

# Study Guide and Commentary ACIM<sup>®</sup> Text, Chapter 13, Section III

## The Fear of Redemption

**NOTE:** In 1994, the Circle of Atonement published my booklet titled *Through Fear to Love*, which contains commentary on this section of the Text, as well as a commentary on T-13.V, “The Two Emotions.” The commentary presented here is based on the same notes I used in preparing that booklet, so there is considerable overlap between the commentary and the booklet.

### Paragraph 1

1. <sup>1</sup>You may wonder why it is so crucial that you look upon your hatred and realize its full extent. <sup>2</sup>You may also think that it would be easy enough for the Holy Spirit to show it to you, and to dispel it **without** the need for you to raise it to awareness yourself. <sup>3</sup>Yet there is one more obstacle [complication] you have interposed between yourself and the Atonement [which you do not yet realize]. <sup>4</sup>We have said that no one will countenance fear **if he recognizes it**. <sup>5</sup>Yet in your disordered state of mind **you are not afraid of fear**. <sup>6</sup>You do not like it, but it is **not** your desire to attack that really frightens you. <sup>7</sup>You are not seriously disturbed by your hostility. <sup>8</sup>You keep it hidden because you are **more** afraid of what it covers. <sup>9</sup>You could look even upon the ego's darkest cornerstone **without** fear if you did not believe that, **without the ego**, you would find within yourself something you fear even more. **10You are not really afraid of crucifixion**. <sup>11</sup>Your real terror is of **redemption**.

### • Study Question •

1. *If you are not afraid of your hatred, what are you really afraid of?*

There is a question that seems to come up for everyone who studies the Course: Why spend so much effort looking at the ego and its hatred? If the ego is false, why pay so much attention to it? “Do I really have to look at all this?” we ask.

Unwillingness to look at our hatred is always a part of the ego's defense system. The ego knows that if we bring the darkness to the light, it will be undone, so it constantly tries to keep us from looking at it. When we begin to turn towards a spiritual path, the ego tries to use that very spiritual truth to hide itself. Often, students of the Course get trapped in a seductive kind of denial. They concentrate on the sweetness and light and ignore the ego and its darkness. They like to affirm that, “I am the holy Son of God himself”

(W-pI.191.Title), but they don't want to look at the hatred of the ego and "realize its full extent" (1:1).

If the ego can't trap you into thinking you *are* the ego, then it tries to trap you into denying that you have *any* ego at all, or denying that your hatred is as deep and far-reaching as it really is. It does anything to keep you from looking at itself.

Looking at the ego, the Course says, is "crucial." The dictionary defines that word as follows: "involving an extremely important decision or result; decisive; critical." The word has the same Latin root as the word "crucifix"; a cross. It describes a crossroads. The decision to really become aware of the amount of hatred that the ego has introduced into your mind is a crossroads, a turning point. If you really want to learn what the Course is talking about, if you want to remember God, everything depends on this. Make this decision and you are on the road to learning; decide not to look, and you are continuing on the path of ignorance. (Or, as I've heard Robert Beatty, a Buddhist teacher, refer to that word: ig-NOR-ance. You are choosing to ignore the evidence of the ego's activity.)

A second objection that comes up, the Course tells us, is that we want the Holy Spirit to do it for us; we don't want the responsibility of raising the ego's hatred to awareness (1:2). Even if we admit that seeing and getting rid of the ego is necessary, we object to having to do it on our own; we want God to do it *for* us. We insist that enlightenment ought to be easy. We want it to be effortless. We want the Holy Spirit to wave a wand and say, "Abracadabra! You're enlightened." We do not want to be told that we are responsible for any part of it. In fact, we're responsible for *all* of it. We have to see that we are the ones "doing" the ego so we can stop doing it. The Course talks about a "consistent effort" that is required to watch our mind carefully. (T-4.IV.7:1-3). It says that to distinguish between the ego and the Holy Spirit, so that we listen to just His voice, "takes effort and great willingness to learn." (T-5.II.3:10))

It is the effort of vigilance in watching our mind that is required, not any kind of effort to change our behavior. In speaking of this, the Course says that we have to exert great effort to achieve effortlessness. We have to undo the mental training our egos have given us (T-6.V(C).10:4-8).

This section is going to deal with answering these two objections, which might be phrased as two questions:

Why is it necessary to uncover our inner darkness in order to awaken spiritually?

Why can't the Holy Spirit simply take away our egos without us having to paw through all the mental garbage?

The Course begins to answer the first question by speaking about "one more complication" or "obstacle" that we have imposed between ourselves and the Atonement (1:3). This is a deep obstacle that lies beyond guilt, which is the major obstacle this chapter speaks of, and beyond the hatred that is hidden by the guilt. This added obstacle is not so much a particular thing, like guilt or fear, but is more of a technique of self-confusion. I call it the layers of the onion syndrome. There are multiple layers of denial. We resist removing the top layer because we actually value the way that layer hides the one beneath it. We resist looking at the guilt because beneath that is our hatred of innocence. We don't actually like the guilt or the fear, but we value them as defenses against what they are hiding.

Why do we hold onto guilt and refuse to accept our total innocence? Because the guilt hides the hatred, the desire to attack that springs out of fear. Why do we resist exposing that hatred? Because it, in turn, is hiding something that frightens us more than either guilt or hatred.

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| Guilt                        |
| Hatred/Fear/Desire to Attack |
| Redemption/Memory of God     |

What is this deeply buried object of fear that keeps us from exposing the ego and letting it go? Read carefully and make careful note of what the Course claims is the thing we fear so much that we are willing to bear the guilt and fear, and willing to project a world of suffering in order to keep it hidden; what makes it seemingly unthinkable to confront “the ego’s darkest cornerstone,” that is, our belief that we have crucified the Son of God?

You could look even upon the ego's darkest cornerstone without fear if you did not believe that, without the ego, you would find within yourself something you fear even more. You are not really afraid of crucifixion. Your real terror is of redemption.

Under the ego's dark foundation is the memory of God, and it is of this that you are really afraid (T-13.III.1:9-2:1).

The “terrible” thing we are desperately trying to hide is the truth of our immutable union with God. We do not want to remember that separating from God is impossible. We do not want to know that God neutralized the thought of separation the instant it entered our mind, so that it had no effect at all. We want separation to be real because that is the only way we can have real independence from God.

The final sentence of the paragraph, 1:11, is, of course, the source of the section title, “The Fear of Redemption.” Why is it “crucial” that we look at the hatred in our hearts without minimizing it? Because if we don’t look we will never see what lies beneath it: the memory of God. And why doesn’t the Holy Spirit do it for us? Because we are the ones who are determined not to let go of what is obscuring that memory. We do not want to let it escape from hiding.

## Paragraph 2

2. <sup>1</sup>Under the ego’s dark foundation is the memory of God, and it is of **this** that you are really afraid. <sup>2</sup>For this memory would **instantly** restore you to your proper place, and it is **this** place that you have sought to **leave**. <sup>3</sup>Your fear of attack is nothing compared to your fear of love. <sup>4</sup>You would be willing to look even upon your savage wish to kill God’s Son, **if you did not believe that it saves you from love**. <sup>5</sup>For this wish **caused** the separation, and you have protected it because you do not **want** the separation healed. <sup>6</sup>You realize that, by **removing** the dark cloud that obscures it, your love for your Father would **impel** you to answer His call and leap into Heaven. <sup>7</sup>You believe that attack is

salvation because it would prevent you from this [to *prevent you from this*].<sup>8</sup> For still deeper than the ego's foundation, and **much** stronger than it will ever be, is your intense and burning love of God, **and His for you**.<sup>9</sup> **This is what you really want to hide.**

• **Study Question** •

2. *What are you trying to protect by not remembering God?*

Remember: in a lot of the discussion in the Text, the Course talks as if we really *are* the ego. It talks that way because we *think* we are egos. When it speaks of “your hatred” it is really talking about the ego's hatred; when it says we are afraid of remembering God, it really means the ego is afraid of remembering God. If your name is Pat, but you believe that your name is Bartholomew, and someone yells, “Hey, Pat!” you will not pay attention. The Course always tries to deal with us where we think we are. If it addressed us where we really are (which is, as it says elsewhere, “asleep in Heaven, dreaming of exile”), we would not respond because we would assume it was talking to someone else.

We have to look at the ego and its hatred because it is hiding something we desperately need to know, something we are nevertheless really afraid of. That thing is the memory of God. (The phrase can be equated here with “redemption,” as can be seen if you juxtapose 1:11 and 2:1.) The ego knows that if we remember God, it is done for, so it struggles to suppress that memory for its own survival (2:2).

Our “proper place” is in God, as part of God, and the ego's very existence depends on believing that it is separate and *not* a part of that One Whole.

The ego believes it is completely on its own, which is merely another way of describing how it thinks it originated. This is such a fearful state that it can only turn to other egos and try to unite with them in a feeble attempt at identification, or attack them in an equally feeble show of strength. It is not free, however, to open the premise to question, because the premise is its foundation. The ego is the mind's belief that it is completely on its own (T-4.II.8:1-4).

The ego is absolutely terrified that you are going to remember who you really are, because once you do remember, you'll know you're not the ego, and the ego simply won't exist any more. The ego's fear of God is incredibly deep. It is a fear of non-being, and we experience it as our *own* fear because we have identified with the ego. But the fear is unbearable, so great that, were it a conscious fear, we would do anything to escape it. That, of course, the ego cannot allow. To hide that profound fear from us, the ego has overlaid it with fears of attack and fears of our own hatred. But those things are not what we're really afraid of. We'd be willing to look “even upon your savage wish to kill God's Son” (2:4) except for the fact that that wish hides our deeper fear of love. We don't want the separation healed! (2:5).

This paragraph seems to be saying some very ugly things about us, although it is really talking about the ego. Yet, the ego is a thought in our mind and we are responsible for it.

When you are willing to accept sole responsibility for the ego's existence you will have laid aside all anger and all attack, because they come from an attempt to project responsibility for your own errors (T-7.VIII.5:4).

That's the point, that's why we have to look at it. Unless we take responsibility for the ego thought, we project it onto others, or onto the world, and feel we can't do anything about it. When we accept the fact that we are the ones "doing" the ego, we can finally stop "doing" the ego.

Although it says some ugly things, the paragraph also says some extraordinarily beautiful things about us, such as sentence 8, which speaks of an intensity of love for God within us that we scarcely can credit.

There are three ways of seeing ourselves. The first is what we can call the *persona*, the outer person that we display to the world. The persona is our mask, our act, the ever-shifting role we play in the world. Most people never go beneath it, as the Course is asking us to do here. For beneath the persona is the *ego*, the person we are afraid we are. It is ugly, hateful, spiteful, and vengeful. Its rage and viciousness are almost beyond belief. That's what we think we're afraid of finding if we look within.

But deeper than that, and "much stronger," Jesus says, is who we *really* are, a magnificent being with an "intense and burning love for God" (2:8), an utterly innocent creature, awesome in power, resplendent in light, blindingly pure. This, your true Self, what the Course refers to as the Christ, is what the ego does not want you to see (2:9). When Jesus says here that "you" want to keep your love hidden, it is speaking about you as identified with the ego. The ego knows that if we were to look directly at it, and to remove that "dark cloud" of hatred, fear, and guilt, God would be like a great magnet, with us the iron filings irresistibly drawn to Him. We would "leap into Heaven" (2:6).

The Course says Heaven is an awareness of our oneness (T-18.VI.1:5-6), so I think what this means is we would leap into full conscious awareness of oneness with everyone, everything, and especially oneness with God. Every desire to attack, every thought of being attacked, would end. That is a leap out of separation and would destroy the ego, so the ego fears it. We continue to rely on attack as a technique of self-preservation because, deep down, we know attack keeps us from reuniting with God (2:7).

As long as we keep shying away from looking at the ego, we won't see what the ego is hiding. That is why it is "crucial" that we look at it. That is the answer to the first question.

### Paragraph 3

3. <sup>1</sup>In honesty, is it not harder for you to say "I love" than "I hate"? <sup>2</sup>[For] You associate love with weakness and hatred with strength, and your own **real** power seems to you as your real weakness. <sup>3</sup>For you could **not** control your joyous response to the call of love if you heard it, and the whole world you thought you made would vanish [and the whole world you *think* you control *would* vanish]. <sup>4</sup>The Holy Spirit, then, seems to be **attacking your fortress**, for you would **shut out God**, and He does not will to **be** excluded.

• Study Question •

3. *Why is it in fact harder to say, "I love," than, "I hate" (3:1)?*

Wanting to continue our separation from God, the ego turns everything around in our minds. It sees the Holy Spirit's loving advances as an attempt to break down its defenses, which it erected to "shut out God" (3:4). The Holy Spirit wants to heal us, and God's will for us is our perfect happiness (W-pI.101.title), yet the ego is convinced this is just a devious ploy to lure us to destruction. It says that we:

...flee the Holy Spirit as if He were a messenger from hell, sent from above, in treachery and guile, to work God's vengeance on [us] in the guise of a deliverer and friend (T-25.VIII.7:2).

We shun the Holy Spirit because the ego understands, and rightly, that if we awaken to love, its whole world would vanish (3:3). So of course, it resists.

If we look at our lives and our thoughts honestly, which is exactly what the Course is telling us we *must* do, we will recognize some rather insane ideas in our minds, ideas such as "love is weakness" and "hatred is strength" (3:2). We may discover the common feeling that it is easier to say, "I hate you," than to say, "I love you" (3:1). When we voice hatred for someone we probably feel strong and powerful; when we admit to love, we feel vulnerable and naked. Love opens us up to attack. This is the evidence of the ego's insanity, its way of twisting things, that the Course wants us to expose. These ideas persist in our minds because of the ego's deep-seated fear that we will recognize our union with God, and in so doing, eradicate the ego forever.

## Paragraph 4

4. <sup>1</sup>You have built your whole insane belief system because you think you would be **helpless** in God's Presence, and you would **save** yourself from His Love because you think it would crush you into nothingness. <sup>2</sup>You are afraid it would sweep you **away** from yourself **and make you little**, because you believe that magnitude lies in defiance, and that attack is grandeur. **3You think you have made a world God would destroy**; and by loving Him, which you do, you would throw this world away, which you *would*. <sup>4</sup>Therefore, you have used the world to cover your love, and the deeper you go into the blackness of the ego's foundation, the closer you come to the Love that is hidden there. <sup>5</sup>*And it is this that frightens you.*

• Study Question •

4. *List the words in this paragraph that refer to the littleness to which you think God's Love would reduce you.*

Our entire belief system, which we have learned from the ego, is profoundly threatened by God's Presence and the idea that we are not separate from Him. We think that if we lost our sense of separate identity we would be crushed into nothingness (4:1). We believe that defiance of God makes us great (4:2), and being only an expression of

His love would make us little. We cling tenaciously to our separateness as though losing it, and being one with *everything*, would somehow diminish us.

The ego's attitude, believing that defiance is what makes us great, reminds me a bit of a cartoon I saw once:



There is a sense in which the ego is right. To love God *would* mean throwing away the world (4:3). The ego tells us, “That’s terrible! Run away from this idea at all cost.” The Holy Spirit says, “That’s wonderful! Go for it!” Think about the world as it was pictured in the Introduction to this chapter: “the delusional system of those made mad by guilt” (T-13.In.2:2), a place of pain, loss, sorrow, and suffering. Is this world something you really want to preserve? The Holy Spirit will offer us the real world in its place, so the net result will be a huge improvement, to say the least! To me, this paragraph is saying, “The world you made isn’t real, and you can throw it away; isn’t that wonderful?”

The profound love at the core of our being has been concealed by the world our ego has made (4:4). That love is both the reason we are afraid to look at the ego, and the reason why looking is so beneficial. The ego does not want to be examined too closely, not because it is so awful (which is, paradoxically, what it would like us to believe), but because a close examination would reveal it to be nothing at all, exposing the love it attempts to hide.

## Paragraph 5

5. <sup>1</sup>You can accept insanity **because you made it**, but you cannot accept love **because you did not**. <sup>2</sup>You would rather be a slave of the crucifixion than a Son

of God in redemption. <sup>3</sup> [For] Your **individual** death seems more valuable [is more valued] than your living oneness [Oneness], for [and] what is **given** you is not so dear as what you **made**. <sup>4</sup> You are more afraid of God than of the ego, and love cannot enter where it is not welcome. <sup>5</sup> But hatred **can**, for it enters of its own volition [of its will] and cares not for yours.

• Study Question •

5. *What quality of the ego's system makes it seem to be worth paying any price for?*

The ego does not want its insanity taken away. It says, “It may be insanity, but it’s *my* insanity!” (5:1). Would anyone question that this world is insane? Why then are we so afraid of losing it? Because we made it. It is *our* insane world, and we absolutely refuse to accept love in place of the insanity because we *didn’t* make love. We are the authors of our insanity and we resent all attempts to take it away from us. This is why we continue to choose the ego’s path of suffering and imprisonment—it represents the only way we know that we *think* will achieve our independence from God. We actually value death more than life because God gave life to us, while death is something *we* made up (5:3).

Jesus is telling us here that suffering, pain, and death persist for only one reason, as insane as it seems: We *want* them to persist. The path of redemption consists of our coming to acknowledge these insane choices, bringing them into conscious awareness, and reversing them.

The ego’s insane desire for independence is the reason we persist in believing that the body and the world are real. It’s why we don’t want to stop believing in death. We simply won’t accept that everything of value has already been created by God and given to us; we want to make something ourselves. We want to be independent, and that means being different from God. We won’t accept that our only part is acceptance. In this madness, we cling to our egos and close ourselves off from God.

I don’t know about you, but I have been fortunate enough in my life to have more than one intense experience of the nearness of God. These were certainly blissful experiences, but I passed through them with more than a little fear as well. God’s nearness was both wonderful and terrifying. Something in me (my ego) knew that if I continued this experience it would have to die, and it would not allow me to continue (5:4). I’ve often wondered if this instinctive ego fear of God is not the reason for the many biblical references to fearing God.

“Love cannot enter where it is not welcome” (5:4).

And that is the answer to question number two, which is, “Why can’t the Holy Spirit simply zap us into enlightenment?” Love can’t zap. If you persist in thinking you don’t want love, which is what characterizes the ego’s thinking, then there is nothing Love can do about it. You have to open to Love, you have to invite It in. You have to look at the ego and see very clearly its hatred of Love, its implacable resistance to Love. You have to expose that thought of resistance in your own mind and see that *you* are the one responsible for thinking it. Only then can you decide to *stop* thinking that thought. You

must choose to cease interfering with Love. You absolutely have to do that yourself. Until you do, Love can't get in.

It seems like an unfair battle sometimes. Hatred can enter your mind unbidden because it couldn't care less what you want (5:5). Love can't enter; its hands are tied, because it does care for what you want. What *you* want is the key. Your will, your choice is the turning point. You need to examine thoughts in your mind that are telling you that you do not want God, that you do not want love, that you want your silly self-made ego instead of your true Self. You need to expose those thoughts, bring them to the light, and deny their truth. You have to say, "No! I want love! I want God!" Then God flows in as naturally as water running downhill.

## Paragraph 6

6. <sup>1</sup>[The reason] You must look upon your illusions [delusions] and not keep them hidden, because [is that] **they do not rest on their own foundation**. <sup>2</sup>In concealment they **appear** to do so, and thus they seem to be **self-sustained**. <sup>3</sup>**This** is the fundamental illusion on which the others [on which they] rest. <sup>4</sup>For **beneath** them, and concealed as long as **they** are hidden, is the loving mind that **thought** it made them in anger. <sup>5</sup>And the pain in this mind is so apparent, when it is uncovered, that its need of healing cannot **be** denied. <sup>6</sup>Not all the tricks and games you offer [have offered] it can heal it, for **here** is the **real** crucifixion of God's Son [see 13.In.4:1].

### • Study Question •

6. a) *What is it that lies beneath your illusions?*
- b) *What is the foundation they rest on?*

Unless you look at your illusions you won't see that they are completely without foundation (6:1). If you keep your gaze averted from your ego, it will seem very real. The world it projects will seem real and self-sustaining. Illusions can only seem real if their cause is concealed, so you have to un-conceal the cause. The cause is you; you are the thinker of these thoughts. You are in charge. You can change those thoughts if you want to. The idea that these illusions are self-sustained—that is, caused by something inherent to them, something outside of your mind—is “the fundamental illusion” (6:3). Undo that one and they all crumble.

Look at the illusions. Look *at* them so you can look *through* them and see what is beneath. There you will find “the loving mind that thought it made them” (6:4), that is, the mind that thought it gave *reality* to what are only *illusory appearances*. You thought you made attack; you only made the illusion of attack. You thought you made hatred; you only made the illusion of hatred. You thought you made evil; you only made the illusion of evil. You thought you made yourself something separate from God; you only made the illusion of separation. You thought you wished death upon others and made it real; you only made the illusion of death. None of it is real! All of it is illusion. You didn't do any of this; you only thought you did.

Beneath all those illusions is this “loving mind.” That mind is in agony because it thinks that it brought all this horrible stuff into existence. When your gaze penetrates past the illusions to see this suffering mind, you will instantly know that it does not require punishment; rather, it needs healing (6:5).

Notice that this aspect of mind is not the ego, nor is it the Christ; it is something in between, so to speak. The ego aspect of mind would not be in pain about its imagined crimes, and the Christ mind would be entirely free of guilt. This is a layer in between. Robert Perry has diagrammed the various layers of mind spoken of by the Course something like the very simplified diagram below. Each level represents a denial of the layer beneath it:

|                                   |  |   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Ego Framework; Mask               | Face of Innocence: Nice, innocent self confronting cruel world                                   | Generated by Ego Proper                                   |
| Ego Framework: Mask               | Victim of other people, of “reality,” and of God (helpless, enraged self)                        | Generated by Ego Proper                                   |
| Ego Framework                     | Ego Proper: attack on others, on reality, on God, on the Self (cruel, malevolent self)           | Ego Source level  |
| Ego Framework: Repercussion level | Call for Love: guilt, accused by ego (crucifixion), need for healing, call for God (loving mind) | Result of Ego Proper                                      |
| Ego Framework: Repercussion level | Right Mind: developing from imperfect to perfect right mind                                      | Imperfections result of ego, but generated by Christ Mind |
| No levels, no variation           | Christ Mind  | Generated by God  |

The “call for love” level is the first level below the ego proper. It is a big step up from the malevolent ego because it has begun to reject the ego’s “crimes,” but it is in suffering because it believes those crimes are real, and that it is guilty of them. Thus, it is still identified with the ego although it judges the ego’s *acts* as wrong. In accepting the guilt, it still believes itself identical with the ego, and is still denying that the innocence of Christ is its own.

It pains you to think you did these things. Your loving mind is utterly horrified at what it seems to have done. It can’t bear to think about it. It runs away and tries to hide beneath the dark cloud of the ego and its projection. It doesn’t even want to think about its own love because it is that very love which it has betrayed, or so it thinks. It is like the prodigal son, lying in the pigsty and thinking, “My God! What have I done? How can I ever go back? How can I ever show my face again at home?” Your loving mind is thoroughly ashamed of itself because it believes it has done damage to the universe

through its anger. It thinks it has spurned and destroyed the Love of God. That sense of shame can be powerful fuel to the ego.

The Course is telling us that if we can get in touch with that profound sense of shame and guilt, we will be getting in touch with the loving mind that feels it. What but a loving mind would be ashamed of hatred and anger? What does the shame tell us about who we really are? If we were as bad as we think we are we would not be ashamed at all! It takes a profoundly innocent mind to feel such profound guilt! Our very shame is the proof that we haven't changed ourselves. We haven't destroyed the love in our heart.

Within you is this innocent child, in pain because it thinks it has thrown away its innocence. That pain "is the real crucifixion of God's Son" (6:6). It is caused by what you believe about yourself; you are the one driving the nails into your own hands.

## Paragraph 7

7. <sup>1</sup>And yet he is **not** crucified. <sup>2</sup>Here is both his pain **and** his healing, for the Holy Spirit's vision is merciful and His remedy is quick. <sup>3</sup>Do not **hide** suffering from His sight, but bring it gladly **to** Him. <sup>4</sup>Lay before His eternal sanity **all** your hurt, and **let** Him heal you. <sup>5</sup>Do not leave any spot of pain hidden from His Light, and search your mind carefully for any thoughts you may fear to uncover. <sup>6</sup>For He will heal every little thought you have kept to hurt you, and cleanse it of its littleness, restoring it to the magnitude of God.

### • Study Question •

7. *Based on this paragraph, uncovering the suffering in your mind allows the Holy Spirit to heal it. Should you simply wait for your pain to be brought to the surface by life's trials?*

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And yet he is not crucified. Here is both his pain and his healing. (7:1–2)

The *pain* is evidence of the healing, much like some kinds of bodily wounds that hurt as they heal. The wound is the wound of love; it is your heart at a deep level rejecting the evil thing it believes it has done. That rejection is coming from the Christ mind deep within you. Your agony, your suffering, your guilt, and all of the outcome of that pain in the form of evil and sin and guilt projected onto other people, all of it is also your prayer, your cry for help.

The Course leads us to see that the deepest, darkest depths of the ego always hide this innocent, loving mind that is suffering from guilt for its imagined crimes. If we look away from the ego we will never encounter that deeper level of mind. That level reflects the love that is all that is real in you, and all that is real in everyone. The depths of the ego hide the love, but to the vision of Christ, the ego becomes transparent and reveals the love.

Even this level of mind can, without a proper response, turn us back into the realm of the ego. The pain is so deep it is unbearable, which is why we used denial to hide this layer of mind in the first place. We need to look upon it with the Holy Spirit, seeing it from His perspective, seeing a need for healing and not a cause for judgment. We need to

be merciful with ourselves. We need to see, not the negative side of this level (its belief in the reality of its sin), but the positive side (the love that rejects what it thinks the mind has done). In short, we need to see the call for love. That is precisely why, when we become aware of this kind of guilty pain, we need to immediately turn to the Holy Spirit.

*Do not hide suffering from His sight, but bring it gladly to Him. Lay before His eternal sanity all your hurt, and let Him heal you. (7:3–4)*

In our insanity, we would still judge ourselves, but the Holy Spirit knows better. Our instinct, when we become aware of guilt, is to hide from God. The Course urges us to oppose that instinct and, instead of hiding them, to bring all our ugly thoughts out into the open where the Holy Spirit can heal them. In fact, he urges us to do more than simply bring these thoughts to Him when they come up; he tells us to go looking for them, to ferret them out and carry them to Him (7:5). This is precisely what many of the lessons in the Workbook have us doing. Those lessons exist to help us make this practice a part of our daily routine.

The word “little” in 7:6 is used in the sense of limited, mean, narrow, or paltry, as opposed to magnitude and grandeur. The little thoughts are those that refuse to see our own magnificence, or that believe we have made ourselves ugly and twisted and powerless.

Notice that the Holy Spirit is not going to take away these thoughts. He will heal them, taking each thought to “cleanse it of its littleness, restoring it to the magnitude of God” (7:6). The little thought says, “I am ashamed.” The same thought, cleansed of littleness, says, “I am in pain because I thought I betrayed love, but the very pain proves that love is still what I am.” This is forgiveness as the Course teaches it; we come to see that we cannot hurt ourselves; we cannot damage our own innocence. All the evidence that we thought proved that sin, guilt and death were real now suddenly is transformed and proves the opposite.

## Paragraph 8

8. <sup>1</sup>Beneath all the grandiosity you hold so dear is your real call for help. <sup>2</sup>For you call for love to your Father as your Father calls you to Himself. <sup>3</sup>In that place which you have hidden, you will only to unite with the Father, in loving remembrance of Him. <sup>4</sup>You will find this place of truth as you see it in your brothers, for though they may deceive themselves, like you they long for the grandeur that is in them. <sup>5</sup>And perceiving it you will **welcome** it, and it will be yours. <sup>6</sup>For grandeur is the **right** of God's Son, and no illusions can satisfy him or save him from what he **is**. <sup>7</sup>Only his love is real, and he will be content **only** with his reality.

### • Study Question •

8. *How can you get in touch with this loving place in your mind?*

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The “grandiosity” here probably refers to all the levels of the ego above the loving mind. By looking without fear at the ego, in all its deceit and viciousness, we see beneath

it our own call for help (8:1). All the horror of this world is just a mask beneath which hides our love of God. We can see that if we are willing to. No matter how ugly the surface self appears to be, underneath, in every one of us, we are longing for God, and yearning only to unite with Him (8:2–3).

How can we “find this place of truth” in ourselves? Jesus says we will find it as we see it in our brothers. It exists in everyone; deep down, we all are crying out for God, although every one of us has denied it. As St. Augustine said centuries ago, there is a God-shaped blank in the heart of every man, and “Our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee.” As we have seen over and over, the Course says we come to accept the truth about ourselves only when we begin to acknowledge that same truth about our brothers (8:4).

As I see that in a brother—as I see past his ego to the call for love that is writhing there in pain over its own imagined destruction—I will welcome the vision of love in my brother (8:5). I will know his ego is just a smoke screen, and it won't matter to me. Seeing that about another person enables me to believe it about myself.

Only your love is real, and nothing but that reality will ever content you (8:7). You will know that you are love, or you will be unhappy. You can't be happy, ever, thinking you are something that you are not. You are love. Only recognizing that, and joyously embracing the truth about your Self, will bring true contentment.

So, look at your brother. Why is he discontent? Why is he upset or angry? Only one reason: He thinks he is not love. Somewhere down there beneath all the pyrotechnic display of emotion is the innocent one who is in despair because he thinks the innocence is gone. He may blame his discontent on hundreds of other things (He may blame it on you!), but you now know what the real cause is. Like you, he is desperately afraid of redemption because it looks like destruction; he is afraid of love because it looks to him like an attack.

Can you condemn him for that, knowing what you now know? He is in terror of the universe; he is in mortal fear of the loving God. Is it any wonder he thrashes blindly about him, seeking to find someone to blame for his terror? Is there anything here to forgive? Is there anything to do, in sanity, except to love him and to hold, in your own mind, the picture of his true innocence? To remind him, in any way you can, of the holy sanity that lies deep within him?

## Paragraph 9

9. <sup>1</sup>Save him from his illusions that you may accept the magnitude of your Father in peace and joy. <sup>2</sup>But exempt no one from your love, or you will be hiding a dark place in your mind where the Holy Spirit is not welcome. <sup>3</sup>And thus you will exempt **yourself** from His healing power, for by not offering total love **you** will not be healed completely. <sup>4</sup>Healing must be as complete as fear, for love cannot enter where there is one spot of fear to mar its welcome.

• **Study Question** •

9. *Based on this paragraph, what will happen if you see nearly everyone as calling for the grandeur given them by God, but you do not see this call in one person such as your “ex” or even your current partner?*

The people around each of us in our lives are the reflections of our own minds. We can't leave out anyone from this forgiveness, because if we do, we are just exempting a part of our own mind from healing (9:1–3).

Love everybody! It seems so simple-minded to say it, it seems trite somehow; but that is just the ego besmirching the truth. To be healed ourselves we must love everyone totally, with no exceptions—most especially the one who just leapt into your mind, attached to a question mark: “Him? Her?” Yes, that one, too. If there is something in another you think is unforgivable, it is because you think there is something unforgivable in you. You cannot leave anyone out (9:4).

## Paragraph 10

10. <sup>1</sup>You who prefer separation [**specialness**] to sanity cannot obtain it in your right mind. <sup>2</sup>You were at peace until you asked for special favor. <sup>3</sup>And God did not give it for the request was alien to Him, and you could not ask this of a Father Who truly loved His Son. <sup>4</sup>Therefore you made of Him an **unloving** father, demanding of Him what only such a father **could** give. <sup>5</sup>And the peace of God's Son was shattered, for he no longer understood his Father. <sup>6</sup>He feared what he had made, but still more did he fear his **real** Father, having attacked his own glorious equality **with** Him.

• **Study Question** •

10. *Paragraph 10 tells the story of the separation, one of the more important versions of this story in the Course. What do you think sentence 2 means?*

You can't keep yourself separate from anyone and stay in your right mind. When we sought to be special we had to go out of our minds to do it (10:1). When you hold onto judgments against someone, you are holding a part of your mind away from healing, and thus you are holding on to insanity. You can't be separate and be whole at the same time; doesn't that make sense?

The paragraph continues in an attempt to explain how this idea of being separate and special has led to all of our (imagined) problems.

To have special favor you have to be separate and different from everybody else. If someone says, “This is my special pen,” you understand that, for some reason, this particular pen is different, perhaps unique. Specialness is what, in our insanity, we have wanted. And we have wanted God to give it to us (10:2). But the thought of separation is “alien” to God, so He did not grant our wish (10:3).

A truly loving father loves all his children equally, and shows no favoritism. Since that kind of father could not give us the special treatment we wanted, we chose to believe

that God is an *unloving* father, one who is quite willing to play favorites. In our minds we made God what we wanted Him to be (10:4). Of course, He still did not give us what we wanted. So, we hated Him for it. Having broken our communion with God and having filled our mind with misperceptions of Him, we destroyed our own peace of mind. How could we be at peace when God had not given us what we wanted, and was now no doubt angry with us for even asking?

We are afraid of the God who plays favorites (a god we made up) because we're dead certain He has stacked the deck against us. But we are even more afraid of the real Father (10:6), the One Who loves everyone equally, because we didn't want that "equal" stuff, we wanted special love, special care, and special attention. We wanted to be special and it pains us bitterly to think we are not. Moreover, we're sure that we've now offended God by asking for something He did not want to give.

This is a very familiar pattern with most of us. As children, we wanted special love from our parents. How smug we felt when it seemed as if our father or mother was giving us special attention at the expense of our brothers or sisters! As adults, we want to be special to our spouse or lover; we can't bear the idea of their loving anyone else as much as they love us. Perhaps we are even jealous of the love given to our children. Such attitudes are a reflection of how we mentally have acted toward God. We wanted special love.

## Paragraph 11

11. <sup>1</sup>In peace he needed nothing and asked for nothing. <sup>2</sup>In war he **demanded** everything and **found** nothing. <sup>3</sup>For how could the gentleness of love respond to his demands, **except** by departing in peace and returning to the Father? <sup>4</sup>If the Son did not wish to **remain** in peace, he could not remain at all. <sup>5</sup>For a darkened mind cannot live in the light, and it must seek a place of darkness where it can believe it is where it is **not**. <sup>6</sup>God did not **allow** this to happen. <sup>7</sup>Yet you **demanded** that it happen, and therefore believed that it was so.

### • Study Question •

*11. List the repercussions of the Son's request for special favor that are mentioned here.*

We had it all and blew it (11:1–2).

We made up war, the whole idea of attack. Even though we had everything, we couldn't bear the thought that we didn't have more than everybody else, so we declared war and tried to take it away from them, and to take it away from God. The result? We wound up with nothing. We gave away our peace. Like Esau in the Old Testament, we sold our inheritance for a single meal—and even that was empty calories.

This didn't really happen (11:6), the Course is quick to remind us. The thought occurred, and we thought we wanted the thought, so we *imagined* we had it. But the separation *never happened*.<sup>1</sup>

To the Son it seemed as if love departed; in reality, it was the Son who departed into "a place of darkness" (11:5) How else, asks the Course, could love respond to the egotistical demand for specialness except by withdrawing? (11:3). To give what was asked would not be love but hate, and so it was not given. God refused to give the Son special treatment. We can learn from this that sometimes, in our relationships, we have to withdraw. When we are asked for what, in love, we cannot give, the only recourse is to withdraw. True love can only refuse to give in to demands for specialness.

So, the Son sought a place of darkness, which is the darkness of our minds in this world, apart from God (or so it seems). Because it is dark, we can *believe* we are away from God; if we allowed light, we would see that we haven't escaped at all. God is still with us, and we are still with Him. But because we demanded specialness, which implies separation, we "believed that it was so" (11:7).

## Paragraph 12

12. <sup>1</sup>To "single out" is to "make alone," and thus **make lonely**. <sup>2</sup>God did not do this to you. <sup>3</sup>Could He **set you apart, knowing** that your peace lies in His Oneness? <sup>4</sup>He denied you only your request for pain, for suffering is not of His creation. <sup>5</sup>Having **given** you creation, He could not take it **from** you. <sup>6</sup>He could but answer your insane request with a sane answer that would abide with you in your insanity. **7And this He did**. <sup>8</sup>No one who hears His answer but will give up insanity. <sup>9</sup>For His answer is the reference point **beyond** illusions [**delusions**], from which you can look back on them and see them as insane.<sup>2</sup> <sup>10</sup>But seek this place and you **will** find it, for Love is in you and will lead you there.

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<sup>1</sup> "The full awareness of the Atonement, then, is the recognition that *the separation never occurred*" (T-6.II.10:7).

<sup>2</sup> "You cannot evaluate an insane belief system from within it. Its range precludes this. You can only go beyond it, look back from a point where sanity exists and *see the contrast*." (T-9.VII.6:1-3).

"He will select the elements in them which represent the truth, and disregard those aspects which reflect but idle dreams. And He will reinterpret all you see, and all occurrences, each circumstance, and every happening that seems to touch on you in any way from His one frame of reference, wholly unified and sure. And you will see the love beyond the hate, the constancy in change, the pure in sin, and only Heaven's blessing on the world" (W-pI.pI.151.11:1-3).

• **Study Question** •

*12. Although God did not give us the specialness we asked for, He did answer our request. What was His answer?*

Remember that this whole discussion started out to explain why looking at the ego and its hatred is necessary. In this consideration of our request for specialness, we *are* looking at it. We're looking at the root thought of specialness that started the whole chain of ego thinking. We're looking at why we are hiding in darkness: We had to, if we wanted to believe in specialness. We're looking at it to see why we are afraid to look. We're seeing why we are afraid of God, both as a God of wrath (our false image of Him) and as a God of love (His reality). We're discovering this fear of God right in our own heart, when all along we'd deluded ourselves into thinking that we wanted God but He was hiding from us. It isn't God that's hiding; it's us!

In this closing paragraph, Jesus really hammers the point home: "God did not do this to you" (12:2). He did not separate you from Himself; He could not. The idea is alien to Him, He cannot conceive of separation. His love is His nature and He cannot violate it. He saw that what you requested could bring you only pain, and so He did not do it (12:4). He cannot let you go, not ever, because He loves you and He knows that "your peace lies in His Oneness" (12:3).<sup>3</sup> He would not give you the pain of being alone, and He did not. Therefore, pain must be an illusion. The separation never happened (T-6.II.10:7), and therefore pain has no cause and cannot be real.

It goes on to say, that God could only "answer your insane request with a sane answer that would abide with you in your insanity" (12:6). This refers to the Holy Spirit in your mind, or the love of God that is in your mind. This is that "intense and burning love for God" (2:8) that lies beneath the ego in every one of us. It is the gift of God to us, His answer to the idea of separation. The Holy Spirit, who represents the love that is in your right mind and is the real you, "is the reference point beyond illusions, from which you can look back on them and see them as insane" (12:9; see also footnote 2). Right there in your mind, in the middle of all the insanity, there is this love. You can't get away from it, but you do have to discover it there in yourself.

And that is why it is so important to look fearlessly at our ego. You have to see it to understand what it is hiding. The more clearly you see the ego the less real it appears. You have to look it square in the eye, so squarely that it stops seeming solid and you can see it is only a cloud, and shining behind that cloud is this place of love. Just "seek this place and you will find it" (12:10). As the song says, "It's in every one of us."

That story of the Son and separation also explains why you must look for yourself, that is, why the Holy Spirit can't magically whisk away the ego. Love never left; you did,

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<sup>3</sup> Even the Bible shows God's inability to abandon His people. In the book of Hosea, after a long lament over the waywardness of His people (who are called *Ephraim* and *Israel*), God cries out: "How can I hand you over, Ephraim, how can I surrender you, Israel? ... A change of heart moves me, tenderness kindles within me... for I am God, not a mortal; I am the Holy One in your midst. I shall not come with threats." (Hosea 11:7-9 REB)

or thought you did. The light is still shining but you are continuing to cover your eyes. You have to notice that you are doing that, and stop; that's all. You have to notice that it is your own hand that is causing the darkness. You're sitting there with your eyes closed and your hands over them, complaining that God turned out the light. God is simply saying, "Open your eyes, and you will notice that all that is between you and the light is your own hands. I'm still here."

When you look at the ego, calmly and deliberately, what you are going to notice is that you are constantly generating it. You are constantly contracting away from Love and refusing to see Its brilliance. And you don't have to do that. You can stop. That's all there is to it. "Hey! That's my own hand there! I'm doing this to myself."

Tentatively, you spread your fingers; you catch a glimpse through the ego's camouflage. Wonder of wonders, what you see is Love! And It is you. It is you!

## Section Summary

### ***The Fear of Redemption***

To awaken to our true Self and to God it is crucial that we become aware of our ego and its hatred and recognize its full extent. We must do this ourselves; no one, including the Holy Spirit, can do it for us. Our personal effort is required.

The ego and its hatred is something our own minds made up to hide God from our awareness. We think we are afraid of looking at the ego in all its blackness, but in reality, we are afraid of what the ego hides: our intense and burning love for God, and His for us. The ego does not want us to look at it because it knows if we look at it clearly we will look through it and find the memory of God, which will mean the end of the ego. We need to see and acknowledge our desire to blot out our real identity as the Son of God, and our belief that we have actually done so. We need to be clear that this is the basis of the ego's thought system because if we become that clear, we will recognize its insanity and abandon it. The more thoroughly we perceive the ego's thought system, the more we will understand the Love within us the ego has been hiding.

We need to see that we are responsible for the ego, that we are the ones 'doing' it. We need to take responsibility for it before we can recognize our power to let it go, to stop 'doing' it. That is why we must do this ourselves. We must get beyond the fundamental illusion that the ego is self-sustaining and recognize that we are its cause, and we can be its un-doer.

When we get in touch with the shame and pain at what we, as egos, think we have done, we will begin to realize that only a loving mind would be so ashamed of betraying love. We then recognize that the mind itself has not been changed; it is still Love, as God created it. Our thought of separation has not done anything to change that. We have not thrown away our innocence. The deep, dark depths of the ego are always hiding the innocent, loving mind that is in pain over what it thinks it has done.

The way given to us to discover this within ourselves is to discover it in others, who are our reflection. In a word, forgiveness. Toward ourselves, ruthless self-examination, a willingness to own the depths of our own hatred and bring it to the light for healing.

Toward others, where we tend to see the ego more easily, a willingness to look beyond what we see to the true innocence beneath. We are all the same mind, recoiling in terror from God's Love because we believe we have attacked Him and are incomparably guilty. To ourselves and to others we must learn to offer the truth: God did not allow this to happen. God did not let separation happen. Within us all, there is still the Love of God.

## Answer Key

1. You are really afraid of redemption.
2. The separation.
3. Because you think that love is weakness. You realize deep down that giving in to love would annihilate the ego, so—because you think the ego is yourself—you feel viscerally threatened by the thought of saying, “I love.” Attacking, by contrast, (i.e., hatred) makes you feel strong and safe.
4. Helpless, nothingness, little, crush, sweep away.
5. The fact that it is something that you made without God; it is yours and yours alone.
6. Two-part question:
  - a. The loving mind that feels horrible pain and guilt over what it thinks it did.
  - b. Our illusions rest on another illusion: The illusion that they are self-sustaining, and rest on a solid foundation. In reality there is no foundation for our illusions.
7. No, you are to search your mind for pain (7:5).
8. You can get in touch with this place in your mind by seeing it in your brother.
9. You will keep part of your mind from God (9:2). “You will not be healed completely” (9:3).
10. Your request to God, asking that He love you more than your brothers, is what began the separation and the loss of peace.
11. The repercussions of our choice include:
  - we found nothing
  - we lost touch with our Father and our peace.
  - we sought a place of darkness to live in
  - we believed we were where we were not
  - we believed that we made our demands come true
  - God could not allow that our demands to be met, so nothing happened
12. He placed the Holy Spirit in our minds to give us a way out of insanity. Connecting with Him in our right minds offers us a different way of looking at our illusions, and so looking past them.