

Study Guide and Commentary ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 7, Section V

Healing and the Changelessness of Mind

Legend for Text paragraphs:

blue text = Material from ACIM 3rd edition (FIP)
bold blue text = words emphasized in all caps in Urtext
red text = alternate or omitted material from the Urtext
light blue text = editorial comments
~~striketrough blue text~~ = Not in Urtext, in FIP edition

Overview of the Section

As the title implies, this section concerns two things—healing and the changeless character of our mind. It teaches that healing is merely the recognition that our mind is changeless. It shows that *healing* is the form that Heaven's wholeness takes for teaching purposes in this world (T-7.II.3:2), and there is no contradiction or inconsistency between them. Just as true forgiveness is learning that there is nothing to forgive, true healing is learning that there is nothing to heal—that wholeness *already exists*.

I think the pivotal paragraph in this long section is the seventh paragraph. The first six paragraphs present healing as the most important ability we can develop, and one that everyone *must* develop, because the only way we can *be* healed is to become a healer. In the seventh paragraph, Jesus introduces the idea of changelessness and shows how healing is really no more than the remembrance of the changeless wholeness present in everyone. He goes on to show how, through recognizing the wholeness in others (and bringing them healing), we can come to recognize it within ourselves.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹The body is nothing more than a framework for developing abilities [Ur: It is therefore a means for developing potentials], which is quite apart from what they are [Ur: the potential is] used for. ²That is [Ur: This is] a decision. ³The effects of the ego's decision in this matter are so apparent that they need no elaboration, but the Holy Spirit's decision to use the body **only** for communication has such a direct connection with healing that it **does** need clarification. ⁴The unhealed healer **obviously** does not understand his own vocation.

• Study Question •

1. In sentence 2, what does the word "that" refer to? In other words, what is a decision?

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As it has done many times already, the *Course* elevates the importance of the mind and minimizes the role of the body. While we live in our bodies, they provide a useful environment in which the various aspects of our being can grow and reach maturity—a “framework for developing abilities”; it is the mind, however, that makes the decision about how to use those faculties (1:1–2). It can choose to follow the ego’s choice in the matter, or the Holy Spirit’s. The disastrous results of the ego’s choices are everywhere around us; it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to identify them. However, the last section instructed us to allow the Holy Spirit to manage our abilities (T-7.IV.4:1). The purpose for which He uses our bodies and their abilities, which is “only for communication” (1:3), is something that merits further discussion because it has “such a direct connection with healing” (1:3). This section of the *Text* provides that discussion. It explains the connection between communication and healing, and in the process explains why the Holy Spirit places so much emphasis on communication, making it the *only purpose* for all our abilities. If someone claiming to be a healer has not been healed himself, there is good reason to question whether or not he understands healing at all! (1:4) To heal, and to be healed, then, we must learn the true nature of healing as a kind of communication.

Paragraph 2

2. **Only** minds communicate. ²Since the ego **cannot** obliterate the impulse to communicate because it is also the impulse to **create**, it can only teach you that the **body** can both communicate **and** create, and therefore **does not need the mind**. ³The ego thus tries to teach you that the body can **act** like the mind, and is therefore self-sufficient. ⁴Yet we have learned that behavior is **not** the level for either teaching **or** learning, since you **can** act in accordance with what you do **not** believe. ⁵To do this, however, will weaken you as a teacher **and** a learner [Ur: *teachers and learners*] because, as has been repeatedly emphasized, you teach what you *do* believe. ⁶An inconsistent lesson **will** be poorly taught **and** **poorly learned**. ⁷If you teach both sickness *and* healing, you are both a poor teacher and a poor learner.

• Study Question •

2. *Do you recall where the Text previously discussed the idea that correction cannot be accomplished on the behavioral level, and the notion that we can adjust behavior while still leaving the mind uncorrected and unhealed? If you can, find that passage and review it (if not, see Answer Key).*

The mind as God created it craves communication with other aspects of mind. Mind desires to extend beyond itself in communication and creation. This threatens the ego’s isolation. Since it cannot destroy this impulse in the mind, the ego tries to *replace* the mind with the body. It teaches us to use our bodies instead of our minds for communication and creation (2:1–2). We can read a lot into that. For instance, it may bring to mind the way we try to connect with one another through sex. True communication isn’t physical, but mental. I think, however, that in essence this paragraph contrasts learning, healing, or correcting things on the *physical level* with learning,

healing, and correcting things *in our minds*. What we *do* is not as important as what we *believe*. We may act in a way that is out of accord with what we believe, and yet what we believe will still get communicated (2:4–5). An unhealed healer is a person who attempts to heal others when his or her own mind has not embraced the beliefs that are essential to true healing. Trying to heal by outward means while our minds are still unhealed will not be effective (2:6), because it is *only* the mind that communicates (2:1), not the body. When the mind is communicating sickness while the body is “communicating” healing, the recipient is getting a mixed message. The Holy Spirit *does* use the body as the mind’s communication device; in fact, that is its *only use* in His mind. However, the mind gives the body its purpose, so the mind must be thinking healing thoughts in order to use the body for healing in an effective manner.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹Healing is the one ability everyone **can** develop and **must** develop if he is to **be** healed. ²Healing is the Holy Spirit’s form of communication **in this world**, and **the only one He accepts** [Ur: knows]. ³He recognizes no other, because He does **not** accept the ego’s confusion of mind and body. ⁴Minds **can** communicate, but they **cannot** hurt. ⁵The body in the service of the ego can hurt other **bodies**, but this **cannot** occur **unless** the body has **already** been confused **with** the mind. ⁶This situation [Ur: fact], too, can be used either for healing or for magic, but you must remember [Ur: realize] that magic always involves [Ur: is *always*] the belief that healing is **harmful**. ⁷This belief is its totally insane premise, and so it proceeds accordingly.

• Study Question •

3. *If magic makes the assumption that healing is harmful (3:6), what does it mean that “it proceeds accordingly” (3:7)?*

In the preceding section we were advised to allow the Holy Spirit to use all of our *abilities* (T-7.IV.4:1). Here, Jesus identifies *healing* as the single most important ability we can develop and strengthen (3:1). The reason our ability to heal is so important to us is that we can only *be* healed by *giving* healing to others, an idea that is expressed repeatedly in the *Course*. For instance:

"I will be healed as I let Him teach me to heal" (T-2.V.18:6).

"As you heal you are healed, because the Holy Spirit sees no order of difficulty in healing" (T-7.IV.5:4).

"You understand that you are healed when you give healing" (W-pl.159.2:1).

Healing is also important because it is a kind of communication (3:2), and, as you may recall, we were just told that communication is the only purpose for which the Holy Spirit uses the body (T-7.V.1:3). If we accept those two premises as true, then logically we can say that our only purpose in this world is to extend healing. Later, in Chapter 12, the *Text* states that quite plainly: "As your function in Heaven is creation, so your function on earth is healing" (T-12.VII.4:7).

The body is where abilities are developed, and the body is a tool for communication. Healing, which is a kind of communication, is the primary ability the Holy Spirit is concerned with. Therefore, in a certain sense, healing is the only ability we need to develop because healing is the purpose the Holy Spirit gives to *every* ability (see T-7.IV.4:1–2). Everything becomes unified in having a single goal—healing (compare with T-7.IV.3:6).

The Holy Spirit makes a clear distinction between the mind and the body (3:3). He knows that only the mind creates and only the mind communicates, but mind cannot hurt (3:4); He knows that communication is more than merely a form of bodily behavior. Unlike the mind, the body *can* hurt other *bodies* when it serves the ego. This cannot occur, however, if we avoid confusing the mind with the body (3:5), as the Holy Spirit does. I think this means that when the body is guided and used by the Holy Spirit, it cannot harm another body. Only when we mistakenly try to communicate or to heal with purely physical means can harm result.

The basis of saying that minds cannot hurt one another (3:4) is that “minds” are not really separate forms; all minds are, in reality, joined (T-18.VI.3:1). How, then, could one mind attack another? Bodies can injure one another because bodies *are* separate forms, yet even so, we won’t use the body to harm unless we are convinced that the body is what we are, and that other bodies are truly separate from us. It boils down to whether or not we truly believe we are separate or united.

From this discussion, Jesus launches into a comparison of healing and magic (3:6 on through the next paragraph). The logic here, I believe, is that *healing* involves the recognition of oneness and wholeness, which takes place entirely on the level of mind, while *magic* is an attempt to bring about healing through some physical means, by changing the world or the body. Magic is a false solution, a shifting around of illusions in order to produce an illusion of real change. It operates on a *presumption of separateness*. If a healer claims to have special powers, or if a healer purports to be giving you something you do not have in yourself, it betrays their belief in separateness (4:4). That healer believes in magic.

The meaning of sentence 3:6 is not clear, but I think “This situation” (“this fact” in the Urtext) refers to the knowledge that bodies can hurt other bodies when the mind and body are confused. Either the ego or the Holy Spirit can use such knowledge. The ego takes it and uses it for magical purposes; that is, the ego encourages our confusion of mind and body, and ensnares us in attempts to heal or to communicate through our bodies (using the physical to accomplish what can only be accomplished by minds). The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, uses that knowledge for *healing*; that is, He *exposes* the confusion between mind and body, and *undoes* it, teaching us to allow His healing power to flow through our minds to others.

The ego thinks “healing is harmful” (3:6). As the *Course* freely admits, that is an “insane premise” (3:7). It makes no sense at all when you look at it in the light. Healing is only “harmful” *to the illusion of the ego*, and destroying the illusion that we are separate egos, while devastating to the ego, is only liberating and empowering to *us*. Of course, the ego hides its fear of healing from our awareness to prevent us from recognizing the ego’s insanity, but the belief underlies the use to which the ego puts our abilities. The ego shuns true healing because healing means the end of the ego. The idea here is a lot like, “Seek but do not find” (see W-pI.71.4). By offering us the palliative of magical,

counterfeit healing, the ego keeps us from seeking for true healing. It does everything it can to keep us away from healing, which is what is meant by “proceeds accordingly” in 3:7. Magic reinforces separateness, and separateness is the antithesis of wholeness; healing awakens the awareness of union. The next paragraph goes on to further contrast magic with true healing.

Paragraph 4

4. ¹Healing **only strengthens**. ²Magic always tries to weaken. ³Healing perceives **nothing** in the healer that everyone else does not share **with him**. ⁴Magic **always** sees something “special” in the healer, which he believes he can offer as a gift to someone who does **not** have it. ⁵He may believe that the gift comes from God **to him**, but it is quite evident that he does **not** understand God if he thinks **he** has something that others lack [*others do not*].

• Study Question •

4. *Do you need to have a special gift in order to become a healer, as the Course understands healing?*

As we've defined magic, it includes any attempt to heal by any means outside of *our own mind*. Please remember, however, what the *Course* says back in Chapter 2: If our level of fear is so great that healing purely through the mind actually *increases* our fear, we should not do so. In such cases, “a compromise approach” is acceptable, and physical means are not only permissible, they are “safer” for our mental well-being (see T-2.IV.4 and T-2.V.2).

If we engage in “magical” healing with the belief that it is actually accomplishing something meaningful, it will weaken us even as it *appears* to be strengthening us (4:1–2). In particular, if we attribute to some “healer” magical powers to heal us, powers that he or she possesses, but which *we do not* possess, we are teaching ourselves that we are deficient and lacking (4:3–4). We are making ourselves dependent upon another person for our healing. It weakens the healer as well, because it separates him or her from those being healed. Even if the healing ability is called a special gift from God, it still separates, as long as it is seen as a gift they have and you do not (4:5). Anything that teaches us that we are different and separate from one another weakens us, and betrays a complete lack of understanding of God's real nature (4:5).

This is one reason why it always raises a red flag for me when I see some spiritual teacher or guru who is making his followers dependent upon him, telling them that they cannot make it without him, belittling their spiritual understanding, or anything of that nature. To me, the mark of a true spiritual teacher is that he, or she, will always strive to help me recognize that I have everything he or she has, and will never hold me back from becoming his or her equal. As the *Course* itself puts it, “Like any good teacher, the Holy Spirit knows more than you do now, but He teaches only to make you equal with Him” (T-6.V.1:1).

The following material from the Urtext was omitted by the editors of the FIP edition. Why, I'm not sure; it seems quite useful, so I include it here, where it occurred in the Urtext.

You might well ask why some healing can result from this kind of thinking, and there is a real reason for this.

However misguided the “magical healer” may be, and however much he may be trying to strengthen his ego, he is also trying to help. He is conflicted and unstable, but at times he is offering something to the Sonship, and the only thing the Sonship can accept is healing. When the so-called healing “works,” then, the impulse both to help and be helped have coincided. This is co-incidental, because the healer may not be experiencing himself as truly helpful at the time, and the belief that he is, in the mind of another, helps him.

Anyone who has looked into spiritual healing seriously has almost certainly wondered why it is that, even with clearly ego-driven “healers” who claim special powers and who may use their abilities to manipulate the people they heal, people still get healed. Some spiritual healers are almost blatant about seeking financial gain from the people they heal. Yet people actually do get healed sometimes. Why?

Despite the mixed motives of the healer, he is “also trying to help.” He *is* offering something, and people who truly want help can open to that and receive that healing help. The healing comes as much (or more) from the person being healed as it does from the healer.¹

Paragraph 5

5. ¹The Holy Spirit does **not** work by chance, and healing that is of Him *always* works. ²Unless the healer **always** heals **by** Him the results **will** vary. ³Yet healing itself **is** consistent, since **only** consistency is conflict-free, and only the conflict-free **are** whole. ⁴By accepting exceptions and acknowledging that he can **sometimes** heal and **sometimes** not, the healer is **obviously** accepting **inconsistency**. ⁵He is therefore **in** conflict, and is **teaching** conflict. ⁶Can **anything** of God **not** be for all and for always? ⁷Love is incapable of **any** exceptions. ⁸Only if there is fear does the [Ur: whole] **idea** of exceptions [Ur: of any kind] seem to be meaningful. ⁹Exceptions **are** fearful because they are made **by** fear. ¹⁰The “fearful healer” is a contradiction in terms, and is therefore a concept that **only** a conflicted mind could **possibly** perceive as meaningful.

• Study Question •

5. *According to this paragraph, healing that is of the Holy Spirit always works. Why?*

An unhealed healer, or one who uses magical means, will not heal consistently; only the Holy Spirit heals consistently (5:1). There are two interesting deductions we can make from what is said here.

¹ A related explanation in regard to unhealed therapists can be found in the supplement, *Psychotherapy: Purpose, Process, and Practice*, (P-3.II.3:2-9).

First, even magic heals *sometimes*. The results vary (5:2) from one case to another, often seeming to be without rhyme or reason. The psychotherapy pamphlet points out that even an unhealed healer will heal sometimes, simply because his goal is healing (P-2.VII.7:4–5). When our healings are inconsistent, we need to realize it means that *we* are inconsistent (5:4) and that we are accepting inconsistency as normal. That is an unfruitful condition that needs to be corrected, because we are not teaching the wholeness that is, without exception, the truth (5:5).

Second, we may sometimes heal by the Holy Spirit (which always works) and sometimes not. The fact that some of our healing efforts succeed and some of them fail does not mean that the Holy Spirit fails. Nor does occasional failure indicate that we are operating *entirely* without the Holy Spirit. It may just mean that we are sometimes trying to heal without Him.

As healers we should never expect *not* to heal. When we distinguish between people we can heal and people we cannot heal, we are making exceptions. Unconditional love gives equally to all; it is *incapable* of making exceptions (5:7). We make exceptions because in some part of our mind we fear that we are not all deserving of perfect wholeness (5:8–9). When we make exceptions, we are failing to recognize that God's gifts are for everyone, forever (5:6), and only fear (which arises in turn from guilt) causes us to doubt God's universal benevolence. Within our minds, we are judging some people as undeserving of healing, or perhaps we are afraid we are too weak to engender healing in the situation, both of which stem from our fear of God. Such a "fearful healer" (5:10) is in need of healing for himself. Fear cancels healing, and healing cancels fear: "All healing is essentially the release from fear" (T-2.IV.1:7).

Paragraph 6

6. ¹Fear does **not** gladden. ²Healing **does**. ³Fear **always** makes exceptions. ⁴Healing **never** does. ⁵Fear produces dissociation, because it induces **separation**. ⁶Healing **always** produces harmony, because it proceeds from integration. ⁷It is predictable **because** it can be counted on. **8Everything** that is of God can be counted on, because everything of God is **wholly real**. **9Healing** can be counted on **because** it is inspired by His Voice, and is in accord with His laws. ¹⁰Yet if healing **is** consistent [**consistence**,] it **cannot** be inconsistently understood. ¹¹Understanding **means** consistency [**consistence**²] because God means consistency [**consistence**]. ¹²Since that **is** His meaning, it is also **yours**. **13Your** meaning **cannot** be out of accord with His, because your whole meaning and your **only** meaning comes **from** His and is **like** His. ¹⁴God **cannot** be out of accord with **Himself**, and **you** cannot be out of accord with Him. ¹⁵You cannot separate your **Self** from **your** Creator, Who created **you** by sharing **His Being with you**.

² "Consistence" and "consistency" are synonyms, but I feel it is worth knowing what the exact word is, especially since it was replaced with "consistent" in 6:10, but was the same word in three places in the original.

• Study Question •

6. *List the results of true healing that are listed here, in contrast to the results of fear.*

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As the previous paragraph pointed out, false or inconsistent healing is the result of our fear of God, which produces a belief that we do not deserve healing. That is why in this paragraph, the first six sentences contrast healing with fear. Healing brings joy; obviously, fear does not (6:1–2). Healing always heals everyone, while fear focuses on differences and withholds healing from those it considers undeserving (6:3–4). Such making of exceptions produces separation and dissociation (6:5). Real healing is based on the integral oneness of everything in God, and so it brings things together in oneness (6:6).

Healing, like all things that are of God, “can be counted on” because it “is wholly real” (6:7–8), “in accord with his laws” and “inspired by His Voice” (6:9). Who can even conceive of anything more reliable, consistent, and enduring than God’s handiwork? Healing is the activity of God within the world, not *directly* (T-7.IV.1:4), but indirectly; it derives from Him through His Voice, the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it shares the characteristics of His creation. “It is [the] result [of His laws and His Voice] in a state of mind that does not know Him” (T-7.IV.1:6).

As it comes from God, then, healing is perfectly consistent. To be healed *is* to be consistent, to be integrated, to be unified in wholeness. Therefore, if we are to harmonize with the nature of healing, we must understand it consistently, with a unified and unconflicted mind (6:10). We must be as consistent as God is, because that is how we truly *are*. Our very being is derived from God’s Being (6:13–15). Part of being healed, then, is becoming more consistent about healing. Part of being healed is giving ourselves over more and more to healing, learning not to make exceptions, learning not to exclude anyone from the Kingdom of God. Our Self, like God, is a Giver, a Creator, a Sharer of Being. We can barely imagine what that looks like in the formlessness of Heaven, but we can know what it looks like here on earth: It looks like healing.

When I am aligned with my Self, then, I will embody healing. I will gladden. I will never make exceptions. I will produce harmony because I proceed from integration (6:6). I can be counted on (6:7). I will listen to the Voice of the Holy Spirit within, and God’s laws will govern my life (6:9).

Paragraph 7

7. ¹The unhealed healer wants gratitude **from** his brothers, but he is **not** grateful to them. ²That is because he thinks he is giving something **to** them, and is **not** receiving something equally desirable in return. ³His **teaching** is limited because he is **learning** so little. ⁴His **healing** lesson is limited by his own ingratitude, which is a lesson in **sickness**. ⁵True learning is constant, and so vital in its power for change that a Son of God can recognize his power in one instant and change the world in the next. ⁶That is because, by changing **his** mind, he has changed the most powerful device that was ever given him [Ur: created] **for** change. ⁷This in no way contradicts the changelessness of mind as **God** created it, but **you** think that **you** **have** changed it as long as you learn through the ego. ⁸This

places [does place you] you in a position of needing to learn a lesson that seems contradictory; - you must learn to change your mind **about** your mind. ⁹Only by this can you learn that it *is* changeless.

• Study Question •

7. *When you have five or ten minutes, take one of the Workbook lessons on the theme, "I am as God created me," read it, and do the recommended practice. See Lessons 94, 110, 112, 120, and 162.*

The unhealed healer is not consistent. When he "gives" his kind of healing (using his "special powers"), he believes that by giving he is losing something. He wants to *receive* gratitude, but probably feels some resentment towards those he "heals" because, in his mind, they are taking something from him without giving anything in return (7:1–2). His lack of gratitude is actually teaching sickness instead of healing (7:4). The unhealed healer does not realize how his mind's unwillingness to receive and to learn restricts his own teaching and giving (7:3). The root of the problem is that he does not realize that his own mind must be healed of its thoughts of separateness and difference in order for healing to be effectively extended to others.

True learning, by contrast, involves a deep realization of the power of my *whole* mind, followed almost immediately by healing effects in the world around me (7:5). Our own mind is the most powerful tool we have for effecting change (7:6)! How can we "change the world" (7:5)? By changing our minds! The *Course* does advise us to make changing our mind our primary goal, rather than changing the world, when it says, "...seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world" (T-21.Int.1:7). But it also very clearly says, in this paragraph, that if we do change our mind, we *will* change the world.

Notice also that the maxim about being healed through healing others is also true in reverse. That is, we cannot heal others until we have been healed. "The only way to heal is to be healed" (T-27.V.1:1).

It takes a truly healed mind to extend true healing, and yet our minds recognize their own healing *as* they extend healing to others. Which comes first, our own healing or that of others? I think the answer is, "Both; but in time, that of others." As the *Course* says of miracles (which is another word for healing):

You cannot perform a miracle for yourself, because miracles are a way of giving acceptance and receiving it. In time the giving comes first, though they are simultaneous in eternity, where they cannot be separated. When you have learned they are the same, the need for time is over. (T-9.VI.6:3–5)

We can get our minds twisted in knots by this if we want to, but it can make a kind of sense. If I am to heal, I must be healed. But if healing my own mind *consists of* becoming willing to see my brother healed, then *being* healed and *extending* healing are, literally, the same thing. When I extend healing to another, and see them healed, it teaches me something about myself. If I have given healing, I must have *had* healing in order to give it. In fact, the realization of my own healing is not complete until I have given healing to another (W-pI.159.2:1). I receive my healing by giving it away.

Now, with all this talk about changing our minds, the *Text* creates a certain logical dilemma for us. The *Course* tells us that God created our mind as changeless, and yet all through the *Course* we are called on to *change our mind*. How can that be (7:7)?

Remember that in the beginning of Chapter 2 the *Text* said that the whole separation started because we believed we could change what God created (T-2.I.1:9 and T-2.I.4:1). Our mind *is* changeless; God created it, and we cannot change it. The problem is, "...you think that you *have* changed it ..." (7:7). We believe that our "attack on God" has made a disastrous alteration in our minds, and caused them to become unloving. That simply is not true, of course.

Our mind is changeless; wholly loving and wholly lovable. My mind and your mind were created as extensions of God's Mind, and our minds are nothing other than an eternal Will to all goodness. Your true mind is kindness itself; gentleness itself; Love Itself. But when we listen to our ego, we believe we have changed that mind into something else.

Because we *do* believe that lie, we must learn to change our mind *about* our mind (7:8). The only thing that needs to be changed is the belief that we *have* changed our mind. This is the only way we can learn that our mind *is* changeless (7:9).

Back in the last section of Chapter 6, the *Course* began talking about the Kingdom. There is a passage there that says almost exactly this same thing in different words:

You have believed that you are without the Kingdom [or that you have changed your mind], and have therefore excluded yourself from it in your belief. It is therefore essential to teach you that you must be included, and that the belief that you are not [included] is the only thing that you must exclude. (6.V.C.6.4–5)

We must be vigilant against any thought that tells us we are something other than complete love, or that any part of ourselves, or any other person, is excluded from the Kingdom of God. We must learn that no one is outside the Kingdom, with no exceptions! If you make any exceptions, you have allowed exceptions in principle, and that principle will wind up excluding *you*.

Paragraph 8

8. ¹When you heal, that is exactly what you *are* learning [Ur: (doing)]. ²You are recognizing the changeless mind in your brother by realizing [Ur: perceiving (knowing)] that he could **not** have changed his mind. ³That is how you perceive the Holy Spirit in him. ⁴It is **only** the Holy Spirit in him that never changes His Mind. ⁵He himself may [Ur: must] think he **can**, or he would not perceive himself as sick. ⁶He therefore does not know what his Self **is**. ⁷If **you** see only the changeless in him you have not really changed him [Ur: at all]. ⁸By changing your mind about **his** *for* him, you help him undo the change his ego thinks it has made in him.

• Study Question •

8. *In 8:1–2, what is the "that" that is "exactly what you are learning," and how does that relate to healing? ("That" refers to something in the preceding paragraph.)*



When you “heal” someone according to the *Course*, you simply help that person remember their own intrinsic wholeness. You remind them that they have not changed what God created. You do not give them something you have that they don't have; you just help them to remember what they already have and are. In so doing, you learn to recognize the changeless mind in yourself (8:1). Notice how the *Course* emphasizes this point over and over: *You* are learning that *your* mind is changeless by recognizing that your brother's mind is changeless. You are healed as you heal.

This is the same thing that Jesus referred to earlier as recognizing the Holy Spirit in your brother (8:3; compare with T-5.III.1–3). The Holy Spirit *is* the changeless mind in him (8:4). He speaks for the right mind, the mind that never changes, the mind that always, already knows. Your brother, in his conscious mind, may believe that he *has* changed his mind, just as you and I believe we have changed our minds. The fact that we are sick, or angry, or feel guilty, proves that we *do* believe we've changed our minds, even though such change is impossible (8:5). In such a state, your brother does not know who he is. He does not know his Self (8:6). He believes that he is what he is not, and that he is not what he is. Your mission is to help him remember the truth. That is how the *Course* defines “healing.”

You don't actually change him; you don't give him anything he didn't already have (8:7). All you are doing is changing your own mind about your brother's mind (8:8). Notice: *all you do is change your own mind*. That, in and of itself, is enough to help your brother undo his own belief that he has changed his mind and made it unworthy of God and capable of being sick. A healer in *Course* terms simply sees “the changeless in the heart of change” or “the light of truth behind appearances” (W-pI.122.13:4). He looks upon what *appears* to be a sick person or an attacking person, but he looks past the appearance to the unchanging reality in the person.

When someone attacks you, as a healer you refuse to believe that that is the truth of the matter. You *know* something else is going on. You don't teach him he is attacking you; you teach him that he *cannot* attack you, and thereby help him to remember who he really is. You tell yourself, “That is not the real person,” and see, behind the appearance, something that does not change, cannot change, and never has changed. Looking past the ego and telling yourself, “What I am seeing is not the truth,” is what the *Course* called “true denial” in T-2.II.2:1–2; you are denying that anyone's mistakes can hurt you. You become a peacemaker, a healer, calling forth in others what you *know must be there* even if they themselves have forgotten it.

Paragraph 9

9. ¹As you can hear two voices, so you can see in two ways. ²One way shows you an image, or [Ur: better,] an idol that you may worship out of fear, but will never love. ³The other shows you only truth, which you will love because you will **understand** it. ⁴Understanding is **appreciation**, because what you understand you can identify **with**, and by making it part of **you**, you have accepted it with love. ⁵That is how God Himself created **you**; in understanding, in appreciation and in love. ⁶The ego is totally unable to understand this, because it does **not** understand what it makes, does **not** appreciate it and does **not** love it. ⁷It incorporates to **take away**. ⁸It literally believes that every time it

deprives someone of something, it has increased. ⁹I have spoken often of the **increase** of the Kingdom by **your** creations, which can only **be** created as **you** were. ¹⁰The whole glory and perfect joy that *is* the Kingdom lies in you to give. ¹¹Do you not **want** to give it?

• **Study Question** •

9. *Application: Think of someone in your life who needs healing. Realize that to some degree you see this person as sick. That means you think this person succeeded in changing him or herself from being whole to being sick. Say to the person:*
“Let me change my mind about you, [name]. Let me recognize the eternal nature of your mind, and know that you could never have changed your changeless Self. Let my vision of you help you realize that your ego has not really changed you.”
10. *Spend a few moments quietly and honestly looking within yourself in an attempt to answer the question posed in sentences 9:10 and 9:11. Find the desire spoken of within you, and fan its flame.*

Two voices, two visions (9:1). Consider the two ways of seeing spoken of here, and ask yourself which is the way you now see, and which is the way you want to see. The image or idol that the ego shows you is one of separated individuals, perhaps fiercely independent, whose strength is thought to lie in attack. You may fear this image and be in awe of it, but you will never love it (9:2). The Holy Spirit's vision shows you the Kingdom, God's lovely creation, which is wholly true. This picture you *will* love, because you so thoroughly identify with it and appreciate it that you are enabled to understand it (9:3–4). Imagine what it is like to see, in another person, something you recognize as part of you, something pure and lovely and undefiled, something that evokes intense appreciation and love on your part!

To the ego the very idea of loving another person like that is nonsensical. It does not even love *you* that way! “The ego does not love you” (T-7.VI.4:3). How likely is it the ego will love, understand, or appreciate its “creations”? When God creates, He understands His creations, appreciates them, and loves them (9:5), and you create as He does. When you see the changeless mind in your brother, you recognize it *as your brother*. You react to that godlike mind just as God does to His creations. The ego reacts just in reverse: It cannot understand, it depreciates, and it loathes what it sees. Its only reason for joining with another is to steal from that other (9:7), because it actually believes that taking from another is the way to increase itself (9:8). Increase in the Kingdom comes by creation, and that takes place through us just as it does through God: It is an outflow, a giving, an outburst of love and joy.

Here, in this world, it is given to us to reflect that ecstasy of creation by *recognizing* God's creation wherever we see it. We heal through *appreciation* of the Christ in one another. That is how we heal one another; that is how we heal ourselves; indeed, that is how we approach God Himself: “God...is approached through the appreciation of His Son” (T-11.IV.7:2).

You and I have the ability to give others “the whole glory and perfect joy that is the Kingdom” (9:10). Oh, that is something I want to do! Don’t you? I want to be someone through whom the goodness of God flows into this impoverished world, a spring in the desert, a light in the darkness, a drink of water in a dry and thirsty land. Isn’t that the desire of your heart, too?

Paragraph 10

10. ¹You **cannot** forget the Father because I am with you, and **I cannot** forget Him. ²To forget **me** is to forget yourself and Him Who created you. ³Our brothers **are** forgetful. ⁴That is why they need your remembrance of me and of Him Who created me. ⁵Through this remembrance, you can change **their** minds about themselves, as I can change **yours**. ⁶Your mind is so powerful a light that you can look into theirs and enlighten them, as I can enlighten yours. ⁷I do not want to share my **body** in communion because this is to share nothing. ⁸Would I try to share an illusion with the most holy children of a most holy Father? ⁹Yet I do want to share my **mind** with you because we **are** of one Mind, and that Mind **is** ours. ¹⁰See **only** this Mind everywhere, because only this **is** everywhere and in everything. ¹¹It **is** everything because it encompasses all things within **itself**. ¹²Blessed are you who perceive only this, because you perceive only what is true.

• Study Question •

11. *If you are familiar with the traditional Christian teaching about “holy communion,” how might the teaching of this paragraph be related to that? (Note: Sentences 7 and 8 in the Second Edition were omitted from the First Edition because they were thought to be too controversial.)*

It seems to me that in this paragraph, Jesus briefly turns from telling us how we can evoke the light in our brothers by perceiving it in them, to *practicing* his own teaching in regard to us. He starts to remind us of who we are by telling us how he sees the truth in us. We cannot forget God, for instance (10:1). He won’t let us! As he reminded us in T-7.III.1, He is with us, and will remind us, and that is exactly how he wants us to be with our brothers and sisters: *with* them to remind them of the truth.

“Our brothers are forgetful” (10:3). Therefore, they are in need of someone who can remind them of their Self: *you* (10:4). You remind them of who *they* are by remembering Jesus and God (10:5). Remembering Jesus and God, in this passage, does not mean simply thinking about them. It means sharing the Mind of Christ (10:9), which means perceiving things as Christ perceives them, and recognizing that we *do* share one Mind with him, and with everyone, a Mind that is the only thing that is literally omnipresent (10:10). The Bible advises us to, “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5 NRSV), and assures us that, “we have the mind of Christ” (I Cor 2:16). In truth, the Mind of Christ is not only in everything, It *is* everything, and all things are within It (10:11).

The Gospels tell a story in which Jesus, at the Last Supper, broke bread and gave it to his disciples, telling them it was his body (or symbolized his body), and they were to “do

this in remembrance” of him (Luke 22:19). Jesus, here (10:7–9), is correcting that story. He is telling us that the way to remember him is not by sharing his body, but by sharing his *mind*. Since his mind is now identical to the Mind of Christ, the one Mind, to share Jesus’ mind is the same as to share the Christ Mind.

Thus, this is yet another way of saying the same thing: As you open your mind to Christ to be corrected, that very act can change the minds of those around you to see themselves differently as well. When you join with Christ, you see His Mind in your brothers, and the light of your vision of them enlightens *them* (10:6). And in that vision, *you* are blessed as well (10:12), for in seeing what is true in your brothers, you remember it in yourself.

Paragraph 11

11. ¹Come therefore unto me, and learn of the truth in **you**. ²The mind **we** share **is** shared by all our brothers, and as we see them truly they **will** be healed. ³Let **your** mind [**minds**] shine with mine upon their minds, and by our gratitude to them make **them** aware of the light in them [**them**]. ⁴This light will shine back upon **you** and on the whole Sonship, because this **is** your proper gift to God. ⁵He will accept it and give it to the Sonship, because it is acceptable to Him and therefore to His Sons. ⁶This is true communion with the Holy Spirit [**Ur: the true communion of the Spirit**], Who sees the altar of God in everyone, and by bringing it to **your** appreciation, **He** calls upon you to love God and His creation. ⁷You can appreciate the Sonship **only** as one. ⁸This is part of the law of creation, and therefore governs **all** thought.

• Study Question •

12. One by one, think of three or four people you know, and “let your mind shine with [Jesus’ mind] upon their minds” (11:3). Nurture the seed within yourself of gratitude toward each one of them for what they are. Appreciate them. Affirm their holiness as God’s creations.

This paragraph summarizes the process of healing. (See below for my breakdown of the process.) It begins with our turning to Jesus and recognizing that we share the same mind he has, and share it with all our brothers as well. The Holy Spirit, too, sees this mind (“altar”) in everyone and calls it to our attention, asking us to appreciate it, and in so doing “to love God and His creation” (11:6).

I love the way this extremely mystical teaching ends up in such simplicity:

- Gratitude toward one another
- Appreciation of each other
- Love toward all of God’s creation
- Recognition of our oneness in God

That’s what it looks like in practice. In my opinion, if it doesn’t look like that, it isn’t from God. This teaching is universal, it is “part of the law of creation” (11:8). Such

consideration and appreciation for others, recognizing them as ourselves, is not a teaching restricted to *A Course in Miracles*. The Golden Rule (usually rendered as, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”), for instance, occurs in some form in every major religion of the world. In the *Course*, Jesus declares that it is “the rule for appropriate behavior” (T-1.III.6:4), so the *Course* also endorses the Golden Rule.

A Buddhist writer, Wes Nisker, shows that Buddhists also understand our oneness:

Meditation can reveal that there is no solidity anywhere, that the observer cannot be separated from what is observed, that phenomena seem to appear out of emptiness, and that everything affects everything else in a co-emergent system that scientists have only recently acknowledged and named “nonlocality.” (*Buddha's Nature: A Practical Guide to Discovering Your Place in the Cosmos*, by Wes Nisker, page 18)

You cannot appreciate just “special parts” of the Sonship; it is all or nothing (11:7–8). Any so-called spiritual path that is exclusive, narrow, and judgmental toward those who do not adopt it, is a path that is leading in the wrong direction.

My own spiritual journey has been one of an ever-widening circle, constantly more and more inclusive as the years have gone by. And it keeps getting wider! Every time I think it can't possibly get more inclusive, it does. So when I see a section like this, which teaches that seeing Christ in everyone is the way to my own enlightenment, I feel like shouting, “Hallelujah!” This is one of the key things about the *Course* that has caused me to choose it as my primary spiritual path.

Summary

Healing is, in this world, the “teaching form” of creation in Heaven. True healing is the recognition of a preexistent wholeness. Lack of wholeness (sickness) is seen as merely a mistake in perception. Healing equals communication, the communication of the idea of wholeness. To be healed, we must learn to heal. Healing is accomplished as we change our minds about our brothers, and see them as whole, just as God created them. We help a brother undo the change his ego thinks it has made in him when we change our mind *about his mind* for him. This is how we extend the Kingdom in this world.

Here is how I understand the steps in the process of healing:

The steps of interaction in healing

1. I come to Jesus and learn the truth about myself. I realize that if the truth is in him it must be in me.
2. Seeing the truth about myself, I extend that to all my brothers. I realize the mind I share with Jesus is shared by all my brothers. I see my brothers truly. My mind, joined with Jesus's mind, shines on them. I show my gratitude to my brothers for what they are. I appreciate the Sonship as one; I love God and therefore love His creation.
3. My brothers are healed. They become aware of the light in them as they see my gratitude and appreciation for their true light.
4. The light in them shines back on me and on the entire Sonship.

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5. This extension of light is my gift to God.
6. God accepts my gift, and shares it with the Sonship.

The whole process is what is meant by true communion with the Holy Spirit.

Answer Key

1. "That" refers to what our abilities are used for. The use to which we put abilities is a decision. The body is merely the playing field in which our abilities are developed; it is *the mind* that decides what the abilities will be used for.
2. Chapter 2, Section VI, particularly paragraph 5.
3. Because magic believes healing to be harmful, it always *avoids true healing*. It never sees mind as the focal point for healing, but tries to heal in some external fashion. It addresses the symptom, leaving the mind unhealed.
4. No. On the contrary, true healing sees the healer and everyone else as sharing the same gifts from God, and it is this perception that brings about the healing.
5. Several reasons are given. One, God's Love cannot make exceptions, so it heals everyone. Two, healing means being free of conflict, and if something is inconsistent it is not free of conflict; therefore healing is, by nature, consistent. Three, anything of God must be "for all and for always" (5:6). Four, exceptions to healing can only seem meaningful if fear is real (5:8) because you would always fear that *this time* might be the exception! So if fear is not possible, exceptions cannot exist.
6. Healing results in gladness. It makes no exceptions. It produces harmony, rather than separation. It is predictable and can be counted on. Healing results in complete consistency because consistency is our very meaning, which is derived from the meaning of God.
7. No written answer is expected.
8. We are learning that mind is changeless. To heal is to recognize the changeless mind in a brother.
9. No written answer is expected.
10. No written answer is expected.
11. Traditional Christian teaching, and especially Roman Catholic teaching, says that Jesus instituted a ritual at the Last Supper, in which he said that his disciples should share bread and wine. The bread, it is said, symbolizes his body, broken for us; the wine, his blood (which, in turn, symbolizes his life) poured out for us. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that when a priest blesses the bread, it literally becomes the body of Christ, and the wine becomes his blood, while Protestants generally take the bread and wine as symbols.

In the paragraph under discussion, Jesus refutes the idea that he would want to share his body with us, since it is an illusion; sharing the body would be to share nothing. He says, rather, that he wants to share his mind with us. To remember him, then, means to share his mind, not his body. He clearly intends us to relate this to the "sacrament" of Holy Communion, because he uses the words

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“remembrance of me” (10:4), which are the words he supposedly used when he instituted the sacrament:

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. (Luke 22:19, ASV)

12. No written answer is expected.