

A Course in Miracles – Lesson 197

It can be but my gratitude I earn.

1. Here is the second step we take to free your mind from the belief in outside force pitted against your own. You make attempts at kindness and forgiveness. Yet you turn them to attack again, unless you find external gratitude and lavish thanks. Your gifts must be received with honor, lest they be withdrawn. And so you think God's gifts are loans at best; at worst, deceptions which would cheat you of defenses to ensure that when He strikes He will not fail to kill.
2. How easily are God and guilt confused by those who know not what their thoughts can do. Deny your strength, and weakness must become salvation to you. See yourself as bound, and bars become your home. Nor will you leave the prison house or claim your strength until guilt and salvation are not seen as one; and freedom and salvation are perceived as joined, with strength beside them, to be sought and claimed and found and fully recognized.
3. The world must thank you when you offer it release from your illusions. Yet your thanks belong to you as well, for its release can only mirror yours. Your gratitude is all your gifts require, that they be a lasting offering of a thankful heart released from hell forever. Is it this you would undo by taking back your gifts because they were not honored? It is you who honor them and give them fitting thanks, for it is you who have received the gifts.
4. It does not matter if another thinks your gifts unworthy. In his mind there is a part that joins with yours in thanking you. It does not matter if your gifts seem lost and ineffectual. They are received where they are given. In your gratitude are they accepted universally, and thankfully acknowledged by the Heart of God Himself. And would you take them back, when He has gratefully accepted them?
5. God blesses every gift you give to Him and every gift is given Him because it can be given only to yourself, and what belongs to God must be His Own. Yet you will never realize His gifts are sure, eternal, changeless, limitless, forever giving out, extending love and adding to your never-ending joy, while you forgive but to attack again.
6. Withdraw the gifts you give, and you will think that what is given you has been withdrawn. But learn to let forgiveness take away the sins you think you see outside yourself, and you can never think the gifts of God are lent but for a little while, before He snatches them away again in death. For death will have no meaning for you then.
7. And with the end of this belief is fear forever over. Thank your Self for this, for He is grateful only unto God, and He gives thanks for you unto Himself. To everyone who lives will Christ yet come, for everyone must live and breath in Him. His Being in His Father is secure because Their Will is one. Their gratitude to all They have created has no end, for gratitude remains a part of love.
8. Thanks be to you, the holy Son of God, for as you were created you contain all things within your Self. And you are still as God created you. Nor can you dim the light of your perfection. In your heart the Heart of God is laid. He holds you dear because you are Himself. All gratitude belongs to you because of what you are.
9. Give thanks as you receive it. Be you free of all ingratitude to anyone who makes your Self complete. And from this Self is no-one left outside. Give thanks for all the countless channels which extend this Self. All that you do is given unto Him. All that you think can only be His Thoughts, sharing with Him the holy Thoughts of God. Earn now the gratitude you have denied yourself when you forgot the function God has given you. But never think that He has ever ceased to offer thanks to you.