

A Course in Miracles – Lesson 187

I bless the world because I bless myself.

1. No-one can give unless he has. In fact, giving is proof of having. We have made this point before. What seems to make it hard to credit is not this. No-one can doubt that you must first possess what you would give. It is the second phase on which the world and true perception differ. Having had and given, then the world asserts that you have lost what you possessed. The truth maintains that giving will increase what you possess.
2. How is this possible? For it is sure that if you give a finite thing away, your body's eyes will not perceive it yours. Yet we have learned that things but represent the thoughts that make them. And you do not lack for proof that when you give ideas away, you strengthen them in your own mind. Perhaps the form in which the thought seems to appear is changed in giving. Yet it must return to him who gives. Nor can the form it takes be less acceptable. It must be more.
3. Ideas must first belong to you, before you give them. If you are to save the world, you first accept salvation for yourself. But you will not believe that this is done until you see the miracles it brings to everyone you look upon. Herein is the idea of giving clarified and given meaning. Now you can perceive that by your giving is your store increased.
4. Protect all things you value by the act of giving them away, and you are sure that you will never lose them. What you thought you did not have is thereby proven yours. Yet value not its form. For this will change, and grow unrecognizable in time, however much you try to keep it safe. No form endures. It is the thought behind the form of things that lives unchangeable.
5. Give gladly. You can only gain thereby. The thought remains and grows in strength as it is reinforced by giving. Thoughts extend as they are shared, for they can not be lost. There is no giver and receiver in the sense the world conceives of them. There is a giver who retains; another who will give as well. And both must gain in this exchange, for each will have the thought in form most helpful to him. What he seems to lose is always something he will value less than what will surely be returned to him.
6. Never forget you give but to yourself. Who understands what giving means must laugh at the idea of sacrifice. Nor can he fail to recognize the many forms which sacrifice may take. He laughs as well at pain and loss, at sickness and at grief, at poverty, starvation and at death. He recognizes sacrifice remains the one idea that stands behind them all, and in his gentle laughter are they healed.
7. Illusions recognized must disappear. Accept not suffering, and you remove the thought of suffering. Your blessing lies on everyone who suffers when you choose to see all suffering as what it is. The thought of sacrifice gives rise to all the forms that suffering appears to take. And sacrifice is an idea so mad that sanity dismisses it at once.
8. Never believe that you can sacrifice. There is no place for sacrifice in what has any value. If the thought occurs, its very presence proves that error has arisen, and correction must be made. Your blessing will correct it. Given first to you, it now is yours to give as well. No form of sacrifice and suffering can long endure before the face of one who has forgiven and has blessed himself.
9. The lilies that your brother offers you are laid upon your altar, with the ones you offer him beside them. Who could fear to look upon such lovely holiness? The great illusion of the fear of God diminishes to nothingness before the purity that you will look on here. Be not afraid to look. The blessedness you will behold will take away all thought of form, and leave instead the perfect gift forever there, forever to increase, forever yours, forever given away.
10. Now are we one in thought, for fear has gone. And here, before the altar to One God, One Father, One Creator and One Thought, we stand together as one Son of God. Not separate from Him Who is our Source; not distant from one brother who is part of our One Self Whose innocence has joined us all as one, we stand in blessedness and give as we receive. The Name of God is on our lips. And as we look within, we see the purity of Heaven shine in our reflection of our Father's Love.

11. Now are we blessed, and now we bless the world. What we have looked upon we would extend, for we would see it everywhere. We would behold it shining with the grace of God in everyone. We would not have it be withheld from anything we look upon. And to ensure this holy sight is ours, we offer it to everything we see. For where we see it, it will be returned to us in form of lilies we can lay upon our altar, making it a home for Innocence Itself, Who dwells in us and offers us His Holiness as ours.