

# Study Guide and Commentary ACIM<sup>®</sup> Text, Chapter 8, Section II

## The Difference Between Imprisonment and Freedom

### Legend:

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  
~~strikethrough blue text~~ = Not in Urtext, in FIP edition

### Overview of the Section

This section clearly continues the previous section. It begins with the statement, “There *is* a rationale for choice” (1:1), which is an unmistakable reference to T-8.I.5:10, in which those who attempt to follow two contradictory teachers are unable to find a rationale for choosing between them. If we are willing to select only one teacher, there *are* some clear criteria for evaluating them. It is also a continuation of the discussion from T-7.X, which told us we were confusing pain and joy. This section tells us we are confusing imprisonment and freedom, and need to learn to tell the difference.

The section contrasts the two teachers, first in the degree of their knowledge of the subject matter, which is the nature of our identity (the ego fails this test because it knows nothing of what we are); second, in the degree to which the teacher’s teaching is in accord with our nature; and third, the extent to which that teaching frees us or imprisons us. In all three respects, the Holy Spirit is unquestionably the best choice as teacher!

*Reading for meditation:* Lesson 74.

### Paragraph 1

1. <sup>1</sup>There *is* a rationale for choice. <sup>2</sup>Only one Teacher **knows** what your reality is. <sup>3</sup>If learning to remove the obstacles to that knowledge [*If learning that*] is the **purpose** of the curriculum, you **must** learn it of Him. <sup>4</sup>The ego does **not know what it is trying to teach**. <sup>5</sup>It is trying to teach you what you are **without knowing** [*it.*] what you are. <sup>6</sup>It is expert **only** in confusion. <sup>7</sup>It does not understand **anything else**. <sup>8</sup>As a teacher, then, the ego is totally confused and **totally confusing**. <sup>9</sup>Even if you could disregard the Holy Spirit entirely, which is [*quite*] impossible, you could still learn nothing from the ego, because the ego **knows** nothing.

• Study Question •

1. *If you were able to completely shut out the Voice of the Holy Spirit, and to listen only to your ego, what would you learn from it?*

The first sentence is the counterpoint to our conflicted curriculum, which left us with *no* rationale for choosing our direction (T-8.I.5:8–10). Jesus is saying, “There is a good, logical reason for choosing the Holy Spirit over the ego.” What is that reason? It’s very simple: Our entire purpose in learning is to learn what our reality is. The Holy Spirit knows what you are, and the ego has no idea what you are (1:2–5). The ego’s very existence stems from questioning what God says you are! If one teacher knows the goal of learning and the other does not know, which one do you want to listen to?

I am struck with the assertion that the ego really knows nothing (1:9)! Sometimes it seems as though the ego, or whatever it is that is “tempting” us and misdirecting us, must know us very, very well. It always seems to choose just the right temptation. It knows our weak points. I think the reason for that is that the understanding of our weaknesses that the ego exploits is really *our own understanding*. The ego is using our own knowledge of ourselves against us. All that the ego really knows how to “teach” is *confusion* (1:6). It cannot offer us anything solid or substantial. Therefore, it confuses the issue, and tries to keep us from discovering the truth, or what we really want, by making an illusion that promises to fill the same need.

The picture I see in my mind is that of an oasis in the desert, where the true pool of water is flanked by several mirages that appear to be other sources of water. We get drawn off to the illusions and lose track of the reality. That’s what the ego does. We’ve already seen how the ego hides joy with illusions in which pain seems more desirable; this section covers the ego’s obfuscation of freedom.

But the main point is that the ego doesn’t really know anything, and even if we could totally disregard the Holy Spirit, so that we listened *only* to the ego’s voice (which isn’t remotely possible, thank goodness), we “could still learn nothing from the ego” (1:9). As a teacher, the ego is completely incompetent and completely unqualified. That is certainly a *very* good reason not to listen to it any longer.

## Paragraph 2

2. <sup>1</sup>Is there **any** possible reason for choosing a teacher such as this? <sup>2</sup>Does the **total** disregard of **anything** it teaches make anything **but** sense? <sup>3</sup>Is **this** the teacher to whom a Son of God should turn to find **himself**? <sup>4</sup>The ego has never given you a sensible answer to anything. <sup>5</sup>Simply on the grounds of your own experience with its teaching, should not this alone disqualify it as your future teacher? <sup>6</sup>Yet the ego has done more harm to your learning than this alone. <sup>7</sup>Learning is joyful if it leads you along your natural path, and facilitates the development of **what you have**. <sup>8</sup>When you are taught **against** your nature, however, you will lose by your learning because your learning will **imprison** you. <sup>9</sup>Your will is *in* your nature, and therefore **cannot go against** it.

• Study Question •

2. *Besides being unqualified and incompetent as a teacher, there are other reasons, "more...than this alone" (2:6), for firing the ego as our teacher. What are they?*

How would you answer the questions posed in the first two sentences of this paragraph? When Jesus uses rhetorical questions such as this, where the answer is obvious (in this case, "No" to the first question and "No" to the second), what is the purpose? The general idea is that the question is meant to have some persuasive effect. To state plainly, "There is no possible reason for choosing such a teacher," may be a strong statement in itself. Yet, as a question, "Is there any possible reason for choosing a teacher such as this?" (2:1), the message comes through even more powerfully because your own mind is coaxed to supply the answering, "No!"

Following the Holy Spirit isn't simply something God requires of us. *It makes sense*, because the alternative teacher is ignorant of the subject matter. Would you study music from a teacher who was tone deaf? Would you apprentice for carpentry with a man whose house was falling down and whose furniture was broken? Of course not! You want a teacher who knows the subject being taught. In this case, *you* are the subject, and the ego does not know you (2:3).

Once again, Jesus is asking us to evaluate, this time, "your own experience with its teaching" (2:5). If we think about it we will realize that our egos have *never* given us a sensible answer about anything. All they have ever done is to confuse us. On that basis alone, we should reject the ego.

Jesus is getting pretty revved up here! It's almost like a salesman or evangelist. You can hear him saying, "And that's not all! The ego has not only *mised* you into confusion, it has brought real *harm* to your learning!" (2:6). The ego is not just some playful sprite; it is a malicious demon. It *intends* harm.

What is so harmful about the ego's teaching is that it leads us against our nature (2:8). Remember, the subject matter is *who you are* (your nature) and *what you want* (your will), and the ego is telling you lies about that. This has to have a crippling effect on you. Because your learning teaches you to do the *opposite* of your true will, it literally *imprisons* you (2:8). Learning *should* lead you into a discovery of your own nature (2:7), and lead to the expression of that nature along natural lines, the full expression of the will that is part of that nature (2:9). The ego's teaching leads you away from the expression of your true nature and your true self. It is therefore constraining you against your will. That is the definition of imprisonment, to be constrained against your will.

The funny thing is, most of us do not feel *imprisoned* by the ego. On the contrary, it seems as if *God* is asking us to do something against our will, at least some of the time. He is asking us to give things up, for instance to give up our grievances when we would like nothing more than to see our enemies ground into the dust. Isn't this how you feel, at least some of the time? Millennia ago, revenge was still considered a valid motivation in prayer. Perhaps you can identify with the vindictive prayers of the Psalmist, such as:

Let evil recoil on those who slander me; in your faithfulness destroy them.  
(Psalm 54:5)

Deliver me from my enemies, O God; protect me from those who rise up against me. (Psalm 59:1)

With God we shall gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies. (Psalm 60:12)

I certainly know I have felt that way at times, and I am pretty sure that nearly everyone has. So, when God comes along and tells us to forgive those “enemies” instead of trampling them down, doesn’t it seem as though God represents the *loss* of free will, while the other voice *is* our free will? Exactly that is the point in this section. Because we have identified with the ego, we have confused imprisonment and freedom.

We have them backwards.

### Paragraph 3

3. <sup>1</sup>The ego cannot teach you anything as long as your will is free, because you **will not listen to it**. <sup>2</sup>It is **not** your will to be imprisoned **because** your will is free. <sup>3</sup>That is why the ego **is** the denial of free will. <sup>4</sup>It is **never** God Who coerces you, because He **shares** His Will **with** you. <sup>5</sup>His Voice teaches **only** in accordance with His Will, but that is not the Holy Spirit’s lesson because that is what you *are*. <sup>6</sup>The **lesson** is that your will and God’s **cannot** be out of accord because they **are** one. <sup>7</sup>This is the **undoing** of **everything** the ego tries to teach. <sup>8</sup>It is not, then, only the **direction** of the curriculum that must be unconflicted, but also the **content**.

#### • Study Question •

3. *Picture this common situation: You are in traffic and another driver cuts you off, or you are in the grocery store and someone cuts in front of your line. You feel angry, and mentally (at least!) berate the person as an inconsiderate oaf. Since this is listening to the ego, it must be somehow imprisoning you. How?*

True free will is the best protection *against* the ego, because when the will is free to follow the nature of the Self, it will ignore the ego (3:1) and align with God. It truly is amazing how completely the ego has bamboozled us! When we think of “free will,” we usually understand that to mean the freedom to do whatever we want, independent of everyone else’s will or wish. Free will seems to mean *not* being aligned with anyone or anything else. Almost by definition then, if my will is one hundred percent aligned with God it *can’t* be free. To qualify as free, I *must* demonstrate independence. In this way of looking at things, then, the ego represents free will, and God is attempting to coerce us to do His Will.

Of course, the reverse is true (3:4). Not God, but “...the ego *is* the denial of free will” (3:3). Free will means a will that is free to *act according to its nature*. Since your nature is an extension of God’s Will (3:4), your will is only free when it is One with the Divine Will, when you *allow* “the natural response of every Son of God to the Voice for his Creator” (8:6). When you are free to be the love that you are, your will is truly free. When, out of fear, you feel compelled to attack, you are in prison.

The Holy Spirit does not try to teach us God's Will ("...that is not the Holy Spirit's lesson..." (3:5)). He does not *need* to teach us God's Will because we *are* God's Will (3:5). Instead, the content of the lesson He teaches is "that your will and God's cannot be out of accord because they are one" (3:6). When our will is unhindered by the ego and free to express its true nature, we will will as God wills. We will love, we will create, we will extend, we will bless. As the last chapter put it, we will "give the Love of God to everything (we) see and touch and remember" (T-7.XI.3:11)—and *that* is true freedom of will. The Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* had it right: "O God, ... in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom..." The service of God *is* perfect freedom.

That lesson totally blows away everything the ego is trying to teach us (3:7). It has labored long and hard to convince us that the service of God is *slavery and not freedom*. It has done everything it could think of to convince us that *differing* from God's Will is the true expression of freedom, that *independence* and not *dependence* means liberty. Yet, if the Sonship's very nature is so like God that we are indistinguishable from Him (W-pII.326.1:5), the ego is obviously blowing hot air! How could going against our nature possibly be construed as freedom? As a body, my nature is to breathe air. Would it be an expression of freedom of will to attempt to breathe water? Or would it be suicide?

Thus, Jesus says, the curriculum we follow needs to be not only uni-directional (not pulled in opposing directions) but also unambiguous in content (3:8). Let there be no confusion, no doubt about it: our will and God's are one. Workbook Lesson 74 ("There is no will but God's") tells us that this idea "can be regarded as the central thought toward which all our exercises are directed" (W-pI.74.1:1). You may want to read that lesson now, as it is quite relevant to the discussion here. The idea that no will but God's exists is absolutely central to the Course. It logically leads to the realization that our will is one with His, and that—in the absence of any opposing will—our minds cannot be in conflict, but must be at peace.

## Paragraph 4

4. <sup>1</sup>The ego tries to teach that you want to **oppose** God's Will. <sup>2</sup>This unnatural lesson **cannot** be learned, and the **attempt** to learn it is a violation of your own freedom, making you **afraid** of your will *because* it is free. <sup>3</sup>The Holy Spirit opposes **any** imprisoning of the will of a Son of God, **knowing** that the will of the Son **is** the Father's. <sup>4</sup>The Holy Spirit leads you steadily along the path of freedom, teaching you how to disregard or look beyond **everything** that would hold you back.

### • Study Question •

4. *What are we asked to do with anything that appears to hold us back on our path?*



As we've seen, the ego is trying to teach us that freedom means opposing God's Will. Fortunately, this lesson is so utterly unnatural that it *cannot* be learned (4:1). We need not fear that we will ultimately be lost in the insanity of thinking that freedom means going against our nature. It won't happen. And yet, although there is no need for fear in that

regard, we still *do* experience fear concerning our will. We fear our will itself; we fear its very freedom (4:2). Our ability to even *try* to learn the impossible lesson, our seeming freedom to make the wrong choices, terrifies us.

There is a part of our minds, I think, that would actually be glad to have freedom of will eradicated. When we ask questions of a certain kind, we show this tendency to want God to remove our freedom:

- How could God allow this tragedy to happen?
- How could God let us become so confused?
- Why doesn't God just take us all home *now*?

All of those questions have the same answer: Our freedom of will is sacrosanct. God cannot take away our freedom of will because our will *is identical with His own* (4:3), which is why the Holy Spirit opposes anything that would imprison our will. If we were not free to follow our own will we could not become confused, we could not cause tragic pain, and we could not resist His calling us to Himself. Like sailors to the Sirens of myth, we would be irresistibly lured to God and held there in an iron grip, imprisoned, not embraced. But if that were to be so, we would be automatons, not living beings, not spirits created in God's own image. We would be mere shells, without the spark of real life.

As the Course tells us later:

The Holy Spirit can use all that you give to Him for your salvation. But He cannot use what you withhold, for He cannot take it from you without your willingness. For if He did, you would believe He wrested it from you against your will. And so you would not learn it *is* your will to be without it. (T-25.VIII.1:1-4)

Love is not love if it is not voluntary. If I somehow had a magic potion I could give you that made you "love" me, would that really be love, or simply some sort of fascination or obsession? How could it be love if it were *forced* upon you, without your consent?

Therefore, the guidance of the Holy Spirit is always toward complete freedom of will (4:4), and in opposition to anything that would restrict our will. We *must* choose God ourselves. "...God's Will cannot be forced upon you, being an experience of total willingness" (T-8.III.2:3). Yet, as the Course says often, we need only "a little willingness" (T-26.VII.10:1-2) to turn toward Him. Given that, the Holy Spirit will amplify our willingness and take us home. We turn the ignition switch, and He supplies the jet-assisted take-off.

## Paragraph 5

5. <sup>1</sup>We have said that the Holy Spirit teaches you the difference between pain and joy. <sup>2</sup>That is the same as saying He teaches you the difference between imprisonment and freedom. **3You cannot make this distinction without Him** [That is] because you have taught **yourself** that imprisonment **is** freedom. <sup>4</sup>Believing them to be the same, how can you tell them apart? <sup>5</sup>Can you ask the part of your mind that taught you to believe they **are** the same, to teach you how they are different [teach you the *difference*]?



• Study Question •

5. *Why do we need the Holy Spirit to teach us to make the distinction between imprisonment and freedom?*

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Three sections ago (T-7.X) Jesus talked about helping us distinguish pain and joy; now he is talking about imprisonment and freedom, and yet he says this is really the same topic (5:1–2). To be free is to be joyful, and to be imprisoned is to be in pain. The reverse of each is also true: to be joyful is to be free, and to be in pain is to be imprisoned. Thus, though he is using different terms, Jesus is really talking about the same confusion in our minds as he was discussing previously.

What we call freedom is really a kind of imprisonment. We believe that freedom means being able to fulfill our every wish, to act with total disregard of other beings, and to be unrestricted in any way. Yet if you actually encounter anyone who is like this, you probably regard them as mentally ill! We are addicted to ego gratification, and even when we do begin to try to reform ourselves we seem to be helpless to throw off the dominion of the ego.

An alcoholic or drug addict is a perfect example of the confusion between imprisonment and freedom. To the objective observer, an addict is obviously *imprisoned* by alcohol or drugs. Yet to the addict, alcohol and drugs represent his or her *freedom*, and they will tenaciously resist all efforts to take away the substance that is destroying them.

This is just how the Holy Spirit sees us in regard to our will. We tenaciously resist His attempts to liberate us from the shackles of the ego, and we do so in the name of our freedom! We insist that having a will that is independent of God's Will is freedom, and that being united with His Will is slavery. Just as substance abusers cannot see that alcohol or drugs are enslaving them, and stubbornly regard them as freedom, as something they *want*, we fail to see how the ego is enslaving us, and stubbornly defend our "right" to do "as we please." We are *egoholics* instead of alcoholics. We seem incapable of recognizing true freedom and real slavery because we have taught ourselves extremely well that imprisonment is freedom. That is why we *need* the help of the Holy Spirit to find our way out of the confusion we have made (5:3).

The Twelve Step Program of Alcoholics Anonymous begins with the first two steps:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

The Course is presenting the same general idea in regard to our liberation from the ego. It isn't saying that we are *completely* powerless; that would be totally contrary to its insistence on the power of our minds (see passages in footnote)<sup>1</sup>, a power that it wants to

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<sup>1</sup> "I would hardly help you if I depreciated the power of your own thinking. This would be in direct opposition to the purpose of this course" (T-2.VII.1:5-6).

"The mind is very powerful, and never loses its creative force. It never sleeps. Every instant it is creating. It is hard to recognize that thought and belief combine into a power surge that can literally move mountains. It appears at first glance that to believe such power about yourself is

re-establish in our awareness. What it says, instead, is that we are incapable of making the distinction between imprisonment and freedom because we have used the power of that very mind to teach ourselves that the two things are identical (5:4). Our mind is what taught us this mistake, so we *cannot* depend on it to teach us its opposite (5:5).

Let me revise that. It does not say we are incapable of making the distinction, it says we are incapable of making the distinction "without Him" (5:3). In our minds the distinction has become too blurred. We need the assistance of a Mind that sees the difference clearly, as He does. This is another clear rationale for choosing Him as our teacher.

Note how the Holy Spirit teaches us to *make a distinction*. This might sound, to some, like separation of some kind. In fact it is the distinction between illusion and truth. The Course does not teach an unrestricted, mushy acceptance of every thought in our minds; it teaches us discernment, judgment of our ego thoughts, and even teaches us to separate the false from the true. Check out the following passages if this idea is of interest:

- T-6.V(C).1:1-6 – The Holy Spirit separates the false from the true in our minds.
- T-1.I.38:3 – His perception enables Him to separate things accurately.
- T-13-IX.4:1 – He separates things we have failed to distinguish.
- T-16.III.4:10 – We must be separated from the illusion.
- T-28.V.3:3 – How forgiveness separates us from the dream.
- W-pl.4.3:2. – Separating the meaningless and meaningful as a goal.

## Paragraph 6

6. <sup>1</sup>The Holy Spirit's teaching takes only *one* [one] direction and has only *one* [one] goal. <sup>2</sup>His direction is freedom and His goal is God. <sup>3</sup>Yet He cannot conceive of God without **you**, because it is not God's Will to *be* without you. <sup>4</sup>When you have learned that your will **is** God's, you could no more will to be without Him than He could will to be without **you**. <sup>5</sup>This **is** freedom and this **is** joy. <sup>6</sup>Deny **yourself** this and you **are** denying God His Kingdom, because He created you **for** this.

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arrogant, but that is not the real reason you do not believe it. You prefer to believe that your thoughts cannot exert real influence because you are actually afraid of them" (T-2.VI.9:5-10). "The mind that serves the Holy Spirit is unlimited forever, in all ways, beyond the laws of time and space, unbound by any preconceptions, and with strength and power to do whatever it is asked" (W-pl.199.2:1).

"True 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. That is because, by changing his mind, he has changed the most powerful device that was ever given him for change" (T-7.V.7:5-6).



• **Study Question** •

6. *As was said in the end of the previous section (T-7.X.3:1 and T-7.XI.1:1), the Holy Spirit always guides us away from pain, towards joy, and therefore toward freedom. 6:1–2 confirms this. According to this paragraph, what is the freedom and what is the joy toward which He is leading us?*

[In an odd exception to the rule, the emphasis on the two “ones” in 6:1 was *not* in the Urtext but was added by the editors.]

The Teacher Who can help us is completely single-minded. There is no confusion about His teaching. Because He does not confuse pain with joy, or imprisonment with freedom, He can guide us unequivocally toward in the “direction of freedom”, which leads us to the “goal of God” (6:1–2). The third sentence is particularly intriguing to me: “Yet He cannot conceive of God without you, because it is not God's Will to *be* without you” (6:3).

First, why the word, “Yet”? It indicates some kind of contrast. The teaching of the Holy Spirit is unidirectional and leads solely to God, *yet*.... We might substitute “nevertheless” or “in spite of that.” The fact of contrast here clarifies the meaning of what immediately follows. If we read the words by themselves, “He cannot conceive of God without you,” we might suppose it to mean that without our help, the Holy Spirit cannot think of God—which would be absurd! The “yet” makes it clear that, whatever the meaning here, it has to be in contrast with what came before, which was, “His goal is God.” The emphasis was on the fact that there is only one goal, and that goal is God. So, where does that leave *us*? The Course is saying that, although God alone is the goal, we are still included, because the Holy Spirit cannot even conceive of a God that does not include us. To say God is the goal of the Holy Spirit automatically includes us because including us is God's Will (6:3). We, too, are part of the goal.

This is a theme we will see cropping up in the sections that follow as well: God and His Son are inseparable, and share one Will. As we saw in paragraph 3, the one lesson the Holy Spirit wants to teach us is that our will and God's Will are the same (3:6). Lesson 74 says it clearly, also:

**There is no will but God's.**

The idea for today can be regarded as the central thought toward which all our exercises are directed. God's is the only Will. When you have recognized this, you have recognized that your will is His. (W-pI.74, Title, 1:1–3)

We've convinced ourselves that, for some bizarre reason, we have willed ourselves into separation from God. To do that would mean a will other than God's must exist: our own. To the Course, not only did this *not* happen, it *could not possibly* happen, because there is only one Will in the universe: God's. His Will is to be one with us. Therefore, that is the only possible thing that can exist (6:3–4). We are afraid that we may suffer and perhaps go to hell because we have chosen to be separate from God. God is telling us, through the Holy Spirit, not to be afraid, because we could not possibly have done that.

This is why the message that we are one with God, and that separation from Him is only an illusion, is our freedom and our joy (6:5). There is no separation from God. We “live and move and have our being” in God (Acts 17:28). This message frees us from our

manufactured guilt. It restores us to the joy of being at home in God, united with Him in all that He wills. We cannot change this truth about ourselves, but we can deny it. When we deny it, when we refuse to accept our oneness with God and His Will, we perpetuate our illusion of separation, and we disenfranchise God in His own Kingdom (6:6).

## Paragraph 7

7. <sup>1</sup>When I said, "All power and glory are yours because the Kingdom is His," [7.VII.11:6] this is what I meant: The Will of God is without limit, and all power and glory lie within it. <sup>2</sup>It is boundless in strength and in love and in peace. <sup>3</sup>It has no boundaries because its extension is unlimited, and it encompasses all things because it **created** all things. <sup>4</sup>By **creating** all things, it made them **part of itself**. <sup>5</sup>**You** are the Will of God because that is how you were created. <sup>6</sup>Because your Creator creates only like Himself, you **are** like Him. <sup>7</sup>You are part of Him Who **is** all power and glory, and are therefore as unlimited as He is.

### • Study Question •

7. (a) *As a study exercise, take a few minutes to skim through paragraphs 7 and 8 of this section, and Sections III and VII to mark the phrase "power and glory," which occurs only in this chapter, and once in T-7.VII.11:6, which is the line Jesus is quoting in 7.1. We will want to follow this thread as we go on into the upcoming sections.*
- (b) *Why must it be true that we have unlimited power and glory?*

Being one with God and His Will means that we, as God's creation, have all power and glory. It really a matter of simple logic. Just as:

All cows have four legs.  
Bossie is a cow.  
Therefore Bossie has four legs.

So also:

All things, including us, are in God.  
God has all power and glory.  
Therefore, we have all power and glory.

Jesus quotes something he said in T-7.VII.11:6, and proceeds to expand on it at some length. The seemingly simple phrase, "the Kingdom is His" (7:1), he amplifies to become a profound statement of ontology: God's Will (a synonym here for His Kingdom) encompasses all things, and all things are part of God's Will; as part of God all things share God's attributes. In even simpler words, God is everything, and His power and glory are everywhere, as will be plainly stated in T-8.III.7:1-2. (This theme of God's ubiquitous power carries on right through the next section, as we will see.) Thus, we must possess all power and glory because God has all power and glory, and everything, including us, is part of Him.

If God's Will is the only will there is, there is nothing opposing it. This is another example of the Course's non-dualism: not two, only one. God's Will, being without

opposition, is by definition all-powerful because it is the *only* power. Whatever its attributes, nothing opposes them and nothing competes with them. If God's Will encompasses love, that love is all the love there is. Not only is God's Will without limit, it is also without bounds. It extends everywhere because everything that exists exists as part of that Will. Just as a branch, which is "created" by a vine, is also part of that vine, so everything God creates is an extension of Himself. Therefore, His Will extends to and includes all of creation. Nothing is outside of it.

As beings with will, we are simply the extensions of God's Will. *We are His Will* (7:5). God "creates only like Himself" (7:6), so if He created us, we are like Him, and share His power and His glory.

I can't help asking myself why, at this juncture, the Course places such emphasis on our power and glory. We were talking about the reasons for choosing between two teachers. We switched over to talking about the unified goal of the Holy Spirit, which is God, in contrast to the fluctuating and conflicting motives of the ego. Jesus has not abandoned these themes, as will be evident when you read T-8.III.1:4 and T-8.III.2:4-6, where he returns to explaining why we need the Holy Spirit to teach us. How, then, does this "power and glory" theme fit in?

We tend to think that submitting to God's Will constitutes a *loss* of power and glory. We imagine that power and glory lie in independence. I think that he is trying to help us realize that our real power and glory lie, not in *independent* will, but in our *union with* God's Will. To say that the ultimate goal is God does not in any way diminish us, because we are *part* of God.

**Application:** Repeat to yourself:

*I am part of God, Who is all power and glory  
Therefore I am as unlimited as God is.  
All power and glory are mine because I am God's.*

## Paragraph 8

8. <sup>1</sup>To what else **except** all power and glory can the Holy Spirit appeal to restore God's Kingdom? <sup>2</sup>His appeal, then, is merely to what the Kingdom is, and for its own acknowledgment of what it is. <sup>3</sup>When you acknowledge **this** you bring the acknowledgment automatically to everyone, because **you have acknowledged everyone**. <sup>4</sup>By your recognition you awaken theirs, and through theirs **yours** is extended. <sup>5</sup>Awakening runs easily and gladly through the Kingdom, in answer to the Call for [of] God. <sup>6</sup>This is the natural response of every Son of God to the Voice for his Creator, because It is the Voice for **his** creations and for his own extension.

### • Study Question •

8. *What happens when we acknowledge the Kingdom, recognizing in everyone a part of that Kingdom?*

Here, it seems to me, Jesus weaves in the theme that ran all through the previous chapter, that of *extension*. The Holy Spirit's desire is "to restore God's Kingdom" (8:1).

Since we are that Kingdom but have forgotten it, He must appeal to something within us in order to awaken our awareness of what we are. He appeals to the power and glory in us (8:1). He appeals, or calls out, to our true being, urging us to recognize and embrace that true being in our awareness—to transcend our false identification with the ego, and to expand into the grandeur of our larger Identity in the Sonship (8:2).

Since the Kingdom, or the Sonship, includes everyone, in order to acknowledge this you *must* acknowledge everyone (8:3). The Identity with which you begin to identify is one that includes all creation. As your mind embraces it, the acknowledgement is automatically transmitted to every mind in the Sonship (8:3–4); your awakening triggers their awakening, just as the awakening of Jesus has triggered ours.

When the Course talks about how Jesus' waking up was our waking, it is talking about the same effect. All minds are one. What happens in one mind affects every mind. Jesus woke up, and that awakening began a process that is still going on, unfolding down through the centuries of time, but as surely accomplished when Jesus arose from the dead as it will be when time is over. Like an avalanche, once begun, unfolds inexorably to its conclusion, so the awakening of Jesus is blossoming into the full awakening of every mind. "The outcome is as certain as God" (T-2.III.3:10).

When I awaken, or you do, we continue the avalanche effect. Our minds touch other minds, galvanizing them toward their own awakening (8:5). Each of us, when we hear the calling of God's Voice, instinctively responds to it, just as a plant turns to the sun. It is our life. It is our source. It is the essence of what we are and what our purpose is, and we recognize it as such (8:6).

## Answer Key

1. Nothing (1:9). Even if we could totally disregard the Holy Spirit and listen only to the ego—which is, thank God, impossible—it could still teach us nothing because it knows nothing.
2. The ego's teaching goes against our own nature and our true will, and therefore has led to our imprisonment. Being taught to live contrary to our will and nature is imprisonment. This is a powerful reason for disregarding everything it teaches.
3. Your true nature is love, and the true nature of the person who cut you off, or cut in front, is also love. The ego's teaching (attack and blame) is contrary to that nature. It is, therefore, the denial of free will because it is contrary to your nature, which is to be free and to share the Love of God with everyone. Freedom means the liberty to be what we are, to follow our nature. Therefore doing God's Will is our perfect freedom, and doing the ego's bidding is imprisonment because it prevents you from being what you are.
4. The Holy Spirit teaches us to *disregard or look beyond* everything that would hold us back (4:4).
5. We need His help because we have totally blurred the distinction in our minds, and believe them to be the same. We can't ask the ego to teach us because it is the part of our mind that did the blurring.
6. Our freedom and joy are found in learning that our will is God's, and that we cannot will to be without Him, any more than He can will to be without us.
7. (a) The phrase "power and glory" occurs in the following sentences:  
T-8.II.7:1,7    T-8.II.8:1    T-8.III.2:6    T-8.III.5:3,5    T-8.III.7:2,8  
T-8.III.8:1    T-8.VII.5:3    T-8.VII.6:3  
(b) We have unlimited power and glory because we are part of God "Who is all power and glory" (7:7). God's Will created all things and includes all things, making them part of Itself (7:3–4), and that Will has all power and glory within it (7:1).