

# Study Guide and Commentary ACIM<sup>®</sup> Text, Chapter 14, Section XI Paragraphs 1–7

## The Test of Truth

### Legend:

blue text = Material from ACIM 3rd edition (FIP)  
**bold blue text** = words emphasized in all caps in Urtext  
red text = alternate or omitted material from the Urtext  
light blue text = editorial comments  
~~striketrough blue text~~ = Not in Urtext, in FIP edition

### Overview of the Section

We've seen in the preceding sections that our task is to stop listening to the ego's judgments, and to listen instead to the Holy Spirit, Who knows that everything that is *not* love is, in reality, a *call* for love. Therefore, whatever the situation, our part is to supply the love that we are. The *key* to doing so, as the opening line of Section XI puts it, is "learning that *you do not know*" (T-14.XI.1:1)—that is, learning to reject the evaluations of life so quickly offered up by our egos. What this section will offer us is a quick test for determining when we are being influenced by the ego's voice, so we can turn away from it: *The Test of Truth*.

### Paragraph 1

1. <sup>1</sup>Yet the essential thing is learning that *you do not know*. <sup>2</sup>Knowledge is power, and all power is of God. <sup>3</sup>You who have tried to keep power for yourself have "lost" it. <sup>4</sup>You still **have** the power, but you have interposed so much between it and your **awareness** of it that you cannot use it. <sup>5</sup>**Everything** you have taught yourself has made your power more and more obscure to you. <sup>6</sup>You know not **what** it is, nor **where**. <sup>7</sup>You have made a **semblance** of power and a **show** of strength so pitiful that it **must** fail you. <sup>8</sup>For power is not a seeming strength, and truth is beyond semblance of any kind. <sup>9</sup>Yet all that stands between you and the power of God in you is but your learning of the false, and ~~of~~ your attempts to **undo the true**.

• **Study Question** •

1. **Paragraph 1.** *It is important to realize that you do not know, because you have "lost" knowledge. According to this paragraph, how did you "lose" knowledge?*
  - A. *By trying to keep power to yourself, and away from God, since power is knowledge and all power is of God.*
  - B. *By forgetting to laugh.*
  - C. *By learning the false.*
  - D. *By trying to undo the true.*
  - E. *It is not clear, but you probably lost it in the same spot as you misplaced your car keys.*
  - F. *A, C and D.*

The first sentence starts with the word, “Yet” (or “But” in the Urtext). As I’ve often pointed out, in the original dictation there were no breaks between sections. Indeed, there were no sections as such. A word like “yet” clearly points back to what came before. Its meaning is akin to “nevertheless” or “in spite of that”; therefore, to understand the full meaning of the sentence it is essential to determine what the “that” is that this is “in spite of.”

As I look back into the previous section, my eyes are caught by the line near the beginning of paragraph 8: “You who believe you understand something of the dynamics of the mind, let me assure you that you know *nothing* of it at all. For of yourselves, you *could* not know it” (T-14.X.8:4–5. Urtext). I think the first sentence we’re looking at is referring to those lines. I believe “that” is the whole process referred to in the paragraphs that follow those lines, paragraphs 8–12; that is, the process of joining with another in seeking for love, allowing the Holy Spirit to show our brothers to us as they truly are, teaching us both their love and their need for love. As we recognize that everything is either love or a call for love, we learn to supply love wherever it is not recognized. That whole discussion is like a parenthesis, and now Jesus is returning to the main point.

What the first sentence is saying here is something like this:

*As vital as that whole process is of opening to the Holy Spirit and allowing a miracle of love to come through you, the key to it all is learning that you don’t know anything, as I said earlier.*

Why is “the essential thing” learning that you do not know? Because what blocks our awareness of the truth is our *false knowing*. We *think* we know, so we are closed to learning anything different. Jesus has made the same point before:

*The Bible tells you to become as little children. Little children recognize that they do not understand what they perceive, and so they ask what it means. Do not make the mistake of believing that you understand what you perceive, for its meaning is lost to you. Yet the Holy Spirit has saved its meaning for you, and if you will let Him interpret it, He will restore to you what you have thrown away. Yet while you think you know its meaning, you will see no need to ask it of Him. (T-11.VIII.2:1-5)*

As long as you *think* you know what something means, you won’t ask the Holy Spirit to interpret it for you. But asking Him is critical, so it is *essential* to

recognize that you do not know. That starts the whole process that leads to the miracle.

What is this knowledge that we think we have, and where did it come from? Why do we “not know”? Jesus begins by equating knowledge with power (1:2), and pointing out that all power (and therefore, all knowledge) is of God. If you separate from God, therefore, you separate from both knowledge and power. You cannot have one without the other, and you can't have either without God.

The reason we do not have knowledge of God is that we threw it away. We sought to be a power unto ourselves, separate from God, and in seeking power we lost both power and knowledge (1:3). Actually we did not lose the power *itself*; we lost our *awareness* of it (1:4). We became our own teachers, and the more we “learned,” the less aware we were of our divine power; we no longer know what power is or where it is (1:5–6). Bereft of power, we resorted to a bravado display, putting on what seems like power but is not (1:7). This, I believe, is a reference to *attack* and *defiance*. We pretend to know; we pretend to be strong. We are like the mouse that roared, putting on a pitiful performance that is doomed to failure. Yet we *do* have the power of God in us, and the only thing blocking it from our awareness is our false learning, motivated by our attempts at separate existence (1:9).

## Paragraph 2

2. <sup>1</sup>Be willing, then, for **all** of it to be undone, and be glad that you are not bound to it forever. <sup>2</sup>For you have taught yourself **how to imprison the Son of God**, a lesson so unthinkable that only the insane, in deepest sleep, could even **dream** of it. <sup>3</sup>Can God learn how **not** to be God? <sup>4</sup>And can His Son, **given** all power by Him, learn to be **powerless**? <sup>5</sup>What have you taught yourself that you can possibly prefer to keep, in place of what you *have* and what you *are*?

### • Study Question •

2. **Paragraph 2.** *It is impossible to dis-empower our true Identity. We could only dream of this, in deepest sleep and insanity. According to this paragraph, out of all that we have taught ourselves, what would we want to keep?*
- A. *Only the spark of beauty.*
  - B. *Chocolate.*
  - C. *Only our right-minded thoughts.*
  - D. *None of it.*

•

If “all that stands between you, and the power of God in you” is your false learning, you should then “be willing for *all* of it to be undone” (1:9; 2:1). It's important to notice that little word, “all.” It is emphasized in the Urtext. Why on earth would we want to keep any part of what blocks us off from full awareness of our divine power? Yet we *do* want to keep parts of it. We think, “Well, yes, that understanding I've based on the past is mistaken, but surely *this* understanding is

okay. Isn't there *something* good about the ego?" And the answer is, "No." The various things we've learned from our egos may *seem* to differ, some better than others, but in reality:

Their tiny differences in form are no real differences at all. None of them matters. That they have in common and nothing else. Yet what else is necessary to make them all the same?

Let them all go, dancing in the wind, dipping and turning till they disappear from sight, far, far out!

Rather than clinging to the rag rights of the ego, we should shout, "Hallelujah!" that we "are not bound to it forever" (2:1). *It is possible* to be free of the ego and its madness. What we've taught ourselves is that the impossible has happened. The Son of God (That's us!) has been imprisoned (2:2), something that is utter madness. It isn't just the *thought* of a madman; it is the *nightmare* of a madman (2:2).

Our imprisonment is unthinkable because, if we are imprisoned, then God is no longer God—and *that* is clearly impossible. How does that follow? An omnipotent God has given His creation *all power*. An all-powerful being cannot be imprisoned! An all-powerful being cannot learn to be powerless (2:4). If he *could* lose his power, then the God Who gave him the power cannot be all-powerful either, and therefore, not truly *God*. The very idea is nonsensical.

We *have* all power and all knowledge; we *are* the holy Son of God Himself. What lesson of the ego is worth more to us than all that? (2:5) We must be willing, then, for *all* of the ego's madness to be undone.

### Paragraph 3

3. <sup>1</sup>Atonement teaches you how to escape forever from everything that you have taught yourself in the past, by showing you **only** what you **are now**. <sup>2</sup>Learning **has** been accomplished **before** its effects are manifest. <sup>3</sup>Learning is therefore **in the past**, but its influence **determines** the present by giving it whatever meaning it holds for you. <sup>4</sup>Your [Your] learning gives the present **no meaning at all**. <sup>5</sup>Nothing you have ever learned can help you understand the present, or teach you how to undo the past. <sup>6</sup>Your past **is** what you have taught yourself. <sup>7</sup>Let it **all go**. <sup>8</sup>Do **not** attempt to understand **any** event or **anything** or **anyone** in its "light," for the [light of] darkness in which you **try** to see can **only** obscure. <sup>9</sup>Put no confidence at all in darkness to illuminate your understanding, for if you do you **contradict** the light, and thereby **think** you see the darkness. <sup>10</sup>Yet darkness cannot **be** seen, for it is nothing more than a condition in which seeing becomes impossible.

• **Study Question** •

3. **Paragraph 3.** *Atonement teaches you how to escape from all of the past. For your learning gives the present no meaning. Rather than illuminating the present, your learning is darkness. When the first sentence says that Atonement shows you what you are now, what are you now?*
- A. *The particular set of physical and mental traits that you are now.*
  - B. *The flow of sensation passing through your awareness right now, as opposed to any conceptualization about those sensations.*
  - C. *Someone doing homework about A Course in Miracles.*
  - D. *The Son of God, the same as you have always been.*
  - E. *A and B.*

The atonement points to the eternal present, rather than to the past. It makes us aware of what we are *now*, and what we always are—and *only* that (3:1). And what we are, of course, is love: “God is but Love, and therefore so am I” (W-pI.rV.Int.4:3).

You are the work of God, and His work is wholly lovable and wholly loving.  
This is how a man must think of himself in his heart, because this is what he is.  
(T-1.III.2:3-4)

The text says that focusing on this truth is how we escape from our false self-image, that of the unworthy, guilty sinner. In other words, we escape from the false by remembering the true. The Course places heavy emphasis, as we have seen, on looking without fear at the ego, in total self-honesty, but it seems to place equal emphasis on reminding ourselves of the Christ we truly are.

Once again, I think the emphasis in the Urtext, left out of the published edition, is important: “Learning *has been* accomplished, *before* its effects are manifest” (3:2). Without the emphasis this seems to be a flat statement of a rather ordinary fact: The effects of learning follow the actual completion of learning. You first learn something, and then you see the effects. But with the emphasis, it hints at what is clearly stated in the next paragraph (4:3): that the Holy Spirit has *already learned* the Truth *on our behalf*. We can plug into His knowledge and, based on what has *already happened*, experience the effects in our lives. We may believe that we have not yet learned the Truth, but the reality is that the Holy Spirit within us has learned Truth already; we are gradually experiencing the effects of that learning.

The reverse is also true: the learning of the ego is also in the past, and the effects we see in our lives are the evidence of our false learning.

Our interpretation of the present depends upon which learning we accept: the Truth of God or the “truth” of our ego (3:3), which, if accepted, actually robs the present of all meaning (3:4). What we (as egos) have taught ourselves cannot help us understand the present, and certainly cannot help us undo the past! (3:5) So often, we believe we understand what someone is doing or saying based on our past experiences with that person or with other persons. Jesus is telling us here

that our past learning is worthless, or worse than worthless: it not only cannot provide true understanding, it *obscures* the Truth by painting a false picture. As we've said several times, when we already think we understand, we are not open to be taught; our false knowing blocks awareness of the Truth.

In fact (and here is another key emphasis of the Urtext), "Your past is what you have taught yourself" (3:6). The past we remember, the past we believe in and upon which we base our responses to the present, is a fabrication of our private, ego mind.

What *you* remember never was. It came from causelessness which you confused with cause. (T-28.Int.9:1-2)

Remembering is as selective as perception, being its past tense. It is perception of the past as if it were occurring now, and still were there to see. Memory, like perception, is a skill made up by you to take the place of what God gave in your creation. (T-28.Int.2:5-7)

...there is no past. (T-13.I.3:3)

...by accepting your guiltlessness you learn that the past has never been (T-13.I.9:1)

If you remember the past as you look upon your brother, you will be unable to perceive the reality that is now. (T-13.VI.1:7)

This unreality of the past, its having been concocted out of the ego's delusions, is the reason behind the forceful appeal that Jesus now makes: "*Let it all go*" (3:7). Let go of the past—*all of it*. Let go of everything you think you have learned that is *based on* the past. It's all worthless and worse than worthless. Stop using "past knowledge" to understand the events of your life, to understand any person you interact with, or to understand *anything!* (3:8) You may think that the past can throw some light on the situation, but what you think of as light is really *darkness*; rather than making things clear, it obscures the truth. In the ego's so-called light what you will see *is* darkness—darkness in the situations of life, darkness in people, darkness in yourself (3:8–9). But darkness can't be seen; "it is nothing more than a condition in which seeing becomes impossible" (3:10). Your past learning casts a thick veil over the light of God in everyone and everything. So *let it go*.

## Paragraph 4

4. <sup>1</sup>You who have not yet brought **all** of the darkness you have taught yourself into the light in you, can hardly judge the truth and value of this course. <sup>2</sup>Yet God did not abandon you. <sup>3</sup>And so you have another lesson sent from Him, **already** learned for every child of light by Him to Whom God gave it. <sup>4</sup>This lesson shines with God's glory, for in it lies His power, which He shares so gladly with His Son. <sup>5</sup>Learn of His happiness, which is yours. <sup>6</sup>But to accomplish this, all your dark lessons **must** be brought willingly to truth, and joyously laid down by hands open to receive, not closed to take. <sup>7</sup>Every dark lesson that you bring to Him Who teaches light He will accept **from** you, **because you do not want it**. <sup>8</sup>And He will gladly **exchange** each one for the bright lesson He has learned **for** you. <sup>9</sup>Never believe that **any** lesson you have learned **apart** from Him means **anything**.

### • Study Question •

4. *Paragraph 4 speaks of giving the Holy Spirit all of our dark lessons and of how He will gladly exchange them for the bright lesson He has already learned for us. According to this paragraph, why do we often doubt, question, get angry at, or throw away the Course?*

Given what we know about the Course “scribe,” Helen Schucman, and her skepticism and doubt about the very Course she was writing out, it’s easy to see this first sentence being addressed to her personally. She *was* trying to judge the truth and value of the Course, and Jesus was letting her know, none too subtly, that she was in no position to do so because her mind was not yet healed. She had “not yet brought *all* of the darkness [she had] taught [herself] into the light in [herself]” (4:1). Nor have you; nor have I.

Do you sometimes doubt the value or the truth of what the Course is saying? I confess that I have done so. We need to remind ourselves that an unhealed mind is unqualified to judge conclusively what is true and what is not. We’ve taught ourselves lies and filled our minds with darkness. The best we can do is to take an experimental or empirical approach. I like that word, “empirical.” It refers to something that is based on or verified by observation and experience rather than by theory or pure logic. In simple terms it means, “Try it and see if it works.” That’s just what the Course invites us to do. Trying to logic out the Course, trying to nail down its theory in detail before actually putting it into practice, just won’t work, because the very mental illness the Course is setting out to correct will guarantee that our logic will be faulty.

Our minds are so upside down, so confused! We think that guilt is innocence, and innocence is guilty; we fear what we should love and love what we should fear; we are convinced that we are separate, and believe that whatever may be wrong with us (and surely, we think, *something* must be wrong), the one thing we’re fairly sure is *not* the problem is our guilt. We are delusional; we hear voices and see people that are not there. With such twisted minds, we may wonder, how

can we ever arrive at the truth? God did not abandon us to our insanity (4:2). He has sent the Truth to us, predigested (“already learned”), in the Mind of the Holy Spirit (4:3). The lesson of Truth, so carefully preserved for us, is full of God’s glory, God’s power, and God’s happiness, all of which is ours as well because we are one with God (4:4–5). These are the bread of Heaven come to feed our spirits; these are the lessons of truth we can and will learn.

The prerequisite to such learning, though, is that we bring *all* of our dark lessons to the truth, into God’s Presence, where we gladly lay them down, and open ourselves to receive from the Holy Spirit (4:6). Full learning requires complete relinquishment of our self-taught dark lessons, but it can come about by stages; as we bring one dark lesson after another to the Holy Spirit, having learned that *we no longer want that dark lesson*, He will replace each one with the bright lesson of God’s glory, God’s power, and God’s happiness that dwells within all of us (4:7–8). He will never wrest anything from us that we do not willingly give up. The process will continue until every dark lesson has been replaced with Truth.

Lately, I’ve been impressed with the need to focus on the light of God’s Truth even as we expose the ego and take responsibility for its thoughts. We’ve invested a ton of energy in learning these dark lessons. They are not going to evaporate as soon as we uncover them; rather, they will just dig in their roots and cling to our minds like wood ticks on a dog. Actually, the dark lessons are not clinging to us; *we* are clinging to *them*.

An alcoholic drinks because, despite the harm it does to his body and his life, he is convinced it is better than the alternative. He thinks that blotting out painful emotions with drink is a *good* thing. Until he comes to learn, to really *know*, that he *does not want* to drink, that he wants something else even more than drink, he will continue to drink. And until we learn that there is something we want more than the ego, something we want to believe more than we believe the ego’s lies, we will continue to be locked into our egos.

Therefore, we need to drill the truth into our minds. This is the reason behind the constant insistence in the Workbook on frequent repetition of the daily thoughts. So when thoughts of scarcity arise, we need to affirm as often as possible, “God is my Source; I have everything I need.” When tempted to sadness, we can tell ourselves, repeatedly, “God’s will for me is perfect happiness” or “God’s happiness is mine.” To me, this is one form of what this paragraph speaks of when it tells us to bring our dark lessons to truth. In the form of a prayer, it might sound like this:

*Divine Spirit, I am experiencing sadness; I feel depressed. I willingly bring this dark lesson to You. I no longer want it. My hands are open to receive the bright lesson of happiness that You have learned for me. I know that God’s will for me is perfect happiness, and I receive it now.*



## Paragraph 5

5. <sup>1</sup>You have one test, as sure as God, by which to recognize if what you learned is true. <sup>2</sup>If you are **wholly** free of fear of any kind, and if all those who meet or even **think** of you **share** in your perfect peace, then you can be sure that you have learned **God's** lesson, and not your own [*not yours*]. <sup>3</sup>Unless all this is true, there **are** dark lessons in your mind that hurt and hinder you, **and everyone around you**. <sup>4</sup>The **absence** of **perfect** peace means but **one** thing: You **think** you do not will for God's Son what his Father wills for him. <sup>5</sup>Every dark lesson teaches this, in one form or another. <sup>6</sup>And each bright lesson with which the Holy Spirit will **replace** the dark ones you do **not** accept [*and hide*], teaches you that you will **with** the Father and His Son.

### • Study Question •

5. **Paragraph 5.** *You are not at peace because your dark lessons teach you that you do not want God's Son to be happy. The test of truth is this: if you are fearless and if everyone who meets or thinks of you is perfectly peaceful, then what you learned is true. Did Jesus pass this test?*
- A. *No, he made everyone upset.*
  - B. *Yes, the Gospel accounts are inaccurate, and do not reflect the peace that all around him really felt.*
  - C. *No. Although he was fearless, and although those he met felt peace, those who think of him nowadays have been so influenced by the Church that they are not at peace.*
  - D. *Yes. The reason that those around him were often upset with him is that they felt the peace he brought, and were threatened by it.*

So, what is “the test of truth” the section title refers to? We want to be sure that we are hearing the Holy Spirit, not the ego. We need a reliable “ego detector.” The Course tells us that there is a simple test, “as sure as God” (Wow! Now *that* is certainty!), that enables us to recognize “if what you learned is true” (5:1). *What is that test?*

Later in the section the test is summarized in a handful of words: “the test of perfect peace” (12:4). Read through this paragraph again now, and ask yourself if you pass this test now, or have ever passed it in a given moment. Note that there are two parts to the test: Not only are *you* at perfect peace (free of every form that fear might take: anxiety, worry, tension, anger) but *everyone* who meets or even thinks of you *shares* that same perfect peace! (5:2) Perhaps you feel, as I do, that there have been times when I felt perfectly at peace about some decision I was making or some lesson I felt I had learned, but as far as I know, not everyone who met me or thought about me shared that peace. My thinking was still limited by my ego, and I wasn't including everyone else in the equation of my decision; I was deciding “for myself,” as if I were a separate entity. And of course, I'm not a separate entity. My decisions affect everyone around me, indeed, everyone in the world. For everyone to share my peace, my decision should be one in which no one loses and everyone gains.

Two questions arise for me as I read this: 1) If Jesus was fully enlightened, did he pass this test? How can we explain the ferocity of those who crucified him if they shared his perfect peace? 2) Is there any practical value *for me* in a standard that, seemingly, nobody can ever meet entirely until they are fully enlightened—if even then?

The Course teaches us that Jesus “became identified with *Christ*, a man no longer, but at one with God” (C-5.2:2). “In his complete identification with the Christ - the perfect Son of God, His one creation and His happiness, forever like Himself and one with Him - Jesus became what all of you must be.” (C-5.3:1). Clearly, the understanding of the Course is that Jesus was wholly enlightened, completely identified with the Christ. He completed his spiritual path. He, of all people in history, must have “learned God’s lesson” and freed his mind of the “dark lessons...that hurt and hinder” (5:3). So, he must have passed the test of perfect peace.

Yet we read in the Gospels that crowds were angry with him and demanded his crucifixion. Even his own disciples were filled with fear upon his arrest and fled. Robert Perry theorizes that, “The reason that those around him were often upset with him is that they felt the peace he brought, and were threatened by it.” They *did* feel his perfect peace, but it produced the opposite reaction. We know that our egos often react to love with fear, so why should it seem strange that those crowds reacted to Jesus’ peace with violence?

I want to suggest another possible way of understanding the text here, because it does not simply say that people around us will *feel* our peace (and maybe react with violence), it says that they “*share* [emphasis in the Urtext] in your perfect peace” (5:2). It also characterizes the peace in which we mutually participate with those around us as being “wholly free of fear of any kind” (5:2). If our peace arouses fear in those around us, it hardly seems to accord with this description!

My understanding of this passage is that “all those who meet or even think of you” refers to those people who are directly involved with us in some way, people who are directly affected by our state of mind—particularly by our belief in guilt, or lack of such belief. The dark lessons so often referred to in this section, from which our mind must be freed, are dark lessons “of guilt” (10:7), lessons that teach us that, “You...do not will for God's Son what his Father wills for him” (5:4). In other words, where God wills perfect happiness for everyone, we will someone misery and punishment; we believe them guilty of some so-called sin, and unworthy of perfect happiness. We are buying into guilt. Perfect peace comes when we no longer ascribe guilt to anyone, including ourselves. Loss of peace arises from the sense of conflict, judgment, separation, and condemnation that we feel when we believe in guilt in any form.

When we project guilt onto someone around us, it directly causes a loss of peace for them. You know this well, whenever someone judges you and considers you guilty of something. When we are *not* projecting guilt onto anyone, everyone who comes in contact with us shares our peace. Our minds are projecting nothing but a will to all goodness for them, just as God does (5:6), and they sense it. They themselves may be generating something besides peace, but their unrest is not coming from *us*. I think that is what is meant by the test of perfect peace: a total lack of judgment and condemnation; complete freedom from attack thoughts. Jesus certainly met that test. The practical value of the test of perfect peace for someone like me is actually bound up in the fact that, until I’ve been enlightened, or in Course terms, attained the real world, I can assume that I *never* pass the test. As we see in the next paragraph, we don’t need to concern ourselves

wondering *how* we can ever learn this lesson and pass this test. For now, our only task is to notice when perfect peace is lacking (Hint: *all* the time!), and ask for help (Hint: *all* the time).

## Paragraph 6

6. <sup>1</sup>Do not be concerned about how you can learn a lesson so completely different from everything that you have taught yourself. <sup>2</sup>How would you know? <sup>3</sup>Your part is very simple. <sup>4</sup>You need only recognize that everything **you** learned you **do not want**. <sup>5</sup>Ask to **be** taught, and do **not** use your experiences to confirm what **you** have learned. <sup>6</sup>When your peace is threatened or disturbed in **any** way, say to yourself:

<sup>7</sup>*I do not know what anything, including this, means.*

<sup>8</sup>*And so I do **not** know **how to respond to it**.*

<sup>9</sup>*And I will not use my own past learning as the light to guide me now.*

<sup>10</sup>By this refusal to attempt to teach yourself what you do not know, the Guide Whom God has given you will speak to you. <sup>11</sup>**He** will take His rightful place in your awareness the instant **you** abandon it, and offer it to Him.

### • Study Question •

6. **Paragraph 6** discusses how we can learn this bright lesson (of being perfectly peaceful). How, according to this paragraph, do we learn this lesson?
- A. By simply realizing that we do not want what we learned.
  - B. By taking lots of Valium.
  - C. By asking to be taught by the Holy Spirit.
  - D. By **not** drawing upon our past experiences.
  - E. By doing the Workbook.
  - F. A, C and D.

The essence of this paragraph is that we have usurped the place of the Holy Spirit, Whose job it is to teach us what everything means and how to respond to it; therefore, all that we need to do to learn the lesson of perfect peace is to stop thinking we can figure it out on our own, and to give the Holy Spirit His rightful place in our lives (6:10–11).

When Jesus speaks about “a lessons so *completely* different from everything that you have taught yourself” (6:1), what lesson is he referring to? It is this: “You will with the Father *unto* His Son” (5:6). I believe the editors of the second edition of the Course, who replaced “unto” with “and,” made a serious mistake! The sentence as written in the Urtext means that your will for God’s Son is the same as God’s Will. Your will *unto* the Son is all goodness, perfect happiness, and eternal blessing. How many of us *believe* that about ourselves? How many of us believe that we are “wholly lovable and wholly loving” (T-1.III.2:3), or that “God’s Son [each of us!] is still as loving as his Father” (T-13.VI.13:5)? We have taught ourselves that our love is, at best, imperfect and lacking. How can we ever learn that our love has never lost its perfection; that our love *is* God’s love, and God’s love is our love?

“Don’t be concerned about” how you will learn that, Jesus tells us (6:1). He meets our self-doubt with a dismissive question, “How would you know?” (6:2). How *could* we possibly know how to teach ourselves a lesson totally different from everything we’ve taught ourselves all of our lives? *Of course* we don’t have a clue! But we don’t have to. Our part “is very simple” (6:3). We simply need to recognize that we no longer want any of the lessons we’ve been teaching ourselves (6:4). As Jesus puts it elsewhere,

To learn this course requires willingness to question every value that you hold. Not one can be kept hidden and obscure but it will jeopardize your learning. (T-24.Int.2:1-2)

Or, in one of my favorite lines:

Resign now as your own teacher. . . It is merely the result of an honest appraisal of what you have taught yourself, and of the learning outcomes that have resulted. (T-12.V.8:3-5)

Stop trying to be your own teacher, and let the Holy Spirit do His job. That’s it. That’s all of it. “Ask to be taught” (6:5). Don’t try to use whatever is happening *now* to confirm what you think you already know—which is what we tend to do. For instance, someone says something that seems insulting or unloving, and we add it to the pile of evidence we’ve accumulated that this person is rude, and does not know how to love. We use it to lay more guilt on them.

Instead, whenever our “peace is threatened or disturbed in any way,” we are asked to remind ourselves (6:6):

<sup>7</sup>*I do not know what anything, including this, means.*

<sup>8</sup>*And so I do **not** know how to respond to it.*

<sup>9</sup>*And I will not use my own past learning as the light to guide me now.*

This is the practical application of the test of perfect peace: Notice whenever your peace is *not* perfect, and realize that this is a clear indication that you are not in your right mind, and that, therefore, you cannot trust your perception of things and need to rely on the Holy Spirit instead of your past learning. Refuse “to teach yourself what you do not know” (6:10). When you give up the role of teacher, the Holy Spirit, Whose rightful place it is, will take His role as Guide, and will speak to you (6:11–12). You won’t have to beg Him. You simply have to stop teaching yourself, stop trying to figure it out.

It works. Try it! The next time you become aware of a disturbance in your peace, which is usually brought on in reaction to something someone else did or said (or failed to do or say), remind yourself, “I do not know what anything, including this, means; therefore, I don’t know how to respond to it. I won’t try to use my past experience to figure it out.” As the saying goes, “Let go and let God.” Or, in the words of Carrie Underwood’s hit country song, “Jesus, take the wheel”:

Jesus, take the wheel  
Take it from my hands  
'Cause I can't do this on my own  
I'm letting go.

## Paragraph 7

7. <sup>1</sup>**You** cannot be your guide to miracles, for it is you who made them necessary. <sup>2</sup>And because you did, the means on which you can **depend** for miracles has been provided **for** you. <sup>3</sup>God's Son can make no needs His Father will not meet, if he but turn to Him ever so little. <sup>4</sup>Yet He cannot **compel** His Son to turn to Him and remain Himself. <sup>5</sup>It is impossible that God lose His Identity, for if He did, **you would lose yours**. <sup>6</sup>And **being** yours He cannot change Himself, for your Identity **is** changeless. <sup>7</sup>The miracle **acknowledges** His changelessness by seeing His Son as he always was, and **not** as he would make himself. <sup>8</sup>The miracle brings the effects that **only** guiltlessness **can** bring, and thus establishes the fact that guiltlessness **must be**.

• **Study Question** •

7. *Paragraph 7. Miracles are provided for you. Just turn to God ever so little and miracles will be yours. They rest on the changelessness of God and your Identity. How does a miracle—which heals someone's internal or external affliction—prove that guiltlessness must be?*



Just as Jesus says we cannot teach ourselves the bright lesson of God (“How would you know?” (6:2)), so he says we cannot be our own guide to miracles. We are the ones who made miracles necessary (7:1). As AA teaches, “Your stinkin’ thinkin’ is what got you here in the first place.” We need help, and Help has been provided—the Holy Spirit. He is “the means...for miracles,” a means we can *depend* on (7:2). Every situation we encounter, every moment in which our peace is threatened or disturbed in any way, can be the birthplace for a miracle if we let it, if we accept that we don’t know what it means and allow ourselves to be guided from within. “Jesus, take the wheel!” What a great prayer!

It doesn’t take much; just “a little willingness,” as the Course says elsewhere (T-26.VII.10:1). Just “turn to Him ever so little” (7:3). As followers of the ego we manufacture needs and lack, over and over, but we cannot make a need that God will not meet if we just turn to Him (7:3). But *we* have to turn to God; God will not and cannot *compel* us to turn without violating His own nature (7:4), and that He *cannot* do. He created us as extensions of Himself, in His own image and likeness, and He created us to be changeless. If God changed His gentle nature and became a compeller, it would change *us*, but because *we* are changeless, God cannot change! (7:4–6)

Sometimes we wish that God would just *zap* us into enlightenment. “Poof! You’re enlightened.” But it doesn’t work that way. We must play our part. We must contribute that little willingness, that minute opening of our mind to the Holy Spirit. “Look with peace upon your brothers, and God will come rushing into your heart in gratitude for your gift to Him” (T-10.V.7:7). We should be thankful that God cannot zap us into enlightenment because He would have to change His nature to do so, and if *He* could change, so could *we*; and it is the fact of our changelessness that assures us that we must be guiltless. A miracle allows us to see someone (a brother or sister, ourselves) as guiltless because they are the changeless creation of God, the “Son as he always was, and *not* as he would make himself” (7:7–8). When we see someone as the changeless creation

of God, we *must* see them as guiltless. God's changelessness and our changelessness are each the guarantee of the other, because we share One Life with God.

## Answer Key

1. F
2. D
3. D
4. Because we have not yet brought all of our darkness to the light in us.
5. D
6. F
7. It proves that guiltlessness must be because it brings the effects of guiltlessness--release from pain, imprisonment, punishment.