

# Study Guide and Commentary ACIM<sup>®</sup> Text, Chapter 12, Section II

## The Way to Remember God

### Legend:

blue text = Material from ACIM 3rd edition (FIP)  
**bold blue text** = words emphasized in all caps in Urtext  
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### Overview

“The way to remember God” (section title) is “to perceive the healing of your brother as the healing of yourself” (T-12.II.2.9). You remember God as you allow the Holy Spirit to translate your perceptions of your brothers into innocence, because in granting innocence to your brothers you are teaching yourself your own innocence, your own nature as God’s beloved Son. When you see through your brother’s ego to the underlying call for love, you are able to see through your own ego as well. The love in you meets his need, and so you remember the love that you really are.

You heal your brother by allowing your mind’s *perception* of him to be healed. You uncover his inherent wholeness by allowing the Holy Spirit to remove the blocks in your mind that have prevented you from seeing it. When you think that you see something offensive in *him*, you “pluck the offense from *your* mind” (T-11.VIII.12.1, emphasis mine), rather than trying to change something in him. Nothing in him needs changing for you to entirely forgive; you need to change your mind *about* him.

Therefore, the way to remember God is to look straight at all the fear in your own mind, at every perception that seems contrary to love, and to let the Holy Spirit shine it all away. The entire Course is structured to facilitate this process; it calls itself nothing more than “an organized, well-structured and carefully planned program aimed at learning how to offer the Holy Spirit everything you do not want” (T-12.II.10.1–2). As we recognize that we do not want our perceptions of attack, and offer them to the Holy Spirit so that He can replace them with His perceptions of innocence, we will remember God.

## Paragraph 1

Miracles are merely the translation of denial into truth. If to love oneself is to **heal** oneself, those who are sick do **not** love themselves. Therefore, they are asking for the love that would heal them, but which they are **denying to themselves**. If they knew the truth about themselves they could not be sick. The task of the miracle worker thus becomes *to deny the denial of truth*. The sick must heal **themselves**, for the truth is **in** them. Yet having **obscured** it, the light in **another** mind must shine into theirs because that light *is* theirs.

### • Study Question •

1. *What does a miracle worker do (what is his or her task)? If you use the words of this paragraph to answer, explain what they mean.*

Sentence 1: We've already discussed this sentence in the preceding commentary (see the discussion of T-12.I.9). In a miracle, the Holy Spirit reinterprets every denial of love, which shows up as some form of fear, as a positive affirmation of the love that the fear attempts to hide.

The discussion so far seems applicable primarily to *moral* flaws, but what about *physical* flaws? How does all this apply to sickness, for instance, as opposed to seeing faults in other people?

Sickness is an appeal for love, just as fear is. If you love yourself you heal yourself, so therefore anyone who is sick isn't loving themselves (1:2). When I am sick, I am asking you and everyone else for the love I cannot give myself (1:3). The principle we saw in the last section, then, obviously applies: The only appropriate response to sickness is to give love to the sick person. That person needs to be reminded of their true nature as God's Son. They need to be helped to recognize their innocence, so that they become willing to receive the love of God they have, out of guilt, denied to themselves.

Their sickness arises out of their guilt. The sequence is that they imagine themselves guilty; therefore, they imagine themselves unworthy of love; therefore, they see themselves as unworthy of *health*. Remove the guilt, and the sickness will follow (1:4; see T-31.I.10:1).

Sentence 5 is a truly key! Make careful note of these words: "To deny the denial of truth" (1:5; see also 8:7). You might even want to memorize them. If you are to be a worker of miracles, that phrase defines your job. When someone denies the truth, or denies *love*—which they can do by manifesting fear or by manifesting sickness—my job and your job is to counteract their denial. It is not necessary to *affirm love*. When sickness or fear *negates love*, all we need to do is to negate the negation. When our thoughts seem to say, "Love is not real" or "There is no love here," we must learn to reply, "What I think is not so." Our thoughts are denying the truth of love, and our response is to reject that denial. This is a familiar refrain in the Course. It often asserts that we do not need to establish truth, but only to undo error. The preceding section sounded the same note (for instance, T-12.I.1:3 and T-12.I.10:1). The message is repeated in many places in many different forms. Some references you may want to read in this regard include:

T-In.1:6-7

T-16.IV.6:1-2;

T-18.IX.12:1-5

T-21.II.7:7-6

T-28.I.1:1-5

M-4.X.3:6-7

You can't heal anyone else. "The sick must heal themselves" (1:6). Every one of us is inherently whole; God endowed us all with the truth. But the sick are denying it. By their sickness, they are saying to you, "Tell me I am wrong! Tell me I am not guilty. Tell me that love is not absent. Tell me I am not unlovable." You can give them those healing messages by refusing to respond to their denial as if it were real and something to be concerned about. You tell them they are OK. You deny the reality of what their denial asserts.

The light in their mind is hidden by the darkness of their fear and sickness, but the light need not be hidden in *your* mind. You can remind them of the truth about themselves by refusing to allow the light in your mind to be hidden from you (1:7). It isn't so much that you shine light *into* them, as if you were a superior or more enlightened being dispensing truth to someone who lacks it. It occurs more indirectly than that: As that you allow them to see the light in *your* mind, it reminds them of the light in themselves. It's not: "I am bringing the light to you, you poor benighted creature!" No, it is: "Don't you realize the light is already within you, you glorious Son of God?"

## Paragraph 2

The light in them shines as brightly **regardless** of the density of the fog that obscures it. If you give no power to the fog to obscure the light, it **has** none. For it has power **only** if **[because]** the Son of God gives power **to** it. He must **himself** withdraw that power, remembering that all power is of God. **You can remember this for all the Sonship**. Do not allow your brother not to remember, for his forgetfulness is **yours**. But **your** remembering is **his**, for God cannot be remembered alone. *This is what you have forgotten*. To perceive the healing of your brother as the healing of yourself is thus the way to remember God. For you forgot your brothers **with** Him, and God's Answer to your forgetting is but the way to remember.

### • Study Question •

2. *Our brothers can break through the fog and remember who they are. How can we assist them in their remembering?*

When a heavy fog obscures the landscape, we know that the sun is still shining just as brightly behind the clouds. The same is true of the divine light in our brothers (2:1). The other person may not be aware of the light, but *you* can be aware of it. When someone else is failing to believe in the light within themselves, and you respond to that as if "no light" were the truth about them, you make their error seem all the more real. That is how

you “give...power to the fog” (2:2). If, however, we do not lend support to their belief in darkness, that darkness has no power.

The wording of the Course here can be confusing. Sentence 2 makes it sound as though *you, by yourself*, can rob the fog of its power. Sentence 4 makes it sound as though *the person who is sick* is the only one who can withhold power from the fog. Reading carefully, it seems to me that what it actually says is that *the Son of God* is the one who gives power to the fog, and *the Son of God* is the one who “must himself withdraw that power” (2:4). Our confusion comes from our failure to recognize that the Son of God is comprised of all of us. Each of us is the Son of God. Any of us can break the power of the fog and bring light into the situation, and the remembrance by any one of us brings the memory to all of us because we are all one Mind. As any one of us remembers, it serves the entire Sonship (2:5).

On the other hand, in practical terms, the person who is sick is the only one who can accept healing for himself. You cannot impose healing on him. A healer (or miracle worker) does not heal, technically, for two reasons. First, because the sickness is not real in the first place. But also—and this is the reason I want to emphasize here—because the sick person must choose to accept the light for himself. You can remember on his behalf, and this will remind him of the truth about himself. To this extent, you give healing and he receives it. But for the healing to be complete, he must accept it.

The Teacher's Manual explains all this quite clearly in M-5.III, “The Function of the Teacher of God.” These paragraphs explain very clearly that the patient—a term that refers to anyone needing physical or mental healing, or in other words, someone who is listening to their own ego, and is allowing the “fog” to obscure the Light of God within them—“the patient must change his own mind in order to be healed” (M-5.III.1.1). The teacher of God cannot do that for them (M-5.III.1.2–3). The teacher comes to such people to “represent another choice which they have forgotten” (M-5.III.2.1). A teacher is a “reminder” who stands for the Alternative (M-5.III.2:2,.6). A healer does not heal (T-9.V.8:1); he reminds the patient of God's healing which has already been given (2.7–10). He allows his *own* mind to be healed, and then “the truth in [his mind] reaches out to the truth in the minds of [his] brothers, so that illusions are not reinforced” (3.6).

When someone is sick, or acting in their ego, they are responding to their own denial of the truth, their own refusal to recognize their identity as God's son. To bring healing to them, you choose *not to encourage their denial* by acting as though it were true. When *you* do not react as if the error, or the sickness, is real, you remind the other person of the Light, and of their own power to choose It. The Course says that we should “not allow your brother not to remember” (2:6) How do we do that? By not failing to remember for *ourselves*. He is making an error, but when you make the error real to yourself, responding to his error as if it were the truth, you reinforce it in his mind. When you *do not* make the error real, you remind him to remember the truth about himself.

This has very little to do with *what you do* and a lot to do with *how you react in your mind*. The person who is sick obviously believes in the reality of sickness at that moment, or they would not be sick. To not make the sickness real to you means that you don't allow their sickness to disturb your peace, you don't allow your mind to be filled with fear, which blocks out love. You do not condemn them or belittle them or make them wrong because they are sick. Instead, you remain open to them. Their sickness is a call

for love, and you will give love. You will give it in whatever form is most appropriate, whatever form will be *understood as love* by the sick person. That might mean you call a doctor or give them medicine; it might mean that you visit them in the hospital or send flowers, just like anyone else. It might mean that you will lay hands on them and pray that their inherent wholeness will reveal itself in their body. The difference will be in what is going on within your mind, and that is what makes the difference. The form your love takes will depend on what is most helpful to the other person (see T-2.IV.5.1–2 and W-pI.186.13:5).

Every sick person, or everyone who seems to be attacking you, presents you with an opportunity to remember God (2:9). They represent your own disowned thoughts, the parts of yourself you have rejected, denied, and projected out into the world. They are the intended means for your own healing. The Son of God has fragmented into billions of parts, and you help gather them in with your love when you deny their denial of truth.

### Paragraph 3

Perceive in sickness but another call for love, and offer your brother what he believes he cannot offer **himself**. Whatever the sickness, there is but one remedy. You will be made whole as you **make** whole, for to perceive in sickness the appeal for health is to recognize in hatred the call for love. And to give a brother what he **really** wants is to offer it unto yourself, for your Father wills you to know your brother **as** yourself. Answer **his** call for love, and **yours** is answered. Healing is the Love of Christ for His Father and for **Himself**.

#### • Study Question •

3. *In the light of Sections I and II, what do attack, fear, hatred, and sickness all have in common?*

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Sickness is just another call for love, and that is how you must learn to respond to it (3:1). Not with fear, not with judgment, but with love. A sick person has been unable to offer love to himself or herself; you can supply the lack.

Sickness is just an “appeal for health,” and hatred is just an appeal for love. Nearly everything the Course says about sickness can be applied to hatred or attack, and everything it says about attack can be applied equally well to sickness, because these two things are really the same thing in different forms, different aspects of one problem with one answer. If you can see sickness truly, as the call for love it is, you will inevitably see hatred the same way. This is why, even if you are not physically sick, giving healing heals you. (Compare the first phrase of 3:3 with T-2.V(A).18:6.)

When you give healing, you are healed (3:4). The way to have love is to give love. The way to know you are forgiven is to forgive. We are all part of one mind, and my brother is myself (3:4), so what is given to one is given to all. In answering my brother’s call for love, I have opened myself to God’s Answer to my own call (3:5). When I offer healing to another, I am connecting with “the Love of Christ for His Father and for Himself” (3:6). When I extend healing, I have aligned myself with the current of Love

that flows through me and through all the universe. I am in tune with God, and thus I am healed.

## Paragraph 4

Remember what was said about the frightening perceptions of little children, which terrify them because they do not understand them. If they **ask** for enlightenment **and accept** it, their fears vanish. But if they hide their nightmares they will **keep** them. It is easy to help an uncertain child, for he recognizes that he does not understand what his perceptions mean. Yet you believe that you **do** understand yours. Little child, you are hiding your head under the cover of the heavy blankets you have laid upon yourself. You are hiding your nightmares in the darkness of your own **false** certainty, and refusing to open your eyes and **look at them**.

### • Study Question •

4. *An exercise: Picture yourself as a little child who has just awakened from a nightmare, convinced there is a monster in the room (or in the closet, or under the bed). You are terrified and have hidden under the covers, afraid of what you might see if you opened your eyes and turned on the light. Then, gathering your nerve, you throw off the covers and turn on the light—and discover you've been afraid of a shadow, of nothing! Now call to mind one of your waking nightmares, one of the situations that seem to be causing your anxiety or pain, ask the Holy Spirit to shine His light on the situation, and try to realize that the fear is just as ungrounded because you are safe, at home in God.*

Here we return to the analogy of children frightened by nightmares, previously referred to in T-11.VIII. Their fearful perceptions arise because they don't understand what is real and what isn't. If the child will "ask for enlightenment and accept it" the fear is gone (4:2). "It isn't a monster, it's just the curtain blowing in the wind." If he does not bring his nightmares to a parent to ask for help but instead continues to try to deal with them by hiding under the covers, his nightmares will continue to terrify him (4:3). The best thing is for the child to recognize "that he does not understand what his perceptions mean." (4:4) This kind of conscious ignorance is the attitude Jesus is encouraging *us* to have: to recognize that the understanding that we presume we have of people and things around us is not reliable. As we saw in the preceding section, we are quite sure that we see people attacking us, and that perception is simply *never* true.

The problem is, we think we *do understand* (4:5), and we are afraid for what we believe are good reasons. We have very deep fears, but we are hiding our heads under the blankets instead of calling for Mommy and Daddy (4:6); that is, we are trying to ignore our fears instead of bringing them out into the open and asking the Holy Spirit what is the real meaning of these things. Daddy has come into the room and turned on the lights—God has sent the Holy Spirit into our minds—, but we are so scared we won't even open our eyes to see that the monster isn't real.



The ego is terrified of God. It is convinced that God wants to destroy us, to punish us for our sins. God is saying to us in the Course, “Your sin is just a nightmare; open your eyes and look!” But we won’t do it.

## Paragraph 5

Let us not save nightmares, for they are not fitting offerings for Christ, and so they are not fit gifts for you. Take off the covers and look at what you are afraid of. Only the anticipation will frighten you, for the reality of nothingness cannot be frightening. Let us not delay this, for your dream of hatred will not leave you without help, and Help is here. Learn to be quiet in the midst of turmoil, for quietness is the end of strife and this is the journey to peace. Look straight at every image that rises to delay you, for the goal is inevitable because it is eternal. The goal of love is but your right, and it belongs to you despite your dreams.

### • Study Question •

5. *Why is it so important to look at our fears, instead of hiding from them?*

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We are afraid to look at what we are afraid of. We are afraid to admit that the world of terror we see is our own invention. We are afraid to look at our own guilt and fear, and to admit that *this* is the cause of our problems. We insist that the problem is out there in the world, that it is with other people, our parents, the churches, the government, the environment, anywhere but in our own minds. When we do that we are just holding on to our nightmares.

“Take off the covers and look at what you are afraid of.” (5:2) That is the appeal of the Course to us. It means, translated from the figure of speech, “Stop blaming others and realize you have been doing it all to yourself. As Jesus said in the section on “The ‘Dynamics’ of the Ego” (T-11.V), fear is bound to arise because we will be looking right at the very source of fear, but in so doing we will be learning that fear is not real (T-11.V.2:3). All the fear, really, is in the anticipation of looking. The fear exists in that moment when you are still hidden under the covers, dreading what you will see, just before you throw them off and open your eyes. When you actually look, with Jesus beside you, there is no fear; all you see is perfect love (5:3).

The Course is trying to tell you that need help, and that “Help is here”—the Holy Spirit (5:4). Your Father has already heard your cry and turned on the light. Just open your eyes! Stop your crying for just a moment. Reach deep down in yourself and find the place of perfect calm and quiet that has always been there, no matter what frantic and seemingly terrifying things are happening all around you (5:5). You won’t find peace through panic. Relax! Let go of your panic. Daddy’s here!

Just open your eyes and look; there is nothing there. There is no sin in your heart; it was just a bad dream. “Look straight at every image that rises to delay you” (5:6). All of it, every fearful image that can come to mind, is nothing, just an image in your mind and nothing more. You cannot fail to reach the goal, because you already have it; the goal you are seeking for exists eternally within you (5:6). That means that the reality of everything

is always love and always will be. If you stop hiding your eyes and thinking you know better, you will inevitably see that love, which God imparted to you by divine fiat. The reality of God's creation cannot be undone by anything as trivial as your ephemeral nightmares (5:7).

## Paragraph 6

You still want what God wills, and no nightmare can defeat a child of God in his purpose. For your purpose was given you by God, and you must accomplish it because it is His Will. Awake and remember your purpose, for it is your will to do so. What has been accomplished for you must be yours. Do not let your hatred stand in the way of love, for nothing can withstand the Love of Christ for His Father, or His Father's Love for Him.

### • Study Question •

6. *Our brothers can break through the fog and remember who they are. How can we assist them in their remembering?*
7. *The title of the section speaks of "The Way to Remember God." What is that way?*

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The first sentence deals with two deep fears, fears that prevent us from advancing spiritually. In our journey to remember God, we often become discouraged and need this kind of encouragement. In the remainder of the section, Jesus repeatedly assures us that, despite our fear of failure, *we can make it* and in fact *there is no possibility of failure*.

First, we think our will has been corrupted and has become independent of God, but that is not true. "You still want what God wills" (6:1).

Second, even if we are aware of that true desire, we are afraid that our ego's awful thoughts have defeated every possibility of ever finding God's love and peace. But that is not true either: "No nightmare can defeat a child of god in his purpose" (6:1). We will inevitably accomplish our goal—as Darth Vader told Luke Skywalker, "It is your destiny!" If God wills it, how can it *not* come to pass? (6:2).

So, Jesus tells each of us: Wake up and remember what you really want (6:3). Be reassured; it is a done deal. God has already given it to you, and all you need to do is to recognize what has already been done (6:4; also 8:2). The hatred you have imagined within yourself cannot defeat your love for God, or His for you (6:5); your remembrance of God is certain.

## Paragraph 7

A little while and you will see me, for I am not hidden because *you* are hiding. I will awaken you as surely as I awakened myself, for I awoke for you. In my resurrection is your release. Our mission is to escape from crucifixion, not from redemption. Trust in my help, for I did not walk alone, and I will walk with you as our Father walked with me. Do you not know that I walked with Him in peace? And does not that mean that peace goes with *us* on the journey?



• Study Question •

8. *Spend some time meditating or praying with the thought, "In your resurrection, Jesus, is my release."*

When Jesus says we will see him in "a little while" (7:1), it doesn't mean "tomorrow. His sense of time is different than ours. He knows that time is only an illusion (T-13.I.5:5). A little time, or a long time—there is no real difference. He said almost these exact words to his disciples the night before he was crucified ("In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me"—John 16:10.) They had to go through the darkness of the crucifixion, the utter despair and seeming loss of all they had hoped for, before the resurrection morning came and they saw him again. It was, in their case, only a few days, but I'm sure it seemed like eternity. Figuratively, we have to go through the same thing they did. We have to despair of our egos before we can waken to the resurrection. But our final rejoicing is just as certain now as that of the disciples was in Jesus' eyes that evening before his arrest.

Back then, he knew the end from the beginning; he knew that the cross would be followed by the resurrection. Now, as he speaks to us, he still knows the end from the beginning. "*You will see me*" (7:1, emphasis mine). What reassurance that brings to us, to know for a certainty that we will see Jesus! We will see the Christ. We will share in his resurrection (7:3). In fact, we have *already* shared in it: That is why Jesus can be so utterly certain of the outcome. On some level, it has already happened! (8:2).

The resurrection of Jesus was an epochal event that established the very grounds and certainty of salvation (T-3.I.1:2). When he rose from the dead the entire world rose with him, including you and me (C-6.5:5; see also T-19.IV(B).6:5 and M-23.6:8-10). Jesus says that he awoke *for* us (he awoke on our behalf), and that that guarantees our awakening (7:2). The last section spoke of how each of us can remember God *for* our brothers because our minds are joined, parts of a single mind; I believe this is speaking of exactly the same thing. Awakening for us and remembering God for us is the same thing; when Jesus awoke, because his mind is one with your mind and mine, his awakening was also ours. It helps me to think of it like this: Jesus is the part of my mind that has already awakened. He is calling on us to awaken *for our brothers*, just as he awoke for us. He is the proof, the reminder to us that there *is* another way to look at the world, and that it works. Even death could not hold him; he could not die. The ego is teaching us to escape from redemption, to avoid God and avoid our true Self; Jesus is teaching us to escape from crucifixion and death by teaching our brothers that *they* are free from it (7:4).

He says "I am not hidden because *you* are hiding" (7:1). Our hiding under the covers has not dimmed the light of Christ. He is already here, even though we are hiding from him. Our hiding is what we must learn to recognize within our minds, so that we can let go of it. His awakening is ours, but we must not only *receive* the awakening, we must *accept* it. We must open our minds to it. We must trust Jesus to show us the way home, to be with us as we die to our egos and awaken to God (7:5).

Jesus, more than anyone, had a hard road to walk, but he tells us here that he walked that road "in peace" (7:6). Of course he did; we know that about him. God went with him,

empowering him and sustaining him as he passed through his trial, the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, the desertion of his disciples, the beatings, the mocking, and the torturous death of his body. If God went with Jesus, surely he will walk with us during our passage through the clouds into the light.

To transcend your ego, it may see that you must embark on an arduous journey, but if you will trust in Jesus' help, he will walk with you, and you will walk your road in peace just as he walked his. This is a journey *of* peace and *to* peace; "peace goes with *us* on the journey" (7:7).

## Paragraph 8

There is no fear in perfect love. We will but be making perfect to you what is already perfect in you. You do not fear the unknown but the known. You will not fail in your mission because I did not fail in mine. Give me but a little trust in the name of the complete trust I have in you, and we will easily accomplish the goal of perfection together. For perfection *is*, and cannot be denied. To deny the denial of perfection is not so difficult as to deny truth, and what we can accomplish together will be believed when you see it as accomplished.

### • Study Question •

9. *Think how you can apply these encouraging words to your own life today. If you like, turn them into a prayer of affirmation.*

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This and the preceding two paragraphs are examples of what occurs often in the Course. Jesus calls us to a forthright examination and confrontation with our egos, something that is bound to bring up all kinds of fear in us. Then he turns around to assure us that the outcome is inevitable, that our success is guaranteed, and that "you will not fail in your mission because I did not fail in mine" (8.4). He promises to go through it with us, and to enable us to "pass through the fire," as it were, in peace. The end of Paragraph 5 expresses it in a nutshell:

Look straight at every image that rises to delay you, for the goal is inevitable because it is eternal. (5.6)

Notice carefully that word "for." You might think that if the goal is inevitable, you could just sit back and wait, but, on the contrary, *just because* it is inevitable, you ought to muster your courage and immediately confront every illusion that stands in the way of your awakening. If the outcome were uncertain there would be reason to hesitate. There would be a fear that looking at your fears might uncover one that is *real*. But if there is no question of the outcome, there is no reason to avoid the process! So, get to it!

All you are doing is "making perfect to you what is already perfect in you" (8:2). You are afraid that when you look at yourself in honesty you will not see the perfection Jesus is talking about; he is assuring us that perfection is already there. That perfection is already *known* (8:3): Jesus knows it, and *we* know it. The fear we are experiencing is just the distraction of the ego, it is the ego's fear of our own perfection, disguised as a fear of finding sin and darkness.

We can't fail at this if we give Jesus just a little trust (8:5). He has *complete* trust in us! (8:5). When you have a coach who is completely confident in your ability to reach some athletic goal, it is relatively easy to trust her to coach you through attaining that goal. That's why Jesus cites his trust in us; it gives us reason to trust his guidance on our path. God created us in perfection; that perfection exists. You can ignore a thing that exists, but you cannot make it stop existing (8:6). With Jesus' help, perfection is well within our grasp. How can you miss in achieving a goal that you already possess? It is a sure thing.

Denying the truth—which is what we have been doing all along — is much more difficult than denying the *denial* of truth, or the denial of perfection. There is an interesting variation on a cliché in 8:7. The cliché says, "I'll believe it when I see it." The Course modifies that by adding two words: "see it *as accomplished*" (8:7, my emphasis). You'll believe in your own perfection when you see it is already done, already in existence. You'll stop struggling when you realize there is nothing to struggle for because you already have it. You will know you are okay when you recognize that nothing has ever been wrong with you. You will be healed when you realize you have never been sick to begin with, and there is no disease from which you need the cure. The point of 8:7 is that we've spent our entire earthly existence blocking the truth of our divine perfection from our minds, something that is infinitely more difficult than denying the ego's lies. How much harder it must be to deny the existence of something real than of something that does not exist! If we can do that most difficult mental feat, surely we can do the easier one. And it will become not only easy but also inescapable once we realize that all we are being asked to do is to accept what we already *are*.

## Paragraph 9

You who have tried to banish love have not succeeded, but you who choose to banish fear must succeed. The Lord is with you, but you know it not. Yet your Redeemer liveth, and abideth in you in the peace out of which He was created. Would you not exchange this awareness for the awareness of fear? When we have overcome fear - not by hiding it, not by minimizing it, and not by denying its full import in any way - this is what you will really see. You cannot lay aside the obstacles to real vision without looking upon them, for to lay aside means to judge against. If you will look, the Holy Spirit will judge, and He will judge truly. Yet He cannot shine away what you keep hidden, for you have not offered it to Him and He cannot take it from you.

The ego "tried to banish love" (9:1). The ego *failed*. You tried to separate from God, but the separation never happened. You thought about sinning but you could not do it! You thought about changing your mind but you could not change it because God created your mind changeless.

Therefore, when you choose to banish *fear*, rather than to banish love, you "must succeed" (9:1). You must succeed because being without fear is already true of you and always has been true of you; you are "wholly lovable and wholly loving" (T-1.III.2:3).

Christ is already in you and always has been, but you are unaware of Him (9:2–3). In awaking, you are simply exchanging this awareness of Christ for the awareness of fear you have been choosing up till now (9:4); nothing about you is actually changing except your belief about yourself. You are not what the ego tried to make of you; you remain exactly as God created you (W-pI.94.2:2, and many other places).

When you have overcome your fear, *this* is what you will see about yourself (9:5): that you have not changed, that you are eternally God's beloved Son. But the only way you can overcome your fear is by looking at it directly, with the help of the Holy Spirit (9:6). *Looking at your fear honestly is absolutely essential.* You cannot lay something aside unless you know exactly what it is you are laying aside. It does do any good to put up a sign saying, "No expectorating!" unless the people reading the sign know that "expectorating" means "spitting." You can't put away your fear unless you know what your fear *is*.

It is very, very tempting to hide our fear, or at least to pretend that it isn't all that bad. If someone asks if we experience much fear in our lives, many of us would likely answer lightly, "Oh, a little, but not all that much." As long as you believe that, you will never put away more than a little, but not all that much, of your fear! Probably the most difficult thing you will ever do is to admit just how terrified you are of God! You cannot leap from believing you are an ego into knowing you are God's Son without exposing the fear that kept you locked into the ego for all that time. Remember, "not looking is the way they [illusions] are protected" (T-11.V.1.1). Exposing our fear is a foundational step on the ladder to Heaven, and you can't skip this step! As the sage, Aurobindo, put it, "You have to climb the stairs and rest your feet firmly on each step to reach the summit."

*If* you look, the Holy Spirit will judge with His perfect judgment (9:7), seeing all of it as either love or a call for help, and His light will shine away all the darkness. But if you don't look at it, if you don't admit the full extent of your fear and hatred of God, He *cannot* shine it away (9:8). He can't take away what you don't offer to Him.

## Paragraph 10

We are therefore embarking on an organized, well-structured and carefully planned program aimed at learning how to offer to the Holy Spirit everything you do not want. He knows what to do with it. You do not understand how to use what He knows. Whatever is given Him that is not of God is gone. Yet you must look at it yourself in perfect willingness, for otherwise His knowledge remains useless to you. Surely He will not fail to help you, since help is His only purpose. Do you not have greater reason for fearing the world as you perceive it, than for looking at the cause of fear and letting it go forever?

"Therefore," Jesus says, "we are...embarking on an organized, well-structured and carefully planned program aimed at learning how to offer to the Holy Spirit everything you do not want" (10:1) When you see a "therefore," it is a good idea to look and see what it is *there for*. The last sentence of paragraph 9 gives the reason that the Course is structured the way it is, and the reason that it emphasizes so very heavily the absolute necessity of looking at our own fears with complete honesty, in the presence of the Holy

Spirit: If you look, He can shine fear away; if you don't look, He can't. You must offer your fears to Him if you want to be free of them, so *therefore* we need this carefully planned program aimed to teach us how to do that.

Now, I do not mean to imply that other spiritual paths won't get you to God. The Course says there are many paths that teach various forms of the same curriculum, all with "the same outcome" (M-1.4:1-2). Only those stemming from the Judeo-Christian line will even mention the Holy Spirit, so obviously that symbolism cannot be a necessary part of the practice. Buddhist mindfulness meditation, for example, also involves the student in an honest self-examination of all kinds of thoughts, including fears, coupled with a realization that those thoughts are ego-based interpretations that do not reflect reality. There is no Holy Spirit to bring these thoughts to in the Buddhist cosmology—no God, in fact—and yet there is an opening up to what is called "Buddha Mind," a higher, universal consciousness that sees things from a standpoint of universal awareness beyond the ego. In my estimation, it is much the same thing as is being spoken of here. My point is not that Buddhism is the same as the Course, but—supporting what the Course is saying here—that any path toward the transcendence of the ego will involve the same kind of recognition of one's fears, with a reinterpretation of them that divests the fear of its significance, followed by deliberate relinquishment of the fear.

There is in every one of us, every ego, a recoil away from God that causes us to see the world in a horribly distorted way. When we are willing to recognize this fear of God in our minds and to offer it to the Holy Spirit for translation, then "He knows what to do with it" (10:2). We don't know, but He does. He can take our thoughts, sort them out, eliminate those that are undesirable, and keep only those that are of God. This is His entire *raison d'être* (10:6). The Holy Spirit is the divine garbage-thought disposal. Drop an ungodly thought in, and *it is gone* (10:4). So when you find a thought in your mind that does not come from God, such as any form of fear, offer it to Him. Don't be afraid that He will take away anything of value; He only eliminates thoughts that are not of God.

Yet the starting point is our willingness to look at the fear. As has been said repeatedly, unless we look we can't give it to Him, and His ability to transform our perceptions cannot help us (10:5).

The last phrase of this paragraph can be seen as a succinct summary of the whole process of the Course: "looking at the cause of fear and letting it go forever" (10:7)

## Answer Key

1. The miracle worker sees the truth behind the denial, and brings to light what the denial is attempting to hide. The miracle worker looks on another person's ego (denial of one's true Self) and sees the Christ that is hidden behind the ego, the Christ who is the truth about them. In the miracle worker's own mind he sees the truth about the other person, and demonstrates that truth to the other person, thus allowing the light to shine into their mind.
2. We help our brothers to remember God by remembering for them, because all minds are in constant communication with one another, so that our remembering is theirs (2:8).
3. Attack, sickness, fear, and hatred are nothing but a call for love (T-12.I.8:10,13; compare with T-12.II.3:1,3).
4. No written response is expected.
5. Because our nightmares won't leave without help; if we do not look at them openly the Helper cannot heal them.
6. As we choose to remember the true identity of our brothers and sisters, our remembrance helps them to remember. What I think in my seemingly separate mind has a direct effect on the minds around me, and on all minds everywhere, because they are not truly separate.
7. The way is stated in 2:9. Be sure to fix this principle firmly in your mind. I remember God by seeing my brothers as healed; by refusing to give any power to the fog of their ego to hide the light of truth in them. I find my own entrance into God's Kingdom by welcoming my brothers into it.
8. No written answer is expected.
9. No written answer is expected.