

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

Grandeur versus Grandiosity

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 previous section spoke of how “lofty” our true Self is (T-9.VII.8:4), and counseled us to transcend the ego by affirming our indispensable importance to the very being of God (T-9.VII.8:2). This could sound quite egotistic, if we let our ego take hold of it. The ego loves self-inflating talk. The Course therefore offers us a section that compares and contrasts the healthy and unhealthy forms of self-affirmation: *grandeur* (true greatness) and *grandiosity* (pretentious self-importance). The latter is the counter-move of the ego, attempting to lure us back to itself. Grandiosity is a synonym for what the Text will later call *specialness*.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹Grandeur is of God, and **only** of Him. ²Therefore it is in you. ³Whenever you become aware of it, however dimly, you abandon the ego automatically, because in the presence of the grandeur of God the meaninglessness of the ego becomes perfectly apparent. ⁴When this occurs, even though it does not understand it, [Though it does not understand this] the ego believes that its “enemy” has struck, and attempts to offer gifts to induce you to return to its “protection.” ⁵**Self-inflation** [is the only offering it can make. ⁶The grandiosity] of the ego is its alternative to the grandeur of God. ⁷Which will you choose?

Note: The second edition restored a new sentence from the original notes. The first word of the second-from-last sentence, “self-inflation,” has been replaced with these words (the words in square brackets were absent in the first edition): “Self-inflation **is the only offering it can make. The grandiosity....**”

• Study Question •

1. *When we get a hint of our grandeur, what “gift” does the ego offer to persuade us to seek protection from what it perceives as an attack?*

As we began our study of this chapter, I pointed out that it is all about acceptance. What we are accepting is our own grandeur, and we do that by accepting grandeur in our

brothers. Grandeur means majesty, magnificence, greatness, and nobility. It is a word in the same class as *lofty*, which is used twice in the last section to describe our true character. We are magnificent because we are extensions of God's own Being (1:1–2).

The Holy Spirit's evaluation recognizes our true grandeur, which we very much underestimate (T-9.VII.4.2). The ego's evaluation perceives our littleness. The ego sees us as unloving, vulnerable, separate from God and therefore different from Him.

To refuse to accept the evaluation of the Holy Spirit is to deny it and to accept the evaluation of the ego in its place. Once we have accepted our own littleness, there are only two possible reactions: despair, or grandiosity, which is just the posturing of the ego. Grandiosity is littleness trying to pretend it is big. Grandiosity is pride, self-inflation, pretension, self-importance, or competition—a strutting arrogance that derives its vapid value from the littleness of others.

An awareness of my true grandeur washes the ego out of my mind (1:3), but the ego does not give up without a fight. When my mind begins to awaken to my grandeur as God's creation, it presents the ego with events that surpass its ability to comprehend. All it knows is that it feels attacked (although the truth does not “attack” anything, and only illusions can feel threatened by it). The ego, therefore, counter-attacks, and tries to seduce my mind and win it over once again (1:4).

The ego wants to entice us away from our true grandeur, but the best temptation it can come up with is a cheap substitute: “self-inflation” (1:5) or grandiosity (1:6). Grandiosity has no real value; it is a bloated pretense of greatness that, in reality, is just a “cover for despair” (2:1). It is a belief in littleness masked over with a veneer of arrogance and pride. All the ego can do is try to puff itself up (1:5). Sound familiar? It's what we all do when our egos have been wounded. We engage in self-narrative, telling ourselves how good we are, or how others have mistreated us or been unfair to us. We compare ourselves with others, especially when the comparison makes us look good.

Perhaps such a reaction is understandable when another ego directly attacks us or threatens us, but the Course says the ego reacts in the same way when our true grandeur peaks through its defenses! I think the ego's grandiosity, when responding to our burgeoning realization of true greatness, takes the form of co-opting the truth for the ego's advantage: It attempts to transform thoughts of grandeur into “self-inflation” (1:5).

It reminds me of counsel given by a senior demon to a junior one, in C. S. Lewis's comic spiritual masterpiece, *The Screwtape Letters*. Charged with tempting a certain individual who was making some progress on his spiritual path, the junior demon complained, “He is actually becoming *humble*.”

His mentor responded, “Have you called his attention to the fact?”

The idea is that if we become *aware* of our humility (part of our true grandeur), it can turn into spiritual pride. Ram Dass writes that truly enlightened beings recognize that they are “nobody special.” The word “special” is a clue to the difference between grandeur and grandiosity: Grandeur is devoid of any comparison with others, while grandiosity always derives its appearance of greatness by contrasting itself with others, exalting itself at their expense.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹Grandiosity is **always** a cover for despair. ²It is without hope because it is

not real. ³It is an attempt to **counteract** your littleness, based on the belief **that the littleness is real**. ⁴**Without** this belief grandiosity is meaningless, and you could not possibly **want** it. ⁵The essence of grandiosity is competitiveness, because it **always** involves **attack**. ⁶It is a delusional attempt to **outdo**, but **not** to **undo**. ⁷We said before that the ego vacillates between suspiciousness and viciousness. ⁸It remains suspicious as long as you **despair** of yourself. ⁹It shifts to viciousness when you decide not to tolerate [**whenever you will not tolerate**] self-abasement and seek relief. ¹⁰Then it offers you the illusion [**delusion**] of attack as a "solution."

• **Study Question** •

2. *What characterizes grandiosity? (Note the references the previous section: "The ego is therefore capable of suspiciousness at best and viciousness at worst" (T-9.VII.3:7) and "The 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" (T-9.VII.4:5)).*

So much of what the ego does is a reaction to its own insanity. Grandiosity arises because the ego believes in littleness (2:3). If you look carefully when your ego flares up, it becomes quite apparent how vulnerable and sensitive it is. Its violence comes out when some external cause raises questions about its capabilities. The ego is hypersensitive to such put-downs, real or imagined, because it holds the same demeaning view of you. Its protests are a false front covering up its self-loathing (2:1).

If you did not believe in your own littleness, why would you ever indulge in self-inflation? Why would you try to put others down in an attempt to raise yourself up? Why would you compare yourself to others if you didn't need the reassurance that you were really pretty good in comparison? The truth is, you *would* not do it nor would you *want* to (2:4). Only your self-deprecating ego makes self-promotion seem attractive.

The worst part of grandiosity, as I've pointed out already, is that it feeds on putting other people down (2:5–6). If you find yourself thinking a lot about how you look in comparison with others, or feel that you must compete with others to establish your value, you're caught up in the ego's grandiosity. Nor does this competitiveness take the form of what is sometimes called "friendly competition." This is competition in the form of outright attack (2:5), and that is so no matter how you try to sugarcoat it. The ego lays low as long as you wallow in misery, accepting the supposed fact of your worthlessness. It still does not trust you to remain docile, but it does not get belligerent (2:8). If you begin to get feisty, however, and want to throw off your mantle of mortification, the ego is no longer Mr. Nice Guy. "It shifts to viciousness" (2:9), not so much against you as against anyone and everyone else. It tries to convince you that the way to feel better about yourself is to attack somebody else (2:10).

Next time you find yourself snapping at somebody, getting angry, or getting nasty, try to stop and ask yourself why you are doing it. What will you get out of it? Chances are you will find that you have been feeling down on yourself for some reason and need to boost your self-confidence and self-appreciation, and the ego has persuaded you that the way to lift yourself *up* is to put someone else *down*. That's grandiosity.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹The ego does not understand [know] the difference between grandeur and grandiosity, because it sees no [it does not know the] difference between miracle impulses and ego-alien beliefs of its own. ²I told you [4.V.2-3] that the ego is aware of threat to its existence, but makes no [does not make] distinctions between these two very [between two entirely] different kinds of threat. ³Its [own] profound sense of vulnerability renders it incapable of judgment except in terms of attack. ⁴When the ego experiences threat, its only decision is whether to attack now or to withdraw to attack later. ⁵If you accept its offer of grandiosity it will attack immediately. ⁶If you do not, it will wait.

• Study Question •

3. *What is the only response of the ego to both miracle impulses and the appearance of external attack, and what is the only variation in this response?*

When we compare grandeur and grandiosity using the ego's eyes, they will look the same to us (3:1), although they are really quite different. They appear similar, in that both have things to say about how great we are. In true grandeur, that greatness is always shared with others. In grandiosity, we try to increase our worth or power by diminishing that of others. The ego cannot see the difference. When we share the perception of the Holy Spirit, however, distinguishing the two is easy (8:1). As you read this paragraph, try to understand clearly why the ego confuses them, and why the Holy Spirit does not.

The discussion in this paragraph refers to an earlier passage about the ego's failure to distinguish "between...two very different kinds of threat," namely "miracle impulses and ego-alien beliefs of its own" (3:1-2). I believe the earlier passage in question is T-4.V.2-4, in which Jesus refers to the ego's confusion of a similar pair of positive and negative things: the "Thoughts of God" and "'unacceptable' bodily impulses." In fact, if you have my commentary on that passage, you might want to re-read it now, because it is closely related to this paragraph in Chapter 9.

While it is easy to see how the two positive terms refer to similar things or the same thing (God's thoughts move us to work miracles), the two negative terms are a bit more difficult to understand and to relate to one another, since one refers to beliefs, which are mental, and the other refers to the body's desires. When discussing Chapter 4, I explained that the term "ego-alien" means, "'Of or pertaining to aspects of one's behavior or attitudes viewed as inconsistent with one's fundamental beliefs and personality' (*Random House Unabridged Dictionary*)". In my own words, the Course is talking about beliefs and attitudes of the ego or behaviors of the body that contradict the ego's core beliefs about itself. In Chapter 4, the Course was referring to the inconsistency between the ego's view of the body as both weak and vulnerable, and as its safe home. In terms of the ego's self-inflation, I would say that in this paragraph the phrase "ego-alien beliefs" refers specifically to the ego's self-defeating tendency to attack itself. For instance, the ego believes in both littleness and grandiosity. A commitment to a belief in littleness is hardly conducive to a grandiose self-perception! So, to the ego, even some of its own ideas seem

to be threats to its existence! They are “beliefs of its own,” and yet they are “ego-alien,” contrary to its core beliefs.

The ego is so sensitive to imaginary attacks that it sees nearly everything as an attack, and can only think to attack in return, despite the fact that no attack exists to be returned (3:3). It is attacked by thoughts that originate in God and it is attacked by its own thoughts. It has one singular response to everything: counter-attack. The only question is, attack now, or attack later? (3:4).

It seems clear to me that the object of the ego's attack, whether now or later, is usually someone beside yourself. Anyone else will do. The choice of when to attack is not based on anything as reasonable as whether or not the other person deserves it, or whether or not the other person might be a dangerous enemy if attacked. The ego's decision is made solely on the basis of whether or not you decide that self-inflation at the expense of another is what you want (3:5–6). If you do not *choose* the attack, the ego cannot act out its aggression. The crucial role of our choice was also emphasized in 1:7.

Yet in some cases the attack may be made directly against our dawning realization of the truth about ourselves (see 4:4–6, where that is clearly the case). The internal attacks of the ego take the form of doubts cast on the truth.

The ego will *always* suggest some form of attack, whether it is responding to the dawn of the light in my mind or to its own confused insanity. It follows the reverse of the line that has appeared on T-shirts and coffee cups: “Love is the answer, whatever the question.” (This line is sometimes mistakenly attributed to the Course, but it actually comes from the book, *Love is the Answer*, by Gerald Jampolsky.) To the ego, the motto is: “Attack is the answer, whatever the question.” Until I have completely returned to the Mind of God, it is inevitable that attack thoughts will arise in my mind. Their presence there neither surprises me nor causes me guilt. The ego will always propose attack. The real issue is, *Will I listen to its proposal?* Will I accept attack as a way of assuaging my feelings of inadequacy? Or will I, instead, look *within* to the true grandeur of God?

Paragraph 4

4. ¹The ego is immobilized in the presence of God's grandeur, because **His** grandeur establishes **your** freedom. ²Even the faintest hint of your reality literally drives the ego from your mind, because you will give up all [because of the complete lack of] investment in it. ³Grandeur is totally **without** illusions, and because it is real it is compellingly convincing. ⁴Yet the conviction of reality will not **remain** with you **unless you do not allow the ego to attack it**. ⁵The ego will make every effort to recover and mobilize its energies **against** your release. ⁶It will tell you that you are insane, and argue that grandeur **cannot** be a real part of you because of the littleness in which **it** believes. ⁷Yet your grandeur is **not** delusional **because you did not make it**. ⁸**You** made grandiosity and are afraid of it because it is a form of **attack**, but your grandeur is of God, Who created it out of His Love.

• Study Question •

4. *Once we have truly seen our grandeur in God, what is necessary in order for us to keep our conviction of its reality from fading away?*

Unless I give ground to the ego in my mind, it has no power. Just as darkness cannot exist in the presence of light, the ego cannot exist in the presence of my Christ-nature (4:1). What possible reason would I have for holding on to the ego when I have grasped the lofty truth about myself? (4:2).

There is something about the truth that just seems somehow *right* (4:3). I think that every one of us knows the truth when we hear it. The Bible says, "...the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you" (I John 2:27, NIV). When you read the truth in the Course, for instance, something within you just resonates to it.

You may also have had experiences of God, or of a profound conviction of the truth of your own innocence and grandeur. In those instants the light dawned, the shadows fled away, and your heart sang with joy. Why is it that those experiences do not remain with you? Primarily because you allow the ego to persuade you that you were mistaken, or at least to cast doubt on your experiences (4:4–6). "Look at yourself! Can you honestly believe that *you* are whole and complete, the perfect Son of a perfect Father? Think what you said about so-and-so! Remember how you let people down all the time." This is how the ego attacks your intimations of eternity. Instead of allowing itself to be exposed as a delusion, it tries to convince you that your True Self is a delusion. Of course, God created you, so He created your grandeur; therefore, it must be real (4:7–8).

Paragraphs 5 & 6

5. ¹From your grandeur you can only bless, because your grandeur is your **abundance**. ²By blessing you hold it in your mind, protecting it from illusions and keeping yourself in the Mind of God. ³Remember always that you cannot be anywhere **except** in the Mind of God. ⁴When you **forget** this, you *will* despair and you *will* attack.

6. ¹The ego depends **solely** on your willingness to tolerate it. ²**[But]** If you are willing to look upon your grandeur you **cannot** despair, and therefore you **cannot** want the ego. ³Your grandeur is God's **answer** to the ego, because it is true. ⁴Littleness and grandeur cannot coexist, nor is it possible for them to alternate **[in your awareness]**. ⁵Littleness and grandiosity can and **must** alternate, since both are untrue and are therefore on the same level. ⁶Being the level of shift, it is experienced as shifting and extremes are its essential characteristic.

• Study Questions •

5. *Grandiosity always attacks; grandeur always blesses. In paragraph 5, how is this tied in to the running theme of the chapter: that we remember who we are by extending to others?*
6. *The ego exists only because we tolerate it (6:1, cf. T-9.VII.3:4). We tolerate the ego when we forget our grandeur and our place in God's Mind (5:4). If tolerating the ego means forgetting our grandeur, what, then, must be "God's answer to the ego"? (6:3).*

I love the notion that when we know the greatness of what we truly are, our natural function becomes one of extending from our bounty to everyone around us (5:1). If we fail to remember where we truly are, we see ourselves as alone, and as deprived and vulnerable. Therefore we despair and we attack (5:4). An awareness of our grandeur induces joyous extension. Truly spiritual people, in other words, cannot attack. They cannot be competitive. They cannot waste their time trying to cut anyone else down in order to make themselves look better. Their being is so full that it simply and quite naturally overflows, like a spring of water bubbling up. When we remember that the Mind of God is all that truly exists, so that we *must* dwell there (5:3), we recognize that being in God's Mind, we must share His grandeur and His abundance of spirit. Like God, we exist to bless. Like Him, it is our function to extend our wholeness. The Course sounds this theme repeatedly:

For it is the function of love to unite all things unto itself, and to hold all things together by extending its wholeness (T-12.VIII.7:11).

When a mind has only light, it knows only light. Its own radiance shines all around it, and extends out into the darkness of other minds, transforming them into majesty (T-7.XI.5:1-2).

Blessing others is also how we retain our grandeur in our minds, instead of allowing the ego to steal it from us again (5:2). Instead of accepting the ego's program of self-aggrandizement through attack, we implement the Holy Spirit's program of Self-recognition through extension.

Grandeur, then, both *produces* our extension and *is preserved by* our extension. We extend *because* we are in the Mind of God, and by extending we *keep* ourselves in the Mind of God (5:2).

The only way the ego can continue to exist is if we allow ourselves to forget who we really are (6:1). The ego will lose its attraction for us when our minds hold a clear understanding of our true Self (6:2). We won't be willing to settle any longer for the shoddy imitation; we will want the real thing. Therefore, if we want to transcend our ego, we need to cultivate an awareness of our grandeur (6:3). Though the Course earnestly encourages us to look without fear at our egos (so that we can let them go), it also, with equal vigor, advises us to look frequently and deeply at the beauty and greatness of our true Self, the Christ. The ego is darkness; the Christ within us is light. If we bring them together in our minds, the ego will disappear (6:4).

The greatness of God within us isn't subject to fluctuation the way the ego's grandiosity is. It is not affected by our illusions of littleness; it merely continues, awaiting

our recognition. The roller-coaster sort of experience many people endure takes place on the ego level, one moment feeling up, the next feeling down; one moment feeling small and weak, the next feeling great and powerful (6:6). Grandiosity and littleness alternate like that (6:5); God's glory within shines undimmed forever. As the next paragraph explains, littleness is not the *alternative* to grandeur; it is the *denial* of grandeur (7:1).

Paragraph 7

7. ¹[But] Truth and littleness are **denials** of each other because grandeur **is** truth. ²Truth does not vacillate; it is **always** true. ³When grandeur slips away from you, **you have replaced it with something you have made**. ⁴Perhaps it is the belief in littleness; perhaps it is the belief in grandiosity. ⁵Yet it **must** be insane because it is **not true**. ⁶Your grandeur will **never** deceive you, but your illusions **always** will. ⁷Illusions **are** deceptions. ⁸You **cannot** triumph, but you *are* exalted. ⁹And in your exalted state you seek others like you and rejoice with them.

• Study Question •

7. *Look at your recent experiences, and try to recall some time when your awareness of your grandeur was replaced with a belief in your littleness. Look again, and try to find an instance when grandeur was replaced, not with a belief in littleness, but with a belief in grandiosity.*

A recognition of our union with Christ results in a stable, serene experience. It is easy to see that a belief in littleness is a denial of our true grandeur (7:1). It is perhaps a bit more difficult to realize that grandiosity denies grandeur just as much as littleness does (7:4), because grandiosity *presumes* littleness and then tries to cover it up (2:3).

I am somewhat relieved to read that we can lose the awareness of our grandeur even after we've experienced it (7:3), because that has happened to me, as I'm sure it has for you as well. I feel relieved because losing track of our grandeur must be a common enough experience that Jesus writes about it as if it happens to almost everyone; he says "when" it happens, not "if." We are not somehow substandard if that happens to us. Notice, though, that we do not lose that awareness of grandeur for some external reason. It is because of something *we do*; we *replace* grandeur with a belief in either littleness or grandiosity (7:3–4). It doesn't just *happen* to us; *we do it*.

One question that often arises is, why? If the awareness of grandeur drives the ego right out of our minds, how does it ever get back in? For that matter, how did it ever get in in the first place? I don't really know the answer. I rather imagine that when I *do* know the answer, I won't need it any more because I won't let the ego in any more. True understanding will come, not through mental effort, but by experiencing the Holy Spirit at work in our minds (see T-17.II.5:2–3). The most rapid path to understanding consists, not in attempts to figure out where the ego came from, but in simple fidelity to the program of spiritual practice laid out in the Course.

Rather than distracting ourselves by worrying about *why* we let the ego in, let us just acknowledge that we *do* it. We *do* choose littleness or grandiosity instead of grandeur,

and when we catch ourselves doing it, we can correct the situation by making a different choice.

I discuss the final sentence, 7:9, in conjunction with paragraph 8.

Paragraph 8

8. ¹It is easy to distinguish grandeur from grandiosity, [simply] because love is returned and pride is not. ²Pride will not produce miracles, and will therefore deprive you of the true witnesses to your reality. ³Truth is not obscure nor hidden, but its obviousness to **you** lies in the joy you bring to its witnesses, **who show it to you**. ⁴They attest to your grandeur, but they cannot attest to pride because pride is not shared. ⁵God **wants** you to behold what He created because it is **His** joy.

• Study Question •

8. *Such strong appeals to grandeur may seem to be bordering on arrogance and pride. What crucial part do others play in helping us to avoid slipping into grandiosity?*

One thing that happens when my mind recognizes its true grandeur is that it automatically gravitates towards like-minded people—others who have begun to transcend their ego and to embrace the Christ within (7:9). What the Christian church calls *the communion of the saints*, or what Buddhism calls the *sangha*, is a natural outgrowth of Christ-realization. Why? Because the Christ is the Self we share (W-pII.6.1:1–2).

In my study of Buddhism, I have discovered that for a Buddhist a commitment to the sangha, to community, is as important as a commitment to the Buddha (to the enlightened self) and a commitment to the *dharma* (the teaching). I question the validity of a person's "spirituality" if it somehow removes him or her from the fellowship of others, rather than leading *into* deeper fellowship with others who are on a similar spiritual path. It is grandiosity, not grandeur, which seeks to exalt itself in separateness.

Grandeur exudes love, while grandiosity exudes pride. That fact makes it easy to tell them apart, even when their appearance is similar. "Love is returned and pride is not" (8:1). That is one of the great benefits of community! In isolation you can be caught up in grandiosity and be convinced you are simply experiencing your true grandeur. Put yourself into a community and you will very quickly detect whether or not you are radiating love or radiating pride. It will be reflected back to you right away! (8:3). When your greatness is a genuine connection with our shared Self, the Christ, people around you will react with joy. They will validate the reality of your experience or expose its pretense (8:4).

Grandeur in you produces joy in those around you. It produces miracles. Pride never does that (8:2). You know you are accepting your grandeur when those around you respond to you with joy. God wants us to see our God-given grandeur in ourselves (8:5), and to see that grandeur everywhere. When what *you* are enables people you encounter to connect with *their own* grandeur, you are in touch with true grandeur, which is always shared. When your words and actions encourage the people around you to feel little,

small, and in awe of you or dependent on you, you are listening to the self-inflating notions of the ego. As always in the Course, the world is your mirror. If the “greatness” you are feeling is obtained at someone else’s expense, if it is at the cost of someone else’s littleness, it is not the grandeur of God.

Paragraph 9

9. ¹Can your grandeur be arrogant when God **Himself** witnesses to it? ²And what can be real that has **no** witnesses? ³What good can come of it? ⁴And if no good can come of it the Holy Spirit cannot use it. ⁵What He cannot **transform** to the Will of God does not exist at all. ⁶Grandiosity is delusional, because it is used to **replace** your grandeur. ⁷Yet what God has created cannot **be** replaced. ⁸God is incomplete without you because His grandeur is total, and you cannot **be** missing from it.

You may have noticed that this section, like the preceding one, is discussing the two evaluations of our nature, that of the ego and that of the Holy Spirit. The ego’s evaluation is split between littleness and grandiosity; the Holy Spirit consistently sees our grandeur.

The Course returns to the notion that a belief in our grandeur is not arrogant, as (no doubt) our ego will try to tell us. It cannot be arrogant because it is the truth. It is real because “God Himself witnesses to it” (9:1). On the other hand, *nobody* witnesses to grandiosity. Something only we can see is, by definition, a delusion (9:2, 6). A thing that does not exist cannot possibly do any good; therefore, the Holy Spirit cannot use grandiosity (9:3–4). The only things He finds useful are things He can redefine and use to accomplish God’s Will. Grandiosity has no part in that plan.

In other words, the ego’s evaluation is a complete fabrication, while the Holy Spirit’s evaluation reflects reality as God created it. How can it be arrogant to recognize simply what is so?

Grandiosity, by contrast, *cannot* be real. Because God created it, our grandeur is eternal and immutable (9:7). Grandiosity attempts to replace that grandeur. Any attempt to replace something that is eternal and immutable has to be a delusional attempt, because it is attempting the impossible (9:6).

You cannot be anywhere God did not put you, and God created you as part of Him. That is both where you are and what you are. It is completely unalterable. It is total inclusion. You cannot change it now or ever. It is forever true (T-6.II.6:2-7).

When the Course says that God is incomplete without us I believe it really means that it isn’t possible to remove us from God’s Mind without making God incomplete (9:8). Since an incomplete God is simply inconceivable, removing us from God’s Mind is equally inconceivable. We “cannot be missing” from God’s totality (9:8).

Paragraph 10

10. ¹You are altogether irreplaceable in the Mind of God. ²No one else can fill your part in it, and while you leave your part of it empty your eternal place merely waits for your return. ³God, through His Voice, reminds you of it,

and God Himself keeps your extensions safe within it. ⁴Yet **you** do not know them until you return **to** them. ⁵You **cannot** replace the Kingdom, and you cannot replace yourself. ⁶God, Who **knows** your value, would not have it so, and so it is **not** so. ⁷Your value is in **God's** Mind, and therefore **not** in yours alone. ⁸To accept yourself as God created you **cannot** be arrogance, because it is the **denial** of arrogance. ⁹To accept your littleness *is* arrogant, because it means that you believe **your** evaluation of yourself is **truer than God's**.

• **Study Question** •

9. *What would it mean to you if you realized, with a deep conviction, the truth that is stated in 10:1?*

10. *Why is belief in littleness arrogant and belief in grandeur not arrogant?*

Continuing the thought from the last paragraph, the Course says that your place in God's Mind belongs to you alone (10:1–2). God has given us all a highly exalted function. I think this is the truth the Apostle Paul was reaching for when he wrote, "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6, NIV). We needn't worry that, while we are off wandering around in a dream, someone or something else is going to come to take our place. *Won't happen!* Our place remains forever in God's Mind, awaiting our remembrance (10:2).

Several times now we've come across mentions of our function in extending God, and our extensions or creations that we have produced. The Course's teaching about our creations, including that in this paragraph, makes it clear that although we may have no conscious awareness of our function or of our creations, those creations *do exist*. Until we once again accept our grandeur, our function, and our place in the Mind of God, we will not know our extensions (10:4). Here, again, like the question of why we keep choosing the ego, I think it is a waste of time to try to figure out exactly what our extensions are. Surely, it is one of the most effective ways the ego can use to distract us from our real goal of remembering who we are. If we reach that goal, the question of our extensions or creations will be settled. Until we reach that goal, answering the question is impossible. Why waste time trying?

If we compare 10:5 with 7:3 and 9:7, we realize that we cannot really bring off the swap that the ego is trying to perform, trying to replace our grandeur with its grandiosity. The reason we cannot do so is that God doesn't want us to (10:6); that is another sense in which we are irreplaceable in God's mind (10:1). Not only are we uniquely qualified to play our role, but also we literally *cannot* be replaced. Even if there were someone or something perfectly capable of carrying out our part of the job, still nothing could replace us. We are an integral part of God. God's Will is *immutable*, which means that it cannot be changed. If He has willed us into existence as a part of Himself, nothing can replace us, even if we wanted to be replaced (10:5). Thus, we cannot substitute grandiosity or littleness for grandeur. We cannot replace our holy Self with a corrupt, sinful self. We just can't do it.

We hold our own value in our mind, that's true. But it is also in God's, which is why it is safe from our tinkering (10:7). This also provides another reason why accepting our grandeur isn't arrogant (10:8); all we are doing is accepting God's evaluation of us,

instead of attempting to replace it with our own evaluation. The latter is arrogance; the former is humility (10:9).

Paragraph 11

11. ¹Yet if truth is indivisible, **your** evaluation of yourself **must be God's**. ²You did not **establish** your value and it needs no defense. ³**Nothing** can attack it nor prevail over it. ⁴It does not vary. ⁵It merely *is*. ⁶Ask the Holy Spirit **what** it is and He will tell you, but do not be afraid of His answer, because it comes from God. ⁷It **is** an exalted answer because of its Source, but the Source is true and so is Its answer. ⁸Listen and do not question what you hear, for God does not deceive. ⁹He would have you replace the ego's belief in littleness with His Own exalted Answer to what you are [to the question of your being], so that you can cease to question it and **know** it for what it **is**.

• Study Question •

11. What does this paragraph tell us to do in order to cease questioning our greatness and instead know our true value in God?



Truth is just the truth; there are not *two* truths. Therefore, if God has the true evaluation of me, I do not really have any choice about how I evaluate myself (11:1). I am what God declares me to be. Any attempt at an alternative evaluation is a denial of the true one.

God, not me, has established what I am. That cannot be changed; it is invulnerable to attack of any kind. My worth “merely *is*” (11:2–5).

How can we get in touch with that worth, that value? Not simply by reading about it or reasoning about it. It takes personal spiritual interaction with the Holy Spirit to learn your true value. “Ask...and He will tell you” (11:6). This involves an inner knowing, not simply an understanding of the concepts; it involves a conviction, a direct experience of your true Self. Nothing but that kind of direct experience offers the solid, certain, unshakeable *knowing*, a knowing that has ceased to question (11:9), that Jesus is talking about.

The answer we “hear” can be, in some regards, frightening. Imagine opening a scroll from God that declares you to be, for instance, the next President of the United States, or even King of the universe! It would be a bit frightening, wouldn't it? The responsibilities you would be taking on would seem daunting.

What God is calling us to *is* frightening! He is calling all of us to be His ambassadors in this world, to be the manifestation of the Holy Spirit to the people around us. It is a high calling. Jesus is encouraging us not to shy away from it, not to shrink back in false humility, which is really ego arrogance in disguise (11:6–8). He tells us that God wants us to listen to His Voice, to stop listening to the ego when it tells us that we are helpless and unworthy, and to come into an unwavering acceptance and experience of our own exalted reality (11:8–9).

Answer Key

1. The ego offers us self-inflation or grandiosity in place of true grandeur.
2. Grandiosity is characterized by trying to outdo others and by competitiveness, which is a form of attack (2:5–10).
3. The ego's only response to both miracle impulses and apparent attack is to counter-attack, since it sees both things as threats. Attack is a given; the only question is when, which is based on whether or not you accept its guidance.
4. We must not listen when the ego tries to deny our grandeur. We must disregard its accusations of insanity.
5. To hold on to grandeur we must exercise it, we must extend ourselves in blessing to others. This is the same message we have seen throughout this chapter, that the way we recognize what we have is by giving it away.
6. Grandeur, and remembering it.
7. No written answer is expected.
8. Others can act as our mirrors to report on our true state. Their joy in response to us mirrors our grandeur to us.
9. To me, it would mean the end of all fear. It would erase any need to compete or attack others. It would make me feel so-o-o safe.
10. It is arrogant to believe my evaluation of myself is superior to God's evaluation. When I believe in grandeur I am doing the very opposite: I put God's evaluation above my own, I deny my littleness, and I accept the truth as God has established it. That is not arrogant. That is true humility.
11. It tells us to "ask," to "listen," and not to question what we hear (11:6, 8). In practice, I believe this means to spend time in quiet meditation on the truth as God has given it to us (for example, in the Course), listening to the inner Voice for God that speaks to us of our grandeur, seeking that internal "click" when we no longer simply know what we are: we *know that we know*.