

Study Guide and Commentary ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 8, Section V

The Undivided Will of the Sonship

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

Overview of the Section

The title of this section, “The Undivided Will of the Sonship,” gives us a clue that this section is continuing the line of thought begun in the previous section, which concerned God’s gift to us: freedom of will. That section ended with some remarks to the effect that it is impossible for me to identify with God’s Will unless I also identify with the Sonship. I cannot identify with one without identifying with the other. If you read the end of Section IV and the beginning of Section V without a break, you will see how readily the thoughts follow one after the other.

Section V opens with a discussion of the impact of this shared identity on the way we interact with those around us who are delusional. Since the Course often points out that we, who are reading the Course, still have many delusions, I think it is safe to assume this applies to ourselves, but it applies more especially here to the people around us who have delusions that we believe we can see through. That is, it deals with our response to people who seem worse off than we are, and therefore people we might be inclined to judge and to reject. When we encounter people who are, in our view, clearly deluded, we may be tempted to separate ourselves from them and dissociate from them. Is that a reasonable approach?

Paragraph 1

1. ¹Can you be separated from your identification and be at peace? ²Dissociation is **not** a solution; it is a **delusion**. ³The delusional believe that truth will **assail** them, and they do not recognize it [*do not see it*] because they prefer the delusion. ⁴Judging truth as something they do **not** want, they perceive their illusions which [*they perceive deception and*] block knowledge. ⁵Help them by offering them **your** unified mind [*will*] on their behalf, as I am offering you mine on [*yours.*] behalf of yours. ⁶Alone we can do nothing, but **together** our minds [*wills*] fuse into something whose power is far beyond the power of its separate parts. ⁷By [*us*] **not being separate**, the Mind [*Will*] of God is established **in** ours and **as** ours. ⁸This Mind [*Will*] is invincible **because** it is undivided.

• Study Question •

1. *Imagine that someone says to you, "How on earth can I forgive the S.O.B. after what he did to me?" Based on sentence 5, what might your response be (I am mostly thinking of your mental response)?*

Whatever mental attitude we adopt, if it involves being separated from our brothers in any way it is delusional and will result in loss of peace for us (1:1–2). Adopting a perception in which a brother or sister is seen as an opponent rather than as a brother or sister who shares one Identity with us is never going to solve our problems, although it may be tempting to think so. How can a perception of attack possibly help, when it is a perception based on an untruth? What can we do, however, when someone we are interacting with sees themselves as under attack by an enemy? How can we perceive that and understand it in a way that will be helpful?

When someone is seeing himself as separated from and under attack by another person, she is suffering from a delusion, a delusion that she actually prefers to the truth (1:3). The truth—that her imagined “attacker” is actually a part of herself—threatens her belief in her ego’s reality. She rejects the truth, thereby cutting herself off from true knowledge (1:4). She does not want to hear “platitudes” about how the person attacking her is really only calling for love, even though that is the truth. She *sees* the attack, not recognizing that what she is seeing is her own projection.

The best way we can help such people is by seeing to it that our *own* mind is healed and unified; we can purify our own perceptions of the situation. Our unified mind is the best gift we can offer them (1:5). I don’t think this means that we will try to verbally instruct the other person, “Here is how you ought to be perceiving this situation.” I think it means we just see it correctly *for them*. We refuse to buy into their misperceptions of the situation. We refuse to see ourselves as separated from anyone involved, either the brother or sister we are interacting with, or the one they are seeing as their attacker. Instead we perceive *both* as united with us in the Mind of God—which is the truth! We may not take any overt action to correct our sister; we simply refuse to share her delusions. That not only fails to add to the delusion, it undercuts the delusion.

As we hold this unified perception of things, we align with Reality. As we refuse to be separate, God’s own Mind “is established in ours and as ours” (1:7). Something happens when we affirm our union with one another, especially when we affirm our union with Jesus. Our true power cannot be known or experienced by any one individual; it is a power that comes from union (1:6). I believe there is a real power, for instance, when two or more people join together in prayer. The meaning here, however, goes beyond that. The agreement of several minds in prayer is only a small taste of the kind of power in union that Jesus is talking about here. When we purposefully choose to overlook and deny the things that apparently divide us, and choose instead to affirm our unity, the power of God is unleashed. The ultimate power, as the next paragraph shows, lies in the undivided will of the entire Sonship.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹The **undivided** will of the Sonship is the perfect creator, being wholly in the likeness of God, Whose Will it is. **2**You cannot be exempt from it if you are to understand what it is and what **you** are. ³By the belief that your will is separate

[By separating your will] from mine, you **are** exempting yourself from the Will of God which *is* yourself. ⁴Yet to heal is still to make whole. ⁵Therefore, to heal is to **unite** with those who are **like** you, because perceiving this likeness **Is** to recognize the Father. ⁶If **your** perfection is in Him and **only** in Him, how can you **know** it **without** recognizing Him? ⁷The recognition of God is the recognition of yourself. ⁸There **is** no separation of God and His creation. ⁹You will realize this when you understand that there is no separation between **your** will and mine. ¹⁰Let the Love of God shine upon you by your acceptance of me. **11**My reality is yours and His. ¹²By joining **your** mind [will] with mine you are signifying your awareness that the Will of God is one.

• Study Question •

2. *What unusual definition of healing is given in this paragraph?*

The focus of this paragraph is on union with Jesus as a path of awakening to God. Jesus presents himself here as one who exemplifies the Sonship. He represents one who is a perfect creation of God, like ourselves; his will is perfectly joined with God's Will.

Our healing begins when we unite our minds with his mind in the recognition that we are like him (2:5, 2:12). As I see it, by joining our minds with the mind of Jesus, realizing that our will and his are one and the same (2:9), we take the first step in reclaiming our identification with the entire Sonship. By joining with Jesus, we realize that God is not separate from His creation (2:8–9); that is, we are like Jesus because both of us are God's creations and therefore share God's nature. We share a likeness to Him (2:5).

Recognizing our oneness with God leads naturally to the realization that *all* of God's creations are one with us in God and share one will with us and with God (2:12). Further, recognizing the unity of God's Will brings us to a full recognition of what we are, of our own Identity as extensions of that Will.

We end up, inevitably, recognizing our place as part of "the undivided will of the Sonship" (2:1), which is also the Will of God (2:8,12). Only in the union of all minds can we find "the perfect creator" (2:1); we cannot recover our reality alone, as individuated minds.

The progression of the healing process is: We start with a divided mind, split between ego and Holy Spirit, perceiving our will as separate from God's Will or the will of Jesus. We then join our mind with Jesus, and thus with God; we allow ourselves to recognize that the Will of God is one, and our will is identical to God's. Thus our mind becomes *unified* or whole. It is this unified, whole mind we offer to our brothers, teaching them that the mind that is in us is also in them, that brings about healing.

The Course calls us to *join our mind with that of Jesus*, just as the Apostle Paul admonishes us in Philippians: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). Elsewhere the Course speaks of how the Holy Spirit sorts out the false from the true in our minds, allowing Him to decide for God for us, which amounts to the same thing. Jesus is speaking in this section as the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the embodiment of the Holy Spirit in a human life. He asks us to let go of the illusion of separateness, of having an independent will, and let his will be our will—because the truth about us is that our will *is* the same as the will of Jesus, and the Will of God. We cannot find our true Self, nor can we find God, without this joining.

The vigilance being spoken about for the last several chapters is vigilance against having a divided mind. It is the recognition that any way in which we believe we have a separate will is just an illusion, something to bring to the Holy Spirit so He will dispel it. It is the abdication of my independent will and the acceptance of my true Self, which *is* the Will of God. Vigilance is continually noticing anything that is independent of God within our mind and bringing it to Jesus, asking that His mind and ours be made one in this area.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹God's Oneness and ours are not separate, because His Oneness **encompasses** ours. ²To join **with** me is to restore His power **to** you **because** we are sharing it. ³I offer you only the recognition of His power in you, but in that lies **all** truth. ⁴As **we** unite, we unite with Him. ⁵Glory be to the union of God and His holy Sons [, **because all**] ⁶**All** glory lies **in** them *because* [**because**] they **are** united. ⁷The miracles **we** do bear witness to the Will of the Father for His Son, and to our joy in uniting **with** His Will **for** us.

• Study Question •

3. *If you take seriously the idea that Jesus is the author of this book, then studying it and assimilating its ideas is one way of joining your mind with the mind of Jesus. Joining with Jesus restores God's power to you (3:2). If you honestly examine your own heart, do you find any resistance to the idea of joining with Jesus? If so, what, and why?*

Being a citizen of the city of Los Angeles equates with being a citizen of the state of California, because California encompasses Los Angeles. Similarly, becoming one with Jesus is the same as becoming one with God, not because Jesus *is* God in any unique sense, but because God's Oneness *includes* the oneness you have with Jesus (3:1). If you move to Los Angeles, you have also moved to California. In the same way, if you join with Jesus, you have also joined with God. His power has been restored to you (3:2).

In Himself, Jesus has nothing to give to us. All he offers us is a recognition of the power that God has *already* given to all of us, including Jesus (3:3). Jesus has recognized that power in himself and he also recognizes it in us. As we join with Jesus, we come to share his awareness of God's power dwelling within us. He becomes the gateway for us into union with God and with the Sonship (3:5).

Once again, the word "glory" is linked with the word "power" (3:5–6). Glory is in us because we are united. Remember, glory is a kind of outshining or expression; it represents light radiating outwards, and as such, it symbolizes *extension*. That is why the paragraph ends (3:7) by speaking about *miracles*. As we join with God and the Sonship, miracles are the natural expression of our union. They are the spontaneous fruit of a branch that has recognized its oneness with the vine.

Paragraph 4

4. ¹When you unite with me you are uniting **without** the ego, because I have renounced the ego in myself and therefore **cannot** unite with yours. **2Our** union

is therefore the way to renounce the ego in you [*yourselves*].³ The truth in both of us is **beyond** the ego. [By willing that, you *have gone beyond it toward truth*.]
⁴Our success in transcending the ego is guaranteed by God, and I share this confidence for both of us and all of us [and I can share my perfect confidence *in His Promise because I know He gave me this confidence for both of us and all of us*].⁵ I bring God's peace back to all His children because I received it of Him for us all.⁶ Nothing can prevail against our united wills because nothing can prevail against God's.

• **Study Question** •

4. Try restating the first three sentences in an ordered, logical argument: *A is true; therefore, B is true; therefore C is true; etc.*
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How can we renounce our ego? Jesus answers this question very clearly here. He tells us that we can renounce our ego by joining ourselves to him, because he is egoless (4:1–2).

Joining yourself to Jesus is not a grim, bleak surrender to an alien will. It is the explosive, joyous recognition that your being is total love! Joining with Jesus is not like being taken captive by God; it is being liberated from an imagined enslavement to an alien will. To give up your independent will and join with Jesus is merely to surrender to love, to abandon all pretense of being anything but love. In surrendering to the Holy Spirit you are surrendering to *your Self*.

In such surrender, success is certain (4:4, compare with W-pI.93.6:1–4) because you are only giving in to the truth about yourself. Eventually everyone must do this because God is God, and God is Love, and Love is what you are. Remember the saying in Chapter 2: “The outcome is as certain as God” (T-2.III.3:10). Other similar lines in the Course are:

The goal is inevitable because it is eternal. (T-12.II.5.6)

I will awaken you as surely as I awakened myself. (T-12.II.7.2)

Ultimately everyone must remember the Will of God, because ultimately everyone must recognize himself. (T-9.I.9.1)

Jesus is sure of our success even if we are not! (4:4). This has been one of the most powerful concepts in the Course for me, personally. Over and over, Jesus tells us how confident he is on our behalf: “There is no chance that Heaven will not be yours, for God is sure, and what He wills is as sure as He is” (T-13.XI.8:9). When nothing seems clear to me, I remember his certainty. When it seems to me that I’ll never make it, I remind myself that Jesus—who has already made it—is utterly assured that I will make it also. He’s sure that *all of us* will make it. He knows that in reality our wills are united with his, and all of them united with God, and that absolutely “nothing can prevail against our united wills” (4:6). The fact that Jesus has already received God’s peace is the *guarantee* that we, too, will receive it, because he received it “for us all” (4:5). No other outcome is possible!

Paragraph 5

5. ¹Would you know the Will of God for **you**? ²Ask it of me who know it for you and you will find it. ³I will deny **you** nothing, as God denies **me** nothing. ⁴Ours is simply the journey back to God Who is our home. ⁵Whenever fear intrudes anywhere along the road to peace, it is [*always*] because the ego has attempted to **join** the journey with us **and cannot do so**. ⁶Sensing defeat and angered by it, the ego regards itself as rejected and becomes retaliative. ⁷You are invulnerable to its retaliation **because I am with you**. ⁸On this journey you have chosen me as your companion *instead* of the ego. ⁹Do not attempt to hold on to both, or you will try to go in different directions and will lose the way.

• Study Question •

5. *Though the ego cannot join with Jesus, it does try to accompany you and him on the journey home, causing fear as a result. What, therefore, is the solution to any fear you encounter along the spiritual path (see sentences 8 and 9)?*

How many times in your life have you wondered if God had some particular plan for your life? Or, in more general terms, have you wondered whether or not there was some purpose or meaning for your life? In that sense, nearly everyone has wanted to know what the Will of God is for themselves (5:1). Continuing to emphasize the importance of your joining with him, Jesus says that the way to find God's Will for you is to ask him (5:2). He knows what it is. Personally, I don't think that he means by this that he has a detailed career path mapped out for every person on earth. I think he means that he knows the Will of God for you because it is the same as the Will of God for him—the "journey back to God" mentioned in 5:4. In other words, he is asking you again to unite with him in fulfilling God's Will to extend Himself in creation, which you do by extending yourself in love as God does. You fulfill God's Will by affirming His creation in everyone around you, and by abstaining from judgment and practicing forgiveness.

When we think about "surrendering" our will to Jesus and to God, we get afraid. Our ego assures us that Jesus is going to take *something* away from us; Jesus assures us that is not so (5:3). When such fears arise on our spiritual journey—and they *will* arise—it indicates that we are listening to our egos again.

I like to think that when I feel fear of God, or fear of having to renounce something valuable if I follow God, that it is really a *good* sign! It is a sign that I have started to make progress, or that I am getting close enough to God that my ego is getting worried about losing! (5:5)

When we renounce our ego and surrender to the love within us, the ego "becomes retaliative" (5:6). It tries to regain its lost ground, and as we've said, usually this comes in the form of some kind of *fear*. You may, for instance, suddenly have this feeling that being so loving is dangerous and crazy. Jesus says that if we stick close to Him, the retaliation of the ego cannot hurt us (5:7). So, even if fear arises on the spiritual path, all you need to do is to take Jesus' hand. Don't be afraid of the fear; it can't hurt you. It actually shows you've been doing *well*; otherwise the ego would not be bothering you.

I used to feel terrible when spiritual fears arose. After all this progress, how could I be afraid of God? How could I be in doubt of Him, or think He would deprive me of

something? My ego wanted me to believe that having such fears was a sign that all my spiritual growth was a farce, and that I'd really not grown at all. Actually, the reverse was true. The fears did not arise because I had not grown; they arose because I *had* grown, and the ego was getting worried.

So, instead of feeling despair when fears arise, just let your fears press you closer to Jesus. Let them renew your determination to walk *only* with Jesus, and to renounce the ego entirely (5:8–9).

Paragraph 6

6. ¹The ego's way is not mine, but it is also **not yours**. ²The Holy Spirit has one direction for **all** minds, and the one He taught me **is** yours. ³Let us not lose sight of His direction through illusions, for **only** illusions of another direction can obscure the one for which God's Voice speaks in all of us. ⁴Never accord the ego the power to interfere with the journey ⁵It [*because it*] **has** none, because the journey is the way to what is **true**. ⁶Leave **all** illusions [*deception*] behind, and reach beyond all attempts of the ego to hold you back. ⁷I [*do*] go before you because I **am** beyond the ego. ⁸Reach, therefore, for my hand because you **want** to transcend the ego. ⁹My strength [*My will,*] will **never** be wanting, and if you choose to share it you will do so [*you will*]. ¹⁰I give it willingly and gladly, because I need **you** as much as you need **me**.

• Study Question •

6. *Based on this paragraph, what is the purpose for reaching for Jesus' hand and what is the result of doing so?*

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We are not in a contest with Jesus, opponents in some battle of the wills. We may think that he somehow represents God, and we represent the ego, but that isn't the truth. The ego is not who we are any more than it is who Jesus is. The way of Jesus is not something foreign to us; it is *our* way, also (6:1–2). We are as much the Son of God as he is.

God's Voice speaks for a single direction in all of us—you, me, Jesus, and everyone else (6:3). God's Will is *God's Will*; no other eventuality is conceivable. What God wills *comes to pass*. Nothing can impede that process. The only thing that can obscure that fact, and make it seem as though some people are *against* God, or cannot find God, is the illusion that some other direction is actually *possible* (6:3). However, since nothing but God's Will is possible, our experience of having gone against His Will—of being *egos*—must be illusory.

The ego would tell us that our “disobedience” and willfulness has disrupted our journey to God. The Course tells us that that is simply impossible, and that we should never accord to the ego a power it does not have (6:4–5). This truth has often bolstered my flagging confidence when I appear to stumble, falter, or fall down on the way to God. Which I do, and which I imagine you have done as well. Here I am, perking along, doing pretty good or so I think, and then, WHAM! The ego strikes back! Perhaps I find myself ranting in anger at someone I should be loving, or whining about how rotten life treats me, or just forgetting about God for a chunk of time while my mind, or maybe my body, goes off in search of some transitory pleasure. Then, when I realize what I've been doing

and want to get back on track, back on the road to God, my ego tries to convince me that I've lost major points with God. That there is no way I can just resume the journey where I was before I stumbled. I have to backtrack. I have to do remedial training. I've lost whatever gains I thought I'd made.

That's just not the case! It ain't so! The ego does not have the power to disrupt my spiritual progress. If it flares up, and I then wake up to its activity and realize I've been duped, all I need to do is change my mind and to stop listening to the ego. Nothing has been lost; nothing *can be* lost. I can "reach beyond all attempts of the ego to hold [me] back" (6:6).

What are we reaching for beyond the ego's attempts? Jesus tells us that *he* is "beyond the ego" (6:7) and that we should, therefore, reach for his hand (6:8). The ego is trying to keep us away from God and therefore, away from Jesus, who, as our role model, represents the divine in human form. The temptation when we have "blown it" is to hide away from Jesus and God, to put off returning to their presence. That is exactly what we should *not* do. That is exactly what the ego wants. When we have suffered a severe ego attack, the thing we need *most* is to reach out for Jesus' hand, to re-connect with God.

There is an old Christian gospel hymn that says:

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, Whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

As Course students we no longer hold the mistaken belief that Jesus' shed blood cleanses our sins away, so just ignore that part. The central message here is, "Don't wait. Don't delay coming to God in the mistaken belief that you somehow have to clean yourself up first. Come just as you are. Come *now*."

The practice of turning *immediately* to Jesus when we become aware that we've fallen prey to our own egos is the way that we can, eventually, *transcend* the ego entirely (6:8). Jesus is the symbol of the part of our shared mind that has already awakened, already left the ego behind. Reaching for his hand symbolizes the mental reach of our minds to identify with that egoless state. When our mind extends itself toward that perfection, that part of our mind (Jesus, if you prefer the personified symbol) shares its strength with us (6:9).

When Jesus tells us here that he needs us as much as we need him (6:10), this means simply that he cannot be complete without us any more than we can be complete without him, because we are all part of the same one mind of the Son of God.

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

Application: The following is a visualization, taken from Perry and Mackie's The Illuminated Text, which is best done with someone else reading it to you (or you reading it to yourself on tape).

See Jesus and yourself on a journey, walking along a smooth, straight path. The road is great, the sun is shining, you are happy to be traveling with your companion.

But then you detect a note of fear in you.

Will this path be able to satisfy everything you want?

Sure, it is great for some things, but for everything?

Suddenly, you see a side path branching off, but still heading in basically the same direction.

Just down this side path is something that often attracts your ego.

Maybe it is a grievance you cherish against someone.

Maybe it is money.

Maybe it is a body.

Look at what that thing is.

There doesn't seem any harm in taking this little side trip.

Then you see something else. Just in front of you, beckoning you to take this path, is a little dark cloud: your ego.

Out of this cloud a hand extends, a skeleton hand,

silently beckoning you to take it and follow it as your guide along this side path.

Now you remember; you know what lies down this path.

You've been down this way before.

It only seems to go roughly in the same direction as the path you're on with Jesus.

In fact, it slowly loops back and heads in the opposite direction.

And once you lay your hands on that attractive image that is enticing you down this path,

it always changes into something else, something less desirable.

Further, the path eventually disappears and leaves you alone in the trackless forest.

Now turn your eyes back to Jesus. Hear him speak to you:

“Never accord the ego the power to interfere with the journey.

It has none, because the journey is the way to what is true.

Leave all illusions behind, and reach beyond all attempts of the ego to hold you back.

I go before you, [hear him speak your name], because I am beyond the ego.

Reach, therefore, for my hand because you want to transcend the ego.” (T-8.V.6:4-8)

See him reach out his hand, waiting for yours.

Now reach your hand out to take his,

knowing that he is beyond the ego, that he has no ego,

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

and that reaching for him signifies reaching beyond the ego.

“My will will never be wanting, and if you choose to share it *you will*.
I give it willingly and gladly, because I need you as much as you need me,
[name].” (T-8.V.6:9-10)

Feel your hand in his. Feel his will pouring from his hand to yours, from him to you.

Now his will has become yours, and all temptation to head off down the ego's path leaves you.

You look up into Jesus' eyes and then look on ahead down the path.

And the two of you continue walking.

Answer Key

1. Perceive yourself and your brother as unified with truth, rather than dissociated from it, and as unified with Jesus and the Mind of God. And then somehow offer him this perception. Refuse to let your mind side with your brother's misperception of unforgivable attack, and hold an image in your mind of both your brother and his attacker as invaluable parts of the one Sonship, united in God.
2. Healing is said to consist in uniting with those who are like you (2:5). Union with Jesus is the exemplar of such unions.
3. No written answer is expected.
4. Jesus has renounced the ego in himself, and no longer identifies with the ego.
Therefore he cannot unite with your ego.
Therefore, when he does unite with you, your ego cannot be part of that union.
Therefore, joining with him is the way to renounce your own ego.
5. Choose Jesus as your companion instead of the ego.
6. The purpose of reaching for his hand is to reach beyond the ego's attempts to hold you back and to reach beyond the ego itself, since Jesus is beyond the ego. This results in him sharing his strength with you.