

A Course of Love



COMBINED VOLUME

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CHAPTER 2

What Love Is

- 2.1 What love is cannot be taught. It cannot be learned. But it can be recognized. Can you pass love by and not know that it is there? Oh, yes. You do it constantly by choosing to see illusion rather than the truth. You cannot be taught love but you can be taught to see love where it already exists. The body's eyes are not the eyes with which love can be recognized. Christ's vision is. For only Christ's vision beholds the face of God.
- 2.2 While you look for a God with a physical form you will not recognize God. Everything real is of God. Nothing unreal exists. Each person passing from this life to the next learns no great secret. They simply realize love is all there is. Nothing unreal exists. Think for yourself: If you were going to die tomorrow what would you today find meaningful? Only love. This is salvation's key.
- 2.3 Because love has no physical form you cannot believe that love could be what you are, what you strive to be, what you seek to return to. Thus you believe you are something other than love and separate from love. You label love a feeling, and one of many. Yet you have been told there are but two from which you choose: love and fear. Because you have chosen fear so many times and labeled it so many things you no longer recognize it as fear. The same is true of love.
- 2.4 Love is the name you give to much you fear. You think that it is possible to choose it as a means to buy your safety and security. You thus have defined love as a reaction to fear. This is why you can understand love as fear's opposite. This is true enough. But because you have not properly recognized fear as nothing, you have not properly recognized love as everything. It is because of the attributes you have given fear that love has been given attributes. Only separate things have attributes and qualities that seem to complement or oppose. Love has no attributes, which is why it cannot be taught.

- 2.5 If love cannot be taught but only recognized, how is this recognition made possible? Through love's effects. For cause and effect are one. Creation is love's effect, as are you.
- 2.6 To believe that you are able to act in love in one instance and act in anger in another, and that both actions originate from the same place, is an error of enormous proportions. You again label love a "sometimes" component and think that to act in love more frequently is an achievement. You label acting from love "good" and acting out of anger "bad." You feel you are capable of loving acts of heroic proportions and fearful actions of horrific consequence, acts of bravery and acts of cowardice, acts of passion you call love and acts of passion you call violence. You feel unable to control the most extreme of these actions that arise from these extremes of feeling. Both "ends" of feelings are considered dangerous and a middle ground is sought. It is said that one can love too much and too little but never enough. Love is not something you do. It is what you are. To continue to identify love incorrectly is to continue to be unable to identify your Self.
- 2.7 To continue to identify love incorrectly is to continue to live in hell. As much as highs and lows of intense feeling are sought by some to be avoided, it is in the in-between of passionless living that hell is solidified and becomes quite real. You can label joy heaven and pain hell and seek the middle ground for your reality thinking there are more than these two choices. A life of little joy and little pain is seen as a successful life, for a life of joy is seen as nothing more than a daydream, a life of pain a nightmare.
- 2.8 Into this confusion of love's reality you add the contents of your history, the learned facts and the assumed theories of your existence. Although your purpose here remains obscure, you identify some things you call progress and others that you call evolution and you hope you have some miniscule role to play in advancing the status of humankind. This is the most you have any hope of doing, and few of you believe you will succeed. Others refuse to think of life in terms of purpose and thereby condemn themselves to purposeless lives, convinced one person among billions makes no difference and is of no consequence. Still others put on blinders to the world and seek only to make their corner of it more safe and secure. Some shift from one option to the next, giving up on one and hoping that the other will bring them some peace. To think that these are the only options available to creatures of a loving God

is insane. Yet you believe that to think the opposite is true insanity. Given even your limited view of who you are, could this really be true?

- 2.9 The insanity of your thought process and the world you perceive must be made known to you before you are willing to give it up. You do know this, and yet you constantly *forget*. This forgetting is the work of your ego. Your true Self does not want to forget, and cannot for even the tiniest fraction of a second. It is precisely the inability of your true Self to forget that gives you hope of learning to recognize love, and, with that recognition, of ending the insanity you now perceive.
- 2.10 Your real Self is the Christ in you. How could it be anything but love, or see with eyes other than those of love? Would you expect any decent human being to look on a loveless world, on misery and despair, and not be moved? Think not that those who seem to add to the world's misery are any exception. There is not a soul that walks this earth that does not weep at what it sees. Yet the Christ in you does not weep, for the Christ in you sees with eyes of love. The difference is the eyes of love see not the misery or despair. They are not there! This is the miracle. The miracle is true seeing. Think not that love can look on misery and see love there. Love looks not on misery at all.
- 2.11 Compassion is not what you have made of it. The Bible instructs you to be compassionate as God is compassionate. You have defined it unlike the compassion of God. To believe God looks upon misery and responds with sympathy and concern and does not end the misery is to believe in a God who is compassionate as you are compassionate. You think you would end misery if you could, beginning with your own, and yet you could no more end misery by making it real than could God. There is no magic here of turning misery into delight and pain into joy. These acts would indeed be magic, an illusion on top of an illusion. You have but accepted illusion as the truth, and so seek other illusions to change what never was into something that never will be.
- 2.12 To be compassionate as God is compassionate is to see as God sees. Again, I stress to you, this is not about looking upon misery and saying to yourself you see it not. I am not an advocate of heartlessness but wholeheartedness. If you believe even the tiniest fraction of what is true, if you but believe you are a small part of God no bigger than a pinprick of light in a daunting sun, you still cannot believe in the reality of misery and despair.

If you do, you believe this is the state of God as well. And if this were true, what hope would there be for misery's end? What light would there be in the universe that could end the darkness?

- 2.13 Reverse this thought and see if it makes any more sense than it did before. In this scenario a benevolent and loving God who has extended His being into the creation of the universe has somehow managed to extend what is not of Him, to create what is unlike to His being in every way. Would even you attempt such folly? Would you conceive of the inconceivable?
- 2.14 What answer then is left but that you do not see reality for what it is? What benefit is left to you in seeing incorrectly? What risk in attempting to see anew? What would a world without misery be but heaven?
- 2.15 Look not to figures from the past to show you the way beyond illusions to the present. Look within to the one in you who knows the way. Christ is within you and you rest within God. I vowed to never leave you and to never leave you comfortless. The Holy Spirit has brought what comfort you would accept to your troubled mind. Now turn to me to comfort your troubled heart.
- 2.16 You have not sufficiently reversed your thinking, or your heart would not still be troubled. The reversal has not occurred because you separate mind and heart and think you can involve one without involving the other. You believe that to know with your mind is a learning process that stands apart from all else that you are. Thus you can know without that knowing being who you are. You think you can love without love being who you are. Nothing stands apart from your being. Nothing stands alone. All your attempts to keep things separate are but a reenactment of the original separation made to convince yourself that the separation actually occurred.
- 2.17 You do not stand separate and alone. At these words your heart rejoices and your mind rebels. Your mind rebels because it is the stronghold of the ego. Your thought system is what has made the world you see, the ego its constant companion in its construction.
- 2.18 Yet your mind too rejoiced in the learning of all the teachings that have brought you here, congratulating itself on a feat that brought it rest. It is from this rest that the heart begins to be heard.
- 2.19 Just as the Holy Spirit can use what the ego has made, the ego can use what the mind has learned but has not integrated. Until you are what you

have learned, you leave room for the ego's machinations. Once you are what you have learned, there is no room in which the ego can exist and, banished from the home you made for it, it slowly dies. Until this happens, the ego takes pride in what the mind has acquired, even unto the greater peace and contentment offered by your learning. It can and does see itself as better and stronger and more capable of worldly success. It would use all you have learned for its own motivations and pat you on the back for your new abilities. Without your vigilance it may even seem to have become stronger than before and fiercer in its criticism. It pretends to hold you to new standards, only to use what you have learned to increase your guilt. Thus it wins in daily battles and works for your final abdication, the day that you give up and admit defeat. It challenges your right to happiness and love and miracles, and seeks only to have you claim that living with such fantasies does not work and will not ever be possible here.

2.20 Into this battlefield you have bravely marched. The war rages by day and by night and you have grown weary. Your heart cries out for solace and does not go unheard. Help is here.

2.21 Do not believe that all that you have learned will not do what it was given you to do. Do not believe in your failure or the ego's success. All you have learned is still with you regardless of your perception of the outcome of your learning. Your perception of an outcome within your control is all that needs to change. Remember that cause and effect are one. What you want to learn you cannot fail to learn.

2.22 We will begin by working on a state of neutrality in which the war is no longer fought, the daily battles cease. Who wins and who loses is not of concern to us here. Peace has not yet come. But the white flag of surrender has been waved and dropped upon a hallowed ground where neutrality will for a short time reign before peace breaks out with glad rejoicing.

2.23 There are no plunders to be treasured. No victors of this war. All that has been learned and learned again is that this is what you do not want. Freedom to return home, away from cries of agony, defeat, and vainglory is all that now is sought. A state of neutrality is where the return begins. Armies may not yet be marching home, but their preparation is underway.