

ACIM Practices during Lent

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Week Two: Light

The experiences of human life are filled with fear, sickness, need, anger, frustration etc. Turn on the news or listen to a friend share their story and you will realize that these are common human experiences. We have spent thousands of years looking for the cure to the human condition. The Course teaches that the cure can only be found in the rediscovery of the Self and our oneness with God and with each other. It is this discovery that sets us free from the human condition and ushers in experiences of abundance, peace, safety and constant care. This week we will take another step closer to the cure by learning and practicing the fundamental element that exists in all of God's Creations and is the very essence of our Being. What is this element? It is light.

The word "light" when spoken in spiritual circles is heavily endowed with meaning. It is an ancient symbol used to encompass all aspects of God and His children; holiness, innocence, joy, and love. It has been used to convey the love of God in many spiritual texts (if not all spiritual texts). Jesus used the word "light" in his Sermon on the Mount when he said, "You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine, so that all people will see your good works, your works of love, and give glory to God." If you have ever attended a Christian baptism you have heard a version of these words spoken to the child. "You are the light of the world. We're counting on you to shine your light into the world." When looking at a child during a baptism it is easy to "see" light. But turn to your right and look at the adult sitting next to you, or look at yourself in the mirror. Do you sense this same light in yourself and others? If not where did the light go? It seems to be hidden by darkness; the body- its size and shape, sickness and health; our judgments of good and bad, worthy or unworthy; our regrets, doubts, mistakes and failures. With all of this blocking the light, it may seem impossible to know yourself as the light of the world. But it's not impossible. In fact, there is a simple and straightforward way to rediscover the light that you are. It is through the recognition that the forms of darkness (body, sickness, need, regrets, failures, death) that seem to cover over the light, do not exist. Seeing the covering as illusion, it disappears and light is all that remains in your awareness.

You might resist this statement because the darkness appears to be opaque and very real. But let's consider what the darkness really is. The darkness and all its forms are merely shadows. A shadow is an image cast onto a surface made by an object that blocked the light. On a sunny day you can see shadows of a body or building and know they are just images made from light. This is how we are asked to see all forms of darkness that appear in the world. Fear, pain, sickness, rejection etc. are shadows made by false beliefs that have blocked the light. Therefore to remove the shadow you need only allow the light to pass through undisturbed. This requires a willingness to remove the blocks within the mind so the light can easily and quickly shine through. This is how we let our light shine into the world and this is how all shadows disappear.

What is so wonderful about seeing darkness as merely shadows (other than the obvious that we do not have to fix the outside but merely pay careful attention to the removal of blocks) is the understanding that this shadow can only exist *if* there is light. After all, you need light to make a shadow. If you are seeing a shadow than there must be light somewhere! Have you ever thought of seeing forms of darkness in this way? We can use the shadows to remind us of the presence of light instead of the reality of darkness! Practice these 4 simple steps and you will see that it's true.

- Notice the shadows, but do not assign any truth to them nor interact with them as if they are true.
- See them as a reminder that light *does* exist because in order to have a shadow there must be light.
- Take your focus off of the shadow.
- And look for the light.

Week One Practice:

This week we devote our practice to light. You *are* the light of the world. What was true two thousand years ago is still true today. Practice exercising your mind muscle called “will”. Will to know once again this light. Will to not be deceived by appearances and will to desire only light as your experience.

Read: Workbook Lesson #75: “The light has come”.

Morning and Evening Prayer: W-184.15:1-9

“Father, our Name is Yours. In It we are united with all living things, and You Who are their one Creator. What we made and call by many different names is but a shadow we have tried to cast across Your Own reality. And we are glad and thankful we were wrong. All our mistakes we give to You, that we may be absolved from all effects our errors seemed to have. And we accept the truth You give, in place of every one of them. Your Name is our salvation and escape from what we made. Your Name unites us in the oneness which is our inheritance and peace. Amen.”

During Times of Temptation:

“If you were to walk around the outside of a light-filled house, no matter how tightly the shades had been drawn and the doors shut, you would eventually find a speck of light seeping through some crack or tiny hole. It is the nature of light to find a way out. If you call to the spiritual light that you see shining from within another, it will bound through any barrier or shield your judgments may have placed in its way.” (Hugh Prather “A Book of Games” pg. 22)

As you go about your day practice seeing everything as a shadow; a pesky thing that is trying to block the light. Do not be deceived by this appearance. Place your awareness on the ring of light that is surrounding the shadow. Notice first the spilling out of this light and then be willing to call directly to the light recognizing it is the only truth of the matter before you.

Daily Mantra:

“We are the light of the world. There is no darkness anywhere. “ I welcome vision and the happy world it will show me” (W.#54.4:7)