

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM® Text, Chapter 6,

Sections III & IV

The Relinquishment of Attack

The Only Answer

Overview

NOTE: Recall the three ego premises in the *Introduction* to this chapter, and the responses given to them: You cannot be attacked; attack cannot be justified; and you are responsible for what you believe. Section I, “The Message of the Crucifixion,” gave a powerful argument showing that attack is not real: “...the most outrageous assault, as judged by the ego, does not matter” (T-6.I.9:1). Section II, “The Alternative to Projection,” began presenting the second point, that attack cannot be justified: “Projection is always a means of justifying attack. Anger without projection is impossible” (T-6.II.3:5–6). Section III now continues the second point with “The Relinquishment of Attack.” Section IV will deal with the third point, which is being responsible for our beliefs and thoughts.

Let me emphasize that this “outline” is just one way of looking at this chapter. In saying that a section deals with a particular ego premise, I do not mean to imply that it says nothing about the other premises. I believe, however, that each section emphasizes a particular point.

Paragraph 1

1. [Ur: We have used many words as synonymous which are not ordinarily regarded as the same. We began with having and being, and recently have used others. Hearing and being is an example, to which we can also add teaching and being, learning and being, and, above all, *projecting* {or extending} and being. This is because,] ¹As we have already emphasized, every idea begins in the mind of the thinker [Ur: and extends outward]. ²Therefore, what extends from the mind is still in it, and from *what* it extends it knows itself. [Ur: This is its natural talent.] ³The word “knows” is correct here, [Ur: even though the ego does *not* know, and is not concerned with *being* at all.] because [“because” was added by the editors] the Holy Spirit still holds knowledge safe in your mind

through His impartial perception. ⁴By attacking nothing, He presents no barrier to the communication of God. ⁵Therefore, being is never threatened. ⁶Your Godlike mind can never be defiled. ⁷The ego never was and never will be part of it, but through the ego you can hear and teach and learn [Ur: and project] what is not true. [From this, which you have made,] ⁸You have taught yourself to believe that you are not what you are. ⁹You cannot teach what you have not learned, and what you teach you strengthen in yourself because you are sharing it. ¹⁰Every lesson you teach you are learning.

• Study Question •

1. Using the information from the rest of the paragraph (particularly sentences 9 and 10), what is the meaning of the last part of sentence 2: "...from what it [mind] extends it knows itself"?

The Urtext passage about synonyms that opens this section is extremely helpful in setting the scene for the rest of the paragraph. Jesus points out that he has identified many words as synonymous with "being": having, hearing, teaching, learning, and "above all" projecting. Projecting, here, is being used in the dual sense it had in the early dictation, which includes extension as the positive form of projection. As the rest of the paragraph makes clear, it is this latter sense that is intended here. We could substitute the word "extending" for "projecting" here. Extending and being are synonymous; what you are, you extend, and what you extend, you are. That concept is what is explored in the rest of the paragraph.

The idea of sentence 1 was discussed in the last section (T6.II.9:1), which explained why perception actually begins within the mind, not outside of it. This paragraph gives it a slightly different twist, with even broader implications: I discover what is *in* my mind by what *extends from* it (1:2). Thoughts begin in my mind and then extend or project outward, where they take on form. I perceive those forms, and they inform me about the nature of my thoughts.

Projection makes perception. The world you see is what you gave it, nothing more than that. But though it is no more than that, it is not less. Therefore, to you it is important. It is the witness to your state of mind, the outside picture of an inward condition. (T-21.In.1:1-5)

Thus, I come to know my own being through what I extend or project. Likewise, I can teach (extend) and learn what is not true as I listen to the ego (1:7). In this way, I have taught myself to believe that I am not as God created me ("not what you are," 1:8). These false lessons cannot have any real effect on my being or mind (1:5-6), because "the ego never was and never will be part of it" (1:7). Yet, projecting the false lessons of the ego strengthens them in me (1:9). Whatever I teach, I learn (1:10).

Earlier, we were told: "The ego is the part of the mind that believes your existence is defined by separation" (T-4.VII.1:5), and "The ego is the part of the mind that believes in

division” (T-5.V.3:1). This paragraph appears to say something contradictory: “...the ego never was and never will be part of [the mind]” (1:6). Is the ego part of the mind, or not?

The explanation lies, I believe, in a line from Section IV of this chapter: "This enables the ego to regard itself as separate and outside its maker, thus speaking for the part of your mind that believes *you* are separate and outside the Mind of God" (T-6.IV.2:5). The ego is not actually a *part of* the mind; it is a self-concept of separateness and isolation *made up by* the mind. Two earlier lines also indicate this interpretation: “The ego is the mind's belief that it is completely on its own” (T4.II.8:4). “The ego is nothing more than a part of your belief about yourself” (T-4.VI.1:6). *The ego is not a part of mind that believes something; it is a belief held by part of the mind.* In the light of T-6.III.1:6, which says the ego was never part of the mind, the lines that occur earlier in the Text calling the ego a “part of the mind” must be considered to be inexact statements.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹That is why you must teach only **one** lesson. ²If you are to be conflict-free yourself, you must learn **only** from the Holy Spirit and teach **only** by Him. ³You **are** only love, but when you deny [Ur: **denied**] this, you make [Ur: **made**] what you **are** something you must **learn** to remember. ⁴I said before that the message of the crucifixion was, “Teach **only** love, for that is what you **are**.” ⁵This is the **one** lesson that is perfectly unified, because it is the only lesson that **is** one. ⁶Only **by** teaching it can **you** learn it. ⁷“As you teach so will you learn.” ⁸If that is true, and it is true indeed, do not [Ur: **you must never**] forget that what you teach is teaching **you**. ⁹And what you project or extend you believe [Ur: **What you project you believe**].

• Study Question •

2. *When Jesus says, “That is why you must teach only one lesson” (2:1), what does “that” refer to? What is the one lesson we must teach?*

The “only lesson” we must teach (2:1) refers to “Teach only love...” (T-6.I.13:2; confirmed here by 2:4). If we want to learn that we are only love, we must teach only love, because what we teach, we learn. How can we be free of conflict if we teach on the one hand by our words that we are love, and, on the other hand, deny that we are love by teaching attack? (2:2). When we believe the ego’s three premises, we *are* teaching attack, and driving the truth of our loving nature out of our minds (2:3). To become free of conflict we need to stop doing that. The *only way* to learn that we are love is to *teach* only love (2:6), because what we teach is teaching us (2:8). We end up believing whatever thought system we project onto others (2:9).

It isn’t simply that what we teach teaches us; *teaching love is the only way to learn it.* You must extend love to others to know you have it. Teaching only love means demonstrating that you cannot be attacked, that attack cannot *ever* be justified, and that

you (and nobody else but you) are responsible for what you believe. It means becoming an example of love and forgiveness in your “crucifying” circumstances, just as Jesus did in his.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹The only [Ur: *real*] safety lies in extending [*only*] the Holy Spirit, because as you see His gentleness in others your own mind perceives itself as totally harmless. ²Once it can accept this fully, it sees no need to protect itself. ³The protection of God then dawns upon it, assuring it that it is perfectly safe forever. ⁴The perfectly safe are wholly benign. ⁵They bless because they know that they are blessed. ⁶Without anxiety the mind is wholly kind, and because it extends beneficence it is beneficent. ⁷Safety is the complete relinquishment of attack. ⁸No compromise is possible in this. ⁹Teach attack in any form and you have learned it, and it will hurt you. ¹⁰Yet this learning is not immortal, and you can unlearn it by not teaching it.

• Study Question •

3. *What can you do to assure your own perfect safety and freedom from all anxiety?*

If we will teach only love, as Jesus did, we will be harmless. We will extend the Holy Spirit to others. This seems to be the same as teaching only love; it means recognizing love and gentleness in them as well as in ourselves (3:1). If I extend only love I am harmless, and if I am harmless I need no protection because no one is going to attack me (3:2). Certainly not God! On the contrary, if I am a messenger only of love, God will protect me, which guarantees perfect safety (3:3).

When I am harmless I am safe, and when I am safe I become positively and actively benign (3:4), and I bless (3:5). I don't just refrain from harm; I extend beneficent blessing. Harmlessness leads to safety; safety leads to extension of blessing, or beneficence (3:6).

It thrills me to think of my mind as “wholly kind” (3:6). Isn't that something you deeply want to believe about yourself? There is no way to come to such a belief unless you *completely* let go of every thought of attack, without compromise (3:7–8). How can you harbor attack and think of yourself as harmless? How can you harbor attack and be free from the fear that someone will attack you? If you are someone's enemy, you cannot feel secure. You are teaching attack in one form or another, and whatever the form, it will hurt *you* (3:9).

The good news is that when you teach yourself attack, the lesson you teach can be changed; it isn't “immortal” and can be unlearned. Simply stop teaching it! (3:10).

• Study Question •

4. *Make a list of a few ways that you, personally, have been teaching the ego's lessons of attack, namely 1) that you can be attacked, 2) that your attack in return is justified, and 3) that you aren't responsible for the way your ego flares up in response to attack.*



Paragraph 4

4. ¹Since you cannot *not* teach, your salvation lies in teaching the exact opposite of everything the ego believes. ²This is how you will learn the truth that will set you free, and will keep you free as others learn it of you. ³The only way to have peace is to teach peace. ⁴By teaching peace you must learn it yourself [Ur: By learning it through projection {extension}, it becomes part of what you know], because you cannot teach what you still dissociate. ⁵Only thus can you win back the knowledge that you threw away. ⁶An idea that you share you must have. ⁷It awakens in your mind through the conviction of teaching it. [Ur: It awakens in you through the conviction of teaching. Remember that if teaching is being and learning is being, then teaching is learning.] ⁸Everything you teach you are learning. ⁹Teach only love, and learn that love is yours and you are love.

• Study Question •

5. *If you have not done so already, scan through the three lessons of the Holy Spirit in Section V of this chapter; mainly just the headings. Which of the three lessons is very clearly foreshadowed in this paragraph?*



Attack and love are exact opposites, and our salvation is found in “teaching the exact opposite of everything the ego believes” (4:1). The ego teaches attack; we are called to teach only love. Thus, to teach love we must relinquish attack *entirely*. Teaching the opposite of what the ego believes is how we attain freedom, and keep it as other learn from us (4:2).

In a sentence that clearly presages the second lesson of the Holy Spirit in Section V, we are again told that *teaching* peace is the *only* way to *have* peace (4:3, compare with 2:6–9 and with T-6.V(B), subsection title). These sections are related, in my opinion, not only to the premises and responses in the Introduction, but to the subsections of Section V of the chapter:

Premise	Sections	Subsection of V
cannot be attacked	6.I	6.V(A)
attack not justified	6.II & 6.III	6.V(B)
you are responsible	6.IV	6.V(C)

Both Section III and subsection V(B) are teaching us that the only way to find peace is by recognizing that attack can never be justified, and must be entirely relinquished. In other words, we cannot find safety or peace *by means of* attack, but only *through abandoning* attack and teaching peace (or love) in its place.

If you can teach peace it *proves* you have peace, because “you cannot teach what you still dissociate” (4:4); if you share it, you must *have* it (4:6). Furthermore, the act of teaching it reinforces it in your own mind with increasing conviction (4:7). You learn *everything* you teach; therefore, if you want to *learn* that you are only love you must *teach* only love (4:8–9). Teaching shows us what we have and what we are. When you teach only love (extend the idea of love), you learn that love (the idea) is *in* you, and that love (the idea) *is you*.

Section IV, The Only Answer

In my tentative outline, Section IV deals mostly with the third ego premise and response from the Holy Spirit: “You *are* responsible for what you believe,” and corresponds to the third lesson of the Holy Spirit in Section V(C), “Be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom.”

The “Only Answer” is the Holy Spirit (1:1, 3:2–4, 12:8–11). The emphasis of this section is that, because we already have the Answer, the power to save ourselves is in our own hands. Our mind is not merely a learning device for the ego and the body; it is the master, the maker of choices. We are responsible: “In an impossible situation, you can develop your abilities to the point where they can get you out of it” (9:3). We are “in charge of the Kingdom” (9:5). The Holy Spirit is the Guide, but *we must choose* to follow Him.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹Remember that the Holy Spirit is the Answer, not the question. ²The ego always speaks first [Ur: because it is capricious...]. ³It is capricious and does not mean its maker well. ⁴[Ur: This is because] It believes, and correctly, that its maker may withdraw his support from it at any moment. ⁵If it meant you well it would be glad, as the Holy Spirit will be glad when He has brought you home and you no longer need His guidance. ⁶The ego does not regard itself as part of you. ⁷Herein lies its primary [Ur: perceptual] error, the foundation of its whole thought system.

• Study Question •

6. *What is the ego's attitude towards you, its maker (1:3–5)?*

The Holy Spirit is “the Answer” (1:1), which means His Voice is a *reply* to the errors of the ego, which “always speaks first” (1:2; previously in T-5.VI.3:5). Ego thoughts arise

in our minds, and the Holy Spirit counteracts and corrects them. The word “capricious” (1:3) to describe the ego is quite interesting. It means the ego is impulsive and unpredictable, “given to sudden and unaccountable changes of mood or behavior” (Apple Dictionary). We cannot trust the ego; it will change its direction on a whim.

If you tend to think of the ego as “me,” as most people do, it may be confusing to be told that the ego “does not mean its maker [you] well” (1:3). You may be thinking, “I thought being *egotistic* meant putting my own interests above everyone else’s. How can my own ego not mean *me* well?” That is the main point of this paragraph, actually! *You* may confuse yourself with the ego, but *the ego* does not; it knows you made it and could withdraw your support of it at any moment (1:4). The ego thinks it has separated from its maker (you) and is no longer part of you (1:6); you have become its *enemy* because you are a threat to its existence.

The ego *tells you* that it is your best friend, but its goal is, quite literally, your death (T-15.I.4:6). The Holy Spirit will be glad when you no longer need His guidance, and will be happy to sink into the background; the ego, however, hates the idea that you might choose to go on without it (1:5).

In considering the statement that, “The ego does not regard itself as part of you” (1:6), we need, perhaps, to step back and take a look at the larger question this raises: *Is the ego part of you?* To do so we will draw on several statements scattered through this section and other parts of the Course.

Failing to regard itself as part of you is called the ego’s “primary error, the foundation of its whole thought system” (1:7), which is somewhat confusing because it implies that in some sense, the ego *is* part of you. One helpful insight comes from Chapter 5, Section VI, which we studied recently:

The ego will not be destroyed because *it is part of your thought*, but because it is uncreative and therefore unsharing, it will be reinterpreted to release you from fear. The part of your mind that you have given to the ego will merely return to the Kingdom, where your whole mind belongs. (T-5.VI.9:4–5, my emphasis)

The ego is definitely part of our *thought*, but not actually part of *us*, which would make it real. It is a thought in our mind that thinks it has become the whole of the mind, or rather, believes it has *replaced* the mind (it is “unsharing”). It believes it is “separate and outside its maker” (2:5) and thus no longer a part of the mind that made it. “Ideas leave not their source” (T-26.VII.4:7), but the ego, though only a thought, believes it has left your mind. It thinks it has existence independent of your mind, which it does not. In fact, the ego believes that the mind is its “learning device,” a tool it can use (5:3). The ego dimly recognizes the presence of something in your mind which is against it (4:1): the Holy Spirit, Who is in your right mind. It is therefore afraid of you, that is, of your mind (2:9), and attacks your mind. The ego actually “conspires” with the body against your mind (5:1) because it knows the mind can end its existence.

Thus, the fundamental error of the ego is its belief that a thought can separate itself from its maker. Its error, in believing itself to be independent of you, is identical to your error in believing you can be independent of God. The ego is neither a part of you, nor separate from you. The ego is a thought in your mind that believes it exists apart from your mind. Since such a thing is not possible, the ego has no existence at all!

Paragraph 2

2. ¹When God created you He made you part of Him. ²That is why attack within [Ur: *within*] the Kingdom is impossible. ³[Ur: But] You made the ego without love, and so it does not love you. ⁴You could not remain within the Kingdom without love, and since the Kingdom *is* love, you believe that you are without it. ⁵This enables the ego to regard itself as separate and outside its maker, thus speaking for the part of your mind that believes *you* are separate and outside the Mind of God. ⁶The ego, then, raised the first question that was ever asked, but one it can never answer. ⁷That question, “What are you?” was the beginning of doubt. ⁸The ego has never answered any questions since, although it has raised a great many. ⁹The most inventive activities of the ego have never done more than obscure the question, because you have the answer and *the ego is afraid of you*.

• Study Question •

7. “*The Kingdom*” seems to mean God’s own Being or Mind, which contains His creations. Another way of putting it is “that which belongs to God.” What does it mean to say, “...you believe that you are without it [the Kingdom]” (2:4)?

The ego does not love us (2:3)! Just as we believe we separated from God, our Source, and now tend to see Him as a threat, an enemy to our independence, the ego believes it made itself and separated from our whole mind, and it sees our whole mind as an enemy. The ego is afraid of our whole mind because it knows the mind has the Answer; it has the *power to choose* to listen to the Holy Spirit (2:9).

We believe we are outside the Kingdom because “the Kingdom is love” and we “made the ego without love” (2:3–4). If we acted without love, we think, we cannot exist in a Kingdom that *is* love. Thus, we now believe that we “are separate and outside the Mind of God” (2:5). As we’ve already seen, however, thoughts do not leave the mind that thinks them, especially God’s Thoughts (T-5.IV.3:5; T-6.II.8:1). He retains us in His Mind; we cannot separate from Him. Yet, we can *believe* that we have separated. This belief is what “enables the ego to regard itself as separate and outside its maker” because this simply reflects our belief about ourselves in regard to God (2:5).

This confusion of impossibilities lies at the root of the question, “What are you?” (2:6–7). If you have left the mind of God, made the ego, and now the ego exists

independently of you, *what are you?* You aren't part of God. You've lost control of your ego. So, what's left? The inventive mind-games of the ego are *designed* to make it impossible to answer the question (2:8–9). But “you have the answer”! (2:9). The Holy Spirit *is* the Answer (1:1); He remembers *for us* the truth of our Identity. This is why “the ego is afraid of you” (2:9), because at any moment we can remember the truth.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹You cannot understand the conflict until you fully understand the [one] basic fact that the ego cannot know anything [Ur: does not know]. ²The Holy Spirit does not speak first, *but He always answers*. ³Everyone has called upon Him for help at one time or another and in one way or another, and has been answered. ⁴Since the Holy Spirit answers truly He answers for all time, which means that everyone has the answer now.

I'm going to stick my neck out here and say that I think the editors misunderstood the first two sentences of this paragraph. I think, in fact, they are meant to be joined by a colon, and to read like this:

¹You cannot understand the conflict until you fully understand the one basic fact that the ego does not know: the Holy Spirit does not speak first, *but He always answers*.

The ego is flailing about, tossing out doubt-riddled questions it cannot answer, hoping to obscure the real question of who we are (2:8–9). It does not want us to seriously consider that question because we already know the answer, and the answer is the ego's doom. We can't really understand this internal battle of thought systems until we really grasp the fact that the Holy Spirit *always answers* every false assertion of the ego. Whenever an ego thought arises, the Holy Spirit counters it. All of us, all the time, have all the answers! “Everyone has the answer now” (3:4). This mental conflict is ever-present in everyone, and the answer to the ego is always available to us.

You may think you know nothing about the Holy Spirit, but the Course says *everyone* knows Him and has called on Him for help (3:3), and has been answered. He *always* answers the ego (3:2), so if your ego has spoken, the Holy Spirit has answered!

There is an old Christian hymn that contains the lines, “I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew, He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me.” It says that God was “long beforehand with my soul.” I think I have been answered by God countless times “in one way or another” without ever knowing that I have called on God and have been answered. I just thought I was *seeking something* and never knew I was dialoguing with God. I made a choice to do something, never knowing “He moved my soul” to do it. His answer to my call has always been the same: the unconditional acknowledgment of my Identity as God's creation (6:1).

Paragraph 4

4. ¹The ego cannot hear the Holy Spirit, but it **does** believe that part of the [Ur: same] mind that made it is **against** it. ²It interprets this [Ur: wholly] as a justification for **attacking** its maker. ³It believes that the best defense is attack, and **wants you to believe it**. ⁴Unless you **do** believe it you will not side with it, and the ego feels badly in need of allies, though not of brothers. ⁵Perceiving something alien to itself in your **mind**, the ego turns to the body [Ur: **not the mind**] as its ally, because the body is **not** [Ur: **because the body is not**] part of you. ⁶This makes the body the ego's friend. ⁷It is an alliance frankly based on separation. ⁸If you side with this alliance you **will** be afraid, because you are siding with an alliance of fear.

• Study Question •

8. *What does the ego want us to believe, and why?*

Although there is no direct contact between the ego and the Holy Spirit (4:1; compare with T-4.I.2:6), the ego is somehow aware of *something* in your mind that “is against it” (4:1). Of course, neither your spirit nor the Holy Spirit is “against” the ego in the sense of attacking it. The lie of the ego feels threatened by the very existence of truth. Operating by its first premise, however (“I am being attacked”), the ego *perceives* itself as under attack, and therefore (second premise) thinks that attacking the mind that made it is justified (4:2).

The ego “believes that the best defense is attack, and wants *you* to believe it” (4:3). (For the most part, we do, don't we?) If you will accept the notion of attack as defense, you will be willing to “side with” the ego, and it craves “allies, though not... brothers” (4:4). If you side with the ego, who will you be siding *against*? Well, if the ego is attacking its maker (4:2), it is attacking *your mind*! So, you will be siding with the ego in an attack on your own mind—a rather bizarre state of affairs. However, if you think about it, you can probably identify several instances in your past in which you became aware that you were sabotaging yourself. Now you know why!

The ego also draws in your body as its ally in its war on the mind, since “the body is not part of you” (4:5), which makes it the ego's friend (4:6) because the ego believes that *it* is not part of you (1:6). I guess this is on the principle that whoever isn't with you (part of you) must be against you.

It seems insane that you or I would side with an alliance that has been formed to attack our minds, yet that is exactly what we do when we identify with the ego and the body. When we adopt the principle that the best defense is a good offense, we have adopted the ego's motto; therefore, we *have* aligned with the inimical alliance of ego and body. When we join that alliance we inevitably become afraid (4:8). I think there are several reasons for such fear. The alliance of ego and body is based on fear, so naturally in joining it we join with the fear. But in addition, whether we let ourselves be aware of it

or not, the alliance's chosen object of attack is *our own mind*. No matter how dim-witted we are, that is bound to set off a few alarm bells!

Paragraph 5 (see Appendix)

5. ¹The ego uses the body to [Ur: **The ego and the body**] conspire against your mind, and because the ego realizes that its "enemy" can end them both merely by recognizing they are not part of you, they join in the attack together. ²This is perhaps the strangest perception of all, if you consider what it really involves. ³The ego, which is not real, attempts to persuade the mind, which *is* real, that the mind is the ego's learning device; and further, that the body is more real than the mind is. ⁴No one in his right mind could possibly believe this, and no one in his right mind does believe it.

• Study Question •

9. *What two insane ideas about the mind itself does the ego try to plant in our mind?*

The ego and body join to attack the mind, which is their maker, because they fear its power to end their existence (5:1). All the mind needs to do is to recognize that the body and the ego are not part of you and they would be ended (5:1). The scenario is decidedly bizarre! (5:2). Here you have something that *is not real* (the ego) trying to persuade something that *is real* (the mind) that the mind is merely a tool to be used by the ego, a "learning device" for the ego (5:3).

From the perspective of the Course's understanding, this *is* a strange idea, yet this is our ordinary way of thinking, isn't it? For the most part, we are identified with our egos, and we *do* think of the mind as little more than our tool. We "use" it to try to figure things out. We believe that the way we can become safe is to manipulate things and people in our environment into the shape and form most beneficial to ourselves. "The role assigned to your own mind in this plan, then, is simply to determine what, other than itself, must change if you are to be saved" (W-pI.71.3:1).

Not only does the ego-body alliance try to persuade us that the mind is the ego's learning tool, it also tries to persuade us that "the body is more real than the mind is" (5:3). The Course has made it clear several times that "the body is a learning device for the mind" (see T-2.IV.3:1 and T-2.V.1:9). The ego wants to convince us that the reverse is true, and the mind exists only to take care of the body. *Which gets more of your attention: taking care of your body, or taking care of your mind?*

It isn't difficult to see how both of these lies are "attacks" on the mind. They demean the mind and reduce it to the role of a slave, instead of acknowledging it as maker and master. If we are in our right mind we cannot possibly believe these lies (5:4). The Course is calling on us to recognize that we are responsible for how we use our minds and for what we think.

Paragraph 6

6. ¹Hear, then, the one answer of the Holy Spirit to **all** the questions the ego raises: You are a child of God, a priceless part of His Kingdom, which He created as part of Him. ²Nothing else exists and **only** this is real. ³You have chosen a sleep in which you have had bad dreams, but the sleep is not real and God calls you to awake. ⁴There will be nothing left of your dream when you hear Him, because you will awaken [Ur: *will be awake*]. ⁵Your dreams contain [have contained] many of the ego's symbols and they have confused you. ⁶Yet that was only because you were asleep and **did not know**. ⁷When you wake you will see the truth around you and in you, and you will no longer believe in dreams because they will have no reality for you. ⁸Yet the Kingdom and all that you have created there will have great reality for you, because they are beautiful and true.

• Study Question •

10. *How would you summarize or paraphrase what this passage has to say about our experience as egos and bodies in this world?*

I think that the “questions the ego raises” (6:1) include the uncertainty about what we are, the role of the mind, and whether or not the ego and body are parts of us. The Holy Spirit gives a long and beautiful answer to these questions in the rest of the paragraph. My summary of that message is this, using the Course's words: “You are a child of God...created as part of Him. Nothing else but this exists and only this is real” (6:1–2, yet another clear echo of the Introduction to the Text). The only “part” of us that is real is what God created; the rest is a bad dream—a nightmare, in other words (6:3). That must include both the ego and the body, since *neither* was created by God (T-4.I.7:8, T-6.V(A). 2:1, and M-22.5:5)¹.

Notice that Jesus not only says what we are experiencing in this world is nothing more than a bad dream, he also says “the sleep is not real” (6:3). This may just be a strong way of saying, “Everything you are experiencing in this world, not just part of it, is unreal” or it could actually mean that, in some sense, we are not *really* asleep. The sleep must be real in some sense, however, if “God calls you to awake” (6:3). I therefore think the meaning must be the first sense, that the whole earthly experience is unreal. That seems born out by sentence 4, which tells us that when we awaken, *nothing* will be left of the dream.

We've been confused by the multiplicity of the ego's symbols (6:5) (bodies, see T-15.IX.2:3). We seem to see many separate beings, but this is only because we are asleep

¹ "Your ego is never at stake because God did not create it" (T-4.I.7:8).

"God did not make the body" (T-6.V.2:1).

"He will, in fact, be unable to recognize his brother at all, for his Father did not create bodies" (M-22.5:5).

and do not *know* the reality of what we see (6:6). When we awaken we will no longer see multiplicity; we will *know* oneness (6:7). There's a later passage where Jesus says much the same thing:

Having made this choice [accepting the Atonement] you will understand why you once believed that, when you met someone else, you thought he *was* someone else. And every holy encounter in which you enter fully will teach you this is not so. (T-8.III.6:7-8)

When, in any relationship, we wake up to the truth, we stop perceiving separate egos and bodies. We no longer think of our sister or brother as “someone else.” Instead, we recognize them as part of ourselves (see T-8.VII.5, for example). This is the recognition of the Kingdom of God in all its beauty and truth (6:8).

Paragraph 7

7. ¹In the Kingdom, where you are and what you are is perfectly certain. ²There is no doubt [Ur: *there*], because the first question was never asked. ³Having finally been wholly answered, it *has never been*. ⁴*Being* alone lives in the Kingdom, where everything lives in God without question. ⁵The time spent on questioning in the dream has given way to creation and to its eternity. ⁶You are as certain as God because you are as true as He is, but what was once certain in your mind has become only the *ability* for certainty.

• Study Question •

11. *Spend some time meditating on the eternal fact of your true nature as God's creation. Pick one of the Workbook lessons that deal with this topic and work through it, for instance, Lesson 94, 97, 110, 162, or 191.*

The ego and its world arose from questioning who we are. In the Kingdom, the question, “Who are you?” (“the first question,” see 2:6-7) was never asked. The ego spoke, the Holy Spirit answered and answered *completely* (see 6:1-2) that it has eradicated the question. In the Kingdom, there is no doubt, no uncertainty, and no question; only Being exists in God, eternally creating. In our separated minds, where the question has been asked, the Holy Spirit has wholly answered it, but our minds, once certain, are now uncertain. We still retain the *ability* for certainty, but we have lost absolute certainty (6:1-6).

Thus, the stage is set to underscore our need to choose. The Holy Spirit has given the answer (“You are a child of God”). We have the ability to terminate our doubt and, by listening to His Answer, become certain once again. It is up to us to do so. You might make sentence 6 into an affirmation: *I am as certain as God because I am as true as He is.*

Paragraph 8

8. ¹The introduction of abilities into being was the beginning of uncertainty, because abilities are potentials, not accomplishments. ²Your abilities are useless in the presence of God's accomplishments, and also of yours. ³Accomplishments are results that have been achieved. ⁴When they are perfect, abilities are meaningless. ⁵It is curious that the perfect must now be perfected. ⁶In fact, it is impossible. ⁷Remember, however, that when you put yourself in an impossible situation you believe that the impossible *is* possible.

This paragraph reminds me of an earlier statement in the Text: "The abilities you now possess are only shadows of your real strength" (T-3.IV.1:1). There is a big difference between possessing the ability to do something and actually having done it (8:1). Nearly everyone has the *ability* to run a marathon, but relatively few of us have ever done so! Likewise, each of us possesses the ability to be pure love, but few of us are consistently loving. We have made what we are something we must remember (T-6.III.2:3). *We are* the children of God, but we have allowed our minds to become confused and to doubt our Identity. *We are* as certain as God, but that has become "only the ability for certainty" (7:6).

This paragraph addresses the question that often arises in the minds of Course students: "Why do I have to do something like being vigilant if I am already perfect and already at home in God?" The simplest answer is, "Because you don't really believe that you are perfect and at home in God."

Yes, "It is curious that the perfect must now be perfected" (8:5). It seems an odd and rather paradoxical thing to say. "In fact," says Jesus, "it is impossible" (8:6). You can't perfect what is already perfect. From the vantage point of truth, then, there is nothing to do and nowhere to go. "I need do nothing" (T-18.VII) is the watchword of the enlightened. Our abilities are useless and meaningless (8:2, 8:4).

And yet, although it is curious, he *does say it*: "...the perfect must now be perfected" (8:5). He reminds us "that when [we] put [ourselves] in an impossible situation [we] believe that the impossible is possible" (8:7). In other words, we don't need perfecting but *we think we do*. We no longer believe in our perfection; therefore, there *is* something to be done. The lie about us must be reversed. We must come again to the realization of our eternal home in God. Thus, *within the dream*, effort is required, and will be required, until we truly have returned completely to the unhindered knowledge of "God's accomplishments" (8:2), that is, His unalterable creation of us.

Paragraph 9

9. ¹Abilities must be developed before you can [or you cannot] use them. ²This is not true of anything that God created, but it is the kindest solution possible for what you made. ³In an impossible situation, you can develop your abilities to the point where they can get you out of it. ⁴You have a Guide to how

to develop them, but you have no commander except yourself. ⁵This leaves you in charge of the Kingdom, with both a Guide to find it and a means to keep it [we keep it by giving it away; for another “find/keep” pairing, see 6.III.4:2]. ⁶You have a model to follow who will strengthen your command, and never detract from it in any way. ⁷You therefore retain the central place in your imagined enslavement, which in itself demonstrates that you are not enslaved.

• **Study Question** •

12. (a) *Who or what is the Guide (9:4), the means (9:5), the model (9:6), and the commander?*
(b) *If I am in charge of my “imagined enslavement,” what does that prove (9:7)?*

We have made a mess and put ourselves in an impossible situation in which the perfect need to become perfected. Even though nothing God created needs to be “developed” (9:1–2) or perfected, developing our abilities (which are things *we* made, not things God created) to the point where they can get us out of the mess “is the kindest solution” to our situation (9:2–3). Developing our abilities is the Holy Spirit’s aim in teaching us His lessons. *What* abilities are involved, and *how* they are to be developed, will become clearer as we go through Section V and its three long subsections. The next several paragraphs will explain *why* this is the kindest solution.

As we embark on this ability-enhancement program (the Course’s program of mind-training), we have four great resources (9:4–7):

- A *Guide*—the Holy Spirit
- A *model* to follow—Jesus, including his life and teaching, his example in death, and his current guidance
- A *means* for keeping the Kingdom (I believe this refers to the practice of mental vigilance that we have already been given in the previous two chapters, and which will be re-emphasized at the end of the current chapter)
- A *commander* in overall charge of the process—our Self.

In your personal escape from the nightmare, you are the commander in chief. Not the Holy Spirit, not Jesus, but *you*. You *are* the only one responsible for what you believe, and you must become vigilant to watch your thoughts and to judge the ego’s thoughts as undesirable.

You have a Guide, and you have a model. When you think you are being attacked, the Holy Spirit will tell you this is not so, and Jesus will remind you that he did not consider himself attacked when he was crucified. When you think that your attack or condemnation of a brother is justified, the Holy Spirit will tell you this is not so, and Jesus will remind you of the way he blessed those who persecuted him. When you think

you are not responsible for what you are perceiving and believing, the Holy Spirit will tell you this is not so, and Jesus will remind you that he *chose* to perceive a call for love rather than attack.

You can make the same choice, and that is the *means* given you. You yourself are responsible for making that choice, and in that sense you are the commander. Whether or not you continue in enslavement, you are in charge. You are *choosing* to be enslaved or to be free, which proves that in truth, “you are not enslaved” (9:7).

Paragraph 10

10. ¹You are in an impossible situation only because you think it is possible to be in one. ²You *would* be in an impossible situation if God showed you your perfection, and **proved** to you that you were wrong. ³This would demonstrate that the perfect are inadequate to bring **themselves** to the awareness of their perfection, and thus side with the belief that those who have everything need help and are therefore helpless. ⁴This is the kind of “reasoning” in which the ego engages. ⁵God, Who **knows** that His creations are perfect, does not affront [Ur: insult] them. ⁶This would be as impossible as the ego’s notion that it has affronted [Ur: insulted] Him.

• Study Question •

13. *Examine your mind for ways in which you wish that God would take a more active role in your spiritual growth, and demand a little bit less of you.*

We might wish that God would just blast us out of the dream and be done with it.² Why put us through all this dreadful agony of developing our abilities to the point where we can escape? Why make us work so hard? Is this some kind of subtle punishment for our “sins” after all? Of course not! This is the “kindest solution” (9:2). Why is it *kindest* to allow us to be in charge of the process? I think it is important to try to follow the rather convoluted explanation in this paragraph, because if we don’t understand the answer, we will be plagued with nagging doubts about God’s love. We will find our trust wavering along the lines of the questions I posed just now.

The reason is precisely because we are not *really* in an impossible situation at all! We only *think* we are (10:1–2). *Thinking* that we are imperfect or inadequate is the problem. Now, suppose God steps in and “does it” for us. What does that tend to prove? *It tends to prove that our self-doubt was justified.* We couldn’t get out of the mess; God had to do it for us. If God showed us our perfection and proved that we were wrong (that is, proved that we were mistaken to think we were not perfect), He would have actually proven that we were *not* perfect. The perfect would be able “to bring themselves to the awareness of their perfection” (10:3). If God had to do it for us, it would show we were not perfect at

² See my article, “Why Won’t God Just Zap Me Into Enlightenment?” on the web at <http://www.circleofa.org/articles/ZapMeIntoEnlightenment.php>

all! It would demonstrate that the ego's claims were true: "that those who have everything need help and are therefore helpless" (10:3-4).

God knows that we are perfect! Therefore, for that very reason, He *does not step in and "do it" for us*. That would be an affront to our dignity as His children (10:5). Instead, He insists that we do it for ourselves so that we can bring ourselves to the awareness of our perfection. For God to affront us by doing it for us is as impossible as the ego's idea that it has in some way offended Him (10:6). God, like you, "cannot be attacked" (T-6.In. 1:7).

Paragraph 11

11. ¹That is why the Holy Spirit never commands. ²To command is to assume inequality, which the Holy Spirit demonstrates does not exist. ³Fidelity to premises [in this case, the premise of equality] is a law of mind, and everything God created [including the Holy Spirit] is faithful to His laws. ⁴Fidelity to other laws is also possible, however, not because the laws are true, but because you made them. ⁵What would be gained if God proved to you that you have thought insanely? ⁶Can God lose His Own certainty? ⁷I have frequently said that what you teach you are. ⁸Would you have God teach you that you have sinned? ⁹If He confronted the self you made with the truth He created for you, what could you be but afraid? ¹⁰You would doubt your right mind [Ur: sanity], which is the only place where [Ur: which is the one thing in which] you can find the sanity He gave you.

• Study Question •

14. *This paragraph gives more reasons why God will not do it all for us. What negative results would occur if He did?*

The importance of the primacy of your mind is the reason the Holy Spirit never commands (11:1). If He commanded you, it would assume you were not His equal—which you are! (11:2). Everything God creates is faithful to God's laws, and one of those laws is that mind is always faithful to its premises (11:3). Thus, God's creations cannot be untrue to God's laws. You can manifest fidelity to other laws as well as God's, laws you make (11:4), but that does not invalidate your mind's faithfulness to God's laws. If God were to demonstrate to you, in some way, that you had been unfaithful to His premises ("thought insanely" (11:5)), He would be teaching something that is not true nor even possible. It would mean that God had lost His own certainty, that His own laws have been contravened (11:6). The "self you made" (the ego (11:9)) is unable to perceive the truth about yourself. If God revealed it to your mind in its current state, you would only be afraid (11:9). You would believe that God was teaching you that you have sinned (11:8). You would doubt your own right mind (11:10) and think yourself lost and doomed. Yet, your mind is "the only place where you can find the sanity He gave you" (11:10).

Therefore, for all of these reasons, the kindest solution God could find was to leave you in charge of the process while providing a model and Guide to help you when you were ready.

Paragraph 12

12. ¹God does not teach. ²To teach is to imply a lack, which God knows is not there. ³God is not conflicted. ⁴Teaching aims at change, but God created only the changeless. ⁵The separation was not a loss of perfection, but a failure in communication. ⁶A harsh and strident form of communication arose as the ego's voice. ⁷It could not shatter the peace of God, but it could shatter yours. ⁸God did not blot it out, because to eradicate it would be to attack it. ⁹Being questioned, He did not question. ¹⁰He merely gave the Answer. ¹¹His Answer is your Teacher.

• Study Question •

15. *“The separation was not a loss of perfection, but a failure in communication” (12:5). Why is it important for you to understand this distinction? (Answer from your own understanding of this sentence and what it means to you.)*



Refresh your memory of what has already been said about the Holy Spirit, communication (12:5), and teaching: See T-5.II.5; T-5.II.8; T-6.I.19; and T-6.II.11. God does not guide or teach (12:1), but the Holy Spirit does. He guides us by speaking for God within our right mind. God doesn't teach because to teach implies a lack in the one being taught, and God knows we have no lacks (12:2). He created the changeless, so He knows that changeless Self does not need to be taught (12:4).

When the ego's voice arose, God's peace was not affected (although ours was) (12:6–7). He took no direct action to blot it out because God does not attack; He simply answered the question the ego raised: “What am I?” (12:8–10). The Answer, already placed in our minds, is our true Teacher (12:10–11). This is the Holy Spirit. The difference between being taught by the Holy Spirit and being taught by God is that the Holy Spirit is part of our own minds, not something separate. He is not an external influence, something added to an imperfect mind; rather, He is the perfect Truth that is an integral part of our minds. He does not command, which implies inequality, but “He teaches only to make you equal with Him” (T-6.V.1:1).

The next section will continue the discussion of the methodology and goals of the Holy Spirit as Teacher.

Answer Key

Section III, The Relinquishment of Attack

1. By extending or teaching love or peace, we are learning love or peace. We come to know what is within our minds by sharing it and seeing it “outside” of ourselves.
2. “That” refers to the preceding sentence: “Every lesson you teach you are learning” (1:10). We must learn to teach only one lesson because whatever we teach, we learn. We can never learn the truth of what we are if we continue to teach conflicting lessons. Although we are only love, we can’t know it unless that is all we teach; instead, we make what we are something we have to remember (2:3). The one lesson we must teach is, of course, love: “Teach only love” (T-6.I. 13.2).
3. To assure my perfect safety and freedom from all anxiety, I can completely relinquish attack, and because I have done so, I can see the gentleness of the Holy Spirit in myself and others, recognizing the harmlessness of our minds. Once I fully accept my own harmlessness, God’s protection will dawn on me, and I will know I am safe.
4. Only you know how honest your answer is!
5. The second lesson (T-6.V(B)), which is, “To have peace, teach peace to learn it,” is clearly foreshadowed in 4:3, “The only way to have peace is to teach peace.” We are being asked to teach *only* love and peace by giving up, without compromise, all attack (and all thought that attack can be justified).

Section IV, The Only Answer

6. It does not mean us well. It mistrusts us because we could withdraw support from it at any moment. It does not want to make us its equal through our learning, as the Holy Spirit does.
7. “...you believe that you are without it” means that you believe you are *outside of* the Kingdom of God, or—as it is worded in 2:5—that “you are separate and outside the Mind of God.” This *is* what we believe. However, it *cannot* be true.
8. The ego wants us to believe that the best defense is attack (4:3), because if we do believe it we will be willing to ally ourselves with the ego and the body (4:4 and 4:8).
9. The ego tries to persuade the mind:
 1. that the mind is the ego’s learning device;
 2. that the body is more real than the mind.

10. My paraphrase of this passage is as follows: The ego and the body are a bad dream. Even the sleep is not real. Nothing of the bad dream of ego and body will remain when we awaken. Now, we are confused by the ego's symbols (for instance, bodies), but that is only because we are asleep. When we awaken we will see the truth, and the symbols of dreams will have no reality for us. Although what we experience in this world seems real and very important, when we awaken it will all be meaningless.
11. No written answer is expected.
12. (a) The Guide is the Holy Spirit; the means is the power to choose the answer in our minds; the model is Jesus. The commander is me. I am in charge of the Kingdom.
(b) If I am in charge, it proves I am not enslaved at all.
13. No written answer is expected.
14. If God took action, it would indicate that God's creations are not faithful to God's laws. If God taught us that we have lost our certainty, it would mean that God has lost His (because what you teach you are). If He showed the truth about us to the self we have made (the ego), we (in our ego mind) would doubt our right mind. By *refraining* from action, God affirms the truth of what we are.
15. I find this line important because it helps me understand how I can still be perfect, and yet be lost in illusion. I am like a radio receiver that is not receiving the radio signal properly. There is absolutely nothing wrong with my various parts. My tubes and transistors are all perfect; my tuner is perfect. My volume control and speakers are perfect. Still, I'm not producing music, because my communication with the radio station has been interfered with. When that communication has been restored, I will be what I have always been: a perfect receiver.
In a more theological sense, knowing that the separation is failure in communication and not a loss of perfection means that I am not a "sinner." All that has happened is that I've fallen out of touch with my perfection, and need to get back in touch with it.

Appendix

T-6.IV.5, Variations

I've left paragraph 5 as it appears in the Foundation for Inner Peace, 2nd Edition, of the Text, and my comments are based completely on that version. However, comparing the published version to the Urtext, I find two problems: first, there are considerable differences between the two versions, and second, the Urtext version is *extremely* hard to understand due to its confusing multiple uses of the pronoun "it," particularly in the third sentence. I am trying to settle on an interpretation that, for me, makes the best sense of the Urtext version. Here are some thoughts I've had to date:

URTEXT:

The ego and the body conspire AGAINST your minds, and because they realize that their "enemy" CAN end them both merely by knowing they are not part of him, they join in the attack together. This is perhaps the strangest perception of all, if you consider what it really involves. The ego, which is not real, attempts to persuade the mind, which IS real, that it IS its own learning device, and that the learning device is more real than IT is. No-one in his right mind could POSSIBLY believe this, and no-one in his right mind DOES believe it.

FIP VERSION:

The ego uses the body to conspire against your mind, and because the ego realizes that its "enemy" can end them both merely by recognizing they are not part of you, they join in the attack together. 2 This is perhaps the strangest perception of all, if you consider what it really involves. 3 The ego, which is not real, attempts to persuade the mind, which *is* real, that the mind is the ego's learning device; and further, that the body is more real than the mind is. 4 No one in his right mind could possibly believe this, and no one in his right mind does believe it.

There is another way of looking at sentence 3. Several times prior to this the Course has said that the *body* is the learning device for the *mind*. Perhaps the ego is trying to invert that somehow, and Jesus is assuming that we realize "learning device" is a synonym for the body. For instance:

Urtext: The ego, which is not real, attempts to persuade the mind, which IS real, that it IS its own learning device, and that the learning device is more real than IT is.

Allen Watson's Commentary on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

Possible interpretation: The ego, which is not real, attempts to persuade the mind, which IS real, that it (the mind) IS its own learning device (that is, the body), and that the learning device (the body) is more real than IT (the mind) is.

Or, paraphrasing a bit: The ego, which is not real, attempts to persuade the mind, which IS real, that the mind is purely physical, nothing more than an aspect of the body, and that the body is more real than the mind.