeing the error outside myself and have made magic real, it is because I have an investment in reinforcing and perpetuating the ego thought system instead of accepting the Holy Spirit's. That is the problem. I have chosen to throw away the love of Jesus and to substitute instead my ego's "love," which always involves helping other people so that I feel better.

So I join with another mind simply by bringing my mind to the Love of the Holy Spirit or Jesus within my mind. That is all I do. And I do that by becoming aware of any of my thoughts that would keep me separate from that Mind and that Love. In other words, all I do—and this basically is what the whole Course is about—is become increasingly sensitive to the interferences of my own thought system, of my own mind, which are always thoughts that magic is real, that the world is real, that pain and suffering are real, and that anger is justified. These are all just different forms of separation. Crucial to the process is becoming aware that any thought I have of anger, concern, anxiety, guilt, or depression, any thought that somebody out there is suffering pain on the level of the body and the world, is coming from a prior

choice that I have made to keep the truth and the Love of God away from me. If I am upset about what is happening to you, I am not in a loving space. I am in an ego "loving" space, but I am not in a genuine loving space because I have made separation and sin real.

And so Jesus is telling us, over and over again, to be aware of the investment we have in making the error real and in keeping the Love of God separate from us. I want to learn to recognize that my concern over you, my feeling sorry for you, and my wanting to end your pain is not love. It seems to be love, but it is not, because it is coming from me, from my interpretation, and not from the Holy Spirit's. So I want to separate myself out from what I am seeing in the world and instead say, "I really want to join with the love that is within me but that is not of me." From that point the love will express through me and then I will do or say whatever is most helpful—whether it is spending two and a half hours playing piano music, laying on of hands, saying a prayer, or whatever.

Again:

(4:1) In order to heal, it thus becomes essential for the teacher of God to let all his own mistakes be corrected.

The focus is never on what is outside; it is always on what is within me.

(4:2) If he senses even the faintest hint of irritation in himself as he responds to anyone, let him instantly realize that he has made an interpretation that is not true.

We are being called to monitor our minds very carefully—to be vigilant for our ego thoughts. The buck always stops in our minds. I can never blame anybody. The third lesson of the Holy Spirit is to "be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom" (T-6.V-C). Obviously we do not have to be vigilant for God. To be vigilant on behalf of God is to be vigilant for our own ego's defenses against Him.

The challenge is to become increasingly aware of even the faintest hint of irritation without feeling guilty about it. Our ego would like us to practice the Course and use it for an upside down purpose: becoming more and more aware of the ugliness of our ego and then doing a real number on ourselves. Obviously, this runs counter to the purpose of the Course, which is to undo guilt through forgiveness.

We want to be able to do this gradually, becoming increasingly aware of the murderous thoughts that lie within all of us, as we learn how to smile at them and say, "Well, of course, what else is new? Why else would I be in this world if I weren't a murderer? This world represents the murder of God. So, of course, what else is new?" This allows us to become increasingly objective about the ego in ourselves.

The image of sitting in an audience with Jesus, looking at my ego acting out, and smiling at it, can be helpful. It means a part of my mind is with Jesus, looking at my ego doing its thing, and together we are saying, "Isn't that silly?" That is what it means to remember to laugh at the ego; we do not take it seriously. Everything in this world is the result of taking the ego seriously, and everything in the world then becomes serious for us. Whenever I take anything in the world seriously, I want, as quickly as I can, to go back within my mind and realize I have made an interpretation that is not true. The interpretation is that what you are doing has terrible effects on me, on my loved ones, on the planet, on God, etc. So I want to realize that it has no effects at all. The reality of the Son of God is unhindered and unchanged by any thought of the ego.

(4:3) Then let him turn within to his Eternal Guide [the Holy Spirit], and let Him [not us] judge what the response should be.

A passage at the end of Chapter 27 in the text talks about how *we* are the ones who judge effects (T-27.VIII.8:4). We judge all the things that go on in the world. We judge them either as awful and terrible, and needing to be changed, undone or punished, or as wonderful things that we want to happen. We are the ones who judge effects. The Holy Spirit in contrast judges their cause. And the cause of all the effects in the world is the "tiny, mad idea" of separation from God. The Holy Spirit's judgment of that cause is that it is silly. It is silly to believe that the ego has the power to attack God and shatter Heaven. When we judge the cause—the ego—as sinful and guilty and deserving of being taken very seriously, that leads to the need for a defense against it.

And that is what the world is. All the terrible effects in the world come because we have forgotten their cause. So, as this passage explains, the Holy Spirit does not judge effects. He does not look to the effects, He does not pay any attention to them. He does not even see them. The Holy Spirit is not involved with anything in the world. He looks at the cause, which is in our minds, and says: "This is silly." And as we can identify with His interpretation of the cause, we too will look on everything in the world and not take it seriously. That allows us to be true instruments of love and compassion to others in the world, because our ego is not involved. The Love of God is now involved. At that point I am not choosing what the loving or the healing response is. The choice is made through me.

(4:4) So is he healed, and in his healing is his pupil healed with him.

"He" refers to the teacher of God, who has become aware of even the faintest hint of irritation, as well as anger, rage, pity, fear, etc. As the Course explains, it takes two to make a sickness, but only one to heal (T-28.III.2). It takes two to make a sickness because the two must agree that they are separate. It takes only one to heal, because if I do not agree that you and I are separate, then we are not separate. Similarly, it takes two to wage a war. If one of the two parties does not fight then there is no war. Sickness is also a war, a war made by the ego against God. If we join in that—you who believe you are sick, and I who feel responsible for or react to it—then the sickness becomes real. The battlefield becomes real. If one of us changes our mind—that is what healing is—then there is no battlefield and no sickness. The Course does not define sickness by the physical symptoms. Sickness is defined by the thought in the mind of being separate.

This is a microcosmic expression of the ultimate healing of the Holy Spirit. The separation thought is that the ego and God are now separate. The Son of God is now separate from his Father. But the presence of the Holy Spirit in the mind of the Son is witness to the fact that the Son is not separate from the Father. If the Holy Spirit is the memory of God's Love that is held within the mind, then the Son's mind is not separate from that memory, and therefore is not separate from God's Love.

That is why the Course says that the separation was healed in the instant that it seemed to occur (T-26.V.3-5; T-28.III.5:2-4). The presence of love in the Son's mind means that he is not separate from love. He is still free to choose to believe that he is separate and sick. But the reality is, he is already healed. And everything that has happened since then—the separation thought, the evolution of the ego thought system, and the making of the world—has become a device to hide or obscure the healing that has already occurred.

Every time we choose to be healed and not make the error real, we are reflecting and becoming a manifestation of the healing principle of the Holy Spirit within our minds. That is how healing works. So if I change my mind about you, then I do not make your magic thought real. I do not get angry at you, attack you, or feel sorry for you. I recognize that our minds are truly joined in God's Love. I know not only am I healed, but you are healed as well, although you may not yet choose to accept it.

(4:5) The sole responsibility of God's teacher is to accept the Atonement for himself.

That is a wonderful way of summarizing what the whole Course is about. Our responsibility is not to heal anyone else. It is not to feed the hungry, or clothe the naked, or visit those in prison, or heal the sick, or raise the dead, or bring about world peace, or save the whales, trees, or the planet. It is none of those things. Our only responsibility is to accept the Holy Spirit's truth within ourselves. That is the acceptance of the Atonement. Nothing else. That is the content.

(4:6) Atonement means correction, or the undoing of errors.

That is a very clear definition of Atonement. It is the undoing or the correcting. It is not anything positive. It is simply the undoing or the denial of the ego's denial of truth.

(4:7) When this has been accomplished, the teacher of God becomes a miracle worker by definition.

When the errors within my mind have been healed, I no longer believe in the ego thought system. And because the definition of the miracle worker is one who accepts the Atonement for himself, if I accept the Atonement for myself, then I am a miracle worker. That syllogism is an example of the Course's logic.

(4:8) His sins have been forgiven him, and he no longer condemns himself.

I have accepted the forgiveness of my sins that has always been there, waiting for me. It is not something that happens as a result of what I am doing. The forgiveness of my sins is always there and I simply undo the blocks to my acceptance or awareness of it. So I no longer am judging myself as having done something sinful. And if I do not judge or condemn myself, then I also cannot condemn anyone else, as the next line says:

(4:9-10) How can he then condemn anyone else? And who is there whom his forgiveness can fail to heal?

The healing has nothing to do with anything external. Once I have accepted the forgiveness of the Holy Spirit within my mind, only love and light are within it. And since all our minds are joined, that love and light extend to all minds. No one can not be affected by the love within me.

As I mentioned earlier, Jesus tells us in the Course that we arose with him (C-6.5:5). When he awakened from the dream of death, everyone was with him because minds are joined. So just as he became the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, we then can become his manifestation simply by exemplifying his life and his love in us—and that is healing. It has nothing to do with what is perceived outside.

There is always the danger that, when we are in the presence of someone who has become a manifestation of Jesus or the Holy Spirit, we will feel good for the wrong reasons. It can become a magical thing where I perceive that you have a holiness I do not have, but that if I sit in your presence, I will receive that holiness from you, which will magically cover all my sins. Real healing in the presence of

a holy person comes when I accept that the love that I am feeling in this person is also within me. And then I know that my sins are forgiven. That is real healing and real joy. So the holy person cannot look within my mind and remove the barriers to love's presence for me. To use the example we have been discussing, let's say I am sick in the hospital and you come to see me. You have no ego and so you do not make my sickness real. You have accepted your holiness. But I can only experience that healing when I accept, not that you have done something for me, but that the light within both our minds has illuminated the love within my mind and has dispersed all the darkness. At that point, my joy is real and I have accepted that healing.