

Study Guide and Commentary ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 11, Section III

From Darkness to Light

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

Preceding sections have emphasized that our choice is between the Fatherhood of God and the illusion of creating ourselves, that is, the ego. Our wish to deny God's Fatherhood is the authority problem, which can be summarized by the question, "Who is my father or author?" The ego's delusional belief is that we made our own father (T-11.In.2:4). To recognize our own gifts as creators, we must first accept that God extended His nature to create us. He gives without limit, and He wills that we extend that giving. Therefore, to recognize His Fatherhood means that we accept our function to extend as He does. In this world, our function manifests as healing. Only joining our will with God's by finding and filling our function can bring us rest (T-11.II.6:1).

The sections we are studying in this lesson and the next deal with the *process* of our healing—how we emerge from darkness to light; how we can claim our inheritance as God's Son; and how we can begin to look beyond the illusions of the ego.

Overview

This section asks us to recognize that all darkness originates within our own mind, from our denial of the Light. It tells us that we are the source of our suffering (1:4). The denial of light cannot be our true will, because it is not God's Will. The path from darkness to light hinted at in the title of the section should be a familiar one by now. It consists of recognizing our denial of the light, and changing our mind to deny the darkness instead. The path out of darkness is summarized by sentences 9 and 10 from the fourth paragraph, which instruct us to choose the light and to deny the darkness, and which you may want to read over now:

⁹If you see them [dark thoughts], it is only because you are denying the light.

¹⁰But *deny them instead*, for the light is here and the way is clear.

Jesus refers to dark companions, the dark way, and dark comforters. The dark way is the way of pain, suffering, weariness, attack, and conflict. The dark companions, I think, are the fear and grief that come with us as unwanted guests on our journey when we follow

the ego's path (4:4). As for dark comforters, sometimes there is a fleeting comfort in seeing the darkness, particularly in seeing it in someone else. Revenge or triumph over a rival—these are dark comforters. The ego promises us that perceiving guilt in a brother will lighten our own load of guilt, and at first it can seem to do so, but then comes the backlash of loneliness and fear, which only compounds the guilt.

We are called on to see, not *dark* companions, but companions of *light*. We are asked to look for the spark of God in people, to see their attack as a call for help and to respond with help and with love. These are not our enemies but our companions on the journey, walking the same road we walk. They are our saviors. *We need them.*

Paragraph 1

1. ¹When you are weary, remember you have hurt yourself. ²Your Comforter will rest you, but **you** cannot. **3You do not know how**, for if you did you could never have grown weary. ⁴Unless you hurt yourself you could never suffer in **any** way, for that is not God's Will for His Son. ⁵Pain is not of Him, for He knows no attack and His peace surrounds you silently. ⁶God is very quiet, for there is no conflict in Him. ⁷Conflict is the root of all evil, for being blind it does not see whom it attacks. ⁸Yet it always **attacks** the Son of God, and the Son of God is **you**.

• Study Question •

1. *Whenever we experience conflict, we become weary. What is the source of our weariness, and where can we find rest and comfort? State your answer in terms of specific actions you might take whenever you feel weary.*

We usually attribute getting tired to physical things: for example, not enough sleep or over-exertion. Sometimes we realize that it can come from mental processes such as anxiety, struggling to solve difficult problems, or emotional distress. Usually, whether we attribute the tiredness to physical or mental activity, we locate the ultimate cause of the problem outside of our minds. Our anxiety, struggle, or distress may be the proximate cause of our tiredness, but we believe that the originating cause of them all is something outside of us.

By now, if we have understood anything the Course has been telling us, we know that this cannot be the case (see T-10.In.1:1). *We* are the cause of our own weariness (1:1). Tiredness is a form of suffering, and any suffering we experience must be coming from our own minds, because God would never allow it to reach us otherwise (1:4).

The Holy Spirit can bring us rest. One of the titles given Him in the Bible and in the Course is "Comforter" (1:2). (Most recent translations replace the word with "Helper" or "Counselor," but I like the warmth of the term "Comforter.") Ever since I first heard that term applied to the Holy Spirit I have loved it. In the Gospel of John, when Jesus was preparing his disciples for his impending departure, he told them:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, [even] the Spirit of truth....But the Comforter, [even] the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things,

and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you. (John 14:16–17, 26, American Standard Version)

This is followed with Jesus' promise, often referred to in the Course:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you....Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful. (John 14:27, ASV)

Clearly, one purpose given to the Holy Spirit is preserving our peace, soothing our turbulent minds, and thus renewing our energy. Worry drains us of energy; peace refreshes us. As the psalmist wrote: "He leadeth me beside still waters. He restoreth my soul" (Psalm 23:2–3, ASV).

I've noticed that quite often when I am troubled, my mind seems out of control. I may try to calm myself, but it almost always fails. It isn't a simple thing to do! My own thinking has produced the exhausting perception of things, and once I am caught up in it, it is nearly impossible to find my way out of it on my own (1:2–3). I need help; or rather, I need the Helper. I am caught up in my mental confusion. I need Someone Who sees things from a different perspective. When I stop my frantic activity, stop pushing myself beyond my physical limits, and get quiet for a while, I can bring my perceived problem to my Counselor and ask Him to help me see it differently. When I do, He does.

The Holy Spirit brings with Him the tranquility of God's Presence. If you consider what peace consists of, it is primarily the absence of conflict. That is why God is so peaceful (1:6). Our weariness arises from the constant conflict and judgment within our minds (T-3.VI.5:1–7). Jesus tells us here that "conflict is the root of all evil" (1:7); earlier, he told us that "the authority problem...is 'the root of all evil'" (T-3.VI.7:2–3). This may seem to be a contradiction, but it is not. In fact, that remark about the authority problem comes just two paragraphs after the passage about constant judgment tiring us. He is not talking about two different things; conflict and the authority problem are two ways of describing the same thing. Our minds exist in perpetual conflict because we believe we have a will that is, or can be, opposed to God's Will. We believe that our brothers have similarly independent wills, so they too can be in conflict with our will. The Course is consistent in attributing our weariness to the presence of this debilitating mental aberration.

The clash of conflicting wills drains our energy. We judge and attack, trying to conquer the opposing power. We fail to recognize that what we are attacking is part of our Self. Our injury is self-inflicted (1:7–8). If we accepted the union of our wills with God's, conflict would be ended, and our exhaustion would never occur.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹God's Son is indeed in need of comfort, for he knows not what he does, believing his will is not his own. ²The Kingdom is his, and yet he wanders homeless. ³At home in God he is lonely, and amid all his brothers he is friendless. ⁴Would God let this be real, when He did not will to be alone Himself? ⁵And if your will is His it **cannot** be true of you, **because** it is not true of Him.

• Study Question •

2. *We often feel homeless, lonely, and friendless. In what way does the Course address each of these perceived needs in this paragraph?*

Perhaps one of the most draining thoughts of all is that I am alone in my struggle through life. It's all up to me. If I don't do it, who will? That sense of being trapped in a lonely struggle against insurmountable odds can leave me feeling exhausted before I even begin.

Because of our alienation from our true Self through our own wish to be something else, we have become cut off from God and our spiritual family—not in fact, but in experience. As was said earlier, “You are at home in God, dreaming of exile” (T-10.I.2:1). We experience ourselves as homeless even though we have a home in the Kingdom (2:2). We imagine ourselves to be alone although God is with us constantly; in fact, we exist *in* God, like a fish does in water (W-pII.222.1:1-3).

Being alone is simply impossible for us, we are *that* intimately connected to God: “You can never be alone because the Source of all life goes with you wherever you go” (W-pI.41.4:3). Feeling lonely and abandoned is an inherent part of our belief in separation, but when we realize that we are not separated, and that God is always with us, those painful feelings will end forever (W-pI.41.1:1). We not only have God as our Companion, we have the friendship of all our brothers (2:3).

The sensation of being alone is simply not real; God would not allow it to be real. God's Will does not include being alone, either for Himself or for us (2:4-5).

Paragraph 3

3. ¹O my child [*children*], if you knew what God wills for you *, your joy would be complete! ²And what He wills **has** happened, for it was **always** true. ³When the light comes * and you have said, “God's Will is mine,” you will see such beauty that you will **know** * it is not of you. ⁴Out of your joy you will create beauty in His Name, for **your** joy * could no more be contained than His. ⁵The bleak little world will vanish into nothingness, and your heart * will be so filled with joy that it will leap into Heaven, and into the Presence of God. ⁶I cannot tell you what this will be like, for your heart is not ready *. ⁷Yet I **can** tell you, and remind you often, that what God wills for Himself He wills for **you**, and what He wills for you * **is** yours.

• Study Question •

3. *Based on this paragraph, how would you complete this sentence: “Joy will completely fill my heart when I finally realize that. _____.”? As an exercise, try reading the paragraph to yourself, aloud, inserting your name at the asterisks.*

In this paragraph Jesus gets almost caught up in ecstasy as he contemplates, in his inner vision, the full measure of God's Will for us. He speaks to us as his “child” instead of as his brother or sister, as he normally does, because he is speaking from a very high

state of consciousness. If we could see what he sees, he tells us, we would be overwhelmed with joy.

That implies, of course, that we currently do not and indeed cannot see what he sees (3:1,6). Yet, although we cannot yet *see* it, we can know it is there. We can understand that God's Will for us is something wonderful, something that causes our Elder Brother to exclaim, "O! If you only knew!" We can take comfort that God's Will is immutable. What God wills, happens; indeed, "what He wills has happened" (3:2). There is no time lag between God's willing and the manifestation of His Will. His Will was accomplished the instant the thought entered His Mind. It will be the same for all eternity, and it is the same right now (see T-30.III.7:1-8).

God's Will for us is the same as His will for Himself, and it belongs to us right now, in this very moment (3:7). Our forgetting it has not affected it in any way. The truth is still the truth, despite our denial of it. The image that comes to mind is of a radiant and glorious reality hidden behind a drab cloud of illusion, like the sun shining behind a dark cloud. When I travel by air I always love taking off on a rainy day, entering the clouds, and then emerging into the glorious light that is always shining above the clouds. From below the clouds are dark; from above, they are brilliantly, breathtakingly white and beautiful. I always experience a rush of joy when I see that sight. Perhaps that joy is an unconscious recognition that what I am seeing reflects the truth of a much higher reality.

What will it be like to rise above the clouds of illusion and enter into God's Presence? What will it be like when "your heart will be so filled with joy that it will leap into Heaven, and into the Presence of God" (3:5)?

Jesus says he can't explain it because our hearts aren't ready (3:6). It would be like trying to explain to a five-year-old what it is like to truly be in love, in a mature, adult, holy relationship. The child is simply not prepared to understand. She will understand one day, or at least be capable of understanding, but not now. Similarly, we are not ready to understand Heaven, and it is useless for us to speculate about it. All we can be told, Jesus says, is that Heaven will be for us the experience of what God wills for Himself (3:7). That has to be something beyond the confines of language to express. But we can be sure of this: it is wonderful and infinitely desirable.

When it happens to us, when our hearts finally lift through the clouds of illusion and into the endless light, we will see ourselves and each other bathed in such beauty that we will have no doubt it comes from God (3:3). We will recognize that His Will is ours; our hearts beat in unison with God's heart; and we are a perfect reflection of His grace, His majesty, His love, His beneficence, and everything about Him. Have you ever caught even a glimpse of that? I have! And I can tell you that it is more breathtaking than anything in this world—more than the sun on the tops of the clouds, more than the Grand Canyon, more than the redwood forests, more than the majesty of towering mountains, more than the luster of the galaxies. O, to see the beauty of God in a sister or brother! The memory alone is so beautiful it brings tears to my eyes.

When that glimpse has bloomed into permanent awareness, the joy we will experience will rise up from within and burst forth in an explosion of beauty, created in the name of God (3:4). We will have recovered our original function as co-creators with God, creating beauty just as He does, out of a surging joy that cannot be repressed. What a contrast this is to the weariness spoken of in the first paragraph, which we usually exhibit!

Paragraph 4

4. ¹The way is not hard, but it *is* very different. ²Yours is the way of pain, of which God knows nothing. **3**That way is hard indeed, and very lonely. ⁴Fear and grief are your guests, and they go with you and abide with you on the way. ⁵But the dark journey is not the way of God's Son. ⁶Walk in light and do not see the dark companions, for they are not fit companions for the Son of God, who was created *of* light and *in* light. ⁷The Great Light **always** surrounds you and shines out **from** you. ⁸How can you see the dark companions in a light such as this? ⁹If you see **them**, it is only because you are denying the light. ¹⁰But **deny them instead**, for the light is here and the way is clear.

• Study Question •

4. *The “dark companions” are mentioned here and in several other places in the section (4:4; 4:6–8; 5:5; 6:2; 7:8). Read these passages and then summarize what is said about the dark companions.*

Bleak, enervated depression on the one hand; expansive joy on the other—how do we make the transition? Which we experience depends only on our choice, our willingness to join our will with God's and to acknowledge His creation wherever we see it. “The way is not hard, but it *is* very different” (4:1). I find myself chuckling softly as I read that. It sure *is* “very different.” What an understatement!

We imagine the spiritual path to be very difficult. It seems hard, and at times a very lonely path (4:3). In truth, all the difficulty comes from the path of darkness and pain. In the New Testament Jesus said, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:30). I have read that the Greek word for “yoke” comes from the same root word as the word *yoga*. Wikipedia says of *yoga*, “The Sanskrit word *yoga* has the literal meaning of “yoke”, from a root *yuj* meaning ‘to join’, ‘to unite’, or ‘to attach,’” so it seems to go both ways. Jesus could have been saying, “My *yoga* is easy; my way is easy.” In essence the word means a program of practice; a way, a spiritual path. The difficulty comes, not in taking up his new way, but in letting go of the old one. As the Course often says, what is asked of us in following the path of God is only what comes naturally to us. God created us with His nature, and the path asks only that we allow that divine nature to manifest itself through us, doing what comes naturally.

If the path were hard it would tire us out. But as we've seen, what tires us out is our own mental conflict, based on our belief that our will is separate from God's. The hardness, loneliness, fear, and grief are part of *our* way, not God's way (4:2–5). They are the dark companions accompanying us on our journey (4:4,6).

When our eyes show us darkness, we must learn to look past it to the light, the “Great Light” that “surrounds [us] and shines out from [us]” (4:7). We need to learn to look past all the evidence for darkness (4:6), letting the light from within us shine into our brothers, revealing the corresponding light in them. This is the very different way Jesus is speaking of. We relinquish judgment and allow the holy nature in all of us to run its course. We find our own acceptance in Heaven through accepting our brothers on earth.

Greg Mackie

Comment [1]: “Yoke” is not a Greek word; it is an English word (the Greek word is “*zygón*”). You're right about the root, though.

Charles Fillmore, the co-founder of Unity, believed that spirit is the only reality, and that our physical senses do deceive us and show us illusions. He spoke of just this same looking past dark appearances to see the light of Truth. He wrote:

We refuse to let the evidences of sense belie the lofty reason...and reach our conclusions regardless of the seeming [appearances]—the phenomenal universe... These conditions which appear to the senses as existing in opposition to the clear reason of the higher Self, and which are opposed to what reason tells us are the attributes of God, are but the illusions of those senses. That only is true and permanent which corresponds to a cause which is all-good, all-powerful, all-intelligent, and everywhere present. A proper application of this doctrine by mankind will demonstrate its Truth. (*The Essential Charles Fillmore*, edited by James Gaither, page 61)

So we learn gradually to reject any perception of fear and grief and pain. We affirm our nature as the Son of God, and we affirm that as the Son of God, these things do not belong with us. “If [we] see them,” Jesus says, “it is only because [we] are denying the light” (4:9). Instead, we learn more and more to deny the reality of fear, grief, and pain, recognizing that God’s Light is always present (4:10).

Paragraph 5

5. ¹God hides nothing from His Son, even though His Son would hide himself. ²Yet the Son of God cannot hide his glory, for God wills him to be glorious, and gave him the light that shines in him. ³You will never lose your way, for God leads you. ⁴When you wander, you but undertake a journey that is not real. ⁵The dark companions, the dark way, are all illusions. ⁶Turn toward the light, for the little spark in you is part of a Light so great that it can sweep you out of all darkness forever. ⁷For your Father *is* your Creator, and you *are* like Him.

• Study Question •

5. *Why do you suppose that the last sentence (5:7) has its verbs in italics?*

It is darkness that hides things, not God. “The way is clear” and not obscure or difficult to find (4:10). Discovering the glorious truth about us isn’t difficult! The truth is obvious; it is self-evident. In fact, it *cannot* be hidden, even though we are trying to do so! We cannot hide our Self and our glory because God does not hide them. God wills us to be glorious (5:1–2). God Himself has taken on the responsibility of guiding us safely home (5:3). Often, we *think* we have lost our way. We stumble and fall; we turn away from the straight path. I know I have done so many times in my life, yet God has always led me back.

I recall one time years ago when my beliefs were still in a simplistic Christian framework. I was young and unmarried, and I believed that thinking about sex was sinful. Nevertheless, I thought about it a lot! So I felt quite guilty. In addition there were many other restrictions, many do’s and don’t’s. There was so much I believed I should be doing that I was not doing, and so much I was doing that I ought not to be doing. I was *miserable!* Finally, I got to the point of thinking that I’d be better off—at least happier!—

without God in my life. I decided just to do whatever I felt like doing, without regard to what I considered right or wrong.

I was a student in France at the time. So, I decided to view a “wicked” French film. I scanned the local paper for something that looked appropriately spicy, and I found a film titled, if I remember correctly, “L’Ecstase” (Ecstasy). The description said something about a woman searching for the ultimate in ecstasy. Sounded sexy to me! So I went.

When the film got under way it became apparent fairly soon that it was not at all what I expected. Instead, it was a film about a woman in search of God, willing to put herself through all kinds of pain in her struggle against sin, even to the point of burning her hand over the flame on the stove to punish herself. A priest counseled her: “My dear child, don’t you realize you don’t have to do anything to be forgiven? Don’t you realize God has already done it all for you? There is no need to struggle!”

Here I was, thinking I was running away from God, and here was the Holy Spirit, leading me right into a film that contained the very answer I needed! No, you can’t really lose your way.

All of our apparent failures are not real; they are hallucinations of failure (5:4). When you are depressed, feeling defeated and discouraged, let the Holy Spirit remind you that you are just having a nightmare (5:5). You may think you have “lost it,” whatever *it* is, but you *cannot* lose it (5:3).

All we need do in such moments is to “turn toward the light.” Our little spark is part of God’s Light (5:6). When we turn to the light within ourselves we are turning to God’s own Light, for they are the same Light. That Light is greater than all the illusory darkness we can produce, and can “sweep [us] out of all darkness forever” (5:6).

I have discovered that no matter how low I sink—and I sink pretty low at times!—if I am willing to turn to that light within me and put my trust in it, it is *always* enough to erase all of my dark feelings. Always! When I can pray, “Father, I choose once more to place myself in Your hands. I *do* want Your Will. I *do* want to extend Your Love through me in this world. I am Your Love made manifest,” then something happens. The depression lifts. I start to believe in myself again.

The reason this simple inner turning has such a powerful effect is that it is realigning us with the truth. We *are* like our Creator, and that can’t be changed (5:7). Even my apparent failures cannot change it.

Paragraph 6

6. ¹The children of light cannot abide in darkness, for darkness is **not** in them. ²Do not be deceived by the dark comforters, and never let them enter the mind of God’s Son, for they have no place in His temple. ³When you are tempted to deny Him remember that there *are* no other gods to place [that you *can* place] before Him, and accept His Will for you in peace. ⁴For you **cannot** accept it otherwise.

• Study Question •

6. *Call to mind a situation in which you are tempted to succumb to fear, or to grief, or to a sense of pain. Somehow, some dark emotion seems to be tempting, or even comforting in a twisted way. Make a conscious choice*

not to be fooled, and refuse to let them enter your mind. You might even speak to them: "Fear, I refuse to let you enter my mind; you have no place in me."

You and darkness don't mix! You don't belong *in darkness* because there is no darkness *in you*. If you should find yourself in darkness for a while, be assured you cannot remain ("abide") there (6:1). Your nature as God's Son won't allow it; you will inexorably be led out of darkness into the light.

Don't be fooled by the temporary attractiveness of dark feelings. I think we have all, at one time or another, been tempted to wallow in self-pity, grief, or fear. When I think about it rationally I cannot understand it, and yet I know there have been times when I took perverse pleasure in indulging my dark feelings. Jesus is appealing to us not even to let them in! (6:2). They lurk just outside of our consciousness, whining like pitiful dogs: "Let me in! Let me in! You'll feel ever so much better if you just let me in!"

Indulging in our darker emotions is a form of the denial of God, as we saw in Chapter 10 (T-10.V.1:3; T-10.V.3:8). Thus, for example, to indulge ourselves in fear is to deny God, and to seek satisfaction from another god—that is, the idol of our fear. When we are tempted in this way, the proper response is to recall that what is tempting us is merely an illusion; "there *are* no other gods" (6:3). Instead of indulging ourselves, we can simply accept God's will in peace (6:3). And "in peace" is really the only way we can accept God's Will. If we were to accept it grudgingly, or with a distressed sense of loss, that would not really be accepting it at all.

To me, this passage seems to be implying a mental conflict that arises when God's guidance, or the circumstances of life that He brings our way, seem to run counter to our own desires. God is leading us in a certain direction, and from the perspective of our ego, we perceive that direction as containing loss to us, or some danger to our puffed-up ego image. We are therefore tempted to respond to God's Will with grief or with fear instead of with joyful acceptance. That, says Jesus, is precisely the time we need mental vigilance. We need to stand guard over our minds, refusing to allow the dark emotions to enter, and reaffirming our willing, joyful union with the Will of God.

Paragraph 7

7. ¹Only God's Comforter **can** comfort you. ²In the quiet of His temple, He waits to give you the peace that is yours. ³**Give** His peace, that you may enter the temple and find it waiting for you. ⁴But be holy in the Presence of God, or you will not know that you are there. ⁵For what is unlike God cannot enter His Mind, because it was not His Thought and therefore does not belong to Him. ⁶And **your** mind must be as pure as His, if you would know what belongs to **you**. ⁷Guard carefully His temple, for He Himself dwells there and abides in peace. ⁸You cannot enter God's Presence with the dark companions beside you, but you also cannot enter alone. ⁹All your brothers must enter **with** you, for until you have accepted them *you* cannot enter. ¹⁰For you cannot understand Wholeness unless **you** are whole, and no part of the Son can be excluded if he would know the Wholeness of his Father.

• Study Question •

7. *Consider the imagery of the temple in this paragraph.*
 - a. *What does the temple represent?*
 - b. *What resides in the temple?*
 - c. *What does it mean to enter the temple?*
 - d. *What does it mean to guard the temple?*

When the vicissitudes of life get you down, don't look to the world for comfort. Don't try to drown your sorrows with intoxicants or banish your doldrums with stimulating entertainment. Don't imagine you can find comfort by indulging your dark emotions. When you are tired and weak and worn, as the old song says, the only true comfort to be found is the Comforter God provides, that is, the Holy Spirit (7:1; compare with 1:2).

Is that a habit you have formed? When you start to feel world-weary, do you turn to the Comforter within? Or do you first seek comfort elsewhere?

Within each of us there is a temple where the Holy Spirit waits to meet with us (7:2). How patiently He waits! When we consider how often we actually visit that temple, it's rather amazing that He is still there, still waiting! We can enter that temple with Him at any time and find peace in the midst of our tumultuous lives. We can enter that quiet place and take rest and repose there with Him. That is all He is calling on us to do here: to take quiet time with God in the inner temple.

(At this point, you might want to give expression to your desire to turn to God for comfort by reading the first paragraph of Workbook Lesson 221, speaking it aloud to God.)

There are prerequisites to entering this temple, however. There are certain companions you must leave behind, and certain others you must bring with you. First, as we've been learning, you need to purify your own mind of all the dark companions (7:7–8). You practice mental vigilance; you guard the temple (7:7). You say no to the ego, and refuse to give in to the temptation of your darker emotions. Your mind must become as pure and holy as God's Mind in order to recognize your unity with Him (7:4–6). Second, you have to bring along your brothers; you cannot exclude them (7:9). You must extend peace to them (7:3; see also T-6.V(B)). You must accept them in your mind as God's Son before you can enter God's Mind as His Son, because the Son is one. What happens to one part happens to the whole; what happens to the whole happens to every part (7:10).

We've seen this message time and again: "You cannot enter God's Presence...alone" (7:8). I think there are at least two levels of meaning here, one immediate, the other longer term. In the immediate sense, it means that as we seek in our daily times of quiet to enter God's Presence, we will succeed only when we are willing for our brothers and sisters to enjoy that same blessing. It reminds me of what Jesus taught in the gospels:

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. (Mark 11:25, NIV)

When we approach God, if our hearts are not clear with our brothers, our approach will be blocked—not by God, Who always welcomes us, but by our own obstinacy. A mind harboring unforgiving thoughts, a mind holding grievances, is not a mind like

God's; how, then, could it exist within His mind? (7:5). The comfort we seek will be diminished to the degree that we allow such dark companions to linger in our minds.

The longer term meaning of the message is that, in the end, when we enter into full and everlasting awareness of the Presence of God, we will do so together because we *are* together. Our awareness of God's Wholeness depends on our inclusion of every part of God's Son (7:10).

Paragraph 8

8. ¹In your mind you can **accept** the whole Sonship and bless it with the light your Father gave it. ²Then you will be worthy to dwell in the temple **with** Him, because it is **your** will not to be alone. ³God blessed His Son forever. ⁴If you will bless him in **time**, you will **be** in eternity. ⁵Time cannot separate you from God if you use it on **behalf** of the eternal.

• Study Question •

8. *How can we, who live in time, begin to move into eternity?*

We seek the Presence of God in our lives, but time often seems to separate us from God. Perhaps we had a brilliant experience of God, but it is in the past; or we think that a great experience of God is, for us, in the far future. The experience of God is always in the *now*. The experience you once had, or the experience you think you will have one day, is with you now, and can be tapped into now, because anything to do with God is eternal.

You do not need to leave time to know union with God. You can know God *in time* if you “use [time] on behalf of the eternal” (8:5). But what does that mean? It means to choose to remember what is true in eternity while you are still in time. It means that you use time to forgive. You use time to “see the changeless in the heart of change” (W-pI.122.13:4). You use time to see past the darkness to the light that is always, eternally beyond it.

We can enter into God's Presence in any moment in which we choose to deny entrance to the dark companions, and allow entrance to all our brothers and sisters who, together with us, comprise the Sonship. Rather than judging anyone as unworthy, we accept everyone, and see them as blessed with the light given them by God (8:1–2). We are simply agreeing with God's blessing (8:3–4). Here within time, we can find a taste of eternity by acknowledging the light of God in our brothers (8:5). That is what the purpose of time is: to teach us to bless all of God's creations, including us.

Answer Key

1. I am the source of my own weariness. I can find rest and comfort from the Comforter, that is, the Holy Spirit. I can turn from my negative thoughts to Him, and seek rest and comfort in His quiet Presence in my mind. In practical terms this means that when I begin to feel weary, I need to find a way to stop and spend some time in quiet to renew my communion with God.
2. I feel homeless, but in reality I am at home in the Kingdom. I feel lonely, but the truth is that I am with God. I feel friendless, yet all my brothers surround me.
3. Joy will completely fill my heart when I finally realize that God's Will is my will; that my heart mirrors the heart of God.
4. Fear and grief are inescapable if we follow the dark path of the ego, but we, who are children of light, should strive to be free of them. Whether we see them or not is determined by our choice, because they are illusions. If we so choose, we can refuse them entrance into our minds. Unless we are free of fear and grief we cannot enjoy God's Presence.
5. The italics emphasize that no matter what we think or seem to experience, the reality of our creation by God has not changed.
6. No written response is expected.
7. In the imagery of the temple:
 - a. Our inner altar; our mind or spirit where we are one with God; almost synonymous with the Mind of God (7:5).
 - b. The Holy Spirit dwells there, waiting to comfort us when we need comfort.
 - c. Entering the temple means connecting in our minds with the Presence of God in our innermost being.
 - d. Guarding the temple refers to mental vigilance: keeping watch against and refusing the dark companions of fear and grief.
8. We can bless the Son of God and forgive all our brothers. In so doing we are using time on behalf of the eternal. This places us in eternity ourselves.