

What It Means to Be a Teacher of God

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Part XXIV

The Correction of Error (T-9.III) (conclusion)

(5:1-2) When a brother behaves insanely, you can heal him only by perceiving the sanity in him. If you perceive his errors and accept them, you are accepting yours.

I perceive the sanity in you through perceiving the sanity in myself. I must first go back within my mind and say to the Holy Spirit: "I must be perceiving falsely because I am seeing a problem as outside and I am reacting to it." It is not just that I see your errors, but I accept them as real. Jesus is not asking that I deny what your body or my body is doing; the problem arises from my making it real by my reaction to it. That is the issue.

If I make your errors real, I must have first looked within myself and made my errors real; so it is my problem. If I really want to be of help to you with your problem—whatever form it takes—I must first get myself out of the way. Otherwise it is my ego trying to help your ego, which may appear to work very well sometimes in the world; but it will not bring peace or love or healing. And it will not truly solve the problem. It may solve the problem temporarily on the level of form, but the same problem will come up in another form.

(5:3) If you want to give yours over to the Holy Spirit, you must do this with his.

I may say that I want to be forgiven and to experience God's Love, but I will not do so as long as I project my sin onto you and attack you for it.

(5:4) Unless this becomes the one way in which you handle all errors, you cannot understand how all errors are undone.

All errors are undone by bringing them to the Holy Spirit—by recognizing that they had no effect, and that they have no meaning or power.

(5:5) How is this different from telling you that what you teach you learn?

It is exactly the same thing.

(5:6) Your brother is as right as you are, and if you think he is wrong you are condemning yourself.

Again, this is not about form; it is about content. You are as right as I am, because we are both children of the same God, and we both share in the same solution. Whatever I do to you or think of you reflects what I think of myself.

(6:1-2) You cannot correct yourself. Is it possible, then, for you to correct another?

I cannot correct myself. Only the Holy Spirit can. So if I cannot do that for myself, what makes me believe I can do it for you? Of course, it is my ego that wants me to believe that I can correct you, because that proves that we are separate: You are wrong and I am right.

(6:3) Yet you can see him truly, because it is possible for you to see yourself truly.

And that, of course, is possible only by accepting the Holy Spirit as my Teacher and my Friend, and listening to what He says.

(6:4) It is not up to you to change your brother, but merely to accept him as he is.

I do not attack you for making a mistake. And I do not have the need to insist that, since you made the mistake, you have to fix it. I simply see you as my brother in Christ without any difference. At that point, the Love of the Holy Spirit will work through me. Whatever I say or do—and it may take the form of correcting the problem or fixing a situation—would then be loving. It would not be done in a spirit of attack or separation.

(6:5) His errors do not come from the truth that is in him, and only this truth is yours.

His errors come because he has made the same wrong choice that I have made. He chose to listen to the ego. If I attack you for choosing the ego, obviously I am making that same mistake real for myself.

(6:6) His errors cannot change this, and can have no effect at all on the truth in you.

His errors cannot change truth. The ego thought system began with the fundamental teaching that the Son of God's error affected truth and changed it. That is why the Course talks about "changeless reality," as a lovely section near the end of the text is called (T-30.VIII). Another section in the text is called "The Changeless Dwelling Place" (T-29.V). And in the manual we read earlier that "reality is changeless" (M-18.1:5).

That is the Atonement principle. Reality cannot be changed by all my silly thoughts; my dreams have had no effect. If I have a nightmare, it has no effect on the reality that I am sleeping safely in my bed. Similarly, all our silly dreams about attacking God and making up a world and attacking each other have had no effect on reality. But if I become upset by your mistake and I want to prove you wrong and find others to agree with me, then I am saying that reality has been changed. If what you do here is important to me, that can only mean in my mind that you and I are here. What we do here can be important only if we believe that there is a "here." And if we believe there is a "here," then we are saying that there is not a "there"—meaning Heaven—because it is one or the other.

(6:7-8) To perceive errors in anyone, and to react to them as if they were real, is to make them real to you. You will not escape paying the price for this, not because you are being punished for it, but because you are following the wrong guide and will therefore lose your way.

The price we pay is the experience of alienation, depression, sadness, anger, anxiety, tension, guilt, etc. Not that God is punishing us for seeing error, but we are punishing ourselves by continuing to separate ourselves from God, Who is our only source of peace, happiness, and love.

(7:1) Your brother's errors are not of him, any more than yours are of you.

Errors come from a part of my mind that is not real. They do not come from who I really am, any more than yours do.

(7:2-3) Accept his errors as real, and you have attacked yourself. If you would find your way and keep it, see only truth beside you for you walk together.

If I see error as real and get upset about it, I have made a choice to leave the path because I am afraid of where it is leading. My ego has told me that if I stay on this path I will go home and find God there, and He is going to punish me. So if I believe that, I will want to get off the path. And what enables me to get off the path is to become angry, or to insist that I am right and to find errors and mistakes in others.

(7:4-7) The Holy Spirit in you forgives all things in you and in your brother. His errors are forgiven with yours. Atonement is no more separate than love. Atonement cannot be separate because it comes from love.

There are no exceptions. I must see Christ in everyone, and I must see all the errors that I am perceiving and making real as being nothing more than a flimsy veil which I would use to seek to hide or cloak the truth. I cannot make any exceptions in how I perceive anyone.

(7:8-9) Any attempt you make to correct a brother means that you believe correction by you is possible, and this can only be the arrogance of the ego. Correction is of God, Who does not know of arrogance.

This reflects the fundamental arrogance of the ego, that it knows best, that it can judge, and that, in fact, it is God.

(8:1-2) The Holy Spirit forgives everything because God created everything. Do not undertake His function, or you will forget yours.

There are no exceptions; the Holy Spirit forgives everything. His function is to forgive and to be the source of the love that is in our minds. His function is to be the correction for all errors. That is the Atonement principle, the undoing or the correction of the ego thought system. Our function is simply to let His function be all that is present in us.

(8:3-5) Accept only the function of healing in time, because that is what time is for.

Healing is basically the undoing of the thought of sickness, the correction of the error.

(8:4-5) God gave you the function to create in eternity. You do not need to learn that, but you do need to learn to want it.

In other words, I must want to get back home. The workbook lesson "I want the peace of God" (W-pl.185) begins with the words: "To say these words is nothing. But to mean these words is everything" (W-pl.185.1-2). We do not mean them because we still believe the peace of God will destroy us. Helen's poem "Amen" ends with the line: "God does not crucify. He merely is" (The Gifts of God, p. 91).

Love does not crucify; love does not punish. Love simply is what it is. It does not know of punishment or sin. We do not need to learn of love and creating—our function in Heaven—but we do need to learn to *want* it.

(8:6) For that all learning was made.

The purpose of the Course is to teach us what we really want and to show us that what the ego says is valuable in this world is not valuable. What the ego tells us will bring us pleasure and avoid pain in this world will not work. So the Course teaches us, step by step, very slowly and gently, to recognize all the gifts the ego offers us, and to say: "These are not the gifts that I want." We learn to go beyond the form that each gift is packaged in to what the gift really is, recognizing that the ego dresses up its gift—really death, pain, attack, and murder—in a pretty package.

(8:7) This is the Holy Spirit's use of an ability that you do not need, but that you made.

Learning is an ability that we made. It is not necessary in Heaven, because there is no learning in Heaven. But we did have to learn the ego's thought system; and we all have learned it very, very well. Once we have used the mind as a learning device to attack, the Holy Spirit then can use that same ability of the mind to teach us something else. And when we have finally and fully learned His lessons, all learning disappears. It is not needed anymore.

(8:8) Give it to Him!

We should let the Holy Spirit be our Teacher, not the ego. As long as we are in this world, we have to learn. And so the world is a classroom. Our only choice then is with regard to which teacher will teach us.

(8:9-10) You do not understand how to use it. He will teach you how to see yourself without condemnation, by learning how to look on everything without it.

Obviously we do not know how to use our ability to learn, because what we have learned by ourselves is not very happy or loving. We have taught ourselves to condemn everything and everyone. We see everything as separate, so that we do not have to experience our condemnation of ourselves. Instead, our attention has been riveted on the condemnation of everyone around us. So that is where the lesson of forgiveness has to begin. We learn not to condemn others by recognizing that when we do, we are really secretly condemning ourselves.

Thus the purpose of the Course is to have us ask ourselves if this is really what we want to do. By criticizing you and finding fault in you, I am really attacking myself. Is that really what I want to do? The problem is that I have not been aware that that is what I am doing. As it becomes increasingly clear to me what I am doing, the choice not to condemn and attack others becomes increasingly easier to make.

(8:11) Condemnation will then not be real to you, and all your errors will be forgiven.

I will no longer see condemnation as real, but simply as a silly mistake. And in doing that, ultimately I am saying that my condemnation of God and of Christ is also silly. At that point I recognize that nothing in me has to be forgiven because nothing is in me except God's Love. And that recognition comes through the process of reversing my ego need to find fault in everyone else, to correct and attack them.