

Jesus' discourse on how Bill should regard the influence of his parents

(This material comes from early dictation of the Course that was not included in the published edition. It was published in Ken Wapnick's *Absence from Felicity* p. 269–272 1st edition, p. 261-265 2nd edition)

“Any form of mental illness can truthfully be described as an expression of viciousness. We said before that those who are afraid are apt to be vicious. If we were willing to forgive other people's misperceptions of us, they could not possibly affect us at all. There is little doubt that you can explain your present attitudes in terms of how people used to look at you, but there is no wisdom in doing so. In fact, the whole historical approach can justifiably be called doubtful.

As you have so often said, no one has adopted *all* of his parents' attitudes as his own. In every case, there has been a long process of choice, in which the individual has escaped from those he himself vetoed, while retaining those he voted *for*. Bill has not retained his parents' political beliefs, in spite of the particular kind of newspapers that constituted their own reading matter in this area. The reason why he could do this was because he believed he was free in this area.

There must be some acute problem *of his own* that would make him so eager to accept their misperception of his own worth. This tendency can always be regarded as punitive. It cannot be justified by the inequality of the strengths of parents and children. This is never more than temporary, and is largely a matter of maturational and thus physical difference. It does not last unless it is held onto.

When Bill's father came to his new office and “destroyed” it, it is quite apparent that Bill *must* have been willing to let it be destroyed. The many times that he has commented on this event alone would suggest that the extreme importance of this misrepresentation in his own distorted thinking. Why should anyone accord an obvious misperception so much power? There cannot be any real justification for it, because even Bill himself recognized the real problem by saying “How could he do this to me?” The answer is *he* didn't.

Bill has a very serious question to ask himself in this connection. We said before that the purpose of the Resurrection was to “demonstrate that no amount of misperception has any influence at all on a Son of God.” This demonstration *exonerates* those who misperceive, by establishing beyond doubt that they have *not* hurt anyone. Bill's question, which he must ask himself very honestly, is whether he is willing to demonstrate that his parents have *not* hurt him. Unless he is willing to do this, he has not forgiven them.

The essential goal of therapy is the same as that of knowledge [ACIM]. No one can survive independently as long as he is willing to see himself through the eyes of others. This will always put him in a position where he *must* see himself in different lights. Parents do not create the image of their children, though they may perceive images which they do create. However, as we have already said, you are not an image. If you *side with* image-makers, you are merely being idolatrous.

Bill has no justification whatever for perpetuating *any* image of himself at all. He is *not* an image. Whatever is true of him is wholly benign. It is essential that he *know* this about himself, but he cannot know it while he chooses to interpret himself as vulnerable enough to *be* hurt. This is a peculiar kind of arrogance, whose narcissistic component is perfectly obvious. It endows the perceiver with sufficient unreal strength to make him over, and then acknowledges the perceiver's miscreation. There are times

when this strange lack of real courtesy appears to be a form of humility. Actually, it is never more than simple spite.

Bill, your parents did misperceive you in many ways, but their ability to perceive was quite warped, and their misperceptions stood in the way of their own knowledge. There is no reason why it should stand in the way of yours. It is still true that you believe they *did* something to you. This belief is extremely dangerous to your perception, and wholly destructive of your knowledge. This is not only true of your attitudes toward your parents, but also of your misuse of your friends. You still think that you *must* respond to their errors *as if* they were true. By reacting self-destructively, you are *giving* them approval for their misperceptions.

No one has the right to change himself according to different circumstances. Only his actions are capable of appropriate variation. His belief in himself is a constant, unless it rests on perceptual acuity rather than knowledge of what he is.

It is your *duty* to establish beyond doubt that you are totally unwilling to side with (identify with) anyone's misperceptions of you, including your own."