

Study Guide and Commentary ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 9, Section VII

The Two Evaluations

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

The section title, “Two Evaluations,” refers to two ways of perceiving ourselves: the ego’s way, and the Holy Spirit’s way (3:1–5, 4:1). At first this appears to be a shift of topic away from the discussion that has run through the chapter thus far, the topic of extension as the means of knowing our true Self. In fact, this section and the next are merely rounding out the prevailing theme of the chapter, which is “The Acceptance of the Atonement,” or the reawakening of our knowledge of what we are.

The chapter began by showing that we are afraid of what we are, and cannot escape from our self-imposed ignorance without a Guide Who exists outside our narrow frame of reference, the Holy Spirit. He teaches us to remember who we are by helping us to perceive Christ in our brothers and sisters. As our changed perception produces miracles in others around us, the light that is reflecting from them to us reveals to us what must be within us. We rediscover our Self in our brothers.

In the previous sections, there has been a running theme concerning the fact that our salvation is found in our brothers. As we open to allow the Holy Spirit to heal through us, His effects demonstrate to us His presence and the truth of our own being. *We become aware of our reality by seeing it in others.* Read through the references given in the Appendix (pages 13 to 15) to get an idea of the prominence in the chapter of this theme: our reality and how it is found in our brother.

Our evaluation of ourselves has been false. It has been the ego’s evaluation. Through our extending healing and forgiveness to those around us, our evaluation of ourselves can be shifted from that of the ego to that of the Holy Spirit. The contrast between these two completely different ways of seeing ourselves is the topic of this section.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹God’s Will is your salvation. ²Would He not have given you the means to find it? ³If He wills you to **have** it, He must have made it possible and [very] easy to obtain it. ⁴Your brothers are everywhere. ⁵You do not have to seek far for salvation. ⁶Every minute and every second gives you a chance to save

yourself. ⁷Do not lose these chances, **not** because they will not return, but because delay of joy is needless. ⁸God wills you perfect happiness **now.** ⁹Is it possible that this is not also **your** will? ¹⁰And is it possible that this is not **also** the will of your brothers?

• **Study Question** •

1. *What are the means for our salvation that God has made readily available to us?*



Unless God is a monster, He obviously wills that we all be “saved” (1:1). In the Course, the word “save” means the healing of our minds, to be happy, to be whole and complete, or to be enlightened (1:1). Of course God wills this for us! How could He do otherwise and be God?

I’ve always particularly loved this paragraph. It is so childlike in its reasoning, so obvious in its conclusions, and yet so humorous at the same time.

If God loves us and wants the best for us, wouldn’t He make finding the means for salvation possible? Of course He would! Wouldn’t He even make finding the means for salvation *easy*? Of course He would! Why in Heaven’s name would He make it impossible or difficult?

And so, He *has* made it easy to be happy, whole, and complete. And what is this easy means for our salvation? Surprise! “Your brothers are everywhere” (1:4).

Somehow, for some of us, that is the last thing we want to hear. “My brother, the means for salvation? You mean *Joe*?” Fill in the name of the person who, in your mind, is least likely to be of any assistance on your way home to God, the one who seems more like a boat anchor than wind beneath your wings.

People sometimes ask me, after studying the Course, “How do I find my partner for a holy relationship? How will I recognize him or her?” The whole point of this paragraph is that you don’t have to look very far (1:5). Usually the answer is staring you in the face (perhaps literally). You can find the means for salvation *everywhere*, anywhere there are people. Every one of them is a means for your salvation. “Every minute and every second” (1:6) offer you an opportunity to choose to accept the Atonement, to overlook a brother’s flaws, to forgive a seeming attack, or to help a sister see herself in the light of Christ. As we read in an earlier chapter:

When you meet anyone, remember it is a holy encounter... Do not leave anyone without giving salvation to him and receiving it yourself. (T-8.III.4:1,7)

Jesus urges us to make use of every such opportunity for salvation, that is, to practice forgiveness and the overlooking of errors in every minute of every day. Why make an effort not to miss any opportunity? Not for lack of future opportunities. The chances to forgive are, fortunately, abundant. Our lessons will keep on repeating until we learn them; there is no cut-off date on salvation in the view of the Course (as there is in many traditional views).

There is a simple logical progression presented here. First, *God wills perfect happiness for me* (1:8). If God is Love, this must be His Will. He must want the best for me. I am His beloved son; how could He want me to be unhappy? There is simply no

way to question this. The Course is very clear: “God’s will for me is perfect happiness” (W-p1.101)¹.

The second thought is that *perfect happiness is my will also* (1:9). How could it be otherwise? How could I want to be unhappy? So my will and God’s Will are the same. You can’t question that either!

Finally, if these two things are so, then *my brothers must also want happiness* (1:10), exactly as I do. Their will must be identical to God’s Will, just as mine is. Paragraph 2 now presents the obvious conclusion.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹Consider, then, that in this joint will you **are** all united, and **in this only**.
²There may [*will*] be disagreement on anything **else**, but **not** on this. ³This, then, is where peace **abides**. ⁴And **you** abide in peace when you so decide. ⁵Yet you cannot abide in peace unless you accept the Atonement, because the Atonement *is* the way to peace. ⁶The reason is very simple, and so obvious that it is often overlooked. ⁷[*That is because*] The ego is **afraid** of the obvious, since obviousness is the essential characteristic of reality. ⁸Yet *you* cannot [*You cannot*] overlook it unless you are **not looking**.

• Study Question •

2. *What is the joint will in which we are all united? (2:1; see paragraph 1).*



What is the obvious conclusion? Simply this: To awaken our awareness of unity and to find peace, we need only focus on that shared will for happiness and nothing else (2:1–4). *This* is what you see when you overlook the mistakes—a shared will for happiness. This is reality. Anything else is illusion. The ego constantly overlooks this reality and focuses on the illusions; the Holy Spirit constantly overlooks the illusions and sees only this reality. That is the perception we are asked to share with Him. Recognizing this shared will in one another is what the Course means by *joining with* our brothers in a common goal.

The thing is, we can’t just *do* this thing; we can’t simply tell ourselves, “I’m going to stay peaceful. I will acknowledge only the will toward happiness I share with my brothers and with God” (2:5). Other things keep intruding and upsetting our peace of mind. We can’t help being aware of our own flaws and failures, and even less can we forget the flaws and failures of our brothers when they impact on us. In order to enter peace and to abide (i.e., live or reside) there, unperturbed, we need to accept the Atonement (2:5).

Why do we need to accept the Atonement? The reason, Jesus tells us, is both simple and obvious (2:6). It’s as plain as the nose on your face, but like your nose, it is easy to overlook. The word “overlooked” in sentence 6 describes a failure to see something we should be seeing; it is different from the way we are supposed to overlook errors in

¹ It is indeed the unfortunate truth that many people do not seem to make the simple, logical connection between these basic ideas: ideas they purport to believe. “God is Love” and “God is omnipotent.” It is not logically possible for these two statements to be true and for the vast majority of humanity to end up eternally punished in hell. If hell exists, God is either not Love or not omnipotent.

others. It's no surprise that the ego overlooks the reason we need to accept the Atonement; it does not want us to find reality (2:7). It fears what we might discover. However, if you and I overlook our need to accept the Atonement it can only be through deliberate negligence (2:8).

So, what is this simple and obvious reason behind our need to accept the Atonement? We learn the answer in the remainder of this section, if we haven't already figured it out. If we have not accepted the Atonement, we see ourselves buried in guilt, and therefore we see the world in the same way; in such a condition, peace is impossible. We perceive ourselves as the ego does: as loveless beings who are prone to viciously attacking others and even God Himself (4:5). How could we ever be at peace with our brothers or ourselves, given that perception? How could we ever be happy if we see ourselves as unloving (5:1)? Only the Atonement can rescue us from our self-condemnation.

The remainder of the section contrasts the ego's evaluation of us with the Holy Spirit's evaluation of us, and explains why we must accept the Atonement as the crucial first step in this whole process. We cannot truly know our divine Self until we extend healing to others. But we cannot extend healing to others until—however briefly—we lift the weight of negative self-evaluation from our minds, allowing us to lift our condemnation from those around us.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹It is **perfectly** obvious that if the Holy Spirit looks with love on all He perceives, He looks with love on **you**. ²His **evaluation** of you is based on His knowledge of what you **are**, and so He evaluates you truly. ³And this evaluation **must** be in your mind, because **He** is. ⁴The ego is also in your mind, because you have **accepted** it there. ⁵**Its** evaluation of you, however, is the exact opposite of the Holy Spirit's, because the ego does **not** love you. ⁶It is unaware of what you are, and wholly mistrustful of **everything** it perceives because its [own] perceptions are so shifting. ⁷The ego is therefore capable of suspiciousness at best and viciousness at worst. ⁸That is its range. ⁹It cannot exceed it because of its uncertainty. ¹⁰And it can never go **beyond** it because it can never *be* certain.

• Study Question •

3. *Identify the two pictures of ourselves we have in our minds, and contrast them. (See also 6:5.) A side-by-side comparison in two columns might be helpful.*

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The use of the word “obvious” is a clue that Jesus is starting to discuss the reason why we need to accept the Atonement in order to find peace, a reason that is “so obvious” (2:6) we miss it. If the Holy Spirit loves everyone—and He does—then He obviously must love *you* (3:1). When I was sixteen, I “went forward” in a Billy Graham Crusade at Madison Square Garden in New York. I remember my counselor pointing out John 3:16, “For God so loved the world,” and saying, “Are you a part of the world?”

“Yes,” I replied, to the no-brainer question.

“Well, if you are part of the world, and God loves the world, He must love you. Right?”

“Right,” I muttered.

“Well, then, say it out loud. ‘God loves me.’”

I said it. I can't tell you the sudden recognition that came over me in the moment that I spoke those words. *God loves me!* It took my breath away, quite literally, and I began to sob, “God loves me! God loves me!” I had been awash with guilt over my juvenile sins, but here was the Bible plainly saying that God loves the world, and therefore, He must love *me*. My evaluation of myself as the scum of the earth was wrong! It *had* to be, if God Himself loved me.

This passage in the Course is making basically the same argument. The Holy Spirit holds an evaluation of us that is in accord with our true nature (3:2). His love is not groundless, some kind of arbitrary affection; He *knows* us to the core, and based on that knowledge, He *loves* us. Elsewhere, the Text says, “He [Christ] loves what He sees within you, and He would extend it” (T-13.V.9:6)..

That exalted evaluation of you does not exist exclusively in the mind of the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is in your mind, His evaluation of you is also in your mind (3:3). In other words, you know this about yourself as well as He does. Unfortunately, the same is true of the ego's demeaning evaluation of you (3:4), not because the ego is really a part of you, but because you have mistaken it for your self. “Its evaluation of you, however, is the exact opposite of the Holy Spirit's...” (3:5). If the Holy Spirit's evaluation is based on love, the ego's is based on the opposite of love. The ego mistrusts us and regards us with active antipathy. So, within your mind, both evaluations of you exist side by side. Accepting the Atonement, or the entire learning process of salvation and enlightenment, can be understood as letting go of the ego's view of yourself and embracing the view that the Holy Spirit holds of you.

I've always found the idea that the ego does not love us to be somewhat startling. After all, in most psychological thought systems, the ego *is* myself. How can it be that the very self I think I am does not love me? Who ought to be more favorably inclined towards me than my very self? Yet, nearly everyone is aware of ways in which we disparage ourselves and even hate ourselves. In a workshop I attended with two hundred other people, we were taken through a process to determine our bottom line negative thought. By far the most common negative thought was some variant of, “I'm not good enough.” Some other variants were: “I am unworthy,” “I don't deserve love,” “I am not lovable,” and “I am untrustworthy.” Such self-hatred is not hard to find if we look for it.

According to both psychology and the Course, even more virulent self-attack lurks beneath the conscious layer of our mind. We are all familiar with the terms “self-destructive behavior” and “self-sabotage,” and most of us could relate instances of them in our own lives. We sabotage our efforts at success, at love, and even at spiritual growth. One thing we are usually very good at is screwing up! Such behavior is a clear indicator of the ego's self-hatred.

Marianne Williamson once defined the ego as “your self-loathing.” It's a good working definition. The best the ego can offer us is its suspicion (3:7). The ego is naturally suspicious of *everything* because its erratic perceptions mean that it cannot be sure of *anything* (3:8–10). Haven't you noticed that voice whispering in your mind, questioning your motives even in your best moments? “You're not really acting from

love; you are trying to get them to like you. You are manipulating them with your kindness.” Or, “Don’t make any promises you can’t keep; you never follow through!”

The darker side of the ego is the way it will viciously attack you when you are down. When something goes wrong, or when sickness strikes, it is the ego that plants the sneering thought in your mind that you must have done something to deserve the calamity. It is the constant, cruel critic that cannot ever forget the mistakes you have made.

Transcending the ego, therefore, means transcending your self-hatred and learning to love yourself. It means adopting God’s own “last judgment” of you: “You are still [God’s] holy Son, forever innocent, forever loving and forever loved, as limitless as your Creator, and completely changeless and forever pure” (W-pII.10.5:1).

Paragraph 4

4. ¹You, then, have two conflicting evaluations of yourself in your mind, and they **cannot both be true**. ²You do not yet realize how **completely** different these evaluations are, because you do not understand how lofty the Holy Spirit’s perception of you really is. ³He is not deceived by **anything** you do, because He **never** forgets what you are. ⁴The ego is deceived by **everything** you do, especially [**even**] when you respond to the Holy Spirit, because at such times **its confusion increases**. ⁵The ego is, therefore, particularly likely to attack you when you react lovingly, because it has evaluated you **as unloving** and you are going **against its judgment**. ⁶The ego will [**begin to**] **attack** your motives as soon as they become clearly out of accord with its perception of you. ⁷This is when it will shift abruptly from suspiciousness to viciousness, since its uncertainty is **increased**. ⁸Yet it is surely pointless to attack in return. ⁹What can this mean except that you are **agreeing** with the ego’s evaluation of what you are?

• Study Question •

4. *When is the ego most likely to become vicious and attack us, and why?*

Obviously either the ego or the Holy Spirit must be wrong in their evaluation of us (4:1), because they see us in exactly opposite ways: wholly loving versus unloving, abundant versus deprived, invulnerable versus vulnerable, wholly lovable versus completely despicable. As the Course points out, we probably think that the ego and Holy Spirit are not complete opposites; we probably think there is some real love and real strength in the ego’s view of us, and we probably think there is some validity in its criticisms (4:2). Perhaps we have often recoiled from its faultfinding and its sly hints concerning our inner corruption, but our very recoil shows that we think its judgments have merit. We may have some idea of how thoroughly the ego despises us, but we have no concept as yet of the magnitude of our true nature. However highly we may have thought of ourselves, it is as nothing compared to the reality.

My true Identity is so secure, so lofty, sinless, glorious and great, wholly beneficent and free from guilt, that Heaven looks to It to give it light. It lights the world as well. (W-pII.224.1:1-2)

We have let our bumbling behavior in the world pollute our self-perception. We follow the ego in its mistaken belief that we have been redefined by our behavior; the Holy Spirit makes no such mistake (4:3). Nothing we have done has changed the reality of what we are.

If our *mistakes* confuse the ego into thinking it has succeeded in destroying God's image in us, our *loving thoughts* confuse it even more! (4:4). It cannot comprehend how such innocent thoughts could arise in such a "corrupt" mind, so it counter-attacks viciously, in an attempt to convince us that our loving thoughts are not real (4:5–7). In the Bible, the devil or Satan is called "the accuser of our brethren" (Revelation 12:10, KJV). The title belongs more accurately to the ego. The ego is skilled at undermining our self-confidence and raising questions about our integrity and honor. It is an expert faultfinder, quick to point out the least hint of its own presence! "You think you are being *loving*? Oh, come on; who do you think you're kidding!" "Only the ego can experience guilt" (T-4.IV.5:5).

What can we do when the ego attacks? "Attack in return"? (4:8). That just proves the ego is right when it calls you an attacker! Sometimes someone close to me will accuse me of being angry with them when I have not been feeling angry at all. Perversely, my reaction is often to *get angry*!

Isn't that how we often react when people say, or imply, that we are unloving? In response, we actually *become* unloving. We make the mistake of trying to fight fire with fire; it won't work. The Course points out that this uncovers an unpleasant truth: Something within us is agreeing with the accusation (4:9). If being called unloving provokes an unloving response, it shows that we agree that we *are* unloving, and we are happy to provide the evidence!

Paragraph 5

5. ¹If you choose [If you are willing] to see yourself as unloving **you will not be happy**. ²You are condemning yourself and **must** therefore regard yourself as inadequate. ³Would you look to the ego to help you escape from a sense of inadequacy it has **produced**, and must **maintain** for its existence? ⁴Can you **escape** from its evaluation of you by using its methods for keeping this picture **intact**?

God wants us to be happy (see 1:1 and 1:8). Self-condemnation and happiness cannot co-exist (5:1–2). I know that from personal experience, because I've noticed that when I feel most deeply unhappy, it usually comes from a sense that I am somehow a spiritual failure or a selfish no-goodnik. A lack of spiritual hope produces profound unhappiness. If we react to accusations or guilt with anger and counter-attack, we are just reinforcing the ego's false perception of us. We are proving that we really are unloving attackers. There is no way to use the ego to fight the ego (5:3–4). Reacting to attack with counter-attack is a choice to see ourselves as unloving; therefore it is a choice for unhappiness. That's all there is to it. You can't use the ego's methods of attack to escape from the ego. You can't get out of the ego by acting within its range of response, being suspicious or vicious. If someone attacks me because he has perceived me to be unloving, when I react with anything but love, I have proved him right! I have chosen to see myself as unloving.

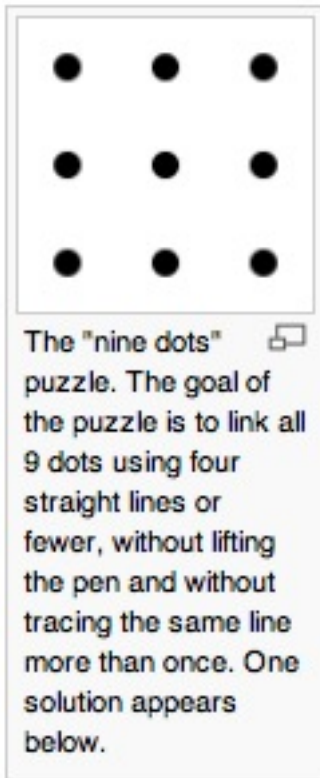
Paragraph 6

6. ¹You cannot evaluate an insane belief system from **within** it. ²Its [own] range precludes this. ³You can only **go beyond** it, look back from a point where **sanity** exists and *see the contrast*. ⁴Only **by** this contrast can insanity be judged as insane. ⁵With the grandeur of God in you, you have chosen to be little and to lament your littleness. ⁶Within the system that **dictated** this choice the lament is inevitable. ⁷Your littleness is **taken for granted** there and you do **not** ask, "Who granted it?" ⁸The question is meaningless **within** the ego's thought system, because it would open [Ur: it opens] **the whole thought system to question**.

• Study Question •

5. *What is the only way to escape from the ego's insane belief system?*

If you cannot use the ego to fight the ego (6:1), what is the alternative? As Albert Einstein once said, "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." You have to get outside of the ego somehow (6:3). It's like the famous puzzle:



You are asked to connect the nine points with four straight lines, without lifting the pen or tracing the same line more than once. The points are located inside a box, but nothing in the rules prevents you from drawing outside the box, and that is the *only* way you can solve the puzzle (one answer is shown in the Answer Key). You have to think outside the box of the ego's thought system. You need a different perspective, a different "reference point" as the Course calls it in several places (T-13.III.12:9; W-pI.93.3:1). Only when you can manage to see things from a point of view that is *not* the ego's can you realize how insane the ego's picture of us is (6:4). The presence of the thought system of the Holy Spirit in your mind is what grants you this different viewpoint. Allowing His thoughts in, and thinking about things from His point of view, is what can free you from the ego.

We contain "the grandeur of God" (6:5), but we don't often allow ourselves to see ourselves that way. Instead, we whine about how weak we feel, how incapable we are of living up to the law of love. If we look at life from the perspective of the ego, we will whine (6:6), because in its eyes we are small, helpless, independent beings at war with the universe, in competition with everyone and at the mercy of forces beyond our control. A common T-shirt or coffee mug motto expresses how the ego wants us to feel: "Life's a bitch, and then you die."

Stuck in the ego's thought system we will never ask, "*Who says* we are deprived, unloving, and vulnerable? (6:7-8; see T-7.VII.3:2). If God created us abundant, loving,

and invulnerable, who came along and changed that? Who is or was greater than God and able to overrule His will?"

Recently, I heard the Unity minister and author, Rev. Jim Rosemergy, speak. He referred to the kind of thoughts that come up in our mind and said, "We need to ask, 'Who's on the phone?'" Is it the Holy Spirit, or the ego? If the thought produces fear, guilt, apathy, or depression, it's the ego calling.

Paragraph 7

7. ¹I have said that the ego does not know what a real question is [T-8.IX.1:3]. ²Lack of knowledge of **any** kind is **always** associated with **unwillingness** to know, and this produces a **total** lack of knowledge simply because **knowledge** is total. ³**Not** to question your littleness therefore is to deny **all** knowledge, and keep the ego's **whole** thought system intact. ⁴You cannot retain **part** of a thought system, because it can **be** questioned only at its foundation. ⁵And this **must** be questioned from beyond it, because **within** it its foundation **does** stand. ⁶The Holy Spirit judges against the reality of the ego's thought system merely because He knows its **foundation** is not true. ⁷Therefore, nothing that arises from it **means** anything. ⁸He judges every belief you hold in terms of where it comes from. ⁹If it comes from God, He knows it to be true. ¹⁰If it does not, He knows that it is meaningless.

• Study Question •

6. *What can we say with assurance about anything that arises from a belief in littleness and inadequacy?*

Instead of reacting to attacks with returned attack, I need to question my littleness (7:3). If a brother is attacking my littleness, I need to see that my brother is attacking an illusion of me that is not true. Therefore, he is not attacking *me* at all, and there is nothing to be angry about.

We hesitate, however, to investigate the truth behind our low opinion of ourselves. The ego is afraid to ask a real question. Our refusal to question the ego's demeaning evaluation of us has to be deliberate; we are not willing to raise the question because to do so puts the entire ego thought system in doubt (7:1–3). In some part of our mind we *want* to hold on to our presumed independence from God, and we are willing to put up with a cruddy self-image if that's what it takes to maintain that independence. At least, we *have been* willing to put up with that, but only because we have not really looked at it. Ultimately, holding on to the ego thought system results in every kind of pain, suffering, sorrow, sickness, and death that we can imagine. Once we realize that fact, and really take it in, we will no longer want it. That is especially true when we recognize that the independence the ego seems to grant is wholly illusory!

What we think we want is to have freedom from pain and suffering while continuing to hold on to the ego. We want the ego without the self-attacking part, but "you cannot retain part of a thought system" (7:4). To find freedom from the pain the ego causes, we have to cut off the ego at its roots (7:4). In the *Psychotherapy* pamphlet, Jesus says that most people enter therapy with the same attitude:

Psychotherapy is a process that changes the view of the self...

Patients do not enter the therapeutic relationship with this goal in mind... Their aim is to be able to retain their self-concept exactly as it is, but without the suffering that it entails. Their whole equilibrium rests on the insane belief that this is possible... [The patient] wants a “better” illusion. (P-2.In.1:1; 2:1, 3–4, 8)

The whole self-concept of the ego needs to be tossed out. But how can we do that while our thinking is taking place wholly *within the confines* of the ego thought system? As long as we think of ourselves as separate individuals—which is how all of us *do* think—the whole thought system of the ego *seems* to make sense to us (7:4–5). If we start from that mistaken foundation, the rest follows logically. We need a different sense of identity, a *larger* identity, on which to base our reassessment of ourselves. Like the joke about the Vermont farmer trying to give directions to a place he'd never been, “You can't get there from here.” We can't get *out of* the ego while we are *in* the ego.

This is why we need the Holy Spirit's help. We need His knowledge of what is true and what is false. Because He knows that the ego's premise about us—that we are unloving beings, separate from God—is false, He also knows that any conclusions we might base on that premise are equally false and meaningless (7:6–10). Our guilt, our self-loathing, our sense of unworthiness, and our feeling of incompleteness—all these things are meaningless.

Paragraph 8

¹Whenever you question your value, say:

²*God Himself is incomplete without me.*

³Remember this when the ego speaks, and you will not hear it. ⁴The truth about **you** is so lofty that nothing unworthy of God is worthy of you. ⁵Choose, then, what you want in these terms, and accept nothing that you would not offer to God as wholly fitting for **Him**. ⁶**You** do not want anything else. ⁷Return your part to Him, and He will give you all of Himself in exchange for the return [**your return**] of what belongs to Him and renders Him complete.

• Study Question •

7. *We often imagine that transcending the ego involves self-abasement. What method does the Course recommend for dispelling the illusion of the ego?*

When I am attacked by my own self-accusation, it causes me to question my value. When that happens, if I can remember that, “God Himself is incomplete without me,” the ego's urgings to attack will fall on deaf ears (8:2–3). The attacks of others simply won't be meaningful to me because I will know my true worth. How can I doubt my worth if I am a necessary part of God's wholeness? I will be able to overlook the ego's attack because it doesn't *mean* anything. Nothing that arises from the ego means anything (7:7). When my brother offers me a view of myself as unloving, I will simply choose to not

accept that evaluation. I will remind myself that I am an essential part of the Divine Being. I will respond with love because I know that love is what I am. I will offer my mind to God as a vehicle for His Love because that is what He created me to be.

As I said earlier, we have very little idea of just how great we are! I remember taking the *est* training in the '80's and learning that we have three ways of seeing ourselves. There is the mask we put on, the person we *want* people to think we are; then, hidden underneath, there is the person we are *afraid* we are (the ego's evaluation of us); and finally, there is the *truth* about who we are, "which is *magnificent*," to use the *est* trainer's word. Jesus uses the word "lofty" instead of "magnificent," but the message is the same. If it isn't worthy of God, it isn't worthy of *you* (8:4).

What part do you play in this? What action is the Course asking you to take? It's very simple: *Choose* (8:5). Sort out the thoughts that enter your mind—the thoughts about your brother and the thoughts about yourself. Throw out any thought that isn't worthy of God Himself. Ask yourself, "Would I say that about God? Would I think that about God?" If not, throw it out. All that you truly want to retain are the thoughts you think with God.

To be vigilant for God and His Kingdom (T-6.V.(C).2:8) means that I refuse to accept the ego's evaluation of me as unloving, and I refuse to accept the ego's evaluation of my brother as unloving. I accept the evaluation of the Holy Spirit instead. When I do that, I see only love and I respond to everything only with love, because that is the truth about my brother, and the truth about myself.

As I do this, I am offering God the gift of His Son, returned from a far country. God is so grateful for this gift, which completes Him, that He will give us all of Himself in return! (8:7).

Answer Key

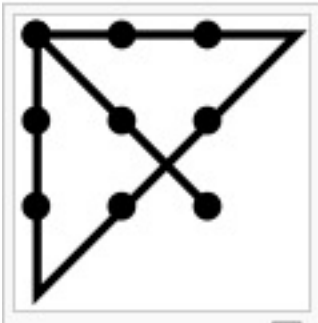
1. Our brothers are the means for our salvation. By joining with and bringing healing to them, we heal ourselves.
2. We are all united by our desire to be happy, or to be saved. We all want to be healed, and in uniting in that will we find peace.
3. The two evaluations of ourselves in our minds are those of the ego and the Holy Spirit. The table that follows contrasts the two different ways we are perceived by the Holy Spirit and by the ego.

HOLY SPIRIT sees us	EGO sees us
as lovable	as unlovable
based on knowledge	out of ignorance of what we are
truly	by implication, falsely
in a way we naturally share with Him	in a way we share only by mistaken

	acceptance
with trust (by implication)	with suspicion
as lofty or grand	as little or inadequate
without surprise or disappointment	with constant surprise and disappointment
with love	with anger and attack

4. The ego attacks when I respond to the Holy Spirit and react lovingly (4:5). It attacks because it sees me as “deprived, unloving and vulnerable” (T-7.VII.3:2). My loving response challenges that perception. It will try to convince me that its evaluation is correct, and my seemingly loving thoughts are the illusion. (The ego’s attacks may come through my own mind, or appear to come from external sources; these are the same.)
5. To escape the ego’s insane belief system we must step outside of it so that we can evaluate it objectively (6:3). We need to step completely out of our usual frame of reference and see things from a completely different vantage point. The evaluation of the Holy Spirit, within our own minds, provides this different vantage point for us.
6. Anything that arises from a belief in littleness and inadequacy is not true and therefore is meaningless.
7. Rather than self-abasement, the Course teaches that remembering and affirming our own true grandeur can dispel the ego (8:3). Even a weak affirmation of our grandeur cancels out our imagined need for the ego’s pretentious posturing. With no need for the ego, we simply let it go. (See also T-9.VIII.1:3 and T-9.VIII.4:2).

Answer to the nine dots puzzle:



Appendix

CHAPTER NINE QUOTES ON "Our Reality, which is found in our brother"

"If you do not know what your reality is, why would you be so sure that it is fearful?" (T-9.I.3:1).

"His recognition of this Will can make it real to you because He is in your mind, and therefore He is your reality" (T-9.I.4:3).

"Remember, then, that God's Will is already possible, and nothing else will ever be. This is the simple acceptance of reality, because only that is real. " (T-9.I.14:1-2).

"If you would know your prayers are answered, never doubt a Son of God. Do not question him and do not confound him, for your faith in him is your faith in yourself" (T-9.II.4:1-2).

"The message your brother gives you is up to you. What does he say to you? What would you have him say? Your decision about him determines the message you receive. Remember that the Holy Spirit is in him, and His Voice speaks to you through him" (T-9.II.5:1-5).

"Salvation is of your brother. The Holy Spirit extends from your mind to his, and answers *you*. You cannot hear the Voice for God in yourself alone, because you are not alone. And His answer is only for what you are. You will not know the trust I have in you unless you extend it. You will not trust the guidance of the Holy Spirit, or believe that it is for you unless you hear it in others" (T-9.II.6:3-8).

"If you would hear me, hear my brothers in whom God's Voice speaks. The answer to all prayers lies in them. You will be answered as you hear the answer in everyone. Do not listen to anything else or you will not hear truly" (T-9.II.7:5-8).

"Believe in your brothers because I believe in you, and you will learn that my belief in you is justified. Believe in me *by* believing in them, for the sake of what God gave them. They will answer you if you learn to ask only truth of them. Do not ask for blessings without blessing them, for only in this way can you learn how blessed you are. By following this way you are seeking the truth in you. This is not going beyond yourself but toward yourself. Hear only God's Answer in His Sons, and you are answered" (T-9.II.8:1-7).

"You can ask of the Holy Spirit, then, only by giving to Him, and you can give to Him only where you recognize Him. If you recognize Him in everyone, consider how much you will be asking of Him, and how much you will receive. He will deny you nothing because you have denied Him nothing, and so you can share everything. This is the way, and the only way to have His answer, because His answer is all you can ask for and want. Say, then, to everyone:

Because I will to know myself, I see you as God's

Son and my brother" (T-9.II.12:1-6).

"When you react at all to errors, you are not listening to the Holy Spirit. . . . This cannot be correction. Yet it is more than merely a lack of correction for him. It is the giving up of correction in yourself" (T-9.III.4:1, 4-6).

"When a brother behaves insanely, you can heal him only by perceiving the sanity in him. If you perceive his errors and accept them, you are accepting yours. If you want to give yours over to the Holy Spirit, you must do this with his. Unless this becomes the one way in which you handle all errors, you cannot understand how all errors are undone. How is this different from telling you that what you teach you learn? Your brother is as right as you are, and if you think he is wrong you are condemning yourself" (T-9.III.5:1-6).

"To perceive errors in anyone, and to react to them as if they were real, is to make them real to you. You will not escape paying the price for this, not because you are being punished for it, but because you are following the wrong guide and will therefore lose your way" (T-9.III.6:7-8).

"Your brother's errors are not of hi, any more than yours are of you. Accept his errors as real, and you have attacked yourself. If you would find your way and keep it, see only truth beside you for you walk together. " (T-9.III.7:1-3).

"He will teach you how to see yourself without condemnation, by learning how to look on everything without it" (T-9.III.8:10).

"Accept as true only what your brother is, if you would know yourself" (T-9.IV.1:4).

"The miracle worker begins by perceiving light, and translates his perception into sureness by continually extending it and accepting its acknowledgment. Its effects assure him it is there" (T-9.V.7:8-9).

"As you awaken other minds to the Holy Spirit through Him, and not yourself, you will understand that you are not obeying the laws of this world. " (T-9.V.8:12).

"This course offers a very direct and a very simple learning situation, and provides the Guide Who tells you what to do. If you do it, you will see that it works. Its results are more convincing than its words. They will convince you that the words are true. By following the right Guide, you will learn the simplest of all lessons:

*By their fruits ye shall know them, and they
shall know themselves"* (T-9.V.9:1-6).

"How can you become increasingly aware of the Holy Spirit in you except by His effects? You cannot see Him with your eyes nor hear Him with your ears. How, then, can you perceive Him at all? If you inspire joy and others react to you with joy, even though you are not experiencing joy yourself there must be something in you that is capable of producing it" (T-9.VI.1:1-4).

"If your brothers are part of you, will you accept them? Only they can teach you what you are, for your learning is the result of what you taught them. What you call upon in them you call upon in yourself. And as you call upon it in them it becomes real to you" (T-9.VI.3:1-4).

"Because the Sonship must create as one, you remember creation whenever you recognize part of creation. Each part you remember adds to your wholeness because each part *is* whole. Wholeness is indivisible, but you cannot learn of your wholeness until you see it everywhere. You can know yourself only as God knows His Son, for knowledge is shared with God. When you awake in Him you will know your magnitude by accepting His limitlessness as yours. But meanwhile you will judge it as you judge your brother's, and will accept it as you accept his" (T-9.VI.4:4-9).

"You are not yet awake, but you can learn how to awaken. Very simply the Holy Spirit teaches you to awaken others. As you see them waken you will learn what waking means, and because you have chosen to wake them, their gratitude and their appreciation of what you have given them will teach you its value. They will become the witnesses to your reality, as you were created witnesses to God's" (T-9.VI.5:1-4).

"Yet while you still need healing, your miracles are the only witnesses to your reality that you can recognize. You cannot perform a miracle for yourself, because miracles are a way of giving acceptance and receiving it" (T-9.VI.6:2-3).

"God's meaning is incomplete without you, and you are incomplete without your creations. Accept your brother in this world and accept nothing else, for in him you will find your creations because he created them with you. You will never know that you are co-creator with God until you learn that your brother is co-creator with you" (T-9.VI.7:7-9).