

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

The Denial of God

Paragraphs 1 to 7

Summary of the chapter so far

The main thrust of this chapter is that we really do believe we have denied God; we really do believe we are infinitely guilty because of that denial, so we also deny the guilt. We then project that denied guilt out onto the world so we can have something else beside ourselves to blame for our separated condition. Ultimately, we make up a false picture of a punishing god who uses the world as his instrument of retribution. In particular, he uses sickness.

This section, "The Denial of God," extends the discussion of the false god of sickness begun in Section III. It clearly shows that sickness, depression, and every dark idol we revere, are all ways in which we deny God. They are madness, but they are not real, and can therefore be undone.

Paragraph 1

The rituals of the god of sickness are strange and very demanding. Joy is never permitted, for depression is the sign of allegiance to him. Depression **means** that you have forsworn God. Many [Men] are afraid of blasphemy, but they do not understand [know] what it means. They do not realize that to deny God is to deny their own Identity, and in this sense the wages of sin *is* death. 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.

• Study Question •

1. *What do all forms of denial do (or at least attempt to do)? Give examples.*

Almost everything we perceive in this world is a projection of our guilt. In a workshop I attended at the Foundation for *A Course in Miracles*, Ken Wapnick once said, "The world is crystallized guilt." Guilt over the denial of God crystallizes in many forms. Remember, a false god is anything or anyone outside of ourselves that we blame for our problems or look to for our rescue. Speaking of the false god we have made up, the Course says this god assumes "many forms," but every one of them is nothing more or less than the denial of God (3:8).

To set up a false god, no matter what form that may take, you must deny the true God. The underlying purpose of every false god is the denial of the real God. That is the main subject of the entire section. We have been looking at how sickness is involved with our denial of God. As with all gods, “worshipping” the god of sickness entails certain rituals. We’ve all heard of some rather strange rituals associated with the worship of certain deities. They can be merely odd, or quite arduous: Speaking in tongues or sitting in long periods of silence, human sacrifice, handling poisonous snakes, frenzied dancing, drinking wine and calling it blood, sprinkling water on babies, and so on. Our false gods are no exception (1:1). One ritual involved in ego-worship is making ourselves sick.

Another strange ritual that comes with our faith in other gods is *depression*. “The god of sickness” prohibits joy (1:2). That is why the Course can say so strongly, “Depression means that you have forsworn God” (1:3).

These rituals are quite peculiar, aren’t they? If we were considering joining a church that told us, “In order to be members, you have to make yourself sick and become depressed,” we probably would not join! We don't ordinarily associate depression with denying God. Perhaps we even think that we are depressed because we want God and can't find Him.

Equating depression with the denial of God is a startling idea. This section is full of references relating depression to denial: (1:2, 3; 2:5; 4:2; 5:8). Depression is the result of directly denying God and also denying Him *indirectly*, which is what we do when we deny the light of God in others and ourselves (2:5). When we “attacked” God, we thought we were fatherless and alone (4:2). “Depression is isolation” (5:8). Depression, then, is the result of our belief in separation, a sense of being cut off from God and one another.

Just as darkness is not a thing in itself, but the absence of light, depression is not a thing in itself, but the *denial of joy*. By nature, we all exist in a state of pure joy. That is how God created us. As God’s creation, joy is eternal; therefore, it still exists right now. If we are not now experiencing total joy, there can only be one reason: We are *denying* it. We want to exist independently of God, so we have to deny Him. In order to deny Him, we have to dissociate ourselves from anything that betrays our origin in God, including the joyful Self that God created. We therefore must deny joy. Depression is thus a denial of God (1:3). In 1:4, Jesus hints that our depression might even be considered blasphemy; later, he clearly says that denying our true Self *is* blasphemy (8:5).

Of course, if you have a friend who is depressed, you don't help anything if you point your finger at him and say, “Blasphemer! You must be denying God!” If anything, that would just increase his depression. He is already feeling isolated and cut off, and your accusations can only aggravate that feeling. You need, instead, to affirm the light that is in him, the infinite worth that belongs to him by right of creation.

We don’t realize that through our denial of God we have brought upon ourselves our own sickness, depression, loss of our lofty Identity, and even our own death (1:5). One of the things I’ve noticed about the Course is how often it says we do not realize something. The phrase “do not realize” or “does not realize” occurs thirty-six times in the Course material. The very first occurrence was fairly recently, in Chapter 8, and also concerned our lack of awareness that sickness is “entirely out of keeping with what [we] want” (T-8.VIII.4:1). There are many other things about which we are ignorant: how much we listen to our false gods (T-10.III.10:4); how much we have denied ourselves, and how profoundly God does *not* wish to see us deprived (T-10.V.10:1); to what extent our anxiety and fear stems from the denial of our Self (T-12.III.6:1–5); that we make the

world (T-12.III.6:7); that, in projecting guilt on others, we are really attacking ourselves (T-13.II.2); how thoroughly we cling to misery and how meaningless that is (T-14.II.1:4–5); and how profoundly we misuse our brothers to support our egos (T-15.II.4:1). These are not even half the occurrences of the phrase. The one that seems to me to sum it all up the best is this line about the wandering Son of God: “He does not realize he has forgotten where he came from, where he goes, and even who he really is” (W-pI.166.4:4). We’ve not only forgotten all this; we don’t even remember knowing anything different from what we know now. We don’t *suspect* that we are not separate minds dwelling inside of bodies.

Our advocacy of the idea of separation has substantially mangled our minds, turned our bodies into devices of torture, and shut us off from Heaven; yet for the most part we are oblivious. The Course seems to have taken on the job of occasionally slapping us in the face to wake us up to the things we have been keeping out of our awareness. I think it is important for every student of the Course to realize, particularly as we begin our study, that there are a great number of things we do not realize and do not know. (In addition to the “do not realize” passages, there are eighty-five occurrences of “do/does not know” and sixty-six of “do not understand.”) We cannot begin to imagine how thoroughly we have blinded ourselves.

This section will teach us that all the apparent faults, sins, and sickness we see in other people are nothing more than the projection of our guilt about our own imagined denial of God. We are trying to cover up guilt in ourselves by seeing it outside of ourselves. We see the world around us the way we *want* to see it. We see the people around us the way we *want* to see them (T-25.III.1:3). Since what we want is something that does not exist, we have to blot out what does exist in order to make the illusions seem real (1:6–7).

We deny God and our own Identity with Him; we replace “what is”—our nature as extensions of God—with “what is not”—the ego and all its fear. We cannot *really* do this, but “you can think you can and believe you have” (1:7). This is extremely important; it is crucial to the understanding of the Course. You *cannot* really replace your true Self with an image you have made up. But you *can* have the mistaken idea that this replacement is possible, and you *do* actually believe you have done it! This is a general formula we must keep in mind to understand the Course: We cannot change reality, but we can think that changing reality is possible, and we in fact *actually believe* that we have done so. The problem the Course is seeking to redress, then, is not “fixing” anything about reality, but undoing our false belief that reality has been changed.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹Do not forget [see 6.In.1:2 and 7.VII.8-9], however, that to deny God will inevitably result in projection, and you will believe that others **and not yourself** have done this **to** you. ²You must [*will*] receive [from others] the message you give [to others] because it is the message you **want**. ³You may believe that you judge your brothers by the messages they give **you**, but you **have** judged them by the message you give to **them**. ⁴Do not attribute your denial of joy to them, or you cannot see the spark in them that would bring joy to **you**. ⁵It is the **denial** of the spark that brings depression, for [*and*] whenever you see your brothers **without it, you are denying God**.

• Study Question •

2.
 - a. *Whenever you think that someone else has taken away your joy or your peace, what is really happening?*
 - b. *What would be the result of attributing your denial of joy to others? Of attributing your denial of joy to yourself?*

The sequence is extremely clear here. Denial is always followed by—and sustained by—projection (2:1). In order to hide from ourselves the fact that we have deliberately denied our own joy in order to sustain our illusion of separation from God, we have to find someone else to blame for the loss of joy. Think about that the next time you flare up because someone cut you off in traffic or jumped ahead in line at the supermarket checkout. If you lose your joy in such a situation, the Course is telling you that you did not come to the situation with joy and then have it taken away from you by the rude driver or customer. Instead, you had already *unconsciously* abandoned your own joy, and you were just cruising, looking for a scapegoat, for someone you could blame for your loss of joy. First denial, then projection. You do it to yourself, you deny you did it, and you blame someone else.

The entire ego thought system is based on the mistaken belief that you actually denied God and replaced yourself. The entire thought system of the Holy Spirit is based on the knowledge that such an alteration in God's creations is simply impossible. We have seen this same thought several times already in this chapter, in different forms (see T-10.III.11.8 and T-10.IV.5:1).

You cannot, in reality, give up your freedom. You cannot give up your Self. You cannot “sin.” But you can *believe* you have given up your freedom, given up your true Self, and therefore you can believe you have sinned. If we had actually usurped God's power and changed reality, it *would* be sin: "To sin would be to violate reality, and to succeed" (T-19.II.2:2). But simply to believe we have denied God and our Self is not sin; it is just a mistake. Yet, it entirely colors “reality as [we] perceive it” (T-10.III.11:8).

Because we mistakenly believe that we have separated ourselves from God and from our Self, we experience such great guilt that we go on to hide our imagined act from our awareness. We therefore deny that we denied God; we block off the memory of it. Yet, we do experience being cut off from joy and cut off from God. When we do, we know *something* must be to blame! This inevitably results in projection, and we blame *others* for having done it to us. If I didn't do it, we reason, someone else must have done it. So when we lose our joy we “believe that others and not [ourselves] have done this to [us]” (2:1).

The faults and “sins” we see in others, then, are always the projection of our own denial of God, our way of attempting to project the blame for our separation onto others. The sequence goes:

- A mistaken choice
- Denial of that choice
- Projection of the choice

When I think someone or something is making me unhappy, I am always projecting my own denial of joy onto them. I am blaming them for the lack of joy I experience. In fact I *have* joy but I am denying it. I cannot replace the joy of God with pain, but I can think that I can, and I do in fact believe that I have. But I am denying responsibility for it, and projecting the responsibility onto someone else.

The way back starts with withdrawing the projection: “They are not doing it to me; I am doing it to myself.” When I bring this realization to the presence of the Holy Spirit, He will remind me that, while I can think I did this and do believe I did it, “no one can really do this” (1:7). All I am doing is imagining the impossible. There is no guilt for that. It is simply a mistake, and mistakes can be corrected.

I am innocent despite my mistakes, and my brothers are equally innocent. We are so sure that our judgments of one another are valid. We think we are judging objectively. We are positive that the reason we feel a certain way towards someone is because of the messages *they* are sending *us*. The fact is, we are judging them because of the messages *we* sent to *them* (2:3). We have projected our guilt onto them and so we see them as guilty.

We attribute our denial of joy to another person when we see them as the cause of our loss of joy. This reflects the statement in the first paragraph of the chapter, which said that nothing outside of us affects us (T-10.In.1:1–3). Our loss of joy comes about *only* when, within our own mind, we have denied joy. When we blame someone else for our loss of joy, we prevent ourselves from seeing “the spark in them,” that is, the light of God’s original creation (2:4). Seeing that spark of God in others is what brings us joy. *Not* seeing that spark in people is what causes depression! (2:5). Nothing is more depressing than the belief that someone you love is without hope, beyond help, and devoid of the spark of God. And that belief, this chapter is telling us, is just the projection of the belief you do not want to admit to yourself—the belief that *you* are without hope, beyond help, and devoid of the spark of God. That hidden belief is the cause of all your problems, and that belief is wholly without foundation, and completely false. It is just an insignificant error (T-27.VIII.6:2), a mistake. As you see others, you see yourself (T-8.III.4:2). When you see someone else as hopeless, it is hiding a belief that *you* are hopeless. And *that* is why you are depressed.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹Allegiance to the denial of God is the ego’s religion. ²The god of sickness obviously demands the denial of health, because health is in direct opposition to its own survival. ³But consider what this means to **you**. ⁴**Unless** you are sick you cannot keep the gods you made, for only in sickness could you possibly **want** them. ⁵Blasphemy, then, is *self-destructive*, not God-destructive. ⁶It means that you are willing **not** to know yourself **in order** to be sick. ⁷This **is** the offering your god demands because, having made him out of **your** insanity, he **is** an insane idea. ⁸He has many forms, but although he may seem to be many different things he is but one idea;—the denial of God.

• Study Question •

3. *What is the true meaning of “blasphemy?”*

“Allegiance to the denial of God is the ego’s religion” (3:1). In other words, the ego will cling to anything that supports the denial of God, which includes the denial of my own perfection and the perfection of God’s creation. The ego will always behave this way; it will do so *religiously*. It will do whatever it thinks is necessary to maintain the illusion of separation from God.

We've all heard about or read about some of the strange, extreme, and even horrifying things people will do in the name of their religion. The list ranges from minor inconveniences such as refraining from all work and travel on the Sabbath, to fatal choices such as allowing yourself or a loved one to die by refusing medical care such as blood transfusions, or drinking poisoned Kool-Aid. All of these things are endured because to fail to do so would require a denial of the entire belief system to which one has committed one's life.

When the Course says that the ego's religion is the denial of God, it is saying the ego will do almost anything to protect that denial. To retain the ego we have to have sickness, because perfect health would show we are part of God, while sickness seems to prove that we cannot be part of Him (3:2). The ego is a sick thought that demands a sick body (3:4). A perfect Son of God, however, cannot be sick, so we discard our memory of our true identity, throwing away the knowledge of our invulnerable Self so that it becomes "possible" to make ourselves sick (3:6)—thus "proving" that we cannot be part of God.

Jesus asks us to take a serious look at the ramifications of this (3:3). When we hold on to the idea of separation, the idea of an existence independent of God's, we are holding on to sickness and death. "Blasphemy, then, is *self*-destructive, not God-destructive" (3.5). Traditionally we've thought that blasphemy was an attack on God. The Course says, no, it is an attack on our real Self.

As Jesus said earlier, "All attack is self-attack" (T-10.II.5.1). When this idea really begins to take hold in your mind, every time you catch yourself with thoughts of attack, condemnation, and blame, you will remember that you are really attacking yourself, and that doing so is insane (3:7). "I'm attacking myself again. I'm denying God again. I'm doing it to myself again." You will turn to the Holy Spirit for help in letting go of those thoughts.

Whatever form taken by our sickness—physical illness, depression, guilt, or any perception of suffering as real—it stems from a single root idea: the denial of God (3:8). Denial of God lurks behind every cough and sneeze, every ache and pain, and every death. This may seem like a terrible message but it carries the seed of liberty within it. As long as we attribute our suffering to some cause outside of our own mind, we are doomed to continue suffering because the cause is beyond our control. If, however, we recognize the cause of suffering as our own mind's denial of God, we have hope because we can change our mind.

The Course lays it all at the feet of this single insane idea that we could deny God. This is the one problem that requires only one solution (W-pI.80.5:5-7). It wants us to realize the tragic multiplicity of effects that stem from this one, central idea and yet, at the same time, it assures us that we do not need to feel guilty about it:

Seek not to appraise the worth of God's Son whom He created holy, for to do so is to evaluate his Father and judge against Him. And you *will* feel guilty for this imagined crime, which no one in this world or Heaven could possibly commit. The Holy Spirit teaches only that the "sin" of self-replacement on the throne of God is not a source of guilt. What cannot happen can have no effects to fear. Be quiet in your faith in Him Who loves you, and would lead you out of insanity. Madness may be your choice, but not your reality. Never forget the Love of God, Who has remembered you. For it is quite impossible that He could ever let His Son drop from the loving Mind wherein he was created, and where his abode was fixed in perfect peace forever (T-14.III.14:1-15:8).

Paragraph 4

4. ¹Sickness and death seemed to enter [entered] the mind of God's Son against His Will. ²The "attack on God" made His Son think he was fatherless, and out of his depression he made the god of depression. ³This was his alternative to joy, because he would not accept the fact that, although he was a creator, he had been created. ⁴Yet the Son *is* helpless without the Father, Who alone **is** his Help.

• Study Question •

4. *This paragraph retells the story of denial and projection still one more time. What key factor in the mind of God's Son was behind all this; what did he refuse to accept?*

“Sickness and death entered the mind of God's Son against His will” (4.1). *God* never wanted us to experience sickness and death. But because you believed you had attacked God and had severed yourself from your Father, you became depressed, and so you attacked yourself (4:2); we chose sickness and death. You accepted the depression as a necessity and made an image of God that fit it, an angry and distant God who was punishing us.

In 4:3 we see what we might call the original awareness of separation and difference. God created the Son as part of Himself, exactly like Himself, with the ability to create as God creates. But there was one apparent difference: The Father created the Son, but the Son did not create the Father. The Father was the Creator; the Son was the Created. And the Son, as it were, had the thought, “That's not fair! He has something I don't have. He must have stolen it from me, so I will take it from Him and be completely justified in doing so.”

The Son “would not accept the fact that God created” him (4:3). If I were to accept the fact that God created me, it would mean that God completely determines what I am. I have no say in the matter. I do not determine what I am; God does. That is the fact the ego refuses to accept. Refusing to accept our creation is why we, in our perception, cut ourselves off from God and denied Him. But if the fact is that we *are* created, and that, therefore, God determines what we are, then we must be His perfect Son.

The last sentence of this paragraph seems to infer that the reason we turned away from God as our Creator is that being created made us feel helpless and dependent. We were attempting to reject helplessness, and yet, in doing so we *made* ourselves helpless. God is our Strength, and without Him, we truly would be helpless.

Paragraph 5

5. ¹I said before that of yourself you can do nothing, but you are not *of* yourself. ²If you were, what you have made would be true, and you could never escape. ³It is **because** you did not make yourself that you need be troubled over [by] nothing. ⁴Your gods are nothing, because your Father did not create them. ⁵You cannot make creators who are unlike your Creator, any more than He could have created a Son who was unlike Him. ⁶If creation is sharing, it cannot create what is unlike itself. ⁷It can share only what it **is**. ⁸Depression is isolation, and so it could not have **been** created.

• Study Question •

5. *Looked on from the right perspective, the fact that we did not create ourselves should bring us peace of mind. Why?*

God created you, and you cannot change what He created. When you deny this, you deny God. You cut yourself off from the true God and therefore you have to make up other gods to replace Him. Anything you don't like in yourself, you try to blame on the world "outside" yourself, which doesn't exist except in your mind.

If we *could* separate ourselves from God, Who is our life, our strength, and our very being, we *would* be completely helpless. But—thank God!—it is impossible to separate ourselves from Him. Therefore, we cannot make ourselves helpless. What we have made in our delusion—our bodies, our world, our sickness and death and misery—is not real because creation can only occur in union with God, extending God's likeness (5:1–3). Since self-created beings must possess the power of original creation, everything they produce would be as real as they are. If we could really do what the ego wishes we could do, and thinks we have done (T-2.I.1:12), it would be reality; we would be unable to escape from the nightmare we have made. However, we did not create ourselves. Only what God created is real; therefore, the ego cannot be real (5:3–4). We can escape.

If you were your own creator, then everything you made—sin, sickness and death—would be true. Acknowledging yourself as God's Creation is the way to realize that everything you made on your own cannot be real. Because none of it is real, "you need be troubled by nothing" (5:3).

The argument of this paragraph is an interesting one. Because "depression is isolation" (5:8), it could not possibly come into existence through sharing, which is its opposite. But sharing is the only kind of creation there is, and a creator can only create what is like itself (5:6). If God is Love, for instance, He cannot create anything that is not Love. So, if creation is sharing, and depression is the opposite of sharing, then depression "could not have been created" (5:8). It cannot be real. It cannot have real effects, and there is no cause to let it upset us.

This is just a specific instance of what was said in the first part of the paragraph; that is, nothing that we made is real; only what God created is real.

Paragraph 6

6. ¹Son of God, you have not sinned, but you have been much mistaken. ²Yet this can be corrected and God will help you, knowing that you could not sin against Him. ³You denied Him **because** you loved Him, knowing that if you **recognized** your love for Him, you **could** not deny Him. ⁴Your denial of Him therefore **means** that you love Him, and **that you know He loves you**. ⁵Remember that what you deny you **must** have once known. ⁶And if you accept denial, **you can accept its undoing**.

• Study Question •

6. *In your own words, without referring to the commentary that follows or the Answer Key, try to explain how accepting denial allows you to accept the undoing of denial.*

I know I say things like this a lot, but this paragraph is really one of my favorite paragraphs in the entire Text! It is so paradoxical, so mind-bending, and so very, very encouraging. It takes our worst fears about ourselves and turns them into reasons for faith. The identical theme will occur again later in Text Chapter 13, which has several paragraphs that expand on the same ideas (see especially T-13.III.2-7).

This chapter asks us to take total responsibility for everything we made; God created none of it, because God created nothing but our mind. It then asks us to realize that everything we think we have made is not real because God did not create it. These illusions, therefore, are not sins, but just mistaken thoughts (6:1). Mistakes can be corrected (6:2). We may imagine that sin is possible, but God *knows* that it is impossible; therefore, despite our doubts, He stands ready to help us (6:2). I have found the words of 6:1 worth memorizing and repeating to myself frequently. They are simultaneously humbling and reassuring.

The next few sentences (6:3-6) are difficult to understand, but if you *can* understand them, you will have gained a real key to the way the Holy Spirit reinterprets our thoughts and translates them from darkness into light. Read them again now before reading on.

Our mind boggles at what this is saying. It does not seem to make sense. How could our *denial of Him* be evidence or proof of our *love*?

The way our thoughts react to this idea is proof of what the Course says about the radical difference between the way the ego interprets things and the way the Holy Spirit does. Our thoughts are upside down and have to be turned right side up again, because they are still directed by the ego's interpretations (W-pII.13.2:3). When we first encounter the thoughts of the Holy Spirit, *they* seem upside down to us! To us, our denial of God cannot prove *anything* except our guilt! To the Holy Spirit, it proves our love!

Let's see if we can get at least a little understanding, maybe a glimmer, of how the interpretation of the Holy Spirit is possible. The Son of God, as God created him, is perfect Love, just like his Father. So of course, he loves his Father perfectly. That is a part of the Son's eternal nature, created by God; it cannot change. In his momentary insanity, though, the Son wanted an existence independent of God. He had a mad wish to be on his own and to create himself. His love for God, however, was so strong that, if he recognized it, he would be held to God forever by that love. Held captive by love, he could not attain independent existence. Since he could not change his love, the only recourse was to block God out of his mind entirely—to deny God. “You denied Him because you loved Him, knowing that if you recognized your love for Him, you could not deny Him.” (6:3). The Son's extreme rejection of God, therefore, is evidence of the depth of his love for God.

We often see the same pattern reflected in our world in the rebellion of teenage sons and daughters against their parents. A teenager often desperately wants to be her own person, her own, independent self. Yet she loves her parents deeply. She no longer wants to be totally shaped and defined by her parents, so she rebels. She does the opposite of her parents. She may reject her parents' beliefs. She may get angry with her parents and accuse them of being unloving. If her love for her parents is very strong, she will have to rebel very strongly. The stronger the love, the more drastic the rebellion. So, you could say that her rebellion *means* that she loves her parents, and that she knows her parents love her. Such children feel that their independence is literally threatened by their parents, *because they love them*; therefore, they do everything in their power to keep the

parents at a distance, to push them away, to deny the mutual love. The children fear that to admit their love for their parents would mean the death of their independence.

When the Holy Spirit looks at our rebellion or denial of God, He sees it that way. To Him, our very denials, what we would call ego attacks or failure or even sin, are proofs of what we are unconsciously trying to deny, proofs of our love for God and of our knowledge of His Love for us.

When we are at last willing to look at our egos honestly and to accept responsibility for our denial of God, then and only then the Holy Spirit can help us reinterpret what we are seeing. We have to “accept denial” (6:6)—that is, to stop hiding it—before that denial can be interpreted by the Holy Spirit as proof of our love rather than proof of our guilt. But when we are at last willing to admit the truth, the Holy Spirit can help us.

I have to come to the point where I say: “Yes, I am denying God, I am pushing Him away. I am afraid of my own love for Him and His for me, because I feel that to recognize it will mean the end of my independence.” When I am willing to admit that, the Holy Spirit translates or reinterprets that very denial and shows me that *it does not mean what I think it means*. It does not mean that I am guilty. *My denial of Him means that I love Him* (6:4). If I did not love Him so deeply I would not rebel so strongly! That realization is the undoing of denial. And that is why Jesus says, “If you can accept denial, you can accept its undoing” (6:6).

To accept denial means to acknowledge that the denial of God and of joy is within our own minds, and not something thrust upon us by outside circumstances. It is to take responsibility for the course of denial and projection that we have been pursuing, and to understand that our mind establishes everything that happens to us.

The Holy Spirit looks at what appears to us as love's opposite, and He sees in it the proof of love. That is how He deals with each of us, in our hearts, when we bring our confusion and pain into His presence and accept responsibility for our denial of God, denial of joy, and denial of peace. And that is how He calls us to act in this world: to perceive what appears to be the opposite of love as proof of the love it denies, and to respond, not to the seeming attack, but to the love behind the hate, the love being repressed by the one who is doing the attacking:

How wrong are you who fail to hear the call that echoes past each seeming call to death, that sings behind each murderous attack and pleads that love restore the dying world. You do not understand Who calls to you beyond each form of hate; each call to war. Yet you will recognize Him as you give Him answer in the language that He calls. He will appear when you have answered Him, and you will know in Him that God is Love (T-31.I.10:3-6).

Paragraph 7

7. ¹Your Father has not denied you. ²He does not retaliate, but He **does** call to you to return. ³When you think He has not answered your call, **you have not answered His**. ⁴He calls to you from every part of the Sonship, because of His Love for His Son. ⁵If you hear His message He **has** answered you, and you will learn [Ur: **what you are**] of Him if you hear aright. ⁶The Love of God is in everything He created, for His Son is everywhere. ⁷Look with peace upon your brothers, and God will come rushing into your heart in gratitude for your gift to Him.

• Study Question •

7. *The Course says God is calling to us. Where does God's call reside, and how can we answer it?*

Our Father has not denied us (7.1). We may imagine that God has abandoned us because of our “sins,” but He does not do that (7:1-2). His Love still calls to us constantly (7:2). From where? “From every part of the Sonship” (7:4), that is, in all our brothers and sisters. We think God isn't listening to us, but the truth is, *we* are not listening to *Him* (7:3). Just as the Holy Spirit hears the Love of God calling in us, perceiving Love even in our very denial and rebellion, we can hear that same Love in everyone if we are willing to listen. It is possible, says Jesus, to see *only* this Love in everyone. When we look on one another in this light, our hearts will be “wholly filled and flooded with God Himself” (Ephesians 3:19, Amplified New Testament). Our recognition of God's Son is our gift to God (7:7). I don't think the gratitude referred to here is completely literal. It isn't that God sees us acknowledge the Christ in a brother and says, “Oh! I'm so grateful, I will rush into your heart and bless you!” He is already in every heart. Rather, opening our minds to see God's Love behind the ego in our brothers and sisters simultaneously opens our minds to see God's Love in ourselves. The experience we have is that we forgive a brother and feel blessed by God. The blessing has always been there; our forgiveness has just enabled us to receive it.

Let us see in our own denial, failures, and sins the evidence of our undying love for God and His for us. Let us see in the failures and sins of others the proof of *their* own love for God. Acknowledge that love in ourselves and in them, and we have given God's creation back to Him. We have rediscovered our true Self, as God created us.

Answer Key

1. They “replace what is with what is not” (1:7). For example, denial replaces joy with depression; holiness with sin; your self as Christ with ego; union with banishment (T-10.I.1:7); God’s creation with what we have made (T-10.IV.4:6–7); your own mind with things outside of mind (T-10.In.2:1).
2. a. We have taken away our own joy or peace, and then projected the blame onto someone else. We are judging them by the message we gave to them.
b. When we project our loss of joy onto others, we can’t see the spark in them that would bring joy to us, and we become depressed. When we take responsibility for our loss of joy and lift that burden from our brothers, we will be able to see the spark of God in our brothers, and they will bring joy to us. “It is the denial of the spark that brings depression” (2:5).
3. Blasphemy, as the Course defines it, is a willingness not to know ourselves in order to be sick; self-destruction (3:5–6).
4. The key factor behind the Son’s denial of God, which led to the projection of a separated world, was his refusal to accept that God had created him (4:4). He could not accept the seeming inferiority this bestowed on him.
5. If we did not make ourselves, a) what we made is not true; b) our idols are nothing; and c) we can escape from our illusions.
6. To accept denial means to admit our denial of God, to own up to it. Unless we are willing to acknowledge the problem, we cannot receive the solution to it (W-pI.79.1:1–2).
7. God’s call resides in the Sonship, and we can answer it by looking with peace upon our brothers; that is, seeing past their egos to the loving Self they, along with us, have been denying.