

# Study Guide and Commentary

## ACIM<sup>®</sup> Text, Chapter 8, Section VI

### The Treasure of God

#### 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

Remember that there were no section breaks in the original dictation. Read the last two paragraphs of Section V and then go right into the first paragraph of Section VI. Jesus is still talking in the first person, continuing his thoughts about our way to transcend the ego by reaching beyond the ego's illusions to take his hand. The section proceeds to interpret the biblical story of the Prodigal Son, showing how the son was the father's treasure, as we, the Sonship, are God's treasure.

#### Paragraph 1

1. **I**We are the joint will of the Sonship, whose wholeness is for all. <sup>2</sup>We begin the journey back by setting out **together**, and gather in our brothers as we **continue** together. <sup>3</sup>Every gain in our strength is offered for all, so they too can lay aside their weakness and add their strength to us. <sup>4</sup>God's welcome waits for us all, and He will welcome us as I am welcoming **you**. <sup>5</sup>Forget not the Kingdom of God for anything the world has to offer.

#### • Study Question •

1. *Try to get the general picture painted by the second sentence. It is talking about the journey to God. Who begins the journey; who is "together"? Who joins in later?*

We need Jesus, and he needs us, because the will of the Sonship is a *joint* will (1:1). It can only be accomplished together. The "we" of the first sentence, then, must refer to Jesus and you. Or Jesus and me. All of us, together; this is something that includes everyone.

Notice how our journey back to God begins. It begins when we—the same "we" here, you and Jesus—set out *together* (1:2). You cannot begin the journey *alone*; there must be a joining together. At first, you mistakenly believe you are an ego, an isolated individual. You begin to transcend your ego identity when you recognize that you share the same

will with Jesus; you want what he wants. It may seem, at first, as if you as an individual are choosing to “follow” another individual, a wiser and holier individual named Jesus.

I confess; that is still how it seems to me, much of the time. Nevertheless, the Course assures me that each time I choose to “follow” him I am actually beginning to go beyond my ego. I am actually starting to realize that I am not the ego; rather, I am a part of something much more vast, and far loftier than I ever dreamed. The journey begins with me joining with Jesus, and in so doing, starting to leave my ego behind.

The journey *continues* as I, in union with Jesus, extend miracles to my brothers and draw them into our union (1:2). I join with Jesus in my mind, and then, just as a rolling snowball gathers up more snow, so the power of our joined minds draws in others as part of our unified mind. It is amazing, when you stop to notice, just how often Jesus brings in this element of *extension*. It’s everywhere! I believe the “our” in sentence 3 is not limited to me and Jesus; now, it includes the brothers gathered in in the preceding sentence. They are the “gain in our strength” spoken of. We gain in strength and in number as more and more minds join with ours, and every increase is, in turn, extended back to those yet “outside” our union, so that they can merge their strength with ours (1:3). They are not outside in truth; they simply are unaware that they, too, are part of us.

This is the intended pattern of growth for the Course and its message. It is meant to spread like a spiritual infection, leaping from mind to mind, assimilating mind after mind into the Divine Oneness known as the Kingdom of God. It is never something imposed from without. Rather, people who open to God and join with Jesus in doing God’s Will demonstrate such radiant happiness, such unflappable peace, and such unwavering love, that people around are drawn in like moths to the flame. They do not have to be coerced into studying the Course; they *want* to study it. Nothing the world offers can compare with this (1:5).

## Paragraph 2

2. <sup>1</sup>The world can **add** nothing to the power and the glory of God and His holy Sons, but it **can** blind the Sons to the Father if they behold it. <sup>2</sup>You cannot behold the world and know God. <sup>3</sup>Only one is true. <sup>4</sup>I am come to tell you that the choice of which is true is not yours to make. <sup>5</sup>If it were, you would have destroyed yourself [yourselves]. <sup>6</sup>Yet God did not will the destruction of His creations, having created them for eternity. <sup>7</sup>His Will has saved you, not from yourself [yourselves] but from your illusion[s] of yourself [yourselves]. <sup>8</sup>He has saved you *for* yourself [yourselves].

### • Study Question •

2. *The world is not true, despite our wish that it be so. Explain why it is that, if we actually could choose whether God or the world is true, we would have destroyed ourselves.*

Here, the running theme of power and glory appears again. Our glory is something that appears when we recognize our oneness and begin to open to an identity that is larger than the ego. The sight of the world can blind us to this glory and to the knowledge of God (2:1–2). This does not mean that physical vision, per se, can prevent us from knowing God; if that were true, enlightenment would mean putting out our eyes. Rather,

it means that if we *focus on* the world, if we accept its evidence as the final truth, or if we make the world our goal and value what the world tells us we should prize, we will be blind to God and Heaven. While I put the world first, Heaven is lost to me.

The world calls to us continually to “look out for Number One.” It tells us to guard our backs and to do unto others before they do unto us. We cannot place material values uppermost and expect to awaken to God at the same time. If God is true, the world is not; if the world is true, God is not (2:3). We imagine that we can choose for ourselves which is true, but no one has the power to decide what is real and what is not. What is real *is real*, and no choice of yours or mine will change it (2:4).

When we begin to go after the treasures of the world, that is the foolish belief we are acting out! We somehow think that if we simply *want it to be so*, the world will satisfy us. No matter how often God tells us it won’t, no matter how many times it has disappointed us, we keep going back to the world, looking for happiness. Going after the treasure of the world is simply another form of choosing the ego as teacher, instead of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is giving us another application of the same lesson: We have to choose one over the other. We cannot have both.

Some part of us probably feels disappointed that we cannot make the world satisfy us. It’s really good news, though, because if our decision *could* alter reality and make something real that was not created by God, we would have destroyed ourselves (2:5). Our mistaken decisions, according to the Course, have no real effects, only the illusion of effects.

This world is causeless, as is every dream that anyone has dreamed within the world... You may cause a dream, but never will you give it real effects.  
(T-28.II.6:1-5)

Because our mistakes have no real effects, they are not sins and they have no consequences. “There is no sin; it has no consequence” (W-pI.101.6;7). If the effects of our mistakes were real, we’d be lost. Such self-destruction, however, *must* be impossible, for reasons about to be explained.

God creates things that endure *eternally*. If something He created were to be destroyed, that would be contrary to His Will; therefore, the destruction of any creation of God is impossible (2:6). His will, therefore, saves us from such destruction (2:7). He does not save us from anything *real*; He saves us from *illusions*. Nothing is really there to be saved *from*, because we have no sinful nature to be delivered from (as some religions teach that we do); all that exists is an *illusion* of a sinful self, a self with a will in opposition to God. As we’ve seen in the preceding sections, our will is identical to God’s, and a separate will is only an illusory quality we attribute to ourselves. We are not saved *from* ourselves, but *for* ourselves (2:7–8). Our illusions are removed so that the truth about ourselves can be restored to our awareness, and our minds can once more become conscious instruments of that divinely created Self.

### Paragraph 3

3. <sup>1</sup>Let us glorify Him Whom the world denies, for over His Kingdom the world has no power. <sup>2</sup>No one created by God can find joy in anything except the eternal; not because he is **deprived** of anything else, but because nothing else is **worthy** of him. <sup>3</sup>What God **and** His Sons create **is** eternal, and in this and this only is their joy.

• Study Question •

3. Consider your own life. What things that are not eternal have been distractions for you, personally? Make a short list for yourself.



The world denies God; that is Who we are asked to glorify (3:1). The Course places God and the world in total opposition to one another. To the Course, the world *is* the denial of God. The world was made by the ego as “a place where God could enter not” (W-pII.3.2:4). It epitomizes the idea of existence without God. Atheists argue that the world can get along perfectly well without God; there is no discernable need for God and no conclusive evidence in the world that He even exists. They are right! They are right because the world was meant to be such a place.

How do we glorify God? Is it by giving Him gifts, or by making great sacrifices for Him? Is it by building cathedrals to Him, or singing songs about Him? No. There is nothing wrong with giving gifts to God, or singing about Him, or even building beautiful structures in which His truth is taught, although God *never* asks for sacrifice. But what glorifies the Creator is the honoring of His creation, and the refusal to value what He did *not* create. God is glorified when we acknowledge His Spirit in each brother and sister, and when we value that joining and oneness literally more than anything in the world.

We recognize the shimmering, invisible Reality that is everywhere present, veiled, and sometimes poorly reflected, in the material world and the bodies that inhabit it. We are not deceived as the shadows of the world “come and go, shift and change, suffer and die” (M-12.6:7–8). “Unity alone is not a thing of dreams. And it is this God's teachers acknowledge as behind the dream, beyond all seeming and yet surely theirs” (M-12.6:10–11).

The only thing that can satisfy us and bring us joy is something *eternal*, because *we* are eternal (3:2). It isn't that God wants to take the physical world away from us; it simply is not *worthy* of us! It cannot possibly satisfy us. This lesson—that the only things that have true value are eternal—is echoed, with emphasis, in Workbook Lesson 133, the sixth paragraph. Anything not eternal is, by definition, temporary. That includes absolutely *everything* in this world. It will wither and decay. We need to pray, as the Psalmist did, “...lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:24). Or, as the parable of Jesus suggests, we need to build our houses on the rock, and not on the sand (Matthew 7:24–27). Nothing but the eternal, the creations in spirit of God and of ourselves, can bring us joy (3:3).

An old Christian hymn expresses it well:

Keep me from the things that wither and decay.  
Give to me the things that cannot pass away,  
And lead me in the way everlasting.

## Paragraph 4

4. <sup>1</sup>Listen to the story of the prodigal son, and learn what God's treasure is and **yours**: This son of a loving father left his home and thought he had squandered everything for nothing of any value, although he had not understood its worthlessness at the time. <sup>2</sup>He was ashamed to return to his father, because he

thought he had hurt him. <sup>3</sup>Yet when he came home the father welcomed him with joy, because [only] the son himself *was* his father's treasure. <sup>4</sup>He [the father] wanted nothing else.

• Study Question •

4. *What seems to be the main point of the parable of the prodigal son, as Jesus retells it here in the Course?*

The story of the prodigal son is taken straight from the Bible, considerably condensed. You might want to read the original version in your Bible; it is found in Luke 15:11–32. It is the only passage of any length from the Bible that is repeated in the Course. It is of interest as an indicator of the Course's relationship with the Bible. It assumes that the reader is familiar with the Bible, or at least with the story of the prodigal son. Jesus does not bother retelling the story in detail; he summarizes it because he assumes that we know it.

To me, this is a clear indication that the primary intended audience for the Course consists of those who have grown up in a Christian culture, familiar with the Bible and its stories. I don't think that excludes anyone whose background differs, but I do think it means that those who are not familiar with the Bible can enrich their appreciation of the Course if they will take some time to study the Bible as well. (For a detailed discussion of the Course's relationship to the Bible, see my book, *Seeing the Bible Differently*.)

The main point of the story, as Jesus summarizes it here, is really found in the contrast between the value of worldly wealth and the value of a person. Jesus tells us that the story shows us “what God's treasure is and yours” (4:1). As the story demonstrates, the son was the father's treasure, not the material inheritance or anything else (4:3–4). The son thought he had squandered the father's treasure, not realizing he *was* the father's treasure. The lesson for us is that we have not thrown away God's treasure; rather, we, who together comprise God's Son, *are* His treasure, and that our “children”—our creations in spirit—are *our* treasure. It is not what we, or our brothers, possess or do that matters so much as what we *are*.

When I put a friend out of my heart because he or she has somehow offended me, I am putting the value of something temporary above the eternal value of our loving relationship. The father in the story did not do that; he valued his son far above the inheritance the son squandered. The loss of the inheritance was trivial when compared to the value of the son's return. As the father acted, so we, too, should act toward one another.

Jack Kornfield, a Buddhist teacher, has written: “At the end of life, our questions are very simple: Did I live fully? Did I love well?” (from *The Path with Heart*). A businessman, confronted with death, probably does not worry about the fact that he did not put in enough time at the office; he is concerned with how his children and spouse see him. “Did I love well?” That, to me, is making the same distinction in values that Jesus makes here. Do we value *things* and *accomplishments*, or do we value the quality of our relationships? Love is what lasts, love is what is eternal; expressing love, both in giving it and in receiving it, is the most important thing in life.

## Paragraphs 5 & 6

5. <sup>1</sup>God wants only His Son because His Son is His only treasure. <sup>2</sup>You want your creations as He wants His. <sup>3</sup>Your creations are your gift to the Holy Trinity, created in gratitude for **your** creation. <sup>4</sup>They do not leave you any more than you left **your** Creator, but they **extend** your creation as God extended Himself to **you**. <sup>5</sup>Can the creations of God Himself take joy in what is not real? <sup>6</sup>And what **is** real except the creations of God and those that are created like His? **7Your** creations love you as you love [as your Soul loves] your Father **for the gift of creation**. <sup>8</sup>There **is** no other gift that is eternal, and therefore **there is no other gift that is true**. <sup>9</sup>How, then, can you accept anything else or **give** anything else, and expect joy in return? <sup>10</sup>And what else **but** joy would you want? <sup>11</sup>You made neither yourself nor your function. **12You** made only the **decision** to be unworthy of both. <sup>13</sup>Yet you cannot **But you could not** make **yourself** unworthy because **you are the treasure of God**, and what **He** values **is** valuable. <sup>14</sup>There **can** be no question of its [the treasure's] worth, because its value lies in God's sharing Himself with it and **establishing its value forever**.

6. **1Your** function is to **add** to God's treasure by creating **yours**. <sup>2</sup>His Will *to* you [in creating you] is His Will *for* you [for you to create]. <sup>3</sup>He would not withhold [the function of] creation from you because **His** joy is in it. <sup>4</sup>You **cannot** find joy **except** as God does. **5His** joy lay in creating **you**, and He extends His Fatherhood to you so that you can extend yourself **as He did**. <sup>6</sup>You do not understand this because you do not understand Him. <sup>7</sup>No one who does not accept his function can understand what it is [No one who does not know his function can understand it.], and no one **can** accept [know] his function unless he knows what [who] *he* is. <sup>8</sup>Creation is the Will of God. <sup>9</sup>His Will created you **to create**. <sup>10</sup>Your will was not created separate from His, and so you must will [and so it wills] as He wills.

### • Study Question •

5. *This question covers both paragraphs 5 and 6. Based on these paragraphs, which of the following statements are true, and which are false?*

- (a) Extension is the only gift you can give to God.*
- (b) Your creations love you as much as you love God.*
- (c) Your decisions in this life determine whether or not you are worthy of your function.*
- (d) You will know your function when you know yourself.*

Creation is both God's gift *to* you and the function expected *from* you. God wants you to be His expression. As love flowed out of God to bring about your creation, your love is meant to extend outward, bringing about new creation (6:1; 6:5). What we are determines what we are *for*. "His Will *to* you is His Will *for* you" (6:2).

As God's creation, created to create (6:9), we are His treasure (5:1); we are the thing He values. Likewise, although we are currently unable to really know what our creations

even are, they are our treasure (5:2). We can only express this in this world by learning to take joy in the eternal (5:5). God's joy lay in creating us; our joy, likewise, is in this endless, effervescent outflow of eternal love that *is* the process of creation.

The function of creation is, I believe, beyond our comprehension at this time, and will remain so until we have remembered (at least to a great degree) what we are as God's creations (6:7). I think Jesus' intent here is both to motivate us toward a higher goal, and to counteract our insane belief that, by our "rebellion" against God's Will, we have somehow forfeited our eternal function. That simply isn't possible. We didn't make our function and we can't make ourselves unworthy of it (5:11, 13). We could say that God is holding the job open for us until we recover from our amnesia!

## Paragraph 7

7. <sup>1</sup>An "unwilling will" does not mean anything, being a contradiction in terms that actually means [leaves] nothing. [You can make yourself powerless only in a way that has *no meaning at all.*] <sup>2</sup>When you **think** you are unwilling to will with God, **you are not thinking.** <sup>3</sup>God's Will *is* thought. <sup>4</sup>It cannot be contradicted *by* thought. <sup>5</sup>God does not contradict **Himself**, and His Sons, who are like Him, cannot contradict themselves **or** Him. <sup>6</sup>Yet their thought is so powerful that they can even imprison the mind of God's Son, **if they so choose.** <sup>7</sup>This choice **does** make the Son's function unknown **to him**, but never to his Creator. <sup>8</sup>And **because** it is not unknown to his Creator, it is forever knowable to him.

### • Study Question •

6. *You probably often experience yourself as being unwilling to agree with God's Will for you, or contradicting His desire for you with a different desire. According to this paragraph, what is really going on when this happens?*

The phrase "unwilling will" is an oxymoron, a word which the American Heritage Dictionary defines as, "A rhetorical figure in which incongruous or contradictory terms are combined." The two parts of the phrase cancel one another out, with no meaning left (7:1). So to say that our will is unwilling is meaningless, and even to *think* so is not really thought at all (7:2). The Course uses this kind of language, saying that what we are thinking isn't really thinking at all, in other places as well. (See, for instance, Workbook Lesson 8, paragraph 3.) The Course teaches that when our minds seem to be filled with "ideas" that contradict reality, or contradict the truth as God knows it, our minds are actually *blank*. Elsewhere, it talks about our "real thoughts" (T-5.V.6:12-16) as opposed to "delusional ideas," and points out that *real* thinking can only be done in concert with God because, as it implies here in Chapter 8, thought exists only in the Mind of God. Any thought that seems to exist *apart* from His Mind cannot be real, because *nothing* exists apart from His Mind. Our real thoughts, I believe, are very much linked to our real function, that of creating, which is why this paragraph ends by talking about our function.

In Workbook Lesson 45, the Course tells us that we have no idea what our real thoughts are; that everything we think is a real thought is *not*. It then proceeds with an exercise aimed at getting in touch with these primordial thoughts, which we "thought

with God in the beginning" (W-pI.45.7:1). In terms of the current discussion, then, our real thoughts are those thoughts that are perfectly aligned with the Will of God, and completely in synch with the creative function He gave us.

The basic idea here should be familiar by now. Our minds, as powerful as they may be, simply cannot contradict God (7:5). We can *imagine* a rebellion, but we cannot actually rebel. Our minds cannot think against God any more than water can decide to be not wet. Therefore, when we think we are unwilling to will with God, that "thought" cannot be real thought at all (7:2). When we imagine that we have abandoned our function in God and sought after one of our own making, that "thought" cannot be anything more than a dream. Our minds can imprison themselves, yes; they do have that power (7:6). They can become mired in intractable illusions; indeed, they already have become mired, which is why we need help. We have become unaware of what our function *is*, to say nothing of actually fulfilling it. Yet, despite that, our function has not changed. It has not been taken from us. He still knows what it is (7:8), and holds that knowledge forever available to us when we choose to return our minds to Him.

To me, all this can be summed up in the words: "the separation never occurred" (T-6.II.10:7). All the apparent horror of the ego, all the awful things we think we have done or thought, have been nothing more than illusions in our mind, dreams, things to be forgotten, things of no real concern.

When it seems that your mind is so hopelessly muddled that it will never be enlightened, when it seems you are trapped in your own ego, you're just experiencing an illusion. You are hallucinating. It isn't anything to be upset about. "Never accord the ego the power to interfere with the journey" (T-8.V.6:4). Just remind yourself, "I am not here, and this is not me" (see T-7.VII.3:5). It's just a hallucination. And reach for the hand of Jesus. Join with Him in your mind; that joining is vital, an essential part of all that the Course is talking about.

## Paragraph 8

8. <sup>1</sup>There is no question but one you should ever ask of yourself;—"Do I want to know my Father's Will for me?" **2**He will not hide it. <sup>3</sup>He has revealed it to me because I asked it of Him, and learned of what He had already given. <sup>4</sup>Our function is to work [function] together, because apart from each other we cannot function at all. <sup>5</sup>The whole power of God's Son lies in all of us, but not in any of us alone. <sup>6</sup>God would not have us be alone because *He* does not will to be alone. <sup>7</sup>That is why He created His Son, and gave him the power to create with Him. <sup>8</sup>Our creations are as holy as we are, and we are the Sons of God Himself, [and therefore] as holy as He is. <sup>9</sup>Through our creations we extend our love, and thus increase the joy of the Holy Trinity. <sup>10</sup>You do not understand this, ~~because you~~ [for a very simple reason:] who are God's Own treasure do not regard yourself as valuable. <sup>11</sup>Given this belief, **you cannot understand anything.**

### • Study Question •

7. *Spend a few minutes pondering the idea that you are extremely valuable to God; that you are His treasure. How does your lack of belief in this idea affect your ability to know your function and carry it out?*

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Do you want to know God's Will for you?

The Course says that this is the only question we ever need to ask ourselves (8:1). Notice that it is a question about what you want. As we've seen, the Course insists that we always receive what we ask for, and the fact that we receive something is proof that we asked for it. If we want to know what God's Will is, we will know it. God is not reluctant to share His Will with us. Jesus points out that *he* knew God's Will simply because he asked to know it, and by asking came to realize that God's Will already lay within himself (8:3). I think he means to show us, by example, that all *we* need to do is ask, truly wanting to know.

Jesus then shares some of what he knows about that Will, that is, about our function. It involves working *together*, because we cannot function separately (8:4). It means allying ourselves with him, and with each other, as was pointed out in the previous section. Our function is not one that can be carried out by any of us as individuals; it takes all of us together, the united Sonship. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and the power of the Sonship that has been repeatedly mentioned ("power and glory") belongs to the whole, not to any part by itself. If we are not united to the Sonship we are powerless (8:5).

If we want to know the Will of God, we can be assured of one thing: God's Will does not involve our being alone, or His being alone without us! (8:6). The whole reason that God created the Son was because He did not want to be alone (8:7); how, then, could His Will *now* involve aloneness in any way? The ultimate intention of the Father is a corporate being, a dynamically and eternally extending unity of shared consciousness. This vision of "a holy temple" that is "a dwelling place for God," the "body of Christ" that is "joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love," is something foreseen by the author of the Epistle to the Ephesians (presumed to be the Apostle Paul) in the New Testament. That corporate unity, all the separate parts functioning together as one, is His Will, and therefore our function can only be the part we play in fulfilling that divine intention, thus bringing joy to the heart of God (8:8–9).

If you think that all this sounds far-fetched or, as an old preacher used to say, "too heavenly-minded to be of any earthly use," you are not alone. Your failure to properly value *yourself* makes it impossible for you to understand your lofty *function* (8:10–11). If you are like me, you find it hard to believe that God, like the father in the parable, would blithely overlook all your failures and mistakes just for the joy of having *you* back. I remember one time listening to an old Bible teacher explaining the Old Testament book, the Song of Songs, as a parable of Christ and the church (in Course terms, the Sonship). He said that the "bridegroom" of the song was Christ, and the "bride" was the church—us. Therefore, when the Bridegroom in the song speaks these words, he is speaking them *to you and to me*:

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, [my] spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.

How fair is thy love, my sister, [my] spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! (Song 4:9–10)

Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled... (Song 5:2)

Thou [art] beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as [an army] with banners.

Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me... (Song 5:4-5)

Imagine, God considers us to be His *treasure*. God does not simply *love* us; God *adores* us. We are His treasure. We have ravished God's heart! If we really *knew* that, His Will for us would be obvious. We could accept the idea that He wants us at His side, creating with Him, sharing His power and glory. The picture of us held by the Course is so far above our normal self-concept that it boggles the mind.

Of course, the image of a loved and a beloved, as powerful as it is, does not convey the reality. There are not two; we are *one* with God. We *are* the passionate love we envision coming toward us; it comes from *within* us. The Divine Mind of which we are a beloved part embraces us, as It always has. This is the message of the paragraph that follows.

## Paragraph 9

9. <sup>1</sup>I share with God the knowledge of the value **He** puts upon you. <sup>2</sup>My devotion to you is of Him, being born of my knowledge of myself **and** Him. <sup>3</sup>We cannot **be** separated. <sup>4</sup>Whom God has joined **cannot** be separated, and God has joined all His Sons **with Himself**. <sup>5</sup>Can you be separated from your life and your being? <sup>6</sup>The journey to God is merely the reawakening of the knowledge of where you are always, and what you are forever. <sup>7</sup>It is a journey without distance to a goal that has never changed. <sup>8</sup>Truth can only be **experienced**. <sup>9</sup>It cannot be described and it cannot be explained. <sup>10</sup>I can make you aware of the **conditions** of truth, but the experience is of God. <sup>11</sup>Together we can meet its conditions, but truth will dawn upon you of itself.

### • Study Question •

8. *Explain in your own words what sentence 6 means.*

We may have lost the knowledge of what our function is, but Jesus remembers. He knows how much God values us (9:1), and because of that, he is devoted to us (9:2). When we begin to realize the magnitude of our own value, and the value of every child of God, we will be absolutely devoted to one another. Everyone, including ourselves, will be worthy of our maximal effort and our maximal love. This is why Jesus tells us that “all relationships are...total commitments” (T-15.VI.1:3). Everyone is infinitely valuable.

God has joined us together with Himself in creation (9:4), so “We cannot be separated” (9:3). The Workbook has a lesson that says there is only one life, a life we share with God (Lesson 167). God *is* our life. Union with Him and the Sonship is the very essence of us; apart from that we do not exist. We cannot be separated from our very life, our very being (9:5). We've read this same set of ideas before:

You cannot understand yourself alone. This is because you have no meaning apart from your rightful place in the Sonship, and the rightful place of the Sonship is God. This is your life, your eternity and your Self (T-5.III.8:1-3).

Separation from God and from one another simply is not possible.

What, then, is all this “journey to God” stuff about? Why do we have such a strong impression that we are on a trip of some kind, and a very long trip at that? What is this journey we all seem to be experiencing?

The Course answers, in one of its most famous and beautiful passages, that:

The journey to God is merely the reawakening of the knowledge of where you are always, and what you are forever. It is a journey without distance to a goal that has never changed. (T-8.VI.9:6–7)

We are returning from sleep to wakefulness. We are “coming back” from our dreams to our *real* life in God. That’s all. We’ve never really left Heaven. We’ve never really become anything other than what God created us to be. The whole trip about being bodies, squeezing life into the brief interval between birth and death, is nothing but a nightmare. We’ve never been that, never will be.

We cannot fully delineate truth with words. “Truth can only be experienced” (9:8). That is why, in the Manual, when discussing the need for clarifying its terminology, the Course tells us: “A universal theology is impossible, but a universal experience is not only possible but necessary” (C-In.2:5). No human mind, even the mind of Jesus, can convey the truth to us, either by words or demonstration. Each of us must experience it for ourselves. Spiritual books are merely man’s attempt to describe spiritual experience; without experience, the books would not exist. Books can never *give* us experience, and their embodiment of truth will always be inadequate, however good.

I know that as I have read the Course my most common positive reaction has been, “Of course! I knew that already; I just didn’t know how to say it.” Experience had already been teaching me. The Course came along to put words to the experience. In my opinion, its words fit my experience better than any other words I have encountered.

Experience always comes from God Himself, and God alone (9:10). As we join our minds with Jesus, and with the minds of our brothers and sisters, we can only make ourselves *ready* for experience. When we are ready, the experience will come, and it will be its own validation (9:11).

## Paragraph 10

10. <sup>1</sup>What God has willed for you *is* yours. <sup>2</sup>He has given His Will to His treasure, whose treasure it is. <sup>3</sup>Your heart lies where your treasure is, as His does. <sup>4</sup>You who are beloved of God are wholly blessed. <sup>5</sup>Learn this of me, and free the holy will of all those who are as blessed as you are.

### • Study Question •

9. *Consider the injunction contained in the final sentence of the section. What are the two parts of what we are being told to do? (Expand the meaning of each part a bit, according to your understanding of the Course.)*

•

This brief paragraph sums up the teaching of the section. God’s Will cannot be contested (10:1). He wanted to share His nature with us, so He did; end of story. We share His Will; in fact, His Will is our *treasure*, it is the thing we truly value (10:2), and the thing we deeply love (10:3), just as God loves *His* treasure (us). We are “wholly blessed”:

(10:4), which must mean that we have all the blessing we could possibly have, and that there is no part of us that is not blessed by God. We are blessed “to the max.”

This is the lesson Jesus wants us to learn from him in this Course. *We are blessed to the max. We are God’s treasure. Our hearts’ greatest joy is in doing His Will.* He seeks to free our wills from their self-imposed bondage, and he asks us to join him in similarly freeing the wills of all those who surround us.

## Answer Key

1. I begin the journey together with Jesus. The brothers gathered together by Jesus and me join in the journey later.
2. If we could actually make the world real by our choice, and could have willed God out of existence, we would actually have “sinned.” We would have altered reality. If we destroyed our Creator, it would be like sawing off the limb of a tree we are sitting on, or worse. It would have destroyed *us*, because God *is* our life. A sentence toward the end of the section puts it succinctly: “Can you be separated from your life and your being?” (9:5).
3. Answers may vary. My own list would include (to mention only a few things) sex, the opinions of others, and being looked up to in some way. The latter is a particular temptation in conjunction with my teaching and writing! Other things that may attract you might include money, being in control, comfort, excitement, accumulating possessions, or power.
4. We are ashamed to return home because we think we have squandered our Father’s treasure. But God welcomes us with open arms, because we are His treasure.
5. The answers are:
  - (a) True
  - (b) True
  - (c) False
  - (d) True
6. You are not really willing or thinking. The only will there is belongs to God; the only thought there is belongs to God. When you have the illusion of having a different will, or different thought, you are fantasizing about something that does not exist.
7. Our failure to value ourselves causes us to not understand anything, specifically, to not understand that our creations extend our love and increase the joy of the Trinity.
8. The journey to God is not an actual journey; it is a reawakening to the fact that you have always been God’s Son (what you are forever) in Heaven (where you are always).
9. The two parts of the injunction are:
  - a. **Personal Atonement:** Learning from Jesus that our will and God’s Will are one; that we are God’s treasure, and His Will is our treasure; that we are beloved of God and we are blessed.
  - b. **Shared Atonement:** Extending this same good news to everyone, all of whom are as blessed as we are.