

## A Course in Miracles – Lesson 133

*I will not value what is valueless.*

1. Sometimes in teaching there is benefit, particularly after you have gone through what seems theoretical and quite remote from what the student has already learned, to bring him back to practical concerns. This we will do today. We will not speak of lofty, world-encompassing ideas but dwell instead on benefits to you.
2. You do not ask too much of life, but far too little. When you let your mind be drawn to bodily concerns, to things you buy, to eminence as valued by the world, you ask for sorrow, not for happiness. This course does not attempt to take from you the little that you have. It does not try to substitute utopian ideas for satisfaction which the world contains.
3. There are no satisfactions in the world. Today we list the real criteria by which to test all things you think you want. Unless they reach these sound requirements, they are not worth desiring at all, for they can but replace what offers more.
4. The laws which govern choice you cannot make, no more than you can make alternatives from which to choose. The choosing you can do; indeed you must. But it is wise to learn the laws you set in motion when you choose and what alternatives you choose between. We have already stressed there are but two, however many there appear to be.
5. The range is set, and this we cannot change. It would be most ungenerous to you to let alternatives be limitless and thus delay your final choice until you had considered all of them in time and not been brought so clearly to the place where there is but one choice that must be made.
6. Another kindly and related law is that there is no compromise in what your choice must bring. It cannot give you just a little, for there is no in-between. Each choice you make brings everything to you or nothing. Therefore, if you learn the tests by which you can distinguish everything from nothing, you will make the better choice.
7. First if you choose a thing that will not last forever, what you choose is valueless. A temporary value is without all value. Time can never take away a value that is real. What fades and dies was never there and makes no offering to him who chooses it. He is deceived by nothing in a form he thinks he likes.
8. Next, if you choose to take a thing away from someone else, you will have nothing left. This is because when you deny his right to everything, you have denied your own. You therefore will not recognise the things you really have, denying they are there. Who seeks to take away has been deceived by the illusion loss can offer gain. Yet loss must offer loss and nothing more.
9. Your next consideration is the one on which the others rest. Why is the choice you make of value to you? What attracts your mind to it? What purpose does it serve? Here is the easiest of all to be deceived, for what the ego wants it fails to recognise. It does not even tell the truth as it perceives it, for it needs to keep the halo which it uses to protect its goals from tarnish and from rust that you may see how innocent it is.
10. Yet is its camouflage a thin veneer which could deceive but those who are content to be deceived. Its goals are obvious to anyone who cares to look for them. Here is deception doubled, for the one who is deceived will not perceive that he has merely failed to gain. He will believe that he has served the ego's hidden goals. And though he tries to keep its halo clear within his vision, yet must he perceive its tarnished edges and its rusted core.

11. His ineffectual mistakes appear as sins to him because he looks upon the tarnished as his own – the rust a sign of deep unworthiness within himself. He who would still preserve the ego's goals and serve them as his own makes no mistakes according to the dictates of his guide. This guidance teaches it is error to believe that sins are but mistakes, for who would suffer for his sins if this were so?
12. And so we come to the criterion for choice which is the hardest to believe, because its obviousness is overlaid with many levels of obscurity. If you feel any guilt about your choice, you have allowed the ego's goals to come between the real alternatives, and thus you do not realise there are but two. And the alternative you think you chose seems fearful and too dangerous to be the nothingness it actually is.
13. All things are valuable or valueless, worthy or not of being sought at all, entirely desirable or not worth the slightest effort to obtain. Choosing is easy just because of this. Complexity is nothing but a screen of smoke which hides the very simple fact that no decision can be difficult.
14. What is the gain to you in learning this? It is far more than merely letting you make choices easily and without pain. Heaven Itself is reached by empty hands and open minds, which come with nothing to find everything and claim it as their own. We will attempt to reach this state today, with self-deception laid aside and with an honest willingness to value but the truly valuable and the real.
15. Our two extended practice periods of 15 minutes will begin with this:

16. *I will not value what is valueless.  
And only what has value do I seek,  
For only that do I desire to find.*

17. And then receive what waits for everyone who reaches unencumbered to the gate of Heaven, which swings open as he comes. Should you begin to let yourself collect some needless burdens or believe you see some difficult decisions facing you, be quick to answer with this simple thought:

18. *I will not value what is valueless.  
For what is valuable belongs to me.*