

CLASS: TWELVE WEEK – DECODING AND LIVING ACIM
WEEK TWO - GENERAL HANDOUT WEEK TWO HANDOUT # 1

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Opening prayer: from ACIM T.2.5.18

“ I am here only to be truly helpful. I am here to represent Him Who sent me. I do not have to worry about what to say or what to do, because He Who sent me will direct me. I am content to be wherever He wishes, knowing He goes there with me. I will be healed as I let Him teach me to heal. And so it is.

Review of terms from previous week: Real, Unreal, Knowledge, Perception, Level # 1 & 2, the Kingdom, and Provisional Reality

Overview and the beginning of the myth of separation

ACIM and Western religious traditions have different understandings of the concept of God, God's Will, our own will, and free will. Since we live in a predominantly Judaic-Christian society, it will be helpful to explore these differences. Without a basic understanding of how these terms are utilized in ACIM, the materials will not make logical sense. They will radically conflict with our previous societal interpretations of these religious terms. It should be noted that all the great religions have mystical traditions as well as organized religious traditions. When we compare their mystical traditions, we see great similarities in that they all teach that to find God we need to seek within, rather than, outside of ourselves. They say that God is a Oneness that we share.

Question: What sort of characteristics do we traditionally associate with the God of fundamentalist religious traditions of the Western World (Jewish, Christian & Moslem religions)?

Western fundamentalist religions' generally view their world and God as separate and apart. They have a dualistic belief system. They may give lip service to the idea that God is everywhere, but this has been relegated to their mystical traditions. For most, God is a personal God that seems to have many human characteristics and numerous needs. Western fundamentalist religions speak of God and also something that is not God. God, who created this world, often takes an active role in the management of earthly affairs. God will take sides and even has a "chosen people" or club. More often this "club" is very exclusive with limited memberships available. Club members can ask for special favors from God, and if necessary bribe God so that God is forced to intercede on their behalf. God also has the power of the "zapper" and can, and will, strike down His friends' enemies. Unfortunately, there are often some "friendly fire casualties" whenever this happens. These casualties serve as wake-up calls for club members and help restore the fear of God within the congregation. The God of western fundamentalist religion is painted as a God of judgment and fear. Thus, sin, guilt and fear are dominant concepts in these three western religious traditions.

Question: What sort of things do we traditionally associate with the God of Eastern religious tradition (Hindu, Buddhism, and Taoism)?

Eastern religions' general view of God is that of the first cause. They do not apply personal human traits to the Godhead. We are all viewed as part of the Oneness of God. God tends to take a more passive role in this world. God does not "actively" manage daily human affairs. The belief system of the eastern religious tradition is non-dualistic for there is nothing outside of God. God basically established the rules for the system and the system now runs itself by applying these rules uniformly to all. There are no favorites in a "Oneness of All."

Question: What is God like for ACIM purposes?

God, for ACIM purposes, cannot really be defined since to define is to limit and the Nature of God is unlimited. God, however, would be an eternal and changeless Oneness. God comprises everything that is real. God is the originating creative force behind "All That Is." God is the expressing of unconditional love that is creation or what ACIM often refers to as extension. Unconditional love grants Its creations, the Sonship, total freedom to be or imagine anything it desires without judgment. Unconditional love means that the Sonship can do nothing to earn God's love or cause God to stop loving Her Child. God's love flows eternally to all Its creations. God is reality and all that is real. Everything that is real is in the holographic Mind of God. The Mind of God is the knowing aspect of God that extends itself as unconditional love. God does not think. It knows. To judge is not to know. God judges not. Being a Oneness of "All That Is" what would there be to judge? God is Truth and only truth exists.

For the purpose of understanding God, which is indefinable, God is broken into three components. Although God is an actual Oneness, for ACIM's purposes, God is spoken of as if He has three distinct parts in this Oneness. These three parts form the Holy Trinity. It is comprised of the Father, the Sonship, and the Holy Spirit. This will be discussed in more detail in later lessons.

Question: What are some of the characteristics that we traditionally associate with the Will of God?

Question: Do we traditionally believe that we have a will that is different from God's Will?

Question: What do you believe is God's Will for you? Write it down.

Question: If you could have anything that your heart desired, what would you will or wish for yourself? Write it down.

Question: How does what you want differ from what you believe God "wants" you to do? Write it down.

ACIM explains that we think that we have made a will separate from God's Will. Because we are under the guidance of the ego's thought system, we believe we are separate and can oppose the Will of God. This is not, nor has it ever been possible. We remain a Oneness of "All That Is." God's Will is changeless and is all that is real and is our true reality, Level #1. We are God's Effect. An effect cannot change its cause. Since God's love is unconditional, we have the total freedom to "be what we are" or to imagine the non-real. We can, and do, believe that we have imagined a will different from God's Will. It is this mistaken belief that we could be something different from what God created the Sonship to be that spawns our dream world of provisional reality, Level # 2. Our world of perception, Level 2, was birthed from our desire to judge. We wanted to be the autonomous arbitrator of the truth. We wanted to be able to make the false real and the true, false. This is impossible. Fantasies have no impact on reality. It is this erroneous belief that we can do something other than the Will of God that ACIM attempts to correct.

Reference: Workbook Lesson# 329

Question: According to ACIM can we do something other than God's Will?

God's Will is all there is in reality, Level # 1. We cannot disobey the Will of God. For God's Will is a Oneness, eternal and changeless. Only in the split-minded, who mistakenly believe that the separation is possible, could one dream that God's Will could be disobeyed or opposed. On Level # 2, our world of provisional reality, we can dream that we can oppose God's Will. This we do constantly when we follow the ego's thought system. Although we can dream that we have sided against God's Will, this dream is not part of the Mind of God and, therefore, has no impact on reality, Level # 1. Because we believe our dream, Level #2, to be true, we must remove all guilt caused by this fantasy. We do this by choosing in favor of the Holy Spirit's thought system. The Holy Spirit knows your illusions cannot change the truth of what we are. Fantasies have no real effect on the reality that is the Mind of God, Level # 1. The Holy Spirit's thought system utilizes the tool of forgiveness to heal our belief that our mind has separated from the Mind of God. This healing process reawakens us to the reality of what we are. The Sonship remains perfect, whole and complete. Upon reawakening from our dream, all Level #2 illusions will disappear.

Reference: Text – 7.IV.6

Question: If your will was the supreme and the only will in the universe, what would you will for yourself and your universe? Write down the answer:

According to ACIM what is God's Will for you?

God's Will for you is perfect happiness. God is unconditional love. God's unconditional love for His Son is God's Will for you. God shares everything in the Mind of God with His creations, because sharing is the Law of Creation or Extension. God's will is "to make happy." God knows that happiness requires that we have total freedom to imagine or experience anything that we desire without the threat that our actions could

force God to withdraw Her love from us. Only if our actions could actually result in the loss of God's love would we have something to fear from God. Time is the tool of the imagination. Imagination is the tool of the game of separation. Imagination allows us to play the game of separation without fear of any consequences. The only fearful consequences that arise within the dream of separation are the result of the dreamer's mistaken belief that the dream is real. **Reference: Workbook Lesson # 101.**

Our world of provisional reality is not real and is not part of the Will of God. Our private world of perception appears real only to the dreamer. When we reawaken to our oneness and reclaim our divine birthright, the nightmare that we are separate and can oppose God's Will will disappear forever. Because we are currently following the guidance system of the ego, our world of perception, Level # 2, does appear to be the only "world" that our split mind is aware of. Yet, this illusionary dream world of our split-mind remains only an unknown dream to the Mind of God and, therefore, it is not real. Right-mindedness, which is the Voice of the Holy Spirit within the split-minded, will insure that we all reclaim our divine inheritance and reawaken from the game of separation. **Reference: Workbook Lesson # 166 & Lesson #167**

According to ACIM, God's Will and our will are not different but are actually the same will. There can be no conflict between your will and the Will of God. They are the same. It is only because we have fallen into a "deep sleep" and are still dreaming that we believe our will is different from God's Will. This is why the purpose of ACIM is not to change the world, but rather to change your mind about how you choose to view your world. By remembering that your mind is the source of the dream of separation, the erroneous belief that you are a separate limited ego body in competition with other ego-bodies will disappear. **Reference: Workbook Lesson #307**

Is our will as powerful as God's Will?

Because our will is the same as God's Will, we have been given the same power as God has. The only difference between God's creative power and our own is that since God is our cause, we cannot do anything that would change how God created us. If this were possible, it would mean that an effect could change its cause. **Reference: Text- 7.X.4 and Text VII.10**

Question: What is your understanding of the term "free will?"

Question: Do you have free will?

Question: If we have free will, does that imply that we can do something other than God's Will? Or is ACIM stating that we do not have free will?

ACIM does say that we have free will. However, ACIM defines your free will differently than most people's understanding of what free will is. Your will is only free when it is one with God's Will. In the Kingdom, Level #1, God's Will and your freely chosen will (your free will) are the same.

In the ACIM's Text Introduction Page 1, it states that we are free to elect what parts of the reawakening experience (the curriculum) that we will take and at what time we will take this curriculum. This curriculum ultimately leads us to the rediscovery of the truth about ourselves. Yet, time only "exists" in the dream state of provisional reality and, therefore, time is not real. Time is the playfield for the game of separation. It is only in "Time" that we get to choose what part of the game board we will play or experience. The game of separation is played out within the imagination of the split-minded. Imagination is not real or experienced in the abstract Mind of God. All paths on the game board ultimately led back to our reawaking to the truth. The game of not knowing what we are has been rigged to insure that the Sonship recover its divine birthright. This reference to free will in ACIM's Introduction is only regarding the timing of when we will freely choose to decide to reawaken to the reality that we remain God's perfect, changeless Son. When we reawaken to our divine birthright, we will freely choose God's Will, which of course, is and always will be, our will. Our dream state is not real since it has never been a part of the Mind of God. The idea of separation arose from the insane belief we could be something other than what we were created to be. This idea was then projected from our delusional split mind upon the game board of make believe which became the world of perception, Level #2.

Choice only seems to exist within the ego's belief system. Choice is part of our thinking mind's provisional reality. Before the separation, there was only the Oneness and, thus there was nothing to choose. In the dream world of provisional reality, Level #2, our free will is only reflected when we freely choose to forgive our brothers and ourselves. On Level # 1, the Kingdom, our free will is always expressed since our free will and God's Will are the same.

Review & discuss Workbook Lesson #1-5 & Lesson #51 See Week #1 Handout # 5

Suggested Homework:

Review the grid on the comparison of western traditions vs. ACIM concepts of God, God's Will and free will. Study the "Notes to Comparison Spreadsheet" for they integrate these terms to ACIM's theory. Handout # 2 & # 3

Review notes and Handout # 4 on Lesson 52- Summary of Lesson 6-10

Do approximately one lesson a day. Five lessons per week. For the second week do Lesson # 6-10.

Ending prayer - or mediation

Father, I thought I wandered from Your Will, defied it, broke its laws, and interposed a second will more powerful than Yours. Yet, what I am in truth is but Your Will, extended and extending. This am I, and this will never change. As You are One, so am I one with You. I claim my divine birthright as your beloved Son. The peace and love of God is my essence. And so it is.

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