

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 3, Section V

Beyond Perception

Overview of the Section

The discussion of perception that runs through the entire chapter continues with a section about what lies beyond the world of perception: the perfectly worthy creation of God.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹I have said that the abilities you possess are only shadows of your real strength, [Ur: The soul's true functions are knowing, loving, and creating.] and that perception [Ur: The intrusion of the ability to perceive,] which is inherently judgmental, was introduced only after the separation. ²No one has been sure of anything since. ³I have also made it clear that the resurrection was the means for the return [Ur: was the return] to knowledge, which was accomplished by the union of my will with the Father's. ⁴We can now establish a distinction that will clarify some of our subsequent statements [this last sentence was added by the editors].

• Study Question •

1. *For your own reference, make a summary list of the points mentioned in this first paragraph, and watch to see when and how they are used in the paragraphs that follow.*

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Jesus begins by briefly reviewing several points he has discussed previously (1:1 and 1:3). He reminds us that our present abilities are “only shadows” of our real strength (compare with T-3.IV.1:1). The Urtext includes a sentence that names our true functions: knowing, loving, and creating. (Presumably this was omitted by the editors because it seems only loosely related to the rest of the paragraph, but it is interesting, nonetheless.) He reiterates that one of those present abilities, perception, which we have seen is a shadow of our *creative* power, only came into being after the separation (see T-3.IV.2:1), and adds that perception is inherently judgmental. He said earlier that perception involves *interpretation*, but he had not specifically connected it to *judgment*, although that is quite

a logical step, since interpretation *requires* judgment. That is the link he uses, in fact, later in this section (T-3.V.7:7–8).

He goes on to remind us that perception is always uncertain (1:2). Then, referring to the first section of the chapter, he reminds us that the resurrection (not the crucifixion) is “the means for return to knowledge” (1:3). He has not previously connected the resurrection and knowledge. The earlier statement (in T-3.I.1:2) said that the resurrection established *the Atonement*. We have to assume then that the Atonement *is* the means for return to knowledge to which he refers in the current paragraph—a connection well worth noting. That’s borne out by the line from the Urtext following T-3.IV.7:10: “The Atonement was an act based on true perception.” Finally, he states that this means (the Atonement) “was accomplished by the union of my will with the Father’s” (1:3). That was a point he made in the previous section as well (T-3.IV.7:6), and seems to refer not just to his willingness to go through the crucifixion if necessary, but to the general recognition that he wanted only what God wanted in all things.

What do all these random points have to do with one another? It may not be clear just yet. But the next sentence (added by the editors, probably to meet the question that naturally arises to the reader) gives us a clue. It says that, having become clear on all of these points, we are now in a position to “establish a distinction that will clarify some of our subsequent statements” (1:4). In other words, he is about to make use of these various points to support another point, a distinction he feels will make what he has to say easier for us to understand. That distinction, as he will state in the next paragraph, is the one between the words “make” and “create.”

Paragraph 2

2. ¹Since the separation, the words “create” and “make” have become [Ur: are inevitably] confused. ²When you make something, you do so [Ur: first] out of a specific sense of lack or need [Ur: and second, out of something that already exists]. ³Anything [Ur: that is made is] made for a specific purpose [Ur: It] has no true generalizability. ⁴When you make something to fill a perceived lack, you are tacitly implying that you believe in [Ur: the] separation. ⁵The ego has invented many ingenious thought systems for this purpose. [Ur: The recent ecological emphasis is but a more ingenious way of trying to impose order on chaos.] ⁶None of them is creative. [Ur: We have already credited the ego with considerable ingenuity, though not with creativeness. But it should always be remembered that] ⁷Inventiveness is wasted effort even in its most ingenious form. [Ur: We do not have to *explain* anything. This is why we need not trouble ourselves with inventiveness.] ⁸The highly specific nature of invention is not worthy of the abstract creativity of God’s creations.

• Study Question •

2. Summarize what you recall from our earlier discussions about the distinction between “make” and “create.” If you wish, look up some of the earlier references to this subject. (For example: T-1.I.12; T-1.I.50; T-1.VI.1:3–4; T-2.V(A).12; T-2.VII.3:8–14; T-2.VIII.1:4–6; T-2.VIII.5:5–6; T-3.IV.3:1.)

Jesus says that having covered these earlier points, he can now really nail down the difference between “create” and “make,” two words that have come to mean the same thing to us, but which in reality are very different (2:1). This is by no means the first time he has made this distinction. In fact, in the sub-section, “Special Principles for Miracle Workers,” he spelled it out quite clearly, called it “essential,” and said it was the foundation of all healing!

(2) A clear distinction between what is created and what is made is essential. All forms of healing rest on this fundamental correction in level perception. (T-2.V(A).12)

Although he has stated the principle before, he has not really explained it in any depth. We might ask, “If it is essential to make a clear distinction between ‘make’ and ‘create,’ then what is the difference?” That is what he is setting out to tell us now.

He begins by discussing “making.” First, the *breeding ground* of making is “a specific sense of lack or need” (2:2). Earlier he told us that the key difference between what we make and what we create is that lack, or need, is very apparent in everything we make, while God’s creation contains no lack whatsoever (T-1.VI.1:3–4). But here he is saying that making *arises from* a perception of a specific need or lack. We perceive lack someplace, and our minds make something to fill that empty space. We made perception itself to fill the lack left by the apparent absence of knowledge. We made the body because we needed a perceiver and something to perceive. We made a post-separation self because we had lost sight of our true Identity with God.

When you make something for a specific purpose, it can’t be generalized for other uses (2:3). If I need a hat to keep my head warm, I can’t use the hat to keep my feet warm at night. I can’t eat it to fill my hunger. I can’t use it to dig up my garden. A hat fills a specific need. While this seems obvious and, at first glance, a meaningless observation—Who cares if I can’t use my hat to hoe the garden?—it says something about the whole sphere of “things made.” Every such thing implies “that you believe in separation” (2:4), because you see one need here filled by one tool, and another—separate!—need over here, filled by another tool. The entire physical universe, then, and everything in it, constantly bears witness to separation as the truth.

The Urtext adds that, secondarily, we always “make” something out of something that already exists. In other words, nothing new is created. To use a favorite word of the home makeover TV shows, an existing something is “repurposed.”

The Course then goes on to broaden the scope of “things made” from physical objects to *thought systems* (2:5); it says we have invented many ingenious thought systems to fill perceived lacks. We have developed many schools of psychology, philosophy, and even science in an attempt to explain the universe, to make sense of our place in the scheme of things, or just to cope and get by without going nuts while still leaving God out of the picture. That is what I think Jesus is referring to. Some of these thought systems are quite ingenious, but “none of them is creative” (2:6), and no matter how ingenious they may be, in the end they are “wasted effort” (2:7). That is quite a harsh judgment on what many people consider to be their life work! Even “The recent ecological emphasis is but a more ingenious way of trying to impose order on chaos.” Yet, if this world is actually an illusion that will simply cease to exist when all minds return to Christ, it must be true. These thought systems are huge, complex, ingenious efforts to explain and to control something which, in the final analysis, does not really exist at all. No effort could possibly be more wasted than that. And that is what all of our “making” is, in the end—wasted effort, attempts to “fill a perceived lack” (2:4) when no lack exists anywhere in God’s creation.

Sometimes we may feel in awe of mankind’s inventiveness and ingenuity to “make” things. I know I sometimes feel that way, even in looking at things like the George Washington Bridge, the Manhattan skyline, the Internet, jet air travel, or doctors who reattach severed arms. But this level of inventiveness and ingenuity is *nothing* compared to “the abstract creativity of God’s creations” (2:8). In other words (here’s one of those earlier principles), our present abilities are only shadows of our real strength. Creation is *far beyond* any of these things.

To say that inventiveness is wasted effort, and that “we need not trouble ourselves with inventiveness,” may seem disturbing. One way of applying this is to our attempts to be clever and inventive in the way we conceive of the truth. A thought like, “Only the Truth is true,” may seem mundane and pedestrian; perhaps we think it needs to be dressed up a bit. But it doesn’t, and being clever here is wasted effect.

Yet, as the reference to ecological emphasis makes clear, Jesus means this to apply quite broadly. We often get dazzled by some of the extremely clever thought systems people come up with. We need to ask ourselves, perhaps, whether or not the focus is on something truly significant, that is, something eternal. For me, it comes down to a matter of priorities. Surely, ecological consciousness is important. Recognizing that we share this planet with billions of people, and more billions yet unborn, seems to me to be part of an awareness of Oneness. Yet our oneness in a physical sense must not overshadow our deeper, non-material Oneness. That must always take precedence.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹Knowing, as we have already observed, does not lead to doing. ²The confusion between your real creation and what you have made of yourself is so profound that it has become literally impossible for you to know anything.

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³Knowledge is always stable, and it is quite evident that you are not.

⁴Nevertheless, you are perfectly stable as God created you. ⁵In this sense, when your behavior is unstable, you are disagreeing with God's Idea of your creation.

⁶You can do this if you choose, but you would hardly want to do it if you were in your right mind. [Ur: This is a fundamental right of man, although not one he would care to exercise if he were in his Right Mind.]

• **Study Question** •

3. *How is our inability to know, and our return to knowledge, connected to this subject of what we made and what God created?*



Now Jesus draws in a second principle he established earlier: Knowing does not lead to doing (3:1). This principle is not one he listed in the first paragraph. I think “doing” is a close synonym for “making.” The idea seems to be that our preoccupation with making stems from our being cut off from knowledge. If we knew, we would not perceive lacks and try to fill them. We would simply be full.

The most significant thing we have made, every one of us, is our post-separation self, or “what you have made of yourself” (3:2). The self we have made and then identified with is a self that, in many ways, is incompatible with knowledge. What keeps us from knowledge is that self (3:2); what will restore knowledge is abandoning the self we have made and re-identifying with the Self God created (the Christ), which is compatible with knowledge. That abandonment of the made self and the assumption of the created Self is what was depicted in Jesus' death and resurrection. Thus, the word *resurrection* in the Course means the mind's reawakening in transcending the ego and identifying with the Christ (T-6.I.7:1–2; T-11.VI.1:6) and it is this that secures our return to knowledge (1:3). In Unity's *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*, Charles Fillmore wrote, “The resurrection is the lifting up of the whole man into the Christ consciousness,” which is saying much the same thing, although he includes the body as part of what is lifted up and made immortal.

What follows in this and the next couple of paragraphs is a series of contrasts between knowledge and the “made self” we imagine we are, showing how completely incompatible they are. First, the stability of knowledge is contrasted with the instability of our self, and our unstable behavior (3:3–5). Therefore, as long as we identify with this unstable self, we cannot know anything.

Our Self as created by God is “perfectly stable,” however (3:4). We may choose to behave unstably, but doing so implicitly denies God's idea of our creation (3:5). Unstable behavior would be impossible if we accepted ourselves as perfectly stable! It might be useful to remember this the next time you catch yourself behaving in any unstable way. “This does not reflect the reality of my being as God created me.”

Paragraph 4

4. ¹The fundamental question [Ur: The problem that is bothering you most is the fundamental question which] you continually ask yourself [Ur: but which] cannot properly be directed to yourself at all. ²You keep asking what it is you are. ³This implies that the answer is not only one you know, but is also one that is up to you to supply. [Ur: The first part of this statement is perfectly true, but the second part is not. We have frequently commented on the absolute necessity of correcting all fallacious thinking which associates man in any way with his own Creation.] ⁴Yet you cannot perceive yourself correctly. ⁵You have no image to be perceived. ⁶The word “image” is always perception-related, and not a part of knowledge. ⁷Images are symbolic and stand for something else. ⁸The idea of [Ur: The current emphasis on] “changing your image” recognizes [Ur: is a good description of] the power of perception, but also implies that there is nothing stable to know.

• Study Question •

4. *Based on this paragraph, the effort to build a better self-image is not a way to discover your true Self. It is a revision of the post-separation self, but not a rediscovery of the true Self. How would this relate to the “make-create” subject we’ve been discussing?*

We keep asking, “What am I?” (4:2) The problem is, we are asking in the wrong place. We ask this question of ourselves. (Here I think Jesus means that we are asking our “little self” or our “post-separation self,” because he depicts this self trying to *perceive* who we are, and perception is a post-separation ability.) We ask our self, as if we knew the answer and were responsible for supplying the answer (4:3). While we actually do know the answer, we’re still off base because we are trying to find it by means of perception (4:4). We cannot perceive our true Self, because that Self has “no image to be perceived” (4:5). It lies beyond perception, beyond symbols (4:6–7). Therefore, when we ask our “self” this question, we are not asking for the answer in the right place (4:1).

To even ask the question, “What am I?” implies a changeable self. So the correction for the mistake we are making isn’t to ask our question in the right place, or of the right source; the answer is to stop asking the question, and to simply *know* who we are. It isn’t a matter of changing our self-image; that again implies a non-stable self, which does not accord with the reality of God’s creation (4:8). The solution entails transcending the changing, questioning self entirely, and awakening to the Self that knows Itself.

If this does not seem very clear to you, I apologize. It is very hard to make clear, even when you’ve had a taste of what it is talking about. There have been moments—regretfully, fairly few and fairly brief—when I simply *knew* Who I was. I was suffused with joy, even with laughter at the usual snarl of my anguished thoughts. And in those

moments of startling clarity, I knew that what I was experiencing was always the truth and had always been the truth; there had never been an instant when I was not this holy Son of God. I did not *attain* this knowledge. In those moments of clarity I have known that I always have this knowledge; I always know it but, outside of those moments of clarity, I block this knowledge from awareness. Still, it is always there.

We are not, therefore, seeking knowledge we do not have. We are attempting to turn away from the false perception of what we are, so that the reality of our Self can arise and become known again. It is a “return to” knowledge, not a new discovery.

Paragraph 5

5. ¹Knowing is not open to interpretation [Ur: because its meaning is its own]. ²You may try to “interpret” meaning, but this is always open to error because it refers to the *perception* of meaning. ³Such incongruities are the result of attempts to regard yourself as separated and un-separated at the same time. ⁴It is impossible to make so fundamental a confusion without increasing your overall confusion still further. ⁵Your mind may have become very ingenious [Ur: Methodologically, man’s mind has been very creative], but as always happens when method and content are separated, it is utilized in a futile attempt to escape from an inescapable impasse. [Ur: This kind of thinking cannot result in a creative outcome, though it has resulted in considerable ingenuity. It is noteworthy, however, that this ingenuity has almost totally divorced him from knowledge.] ⁶Ingenuity is totally divorced from knowledge, because knowledge does not require ingenuity. ⁷Ingenious thinking is *not* the truth that shall set you free, but you are free of the need to engage in it when you are willing to let it go [Ur: When we say “the truth shall set you free,” we mean that all this kind of thinking is a waste of time, but that you are free of the need of engaging in it].

• Study Question •

5. *Reflect on the thought that, “Ingenious thinking is not the truth that shall set you free” (5:7). Does the realization that you do not have to “figure it out” excite you or depress you?*



The last paragraph pointed out that the true Self cannot be perceived, and that any self we *perceive* is subject to our interpretation, changeable, and therefore, not the true Self. This paragraph expands on the negative aspects of interpretation, from which knowledge is completely free (5:1). In a return to Paragraph 2’s theme of inventiveness, the gist of this paragraph’s message is that ingenious thinking, used to interpret the meaning of ourselves and of our world, is *not* the path to knowledge.

All interpretations, like all perceptions, are prone to error, because interpreting the meaning of *anything* produces only a “*perception of meaning*” (5:2). When I attempt to analyze the nature of my own self, even if I try to include the concept of non-separation

from God, I am doing my thinking from a separated viewpoint; I am a separate individual trying to understand non-separation. The result can only be more confusion (5:3–4). Trying to figure out the nature of the Self simply cannot work.

As many teachers of non-dualism have pointed out, the Self cannot see itself. *Whatever I can perceive is not me.* The Self can only be known by direct experience.

To know the Self does not require ingenuity (5:6). Clever thinking won't get us there. And we can actually be free of the need to engage in ingenious thinking when we become willing to let it go (5:7). That implies that the only reason we seem to need ingenious thinking is because we *want* to engage in it. It makes us feel clever, but doesn't really accomplish anything useful. I do not, however, think this intends to totally disparage thinking. The Course, in many places, encourages us to use our minds constructively. For instance, read W-rIII.in.5–7, where the mind is called “the Holy Spirit's chosen means for your salvation.” What is belittled here is the *misuse* of mind, engaging it in a “futile attempt to escape” (5:5) from the paradox we've set up. We are trying to figure out a way to have our cake and eat it, too—to hold on to the separated self, and yet to still be one with God (see 2:4–5). That is simply impossible.

Paragraph 6

6. ¹Prayer is a way of asking for something. ²It is the medium of miracles. ³But the only meaningful prayer is for forgiveness, because those who have been forgiven have everything. ⁴Once forgiveness has been accepted, prayer in the usual sense becomes utterly meaningless. ⁵The prayer for forgiveness is nothing more than a request that you may be able to recognize what you already have. ⁶In electing perception instead of knowledge, you placed yourself in a position where you could resemble your Father only by perceiving miraculously. ⁷You have lost the knowledge that you yourself are a miracle of God. ⁸Creation [Ur: *Miraculous creation*] is your Source and your only real function.

• Study Question •

6. *Spend some time practicing the prayer for forgiveness, which means, requesting to recognize what you already have. Write a short example of such a prayer.*



Instead of ingenious thought, we need to pray for forgiveness—which, in the marvelously idiosyncratic way the Course has of defining things, simply means to “request that you may be able to recognize what you already have” (6:5). We cease trying to figure things out, or to attain to some state of knowledge currently beyond us. Instead, we ask for help in recognizing what we already are and already have.

Recognizing what we already have is what happens in a miracle. “Prayer...is the medium of miracles” (6:1–2), which is a direct quote of T-1.I.11:1. Prayer is the way we access miracles. We pray for the ability to recognize that which is always so. Forgiveness is what makes that recognition possible, because it removes what is blocking that recognition.

When I realize that there is no sin and that what I thought was sin has no consequences (W-pI.101.6:7), I realize that I am still joined in eternal union with God. I have everything because I have God, Who *is* everything. That totally wipes out any need for “prayer in the usual sense” (5:4) of asking for things.

When I chose to perceive instead of to know (which I chose when I chose separation (1:1)), I have lost the knowledge of my true Self, a miracle of which Creation is the only Source and the only function (6:6–7). To reconnect with that knowledge, I must first *perceive* miraculously (6:6). My false perception must be taken out of the way, allowing the truth to return to me.

Paragraph 7

7. ¹The statement “God created man in his own image and likeness” needs reinterpretation. ²“Image” can be understood as “thought,” and “likeness” as “of a like quality.” ³God did [Ur: *did*] create spirit [Ur: *the Son*] in His Own Thought and of a quality like to His Own. ⁴There *is* nothing else. ⁵Perception, on the other hand, is impossible without a belief in “more” and “less.” ⁶At every level it involves selectivity [Ur: *Unless perception, at every level, involves selectivity, it is incapable of organization*]. ⁷Perception is a continual process of accepting and rejecting, organizing and reorganizing, shifting and changing [Ur: *changing focus*]. ⁸Evaluation is an essential part of perception, because judgments are necessary in order to select. [Ur: *“Lack of lack” is a concept which is meaningless to a perceiver, because the ability to perceive at all rests on lack.*]

• Study Question •

7. *In what way is judgment inextricably involved with perception?*

Humankind was created in God’s image and likeness, that is, in His Thought and of a quality like to His Own (7:3). Then follows the line: “There *is* nothing else.” God, and God’s extension in creation, is all that exists. In creation, everything is “of a like quality,” and therefore perfectly equal and without any difference. It is a condition of perfect oneness (7:1–4). Perception, by contrast, *depends on* making distinctions. Something is “more” and something is “less.” The very process of perception is one of judgment, of sorting things out and telling them apart from one another (7:5–8). When we perceive visually, for instance, our minds are sorting things out, focusing on one, making

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something foreground and something background, noticing boundaries and shapes—the whole process of perception *is* a series of judgments. And that entire process is completely inapplicable to the reality of creation.

Paragraph 8

8. ¹What happens to perceptions if there are no judgments and nothing but perfect equality? ²Perception becomes impossible [Ur: *it automatically useless*]. ³Truth can only be known. ⁴All of it is equally true, and knowing any part of it is to know all of it. ⁵Only perception involves partial awareness. ⁶Knowledge transcends [Ur: *all of*] the laws governing perception, because partial knowledge is impossible. ⁷It is all one and has no separate parts. [Ur: *This is the real knowledge.*] ⁸You who are really one with it need but know yourself and your knowledge is complete. ⁹To know God's miracle is to know Him.

• Study Question •

8. *Attempt in your own words to answer the question posed in 8:1, and to explain the reason for your answer.*



If the reality of creation is that everything is perfect equality, all of like quality with God, then judgments (which select between different things) become impossible. Since perception depends on judgment, then “perception becomes impossible” (8:1–2). Recall what we said in the commentary on the last section, about existence without perception (see my comments on T-3.IV.10). We may find it hard to conceive of what it would be like to exist without perception, and may even find the thought frightening. Nevertheless, the Course is emphatic that there is a kind of awareness—here called *knowledge*—that bypasses perception entirely, and is vastly more satisfying and stable.

We can't *perceive* truth; we can only *know* it (8:3). When we know any part of it, we know it all, because it is seamlessly one. This, too, is hard for us to grasp. I think I get a sense of it every time I notice that nearly any truth in the Course, if you think about it long enough and carefully enough, will lead you to any other truth in the Course. Every part of it implies, and requires, every other part. “I am as God created me” implies “There is no sin.” “There is no sin” implies “I am the holy Son of God Himself.” “I am as God created me” also implies “There is no world.” Which implies “I am not a body.” And so on. But that is only a shadow, I think, of what is meant here. When we *know* any part of truth, we know it all. “It is all one and has no separate parts” (8:7).

Perception is like trying to describe the Grand Canyon in words. Knowledge is like opening your eyes and *being in the Grand Canyon*. And even that is a poor comparison.

Because truth is all one, if we know ourselves—or, I should say, our Self—we know God (8:8–9). This idea occurs more than once in the Course:

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The recognition of God is the recognition of yourself. There is no separation of God and His creation (T-8.V.2:6–7).

Paragraph 9

9. ¹Forgiveness is the healing of the perception of separation. ²Correct perception of your brother is necessary, because minds have chosen to see themselves as separate. ³Spirit [Ur: Each Soul] knows God completely. ⁴That is its miraculous power. ⁵The fact that each one has this power completely is a condition entirely alien to the world's thinking. ⁶The world believes that if anyone has everything, there is nothing left. ⁷But God's miracles are as total as His Thoughts because they *are* His Thoughts. [Ur: God shines in them all with perfect light. If they recognize this light anywhere, they know it universally. Revelation cannot be explained, because it *is* knowledge. Revelation *happens*. It is the only *really* natural happening, because it reflects the nature of God.]

• Study Question •

9. *How does the first sentence define forgiveness? Think about some situation that you see as needing forgiveness, and apply this concept of forgiveness to that situation.*



Benjamin Franklin, at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, said, “We must indeed all hang together, or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately.” What the Course is saying goes even deeper than *needing* to “hang together.” If forgiveness means that our perception of separation is healed (9:1), then for me to be healed, I *have to* perceive my brother as healed (9:2). If I can be healed and my brother can be *not* healed, then we are separate; and if I am seeing separation, I am not healed at all! Either we are all forgiven, or none of us is. Either we are all in God, or none of us is.

Each one of us “knows God completely” (9:3–5). Each one of us “has everything” (9:6). In the thinking of the world that is impossible; “if anyone has everything, there is nothing left” (9:6) for the rest of us. But that isn't how it works with God's miracles and God's Thoughts. They are all total. All of them include everything. Forgiveness is teaching us that we know God completely and have everything! What a wonderful message! And how wonderful it is to share it with all of our brothers.

Let me, then, remember this the next time I encounter a situation needing forgiveness. How can I best communicate that there is no separation? How can I best impart the message to my brother and myself, the message that we both know God completely and have everything? What am I currently thinking or doing that contradicts that message?

Paragraph 10

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10. ¹As long as perception lasts prayer has a place. ²Since perception rests on lack, those who perceive have not totally accepted the Atonement and given themselves over to truth. ³Perception is based on [Ur: Perception is] a separated state, so that anyone who perceives at all needs healing. ⁴Communion, not prayer, is the natural state of those who know. ⁵God and His miracle [Ur: miracles] are inseparable. [Ur: All words, at best, are preparatory. *The word is really a thought. No one word is universally meaningful, because a word is a symbol... The original name for "thought" and "word" was the same. The quotation should read "In the beginning was the thought, and the thought was with God, and the thought was God."*] ⁶How beautiful indeed are the Thoughts of God who live in His Light! ⁷Your worth is beyond perception because it is beyond doubt. ⁸Do not perceive yourself in different lights. ⁹Know yourself in the One Light where the miracle that is you is perfectly clear.

• Study Question •

10. *Why does prayer have a place "as long as perception lasts"?*

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Perception "rests on lack" (10:2). Therefore, anyone who perceives has not completely accepted the Atonement and has not totally accepted the truth—because in truth we lack nothing. If nothing else will rein in our spiritual snobbery, this teaching will! "Anyone who perceives at all needs healing" (10:3). I guess that includes you and me, huh?

Prayer is the medium of miracles, the means by which we receive healing; therefore, as long as we perceive, we need prayer (10:1). Needing prayer is not natural (10:4), but we are not in a natural state. Our natural state is one of *communion* with God and one another, as Thoughts of God, living in His light (10:5–6). In that state there is no judging of one another; instead, we are overtaken with constant delight at one another's beauty! As the Workbook puts it, when we know our own worth and that of our brothers, we can "scarce refrain from kneeling at [one another's] feet" (W-pI.161.9:3).

What lies "beyond perception," as the title of the section reads? "Your worth" (10:7). When you go beyond perception to knowledge, what you encounter is a direct awareness of your own worth as God's creation, a worth that includes everyone and is shared by everyone. Any perception of yourself "in different lights" (10:8), as anything less than a living miracle (10:9), is a mistake which needs healing.

Answer Key

1. The answer is left as an exercise for the reader.
2. The distinction between making and creating is crucial to teachers of God (T-2.V(A). 12). The essential difference is that in what we make, there is apparent lack; no lack exists in God's creation. Making can be a kind of miscreation that both arises from and leads to fear. What we create with God is real; what we make apart from God is only real *in our own sight*, but not in God's Mind. The last judgment is a sorting out of what we have produced into what is worthwhile or truly creative and what we have made apart from God, which is not worth preserving. The "self" we think we are after the separation was made (by us) and not created (by God).
3. The thing that prevents us from knowing is that we have confused the self we have made (or what we have made of ourselves) with our real self, created by God. We have confused what we made with what God created. We have believed in an unstable self; since knowledge is always stable, we have made knowledge impossible for ourselves.
4. A new self-image is something we can "make" for ourselves; this shows the power of perception (4:8). It does not truly reflect the reality of the Self God created, however. That Self is far beyond any self-image we can make.
5. No written answer is expected. For myself, the impotence of "ingenious thinking" has both its pros and its cons. I *enjoy* figuring things out and interpreting things, so part of me wants to do that and to feel the sense of power and control it brings. But another part of me is deeply relieved, because I know that, no matter how hard I think, I will never be able to "figure out" all of reality, not even the small part of it that is my own relationship with God. If knowing God requires hard, ingenious thinking, then godliness is an attribute reserved to the super-intelligent. Who wants that?
6. A prayer for forgiveness: "Dear God, help me to relinquish my identification with this imperfect self I have made, and to identify instead with the wholeness of Christ." Suggestion: Examine a number of the prayers given in Part II of the *Workbook for Students*. Although they may not use the word *forgiveness*, most of them are forgiveness prayers, in the sense of requesting to recognize what we already have.
7. Perception involves selectivity, choosing which things to see and which not, which are foreground and which are background, telling where one thing leaves off and the next begins. All of these are judgments. So judgment is essential to the perceptual process.
8. If there are no judgments and everything is equal, then there can no longer be any perception, because without judgments there is no perception.
9. Forgiveness is defined as, "the healing of the perception of separation." In the situation I am thinking of, how am I seeing myself as separate from others and them from me? What would it mean to heal that perception?

10. Miracles reach our minds and heal our perception through prayer. Saying prayer has a place as long as perception lasts is like saying, “Aspirin has a place as long as your headache lasts.” When the headache is gone, you don’t need any more aspirin. When knowledge replaces perception, we won’t need any more prayer.