

ACIM Study Guide and Commentary

Chapter 5, Healing and Wholeness

Section III

The Guide to Salvation

Overview of the Section

Chapter Five has two main themes: the Holy Spirit as the Voice for God Who calls us to return, and the interpersonal nature of miracles, or the need to share our healing in order to know we have it. Sections II, III and IV, especially, focus on both of these themes. Section III focuses especially on the Holy Spirit's role in salvation.

• Study Question •

1. *Skim through the Sections II and III and write down every phrase you can find which describes what the Holy Spirit is. Look for phrases beginning with words such as, "The Holy Spirit is..." or "He is...."*

Paragraph 1

1. ¹The way to recognize [Ur: *to learn to know*] your brother is by recognizing [Ur: *perceiving*] the Holy Spirit in him. ²I have already said that the Holy Spirit is the bridge [or *thought-transfer*] for the transfer of perception to knowledge, so we can [Ur: *can*] use the terms as if they were related, because in His Mind they are. ³This relationship **must** be in His Mind because, unless it were, the separation between the two ways of thinking would not be open to healing. ⁴He is part of the Holy Trinity, because His Mind is partly **yours** and also **partly God's**. ⁵This needs clarification, not in statement [Ur: *since we have said this before,*] but in **experience**.

• Study Question •

2. *Explain what you think sentence 1:5 means, and how it is related to sentence 1:1.*

The Holy Spirit leads me from false perception, through true perception, to knowledge. He is the "bridge" between my perception (duality) and God's knowledge (unity) (1:2). "His Mind is partly yours and also partly God's" (1:4), which places Him in a unique position, connecting Creator and Creation. When I recognize this divine Spirit *in my brother or sister*, acknowledging him or her both as God's creation and as an

extension of God Himself, I am truly recognizing my brother as he is (1:1). I am seeing with true perception, which will lead me back to knowledge.

The Holy Spirit is intimately connected in the Course to the idea of sharing with our brothers. Since “The Holy Spirit [is] the shared Inspiration of all the Sonship” (T-5.I.7:1), it is impossible to think of Him without bringing in the rest of the Sonship. The reverse is also true: it is impossible to perceive our brothers truly without bringing in the Holy Spirit: “The way to recognize your brother is by recognizing the Holy Spirit in him” (1:1).

We come to recognize the truth about our brothers and sisters when we realize that the Holy Spirit is in them just as He is in us. Within them is the same “Call to return” (II.2:2), the same “principle of Atonement” (II.3:1), the same “Voice That calls you back to where you were before and will be again” (II.3:7), the same Voice for God quietly reminding and speaking for peace (II.7:7–8). When you recognize that Voice in your brother, you are recognizing the truth about your brother.

That recognition is a perception, not yet knowledge, but is the “way to learn to know” (1:1, Urtext). True perception and knowledge are related in the Mind of the Holy Spirit (1:2). Indeed, His Mind establishes and maintains the relationship between perception and knowledge; He *is* the Bridge, the means by which our thoughts are transferred from perception to knowledge.

Perception, you will recall, exists in the realm of the ego and duality (which requires separation), while knowledge exists only in the realm of spirit and oneness, where no separation exists and therefore no perception. From perception and knowledge arise two ways of thinking: the empirical (perception-based) thinking of the ego, and the what we could call the *gnostic* thinking of the spirit. (*Gnostic* means “intuitive apprehension of spiritual truths” according to the *American Heritage Dictionary*.) The separation between the two ways of thinking seems absolute. Without the link between perception and knowledge provided by the Mind of the Holy Spirit, there would be no way to heal the separation between them (1:3). The link in His Mind *must exist* because healing exists.

I think this point will be most meaningful to the philosophically inclined among us—and I include myself in that number. For me, there is a logically unbridgeable gulf between perception and knowledge, or between identification with the ego and identification with the shared Identity of the Sonship. There is a philosophic sense of, “You can’t get there from here.” As I’ve often tried to express, how can I “be” without being distinct from other things? How can “I” disappear without a sense of loss into the One? How can a mind totally engulfed in perceptual thinking make the transition to Gnosis?

The concept of the Holy Spirit, a Being both part of God’s Mind and part of my mind (1:4), a Being Who, being part of God, is capable of bridging that cosmic gulf, delights me! It seems so highly appropriate, so perfectly necessary, so clearly fitting to the problem. Yet for others, the problem seems contrived, and the Holy Spirit seems almost entirely unnecessary. These folks do not seem to be troubled by the philosophical gap between Oneness and duality, perfection and imperfection, Heaven and earth, or eternity

and time. These folks seem to be able to say, “Of course we are one with God!” and leave it at that, without struggle or mental conflict. I bless them; I am glad for them. For the rest of us, who cannot seem to avoid seeing the stark antinomy¹ represented by these two totally distinct realms, the Holy Spirit comes as a blessed way out of an unsolvable dilemma.

I am not surprised when Jesus says that this dual nature of the Holy Spirit “needs clarification” (1:5). Philosophically, it is quite profound. But I *am* surprised when he adds that the needed clarification will come “not in statement but in experience” (1:5). Yes, it is the resolution of a philosophical paradox, but the resolution does not come about via profound and clever thinking; it comes through experience. In other words, through *gnosis*, “intuitive apprehension of spiritual truths.” We may not be able to wrap our little minds around the concept of a Being Who is both part of the Holy Trinity and yet part of our own mind, but we can *experience Him* and in that way come to understand what is being said here. As we experience the working of the Holy Spirit within us, we will come to know through that experience what it means that His Mind is partly ours and partly God’s. We won’t need explanations; we will simply *know*.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹The Holy Spirit is the **idea** of healing. ²Being thought, the idea **gains** as it is shared. ³Being the Call *for* God, it is also the idea *of* God. ⁴Since you are part of God it is also the idea of **yourself**, as well as of all His creations [Ur: **all the parts of God**]. ⁵The idea of the Holy Spirit shares the property of other ideas because it follows the laws of the Universe of which **it** is a part. ⁶[Ur: **Therefore,**] It is strengthened by being given away. ⁷It increases in **you** as you give it to your brother [Ur: **brothers**]. ⁸[Ur: **Since thoughts do not have to be conscious to exist,**] Your brother does **not** have to be **aware** of the Holy Spirit [either] in himself or in you for this miracle to occur. ⁹He may have dissociated the Call for God, just as **you** have. ¹⁰This dissociation is healed in **both** of you as you become aware of [Ur: **see**] the Call for God in him, and thus acknowledge its being.

• Study Question •

3. *Explain how thinking of the Holy Spirit as an idea—the idea of healing, of God, and of yourself—makes it understandable that you gain more of Him by giving Him away.*

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¹ *Antinomy*: a contradiction between two apparently equally valid principles or between inferences correctly drawn from such principles (Merriam-Webster dictionary)

We can begin to experience this bridge-like aspect of the Holy Spirit as we begin to have experiences of healing. The Holy Spirit, we are told, is an idea or a thought—the idea of healing (2:1). It may seem hard to relate something that is *an idea* with something that acts as *a person*. Yet the Course refers to both the Holy Spirit and *your spirit* as an idea or “Thought of God” (T-13.VIII.4:3 and C-1.1:3), and in 2:3–4 it calls the Holy Spirit “the idea of God” and “the idea of yourself.” The Holy Spirit represents the truth; in some sense, He *is* the truth, the very idea of it. He is the thought of wholeness in our minds, the awareness, seeming sometimes dim, of a state of completion and integration that we know exists, and toward which we strive, although we cannot even describe it. He *is* that thought within us. He is the idea of God or of what God is, that seems to come from beyond our own thinking and pull us upward toward itself. He is the idea of our true Self, calling to us to be acknowledged and released from the prison of forgetfulness.

Clearly, it is important that we conceive of the Holy Spirit *as an idea*. Why? Because we can understand that ideas, as we saw back in T-5.I.1, are undiminished when they are shared or given away, and increase as others receive them. If the Holy Spirit is an idea, the same is true of Him. When we give Him to others what we have remains the same or grows, and He extends Himself into those to whom we give Him.

The idea of the Holy Spirit is “strengthened by being given away. It increases as you give it to your brother” (2:6–7). This thought about ideas and giving was first developed back in Section I, paragraphs 1 and 2. Now it is being applied specifically to the Holy Spirit and His thought system. The way to strengthen your own awareness of the Holy Spirit is to give the Holy Spirit to your brother, or to recognize the Spirit in your brother.

How do you do that? Is it necessary for the other person to awaken and consciously become aware of the Holy Spirit in his life in order for you to give the Holy Spirit to him? Jesus tells us that is *not* necessary (2:8–10).

The only thing you need to do is “become aware of the Call for God in him” (2:10). Your brother does not have to do anything. He need not be aware of the Holy Spirit in himself, nor acknowledge the Holy Spirit in you. In this passage, healing is definitely seen as a one-sided process. Only *one mind* has to change, and *both* minds will be healed. Your brother does not have to cooperate at all. He can be completely oblivious and still receive the miracle.

When I see a brother through the Holy Spirit in his own mind, *he is healed*. But for that healing to manifest, he must accept it, and he may not be ready to do that at this moment in time. In that case, the Holy Spirit holds the healing for him until his fear of it has been reduced enough to accept it. The same idea is presented in the section, “Should Healing Be Repeated?” in the *Manual for Teachers*. (See M-7.2:1-3 and also M-6.1:6–2:9.)

Exercise: Think of a brother whom you regard as somewhat insane, and then repeat these words several times, allowing them to sink into your awareness:

I see the Holy Spirit in you.

*I acknowledge a Presence in you that is perfectly sane,
that is always seeking to guide you towards sanity,
and that in the end will succeed.*

Paragraph 3

Here we have quite a bit of Urtext material that shows how the teaching grew organically out of the day-to-day experiences of Bill and Helen:

3. [Ur: Bill, who has made a number of vital contributions to our joint venture, made a major one a while ago, which he himself did not appreciate or even understand. If we recognize its value together, we will be able to use it together, because it is an idea, and must therefore be shared to be held. When Bill said that he was determined “*not to see you that way*,” he was speaking negatively. If he will state the same idea *positively*, he will see the *power* of what he said. He had realized that there are two ways of seeing you, and also that they are diametrically opposed to one another.] ¹There are two diametrically opposed ways of seeing your brother. ²They must both be in your mind, because you are the perceiver. ³They must also be in his, because you are perceiving him. [Ur: What he was really saying was that he would *not* look at you through *his* ego, or perceive *your* ego in you. State {d} positively, he would see you through the Holy Spirit in *his* mind, and perceive it in *yours*.] ⁴See him through the Holy Spirit in his mind, and you will recognize Him in yours. [This edited statement would be closer to the original if it read: See him through the Holy Spirit in *your* mind, and you will recognize Him in *his*.] ⁵What you acknowledge in your brother you **are** acknowledging in yourself, and what you share you **strengthen**.

• Study Question •

4. *What are you encouraged to do (in regard to your brother) that will help you recognize the Holy Spirit in your mind?*
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Jesus here takes a simple statement of Bill's, that he was determined “*not to see you that way*,” and uses it to tie together the teaching about seeing the Holy Spirit in our brothers with the teaching about how sharing an idea strengthens it.

The Course wants us to see our brothers through the Holy Spirit in our mind; if we do so, we will recognize the Holy Spirit in their minds (1:4, Urtext). Seeing someone through the Holy Spirit in my mind seems to have two aspects. First, I think it means seeing the person as the Holy Spirit sees them—God's perfect creation, the holy, guiltless Son of God. Second, I believe it means seeing the *activity* of the Holy Spirit in them—the Call for God, the same desire for peace and love that is in us. The Course is restating one of its central themes: We find our salvation through offering salvation to others.

We have two completely different options for how we see our brothers; both options exist in our minds and in our brothers' minds (1:1–3). Seeing through the Holy Spirit is one option that is specifically mentioned (1:4). The other option, obviously, is seeing

through the ego. When someone interacts with us, they may be acting from their ego, but nevertheless we can choose how we see them. We can see them through our own ego, which will focus on their ego, with conflict the certain result. Or, we can see them through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the same in both of us, and He will look on our brother with the same love with which He looks on us, reinterpreting him on behalf of God. He will see his spirit, not his ego. He will hear his call for love, and not his malicious attack thoughts.

As we see our brother through the Holy Spirit's eyes, acknowledging the Holy Spirit in him, we are acknowledging the Holy Spirit in ourselves at the same time. As we share the Holy Spirit with our brother, we strengthen Him in ourselves (1:5). By seeing another person this way, we verify that what we see in him, we also have. We could not see it in another if it did not exist in us.

The final sentence in this paragraph is one that I have memorized. It comes to mind often as I interact with other people during the day. I find myself thinking, "Is what I am acknowledging about this person something I want to acknowledge about myself?" If I find myself perceiving someone to be contentious and argumentative for instance, I have the choice of whether to focus on that aspect, or whether to direct my attention to some more positive aspect of the person. I strengthen whatever I acknowledge, so let me acknowledge the things I *want* to strengthen. Let me determine to see others through the Holy Spirit in my mind and to perceive the Holy Spirit in their minds.

Paragraph 4

4. ¹The Voice of the Holy Spirit is weak in you. ²That is why you must share It. ³It must be increased in strength before you can hear It. ⁴It is impossible to hear It in yourself while It is so weak in your [Ur: *own*] mind. ⁵It is not weak in Itself, but It is limited by your unwillingness to hear It. [Ur: Will {willingness} itself is an idea, and is therefore strengthened by being shared.] ⁶If you make the mistake of looking for the Holy Spirit in yourself alone your thoughts will frighten you [Ur: You have made the mistake of looking for the Holy Spirit in yourselves, and that is why your meditations have frightened you] because, by adopting the ego's viewpoint, you are undertaking [Ur: you undertook] an ego-alien journey with the ego as guide. ⁷This is bound to produce fear. [Ur: Bill's better idea needs to be strengthened in both of you. Since it was his, he can increase it by giving it to you.]

• Study Question •

5. *If you feel that the Voice of the Holy Spirit seems faint within you, how can you strengthen it?*



Sharing the Holy Spirit with others is how we strengthen His Voice in our own minds (4:1–2). If we want to be more aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we

should start by *looking for Him in others*. The more we acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit in our brothers, the clearer His Voice becomes in our minds. The Voice of the Holy Spirit is weak in us and must be strengthened (4:3–4). Not that the Voice is actually weak in itself, but our unwillingness to hear the Voice limits It (4:5). The measure of how willing a person is to hear the Holy Spirit in himself is his willingness to acknowledge the Holy Spirit in others.

If someone looks for the Holy Spirit in himself alone, he is going to wind up in fear as he encounters the dark, vicious, and murderous thoughts of his own ego (4:6). And that is what he will encounter because the very idea of looking for the Holy Spirit *in myself alone* is an ego idea. “By myself” is the very heart of the ego’s point of view (T-4.II.8:1). Therefore, if you look for the Holy Spirit by yourself,

...you are undertaking an ego-alien² journey with the ego as guide. This is bound to produce fear. (4:6–7)

Putting this into practical terms, don’t try to find the Voice for God by looking only in yourself. You will be asking the ego to do something alien to itself, and this will produce great fear. Look for Him instead in your brothers. This way is totally harmonious with your nature as God’s Son and as part of the Sonship, and joy is the inevitable result.

An Interlude: Looking at the overall picture

I have struggled to understand what Jesus is saying here and have to confess I am uncertain that I have done so. I will share with you what I have so far, in hope it will further your understanding. This will involve concepts from throughout the section, not just from the fifth paragraph. Once I’ve presented what I think is the overall idea, I will return to the on-going commentary.

Between sentences 2 and 3, paragraph 5 seems to shift themes from thoughts about time and delay to a discussion of the Holy Spirit as God’s Answer to the ego, the One Who reinterprets us for God. Yet, reading further, there does seem to be a continuity of thought, because the words “time” and “eternity” crop up later in both the sixth and seventh paragraphs. The connection between the theme of time and the role of the Holy Spirit is difficult to grasp, yet I believe there is one. Jesus sees connections and relationships between ideas that at first, to us, seem completely disconnected, because he is seeing things from a very different perspective. From the ego’s perspective, the ideas are unrelated; from the Holy Spirit’s perspective, they are so related as to be almost identical.

In the eighth paragraph, Jesus begins talking about the peacefulness of the vision of the Holy Spirit as opposed to the war and conflict that are natural to the

² Jesus seems to be making a very subtle play on words again, this time with the word “ego-alien,” which has a very distinct psychological meaning, as I pointed out in commenting on T-4.V.2. An “ego-alien journey” would be a journey which is inconsistent with the fundamental beliefs and personality of the ego. Looking for the Holy Spirit is fundamentally inconsistent with the ego’s beliefs. No small wonder, then, that “This is bound to produce fear.”

ego. This seems like another shift in themes. Yet the final sentence of the paragraph (8:13) clearly links this theme of war and peace to the theme of time begun in the fifth paragraph: “Eternity and peace are as closely related as are time and war.” In Jesus’ mind, all three of these themes—time vs. eternity, the function of the Holy Spirit as reinterpreter, and war vs. peace—are likewise related to the opening theme of the section: that the way to recognize our brother is to recognize the Holy Spirit in him, and the way to recognize the Voice for God in ourselves is to recognize Him in others.

If we start with the idea of the Holy Spirit as the “bridge” between perception and knowledge, an idea that recurs often in this section, I think we have a good clue as to how all the elements tie together. We are told that the Holy Spirit is “the mediator between the interpretations of the ego and the knowledge of the spirit” (7:1). His function is *reinterpreting* what the ego makes (7:4) so that we are able to understand all of it in the light of God.

Therefore, He mediates between the ego’s interpretations and knowledge *by reinterpreting things*. He does not attack nor destroy anything made by the ego; He simply reinterprets it so that we can see it without guilt. He helps us, for instance, see the call for love behind an attack. He does not change the facts of what happened, but He utterly transforms our understanding of what “what happened” *means*.

He is the bridge between perception and knowledge. Similarly, then, He is the bridge between time and eternity, and between conflict and peace. The ego made perception, time, and conflict. The Holy Spirit reinterprets all these things and uses them to bring us back to God. His reinterpretation is our bridge between our *perception* of who we are and the *knowledge* of Who we *really* are. All of these things, then, are related because in all of them the Holy Spirit is our Guide to Salvation, reinterpreting what we have made in such a way that we can come to see the creation of God behind it all.

His function in reinterpreting our self, or bridging the gap between the “self” and the “Self” is also related to the theme of recognizing the Holy Spirit in ourselves by recognizing Him in others. Finding the Holy Spirit in ourselves by recognizing the Holy Spirit in others helps us to realize that we are not the isolated self we thought we were. “This is because you have no meaning apart from your rightful place in the Sonship...this is your life, your eternity and your Self” (8:2–3). The Sonship, which includes all of us, *is* our Self; therefore, we cannot find ourselves without finding the Sonship.

If we begin to share His perception of things, we are going to see a lot of things differently. For instance, if I begin to perceive that my brother is my self, a part of the Sonship just as I am, the same as me rather than different, I will not, like the ego, perceive strife, conflict and war. The vision of the Sonship is a very calm and peaceful vision (8:6) because there is no separation and no one to be in conflict *with*.

Sharing His perception, I will see *time* very differently because I will focus only on the eternal aspect of time, which is *now* (6:5). I won't see the past and bring guilt from it into the present, nor will I worry about the future. Delay will be unimportant because *now*, in eternity, everything is already complete. I won't fret about delay in myself or in my brothers, because I will see everyone, including myself, from this reinterpreted perspective of which the Holy Spirit constantly reminds me.

Because the Sonship is One, if I share this perception about myself I *must* have the same perception of my brothers, and if I have this perception of my brothers I must also have it about myself.

This, then, is what I feel is the overall message of this section that ties together several apparently diverse themes. With that overall understanding in mind, let's return now to our comments on paragraph 5.

Paragraph 5

5. ¹Delay is of the ego, because time is its concept. [Ur: Delay is obviously a *time* idea.] ²Both time and delay are meaningless in eternity. ³I have said before that the Holy Spirit is God's Answer to the ego. ⁴Everything of which the Holy Spirit reminds you is in direct opposition to the ego's notions, because true and false perceptions are themselves opposed. ⁵The Holy Spirit has the task of undoing what the ego has made. ⁶He undoes it at the same level on [Ur: in the same realm of discourse in] which the ego operates, or the mind would be unable to understand the change.

• Study Question •

6. *This paragraph states quite clearly that the undoing work of the Holy Spirit operates at the same level as the ego (in particular, within the framework of time and space). Why is this?*

The ego does not want you to go on this journey and will do everything it can to delay you: "Delay is of the ego" (5:1). It thinks it is gaining something by delaying you, because "time is its concept" (5:1). Actually time, and therefore delay, are both meaningless in eternity (5:2). The ego first delays us, and then tries to get us to panic over being delayed on the journey. The Holy Spirit, Who is the bridge between time and eternity, understands our concern with time but also understands that time is meaningless, and in communing with us He communicates His unconcern with our delays.

In sentence 3 Jesus begins to talk of the Holy Spirit as God's Answer to the ego, an idea he has introduced previously (T-5.II.2:5, for instance). The ideas of which the Holy Spirit reminds us are in "direct opposition to the ego's notions" (5:4). This general principle could be illustrated by what was just said about time, which is the ego's idea but which is meaningless in eternity.

What is said next is extremely important to understanding why the Holy Spirit works the way He does.

The Holy Spirit has the task of undoing what the ego has made. He undoes it at the same level on which the ego operates, or the mind would be unable to understand the change. (5:5–6)

There are two key thoughts here:

The job of the Holy Spirit is *undoing what the ego has made*. He does not need to create anything new because God's creation is complete already. He just undoes what the ego has made that hides God's creation. He removes the blocks to the awareness of Love's presence.

The Holy Spirit does His job *at the same level on which the ego operates*. As the Manual puts it, "This course remains within the ego framework, where it is needed" (C-Int.3:1). Correction is needed on the level at which the error occurred, and that is the ego level. If the correction came at a different level "the mind would be unable to understand the change" (T-5.III.5:6).

It is quite important for us to realize this. As long as we are in the process of being corrected, we are going to remain at "the ego level." We are going to continue to have bodies and to appear to be separated individuals. We are going to experience the limitations of time and space. We should not expect to get blissfully lost in some continual, direct experience of the spiritual realms. As long as we have lessons to learn we will continue to experience the limitations of the body.

Do not despair, then, because of limitations. It is your function to escape from them, but not to be without them. (M-26.4:1–2)

Paragraph 6

6. ¹I have repeatedly emphasized that one level of the mind is not understandable to another. ²So it is with the ego and the Holy Spirit [Ur: the Soul]; with time and eternity. ³Eternity is an idea of God, so the Holy Spirit [Ur: the Soul] understands it perfectly. ⁴Time is a belief of the ego, so the lower mind, which is the ego's domain, accepts it without question. ⁵The only aspect of time that is [Ur: really] eternal is *now*. [Ur: That is what we *really* mean when we say that now is the only time. The literal nature of this statement does not mean anything to the ego. It interprets it, at best, to mean "don't worry about the future." This is *not* what it really means at all.]

• Study Question •

7. *To get a better feel for what it means that "the only aspect of time that is eternal is now," try practicing the exercise given in Workbook Lesson 230, "Now will I seek and find the peace of God."*



There is a place where time and eternity meet. That place is *now*, in the present moment (6:5), or in what the Course, in Chapter 15, will begin calling “the holy instant.” The ego level of the mind cannot understand the spirit, nor can it understand eternity (6:1–2). Only in the holy instant, where in a certain sense the levels overlap, can there be some kind of comprehension. In the holy instant, you know that delay is unimportant because *right now* you are whole, complete, and at peace. There, in the holy instant, the Holy Spirit bridges the apparently irreconcilable idea of eternity and the ego’s belief in time (6:3–4).

Bear in mind this dichotomy between our lower mind, dominated by the ego, and our higher mind, which is controlled by spirit. The lower mind simply cannot comprehend the idea that “now is the only time,” or that “the only aspect of time that is eternal is now.” The concept cannot fit within the ego’s thought system, so it is forced to *misunderstand it* to mean, “Don’t worry about the future” or “Always appreciate the present moment.” That isn’t what it means. It means quite literally that only this instant is real, and that is something we can’t begin to understand except through the experience of the holy instant.

Paragraph 7

7. ¹The Holy Spirit is the Mediator between the interpretations of the ego and the knowledge of the spirit [Ur: the Soul]. ²His ability to deal with symbols enables Him to work with [Ur: *against*] the ego’s beliefs in its own language. ³His [Ur: *equal*] ability to look **beyond** symbols into eternity enables Him to understand the laws of God, for which He speaks. ⁴He can therefore perform the function of **reinterpreting** what the ego makes, not by destruction but by understanding. ⁵Understanding is light, and light leads to knowledge. ⁶The Holy Spirit is **in** light because He is **in you** who **are** light, but you yourself do not know this. ⁷It is therefore the task of the Holy Spirit to reinterpret you on behalf of God.

• Study Question •

8. *How does the Holy Spirit’s ability to deal with both ego symbols and what lies beyond symbols help Him to perform His function (7:2–4)?*

Filled with the knowledge of the spirit, the Holy Spirit is yet able to “work with the ego’s beliefs in its own language” (7:2). He can bridge that gap. This paragraph presents one possible interpretation of the line in Section I that said, “The Holy Spirit is the only part of the Holy Trinity that has a symbolic function” (T-5.I.4:1). He is the only part of the Trinity that works with symbols, which are intimately connected with the separation. (A symbol is something that stands for something else. Without separation, there is no “something else” and symbols are therefore impossible.) The Father has nothing to do with symbols; neither does the Son.

The Holy Spirit is the communication link or *Mediator* between the realm of symbols and the realm of direct knowledge (7:1). These two levels cannot understand one another, but the Holy Spirit understands both. He understands God's laws, but He can also reach into a mind that is dominated by the ego and speak in symbolic language (7:2–3). Like an interpreter, He is able to speak both our language and that of Heaven. That ability to bridge the gap is what makes it possible for Him to reinterpret what the ego makes (7:4). He understands eternity and can speak of it in time. If that were not possible, we would be trapped in time.

The word “understanding” (7:4) is important because it tells how the Holy Spirit reinterprets things. He *understands* them. That is, He perceives them in the light of truth, and that truth leads to knowledge (7:5). When I have a thought of attack, for instance, the ego can interpret it either favorably or unfavorably. Either the ego will justify the attack, or if it cannot do that, it will interpret it as sin and make me guilty for it. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, understands what is really going on, so He neither justifies the attack nor condemns it. Instead, He sees it simply as a mistake, coming from my fear. He sees it as my call for love (see T-12.I.3:1–4) and He answers with love. Similarly, He reinterprets everything the ego makes by understanding it, by seeing it in light (7:6), and that dispels the darkness.

He knows our true nature as light (7:6), and based on that truth, He reinterprets us on behalf of God (7:7). That is His function. He shows us that only our loving thoughts are true, and everything that appears to be sin and darkness is an illusion (see T-5.IV.1:3).

Paragraph 8

8. ¹You cannot understand yourself alone. ²This is because you have no meaning apart from your rightful place in the Sonship, and the rightful place of the Sonship is [in] God. ³This is your life, your eternity and your Self. ⁴It is of this that the Holy Spirit reminds you. ⁵It is this that the Holy Spirit sees. ⁶This vision [Ur: invariably] frightens the ego because it is so calm. ⁷Peace is the ego's greatest enemy because, according to its interpretation of reality, war is the guarantee of its survival. ⁸The ego becomes strong in strife [Ur: because]. ⁹If you believe there is strife you will react viciously, because the idea of danger has entered your mind. ¹⁰The [Ur: This] idea itself is an appeal to the ego. ¹¹The Holy Spirit is as vigilant as the ego to the call of danger, opposing it with His strength just as the ego welcomes it [Ur: with all its might]. ¹²The Holy Spirit counters this welcome by welcoming peace. ¹³Eternity and peace are as closely related as are time and war.

• Study Question •

9. *What is the vision the Holy Spirit sees, and reminds us of (2–5)?*
10. *Why is the concept of “striving” contradictory to spiritual advancement (8–12)?*



I think all of the ideas under discussion are related to the idea of “delay” mentioned in paragraph 5. That mention follows a discussion of how we can make the mistake of looking for the Holy Spirit within ourselves alone, which can appear to delay our progress. Within time, it *does* delay us. We can become agitated by such delay, and develop a sense of struggle about our spiritual advancement, or “strife,” as paragraph 8 calls it. Likewise, thinking we can see the Holy Spirit in ourselves without seeing Him in others puts us into conflict with others.

To the Holy Spirit, however, the only important part of time is *now*. And the only important thing in this instant of time is being at peace—not in strife. In the holy instant we can tap in to the Holy Spirit’s lack of concern about what, to us, seems to be intolerable delay and strife. He sees us already complete, already in the light, and in the holy instant He reminds us of our completion; He reminds us that we need do nothing, and “delay” does not ultimately matter.

There is simply no way for us to understand ourselves alone (8:1). Why? Because we *are not* alone. We are part of the Sonship, and the Sonship is part of God (8:2–3). The Holy Spirit knows this, although we have forgotten it (8:3–5, see also 7:6). This is what He sees, and what He reminds us of. If we try to look at our ego without Him, or if we try to look for the Holy Spirit in ourselves alone (4:6), we won’t understand what we see. What we are includes the totality of the Sonship, and the Sonship is in God. If we leave out that larger context we are operating on the ego level, which will inevitably produce more fear, and thus delay us. The delay does not matter, but it is not necessary, either.

The vision the Holy Spirit sees frightens the ego because it is a very calm vision, and to the ego, calmness is terrifying. Peace is its greatest enemy (8:5–7). That is why, if you look for the Holy Spirit with the ego as guide (looking in yourself alone), you will experience fear. The very peacefulness of what you see will terrify your ego.

Why does peace terrify the ego? Because it thrives on struggle, conflict, and war (8:7). “The ego becomes strong in strife” (8:8). Strife calls forth the ego and causes us to react viciously (8:9–10). Peace threatens the ego.

The ego, therefore, welcomes danger and thoughts of danger (8:11). Such thoughts keep us separated. The Holy Spirit opposes thoughts of danger with His peace (8:12). Thoughts of danger come from our feeling of being alone against the world. His peace comes (as we saw earlier in the paragraph, 8:2–4) from the vision of the Sonship, or the realization that we are not alone against the world, but one with all of God’s creation. Therefore, there is nothing opposing us, nothing to be afraid of.

It is the vision of the eternal oneness of the Sonship, shared with us by the Holy Spirit, that brings us peace, brings us freedom from concerns about time, and brings us

the awareness of our true Self. “Eternity and peace are...closely related...” in that vision (8:13), just as “time and war” are related in the ego’s perception.

Paragraph 9

9. ¹Perception [Ur: as well as knowledge] derives meaning from relationships. ²Those you accept are the foundations of your beliefs. ³The separation is merely another term for a split mind. [Ur: It was not an act, but a thought. Therefore, the idea of Separation can be given away, just as the idea of unity can, and either way, it will be *strengthened in the mind of the giver.*] ⁴The ego is the symbol of [Ur: the] separation, just as the Holy Spirit is the symbol of peace. ⁵What you perceive in others you are strengthening in yourself. ⁶You may let your mind misperceive, but the Holy Spirit lets your mind reinterpret its own misperceptions.

• Study Question •

11. *How does the Holy Spirit help me out of my misperceptions?*

The idea behind this paragraph seems to be that the ego must be the source of any perception that puts me in separation or in conflict, whether within myself or with others, because the ego is the symbol of separation. If I listen to the Holy Spirit, I must be at peace with myself and with all creation. How I see others is how I see myself. If I am not at peace with you, I am not at peace within myself.

This paragraph opens with one of those statements that seems important the minute you hear it, and yet, like many things in this section, the statement seems quite cryptic.

Perception derives meaning from relationships. Those [relationships] you accept are the foundations for your beliefs. (9:1–2)

Perception, of course, is the means the ego made by which we “know” things. It “derives meaning” concerning what it sees by the way in which the mind feels related to what is being seen. If I see a car crash, for instance, my mind will assign a very different meaning depending on whether the car involved belongs to a stranger or is *my* car. A terrorist bombing may elicit mild sympathy for the victims, but if my son dies in the blast, it means much more to me. The intensity of meaning my mind assigns varies in proportion to the degree of my relationship to what I perceive.

What relationships do I accept into my mind? The relationships I accept determine my beliefs about what I see (9:2). From the perspective of the Holy Spirit I am related to *everything*; my relationship is with the universe (T-15.VIII.4:4, T-4.VII.4:5). If I share the vision of the one Sonship, everything has meaning to me.

“The separation is just another term for a split mind” (9:3). We think of ourselves as separate beings, but there is really only one mind, perceiving itself as split. The separation I see *externally* is only the reflection of the *internal* split. The conflict I see outside reflects the war against myself in my mind. The ego—my separated

consciousness—is the symbol of that war (9:4). The Holy Spirit is the symbol of peace (9:4).

Which do I see in my brother? Ego, or Holy Spirit? War, or peace?

What you perceive in others you are strengthening in yourself. You may let your mind misperceive, but the Holy Spirit lets your mind reinterpret its own misperceptions. (9:5–6)

The choice is between ego and Holy Spirit, between separated individuals in conflict or the eternal calm of the Sonship, between a self hopelessly slogging along through time or a Self eternally whole. What I choose to see in my brother I am strengthening in myself. If I choose to see in *him* the Christ in whom we are both related, it forms the foundation of my belief about *myself*. If I choose not to relate to him, to see him as separate, I form and strengthen my belief in my own separateness.

Yet, even if I make the wrong choice and misperceive my brother, the Holy Spirit will enable me to reinterpret my misperceptions (9:6). By bringing my misperceptions to Him, holding them in His light, He will enable me to see things differently. He is the Guide to Salvation, showing me the way out of the mess of my own misperceptions. He reinterprets me on behalf of God. I can join my mind with His, and with Him reinterpret my misperceptions. It is a collaborative venture: He has the vision, but we have to agree to share it.

Paragraph 10

10. ¹The Holy Spirit is the perfect teacher. ²He uses only what your mind already understands to teach you that you do not understand it. ³The Holy Spirit can deal with a reluctant [Ur: an unwilling] learner without going counter to his mind [Ur: will], because part of it [Ur: his will] is still for God. ⁴Despite the ego's attempts to conceal this part, it is still much stronger than the ego, although the ego does not recognize it. ⁵The Holy Spirit recognizes it perfectly because it is His Own dwelling place; the place in the mind where He is at home. ⁶You are at home there, too, because it is a place of peace, and peace is of God. ⁷You who are part of God are not at home except in His peace. ⁸If peace is eternal, you are at home only in eternity.

• Study Question •

12. (a) Which part of your mind—ego, or the part for God—is stronger? (b) Why are we often unaware of the part that is for God?
13. When you are able, spend five to ten minutes in meditation trying to become aware of the part of your mind that is still for God, the part which is called the “dwelling place” of the Holy Spirit, “the place where He is at home,” the place also where “...you are at home...” and the “place of peace.”



The meanings we assign to things based on our apparent lack of relatedness to them are misperceptions. These misperceptions make up what we believe to be our “understanding” of things. The Holy Spirit does not launch a frontal attack on our misperceptions; He *uses* them to correct us (10:1–3). He takes what we think we know and through logic, demonstration, experience of the results of our beliefs, and experience that comes from His vision, He teaches us that we don’t know anything at all. He does not go “counter to [our] mind” (10:3). Instead, He appeals to the part of our mind that still agrees with Him, the part that is “still for God” (10:3), which is the part of mind that the Course sometimes calls our “right mind” (T-5.I.3:3) or “higher mind” (T-4.IV.11:2).

We saw the same idea in the last section, T-5.II.8:2: “He is in the part of your mind that always speaks for the right choice.” There is a part of your mind that is uncorrupted; to overcome the unreason you have accepted, the Holy Spirit appeals to the reason that dwells in that uncorrupted part of mind. The right mind is the ally of the Holy Spirit. His Voice speaks as much for your right mind as it does for God; He is reminding you of your own will, what you really want. “The purpose of this Guide is merely to remind you of what you want” (T-9.I.3:6).

The right mind is much stronger than the ego (10:4). The ego tries to hide your right mind from you, but the Holy Spirit recognizes its strength and uses it. The right mind is His home (10:5). This mind is our true home as well, our native state. It is a place of peace, and we are at home only in peace (10:6–7). Since peace is eternal, then because we are at home only in peace, we are at home only in eternity as well (10:8).

The right mind is the “place” we visit in a holy instant. When I meditate, I often think of myself as “going home,” and sometimes that helps me peel away the obscuring thoughts and feelings of the ego. With the barriers lifted, I can “go home” to this place of eternal peace that is within me. Sometimes our peace seems so fragile, subject to every minor variation of life, broken by the tiniest uprising of threat or trouble. The truth is, our peace is stronger than anything the ego can throw at it. Our peace has, in fact, *never been disturbed*. Our peace is eternal (10:8). “Not one note in Heaven’s song was missed” (T-26.V.5:4). The noisy chaos of the ego mind is just an illusion. Within, there is *always* peace. It is this eternal peace of which the Holy Spirit reminds us.

Paragraph 11

11. ¹The ego made the world as **it** perceives it, but the Holy Spirit, the **reinterpreter** of what the ego made, sees the world [**Ur: only**] as a teaching device for bringing you home. ²The Holy Spirit must perceive time, and reinterpret it into the timeless. [**Ur: The mind must be led into eternity through time, because having made time it is capable of perceiving its opposite.**] ³He [**The Holy Spirit**] must work through opposites, because He must work with and for a mind that **is** in opposition. ⁴Correct and learn, and be open to learning. ⁵You have **not** made truth, but truth can still set you free. ⁶Look as the Holy Spirit looks, and understand as He understands. ⁷His understanding looks back

to God in remembrance of me. ⁸He is in communion [Ur: Holy Communion] with God always, and He is part of you. ⁹He is your guide to salvation, because He holds the remembrance of things past and to come [“the remembrance of things past” is from Shakespeare’s Sonnet 30], and brings them to the present [“brings them to the present” appears to have been inserted by the editors]. ¹⁰He holds this gladness gently in your mind, asking only that you increase it in His Name by sharing it to increase His joy in you.

• Study Question •

14. Give your understanding of sentence 6: “Look as the Holy Spirit looks, and understand as He understands.”

The ways in which the ego and the Holy Spirit look upon the same world are in stark contrast. The Course’s view of the world’s origin is rather dark; it teaches that the ego made the world as an expression of separateness, a battleground, a powerful distraction from God and a place where greatness is found in defiance and conquest. That is how the ego perceived the world, so that is how it made the world (11:1). When we look at the world without the help of the Holy Spirit, that is what we are going to see. That is what the world is like.

Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit “sees the world as a teaching device for bringing you home” (11:1). He is the bridge between the world and Heaven. He *reinterprets* what the ego made (11:1). He takes the very things the ego made to cut us off from God and uses them to take us home.

For instance, the ego made special relationships as a response to God’s gift of the Holy Spirit, a subtle deception to keep us from Heaven (see T-17.IV.4:1). The Holy Spirit does not destroy special relationships (T-18.II.6:4–7); instead He transforms them into holy relationships and makes them into the most tangible reflection of Heaven that is possible.

In His function as Interpreter of what you made, the Holy Spirit uses special relationships, which you have chosen to support the ego, as learning experiences that point to truth. (T-15.V.4:5)

In this world, God's Son comes closest to himself in a holy relationship. (T-20.V.1:1)

One example of how the Holy Spirit reinterprets what the ego made concerns *time*. Time and delay are meaningless in eternity. Yet, the Holy Spirit uses time to bring us to eternity (11:2). We seem to learn over a period of time. As we read in Miracle Principle #15,

The purpose of time is to enable you to learn how to use time constructively. It is thus a teaching device and a means to an end. Time will cease when it is no longer useful in facilitating learning. (T-1.I.15:2–4)

The purpose of time is solely to "give you time" to achieve this judgment [retaining only what is creative and good in your mind]. (T2.VIII.5:8)

The Holy Spirit uses time to lead us out of time. Because we are in the illusion of time, it seems as though we *need* time to go through the learning process. The Holy Spirit is perfectly willing to cooperate with that illusion, so long as He can use it to move us closer to home.

Our mind *is* in opposition; we are here to unlearn that opposition, but in order to reach our dualistic mind and bring us home, the Holy Spirit must work *through opposites* (11:3). He meets us where we are. Thank God, He does not ask us to be free of conflict before He will help us! Yes, He is here to help us be free from conflict, but to lead us to that freedom He works within the context of the conflict. "Correct and learn, and be open to learning" (11:4). He urges us to allow Him to present us with the correction to our twisted thinking.

We can join our minds with the Holy Spirit to look as He looks and understand as He understands (11:6). That is what we are learning to do. He "looks back to God" (11:7). He is always in communion with God, and He calls us to share that communion (11:8). He is within us as our Guide to salvation, constantly leading us into the eternal present (11:9). The "remembrance of things past and to come" that He holds (11:9) speaks, I believe, of our former and coming glory as children of God. This was referred to earlier in T-5.II.3:8: "His is the Voice that calls you back to where you were before and will be again." He maintains "this gladness gently in your mind," keeping the memory of it there for us to reaffirm at any time, and all He asks is that we *increase* that gladness by *sharing* it (11:10).

In summary, then, the Holy Spirit is a divine Presence in our minds that operates constantly to preserve the truth and to return that truth to our awareness. He is fully aware of unitive knowledge, yet is capable of working in the realm of duality in which we have lost ourselves, in order to lead us out of that duality and back to the unity which has never been lost.

Answer Key

1. The Holy Spirit is:

Motivation for miracle-mindedness	the spirit of joy
the Call to return	God's Answer to the separation
the means by which the Atonement heals	the call to joy
the Voice That calls you back	the radiance that banishes the darkness
the glory before which dissociation falls away	one way of choosing
Voice for God	our Guide in choosing
our remaining communication with God	the way in which God's Will is done on earth as it is in Heaven
the call to awaken and be glad	the Mind we share with Jesus
the Bridge for the transfer of perception to knowledge	part of the Holy Trinity
the idea of healing	the Call <i>for</i> God and the idea <i>of</i> God
God's Answer to the ego	the Mediator between the interpretations of the ego and the knowledge of the spirit
the symbol of peace	the perfect Teacher
the reinterpreter of what the ego made	your Guide to salvation

2. The awareness of the Holy Spirit's Mind as partly ours and partly God's is not something that comes through intellectual understanding. Rather, this awareness comes through direct experience. One way, perhaps the main way, in which we come to recognize the Holy Spirit in ourselves is through recognizing Him in our brothers.
3. Because the Holy Spirit is the idea of healing, the idea of God, and the idea of our true Self, we can give Him away and gain more of Him at the same time. Being given away strengthens ideas.
4. You are encouraged to "see him through the Holy Spirit in his own mind," which I think means both seeing him as the Holy Spirit sees him and seeing the Call for God (the Holy Spirit) within him (even when he is manifesting something quite un-God-like). When you acknowledge the Holy Spirit in a brother, you strengthen your own connection with Him.
5. We can strengthen the voice of the Holy Spirit in ourselves by sharing Him with others; that is, by acknowledging and honoring the divine voice in our brothers and sisters.

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6. The Holy Spirit operates at the same level on which the ego operates, because if He did not, the mind would not be able to understand the changes He desires to make.
7. No written answer is expected.
8. His ability to manipulate symbols allows communication with ego-dominated minds; His ability to see reality beyond the symbols enables Him to understand the laws of God. This dual ability allows Him to reinterpret what the ego makes and see the reality behind it.
9. The Holy Spirit sees our Self, which is the Sonship, and He reminds us of the Sonship.
10. The Holy Spirit helps us be watchful *for peace* and against conflict; therefore, any sense of strife and struggle about our spiritual growth is inappropriate to the nature of our journey.
11. The Holy Spirit helps my mind reinterpret its own misperceptions. This indicates that I must *join with* the Holy Spirit in this reinterpretation.
12. **(a)** The part of our mind that is for God is “much stronger than the ego” (10:4). **(b)** We are often unaware of the part of our mind that is for God because the ego constantly tries to conceal it from us.
13. No written answer is expected.
14. It means to see with forgiving eyes, seeing the Sonship as He does, seeing the Holy Spirit in everyone, seeing peace instead of conflict, and allowing Him to reinterpret everything for us.