

Study Guide and Commentary ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 10, Section IV

The End of Sickness

Note: This section, “The End of Sickness,” continues Section III’s discussion about idols and false gods. It helps to relate these terms to the concepts expressed in the Introduction to this chapter, concepts that can be seen running through the whole chapter when this connection is made. An idol or false god is anything or anyone outside of yourself that you blame for your problems or look to for your rescue. Thus, in this sense, the opening line of the chapter, “Nothing beyond yourself can make you fearful or loving, because nothing is beyond you” (T-10.In.1:1), is a direct reference to idols. The whole chapter is trying to get you to abandon all belief in such idols and to recognize that “your holy mind establishes everything that happens to you” (T-10.In.2:6).

Paragraph 1

1. ¹All magic is an attempt at [is a form of] reconciling the irreconcilable. ²All religion is the recognition that the irreconcilable cannot **be** reconciled. ³Sickness and perfection **are** irreconcilable. ⁴If God created you perfect, you *are* perfect. ⁵If you believe you can be sick, you **have** placed other gods before Him. ⁶**God** is not at war with the god of sickness you made, but **you** are. ⁷He is the symbol of deciding [willing] **against** God, and you are afraid of him **because** he cannot be reconciled with God’s Will. ⁸If you **attack** him, you will make him real to you. ⁹But if you refuse to worship him in whatever form he may appear to you, and wherever you think you see him, he will disappear into the nothingness out of which he was made.

• Study Question •

1. *Assume that the things that cannot be reconciled referred to in sentences 1 and 2 are God’s perfection and the sin, sickness, and suffering of this world. If that is so, then:*
 - a. *Give some examples of ways that we try to reconcile what cannot be reconciled (see 1:5–8).*
 - b. *What does it mean to refuse to worship the idol of sickness, and how would you do it?*

The picture that the Course has painted in this chapter is grim. We have dissociated from the knowledge of God and our Self. We have locked it out of our minds and have thrown away the key. We have replaced the true God with projected false gods, and we

now believe these gods control us instead of the other way around. How can we escape from this nightmare in which we have trapped ourselves? How can we escape from these idols?

The answer does *not* lie in attempting to somehow create a world-view that includes both God and sin, as some do in trying to see misfortune as some sort of divine punishment, or trying to explain why God allows bad things to happen to good people. That would be trying to reconcile the illusion with the truth, which is the essence of what the Course calls *magic*, because “All magic is an attempt at reconciling the irreconcilable” (1:1). If you try to reconcile this world—including all its external influences—with God, you are engaging in magic. Don’t try to explain the world. Don’t try to understand it. Don’t try to make God a part of it.

Take sickness, for instance. If you make it real and then try to explain how God sends sickness as a blessing, or a test of some kind, or as a punishment, you are making magic. To the Course, the essence of the difference between true religion and magic lies in how each treats the illusion of evil (1:1–2). Magic accepts evil as real and tries to integrate it into its view of God; religion recognizes that evil cannot be reconciled with God and therefore cannot be real. One aspect of evil is sickness. If God created you perfect (1:4), how can you explain sickness? The simple answer is, you can’t! If you are perfect you can’t be sick; if you are sick you can’t be perfect. Believing that sickness is real is a form of idolatry (1:3–5).

Even *attacking* the false god of sickness makes him real to you (1:8); “God is not at war with” him (1:6) and neither should you be. The appropriate response is to *ignore* him. You just “refuse to worship him” (1:9). You don’t make him important in any way.

Think about the very first lesson in the Workbook: “Nothing I see means anything” (W-pI.1.Title). What does it *mean* when you get sick? Nothing. It is only a “symbol of deciding against God” (1:7). You can use it as a reminder to decide for God. And that is all there is to it. Don’t make a big deal out of it. Don’t be afraid of it. Don’t fight it. Just open your mind to God.

Now, I do not believe that this means I should naively ignore symptoms of serious illness when they occur. If my body is manifesting disease in some way, it shows that my mind is *already* out of line with God’s perfection; the symptoms reveal that I still believe I can be sick. With that belief in my mind, it is hypocritical and foolish to pretend that, without any major mental transformation, I can truly ignore the god of sickness. I’m already failing to do that. Therefore, it makes sense to use a “compromise approach” as the Course calls it (T-2.IV.4:6), by making use of some physical form of healing. This is a temporary measure only, to be used only until I am capable of healing purely by the power of my mind. I go to the doctor, take the pill, have the operation, but I do so knowing I am only treating the symptom. The real effort at healing needs to go into healing my mind’s false belief that I, as God’s creation, can be anything less than perfect.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹Reality can dawn only on an unclouded mind. ²It is always **there to be** accepted, but its acceptance depends on your **willingness to have it**. ³To know reality **must** involve the willingness to judge unreality **for what it is**. [This is the *right use of selective perception*.] ⁴To overlook nothingness is merely to

judge it correctly, and because of your ability to evaluate it truly, to **let it go**.
⁵Knowledge cannot dawn on a mind full of illusions, because truth and illusions are irreconcilable. ⁶Truth is whole, and **cannot** be known by **part** of a mind.

• **Study Question** •

2. *What must happen within our minds before reality can dawn upon them?*

Reality, naturally, always exists because reality *is* what exists (2:2). There is never a need for us to make reality or to find it, only a need to accept it. We can, however, refuse to accept reality, choosing to believe in something unreal instead. Choosing to believe in something unreal in preference to reality is, of course, one definition of insanity! For this very reason, the Course often refers to humankind as insane, as you may have noticed.

Truth is irreconcilable with illusions (2:5), and, as the preceding paragraph has made clear, trying to reconcile the irreconcilable is a waste of time. For this reason, if we want to know reality in all its perfection, our mind must first be willing to let go of the illusions we have been using to obscure reality (2:1, 2:5). You cannot hold on to illusions with one part of your mind while trying to apprehend truth in another part (2:5–6); you have to let go of the illusions completely.

You have to be willing to let go of the illusions, to “judge unreality for what it is” (2:3), that is, to look at unreality and say, “This is not real.” For instance, your reality is not sick. When you look at sickness, the way to judge it for what it is—unreal—is to overlook it (2:4). Overlooking sickness means that you recognize that sickness is not some external force capable of taking away your peace. You “let it go” (2:4). You reconnect with the peace of God in your heart. In so doing, you have denied the power of sickness.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹The Sonship cannot be perceived as **partly** sick, because to perceive it that way is not to perceive it at all. ²If the Sonship is **one**, it is one in **all** respects. ³**Oneness cannot be divided**. ⁴If you perceive other gods **your** mind is split, and you will not be able to **limit** the split, because it **is** the sign that you have removed part of your mind from God's Will. ⁵This **means** it is out of control. ⁶To be out of control is to be out of **reason**, and ~~then~~ the mind **does** become unreasonable [unreasonable without reason. This is merely a matter of *definition*]. ⁷By **defining** the mind wrongly, you perceive it as **functioning** wrongly.

• **Study Question** •

3. *When I project my problems and try to see them as outside of me (a guilty or sick brother, for instance), I am in fact splitting my mind. What, then, must I do in order to see myself as whole?*

Try reading the last sentence of paragraph 2 and go right into paragraph 3 without a break; there is an unbroken progression of thought here. Letting go of illusions *entirely* means letting them go, not just for myself but also for the entire Sonship. The Sonship is

a unified whole (3:2–3). If I am seeing part of the Sonship as sick and part as not sick, I am not seeing its reality at all (3:1), because the oneness of the Sonship cannot be divided (3:3).

This of necessity means that I always include everyone in my judgment. You cannot accord reality to sickness anywhere in the Sonship, because if any part of it is sick, all of it is sick (3:2–3). Therefore, if I think, “I am okay but you are not,” I cannot limit the effects of my thought to you alone (3:4). Mind is either *one* or it is *split*. I can't have it both ways. If I am whole, so are you; if you are sick, so am I. We are one. I cannot see my brothers or sisters as sick, or as guilty, and expect to see myself any differently. If I want innocence and health, I must accord innocence and health to everyone. Any other view is based on an incorrect definition of the mind (3:7).

To understand the meaning of sentence 4, which speaks of “other gods,” remember my definition of an idol or false god: An idol is anything or anyone outside of ourselves that we blame for our problems or look to for our rescue. I “make” an idol when I project the cause of my problem or distress outside of my own mind, and see something else as the cause of my upset. That “something else” is the idol. Idols are, by definition, independent of God's Will; they are “gods” in their own right.

The effects of our projection are far more devastating than we commonly realize:

1. Projection splits my mind.
2. Projection affects me just as it affects those on whom I project.
3. Projection destroys the proper functioning of my mind.

First, when I make an idol by projection, I am splitting my mind (3:4). The reality is that mind is one, and the upset and its cause are both contained in my mind. I, however, am seeing the cause as something separate from myself. When I see my brother as in any way different from myself (not in external appearance but in essential nature), I have accepted separation; I have accepted that mind is split.

Second, when I project, I am attempting to displace something from my mind to another place, but actually I am doing it to myself. My hope in projecting is that I can limit the problem to what I believe is outside of me (a guilty brother or a sick brother), but I cannot “limit the split” (3:4). What I lay upon my brother, I lay upon myself. Therefore, to see myself as whole, what must I do? The obvious answer is, I must see *everyone* as whole.

Third, when I project, I cripple my mind's functioning. By locating the cause of my problems as somewhere outside of my mind, what I have actually done (in my imagination) is to take part of the mind and remove it from God's control. What I perceive as separate and outside of mind is really within it, but in my perception it has been split off and is “out of control” (3:5). As I define it, so it is; if I define mind incorrectly, the mind functions incorrectly; it becomes out of control and unreasonable (3:6–7).

This all sounds quite ominous, but the next paragraph will reassure us that all of these effects are merely illusory; they do not exist.

Paragraph 4

4. ¹God's laws will keep your mind at peace because peace is His Will, and His laws are established to uphold it. ²His are the laws of freedom, but yours are the

laws of bondage. ³Since freedom and bondage are irreconcilable, their laws **cannot be understood together**. ⁴The laws of God work only for your good, and there **are** no other laws beside His. ⁵Everything else is merely lawless and therefore chaotic. ⁶Yet God Himself has protected **everything** He created **by** His laws. ⁷[Therefore,] Everything that is not under them does not exist. ⁸"Laws of chaos" is a meaningless term [are meaningless, by definition]. ⁹Creation is perfectly lawful, and the chaotic is without meaning **because it is without God**. ¹⁰You have "given" your peace to the gods you made, but they are not there to take it **from** you, and you cannot [you are not able to] give it to them.

• Study Question •

4. *The laws of God versus the "laws of chaos":*

a. *List or summarize what is said about God's laws.*

b. *Give some examples of laws other than God's that we think bind us.*



When God created our minds, He intended for them to be unified and protected under His laws. As we choose to undo the split condition of our minds, moving toward our original state under those laws, our peace of mind will increase because the purpose of His laws is to maintain our peace (4:1). His laws produce peace, freedom, safety, and divine order (4:2–4, 6).

Our laws, the laws by which we have made the split mind, are not really laws at all. Laws are the rules that govern things; they define order. As we saw in the previous paragraph, when it follows the ego's thought system the mind becomes out of control, the opposite of divine order (3:5–7; 4:5). The opposite of order is *chaos*, which means confusion or disorder, so the Course refers to the laws by which the ego governs our minds as the "laws of chaos" (4:8). The phrase "laws of chaos" deliberately combines incongruous or contradictory terms to underscore the absurdity of thinking that the ego has laws. Chaos *has* no laws. (In Chapter 22, Section II, the Text will devote twenty-two paragraphs to a detailed discussion of these chaotic "laws," principles of thought that produce disorder instead of order.)

The "laws of chaos" are the laws we attribute to idols. They share the characteristic thought that cause is external to us, that something outside of us can affect us. We have "given" our power to things we have made, things that appear to be outside of ourselves, and we believe that these things can rob us of our peace.

Yet once again, Jesus emphasizes that accepting the split mind, or denying mind's oneness, does not actually *do* anything. It affects our *perception* of reality but not reality itself. God's laws are all-encompassing. Everything not under them *does not exist* (4:7). The apparent chaos produced by the mind when it tries to invent its own laws does not mean anything (4:9); only God's creation is meaningful, and nothing else exists. Our illusions can and do produce all our pain, and yet every bit of it is nothing more than a bad dream that will pass away in the morning. In truth, our idols cannot destroy our peace (4:10).

Paragraph 5

5. ¹You are **not** free to give up freedom, but only to **deny** it. ²You cannot do

what God did not intend, because what He did not intend **does not happen**.³Your gods do not **bring** chaos; you are **endowing** them with chaos, and accepting it **of** them.⁴All this has never been.⁵Nothing but the laws of God has ever been [**operated**], and nothing but His Will will ever be.⁶You were created through His laws and by His Will, and the manner of your creation established you a creator [**as creators**].⁷What you have made is so unworthy of you that you could hardly want it, **if you were willing to see it as it is**.⁸You will see nothing at all.⁹And your vision will **automatically** look beyond it, to what is **in** you and all **around** you.¹⁰Reality cannot **break through** the obstructions you interpose, but it **will** envelop you completely **when you let them go**.

• **Study Question** •

5. *Compare several passages from Chapter 10: III.11:7–8; IV.4:10; IV.5:1–2; V.1:6–7; V.6:1–2; and V.8:3–4. These passages have one idea they all share; what is it?*

The reassuring thought of the previous paragraph continues:

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. (5.1–2)

The language here is clear and unequivocal. We seem to have gone against God's Will. In our stupid and childish arrogance, we seem to have screwed things up *terribly*. We seem to have produced a world where war, sorrow, sickness, pain, grief, grinding boredom, drudgery, perversion, abandonment, betrayal, staggering poverty, crushing hunger, and petty littleness of spirit prevail, with all of it ending in a death often seen as a welcome relief. But Jesus says, "Wrong! That is not what God intended, so it cannot have happened." We have not really produced a world of imprisonment; we have merely denied our freedom. The freedom still exists, has existed forever, and will forever exist.

You can *believe* that you have given away your peace and your freedom, but you can't actually *do* it. You can imagine other gods who take it from you, but they aren't really there, so they can't take anything from you (4:10).

The people and things that seem to bring chaos into our lives do not truly bring it. The chaos does not come from them; it originates in our minds. We then project it onto our false gods, and perceive them as bringing the chaos to us (5:3). The chaos arises in our own minds and nowhere else:

The secret of salvation is but this: that you are doing this unto yourself. . . . Whatever seems to be the cause of any pain and suffering you feel, this is still true. (T-27.VIII.10:1, 4)

I am affected only by my thoughts. (W-pII.338.Title)

The chaos does not really exist, and never has; only God and what God wills exist (5:4–5). We've made a mess, but, thank God, we've only *made* it, we have not *created* it. We've fabricated an illusion rather than creating chaos. We can deny the good in ourselves, but we cannot make ourselves evil, nor can anything else lure us away from God. This whole horrible nightmare is a figment of our imagination; we are making up the entire thing in our mind.

Even though God created you in His image as a creator like Himself, you could not and cannot create in any way other than “through His laws and by His Will” (5:6). What you have made is against both God’s laws and God’s Will, so it cannot be creation. All the horror of the world, everything you hate about it, everything you deplore, everything that upsets you and takes away your peace—it all comes from *you*. It is all nothing but a projection of your own decision against God. But that decision has changed nothing. Reality still exists. When you are willing to accept responsibility for your denial and all its apparent effects, you will have reclaimed your inheritance as the Son of God.

If you look at it closely with a desire to see the truth, what will you see? “You will see nothing at all”! (5:8).

The Course never shies away from the monstrous and hideous nature of the world our thinking has produced, yet side by side with that terrible message it forcefully asserts that none of this really matters because none of it is real. It is a chimerical veil cast over an eternal and unchanging reality. True spiritual vision will first look *at* the illusion. Then, it will recognize the ephemeral nature of the illusion and look past it, through it, to the solid Reality that illusion has been hiding from our view. Contrary to what *X-Files* tried to tell us, the truth is not *out there*; that Truth is in us and all around us (5:9).

*“It's in every one of us to be wise
Find your heart
And open up both your eyes
We can all know every thing
Without ever knowing why
It's in every one of us by and by.”*

Words by David Pomerantz

Or, in the words of another familiar song, this one learned in childhood, we can find a surprising amount of wisdom:

*“Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream,
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.”*

That simple rhyme contains a simple truth: that because life is just a dream we can float through it joyfully, that we can let go of the illusions of the world because our own minds have been making them up. If we take this idea seriously, then we will be, in the delightful phrase C. S. Lewis chose for the title of his autobiography, *Surprised By Joy*. Reality will “envelop [us] completely” (5:10) when we see the illusions that we have projected *as illusions*, and remove them from our field of vision.

Two other passages make this point very clearly: T-20.VIII.7:3-4 and W-pI.32.1:2-5. I recommend you look up these passages and read them now.

Once again, all we need to do is to be “willing to see it as it is” (5:7). We need to be willing to look at the world and see that it is only a projection of our minds. When we do, we will see it is illusion, that is to say, “nothing at all” (5:8).

A passage in the Manual for Teachers may help clarify what is being taught here in Chapter 10, particularly in relationship to sickness. You may want to read through this passage now: M-5.I.1–2, 5.II.1–3. It points out that sickness is actually a choice we make because we mistakenly think it will bring us something of value. We do not accept healing because to do so would be to accept total responsibility for our thoughts, and we are not willing to do that. Healing requires just that: We must see that we cannot blame bodies (our own or anyone else's) for anything; it all comes from the mind. Both sickness and healing come from the mind alone.

Paragraph 6

6. ¹When you have experienced the protection of God, the making of idols becomes inconceivable. ²There are no strange images in the Mind of God, and what is not in His Mind **cannot** be in yours, because you are of one mind and that mind belongs to **Him**. ³It is yours *because* it belongs to Him, for to Him ownership is sharing. ⁴And if it is so for Him, it is so for you. ⁵His definitions *are* His laws, for by them He established the universe as what it is. ⁶No false gods you attempt to interpose between yourself and your reality affect truth at all. ⁷Peace is yours because God created you. ⁸And He created nothing else.

• Study Question •

6. *Sentences 3 and 4 identify a connection between ownership and sharing that is true both for God and for us. The extremely important idea, a core idea in the Course, has been expressed repeatedly earlier in the Text, using several different words. Try to summarize the idea, and see if you can remember another way the Course has expressed the same concept.*

We make idols in a mistaken attempt to seek protection, but true protection and peace come from acknowledging God as our Creator (6:1, 7). When we know His protection, we know that we have no need of idols; we share His Mind. Clearly, there are no illusions or idols in the Mind of God! In truth, we “are of one mind” with God and with one another. Therefore, there can be no idols in our minds any more than there can be idols in God’s Mind. (6:2).

I know from my own experience that when I am deeply aware of my connection with God, the lure of this world’s temptations is drastically diminished. One Christian writer whose name I have forgotten referred to it as “the expulsive power of a new affection.” Just as, in springtime, the rising of new sap in the tree puts forth new leaves that push off the last of the old, dead, leaves, the life of God rising within us causes us to shed our worldly attachments. They simply are no longer needed nor wanted. Conversely, I find that if I have detached myself from God and denied my origin in Him, the idols can seem very necessary and even attractive. When I leave God out, I seem to need something to fill the void left by God. That’s why we made up the idols in the first place.

The Course makes a strange assertion here. It says that our minds are ours *because* they belong to God (6:3). It might seem more logical to say that if my mind belongs to God then it does *not* belong to me; it is His, not mine. That isn’t how things work with God, however. “To Him ownership is sharing” (6:3). Therefore, if God owns something

it is by definition shared with us. Our minds are ours in a more profound sense than they would be if they belonged to us alone! Our minds are also much more thoroughly protected this way. A crude analogy might compare our safety to the sense of security that would come in this world if our property were like a shared national treasure, protected by the entire army, lending its strength to our own. *God* owns my mind, and He extends it to me on a permanent basis. It is still His, but it is mine as well. For that reason, idols have no place in it.

The interesting thing is, if ownership is sharing for God—so that He keeps what He has by extending it to others—then the same is true for us (6:4). The things that seem to us like God's laws are simply God's nature extending to us; God's nature defines the nature of everything He creates (6:5). Therefore, for us to truly own anything it must be shared, and if it is not shared, it is not really ours! This idea is another aspect of the underlying theme in this section, the idea that nothing outside mind exists, and all minds are one. Nothing is separate from anything else; everything is part of a vast Wholeness.

The earlier part of the section was emphasizing that what we share with others we inevitably visit upon ourselves. The downside of that is that when we project, judge, and condemn, or when we see a brother as sick, we attack ourselves as well. The upside is that when we share love, acknowledgment, and blessing with a brother, we bless ourselves as well. In both senses, our mind is the single cause of our experience; nothing outside of us can affect us, either negatively or positively. To repeat a very difficult concept: *There is nothing outside of us* (T-10.In.1:1).

Since that is true, nothing that we imagine to exist apart from ourselves can have any effect on reality. No idol that we make up as some kind of intermediate cause between ourselves and our reality can possibly have any real effects (6:6), because no such cause, external to our own mind, exists. That means that we must already have peace because God gave it to us in creation (6:7), and there is nothing at all that can take it away from us. He created you, and nothing else but you (6:8); there are no enemies, and not even the possibility that one exists.

All this has never been. Nothing but the laws of God has ever been, and nothing but His Will will ever be (5:4-5).

Paragraph 7

7. ¹The miracle is the act of a Son of God who has laid aside all false gods, and calls on his brothers to do likewise. ²It is an act of faith, because it is the recognition that his brother **can** do it. ³It is a call to the Holy Spirit in his mind, a call [to Him] that is strengthened by [this] joining. ⁴Because the miracle worker has heard God's Voice, he strengthens It in a sick brother by weakening his belief in sickness, which he does **not** share. ⁵The power of one mind **can** shine into another, because all the lamps of God were lit by the same spark. ⁶It is everywhere and it is eternal.

• Study Question •

7. *How does the power in your mind bring light to other minds?*



Laying aside idols means, on the one hand, that we take complete responsibility for everything we see; that we recognize that there is nothing outside of us that can take the peace of God from us. On the other hand, it means that we are willing to recognize that what we perceive with our senses is not real, and that therefore we are not guilty because what we see is not real. When we lay aside false gods in this way, we will also treat others differently. We will call on them to do the same as we do, and that means we will extend miracles to them (7:1).

That does not mean we put on white robes and start announcing that the world is over. Nor does it mean that we set ourselves up as faith healers or some other form of dispenser of miracles.

Extending a miracle to my brother means that I see him as one with me, the same as myself. I see that nothing can take the peace of God from him because God is his only Father. I recognize that, like me, this brother is totally responsible for what he sees, *and* that he is not guilty because none of it is real. I see him in this way, and by doing so, I call on him to see himself in the same way. I have given up projecting my problems onto him, and making him an idol that I blame for my troubles; by doing so I invite him to stop seeing me as the cause of his troubles.

Often this has to happen in what appears to be a hostile relationship. Both parties are at war. Both are wary and mistrustful of the other, and fearful of lowering defenses and laying aside their swords lest the other take unfair advantage and strike them dead. *Someone* has to start. Someone has to take the first step toward peace. Someone has to be the first to give up grievances, recognizing their unreality and taking full responsibility for the perception of attack. Someone has to say, "You have not taken away my peace; I did that to myself."

It can be scary. The Course says bluntly, "It is an act of faith, because it is the recognition that his brother can do it" (7:2); that is, it is based on a belief that your brother, like you, can see his idols as illusions and see past them to the truth. To do that can take a considerable amount of faith at times! When I first read what the Course says elsewhere, that miracles require faith (see W-pII.13.4, "What is a miracle?"), I thought it referred to trusting in Christ in myself, or trusting in the reality of wholeness when my eyes are showing me sickness. Yet here, quite obviously, the act of faith referred to concerns having faith in the Holy Spirit *in my brother* (7:3). It means, as I said, believing that he or she has sufficient inner wisdom to recognize his or her own projections, that is, the idols that are blocking real vision, and that he or she has sufficient spiritual motivation to let those idols go.

I have to confess that there are people in my life about whom I find it difficult to believe those things. I have interacted with them many times, and time and time again they have utterly failed to recognize their projections. They have laid into those around them wildly, lashing out with unfounded accusations, and they have done it so often and so consistently that it strains my ability to believe they will ever retract those projections and stop blaming everything outside of themselves for their problems. When I interact with these people, I need to remind myself often that what I am trusting in is not the ego that I see manifesting, but the Holy Spirit hidden behind that ego façade.

As a miracle worker, I realize that I could never have made the leap to vision on my own. (I also need to recognize that, in many situations, I still have not made that leap!)

Only in listening to the Holy Spirit, God's Voice, can I recognize my illusions for what they are. My brother can do the same thing because he has the same Holy Spirit. My faith in my brother adds strength to that Voice within him (7:4). The Holy Spirit in him is calling out for God just as the Holy Spirit in me is calling out for God. By *joining* with that call in his mind, I strengthen it (7:3). I draw out of him his true belief in what his mind is denying. By my peace of mind when confronted with my brother's sickness¹, I weaken his belief in sickness (7:4), and thus I strengthen his belief that he, too, can be at peace. My mind can literally shine the light into his, reminding him of his own inner light or spark (7:5). This is so because all minds are extensions of their Source. The spark of God "is everywhere and it is eternal" (7:6).

Paragraph 8

8. ¹In many only the spark remains, for the Great Rays are obscured. ²Yet God has kept the spark alive so that the Rays can never be completely forgotten. ³If you but see the little spark you will learn of the greater light, for the Rays are there unseen. ⁴Perceiving the spark will heal, but knowing the light will create. ⁵Yet in the returning the little light must be acknowledged first, for the separation was a descent from magnitude to littleness. ⁶But the spark is still as pure as the great light, because it is the remaining call of creation. ⁷Put all your faith in it, and God Himself will answer you.

• Study Question •

8. *Call to mind a person you tend to see in a negative light. Close your eyes and try to envision that person with a glowing spark near their heart. Think of that spark as the spark of Christ, the remnant of God's glory within them. In your mind, say to the person, "I see the spark of God within you. I trust the spark of God within you. Your light and mine are from the same source. I know you can respond to God's Voice just as I can. Therefore, I trust you to put aside your projections and to reclaim the power of your mind."*

This paragraph gets a little confusing in its symbolism of sparks and little and greater lights. Some people who have encountered the term "Great Rays" in other metaphysical writings mistakenly think the Course is using the phrase in the same way, with the same meaning. (For example, Alice Bailey wrote about the "seven great rays" that were somehow related to the biblical phrase, "the seven spirits which are before His [God's] throne" (Revelation 1:4). These rays carried some kind of divine energy, were related somehow to the astrological signs of the zodiac, and produced seven different personality types in humans. None of this has anything to do with the Course's use of this phrase.) In the Course, "Great Rays" simply means the full light of Christ in a Son of God, Christ in all his glory. By contrast, the "spark" is all we can see at first, because the greater light is

¹ Sickness, here, can refer either to physical, mental, or spiritual illness, in my opinion. The primary meaning is almost certainly physical sickness, but it includes the others as well.

covered over by the debris of the ego. The spark is the remnant of that greater light, “the remaining call of creation” (8:6).

The previous paragraph ended by saying that we all have been lit from the same Light of God. That light is everywhere. It may be hard to see. There may only be a spark of that light left (8:1). But that spark is all I need to see, and everyone has such a spark because God will not allow it to die (8:2). In fact, everyone has the Great Rays of Christ within them (8:3), even if all that is evident right now is the tiny spark.

We need to deliberately choose to see that spark in people around us, to look for it. If we do, we *will* see it, and more: The spark will open up a way to see the Great Rays of Christ (8:3). This is really using concrete symbols of light to say the same thing as has been said previously in more abstract terms: that as we allow our perception of our brother to be corrected so that we see him as sinless and whole, God will replace our perfected perception with knowledge. In both instances, we see the same transition from healing (something restorative) to creating (which is unrelated to anything that needs correction or healing but is simply an extension of perfection) (8:4).

So when Jesus says “in the returning the little light must be acknowledged first” (8:5), he means in practical terms that we need to recognize Christ in individual brothers and sisters before we can begin to relate to the abstract, formless Christ of which we all are parts. We need to acknowledge that our brother has at least enough of the light in him that he is capable of returning to God before we will ever come to see him as wholly sinless and pure. We have to start where we are (or think we are, at any rate).

We are asked to put all our faith in that spark in others and in ourselves (8:7). It isn't just that brother or sister (or, as you may think of the person: that slime-ball, that low-life, or that S.O.B.) in whom you are to trust; you put your trust in the spark of God within them. Do that, and “God Himself will answer you” (8:7).

Answer Key

1. a. We attempt to reconcile the world and God by: Believing that sickness is real; fighting against external idols of sickness, or attacking errors; material or psychic healing; trying to explain sickness as a blessing or as punishment from God.
b. We can refuse to worship the idol of sickness by: Refusing to make the idol real or to respond to it as if it were real; refusing to make sickness a “big deal”; refusing to attribute any power to the idol of sickness; being unwilling to make sickness a cause for fear.
2. Our minds must be willing, first, to judge unreality as unreal, and second, to accept reality in its place. We must let go of illusions before we can know truth.
3. To see myself as whole I must see all the Sonship as whole, and see no part of it as sick. I must stop projecting.
4. a. God’s laws: keep our minds at peace; are established to uphold our peace of mind; are the laws of freedom; work only for our good; no other laws beside His; protect everything God created.
b. Laws of chaos: Laws of medicine and bodily health; laws of human relationships, such as the idea that we require the companionship of other bodies in order to avert loneliness; laws of economics, or need of money to survive. (See also W-pI.74)
5. According to these passages, we cannot alter reality, give away our power, give up freedom, replace what is with what is not, really sin, get sick or die; but we think we can and believe we have done so. We can deny reality, deny our power, and deny our freedom, but this denial does not really change the truth about us. The shared idea here is that we are real, and reality cannot be changed or destroyed, whatever we may think to the contrary; it can only be temporarily concealed by illusions.
6. The idea here is that God has what He has by sharing it; giving it is the way He keeps it. For us, likewise, to possess what is ours we must share it with our brothers. The Course has expressed this several times previously, generally in words close to these: “Giving is how we keep what we have.” See T-4.VII.5:1–2; T-5.In.3:5; and T-5.I.1:8, for instance.² Note that these passages (including those listed in the footnote) all occur before the section of Chapter 10 we are studying. There are dozens more such passages in the Course, because it is perhaps one of the most important ideas in the Course. In fact, the Course itself says that teaching us this lesson is “a major learning goal this course has set” (read W-p1.105.3).
7. When I hear God’s Voice and give up my faith in idols, my example weakens my brothers’ belief in idols. My faith in my brother calls to the Holy Spirit in him, and my faith joins with him to strengthen God’s Call within his mind.

² Additional references to this same concept include: T-5.IV.3:1–3; T-5.IV.8:8–11; T-6.III.4:4–8; T-6.V(A).5:13; T-6.5(C).6:1; T-7.VIII.1:6; and T-9.II.11:4–7.

8. No written answer is expected.