

Study Guide and Commentary ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 15, Section III

Littleness versus Magnitude

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

In the final paragraph of the last section, Jesus said that the practice of the holy instant “is the practice of the power of God in you” (T-15.II.6:6). In other words, affirming that at the core of our being we are divine; practicing focusing our attention on the infinite power of God that is also our power. He contrasts this power with the weakness of the separated ego.

In Section III, he switches the analogy from weakness versus strength to littleness versus magnitude, but essentially he is speaking of the same things: our pitiful individual, separate personhood compared to the magnificence of our divine nature, the ego contrasted with the Christ. The goal that is stated in 4:5 of this section is “To hold your magnitude in perfect awareness in a world of littleness.” Our times of meditation practice are meant to be practice in the awareness of magnitude.

He asks us to consider our every decision in the light of which identity is the basis of our choice: ego or God? And not only that, but to allow God to give Himself through us to others, restoring the awareness of magnitude to everyone. Only by letting no one forget what we wish to remember (11:4) can we remember it for ourselves (11:5). Written near Christmas, the latter half of the section uses the imagery of the birth of Jesus to picture the birth of Christ in us.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹Be not content with littleness. ²But be sure you understand what littleness is, and why you could never **be** content with it. ³Littleness is the offering you give [**gave**] **yourself**. ⁴You offer [**offered**] this in place of magnitude, and you accept it [**and accepted it**]. ⁵Everything in this world is little because it is a world made out of littleness, in the strange belief that littleness **can** content you. ⁶When you strive for anything in this world **in the belief that it will bring you peace**, you are belittling yourself and blinding yourself to glory. ⁷Littleness and glory are the choices open to your striving and your vigilance. ⁸You will **always** choose one **at the expense** of the other.

• Study Question •

1. Paragraph 1 contrasts littleness with glory. Which of the following are not examples of littleness, based on this paragraph (there may be more than one)?
 - A. Thinking that a special person will satisfy you.
 - B. Thinking big, in the sense of believing that you can have everything you want in this world.
 - C. Thinking that there is a glory at the base of your being that can make you endlessly happy.
 - D. Affirming that prosperity is your divine right.

The admonition to “be not content with littleness” (1:1) may seem at first to be needless. Who among us would choose to be content with littleness if there were an alternative? But Jesus immediately warns us to be sure we understand what littleness *is*; it isn't what we think! What do *you* think “littleness” means? Is it not amounting to much in this world? Having very little importance or influence in our families or at our work? Not having total control of our own lives, but being under the thumb of someone else or the government or big business? Is that what Jesus means?

If that is what littleness is, then its opposite, magnitude, would mean being an influential, powerful person in the world. It would mean that, “you don't mess around with Jim.” It would mean that you don't put up with the attempts of others to influence or control you. It would mean being a powerful person in the eyes of the world. And I don't think that is what he means, do you?

He defines littleness as “the offering you gave yourself” (1:3) and which “you accepted” (1:4), and says we could *never* be content with it (1:2). Then, shockingly, he tells us that “everything in this world is little” (1:5). So being a powerful person *in this world* is still being content with littleness! It isn't grandeur, it's grandiosity¹.

The sixth sentence makes this abstract concept extremely practical: “When you strive for anything in this world *with the belief that it will bring you peace*, you are belittling yourself and blinding yourself to glory” (1:6). This isn't telling us that we ought never to strive for anything in this world, things like a better job, a more comfortable income, an ideal marriage, athletic excellence, or more attractive clothing. Seeking these things is not wrong in and of itself. It is seeking them with the belief that they will bring you peace that means we are buying into littleness.

How is the belief that something in this world will bring us peace buying into littleness? Because in believing that, we are “belittling” ourselves (1:6). What we are in truth is so magnificent that anything and everything in this world pales by comparison.

¹ The dictionary defines *grandiosity* or *grandiose* as “pretentious and pompous.” The French translation of it is *megalomanie*, that is, megalomania. Grandiosity, in the Course's use, is the *pretense* of grandeur.

² "The habit of engaging with God and His creations is easily made if you actively refuse to let your mind slip away. The problem is not one of concentration; it is the belief that no one, including yourself, is worth consistent effort" (T-4.IV.7:1-2).

³ There are those mysterious creations again! As I've said before, our creations exist in Heaven and, like everything in Heaven, they are pure spirit, formless, timeless and

We don't need anything in this world to have peace. We *have* it inherently. We were created in glory and we have that glory within us. In every choice we make in this world, we can approach it with a belief in our inherent glory and magnificence, or with a belief in our littleness. We need to be vigilant (1:7) to observe which belief is driving us. We always choose one at the expense of the other (1:8). If we are firmly fixed in the awareness of our glory, we will not become attached to or dependent on anything in this world. We will know that we are whole in ourselves, without any need of external props to boost our self-esteem or sense of security.

Our striving must be, not to obtain things in the world to increase our power and importance, but to obtain the awareness of our magnificence as God's perfect creation.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹Yet what you do not realize, each time you choose, is that your choice is your evaluation **of yourself**. ²Choose littleness and you will **not** have peace, for you will have judged yourself **unworthy** of it. ³And whatever you offer as a substitute is much too poor a gift to satisfy you. ⁴It is essential that you accept the fact, and accept it gladly, that there is **no** form of littleness that can **ever** content you. ⁵You are free to try as many as you wish, but all you will be doing is to delay your homecoming. ⁶For you will be content **only** in magnitude, which **is** your home.

• Study Question •

2. *Paragraph 2 speaks of realizing the negative results of choosing littleness. Which of the following statements is not a reason why littleness is an undesirable choice?*
- A. *Choosing littleness is an evaluation of yourself which says that, being little, you do not deserve peace.*
 - B. *Choosing littleness will never content you.*
 - C. *Choosing littleness will make you little.*
 - D. *Choosing littleness will make your awakening take longer.*

Each time we choose littleness, and buy into the false belief that we need something in the world to give us peace, we have diminished our own self-evaluation (2:1). And whatever it is we are striving for will not give us peace when we get it because, in believing that we *need* it, we have judged ourselves as *unworthy* of peace. We have told ourselves that, without this external thing, we cannot have peace, and no matter how great the external thing is—becoming a millionaire, marrying a movie star, owning a Lamborghini sports car, writing the great American novel—it is “much too poor a gift to satisfy you” (1:3).

Jesus tells us that “it is essential that you accept the fact, and accept it gladly, that there is *no* form of littleness that can *ever* content you” (1:4). Think what that means. He has already told us that everything in this world is little. Therefore, what he means is that nothing in the world can *ever* content you! The lesson is stated more than once in the Course:

The world you see holds nothing that you need to offer you; nothing that you can use in any way, nor anything at all that serves to give you joy (W-pI.128.1:1).

The lesson is perhaps stated most powerfully in the final chapter of the Text. The following passage is lengthy, but I think it underscores just why Jesus says that it is *essential* to gladly accept the fact that nothing in the world can ever content us:

Real choice is no illusion. But the world has none to offer. *All* its roads but lead to disappointment, nothingness and death. There *is* no choice in its alternatives. Seek not *escape* from problems here. The world was made that problems could not *be* escaped. Be not deceived by all the different names its roads are given. They have but one end. And each is but the means to *gain* that end, for it is here that all its roads will lead, however differently they seem to start; however differently they seem to go. Their end is certain, for there is no choice among them. All of them will lead to death. On some you travel gaily for a while, before the bleakness enters. And on some the thorns are felt at once. The choice is not *what* will the ending be, but *when* it comes.

There *is* no choice where every end is sure. Perhaps you would prefer to try them all, before you *really* learn they are but one. The roads this world can offer seem to be quite large in number, but the time must come when everyone begins to see how like they are to one another. Men have died on seeing this, because they saw no way *except* the pathways offered by the world. And learning *they* led nowhere, lost their hope. And yet this was the time they *could* have learned their greatest lesson. All must reach this point, and go *beyond* it. It is true indeed there is no choice at all within the world. But this is *not* the lesson in itself. The lesson has a *purpose*, and in *this* you come to understand what it is *for* (T-31.IV.2:1-3:10).

Realizing the emptiness of the world is essential; “All must reach this point, and go *beyond* it” (T-31.IV.3:7). Failure to accept this fact undermines our ability to accept our grandeur, because dependency on something in the world diminishes our awareness of our essential wholeness. “All you will be doing is to delay your homecoming” (2:5). Magnitude *is* our home (2:6), and only that can content us.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹There is a deep responsibility you owe yourself, and one you must learn to remember **all** the time. ²The lesson may seem hard at first, but you will learn to love it when you realize that it is true and ~~is but~~ **[constitutes]** a tribute to your power. ³You who have sought **and found** littleness, remember this: Every decision you make stems from **what you think you are**, and represents the value that you **put** upon yourself. ⁴Believe the little can content you, and by **limiting** yourself you will **not** be satisfied. ⁵For your function is **not** little, and it is only by finding your function and fulfilling it that you can **escape** from littleness.

• **Study Question** •

3. **Paragraph 3.** *This paragraph says that we have a deep responsibility that we must remember all the time, that will seem hard, but that we will come to love. What is this responsibility?*
- A. *To accept the Atonement for ourselves.*
 - B. *To believe that the little can content us.*
 - C. *To remember that our every choice reflects our concept of our value and our identity.*
 - D. *To pledge allegiance to the flag.*
 - E. *A and C*

Earlier, the Course has pointed out that we often are not willing to expend the effort to engage with God by watching our thoughts because, down deep, we don't think we are worth the effort.² Here, we read about "a deep responsibility you owe yourself," and the responsibility spoken of is really the same thing referred to in the earlier passage. The first thing he tells us about that responsibility is that it is something we "must learn to remember *all the time*" (3:1). So it's a matter of remembering, of constantly and consistently bringing something into our minds. That certainly takes effort! (We don't know yet what that something is; that's coming up.)

The question facing each of us is, "Do I think I deserve such effort?" It isn't much different from the way we are about things like maintaining a proper weight or exercise. We say we want to do it, but we sabotage ourselves. We know we would benefit from it but we are not willing to pay the price—why? Because we don't think we are worth the effort. When a person buckles down and does the things that bring them health and happiness, it comes from a manifestation of self-love and self-respect.

So, there is some "deep responsibility" we owe ourselves. Jesus tells us that, "the lesson may seem hard at first." What does he mean by "the lesson"? I first thought he was referring to the thing we are supposed to remember all the time, but I changed my mind. He just told us we must "*learn to remember all the time.*" Obviously, then, the *lesson is to remember all the time!* And yes, that's hard, darn hard! That, really, is what the Workbook is all about. In one series of lessons, it asks us to stop every hour to apply the Course's teaching to the events of that hour, so that each hour is entered with a clean slate (W-pI.193.12:1-5). That is the kind of constant, consistent mental practice that we owe ourselves. It takes frequent and extended practicing to learn this lesson of remembering *all the time!*

The *content* of what we are supposed to remember constantly is, "Every decision you make stems from *what you think you are*, and represents the value that you *put* upon yourself" (3:3). As we watch the choices we are making, moment-to-moment, we are being asked to constantly remind ourselves that the choice we make arises from our belief about what we are. If we are choosing to be angry with another person, it stems from some belief we have about *ourselves*, not about the other person. Perhaps we think the

² "The habit of engaging with God and His creations is easily made if you actively refuse to let your mind slip away. The problem is not one of concentration; it is the belief that no one, including yourself, is worth consistent effort" (T-4.IV.7:1-2).

other person has slighted us and hurt our feelings; that might stem from a belief that we are our ego, or that we are our feelings. If someone disagrees with us and we feel our opinion is being questioned or attacked, perhaps we are identifying with our thoughts. If our body is being threatened, maybe we are mistaking our bodies for ourselves. And so on. If we are choosing to go after some material gain, or we seek a special relationship, or we crave some kind of food, drink or drug, we are believing that we are limited and lacking in some way (3:4).

As long as we have such a low opinion of ourselves we will never be happy. What we are is magnificent. We are here, as a song I heard just yesterday affirms, to “do amazing things.” “Your function is *not* little” (3:5). We are here to be the express image of God’s Love in the world. Dare to believe it.

Paragraph 4

4. ¹There is no doubt about what your function **is**, for the Holy Spirit **knows** what it is. ²There is no doubt about its magnitude, for it reaches you through Him *from* Magnitude. ³You do not have to strive for it, because you **have** it. ⁴All your striving must be directed **against littleness**, for it **does** require vigilance to protect your magnitude in this world. ⁵To hold your magnitude in perfect awareness in a world of littleness is a task the little cannot undertake. ⁶Yet it is asked of you, in tribute to your magnitude and **not** your littleness. ⁷Nor is it asked of you alone. ⁸The power of God will support every effort you make on behalf of His dear Son. ⁹Search for the little, and you **deny** yourself His power. ¹⁰God is not willing that His Son be content with less than everything. ¹¹For He is not content without His Son, and His Son cannot be content with less than His Father has given him.

• Study Question •

4. *This paragraph acknowledges that in this world of littleness it is impossible for the little to hold magnitude in perfect awareness-- something that we Course students have long ago decided on our own. What conclusion should we draw from this statement?*
- A. *Because it is impossible, you should not try to force yourself to do it, but should accept yourself instead.*
 - B. *It is impossible in this world, but once you leave this world it is possible.*
 - C. *It is only impossible for the little, and you are not little.*
 - D. *It is possible because God will support your every effort.*
 - E. *C and D*
 - F. *A and B*

One way this paragraph sums up that deep responsibility we owe ourselves is, “To hold your magnitude in perfect awareness” (4:5). Jesus acknowledges that it seems hard at first, and it isn’t anything that can be done by “the little,” which is certainly how we usually think of ourselves. Our task, our function, is not a small one! We are here to save the world. God Himself gave it to us from His own Magnitude, and there is no doubt

about it (4:1,2). We don't have to expend a lot of energy figuring out what it is (4:3). "Teach only love, for that is what you are" (T-6.I.13:2).

Yet it does take effort or, in the words of the Course, you do have to "strive" in some way—not to find your magnificent function but to protect your magnitude against all thoughts of littleness (4:4). Even in this "world of littleness," we are asked to remain continually aware of our magnitude, of the immensity and power of what we are as God created us (4:6).

And we are asked to remember this, not only about ourselves, but about "His dear Son," that is, about everyone (4:7,8). God will lend His infinite power to our every effort to expand our vision of each of our brothers and sisters to a vision of magnitude, a vision that accords them the proper glory that belongs to them as part of the divine family with us.

If we "search for the little" (4:9), focusing on the apparent smallness of other people, lamenting their ego failures and making that be our picture of them, we will be denying the power of God that is offered to us. It isn't that we cannot see others with the eyes of Christ, it's that we *won't*. The power of that vision is constantly offered us, constantly flowing to us, always available. If I do not see you as the holy and whole child of God, deserving of my deepest love and respect, it is only because I am choosing to block God's power from transforming my vision. "Christ's vision is His gift to you" (T-13.VIII.6:6). We are called to "offer Christ's gift to everyone and everywhere" (T-13.VIII.7:2).

Nothing can content us, nothing can bring true happiness, except the fullness of God's gift, which is *everything*. God is not content without me, nor am I content without God. In the words of an old hymn, "My goal is God Himself. Not joy, nor peace, nor even blessing, but Himself, my God."

Paragraph 5

5. ¹I asked you earlier [**We asked you once before**], "Would you be hostage to the ego or host to God?" ²Let this question be asked you by the Holy Spirit **every** time you make a decision. ³For every decision you make **does** answer this, and invites sorrow or joy accordingly. ⁴When God **gave** Himself to you in your creation, He **established** you as host to Him forever. ⁵He has **not** left you, and **you** have not left **Him**. ⁶All your attempts to deny His magnitude, and make His Son hostage to the ego, **cannot** make little whom God has joined with Him. ⁷Every decision you make is for Heaven or for hell, and brings you [**will bring you**] the **awareness** of what you decided **for**.

• Study Question •

5. *While making decisions, we are to ask ourselves the question, "Would I be hostage to the ego or host to God?" What statement(s) from earlier in the section is this meant to be a direct variation on (there may be more than one answer)?*
 - A. *That every choice is a choice between littleness and glory.*
 - B. *That every decision stems from what we think we are and what our value is.*
 - C. *That we are frightened of God because we think He demands total sacrifice.*
 - D. *That the power of God will support our every effort to hold our magnitude in mind.*

This presents yet another way of describing the lesson we are trying to learn. It has been described so far as holding our magnitude in awareness, as remembering that each decision stems from who we think we are, realizing that nothing in this world can content us, and remembering that only God's magnitude can bring us contentment. Now, we are told to ask ourselves if we want to be hostage to the ego or host to God (5:1-2). This, too, is another way of remembering the truth about us: that we *are* host to God—that has been established by God Himself (5:4)—and *not* hostage to the ego.

Look at each decision, and ask yourself, which view of myself does this decision reflect? Does it show me as hostage to the ego, or as host to God? Every decision I make is an answer to the question of how I see myself (5:3). I was created as host to God, and host to God I still remain. God has not left me, nor have I left Him (5:5). Maybe I *think* I have left Him, but leaving God is impossible. God is life; God is Being. I live and move and have my being in God. The Course compares us to a ripple in the ocean, or a sunbeam from the sun, which thinks it is apart and separate from the ocean or the sun. It says:

...what it thinks it is in no way changes its total dependence on them for its being. Its whole existence still remains in them. Without the sun the sunbeam would be gone; the ripple without the ocean is inconceivable (T-18.VIII.4:4-6).

It is simply impossible that we could exist apart from God. How could you live without Life? How could you be without Being? "All your attempts to deny His magnitude, and make His Son hostage to the ego, cannot make little whom God has joined with Him" (5:6).

It's all up to us. Every decision we make "is for Heaven or for hell" (5:7), and as we choose so we will experience. Do you want to be aware of hell? Or aware of Heaven? That is the question we need to hold in mind every minute of the day.

Paragraph 6

6. ¹The Holy Spirit can hold your magnitude, clean of **all** littleness, clearly and in perfect safety in your mind, untouched by every little gift the world of littleness would offer you. ²But for this, you cannot side **against** Him in what He wills for you. ³Decide for God through Him. ⁴For littleness, and the belief that you can be **content** with littleness, are decisions ~~you make~~ [you have made] about yourself. ⁵The power and the glory that lie in you from God are for all who, like you, perceive themselves as little, and ~~believe~~ [have deceived themselves into believing] that littleness can be blown up [by them] into a sense of magnitude that can content them. ⁶Neither **give** littleness, nor **accept** it. ⁷All honor is due the host of God. ⁸Your littleness deceives you, but your magnitude is of Him Who dwells in you, and in Whom you dwell. ⁹Touch no one, then, with littleness in the Name of Christ, eternal Host unto His Father.

• Study Question •

6. *This paragraph further solves the dilemma of how to hold our magnitude in perfect awareness: the Holy Spirit will hold it there for us, if we do not decide to be content with littleness. It also says that we should neither give littleness nor accept it. So, what if someone comes up to you and says, "You know, you are just so special!" What do you do?*
- A. *You tell them that you are not special, just forgiven.*
 - B. *You make your eyes really big and tell them that, correction, you are glorious.*
 - C. *What you say or do is beside the point. The real point is not to receive or to give the affirmation of littleness implied by specialness.*
 - D. *You tell them to shut up before Jesus hears them.*
 - E. *You quickly affirm in your mind that they are special, too, and then allow the Holy Spirit to guide your words.*
 - F. *C and E*

As I point out in the question above, this paragraph solves the dilemma of how to hold our magnitude in perfect awareness, untouched by the thinking of the world: the Holy Spirit will *hold it there for us*, **if** we do not decide to be content with littleness (6:1). Being content with littleness is the same thing as siding against the Holy Spirit in what He wills for us (6:2).

To me, this harks back to what has been said about giving all decisions to the Holy Spirit, and how the Spirit evaluates what we need and what we don't need.

Only the Holy Spirit knows what you need. For He will give you all things that do not block the way to light. And what else could you need? In time, He gives you all the things that you need have, and will renew them as long as you have need of them. He will take nothing from you as long as you have any need of it. And yet He knows that everything you need is temporary, and will but last until

you step aside from all your needs and realize that all of them have been fulfilled (T-13.VII.12:1-6).

To side against the Holy Spirit in what He wills for us, then, would mean that we persist in holding onto or grasping for things we do not really need, things that block the way to light. It would mean seeking contentment through something or someone in this world. We each know what that means for us, and your “special needs” are probably different than mine. If we truly want the Holy Spirit to hold our magnitude in perfect awareness in our minds, we *must* “decide for God through Him” (6:3), that is, through the Holy Spirit.

To have our minds bathed in the light and glory of God, to be, as the Apostle Paul says, “filled [through all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]!” (Ephesians 3:19, Amplified Bible), we must grant that fullness to all our brothers and sisters, even those who “have deceived themselves into believing] that littleness can be blown up [by them] into a sense of magnitude that can content them” (6:5).

Have you ever felt that way? That you are trying to somehow inflate your little self into something big enough to content you? Until we accept our mutual magnitude, that’s what we all do.

The practical advice of this section could be summed up in this short sentence: “Neither *give* littleness, nor *accept* it” (6:6). Or later, “Touch no one, then, with littleness in the Name of Christ” (6:9). In other words, determine to see yourself and everyone else as the magnificent creations of God that we all are. Don’t hold a “little” thought about anyone, including yourself. “All honor is due the host of God” (6:7), and that is you, me, and everyone. God established us as host to Him forever (5:4). So all honor is due to you, me, and everyone! One line in the Workbook so perfectly expresses this: “And in Christ’s vision is his [your brother’s] loveliness reflected in a form so holy and so beautiful that you could scarce refrain from kneeling at his feet” (W-pI.161.9:3).

Have you ever felt like that about another person? Have you ever looked into someone’s eyes and *seen God*? I have. Not often, that’s for sure, but I have felt it. It’s how I’d like to see everyone, and I’m sure if I did, I’d be completely blissed out. But is that a good thing, or not? Somehow, I guess, we’re afraid of being that way! Would we become “bliss ninnies,” as someone has labeled people who always see only the positive? Would we be “too heavenly-minded to be of any earthly use”? Or would we be, as Jesus was, one who “reflects [*or radiates; shines forth*] the glory of God and shows exactly what God is like [*is the exact representation/imprint/stamp of his being/essence/nature*]” (Hebrews 1:3, Wuest’s Expanded Translation)? I think it would be the latter.

Paragraph 7

7. ¹In this season (Christmas) which celebrates the birth of holiness into this world, join with me who decided for holiness for **you**. ²It is our task **together** to restore the awareness of magnitude to the host whom God appointed for Himself. ³It is beyond **all** your littleness to give the gift of God, but **not** beyond **you**. ⁴For God would give Himself *through* you. ⁵He reaches from you to everyone and beyond everyone to His Son’s creations, but **without** leaving you.

⁶Far beyond your little world but still in you, He extends forever. ⁷Yet He brings all His extensions to you, as host to Him.

• **Study Question** •

7. *Paragraph 7 gives both a meaning and a message for Christmas. The meaning given for Christmas is that it was the birth of holiness into this world. What is the message, according to this paragraph?*
- A. *Jesus decided for holiness for the world, and we should join with him and also decide for holiness for the world.*
 - B. *To, with Jesus, help everyone hold in their minds the awareness of their magnitude.*
 - C. *To let Jesus be born in our own hearts.*
 - D. *To accept the holy instant.*
 - E. *To let God give Himself through us to all the Sonship.*
 - F. *A, B and E*
 - G. *All of the above.*

Christmas is the celebration of “the birth of holiness into this world” (7:1). Traditionally we think of it as the birthday of *Jesus*, rather than the birth of holiness. What is implied in this sentence is a concise but complete understanding of what the birth of *Jesus meant*, and what he accomplished in his short life on earth. He “decided for holiness,” that is, he made the choice every human being has been called upon to make since the beginning of this world. And he did so “for *you*.” He chose to remember his true Identity, and in so doing he opened the way for all of us to follow him. The Manual for Teachers expands on this idea:

He has recognized himself as God created him, and in so doing he has recognized all living things as part of him...His part in the Sonship is also yours, and his completed learning guarantees your own success (M-23.2:6 and 3:4).

The name of *Jesus* is the name of one who was a man but saw the face of Christ in all his brothers and remembered God. So he became identified with *Christ*, a man no longer, but at one with God. (C-5.2:1–2).

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. He led the way for you to follow him. He leads you back to God because he saw the road before him, and he followed it (C-5.3:1–3).

And having completed his work, Jesus now calls us to “join with me.” He says, “It is our task *together* to restore the awareness of magnitude to the host whom God appointed for Himself” (7:1–2). We are here to complete what he began. For ourselves, we must awaken to “the awareness of magnitude” that is our inheritance, and we must share that with “the host.”

The word “host” has two possible meanings here. It can mean “a multitude” or it can mean “one who receives other people as guests.” I think both meanings apply! Later in the paragraph, we are told that God wants to give Himself *through* us, reaching “from you to everyone and beyond everyone to His Son’s creations” (7:4–5). God’s gift is

Himself, so that fits “host” in the sense that we become the host to God, as has been stated previously (T-11.II.7:1 as well as in this section, 5:1). In fact, in 5:4, we are told, “When God gave Himself to you in your creation, He established you as host to Him forever” (T-15.III.5:4), and in this paragraph Jesus refers to “the host whom God appointed for Himself” (7:2), clearly the same thing. Host here thus means as “one who receives God as his guest,” or, “one in whom God dwells.” You and I are *appointed by God* and *established* as those in whom God dwells. That is our function, at least in part!

But the other sense fits as well: host as multitude. It is not simply *you* who are God’s host. Through you, God will reach out not only *to everyone* but *beyond everyone* to our collective creations³. *That* is the rest of our function. We are to allow God to dwell in us and reach through us to, and beyond, everyone, to share the same gift with them all. Such a high calling may seem beyond us, and it *is* beyond our *littleness*, but not beyond what we really are (7:3). This is something that *we can do*.

You are not asked to do mighty tasks yourself. You are merely asked to do the little He suggests you do, trusting Him only to the small extent of believing that, if He asks it, you can do it. You will see how easily all that He asks can be accomplished (T-14.VII.5:13-15).

Try to get a picture in your mind of God extending through you to the ends of the universe and beyond, “far beyond your little world,” yet still in you, without leaving you, and bringing all His extensions back to you, who are the host to Him (7:5–7). Eric Butterworth, the famous Unity minister, often quoted Emerson as having said, “Every man is the inlet, and may become the outlet, of all there is in God.”⁴ We’ve only just begun to understand the power of God that can flow through us. We are being called to leave all littleness behind, and to claim the magnitude of what we are.

Paragraph 8

8. ¹Is it a sacrifice to leave littleness behind, and wander not in vain? ²It is not sacrifice to wake to glory. ³But it **is** sacrifice to accept anything **less** than glory. ⁴Learn that you **must** be worthy of the Prince of Peace, born in you in honor of Him Whose host you are. ⁵You know not what love means because you have sought to purchase it with little gifts, thus **valuing** it too little to understand its magnitude. ⁶**Love is not little** and love dwells in you, for you are host to Him.

³ There are those mysterious creations again! As I’ve said before, our creations exist in Heaven and, like everything in Heaven, they are pure spirit, formless, timeless and perfect—and that’s about all we know, and *can* know, about them. “In this world it is impossible to create” (T-17.IV.2:1). “You do not know your creations because you do not know your brothers, who created them with you” (T-7.XI.6:3).

⁴ I’ve not been able to find that quote in Emerson, although something close to it does occur in the writings of Charles Fillmore. Emily Cady and Ralph Waldo Trine both also attribute the quote to Emerson. Perhaps they were all misquoting. The only Emerson quotation about us being an “inlet” to anything that I can find is this, from his essay on History: “There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason, is made a free man of the whole estate.”

⁷Before the greatness that lives in you, your poor appreciation of yourself and all the little offerings you give slip into nothingness.

• Study Question •

8. *Paragraph 8. Waking to glory is not sacrifice, but wandering in littleness is. Please list all of the things that this paragraph says dwell in you.*

Jesus asks a rhetorical question: “Is it a sacrifice to leave littleness behind?” (8:1) Clearly, “It is not a sacrifice to wake to glory” (8:2). This just underscores the absurdity of our reluctance to embrace our high calling, as the Apostle Paul did: “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:14 KJV) The words Jesus uses in these passages are amazing! “Magnitude.” “Glory.” The latter reminds me of another quotation from Paul:

“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ... the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” (Romans 8:19–21 NRSV)

This biblical passage carries the same basic thought: that as Christ is revealed in us it will somehow extend to all of creation. And it speaks of our “glory,” a word that means magnificence, splendor, or great beauty. It often carries a sense of shining radiance, but it can also refer to honor or worthiness. And this is a word applied to *us*.

Thus, it is a sacrifice for us “to accept anything *less* than glory” (8:3). We need to realize that we are “worthy of the Prince of Peace” (8:4), deserving of giving a home to Christ and to God. Charles Fillmore, the founder of Unity, often said that his favorite phrase from the Bible was “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). The Apostle Paul said, “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (Galatians 2:20 NRSV). This is what we are talking about here. We are coming to accept that we are God’s outlets in the world, that Christ lives in us, as us, that we *are* the Christ in individualized forms. To see ourselves as anything less than this is a needless sacrifice of our inherent glory.

When Jesus says we have sought to purchase love with little gifts, I believe he is referring to the ignoble ways we seek to elicit love from other human beings. We try to *buy* love, something that is fundamentally impossible, since love is a freely given gift by definition. Our definition of love is flawed; we value it too little to understand its greatness (8:5). The proof that we don’t understand it is that we think it can be *bought*. Again, it is a matter of settling for littleness instead of magnitude. Love is no small thing! It lives in us because God lives in us, and God *is* Love (8:6).

We are undervaluing ourselves, which is betrayed by the way we think we need to purchase love. We don’t need to purchase it. We do not lack love; It *lives* in us. It’s a matter of “poor appreciation” of ourselves. As we come to recognize that God lives in us, that we are home to all of God’s glory and all of God’s love, our poor self-image is washed away, along with “all the little offerings you give” (8:7).

Paragraph 9

9. ¹Holy child of God, when will you learn that **only** holiness can content you and give you peace? ²Remember that you learn not for yourself alone, no more than I did. ³It is **because** I learned for **you** that you can learn of **me**. ⁴I would but teach you what is yours, so that together we can replace the shabby littleness that binds the host of God to guilt and weakness with the glad awareness of the glory that is in him. ⁵My birth in you is your awakening to grandeur. ⁶Welcome me not into a manger, but into the altar to holiness, where holiness abides in perfect peace. ⁷My Kingdom is not of this world because it is in **you**. ⁸And **you** are of your Father. ⁹Let us join in honoring you, who **must** remain forever **beyond** littleness.

• Study Question •

9. *Paragraph 9. Learn that only holiness will content you so that you can join Jesus in teaching glory to all the Sonship. This paragraph contains that beautiful line, "Welcome me not into a manger, but into the altar to holiness...." What do you think this line means?*
- A. *Jesus was affronted by being born into a manger, which only reflected the shabby littleness that we tried to bind his glory with.*
 - B. *We need to change our Nativity scenes so that the baby is lying on a little altar.*
 - C. *We need to change our Christmas focus from Nativity scenes to accepting Jesus into the holy place in our minds.*

Notice how Jesus addresses you here: "Holy child of God." That is the lesson in a nutshell. That is what you are—the holy child of God. We need to stop trying to find contentment and peace through anything of this world, including human relationships (9:1). Only holiness can content us. Holiness here does not mean separation from impure things (as in traditional religions), but rather the sharing of oneness with God and all God's creations. It is a total absence of guilt, not because of what we have done or not done, not because of anything Jesus did, but because we are partakers of the divine nature. We are holy because God is holy, and we are God's children who share His nature.

We are each learning that lesson for ourselves, but also for everyone, just as Jesus did (9:2). He learned the lesson for himself so that he can share it with us. We can learn the lesson because he did (9:3). Together with Jesus we can assist others to let go of their littleness and to claim their innocent grandeur (9:4).

As we become aware of the glory of Christ that is in us, we are "awakening to grandeur" (9:5). This is the real meaning of Christmas: not the birth of the baby Jesus in a manger, but the coming of Christ to take his place on the altar of our hearts, the altar to holiness that lies in each of us (9:6). Far more than "accepting Jesus as my Savior," this means accepting Christ as dwelling at the center of my being, accepting Christ *as myself!* Jesus declares, "My Kingdom is not of this world because it is in *you*" (9:7). Christmas should be a reminder to honor, not Jesus, but what he demonstrated about who and what

he, and *all of us*, are: beings who are “of your Father” and “forever beyond littleness” (9:8–9).

Paragraph 10

10. ¹Decide with me, who has decided to abide with you. ²I will as my Father wills, knowing His Will is constant and at peace forever with itself. ³You will be content with nothing **but** His Will. ⁴Accept no less, remembering that everything I learned is yours. ⁵What my Father loves I love as He does, and I can no more accept it as what it is **not**, than He can. ⁶And no more can **you**. ⁷When you have learned to accept what you are, you will make no more gifts to offer to yourself, for you will know you are **complete**, in need of nothing, and unable to accept **anything** for yourself. ⁸But you will gladly give, **having** received. ⁹The host of God needs not seek to find **anything**.

• Study Question •

10. Paragraph 10. Jesus urges us to decide with him for God's Will and to accept no less than God's Will. He says when we have learned to do this (which also entails accepting what we are) we will make no gifts to offer ourselves. What does this making of gifts for ourselves refer to, based on this section?

- A. The gifts of littleness.*
- B. The gifts of this world.*
- C. The little gifts with which we have tried to purchase love.*
- D. The little things we pick up for ourselves while Christmas shopping.*
- E. A, B and C*

I like to think of Jesus as the part of me that has already remembered God; the part of me whose will is joined to God's; the part of me that has learned every lesson, that loves as God loves, and is “at peace forever with itself.” (10:2–5). Jesus has decided to abide with me (10:1), and “abide” means “live permanently.” Not a guest, a permanent resident. He asks me to decide with him, which means that my whole being is aligned with his. This is where true contentment lies—to be at one with the Will of God, to accept that I am as loving as God is, that I share God's nature (10:2–3). Jesus tells me that everything he learned is mine (10:4)! Wow! I can draw on that profound wisdom. There is something within me that *already knows the answers*.

The truth is, I *cannot* accept myself as anything less than the holy child of God (10:5–6). I may try. God knows I *have* tried! But God knows the truth about me, and so do I, in my heart of hearts. I am God's, pure and simple. I am part of divinity. I am “complete, in need of nothing, and unable to accept *anything* for myself” (10:7). I will *know* that when I have accepted what I am. And needing nothing, I will gladly give because I know I have already received (10:8). Seeking is over. God lives in me; what more could I need (10:9)?

Paragraph 11

11. ¹If you are wholly willing to leave salvation to the plan of God and **unwilling** to attempt to grasp for peace **yourself**, salvation will be **given** you. ²Yet think not you can substitute **your** plan for His. ³Rather, join with me in His, that we may release all those who would be bound, proclaiming together that the Son of God is host to Him. ⁴Thus will we let no one forget what **you** would remember. ⁵And thus **will** you remember it.

• Study Question •

11. Paragraph 11. We must leave salvation up to God's plan, not our own. Ours is based on pursuing littleness. His is based on extending glory. You are about to go out on a first date with someone. What would it mean to apply the message of this paragraph to that experience?

- A. You would hope to have a "glorious" time, if you know what I mean.*
- B. You would give up your expectations that this particular person can make you feel loved. It may be him or her, but you would not be attached to that.*
- C. You would see it as an opportunity to extend the awareness of your date's true glory to him or her and so release him or her from the bonds of littleness.*
- D. You would see it as an opportunity to release your date from the bonds of his or her clothing.*
- E. B and C*

“Only God’s plan for salvation will work” (W-pI.71.Title). That is the gist of this paragraph. Once we stop trying to save ourselves, thinking that “if some external circumstance or event were changed, [I] would be saved” (W-pI.71.2:2), and simply “leave salvation to the plan of God” (11:1), then and only then “salvation will be *given* you” (1:1). We can’t substitute our plan for God’s, giving ourselves “little gifts” by trying to manipulate the world to our liking (11:2). We must become *wholly* willing to leave it all to God, and to join God’s plan along with Jesus (11:1 and 11:3).

What is that plan? The final three sentences give a succinct summary. Release everyone (“all those who would be bound” (11:3), that is, those who are choosing to be hostages to the ego rather than being hosts to God), joining with Jesus to let them know that, as part of “the Son of God” they are “host to Him,” i.e., to God (11:3).

Notice how Jesus keeps making himself a part of the process along with you! “*Join with me* in this, that *we* may release all those who would be bound, *proclaiming together* that the Son of God is host to Him. Thus will *we* let no one forget...” (11:3–4). This is living and acting in union with Christ, as Jesus taught in Chapter 15 of John’s gospel:

“Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing...If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” (John 15:4–7 NRSV)

Perhaps it troubles you to think of joining with Jesus or calling on his strength, wisdom, and learning to bring forth fruit in your life. Maybe it seems to smack a bit of traditional Christianity. Maybe it does; maybe they had something right. But, if it bothers you, try to think of Jesus as the part of mind, or of yourself, that has remembered God. Even with vine and branches, there is nowhere that “vine” leaves off and “branch” begins; it’s all part of a whole.

The second part of the plan, after proclaiming to everyone that God lives in them, is that as you refuse to let anyone else forget that fact, *you* will remember it (11:4–5).

Paragraph 12

12. ¹Call forth in everyone **only** the remembrance of God, and of the Heaven that is in him. ²For where you would ~~have~~ [help] your brother be, there will you think **you** are. ³Hear not his ~~appeal to~~ [call for] hell and littleness, but only his call for Heaven and greatness. ⁴Forget not that his call is yours, and answer him with me. ⁵God’s power is forever on the side of His host, for it protects **only** the peace in which He dwells. [And therefore it is with you, and dwells in you with Him.] ⁶Lay not littleness before His holy altar, which rises above the stars and reaches even to Heaven, because of what is **given** it.

• Study Question •

12. Paragraph 12 is a final plea to call forth in everyone the memory of their magnitude, for this is what will invoke that memory within us. This paragraph speaks of our call to "hell and to littleness." Yet we have recently discussed again the recurring concept of everything being either a call for love or an extension of love. Based on your general understanding of the Course, please answer the following question: How can there be any call for hell if all we do is call for love or extend love?

- A. Our minds do buy into the ego's call for hell within us, though only when we think it will deliver us love.*
- B. The call for hell contains within it the pain of hell, and this pain is a call for love.*
- C. There is no such thing as a call for hell--our desires are always pure--which is why we are not supposed to hear this call in others.*
- D. A and B*
- E. All of the above.*

Jesus sums up the plan of God again in the first two sentences. He tells us to “call forth in everyone *only* the remembrance of God and of the Heaven that is in him” (12:1). The details of how to do that, how to “call forth” those memories, will vary from situation to situation. For me it comes down to intention. “I am here only to be truly helpful” (T-2.V.18:2), and that means helping him or her to be in peace, in guiltlessness, and in Heaven. If that is “where [I] would help my brother be” (12:2), if my wish is to share union with God with him, that is enough. It’s another application of the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” And if that is truly what I want for my brother, that is what *I* will experience.

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I won't listen to his call for hell and littleness—his anger, his fear, his attack, his guilt—but instead I will hear it all as a call for Heaven and greatness (12:3). I will recognize that he, like me, is seeking to know his true Identity in God, seeking to lay hold of his true magnitude. His call is my own call (12:4). As I answer him, I will be answered. And the only appropriate response is appreciation and love. God's power is there to support me in doing so (12:5; the line after is supplied from the Notes). Let us resolve not to bring littleness (judgments, ego needs, etc.) to God's altar, but in every instance to remember our own magnitude, and that of one another as well.

• Study Question •

13. Please summarize in your own words in no more than a paragraph the main message of this section, or the main theme that struck you personally.

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Answer Key

1. C

2. C

3. C

4. E

5. A and B

6. C

7. F

8. Glory

Prince of Peace

God

love

greatness

9. C

10. E

11. C

12. D

13. My summary: Be not content with littleness. Choosing the little gifts of this world means you have evaluated yourself as unworthy. Instead, practice your magnitude, and give it to all who think they are little. By giving it you will receive it.