

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 12, The Holy Spirit's Curriculum

Section I, The Judgment of the Holy Spirit

Overview of Chapter 12

The opening paragraphs of this chapter summarize the key concepts from the eleven preceding chapters. The chapter title, "The Holy Spirit's Curriculum," well describes the chapter's content. A *curriculum* is a listing of subjects taught in a particular course of study. As the word suggests, the chapter presents an extended overview of the lessons the Course is trying to teach us.

Key Concepts Already Introduced

The opening paragraphs remind us that the *mind* is always the source or the cause, and that everything else is the effect of choices made in the mind.

**Mind chooses and interprets —
emotions react to mind's interpretation —
behavior results.**

First, the mind, which is where choices are made, chooses between two possible interpretations of things and people in our lives, based on what we *want* to see: either the ego's world or God's creation. It constantly chooses between these "two evaluations," as they were called in an earlier section (T-9.VII), and (as we begin) usually chooses the ego's interpretation. As a result, we see attack, or desertion, or betrayal, or enslavement (manipulation and control). Then, we make our interpretation *real*—real *to us* but not truly real. We believe our interpretation is a fact, and not just our perception.

Second, we have an *emotional* reaction to our interpretation of things. We feel attacked. We feel ourselves to be the victim of the world we see. We feel angry, and want justice or vengeance; we feel pain.

Finally, in many cases, we translate the emotional reaction into *behavior*. We *act* like a victim. Perhaps we even get sick. "Oh! How you have hurt me!" we say to our brother. When we act out our emotions and play the victim, we are actually *attacking* our brother. It is a particularly vicious attack because it is disguised and looks like something else. By acting the victim, we are hurling an accusation at our brother: "You are a victimizer! You are a betrayer, a deserter, an attacker, a controller." That is *never* the truth about him; it is only our interpretation, which we have made real to ourselves, and now are trying to make real to him.

Sometimes, however, we don't act out the emotion. We control our behavior. We smile and act nice; we *pretend* we don't have the emotional reaction. We may believe

that we are being loving by doing so, avoiding conflict. Actually, it may sometimes be healthier to act out the emotion we are feeling (although it is still a vicious attack!). By suppressing the emotion, we are splitting and attacking our own mind. One part of the mind is seeing the other person as a sinner and having a strong emotional reaction, while the other part is telling us we can't act that way and be a loving being. The integrity of our mind is destroyed.

Attempting to control our emotions does not work any better than controlling the behavior. Attacking the emotion directly solves nothing. Trying to stifle your fear, your hurt, and your anger simply isn't possible. As long as the interpretation on which the emotions rest remains unchanged, *you cannot forgive in truth*.

The Course does not want to leave either behavior or emotion intact; it wants to change them both. "This is a course in cause and not effect" (T-21.VII.7:8), it tells us. You can't fix the problem by changing things on the level of the *effects*, which is the level of behavior or the level of our emotional reactions. You have to go back to the level of *cause*, which is the choice made in mind and the interpretations based on that choice.

So you can't fix it by altering the behavior; you can't fix it by altering the emotions. Although it may be more honest to act out those emotions of hurt and betrayal, doing so is not the final answer. You can only resolve the situation by going back to the source, the decision in the mind to interpret in a certain way. We need *a different interpretation*, a different judgment. That is why the entire process begins only when we are willing to give up our interpretations, to call every one into question (T-11.VIII.3:8), to realize that we don't know what anything means (T-11.VIII.2:3,5), and to ask the Holy Spirit for a different way of seeing things.

His way of seeing things—His interpretation—is called here "the judgment of the Holy Spirit" (title of Section I). We saw in the previous section that only loving thoughts give this world any reality at all; everything else is false. Therefore the Holy Spirit interprets things in this way:

Every loving thought is true. Everything else is an appeal for healing and for help, regardless of the form it takes. (T-12.I.3:3-4)

That is the truth. Any other interpretation is the result of our ego, which imposes what it *wants* to see on top of the truth, and obscures it. All of our problems, all of our confusion and emotional pain, stem from this one source. We are not the victims of the world we see (W-pI.31.title); rather, we are the victims of our own interpretations, the victims of our own thoughts about what things mean.

This chapter, then, is about what the Holy Spirit is trying to teach us: to accept His judgment in place of our own. It tells us what we will begin to see when we are finally willing to let go of our interpretations, to stop thinking we understand anyone else's ego, and to allow the interpretation of the Holy Spirit to arise in place of our own. "I will step back and let Him lead the way" (W-pI.155.title) is one way of summing up this process; I withdraw my belief in my own interpretations of things, and I accept His judgment into my mind. This isn't about finding better parking places; it is about seeing everyone and everything in the world with different eyes (W-pI.in.4:1)

Section I, The Judgment of the Holy Spirit

Note that the material quoted from the Text has been edited to reflect the emphasis, and sometimes the wording, used in the "URText," the earliest version of the Text. Differences from the published version either in alternate wording or omitted words are indicated according to the following legend:

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

Paragraph 1

1. 1 You have been told not to make error real, and the way to do this is very simple. 2 If you **want** to believe in error, you would **have** to make it real because it is not true. 3 But **truth** is real in its **own** right, and to believe in truth *you do not have to do anything*. 4 Understand that you do not respond to anything [stimuli] directly, but to your interpretation of it [stimuli as you interpret them]. 5 Your interpretation thus becomes the **justification** for the response. 6 That is why analyzing the motives of others is hazardous to **you**. 7 If you decide that someone is **really** trying to attack you or desert you or enslave you, you will respond as if he had actually **done** so, having made [**because you have made**] his error **real** to you. 8 To interpret error is to **give it power**, and having done this you **will** overlook truth.

• Study Question •

1. *What do you think it will look like when you stop making error real?*

As the opening line of the chapter indicates, we have been asked not to make errors real (T-9.III.6:7-8, 7:2;). So let's stop and consider what the Course means by *making the error real*. To learn *not* to do this, we have to learn to recognize it. We have to know what we are supposed to stop doing.

Making the Error Real

When someone does something (or neglects to do something), our mind first chooses which version of the world it wants to see: the ego's or God's. If we are afraid of God's Love, if we are controlled by our guilt and fear of punishment, we will want to get rid of that guilt by projecting it onto someone else. Therefore, we will choose the ego's view of the world so we can see the evil as outside ourselves and place the blame there.

Based on that choice, the mind then makes an interpretation of what we have seen. We label what our brother did as attack, or abandonment, or neglect, or some other "sin." We then freeze that interpretation in concrete; we "make it real." We convince ourselves

that our *interpretation* is *fact*. We now have an emotional reaction to that “fact” and act accordingly.

Here's a clear definition of making the error real from the Course itself: “To perceive errors in anyone, and to react to them as if they were real, is to make them real to you.” (9.III.6.7)

Therefore, we could say that to make the error real means to interpret our brother's actions as an attack, or as sin, and to view that attack or “sin” as real. What is only our interpretation has become “fact” in our minds. We then either (1) attack back (probably the most common response), (2) erect defenses (playing the victim), (3) “forgive” it by abstaining from counter-attack (false forgiveness or the martyr), or (4) try to “fix” it by correcting our brother or sister (the unhealed healer).

That is making the error real, and it is what the Course says we have been told *not to do*. In describing the ego's plan for forgiveness in Chapter 9, Section IV, Jesus said:

The ego's plan is to have you see error clearly first, and then overlook it. Yet how can you overlook what you have made real? (T-9.IV.4.4–5)

In forgiveness as taught by the Holy Spirit, however, the overlooking comes *first* so that the error disappears from sight (T-9.IV.5:3). In other words, the Holy Spirit enters in at the mind level, before you have interpreted your brother's act as a sin and frozen it into “fact” in your mind. Once you make that false interpretation and believe it to represent reality, you cannot help reacting emotionally and behaviorally to it. Once it seems real to you, you cannot truly forgive it. “For it is impossible to think of sin as true and not believe forgiveness is a lie” (W-pI.134.4:2).

When you see the errors of the ego in someone else, you have already chosen to listen to your own ego and perceive what it wants you to perceive (T-9.III.3.1). If you see anyone—yourself or another person—as guilty in any way, you are making the error real, because all guilt is unreal (T-13.X.6:5; T-13.X.7:3).

In my own words, this is what the Course teaches:

When it looks like someone is attacking you, the attack is only your *perception* or *interpretation* of what they are doing. You are making your interpretation real to yourself by believing your interpretation is the truth. There is another way to see it.

When it looks like someone is treating you unfairly, that is only your *perception* or *interpretation* of what they are doing. There is another way to see it.

When it looks like someone is causing you pain, that is only your *perception* or *interpretation* of what they are doing. There is another way to see it.

To see these kinds of things in another way is *not easy*. In fact, for you and for me, *it is impossible*. That is why the book speaks of *miracles*!

The change of mind and shift of perception the Course refers to are very, very real. They are not simple changes in our behavior. A miracle does *not* mean:

Pretending you don't feel attacked, or unfairly treated, or hurt. That is just denial.

Trying to see it differently, trying to figure out how to forgive truly.

Feeling guilty because you still see attack or sin as real.

The miracle is about *really seeing things differently*! Really perceiving, at the gut level, that attack isn't real attack, unfair treatment isn't real unfair treatment, and pain isn't real pain. It is about *experiencing* this so that you *know* it; not just getting the concepts.

There is absolutely *no way for you to do this* by yourself. That is why you *must* call

upon the help of the Holy Spirit. This kind of vision is His gift to you, not something you work up on your own.

And yet, coming back to that first line of the chapter, Jesus says “The way to do this is very simple.” It is simple because it isn’t something you have to *do*. Rather, it is something you must *stop doing*. The next few lines explain this clearly if you follow the logic carefully. Let’s follow along.

For a moment, assume that the Course is true, and that there really is no such thing as error, which is a generic word standing for sin, attack, or any unloving or ungodly thing a person might do. You, along with everyone else, are still as sinless as the day God created you, and everything that looks like sin is an illusion. Just assume for a moment that everyone is really *sinless*, without error.

Now, given that error is not real, imagine what you need to do to come to *believe* that error *is* real. You would somehow have to convince yourself of its reality. You would have to *do something* to make it real to you: “If you want to believe in error, you would have to make it real because it is not true.” (T-12.I.1:2). This passage reminds me of the song about hatred and racial prejudice: “You have to be carefully taught.” The facts simply don’t support racial hatred. To believe an entire race is hateful, a person must do a lot of twisting of the facts and misinterpretation, and in the end, they hate because they want to hate.

You don’t have to *do anything* to believe in truth (1:3). What’s real is real, and believing in it takes no effort. Therefore, to experience truth and not make the error real—to forgive as the Course teaches it, which means to see there is no sin to forgive—all you have to do is...*nothing*.

What’s easier than nothing?

You *are* currently making error real all the time. In itself, the error is not real; therefore, you must be *doing something* to make it real. Truth is *already* real; you don’t need to do anything to *make* it real. So all you need to “do” is to *stop* doing what you are doing. You don’t have to do anything more, just cease doing what you are now doing. This is why you need to look at your ego honestly. You have to *see what you are always doing* in order to know you are doing it, and to stop it.

“You do not respond to anything directly, but to your interpretation of it” (1:4). It is not what your brother or sister *does* that makes you experience attack, or blame, or pain, or loss. It is *your interpretation* of what they do. You don’t get angry at a fact; you get angry at your interpretation of the facts. The same idea is stated in more detail in the Manual for Teachers:

Perhaps it will be helpful to remember that no one can be angry at a fact. It is always an interpretation that gives rise to negative emotions, regardless of their seeming justification by what *appears* as facts. Regardless, too, of the intensity of the anger that is aroused. (M-17.4:1-3)

Negative *emotions* arise from negative *interpretations*.

It is your interpretation that is making the error real. The thing you are doing, and the thing that you must stop doing, is interpreting or judging what your brothers and sisters do. Therefore, in simple terms:

Stop paying attention to your interpretation of things, and let the Holy Spirit give you another interpretation.

As Chapter 11 told us, one of our biggest mistakes is thinking that we understand what things mean (T-11.VIII.2:3). Here, Jesus is pursuing the same line of thought. He says that thinking we've properly analyzed someone's ego motivation is more than a mistake—it's *dangerous*: "Analyzing the motives of others is hazardous to *you*" (1:6). The ego makes use of the situation, trying to prove that we *can* understand our perceptions: "The analysis of ego-motivation is very complicated, very obscuring, and never without your own ego-involvement" (2:1).

Such analysis is hazardous *to the one doing the perceiving and interpreting* because it literally causes you to be out of touch with reality! "...having done this you will overlook truth" (1:8). You lay an interpretation on the person and then respond to the interpretation as if it were real: "If you decide that someone is really trying to attack you or desert you or enslave you, you will respond as if he had actually done so, having made his error real to you" (1:7). You are reacting to something that isn't there; you are delusional and don't know it. Think about this the next time you perceive anyone in one of the three ways mentioned in sentence 7 (for example, someone trying to manipulate you). By engaging in such judgments you are setting yourself up for disaster. You are wasting your life defending yourself against imaginary enemies.

When someone around you "makes a mistake" and listens to his or her own ego, you are the one who gives their ego power over you (1.8). You give it power by trying to interpret it. You set up your interpretation and think it is real, and the interpretation blocks the truth from your sight. (The *truth* is what the Holy Spirit sees; it is the reality of the person as God's creation: their innocence and loveliness.) So all you need to do to not make the error real and to see the truth is to *stop paying attention to your own interpretations* and to ask the Holy Spirit to give you His interpretation.

Paragraph 2

2. 1 The analysis of ego-motivation is very complicated, very obscuring, and **never** without your own ego-involvement. 2 The whole process represents a clear-cut attempt to demonstrate **your own** ability to understand what you perceive. 3 This is shown by the fact that you **react** to your interpretations as if they **were** correct. 4 You may then control your reactions behaviorally, **but not emotionally**. 5 This would obviously be a split or an attack on the integrity of your mind, pitting one level within it against another.

• Study Question •

2. *What is the major factor that makes it complicated to analyze another person's ego motivation?*

We are always analyzing other people's motives and attributing harmful intentions to them. This is "very complicated" and your own ego always gets involved (2:1). Analyzing the motives of others makes their ego real to you, and it makes your own ego real as well, which is why the ego wants you to do it. Basically, the Course is advising you to give it up. Stop trying to figure people out; it always ends up with your blaming and judging them in some way, making their errors real and making your own ego real to yourself.

Have you ever encountered someone who is in over their head, but is trying to bluff

their way through some situation? They pretend to know what they are talking about, but they are really blowing hot air. I have seen this sometimes in people giving guided tours or even in teachers when someone asks them a difficult question. They do not want to admit they do not know the answer, so they make one up and state it with all the authority they can muster. In several cases, it just happened to be something I knew about, or they probably would have fooled me. They didn't want to seem ignorant; they wanted to remain in control as the trusted authority, but in my eyes they were making fools of themselves because I knew the truth.

Well, that's what the ego does. The ego always wants to be in control. It wants to demonstrate its ability to understand the situation (2:2). When we by ourselves interpret something as complex as another person's ego, and then react as if our interpretation were a fact, we are giving way to our ego, which is trying to prove it has not lost control (2:3). The ego is thinking, "If I can understand it, label it, categorize it, and especially if I can stand in judgment on it, then I am okay."

Maybe we try to control our reactions "behaviorally" (2:4). That is, for example, you feel attacked, but you graciously refrain from counter-attack; or you feel hurt, but you don't strike back. You may sulk in a corner and lick your wounds. You congratulate yourself because you are not acting out your rage; you are nobly suffering in silence.

You may be controlling behavior, but you can't control your *emotional* reaction once you have accepted your interpretation as the truth. (Remember, this is your reaction *to your interpretation*, not to the truth.) Trying to regiment your emotions just gives you a headache! Jesus says you are literally attacking the integrity of your mind when you do that (2:5). You feel schizoid. One part of you wants to kill the person who is perceived as attacking you, while the other part is trying to hold the lid on your temper. *That isn't what the Course is advising us to do!* (It isn't advising us to blow the lid off either, as we will see.)

Paragraph 3

3. 1 There is but one interpretation of [all] motivation that makes any sense. 2 And because it is the Holy Spirit's judgment it requires no effort at all on your part. 3 Every loving thought is true. 4 **Everything else** is an appeal for healing and help, [help. That is what it is,] regardless of the form it takes. 5 Can anyone be justified in responding with anger to a brother's plea for help? 6 No response can **be** appropriate **except** the willingness to give it **to** him, for this and **only** this is what he is **asking** for. 7 Offer him anything **else**, and **you** are assuming the right to attack his reality by interpreting it **as you see fit**. 8 Perhaps the danger of this to your **own** mind is not yet fully apparent, [but this by no means signifies that it is not perfectly clear]. 9 If you believe [maintain] that an appeal for help is something **else** you will **react** to something else. 10 Your response will therefore be inappropriate to reality as **it** is, but **not** to your perception **of** it. [This is poor reality testing by definition.]

• Study Question •

3. a) *What two categories does the Holy Spirit see in everything?*
- b) *What is the one appropriate response to both categories of things?*

The only interpretation that makes sense is that of the Holy Spirit (3:1–2). You might as well kiss *all* your interpretations goodbye; they are useless. But because this interpretation comes from the Holy Spirit, “it requires no effort at all on your part” (3:2). Learning to do nothing (to refrain from interpreting by yourself) takes a long time, but when you learn it, it really is *easy* and *effortless*. Once you realize that your interpretations are causing you pain, you *won't want* them and you will gladly let them go. When you let them go, the interpretation of the Holy Spirit just *shows up* to take the place of yours.

The only activity necessary is to observe your own reactions (which are reactions to your interpretations) and to realize they are not valid. You stop trying to *justify* your reactions but you don't *fight* your reactions. The Course never says not to get angry, but it *does* say that “anger is never justified” (T-30.VI.1:1; M-17.8:6). So when you get angry, you notice it, and you tell yourself, “OK, I am angry. I am reacting to my interpretation of things, which is unreliable. Holy Spirit, please help me to see this differently.” And that is all you do. You don't *try* to see it differently; you let the Holy Spirit bring that to you. This is why it requires no effort. In fact, making an effort will always engage your ego and result in just another judgment.

The judgment of the Holy Spirit is the same as the judgment of your own true Self. Love is your nature. Any thought of attacking another person, any thought of getting vengeance or getting even, any thought of attributing blame and guilt to another person *always hurts you*. It hurts you because it goes against your nature, because your nature is Love. What hurts is when you close your heart. What hurts is when you constrict yourself around the spontaneous flow of love that always is welling up within you. When you start to realize that, you willingly stop doing it. And when you stop *blocking* the love that is always springing up within you, it flows out without effort, and you accept the judgment of the Holy Spirit.

What, then, is the judgment of the Holy Spirit? What is the perception of the world that will take the place of ours if we are willing to let go of it?

The next two sentences are the keys to this entire section; indeed, they are keys to the whole *Course*! They define the judgment of the Holy Spirit:

Every loving thought is true. Everything else is an appeal for healing and help, regardless of the form it takes. (3:3–4)

This is how the Holy Spirit sees absolutely everything. It's either love or a call for love; nothing else, not ever. “The only judgment involved is the Holy Spirit's one division into two categories; one of love, and the other the call for love” (T-14.X.7:1).

Unless you are willing to apply this judgment to everyone in your life, you won't be willing to apply it to yourself. Wouldn't you like to think that, *in yourself*, everything is either the expression of a loving thought or else a call for help? Wouldn't that picture of yourself enable you to experience your own innocence? It is a view of the world and yourself—a way of perceiving the world and yourself—that is totally non-judgmental, totally without any blame and without any guilt.

Everything is either *love* or a *call for love*, which means there is no blame or guilt in *anything*. I think that if we are honest, we have a difficult time seeing how some things can fall into either category. The classic example is Hitler and the Nazi holocaust. A

more recent example is the crimes of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia and Bosnia. Those are tough cases, graduate school of forgiveness material. We are still in grade school or kindergarten. I'm not going to pretend that I could look on someone who had committed mass murder and respond with nothing but love, and I don't think the Course expects us to do so all at once. That is something we all have to *learn* how to do. But we don't have to look at such extreme examples to find things we have difficulty forgiving! I'm sure you can think of something done by someone you know very well that makes it hard for you to accept their perfect innocence. Those things, the ones that are close up and personal, are the ones we all need to work on.

I'm not implying that the petty "sins" of our close friends and relatives are as heinous as the crimes of Hitler and Milosevic—although the Course does teach that the whole idea of a hierarchy of illusions is false (T-23.II.2–3). No one illusion is greater than any other. No one sin is greater than another. All of them are the same: illusions, and therefore untrue. That is why "There is no order of difficulty in miracles" (T-1.I.1:1). It isn't that our sins are as heinous as Hitler's; it's that his are as *meaningless* as ours!

We find it hard to consider everything as either love or a call for love, but that is the natural way of seeing things for the Holy Spirit, which is precisely why we need His assistance, His "instruction in perception" (T-11.VIII.3:5). Any time we perceive anything besides love or a call for love, we are looking at things with the ego and therefore perceiving falsely. We are mistakenly interpreting someone's behavior as attack (3:7), desertion, or betrayal. We are seeing things that are not there. When we do this, the only possible response we can make appears to be some form of attack, condemnation, defense or punishment. We may even think that we *would like* to be loving, but it just isn't possible in light of what this person has done.

If your brother is expressing a loving thought, of course you respond with love. If he is sinning or attacking you, how could you love that? But if he is expressing a *call for love*, what response other than love could be appropriate? So, no matter what anyone else does, *you always respond with love*. What could be simpler? No complex analysis is required. All you do is respond with love, in every situation (3:5–7). The difficulty for us lies in translating our perception of attack into the perception of a call for love. Once we can perceive the call for love, responding with love is quite natural.

Being a "Realized Master" like Jesus is the easiest thing in the world. There are no complex choices—in fact no choice at all!—no need for deep analysis. You don't even need to figure out if it is love or a call for love; in fact you cannot (T-14.X.7:2). You simply respond to *everything* with love.

You won't learn to do this overnight. We need to be gentle with ourselves when we respond to others without love. I am just pointing out that no response but love is *ever appropriate*. Attack is never justified (T-30.VI.1:1–2). How can you respond to a call for help with *attack* and say it is justified? If you perceive your brother's action as attack, then yes, counter-attack seems justified. But if you let go of your perception and accept the perception of the Holy Spirit, then attack cannot be justified. If you attack, you are believing in your own interpretation and "making it real," reacting as though the attack and sin that you see are real.

If you believe the appeal for help is *something else* like attack or betrayal, then of course "you will react to something else" (3:9). Your response is appropriate to *your perception* of reality, but not to reality as it really is (3:10). So—if what the Course is

saying is true, and if the perception of the Holy Spirit is *real*—if everything that is going on is, *in reality*, either love or a call for love—then you have been living in a hallucination! You have been responding to a bad dream. You have been out of touch with reality. You have been insane. And *that* is the “danger of this to your own mind” that is spoken of here (3:8) and earlier (1:6).

In the reality that the Holy Spirit sees, there is no attack. No one attacks anyone; they just call out for help. Of course your body can be attacked, and your ego, but you are not your body and you are not your ego, nor do your body and ego have any real existence. When Jesus was being crucified, he did not see it as an attack! What seemed like a terrible injustice, he said, was inconsequential (T-6.I.9:1). Attacks on the body, according to Jesus, do not justify anger (T-6.I.4:1–4). He didn't deny there were nails being driven through his hands and feet, but he refused to interpret that as an attack (T-6.I.5:2–3)! He blessed the ones who were killing his body; he prayed for their forgiveness.

Other bodies may be attacking your body, and other egos may be attacking your ego, but that isn't who you really are and it isn't who *they* really are; it is just one illusion attacking another illusion, and it has no meaning. That is what the Holy Spirit wants to teach us, if we are willing to listen.

We've all probably met someone who is out of touch with reality, and in some way, maybe a small and socially acceptable way, they are paranoid or insane. Perhaps he is a hypochondriac. Perhaps she is stuck in an abusive relationship. To you who see more clearly than they do, it is obvious how they suffer because they are out of touch with reality. The Course is telling us we are *all* out of touch with reality if we perceive an appeal for help as *anything else* but an appeal for help, and we are hurting ourselves, and responding in ways that are inappropriate—not ways that are sinful or wrong, just *inappropriate*.

The change in perception that is induced by the miracle is just this: Suddenly, what looked to you like an attack is no longer an attack; it is a call for help, and you know instinctively that the only response that can be justified is to give your brother what he is asking for—help, or love. It is the only response you *want* to give. You find yourself responding with love to everything. Of course you respond to *love* with love! But now, you recognize everything that is not love as a *call* for love, and you respond accordingly.

Paragraphs 4–5

4. 1 There is nothing to prevent you from recognizing **all** calls for help as exactly what they are **except your own imagined [perceived] need to attack**. 2 It is only **this** that makes you willing to engage in endless “battles” with reality, in which you **deny** the reality of the need for healing by making **it** unreal. 3 You would not do this except for your **unwillingness** to accept reality as it is, and which you therefore withhold from yourself [**to perceive reality, which you withhold from yourself**].

5. 1 It is surely good advice to tell you not to judge what you do not understand. 2 No one with a personal investment is a reliable witness, for truth to him has become what he **wants** it to be. 3 If you are unwilling to perceive an appeal for help **as what it is**, it is because **you** are unwilling to give help **and to receive it**. [**The analysis of the ego's “real” motivation is the modern equivalent**

of the inquisition. For in both, a brother's errors are "uncovered," and he is then attacked for his own good. What can this be, but projection? For his errors lay in the minds of his interpreters, for which they punished him.] 4 To fail to recognize a call for help is to refuse help. 5 Would you maintain that you do not need it? 6 Yet this is what you are maintaining when you refuse to recognize a brother's appeal, for only by answering his appeal can you be helped. 7 Deny him your help and you will not recognize [perceive] God's Answer to you. 8 The Holy Spirit does not need your help in interpreting motivation, but you do need His.

• Study Question •

4. When you refuse to accept what your brother is doing as a call for love, what is the effect on you?

The only thing that prevents us from seeing the call for help that lies behind every perceived attack is our "own imagined need to attack" (4:1). In other words, we look at a brother who is appealing for our help (in reality) and what we see is something that justifies our attack; and we see that because we need to attack, or we imagine we do. The statement is rather startling; it needs explanation. We typically believe that looking beyond attack to see the call for love is difficult. Jesus says that we'd see it without any difficulty if there were not something getting in the way. The only thing that prevents our recognizing all calls for love is "your own imagined need to attack." It's important that we understand what he means. This is the key to allowing forgiveness to enter our consciousness.

What does the Course mean by our "imagined need to attack"?

As an ego, the only way we can survive, the only way we can remain completely independent and autonomous, is to attack others. We may not consciously admit this to ourselves; in fact, we rarely admit it and usually will argue vehemently that we don't believe in attacking others. Our egos, however, see attack as a need, a necessity like food, drink, and sleep for our bodies. Attack is an ego survival mechanism. Attack is the only way to get things from others. The ego convinces us that we can get rid of our own guilt by projecting it onto others, attacking them and laying guilt on them, but actually the ego needs us to attack in order to keep us guilty, and therefore separate from God. (See T-13.II.1-2).

We see what we want to see. We deny the reality (the call for love) and see unreality (an attack) in other people because we are not willing to see the reality of our own call for love (4:2). We see other people as egos because, deep in our subconscious, we want to be egos.

The reality about ourselves is that we are nothing else than perfect love. Even what looks to us like our attacks on God and our brothers is really nothing but our confused call for love and for help. Why would we be so afraid of seeing that? Because it would mean that we are extensions of God and nothing else, and we think that we want to be something other than extensions of God. We think we want to be independent of God. When we identify with the ego, it seems as though recognizing ourselves as pure love would mean giving up the 'me' we know and identify with. That scares the hell out of us, or more accurately, it scares us into hell.

The lines from the URText (following sentence #3) that compare our analysis of ego motives to the Spanish Inquisition are worth considering even though they were omitted from the edition published by FACIM (the words are included in the *Original Edition* published by the Course in Miracles Society). I'd guess they were omitted because the editors considered them too shocking. Just as the inquisitors imagined guilt in those they accused, often tortured them until they (falsely) admitted their guilt, and then punished them for the imagined guilt, so we do exactly the same thing when we perceive "the ego's 'real' motivation" in a brother or sister, and punish them for the guilt we are projecting upon them. We might make a similar comparison to the Salem witch trials in colonial Massachusetts, when women were accused of witchcraft and burned at the stake because of a deluded belief by their neighbors that the women were in league with the devil. A more modern example can be found in the witch-hunt for Communists under Senator McCarthy in the 1950's. We shake our heads in wonder over those glaring examples of false accusations. Let us realize, then, that each of us has done much the same thing when we have attributed guilt to *any* child of God.

As egos, we don't want to see ourselves as purely loving. We don't want to see everything in ourselves as either love or a call for love, and so we persist in seeing other people as manifesting something other than love or a call for love (4:3). We imagine that, to protect our own existence, we *must attack*, and to justify our attack we must *see* attack coming at us from others.

The truth is that we don't understand our *own* motives, and we understand the motives of others even less! Furthermore, listening to our own ego we are prejudiced. The ego *wants* to find cause to condemn our brothers, and so it finds it (5:1–3). It would be simple common sense to stop making such uninformed and prejudiced interpretations (5:1).

We know better, even in this world, than to trust the judgment of someone with a personal investment in the situation. We understand all about conflict of interest. People who own stock in cable television companies, for instance, do not belong in government agencies that regulate television because they will be prejudiced in favor of cable TV. Congressmen who own stock in oil companies shouldn't be making laws that regulate those companies; they will tend to favor the oil companies.

The ego is like that: It has a personal investment in how it sees the world. Truth becomes what you want it to be! Therefore, stop trusting your private interpretations of anything! "Resign as your own teacher," as Jesus puts in just a few pages later in the Text (T-12.V.8:3).

Paragraph 4 presented one way of understanding the ego's biased view of the world by referring to our *supposed need to attack*. The ego sees attack externally in order to *justify* its imagined need to attack. "I don't want to attack you, but I have to defend myself!" The ego tries to build itself up by putting others down, and it *wants* to find reasons to judge and condemn. It makes the ego feel better.

Another reason the ego refuses to hear appeals for help stems from its twisted refusal to admit that we *need* help (5:3). The ego's insane goal of autonomy—its desire to be completely independent of any power except its own—rejects any notion of our dependence upon God, or of our need of one another. We refuse to recognize appeals for help in others because we don't want to recognize our own anger as an appeal for help. We want our anger to be "justified anger," or "the natural pain of being rejected," or

some such thing, and to justify our anger, we interpret our brother's call for help as "attack."

Let's admit that we need help. Let's admit that we don't understand ego motives, or what we are, or what other people are, and *ask for help from the Holy Spirit*. That is what this is all about: giving up the trust we have in our own interpretations, and asking the Holy Spirit to judge for us (5:8).

If we deny that what looks like attack in a brother is really a call for help, and call it attack instead, we will not recognize our own need for help (5:6). Not seeing the need, we won't recognize God's Answer when it comes (5:7). That is the ego's whole plan: to hide the problem from us so that we won't recognize the Answer.

Paragraph 6

6. 1 **Only** appreciation is an appropriate response to your brother. 2 Gratitude is due him for both his loving thoughts and his appeals for help, for both are capable of bringing love into **your** awareness **if you perceive them truly**. 3 And **all** your sense of strain comes from your attempts **not** to do just this. 4 How simple, then, is God's plan for salvation. 5 There is but one response to reality, for reality evokes no conflict at all. 6 There is but one Teacher of reality, Who understands what it is. 7 He does **not** change His Mind about reality because **reality** does not change. 8 Although **your** interpretations of reality are meaningless in your divided state, His remain consistently true. 9 He **gives** them to you because they are *for you*. 10 Do not attempt to "help" a brother in **your** way, for you cannot help yourself. 11 But hear his call for the Help of God, and you will recognize your **own** need for the Father.

• Study Question •

5. *This section, in this paragraph and paragraph 3, mentions three things that are appropriate responses to (or "due to") our brothers when they call for help (calls we are prone to perceive as attacks). What are those three things?*

The only appropriate response to a brother, no matter what he does, is to *appreciate him*. Or in other words, express our *gratitude* (6:1–2). If everything is love or a call for love, then this is obvious: If he expresses love to us, of course we are grateful. But what if he seems to attack us? If we accept the interpretation of the Holy Spirit that what we are seeing is, *in reality*, an appeal for help, then even this can bring love into our awareness (6:2). And for that, we should be grateful. If I perceive my brother or sister with the Holy Spirit, I will see a call for love, which brings me an awareness of the love within me as I respond. So I am grateful for the chance to allow love to flow through me.

Sometimes we speak of the difficulty following the Course. It seems like struggle and strain. We may think that forgiving is difficult. Jesus says it isn't forgiveness that's difficult; what takes all the effort is twisting reality enough to maintain our unforgiveness (6:3). The strain doesn't come from *releasing* our inherent love. That is effortless. The strain comes from our *blocking* that love through deliberate misperception. Love is the *one response* that is *always* appropriate to reality (6:5).

The simple truth is that "Love is the answer, whatever the question" (a line from Gerry Jampolsky's book, *Love is the Answer*). That is the unchanging reality that the

Holy Spirit always sees, and that we repeatedly fail to see (6:7). When we attempt to see something besides love or a call for love, we are listening to the ego's desire to change reality! The Holy Spirit does not force His interpretations upon us, He shares them when we ask for them because these interpretations are not simply a better way of seeing others; they are the only proper way to see ourselves (6:9). They are consistent with our nature, and God provided the Holy Spirit as a way of communicating those right perceptions to us.

We are cautioned here against our blundering attempts to "help" each other (6:10). We try to help people by correcting them, or by trying to "fix" them. We try to make them change. Usually this just induces guilt and resistance in the other person. They feel judged and belittled, no doubt because, when we try to "help" them like that, we *are* judging and belittling them.

If you doubt that you are judging the other people when you attempt to help them in this way, think about how you feel when someone tries to "help" *you* by correcting you. Perhaps they tell you that what you are doing is wrong and try to instruct you in how to do it "right," which is whatever seems right to them. Speaking for myself, this kind of help, however well intentioned, drives me up the wall! That's true especially when I am listening with my ego, at which time I usually respond to this kind of help with anger. "Why are *you* always right, and I'm always wrong? Who made you the expert in everything?"

Remember what was said earlier in the Text: Our task is not to correct one another, but to accept one another ("It is not up to you to change your brother, but merely to accept him as he is," T-9.III.6:4).

The way to help another person is to *accept* them, to love them despite whatever it is they did. The way to help is not by telling them what they did wrong. The way to help is to not make them guilty for what they did. The way to help them is to not make them fearful of some kind of punishment, such as being cut off from your love. The way to help is to not put them out of your heart.

They do not need *your* help; they need the help of God, just as you do. When you think someone needs your own help, you are behaving as what the Course calls an *unhealed healer*. When you recognize in others and in yourself the need for God's Help, you are a true healer.

Paragraph 7

7. 1 Your interpretations of your brother's needs are your interpretation of **yours**. 2 By giving help you are **asking for it**, and if you perceive but one need in yourself you **will** be healed. 3 For you will recognize God's Answer as you want It to be, and if you want It in truth, It will be truly yours. 4 Every appeal you answer in the Name of Christ brings the remembrance of your Father closer to **your** awareness. 5 For the sake of **your** need, then, hear every call for help as what it is, so God can answer *you*.

• Study Question •

6. *How does the way we interpret our brother's needs affect our own awareness of God?*



In this paragraph, notice the emphasis the URText places on the words “your” and “yours.” The whole paragraph emphasizes the effects your interpretations of others have on *you* and how you think about yourself. If you think you lack power, you will believe your brother is seeking power over you. If you think he needs external help, you will believe *you* need external help. If you think your brother needs to behave perfectly in order to be accepted by God, you will think the same of yourself. If you realize his true need is for the Help of God within, you will also recognize that God’s Help is all you need as well. (7:1). The way you interpret your brothers’ calls for help is very important *to you* (7:5).

When you “give help” to a brother by refusing to see him as guilty, you are giving that same help to yourself. You give help by *not* blocking the flow of love within yourself. You give help by demonstrating that your brother has not taken away your peace; he has not damaged love in you; he has done nothing to merit guilt. This is what the Course means by being “truly helpful” (T-2.V.18:2).

When you give help in this way, you are seeing that you and your brother share the same “one need” for God, the same “one need” to recognize yourself as God’s creation (7:2). When you realize you both have the same one need, you will recognize the Answer to that shared need, which is the recognition of your unchanging relationship with God. When you recognize God’s Answer as your *only* need, you will have It (7:3). This is the way you join together; this is the way you become a Teacher of God.

This is the same quality described in chapter 1 of the Manual for Teachers, using somewhat different words. There, it says that you qualify as a teacher of God by seeing your own interests as inextricably joined with those of another person (M-1.1:1–2). This section of the Text describes it like this: You recognize the same need in your brother and yourself, one need with One Answer, the Holy Spirit. You realize that despite any apparent conflict on the surface, underneath that conflict you both want the same thing and have the same goal. You both want peace; you both want to love and be loved. You both need to remember your divine nature. And you choose to see *that* as what is real, instead of the conflict.

When you refuse to listen to the ego’s dark interpretation, and you choose instead to listen to the Holy Spirit, to see your brother’s appeal for help, the love of God in you will just show up. It will take the form appropriate to the situation. This helps you remember God for yourself (7:4). When you refrain from interpreting your brother’s actions as an attack, and instead hear a call for help, you receive God’s Answer not only for your brother, but for yourself (7:5)..

Paragraph 8

8. 1 By applying the Holy Spirit’s interpretation of the reactions of others more and more consistently, you will gain an increasing awareness that **His** criteria are equally applicable to **you**. 2 For to **recognize** fear is not enough to escape **from** it, although the recognition **is** necessary to demonstrate the **need** for escape. 3 The Holy Spirit must still **translate** the fear into truth. 4 If you were **left** with the fear, once you had **recognized** it, you would have taken a step **away** from reality, not **towards** it. 5 Yet we have repeatedly emphasized the need to recognize fear and face it **without disguise** as a crucial step in the undoing of the ego. 6 Consider how well the Holy Spirit’s interpretation of the

motives of others will serve you then. 7 Having taught you to accept only loving thoughts in others and to regard everything else as an appeal for help, He has taught you that **fear itself** is an appeal for help. 8 This is what **recognizing** fear really means. 9 If you do **not protect** it, **He** will reinterpret it. 10 That is the ultimate value [**to you**] in learning to perceive attack as a call for love. 11 We have already learned that fear and attack are inevitably associated. 12 If **only** attack produces fear, and if you see attack as the call for help that it **is**, the **unreality** of fear must dawn on you. 13 For fear *is* a call for love, in unconscious recognition of what has been denied.

• **Study Question** •

7. *We attack, remember, because we are afraid. In dealing with fear, what two stages must we go through, and what purpose does each stage serve (see T-1.IV.1:1–4 for an interesting parallel)?*
8. *What must occur in order for the Holy Spirit to reinterpret our fear for us (8:9)?*

This section clarifies an important point: To undo the ego, fear must not only be *recognized* but also *reinterpreted*. Although recognizing our fears is an absolutely essential part of the process, it is not enough (8:2–5). In addition, we need to let the Holy Spirit reinterpret fear as an appeal for help. A bit later the Course says that every emotion is a form of only two emotions, *love* or *fear* (9:5; see also T-13.V.1:1). Here Jesus says that everything is either *love* or a *call for help*. If both statements are true, then fear and a call for help must be virtually the same thing. This paragraph says exactly that—“fear itself is an appeal for help” (8:7)—and it explains how fear can be seen that way.

The more you apply the interpretation of the Holy Spirit to the actions of others, the more you will understand how it also applies to you (8:1). The more you forgive the egos of others, the more you will be able to forgive your own ego. From the words “increasing awareness” (8:1) we can gather that this is a long process, growing in slow increments.

Maybe you will find it difficult at first to see some forms of attack as calls for love. It seems hard to see someone who mugs you on the street as calling for help! But perhaps you can see it as a manifestation of fear, which, as we have seen, is the same thing as a call for help (8:7). Here is a person who is so afraid he thinks the only way he can survive is through violent attack. Such a fearful person *really needs* love! So when someone seems to be attacking you, you can say, “It isn’t ‘attack,’ it is fear. He’s just very afraid.” Likewise, when your ego flares up, you can realize that it doesn’t mean that you are a sinful person; it just means you are afraid of God, afraid because you believe you are alone and in danger. Being afraid isn’t a sin.

You must begin by recognizing the fear, but recognizing fear isn’t enough to escape from fear. It just shows that you have something that you need to escape (8:2). More is necessary. If all you do is become aware of your fear of God, you are worse off than when you started (8:4). If we stop with awareness of fear, we inevitably try to resist the fear, to overcome it, or to make it go away. As Werner Erhard once said, “What you resist, persists.” You cannot overcome fear by *fighting* fear. The Course has already made this point twice before, back in chapter 2 (T-2.VII.4:2–4 and T-2.VI.5:8–9). The

recognition of fear is only a preliminary step that helps us to realize that “immediate correction is needed” (T-2.VI.5:8). But if you stop there, you have taken a step away from reality instead of towards reality (8:4). Who could live in total fear?

It can help, in the beginning stages of our spiritual journey, to understand that all attack, all depression, all anger, and everything that is not love is just fear and nothing else (T-11.V.10.1). This is a big part of what it means to recognize fear: It means realizing that all this multitude of apparently diverse problems is really just fear in disguise. Recognizing the fear behind the mask helps a lot. It not only helps, it is essential, it is “*a crucial step in the undoing of the ego*” (8:5, emphasis mine). Once these things are recognized as fear they can be dealt with.¹

The second crucial step is that “The Holy Spirit must still translate the fear into truth” (8:3). What does that mean? The Course explains in 8.6–9, but to prepare yourself to understand that explanation, read over now the two passages in chapter 2 I referred to above, which describe this translation process in different terms. What does it mean to “accept the Atonement?” What is “mastery thorough love?” They both mean realizing that fear is *nothing but an appeal for help* (8:7). “This is what recognizing fear really means” (8:8). Recognizing fear, then, ultimately means recognizing that what looks like fear isn’t fear at all; it is an appeal for love. If you are willing to stop protecting your fear by calling it something else, the Holy Spirit will reinterpret it for you (8:9). He will show you the call for love hiding within the fear.

There are several steps here I want to point out:

1. First, we perceive something that looks like attack, or anger, or hatred.
2. Second, we realize that what we are seeing is really fear in disguise.
3. Third, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we recognize that *all* forms of fear are really calls for love.

If you are willing to recognize that when someone seems to be attacking you, they are really calling for love, you will suddenly realize you have nothing to be afraid of! If they are not attacking you in reality, but are actually calling out for love, there is no reason to be afraid (8:12). Having allowed the Holy Spirit to translate your perception of your brother’s fear, suddenly you will see that what you thought was fear in you is, in reality, *your own call for love*.

“For fear *is* a call for love, in unconscious recognition of what has been denied” (8:13). This sentence is expanded on in the next paragraph. It may be difficult at first to see how the identity of fear and a call for love is tied in with denial, so it requires a little explanation. The basic thought is that, since fear is a denial of love (why would I be afraid of you if I thought you were a loving being?), it is actually an unconscious affirmation of our belief in the reality of love.

This is a tough point to get, but it is the crux of the Holy Spirit’s re-interpretation of everything.

Fear is our response to our belief that love is absent. And if we believe “something” is absent, we must believe that the “something” exists. We must believe it is real and that

¹ The first step of recognizing our fear is mentioned frequently in the Course, with constant emphasis on its importance: The following passages are places where the first step is mentioned and called “crucial,” or words to that effect, as it is here (in 8:5): T-11.IV.4:1–6; T-2.V.1:1; T-2.VI.4:1–3; T-2.VI.7:1; T-4.III.7:2–5; T-11.V.2:1–5.

it *could* be here. Therefore, since fear is our response to the belief that love is absent, it is really *an appeal for love to be present!*

When I am afraid of you, I believe that love is absent in you. So my fear of you is really an appeal for love to be present in you. And vice versa: when someone is afraid of *you*, they are appealing to you for love to be present in you. How can you possibly respond with anything but love?

Virtually the same steps were presented back in chapter 2:

Know first that this is fear.

Fear arises from lack of love.

The only remedy for lack of love is perfect love.

Perfect love is the Atonement.

(T-2.VI.7.5–8)

Paragraph 9

9. 1 Fear is a symptom of your ~~own~~ deep sense of loss. 2 If when you perceive it in others you learn to **supply** the loss, the basic **cause** of fear is removed. 3 Thereby you teach yourself that fear does not exist **in you**. 4 The means for removing it is **in yourself**, and you have **demonstrated** this by **giving** it. 5 Fear and love are the only emotions of which you are capable. 6 One is false, for it was made out of denial; and denial **depends** on the [real] belief in what is denied for its **own** existence. 7 By interpreting fear correctly as a **positive affirmation of the underlying belief it masks**, you are undermining its perceived usefulness by rendering it useless. 8 Defenses that do not work **at all** are **automatically** discarded. 9 If you raise what fear conceals to **clear-cut unequivocal predominance**, fear becomes meaningless. 10 You have denied its power to conceal love, which was its only purpose. 11 The veil [mask] that **you** have drawn across the face of love has disappeared.

• Study Question •

9. *As a meditational exercise, try applying the thought in 9:7 (first part) to some manifestation of fear in your own life. Think of a situation in which fear has arisen in you, perhaps disguised as something else—any emotion that is not love will do! For instance, perhaps you are angry with a friend or loved one. Anger is a form of fear. So, say to yourself, “My fear of ____ is a positive affirmation of my belief in love.” Try to come up with several examples.*

We believe that we have lost love, and our fear is the proof (9:1). It is a reaction to the belief that love is absent, in myself or in another. If someone else attacks me in some way, it is because they are afraid of me. They fear me because they believe that love is absent from me, and therefore not available to them.

In such a situation, instead of responding with a fearful counterattack, I can allow love to flow through me. When I manifest love, the other person no longer has any reason to fear me (9:2). And because I have seen that their “attack” is really fear, and that their fear is really a call for love, I have nothing to be afraid of myself. In this way, I have proven to myself that fear is not real (9:3). Love has the power to remove fear, and by giving love I have demonstrated that love is in me (9:4). Fear was caused by the belief

that love was absent, but I have shown that love is *not* absent. Therefore the imagined cause for fear is gone.

Every emotion is either fear or love (9:5). And fear is *false* (9:6), because it was made by denying that love was present—when love was present all along. Fear is just the denial of love, like darkness is the denial of light (T-2.VI.7:6; T-1.IV.3:1). It is nothing but the belief that love is absent.

And then comes this key phrase: “Denial depends on the belief in what is denied for its own existence” (9:6). What a stunning statement! It almost seems to be as irrational as “Black is really white.” Yet it has the ring of truth to it.

If I did not believe that love exists, I would not be so upset when I think it is absent! Why would I be upset over the absence of something that doesn't exist? Therefore, when I am afraid, I am unconsciously affirming my belief in love's reality, “in unconscious recognition of what has been denied” (8.13). I know that love *should* be present in the situation, and I am manifesting my deep sense of loss that it is not there.

Because fear is the denial of love, we would be justified if we restated 9:6 by substituting specifics for the general terms, like this: “Fear depends on the belief in love for its own existence.” If love did not exist, how could you have a sense of loss over its absence? How could you be upset when you think it is not present, if it does not exist at all?

This is the translation that the Holy Spirit makes: You are enabled to interpret fear (and all the forms it takes) “as a positive affirmation of the underlying belief it masks” (9:7), which is a belief in love. When someone seems to be attacking you, and you set aside your own interpretations and let the Holy Spirit give you His interpretation, you begin to see that this “attack” is only a form of fear, and that the fear in the other person is really a *positive affirmation* of their unconscious belief in love. They are mistaking their deep sense of loss of love as something real; therefore, they are afraid, so of course they attack. All you can do when you see such a desperate appeal for love is to supply the loss, to give them the love they are asking for.

That translation, when everything shifts from black to white, when the ugly attack you saw in your brother or in yourself is seen as fear and then recognized as hiding a call for love—that is a *miracle*. That was what the opening sentence of the next section affirms: “Miracles are merely the translation of denial into truth” (T-12.II.1:1).

When you respond to fear in this way you undermine “its perceived usefulness” (9:7). The “usefulness” spoken of is the usefulness of fear; the ego uses fear as a defense against love, as we can see in 9:9. To the ego love is dangerous (T-12.IV.1:1); it is a threat to the ego's existence. If you are love, you are not an ego. So the ego uses fear as a defense against any perception of love. That is why you are afraid of your brother or sister; it is why they are afraid of you. The ego does not want to see love in anyone.

But when you interpret fear correctly as a call for love, and respond with love, you have negated its value as a defense (9:7,10). When you see fear correctly you see it as a positive affirmation of belief in love. Instead of defending against love by hiding it in your brother and evoking anger and attack from you, fear *reveals* your brother's belief in and desire for love, and *elicits* the love in you.

When you do that, “fear becomes meaningless” (9:9). Since it no longer works as a defense, it has no purpose at all. To “raise what fear conceals to clear-cut unequivocal predominance” (9:9) means to see through fear to the love that it hides, and to make that

love the *predominate* thing you see. It means to re-interpret fear as evidence of a belief in love. Fear was a veil you drew across the face of love, and now that veil is gone (9:11).

Paragraph 10

10. 1 If you would look upon love, which *is* the world's reality, how could you do better than to recognize, in every defense **against** it, the underlying appeal *for* it? 2 And how could you better learn of its reality than by answering the appeal for it by **giving** it? 3 The Holy Spirit's interpretation of fear **does** dispel it, for the **awareness** of truth cannot **be** denied. 4 Thus does the Holy Spirit replace fear with love and translate error into truth. 5 And thus will **you** learn of Him how to replace your dream of separation with the fact of unity. 6 For the separation is only the **denial** of union, and correctly interpreted, attests to your eternal knowledge that union is true.

• Study Question •

10. The previous paragraph showed how fear, which seems to be a very negative thing, could be reinterpreted in a positive light. How does this paragraph apply that same principle to the separation?

The essence of spiritual enlightenment is quite simple. Enlightenment means bringing all your mind and your thought into accord with what is real. The reality behind everything is love (T-2.VII.5:3). Since love is what is real, a motivation to become enlightened is a motivation to see only love. But how can we achieve that? How can we become so enlightened? The Course's answer is: By recognizing the *unreality* of everything *except* love.

All forms of attack, and all things that appear to separate you from God, are only fear and nothing else. All fear, in yourself or your brother, is nothing but a defense against love. That defense, however, *properly perceived*, betrays a hidden belief in love. Recognizing this is the best way to turn the tables on the ego (10:1) and to see love everywhere. You will be using the ego's own weapon (fear) to undo the ego. The weapon it designed to make you deny love has, instead, enabled you to see love and to give it.

You will do more than simply *see* love; you will experience its reality for yourself. Every time someone's ego flares up in defense against love (that is, they manifest fear in some form), you will see that fear as an appeal for love and you will give the love that is asked for. Love is called for, and you find that it exists within you (10:2).

When you deny the denial of truth by refusing to listen to the ego's interpretation, and allow the Holy Spirit to interpret for you, fear will disappear (10:3). When fear disappears, the love it was hiding is revealed. You become aware of the truth about yourself and others, and that awareness *cannot be denied*. This is how the Holy Spirit translates fear into love and error into truth (10:4). This is what a miracle is.

You may have heard it said that there are no negative emotions. This teaching of the Course gives a true meaning to that saying. A negative emotion is just the denial of the positive. The ego tries to use that negative emotion as a defense against its positive counterpart, but in fact all negative emotions betray a covert belief in the positive side. Love is all that is real, and anything else is just the ego's mad attempt to defend an illusory existence against the reality of love.

This is the basic technique or method that the Holy Spirit uses to restore us to full awareness of our union with God (10:5). Nothing the ego can throw up in its defense can escape the Holy Spirit's ability to give it a positive spin, and to use it against the ego. The Course takes this technique of translating error into truth so far that it says that even "the separation is only the denial of union" (10:6). Seen through the Holy Spirit's lens, the "terrible fact" of separation appears as a witness to our mind's "eternal knowledge that union is true" (10:6). That is why even the root thought of separation from God, which started this whole mess, is nothing to be guilty about (T-14.III.15:3). Seen through the eyes of the Holy Spirit, it speaks the truth about us, it speaks of the union with God that, deep within, we *know* cannot be broken.

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This is how the Course undoes guilt: It shows us that our darkest thoughts and our most shameful reactions are nothing but positive affirmations of what they hide. All the ego's defense mechanisms become the very means the Holy Spirit uses to show us the truth about ourselves. There is nothing you have ever done that cannot be re-interpreted or translated in this way. There is nothing anyone else has ever done that cannot be seen this way.

The *Workbook's* Introduction says its purpose is to give you "a different perception of everyone and everything in the world" (W-Int.4.1) "The judgment of the Holy Spirit" is that different perception. It literally turns your world upside down—or rather, right-side up, since it is the ego who sees things upside down. Nothing escapes the re-interpretation of the Holy Spirit, Whom the Course calls "the great Transformer of perception" (T-17.II.5:2). When you see with the Holy Spirit, *everything proves the reality of love*.

It begins when you start to question your own perceptions of things; when you recognize that your emotions are responses to your own interpretations and not to the facts. You ask the Holy Spirit for a new interpretation. You begin to see that everything that seems to separate you from God or your brother is some form of fear. You allow that fear to be re-interpreted, so that instead of being something negative, it becomes a positive affirmation of the underlying belief it masks, not fear any longer, but a call for love. You respond with love to calls for love. And suddenly, all that you see is love!

In closing, I'll quote a lovely line from another of Donna Cary's songs: "You don't have to forgive, when you see the innocence of it all." The Holy Spirit's way of seeing, His judgment, is a way that sees everyone and everything as innocent and without guilt. This is the new perception to which He is leading us (W-pII.10.5:1-2; M-1.3:4). We are here in this world to learn our innocence by teaching the world of its own innocence.

Answer Key

1. To stop making error real would mean that I would question my interpretations, and refrain from responding as if my interpretations were correct.
2. The primary thing that makes interpreting someone's ego difficult is that my ego always get involved in the interpretation, fabricating theories in an attempt to prove that it does understand what it perceives (2:1-2).
3. a) Loving thoughts, and appeals for help.
b) Love; giving the help asked for.
4. When you refuse to acknowledge your brother's call for help, you withhold reality from yourself. By refusing to *give* help when asked, you are refusing to recognize that you *need* help.
5. The appropriate responses to calls for help or for love are: 1) to give what is being asked for (3:5-6); 2) appreciation (6:1); and 3) gratitude (6:2).
6. The way we interpret the needs of our brother directly affects our own receptivity to God's Answer (7:4). Every time we interpret a call for help as attack, we keep the Father out of our own awareness.
7. The two stages of dealing with fear are: (1) *recognition*, necessary to demonstrate our need to escape; (2) *reinterpretation*, the translation of fear into truth, in order to escape from it.
8. We must stop protecting or hiding our fear, and bring it to His light.
9. No written answer is expected.
10. The thought of separation is actually a positive affirmation of union, since it is the denial of union, and "denial depends on the belief in what is denied for its own existence" (9:6).