

# Study Guide and Commentary ACIM<sup>®</sup> Text, Chapter 10

## The Idols of Sickness

### Introduction & Section I, At Home in 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
- ~~striketrough blue text~~ = Not in Urtext, in FIP edition

There is a series of thoughts that gets repeated many times in Chapter 10, particularly in the final two sections. We've seen a similar sequence of thoughts presented in Section I of Chapter 2. It runs like this:

1. God created only perfection.
2. Perfection cannot change nor become imperfect.
3. We, however, can believe we have changed it.
4. We do believe we have changed it.
5. We have made false gods (powers beyond God) to explain the changes that we believe in.

*Salvation undoes these steps, in reverse order:*

5. We acknowledge our denial and recognize that our idols have no power (we are doing this to ourselves).
4. We realize that we have not changed ourselves.
3. We realize that we *cannot* change ourselves.
2. We see that nothing can change or mar any of God's creation.
1. We acknowledge God's Fatherhood and thus acknowledge that our Self remains as God created It.

A number of passages from this chapter manifest this theme. I quote the references in an Appendix, and I suggest you read them before proceeding. Key references are indicated with **boldface**. All references are from Chapter 10.

To many Course students, probably the most familiar line in this group is from Section I: "You are at home in God, dreaming of exile but perfectly capable of awakening to reality" (T-10.I.2:1). This single sentence is a good summary of the message of this section.

This is a tough chapter because it asks us to take responsibility for our sickness. It says that we have denied God and made up a false god in His place, a god of sickness and depression. We have projected responsibility for our sickness and depression onto things outside of ourselves, particularly onto our brothers and onto God Himself.

The chapter focuses on sickness as a specific example of a key general principle of the Course, which is stated succinctly near the end of the chapter: “If you accept denial, you can accept its undoing” (T-10.V.6:6). In other words, if we will recognize our denial and projection, we will realize that because *we* have made it, *we* have the power to undo it, with the help of the Holy Spirit. Applied to sickness, this means that when we are willing to recognize that our own choice to deny God is the hidden cause of illness, we will discover within ourselves the power to heal that illness.

We have to be willing to look at the unreality of what we have made, and to judge it as unreal (T-10.IV.2:3,5). We have to recognize the illusions our mind has made and to let them go in order for the truth to dawn upon us. If we are willing to see our illusions, which include our own denial of God and of joy and the way we project blame for the loss of what we have denied onto everything but ourselves, *we will see nothing* (see T-10.IV.5:7–10). In other words, we’ll see that we made it all up. As the illusions dissipate, the reality they were hiding will appear to us without any additional effort on our part (T-10.IV.5:9).

Once again the Course is making it startlingly clear that all we need to do is look upon our illusions as they are, recognize what we have been doing to ourselves, and choose the truth instead.

## Introduction

### Paragraph 1

1. <sup>1</sup>Nothing beyond yourself can make you fearful or loving, because nothing *is* beyond you. <sup>2</sup>Time and eternity are both in your mind, and **will** conflict until you perceive time **solely** as a means to **regain** eternity. <sup>3</sup>You cannot do this as long as you believe that **anything** happening [Ur: *anything that happens*] to you is caused by factors **outside** yourself. <sup>4</sup>You must learn that time is solely at **your** disposal, and that nothing in the world can take this responsibility **from** you. <sup>5</sup>You can **violate** God’s laws in your imagination, but you cannot escape from them. <sup>6</sup>They were established for your protection and are as inviolate as your safety.

#### • Study Question •

1. *What belief is said to prevent us from perceiving time correctly, that is, as a way to escape time’s illusion?*
2. *Make a list of ways in which you still believe that something other than yourself is causing something that happens to you.*

#### Notes:

- You may want to compare this paragraph with W-pI.190.5, which makes many of the same points:

It is your thoughts alone that cause you pain. Nothing external to your mind can hurt or injure you in any way. There is no cause beyond yourself that can reach down and bring oppression. No one but yourself affects you. There is nothing in the world that has the power to make you ill or sad, or weak or frail. But it is you who have the power to dominate all things you see by merely recognizing what you are. As you perceive the harmlessness in them, they will accept your holy will as theirs. And what was seen as fearful now becomes a source of innocence and holiness.

- Let me again remind you that there were no breaks between chapters and sections in the original dictation. This chapter was run together with the preceding one, and many of the ideas from the preceding section carry over and are referred to and expanded on in this chapter.

The chapter gets off to a roaring start with its first sentence. We ourselves determine whether we experience fear or love. We are not “made” to experience anything by any outside factors; we choose our experience. The reason this is so is that “nothing is beyond you” (1:1). We include everything—everything in time and in eternity (1:2). It may seem to us that things outside of us cause us to have certain experiences. We may believe we get sick because we eat poorly, or because we get cold and wet in the rain. We may believe other members of our family can make us unhappy. In the Course’s view, these things are not external to us; they are part of what we are. There *is* nothing that is outside of our mind (T-18.VI.8:8).

When we first hear the idea that things outside of us do not cause things to happen to us, we are likely to think that the Course teaches that we somehow control these outside factors. In this view, instead of something making us sick, we *attract* sickness. Instead of a co-worker stabbing us in the back for a promotion, somehow we *made* the co-worker do that. This is the view that, “We create our own experience.” We shift from individual-as-victim to individual-as-god.

There is a basic flaw in that way of looking at things. The central idea presented by the Course is that nothing outside of me affects me; it all originates in my mind. But what is true of me must be true also of my co-worker. So, if nothing outside of *him* affects him, and I am outside of him, how could I possibly compel him to stab me in the back? I cannot cause his actions, nor can he cause mine. The “normal” way of looking at things—individual-as-victim—is that I am an isolated speck in the universe, driven by factors outside of me and beyond my control. The seemingly opposite way—individual-as-god—perceives me as an all-powerful speck that somehow manipulates the separate universe like a puppeteer operating his marionettes.

The fundamental flaw lies, not just in incorrectly assigning the responsibility for what happens to separate beings, but in the very idea that separate beings exist at all. Yes, your brothers have an effect on you—but your brothers are not outside of your mind! You and they are all part of a larger whole. It is not you *as an individual* who causes all things, it is *you as universal mind*.

The options about who is causing things are not limited to you individually or to all that is not you. The cause of things is neither one nor the other; it is a single cause, one mind, of which we each are a part. This mind is expansive enough to include all of time and eternity (1:2). Just a few pages ago (T-9.VII), Jesus was talking about our mind’s two evaluations of what we are. Here he speaks of two more things that are both in our mind: time and eternity (1:2). These two things are parallel to the two evaluations: The ego’s

view of us is in time, while the Holy Spirit's view reflects eternity. In that sense, this discussion can be seen as a continuation of the earlier section.

The goal seems to be to unify our mind's perception of time and eternity so that they complement each other instead of conflicting with each other. Our purposes within time often seem to be in conflict with our "higher goals." This conflict will continue until we see time only "as a means to regain eternity" (1:2). The only way we can see time with such a unified purpose, however, is to realize that *we* give time its purpose (1:4); *we* cause everything that happens in time (1:3).

I admit to having a very hard time learning this lesson. One of my most persistent perceptions in life is that I am not in complete control of my time. I jokingly refer to myself as "time-challenged," because I have a lot of trouble with scheduling my time, remembering appointments, meeting deadlines, being on time for things, and so on. I often find myself feeling pressured by circumstances seemingly beyond my control. Even in writing these commentaries I often find myself "behind schedule" and being "forced" into working evenings or weekends to catch up. I fight a battle with feelings of anger directed at I-don't-know-whom for giving me unfair obstacles or tasks that cannot possibly be completed in the time allotted to them. When I am writing and my computer crashes or I can't find a needed reference book, I want to blame something, anything, outside of myself. The Course says that I cannot escape responsibility for being the cause of my experience in time. I'm still chafing at that and dragging my feet about accepting it. I just do not want to admit the Course is right when it says, "you are doing this unto yourself" (T-27.VIII.10:1).

Everything arises from thought. That is God's law. That is how things work. We cannot escape these laws, although we can imagine that we have done so (1:5). When we think that some objective thing—whether some other person living in a body or some non-personal force or substance—causes our experience, all we are doing is imagining a violation of God's law. The law is a *law*; it cannot be violated. The cause is always thought, always the mind. God made this a law, not to restrict us, but to protect us (1:6). Our mind is invulnerable for the very reason that it cannot be affected by anything outside itself. It has total control of its destiny. As this paragraph intimates, until we accept this fact we will remain locked within time, unable to escape and experience eternity.

## Paragraph 2

2. <sup>1</sup>God created nothing beside you and nothing beside you exists, for you are part of Him. <sup>2</sup>What except Him **can** exist? <sup>3</sup>Nothing **beyond** Him can happen, because nothing **except** Him is real. <sup>4</sup>**Your** creations add to Him as **you** do, but nothing is added that is different because everything has always **been**. <sup>5</sup>What can upset you except the ephemeral, and how can the ephemeral be real if you are God's **only** creation and He created you eternal? <sup>6</sup>Your holy mind [**will**] establishes **everything** that happens to you. <sup>7</sup>Every response you make to everything you perceive is up to you, because your mind [**will**] **determines** your perception of it.

### • Study Question •

3. *Think of several situations in your life, and, holding each one in mind, say to yourself, “My mind determines how I see this situation, and how I respond to it is entirely up to me.”*

The ideas already introduced are expanded on here.

We are created by God and as part of Him (2:1). Nothing exists outside of Him (2:2); nothing beside *us* exists (2:1). Nothing except God is real (2:3). All that is real is eternal. Only “ephemeral” (transient, impermanent, evanescent, temporary) things can upset us, and since all that is real is eternal, there *is* nothing ephemeral. What is ephemeral is not real; it is illusory. Therefore, there is nothing that can truly upset us (2:5).

The logic of all this is this:

- God alone exists; His creation is part of Him.
- God is eternal.
- Only non-eternal things can upset us.
- There are no real, non-eternal things.
- Therefore, nothing can upset us.

How is it, then, we can become upset? It *must* be coming from our own mind; there is no other possible source (2:6). The way we perceive everything is determined by our mind, and our response to it, whether it be upset or love, is the result of our perception (2:7).

If we look honestly at the way we normally think, it becomes evident that these premises seem far-fetched to most of us, or to all of us most of the time. Our thoughts may run like this: “God is all there is? Really? It sure *seems* as if there are a lot of things that are not God, things that are even contrary to God.” And because we cannot accept the premise, we cannot accept the conclusion, either: that nothing exists that can upset us, or that everything that *appears* to upset us does not really exist.

In my opinion it is rewarding to spend some time thinking about this logically. Examine your premises and consider the resulting consequences. If things exist that are not part of God, where do they come from? There must be some power that is independent of God and capable of creating things contrary to His Will. If that is true, then God is not really God! (That was always a problem in my mind with the existence of the devil.) If, however, God does exist, then He *must* include all that is; nothing opposed to Him can be real. Unless God created evil as His own opposite, which makes no sense at all, because if God created evil, then God *is* evil and not good!

There is a remark in here about our creations that seems deliberately paradoxical. Our creations add to God, and yet “everything has always been” (2:4). The concept of a thing that has always existed seems incompatible with a created thing that adds to God. If it adds something, it must be new, and yet if it has always been, it cannot be new. From our limited perspective, a thing cannot be both an addition and eternal. Somehow, in eternity, the two things do not contradict. When we create, it adds to God, and yet whatever we create has always existed. The best I can do in trying to understand this is to compare creation to a plant’s growth. When a plant grows a new branch, the branch adds to the plant, and yet it is nothing new; it is “more of the same.” It is the same plant, just expanded. I’m sure that the heavenly explanation is much more profound than that, but the plant analogy helps me.

## Paragraph 3

3. <sup>1</sup>God does not change His Mind about **you**, for He is not uncertain of **Himself**. <sup>2</sup>And what He knows **can** be known [by you], because He does not know it only for Himself. <sup>3</sup>He **created** you for Himself, but He gave you the power to create for **yourself** so you would be **like** Him. <sup>4</sup>That is why your mind [will] is holy. <sup>5</sup>Can anything **exceed** the Love of God? <sup>6</sup>Can anything, then, exceed **your** will? <sup>7</sup>Nothing can reach you from **beyond** it because, being in God, **you** encompass everything. <sup>8</sup>Believe this, and you will realize how much **is** up to you. <sup>9</sup>When **anything** threatens your peace of mind, ask yourself, “Has God changed His Mind about me?” <sup>10</sup>Then **accept** His decision, for it is indeed changeless, and refuse to change your mind about **yourself**. <sup>11</sup>God will never decide **against** you, or He would be deciding against Himself.

### • Study Question •

4. *One aspect of our grandeur is that our own mind and will determine our experience. How much is up to you, if you believe that this is true?*

You must be responsible for everything that happens to you because God chose to make your creative power like His own, and He has not changed His Mind about you (3:1,3). He intends for you to use that power; He wants you to be like Him (3:3). He created your mind to have sole dominion over your experience. *So it does*. There is no power opposed to God or apart from God to contradict His Will (3:5). Since God’s Will, which cannot be contravened, is that *your* will be sovereign within your experience, and since nothing but God and you exists (3:7, 2:5), your will *is* sovereign. Nothing can oppose it (3:6–7). Whatever happens to you happens by your choice; there is no other power that could be responsible. Nothing happens to you against your will because there is nothing apart from you that could be against your will.

It may not seem like it at first, but this is actually very good news! Jesus points this out quite clearly in the first section of this chapter:

*Who could have done this but you? Recognize this gladly, for in this recognition lies the realization that your banishment is not of God, and therefore does not exist (T-10.I.1:6-7).*

It’s all up to you. You are responsible for the *appearance* of separation *for the very reason that you are not separate from God*: that is, your union with God is what gives you the power to fabricate such realistic illusions. But since your power depends on that union, the very thing that makes you responsible for the apparent separation proves that you are not truly separated, and that the ego never happened. Thus, to truly accept *responsibility* for the ego is identical to being *free from* the ego! To understand your own responsibility for separation is to realize that separation never happened.

On that basis, the Course offers some very practical advice. It suggests that when upset, we ask ourselves: “Has God changed His Mind about me?” (3.9). You lose your peace because, in some way, you begin to believe in separation; you begin to believe that there is something outside of God and outside of yourself that can harm you. Reminding yourself that God *has not* changed His Mind causes you to realize that you are not separate from Him, that nothing separate from God even exists, and, therefore, your loss of peace has no grounds. Your lack of love or your brother’s lack of love has had no effect on your reality. Things that have no effect do not exist; they are only illusions. You

realize, therefore, that all that has happened has been an illusion. There is nothing to be angry about, nor anything to be guilty about. It never happened.

You must refuse to accept the ego's accusations and attempts to make you feel guilty or to see guilt in someone else (3:10). Remember that you are God's eternal creation. Nothing outside you can affect you; therefore, you are invulnerable. Lesson 338 in the Workbook is a good one to read in this connection. It points out that only our thoughts affect us. True, thoughts can cause us distress, but because they are our own thoughts, we can change them.

## Section I

# At Home in God

The overall idea in this short section is that the entire world that seems to upset us is really no more than a dream within our holy mind. We are the holy Son of God who has fallen asleep. In our shared, vast mind, a tiny part of us is dreaming the dream of this world. We dream that we are an ego, a frail, sinful human being living in a body in the world of space and time. Our experience of being a body in the world, which seems so very real to us, is nothing more than a bad dream.

### Paragraph 1

1. <sup>1</sup>[The reason] You do not know **your** creations [is] simply because you would decide against them as long as your mind is split, and to attack what you have created is impossible. <sup>2</sup>But remember that *it is as impossible for God*. <sup>3</sup>The law of creation is that you love your creations as yourself [a take-off on the biblical "love your neighbor as yourself"], **because they are part of you**. <sup>4</sup>Everything that was created is therefore **perfectly** safe, because the laws of God protect it by His Love. <sup>5</sup>Any part of your mind that does not know this has banished itself from knowledge, because it has **not met its conditions**. <sup>6</sup>Who could have done this but you? <sup>7</sup>Recognize this gladly, for in this recognition lies the realization that your banishment is not of God, and therefore does not exist.

#### • Study Question •

5. *Why should you be glad to realize that you, and not God, have banished yourself from knowledge?*

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The section opens by citing our deep-seated fear and anxiety as evidence that, in what amounts to a self-imposed exile, we have deliberately cut ourselves off from the knowledge of God. The argument here is that we do not know what our creations are because the laws of God are set up to prohibit us from attacking our own creations (1:1, 3–4). Let me suggest a parallel. In certain diseases known as autoimmune diseases, the body attacks its own healthy cells, mistaking them for foreign invaders. We suffer from a *spiritual* autoimmune disease. Because our minds are so confused, if we were able to connect with our creations we would turn on them, failing to recognize them as a part of ourselves. The instant we *do* recognize them as part of us, we will also recognize them as our creations. But because our creations are hidden from us we cannot attack them. All of

creation “is therefore perfectly safe” (1:4). That includes all of us, because we are God’s creations, and the same law of preservation applies to all creations, both ours and God’s.

In our usual thinking, however, we don’t know this. That’s evident, because if we did know the perfect safety of creation, we would never experience any fear or anxiety. A part of our mind—the only part we are usually aware of—“has banished itself from knowledge” (1:5). We may resist the idea that we have banished ourselves, preferring to think that God has banished us, just as He banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden after their “sin.” Of course, according to Jesus in the Text, that isn’t how it happened. God did not cast us out:

God does not believe in retribution. His Mind does not create that way. He does not hold your "evil" deeds against you... This kind of error is responsible for a host of related errors, including the belief that God rejected Adam and forced him out of the Garden of Eden (T-3.I.3:4-6, 9).

But if God did not reject us, who else could be responsible? (1:6). God certainly would not reject us because He loves us as His Son. And beside God and the Sonship, nothing else exists. So we ourselves *must* have forged the gap between our mind and knowledge. *We* must be responsible for the existence of the ego.

The Course keeps assuring us that this understanding is a reason for rejoicing, not for gloom or guilt. It points out that, since we banished ourselves, our exile is only imaginary. If God did not create it, it does not exist (1:7). As I said earlier, to truly accept *responsibility* for the ego is identical to being *free from* the ego.

## Paragraph 2

2. <sup>1</sup>You are at home in God, dreaming of exile but perfectly capable of awakening to reality [Reality]. <sup>2</sup>Is it your decision [will] to do so? <sup>3</sup>You recognize [know] from your own experience that what you see in dreams you think is real while [as long as] you are asleep. <sup>4</sup>Yet the instant you waken you realize [know] that everything that seemed to happen ~~in the dream~~ **did not happen at all**. <sup>5</sup>You do not think this strange [mysterious], even though **all** the laws of what you awaken to **were** violated while you slept. <sup>6</sup>Is it not possible that you merely shifted from one dream to another, without really waking?

### • Study Question •

6. *The first phrase of sentence 1 obviously does not mean that God is the physical building that you live in. What does it mean, as you understand it?*

As I indicated at the beginning of this commentary, I believe that the first sentence of this paragraph summarizes the whole section. In my mind, it is one of the most profound sentences in the Course. It contains absolute reality (“at home in God”), the illusion (“dreaming of exile”), and the transition between the two (“perfectly capable of awakening to Reality”).

In reality we have never left the mind of God. We are thoughts in God’s Mind, and “ideas leave not their source” (T-26.VII.13:2, and five other places in the Course). The pristine purity of God’s creation has never been tainted or altered in any way. As His Son, we have never left our heavenly home. That is the ultimate Reality.

It seems, however, that we are in exile. Our exile is not real; we are dreaming. A part of our mind is asleep and experiences itself as separate from God, although no such separation exists. We dream of a journey away from God, but we have never embarked on such a journey: "You travel but in dreams, while safe at home" (T-13.VII.17:7).

But it is possible to leave the dream and return to Reality. Although part of our mind is asleep, we can still wake up. We can recognize that the separation is only a dream, and return to a full and continuous experience of Reality.

The question about waking up, however, is: *Do we want to?* (2:2). Is that our *will*? I smile as I write that because I can recall times in my life when, teetering on the brink between sleeping and waking, I was aware of wanting my dream to continue. (I'll keep the content of those dreams private, thank you.) We do very much the same thing in the process of spiritual awakening. We choose to continue dreaming. Within this process, however, our mind functions much more forcefully. Sometimes when waking from nighttime sleep, even if I want to continue dreaming, I don't or can't; something wakes me. When we choose to remain asleep spiritually, though, the power of our mind is absolute. We remain asleep. Our decision alone determines whether or not we awake.

The parallel between spiritual sleep and physical sleep is quite detailed. In physical sleep, when we dream we do not question the contents of our dreams. The people, places, and events of our dreams seem real to us. The detail is utterly convincing (2:3). Everyone has experienced such dreams. Sometimes, dreams are so utterly realistic that even after we wake up we are not entirely sure that it was just a dream. We may find ourselves asking a friend or spouse to confirm the unreality of what we dreamed, usually some disaster, major or minor: "Say, Joe! When we were at that party the other night, I didn't break a lamp, did I?"

Normally, however, you know right away that your dream was not real (2:4). Sometimes the persons in the dream are not even anyone you know. Sometimes, dreams are chronologically inconsistent; you may dream you are a child in current-day setting, or you may juxtapose people in the dream who never met in real life. Sometimes, dreams are truly fantastic—you were flying, or talking with animals, or visiting a city on Mars (2:5). The odd thing is, while you are dreaming, it all seems reasonable even though when you wake it is clearly impossible (2:4).

The Course then raises a disturbing possibility: Perhaps, when you wake from a nighttime dream, you are merely shifting from one dream to another without really waking up (2:6)! Isn't it possible that this experience right now, which we refer to as "real life," is just as much a dream as those nighttime dreams? If your mind can produce such a powerful semblance of reality out of things that bear no resemblance at all to waking life, isn't it possible that your mind could be manufacturing what you think is waking life? Isn't it at least possible that this is just a dream?

In nighttime dreams, the world you experience seems to exist outside of your mind. It is filled with people and things that are not part of you, and that cause you to feel things. Yet all the parts of that world, including all the things and people in it, exist only as thoughts within your mind. Your mind is making them up, and any feelings you have—seemingly *in response to these dream people and things*—originate in your mind and nowhere else. There *is* no external cause for them. The Course is telling us that our so-called waking experience is really just one vast dream. All of it exists nowhere but within the mind of the sleeping Son of God.

## Paragraph 3

3. <sup>1</sup>Would you bother to reconcile what happened in conflicting **dreams**, or would you dismiss **both together** if you discovered that **reality** is in accord with neither? <sup>2</sup>You do not remember being awake. <sup>3</sup>When you hear the Holy Spirit you may [**you merely**] feel **better** because loving then seems **possible** to you, but you do **not** remember yet that it once was so. <sup>4</sup>And it is in this remembering that you will know it can be so again. <sup>5</sup>What is possible has not yet been accomplished. <sup>6</sup>Yet what has once been is so now, if it is eternal. <sup>7</sup>When you remember, you will know that what you remember **is** eternal, and therefore is **now**.

### • Study Question •

7. *State whether or not you agree with this statement: "It is important to see love as more than merely possible." Give reasons for your answer.*

Suppose you dream two dreams that contain conflicting pictures of reality. For instance, in one you live in Seattle, Washington, while in the second you live in Paris, France; but in fact, you live, let's say, in New York. You would probably make no effort at all to make sense out of those dreams, or to reconcile them by asking, "How could I be in both Seattle and Paris?" You would just ignore them (3:1). I think the Course is suggesting here that we would be wise to treat our perceptions of this dream world in much the same way.

"But," you may say, "if this world is a dream, I don't remember ever being awake!" Compare that to the dreams you have at night, however: *In your dreams*, do you remember being awake? Usually you do not. That occurs only in what is called *lucid dreaming*. In most dreams, you do not realize that you are dreaming. You only become aware that you were dreaming after you wake up. So, it isn't surprising that within the dream, all you remember is the dream.

Incidentally, the Course is calling us to something very much like lucid dreaming in this world, something it calls "awareness of dreaming" (M-12.6:6). Lucid dreaming is a dream state in which you are fully aware that you are dreaming. Often, in such a state, you are able to control the direction of your dream. The Course's term is a virtual synonym. To say that someone is aware of dreaming is to say that they have become totally responsible for their experience. They still see the persons and things in the dream, but they now understand that they are not real. The Manual for Teachers states this clearly:

God's teachers choose to look on dreams a while. It is a conscious choice. For they have learned that all choices are made consciously, with full awareness of their consequences. The dream says otherwise, but who would put his faith in dreams once they are recognized for what they are? Awareness of dreaming is the real function of God's teachers. They watch the dream figures come and go, shift and change, suffer and die. Yet they are not deceived by what they see. They recognize that to behold a dream figure as sick and separate is no more real than to regard it as healthy and beautiful. 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-12.6:2-11).

That is our goal: to get to the place where we *know* what is a dream and what is real, and the seeming evidence of the dream does not deceive us any longer. The goal is to begin to become aware that we are dreaming, that it is our own mind producing the dream, and to begin to remember what being awake really is.

We are not there yet. Right now, we have only brief glimpses of reality. Even though we read about being awakened or enlightened and perhaps have reassuring flashes of insight into what that means—“intimations of immortality,” as Wordsworth called such foretastes—enlightenment remains a longed-for future state, rather than an eternal reality (3:2–3). While having hope is good, it isn’t a very advanced state! Love is more than merely possible; love is real now, has always been, and will always be. We are not yet awake nor do we remember being awake (3:2). In reality, we are wholly lovable and wholly loving right now (T-1.III.2:3), and nothing else is real. Eventually, we will remember what has always been so.

This is the experience that mystics describe, or try to describe. When the awareness of Oneness dawns it is not recognized as a new experience; rather, it is recognized as having *always been so*. It is so *now*, even when unrecognized. It alone is the Reality, and all else is the dream.

## Paragraph 4

4. <sup>1</sup>You will remember everything the instant you **desire it wholly**, for if to desire wholly is to create, you will have willed away the separation, returning your mind simultaneously to your Creator and your creations. <sup>2</sup>Knowing them you will have no wish to sleep, but only the desire [**will**] to waken and be glad. <sup>3</sup>Dreams will be impossible because you will **want** only truth, and being at last your will, it will be yours.

### • Study Question •

8. *If remembering is so important, how can we remember?*

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Learning to become aware of the dream and to remember, or to accept, reality, is the process we are in. When our minds have been transformed—within the dream—to the point of totally owning our responsibility for the dream and desiring only reality, we will awaken gladly and with joy. We will want only to awaken, and when we desire anything wholly, it becomes ours (4:1, 3).

The only reason we are not awake now is that, in part of our minds, we don’t want to awake. We are holding on to the dream and hoping it will get better. We are not willing to admit it isn’t real and that we are its cause. Helping us to look at our unwillingness and to own up to it is a major goal of the Course.

The next section goes on to discuss “The Decision to Forget,” and points out that the very fact that we don’t remember being awake is the result of a choice we are making, a deliberate decision to put certain knowledge out of our minds.

## Answer Key

1. The belief that what happens to us has outside causes, the belief that there is something “beyond” us that can affect us, and the refusal to take responsibility for all that happens in time—all prevent us from seeing time correctly.
2. No written answer is expected. Some fruitful areas for consideration include childhood experiences, family members or co-workers who seem to affect you, the environment, germs and viruses, or the government.
3. No written answer is expected.
4. If this is true, everything is up to us.
5. Because if God didn't do it, it is not real. Further, if you did it, you can change it.
6. You are in Heaven, within God, Who is your home. You are not really here in this world.
7. Yes, I agree, because something that is possible is not real now. If something is real now, it is not possible; it is actual. If something is not real now, it must be distant in time. Love is not a possibility; it is a present reality.
8. We can remember by whole-heartedly desiring to remember, which implies letting go of all the reasons we have for forgetting.

## Appendix

### Quotations about Our Unchanging Wholeness and How We Deny It

"Nothing beyond yourself can make you fearful or loving, because nothing *is* beyond you" (T-10.Int.1:1).

"You are at home in God, dreaming of exile but perfectly capable of awakening to reality" (T-10.I.2:1).

"And if your reality is God's, when you attack you are not remembering Him. This is not because He is gone, but because you are actively choosing not to remember Him" (T-10.II.5:5-6).

"You have not attacked God and you do love Him. Can you change your reality? No one can will to destroy himself" (T-10.III.1:1-3).

"Yet every Son of God has the power to deny illusions anywhere in the Kingdom, merely by denying them completely in himself" (T-10.III.7:3).

"You have "given" your peace to the gods you made, but they are not there to take it from you, and you cannot give it to them" (T-10.IV.4:10).

"You are not free to give up freedom, but only to deny it. You cannot do what God did not intend, because what He did not intend does not happen" (T-10.IV.5:1-2).

"The sense is very literal; denial of life perceives its opposite, as all forms of denial replace what is with what is not. No one can really do this, but that you can think you can and believe you have is beyond dispute" (T-10.V.1:6-7).

"Son of God, you have not sinned, but you have been much mistaken. Yet this can be corrected and God will help you, knowing that you could not sin against Him" (T-10.V.6:1-2).

"And if you accept denial, you can accept its undoing" (T-10.V.6:6).

"You are not sick and you cannot die. But you can confuse yourself with things that do. " (T-10.V.8:3-4).

"Your mind is capable of creating worlds, but it can also deny what it creates because it is free" (T-10.V.9:11).

"Do not perceive anything God did not create or you are denying Him" (T-10.V.13:1).