

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM® Text, Chapter 15, Section VI

The Holy Instant and the Laws of God

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
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Overview of the Section

In this section we see the holy instant described as a moment in which we remember God, and in which we experience the eternal oneness we share with all our brothers and sisters. Thus, the holy instant brings an experience of true relationships and true love, in which no one is special. We transcend “special love” to experience the meaning of the love that we are.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹It is impossible to use one relationship **at the expense** of another and **not** to suffer guilt. ²And it is equally impossible to condemn **part** of a relationship and find peace **within** it. ³Under the Holy Spirit's teaching **all** relationships are seen as **total** commitments, yet they do not conflict with one another in **any** way. ⁴Perfect faith in each one, for its ability to satisfy you **completely**, arises only from perfect faith in **yourself**. ⁵And this you cannot have while guilt remains. ⁶And there **will** be guilt as long as you accept the possibility, **and cherish it**, that you can make a brother into **what he is not**, because **you** would have him so.

• Study Question •

1. *What does the idea that all relationships are total commitments seem to mean? (Pick one.)*
 - A. *Once you enter any relationship you should never leave it.*
 - B. *You are totally committed to making each brother into all that they can be.*
 - C. *You have perfect faith in every relationship to satisfy you completely, and do not seek to substitute another relationship for it.*
 - D. *Multiple sexual relationships are supported by the Course.*

We all experience conflicts *between* relationships. You can probably think of a half-dozen ways in which people can “use one relationship at the expense of another.” (1:1). The example of an extra-marital affair leaps immediately to mind. But there are many other ways we all do this. We may treat two people with unequal favor, giving time to one at the cost of taking time from the other. We may gossip about a person to undermine their relationship with a boss or friend with whom we cherish a closer relationship. And so on. Whenever we do things like this we *will* experience guilt (1:1). Something within us knows we have acted without love and judges us for it.

Similarly, we experience conflict *within* our relationships. We can never experience peace in any relationship if we are condemning some part of it (1:2). For instance, we may have a lot of fun with a certain friend, yet hate the way they always complain about things.

The answer of the Holy Spirit to such conflicts, whether they are within or between relationships, is to learn to see *all* relationships as *total* commitments, with no conflict between them (1:3). Upon reading such a statement, I’m sure, the question immediately pops up: “What does that mean: ‘total commitments’? How is it possible to see all my relationships as total commitments and *not* have them come into conflict?” It simply is not possible to give equal time, for instance, to every person I relate to, from a spouse or a child to the grocery clerk at the check-out stand. I am forced by circumstances to treat different relationships differently. How can I be “totally committed” to a clerk in a store in the same way I am committed to my spouse?

Well, the commitment being called for certainly cannot have anything to do with sexual fidelity or allotment of time or allotment of money. It really has nothing to do with the outward *form* of the relationship; it has to do with the inner *content* of the relationship. Sentence 4 gives a clue about what it means: you have “perfect faith in each one, for its ability to satisfy you *completely*” (1:4). I have perfect faith that my wife will be the perfect wife, my barber will be the perfect barber, the clerk at the check-out will be the perfect clerk—regardless of the outward behavior. I will be seeing the perfection within each person, whatever role they play in my life.

The trick is that we will never see everybody in that light until we see *ourselves* that way, with perfect faith in ourselves, free of all guilt (1:4–5). And for that to happen, we need to stop trying to manipulate other people to satisfy our imagined needs. That really is what 1:6 is talking about. As we were told in the previous section:

We have said that to limit love to part of the Sonship is to bring guilt into your relationships, and thus make them unreal. If you seek to separate out certain aspects of the totality and look to them to meet your imagined needs, you are attempting to use separation to save you (T-15.V.2:2-3).

We want a brother or sister to meet our imagined needs. We want him or her to be our savior, and no one, in that sense, is our savior. We need to seek and find completion *within ourselves*, because it *is* there. But we try to make the other person into what they are not, and guilt is always the result of such manipulation. The guilt completely blocks our faith in ourselves; of course it does. How could I totally trust myself and be guilty at the same time? And if I cannot have faith in *myself* there is no way I can have perfect faith in *you*. I will always see you as I see myself, and see myself as I see you.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹You have so little faith in yourself because you are unwilling to accept the fact that perfect love is **in** you. ²And so you seek **without** for what you **cannot** find without. ³I offer you *my* perfect faith in you, **in place** of all your doubts. ⁴But forget not that my faith **must** be as perfect in all your brothers as it is in you, or it would be a limited gift to **you**. ⁵In the holy instant we **share** our faith in God's Son because we recognize, together, that he is wholly worthy **of** it, and in our appreciation of his worth we **cannot** doubt his holiness. ⁶And so we love him.

• Study Question •

2. *How can we obtain greater faith in ourselves? (Pick all that are correct; there may be more than one.)*
- A. *Share a holy instant with Jesus, in which He shares with us his faith in God's Son (which includes ourselves).*
 - B. *Look within ourselves and try to see the perfect love that is there.*
 - C. *Realize that to have faith in ourselves we must also share Jesus' faith in all our brothers.*
 - D. *Find a relationship partner who really believes in us and supports us.*



If we were willing to accept the fact that perfect love is in us, we would have perfect faith in ourselves to love everyone with total commitment (2:1). Notice that, as it is so

often, this is a matter of *willingness*. Try repeating aloud the words, “I have perfect love within me,” and see what feelings arise. Do you feel some doubt?

Since we don't have such faith in ourselves, we look for love outside of ourselves (2:2). I don't need to tell you all the ways we can do that; you know what they are. And the reverse of this statement is true as well: If I am looking for love outside of myself, I must not have faith that perfect love is *in me*. Why would I be looking elsewhere if I knew that were true? And of course looking for love outside ourselves cannot work because we are looking in the wrong place.

Since our lack of faith in ourselves is the problem, Jesus offers us *his* perfect faith in us to replace all our doubts (2:3). I find that thought immensely comforting and helpful. I wrote lyrics for a song about it:

1. When nothing seems so clear to me,
You give to me Your certainty.
I find my strength in what You see,
For You have faith in me.
2. My willingness is all I need
To choose to see things diff'rently.
My faith is weak, my trust is poor,
But You have faith in me.
3. I rest myself upon Your trust,
Though all in me would turn to dust.
The Love of God sustaineth me,
For You have faith in me.
4. Your faith is firm; I trust Your word,
The journey's outcome is assured.
Certain the Call that I have heard,
Knowing Your faith in me.
5. I do not know the thing I am,
Nor what to do, nor where to go;
Yet One Who knows walks by my side,
And He has faith in me.
6. I am amazed, I am undone,
That You in me should see God's Son,
Your Love assures me we are one,
So strong Your faith in me.
7. You go with me where'er I go.
Your hand upholds me, this I know.
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
I trust Your faith in me.

But he urges us not to forget that, if he has faith in *me*, he must have faith in *everyone* in the same way. His faith is universal, not limited just to me or you (2:4). This is what the holy instant reveals to us. We recognize that the person we are relating to—spouse, boss, friend, or random acquaintance—is *worthy* of our faith. We believe in his or her holiness without reservation, “and so we love him”

Paragraph 3

3. ¹All separation vanishes as holiness is shared. ²For holiness is power, and by **sharing** it, it **gains** in strength. ³If you seek for satisfaction in gratifying your needs as **you** perceive them, you **must** believe that strength comes from **another**, and **[that] what you gain he loses**. ⁴Someone must **always** lose if you perceive yourself as weak. ⁵Yet there is another interpretation of relationships that **transcends** the concept of **loss** of power completely.

• Study Question •

3. *How is this sharing holiness with another related to the necessity of letting go of our imagined needs in relationships, mentioned in T-15.V.5:7?*
- A. *Letting go of my imagined needs is necessary to free me from the getting concept.*
 - B. *Trying to meet my imagined needs causes me to believe that strength comes from outside myself, and that another must lose for me to have it.*
 - C. *In the Holy Spirit's kind of relationship I have no need to take anything from my brother; my only need is to extend love.*
 - D. *All of the above.*

When I experience a holy instant with a brother or sister, I recognize our shared holiness (2:5), and, as I do so, “all separation vanishes” (3:1). The ego’s kind of relationship tries to gain power for myself by taking it from my brother to fill up my lack; the Holy Spirit’s kind of relationship gains in power by sharing holiness, which increases as it is shared (3:2). It’s a characteristic of divine things: they increase by being given away.

When I relate from my ego I will always be trying to *use* another person, to *get* something from him or her, and I will believe that what I gain, they lose (3:3). This is the result of seeing myself as weak in some way (3:4). I lack; I have a need. You have what I need, so I must take it from you. Perhaps we don’t see ourselves in this manner; perhaps it does not seem that, in asking another to meet my needs that I am *taking* something from them, and that they *lose* by giving it. Certainly there is a kind of giving that does not result in loss, and that’s what Jesus turns to in sentence 4: a different “interpretation of relationships that *transcends* the concept of *loss* of power completely” (3:4). That different interpretation is what he will describe in the next paragraph. But let’s not turn to that too quickly; let’s not avoid understanding and recognizing the activity of our egos in relationships.

In his book, *Relationships as a Spiritual Journey From Specialness to Holiness*, Robert Perry characterizes the special relationship like this:

A special relationship is one in which:

- I try to have a special or exclusive interaction
- with a special person
- so that I can feel more special.

Sometimes the energy that drives an exclusive relationship is something that carries the thought, “If you love me, you have to give up everyone else but me.” In such a relationship, my ego simply can’t stand it if my partner pays attention to another person, especially a person who I view as potential competition for my partner’s specialness. In extreme cases of possessiveness, one partner even tries to separate their mate from their

parents, brothers, and sisters, refusing to let them spend their time on other people. "What you gain, he loses," is the underlying belief.

We need to look at our own relationships to uncover the ego's subtle ways of using them for its own ends, to the detriment of the relationship partner and to the relationship itself. We will examine this bargaining dynamic of the ego, this giving to get, more thoroughly in the next section.

Paragraph 4

4. ¹You do **not** find it difficult to believe that when **another** calls on God for love, **your** call remains as strong. ²Nor do you think that when God answers **him**, **your** hope of answer is diminished. ³On the contrary, you are more inclined to regard **his** success as witness to the possibility of **yours**. ⁴That is because you recognize, however dimly, that God is an **idea**, and so **your** faith in Him is **strengthened** by sharing. ⁵What you find difficult to accept is the fact that, **like** your Father, *you* are an idea. ⁶And like Him, **you** can give yourself **completely**, wholly without loss and **only with gain**. ⁷Herein lies peace, for here there *is* no conflict.

• Study Question •

4. *Which of the following ideas can help us strengthen our faith in our ability to give ourselves in total commitment to a every relationship? (Pick one idea that expresses the main thought of this paragraph the best.)*
- A. *I am an idea, as God is an idea, and what I am is strengthened by sharing.*
 - B. *My brother's success in calling on God witnesses to the possibility of my own.*
 - C. *Because God is my Source, I must be like Him.*
 - D. *My call for God is as strong as my brother's.*

In an earlier discussion, the Course explained why it was important to recognize that ideas increase by being shared, and that everything is an idea. In Chapter 5 it said:

Having everything, spirit holds everything by giving it, and thus creates as the Father created. While this kind of thinking is totally alien to having things, even to the lower mind it is quite comprehensible in connection with ideas. If you share a physical possession, you do divide its ownership. If you share an idea, however, you do not lessen it. All of it is still yours although all of it has been given away. Further, if the one to whom you give it accepts it as his, he reinforces it in your mind and thus increases it. If you can accept the concept that the world is one of ideas, the whole belief in the false association the ego makes between giving and losing is gone (T-5.I.1:8-14).

Let us start our process of reawakening with just a few simple concepts:

Thoughts increase by being given away.

The more who believe in them the stronger they become.

Everything is an idea.

How, then, can giving and losing be associated? (T-5.I.2:1-5).

Because we lack faith in our ability to give ourselves completely, in total commitment, in every relationship, Jesus reminds us that we do not think that God's positive response to a brother's call for help in any way diminishes the likelihood of His responding to us in the same loving way (4:1–2). In fact, we are *encouraged* when someone else is blessed by God in some way; his success strengthens our faith in God (4:3). We “recognize, however dimly, that God is an *idea*” (4:4), an idea of love, an idea of compassion, and therefore, something that is strengthened by being given away. In other words, as God gives, He does not lose anything, but rather, God *increases* by giving. Giving is *not* losing. Something in us, deep down, knows that is so—at least, it is so about God. But what about *us*?

Where our reasoning breaks down, however, is in accepting that, “like your Father, *you* are an idea,” and that therefore, “*you* can give yourself *completely*, wholly without loss and *only with gain*” (4:5–6). If God can give Himself completely without loss and only with gain, *so can we*, because, like Him, we are ideas. And if that is true, “there *is* no conflict” (4:7), no reason *not* to give love to everyone. If we are like God, then by giving love to everyone we will be *increased* by every relationship we engage in. “Herein lies peace” (4:7), a line that recalls the Introduction to the Text, “Herein lies the peace of God” (T-In.2:4). There, it says that the peace lies in knowing that nothing real can be threatened and that nothing unreal exists. Here, the peace lies in knowing that we can give ourselves completely without any loss and only with gain. These concepts come together in the concept of “no loss, only gain.” “Nothing real can be threatened” is also saying “Love never brings loss,” and “Nothing unreal exists” declares that there will be no unreal result of love, that love brings “only gain.” Love has no opposite. There is nothing to fear.

Paragraph 5

5. ¹In the world of scarcity, love **has** no meaning and peace is impossible. ²For gain and loss are **both** accepted, and so no one is aware that perfect love is **in** him. ³In the holy instant you recognize the **idea** of love in you, and **unite** this idea with the Mind that thought it, **and could not relinquish it**. ⁴By **holding** it within itself [**Itself**], **there is** [**was**] no loss. ⁵The holy instant thus becomes a lesson in how to hold **all** of your brothers in **your** mind, experiencing not loss but **completion**. ⁶From this it follows you can **only** give. ⁷And this *is* love, for this alone is natural under the laws of God. ⁸In the holy instant the laws of God prevail, and only **they** have meaning. ⁹The laws of this world cease to hold any meaning at all. ¹⁰When the Son of God **accepts** the laws of God as what he

gladly wills, it is impossible that he be bound, or limited in **any** way. ¹¹In that [this] instant he is as free as God would have him be. ¹²For the instant he refuses to be bound, he is *not* bound.

• Study Question •

5. This section refers to the “laws of God,” and in this paragraph we are told that “in the holy instant the laws of God prevail.” Explain what you think is meant by the phrase, “the laws of God.”

When we believe in scarcity rather than abundance, we believe in both gain and loss. The idea of “perfect love” is inconceivable, because giving means losing. The Workbook has some clear words about this:

The world believes that to possess a thing, it must be kept. Salvation teaches otherwise. To give is how to recognize you have received. It is the proof that what you have is yours (W-pI.159.1:5-8).

Without that firm conviction that giving is receiving, perfect love and peace simply are not possible. As long as the idea of loss is accepted, we cannot be aware that perfect love is in us (5:1–2).

When these barriers to love are removed, love is spontaneously manifest. We are asked to “Teach only love, for that is what you are” (T-6.I.13:2). What we are is love, and that is what you see and remember in the holy instant. You do more than simply remember this idea; you *experience* yourself as love. You remember that “God is but love, and therefore so am I” (Workbook, Review V). You *recognize* the idea of love in yourself and then *unite* the idea with the divine Mind (5:3). Divine Mind (Christ Mind? Holy Spirit? I’m not certain what is meant here) retained the idea of love for us, and “there *was* no loss” (5:4). I think that, beyond the obvious meaning that the idea of love remains in us exactly as God created it, without being diminished in any way by our temporary insanity, there is a larger meaning here, tying in to the notion that loss *per se* is impossible, and has never existed. There was no loss of any kind, never any loss whatsoever.

The holy instant brings a union with this untarnished idea of love within us, and “thus becomes a lesson in how to hold *all* of your brothers in *your* mind, experiencing not loss but *completion*” (5:5). That’s what love in us does: embraces everyone as someone who does not compete with us, but rather *completes* us. When our perception is cleansed to this extent our only response to a brother or sister is *only* to give, in any way we can (5:6). “And this *is* love” (5:7). That’s what love does; love gives. It is the natural response¹ of a holy mind to a brother asking for help. The holy instant is an instant of love without any attack:

¹ "But you are merely asked to see forgiveness as the natural reaction to distress that rests on error, and thus calls for help. Forgiveness is the only sane response" (T-30.VI.2:7-8).

What occurred within the instant that love entered in without attack will stay with you forever (T-27.V.11:4).

Love is natural “under the laws of God” (5:6–8) because God is Love, and this is what God does. Our only need in the holy instant is to extend love:

With love in you, you have no need except to extend it. In the holy instant there is no conflict of needs, for there is only one [one need, to extend love]. For the holy instant reaches to eternity, and to the Mind of God. And it is only there love has meaning, and only there it can be understood (T-15.V.11:3–6).

“The laws of this world cease to hold any meaning at all” (5:9). Sometimes what the heart of love within us calls for flies in the face of secular wisdom, but in the holy instant, there *is* no other law but that of love (5:8–9). Following this inner call becomes an irresistible urge when our will joins with God’s, and nothing can hold us back from following (5:10). The holy instant is thus an experience of total freedom and liberation and limitlessness (5:11–12).

Paragraph 6

6. ¹In the holy instant nothing happens that has not always been. ²Only the veil that has been drawn **across** reality is lifted. ³Nothing has changed. ⁴Yet the **awareness** of changelessness comes swiftly as the veil of time is pushed aside. ⁵No one who has not yet experienced the lifting of the veil, and felt himself drawn irresistibly into the light behind it, can have faith in love **without** fear. ⁶Yet the Holy Spirit *gives* you this faith, because He offered it to me and I **accepted** it. ⁷Fear not the holy instant will be denied you, for I denied **it** not. ⁸And through me the Holy Spirit gives [*gave*] it unto you, as **you** will give it. ⁹Let no need **you** perceive obscure your need of **this**. ¹⁰For in the holy instant you will recognize the **only** need the Sons of God share equally, and **by** this recognition you will join with me in **offering** what is needed.

• Study Question •

6. *What kind of reassurance, or reason to believe we will experience the holy instant (if we have not), is given to us here? (Pick more than one.)*
- A. *Nothing happens in the holy instant, so we don't really need it.*
 - B. *Everything the holy instant brings to us is already ours; the instant only removes the veil that hides it.*
 - C. *Jesus already accepted this faith from the Holy Spirit, therefore we can have it too.*
 - D. *Jesus himself will give us the holy instant, as the Holy Spirit gives it to us through him.*
 - E. *Since we have no needs, we cannot need the holy instant.*



The first sentence of this paragraph is one that is difficult to understand until one has experienced it. When the veil that blinds us to Reality lifts there comes the astonishing awareness that what you are experiencing is something that has always been true, and has always been present. Nothing changes. Instead, one's entire perception of the past is suddenly transformed so that you are able to see that the miraculous sense of safety, of peace, of being loved and of being loving, has been there all along. Always! When this awareness dawns you may be tempted to laugh out loud at the absurdity of your past belief and behavior. It was all so *unnecessary!* (6:1–4)

Jesus goes on to say that if you have never yet had such an experience of being “drawn irresistibly into the light” that always shines behind the veil of time, you cannot have faith in love *without being afraid* (at least a little) (6:5). Without that clear knowing that brings awareness of an unshakeable Reality, a certainty that “Nothing real can be threatened,” love seems risky. Loss seems a distinct possibility. It's not; that was the point being made in 4:6: “You can give yourself completely, wholly without loss and only with gain.” Within the holy instant you *know* that.

Perhaps you may fear that the holy instant will be denied to you, and that you will never experience faith in love without fear. Jesus says that is a groundless worry. It won't happen because he did not deny the holy instant, but accepted it when the Holy Spirit offered it to him. The Holy Spirit will provide the faith you need to accept it yourself (6:6–8). The fact that he chose to make the holy instant permanent is the proof that we can do so. “Fear not the holy instant will be denied you, for I denied it not.” (T-15.VI.6:7). In fact, as the tense of the verb in 6:8 in the Urtext makes clear, when Jesus received the holy instant he received it for us all, and the Holy Spirit “gave” it to us “through” him.

Don't miss the final phrase of that sentence, however; it explains what follows. He says that the Holy Spirit gave us the holy instant through him, *as we will give it* to others (6:8). And giving the holy instant is our only real need; we have no need but to extend love. We are urged not to allow our “imagined needs” to blind us to this ultimate need (6:9). If we can set aside those ego-centric needs and open to the holy instant, we will become aware of the love within us that *needs* to burst forth, a need that we share equally with every child of God, and in that awareness we will join with Jesus in *offering* that love to the world (6:10).

Paragraph 7

7. ¹It is through *us* that peace will come. ²Join me in the **idea** of peace, for in ideas minds **can** communicate. ³If you would **give yourself** as your Father gives His Self, you will learn to understand Selfhood. ⁴And therein is love's meaning understood. ⁵But remember that understanding **is of the mind**, and **only** of the mind. ⁶**Knowledge** is therefore of the mind, and its **conditions** are in the mind **with** it. ⁷If you were not an idea, and nothing but an idea, [*If you were not only an idea, and nothing else,*] you could [*would*] not be in full communication with all that ever was. ⁸Yet as long as you prefer to be something else, or would attempt to be **nothing else** and **something else** together, you will not remember the language of communication [*ideas*], **which you know perfectly**, you will not remember.

• Study Question •

7. *Drawing on this paragraph and all that has been said so far, how are we to come to understand love's meaning? (cf. 15.V.1:1; 15.V.3:1; 15.V.10:3)*

Continuing the idea from above, in which we join with Jesus in offering love to the world, we read that peace comes to the world *through us* (7:1). Jesus asks us to join him in “the *idea* of peace” (7:2). The focus is on the way we *think* more than on what we do. Minds communicate *in ideas*.²

The expression of love is equated here (7:3), and earlier (4:6), to *giving oneself*. In her book, *The Wisdom Jesus*, Cynthia Bourgeault discusses *kenosis*, which she defines as letting go or self emptying, which is what is being referred to here. Bourgeault says:

There's another route to center: a more reckless path and extravagant path, which is attained not through storing up that energy or concentrating the life force, but through throwing it all away—or giving it all away. The unitive point is reached not through the concentration of being but through the free squandering of it; not through acquisition or attainment but through self-emptying; not through “up” but through “down.” This is the way of *kenosis*, the revolutionary path that Jesus introduced into the consciousness of the West. (*The Wisdom Jesus*, Cynthia Bourgeault, page 66)

That is love's meaning—that self-emptying. In that *kenosis* we understand love's meaning (7:4).

² In personal material written at this same time, which isn't included in the Course, there are indications that part of what is meant here is that communication does not require any kind of bodily union. Love can express itself in ideas, without physical union such as sex. Paragraphs 8 to the end of Section VII will make the same point.

But we must remember that “understanding is *of the mind* and *only* of the mind” (7:5). Why is that admonition stressed just at this point? Because this understanding can be blocked by our desire to be a separate body, or a mind-body combination, either of which maintains our separateness. It is important for us to realize that we are “*only* an idea, and *nothing else*” (7:7, Urtext).

What has been given you? The knowledge that you are a mind, in Mind and purely mind, sinless forever, wholly unafraid, because you were created out of Love. Nor have you left your Source, remaining as you were created. This was given you as knowledge which you cannot lose. It was given as well to every living thing, for by that knowledge only does it live (W-pl.158.1:1-5).

Because we are an idea and nothing else we can “be in full communication with all that ever was” (7:7). Minds communicate, and can use the body to do so, but does not *need* the body: “Only minds communicate” (T-7.V.2:1). “For minds need not the body to communicate” (T-20.V.5:3). I believe 8:7 refers to our believing that we are bodies, or perhaps minds in bodies, and not purely mind. We can use the body as a communication device, as the Course frequently says is its only legitimate purpose, but until we stop identifying with our bodies we will not remember the true language of communication through mind alone, the language of love and oneness.

Paragraph 8

8. ¹In the holy instant God is remembered, and the language of communication with **all** your brothers is remembered **with** Him. ²For communication is remembered **together**, as is truth. ³There is **no** exclusion in the holy instant because the past is gone, and with it goes the whole basis **for** exclusion. ⁴Without **its** source exclusion vanishes. ⁵And this permits **your** Source, and That of all your brothers, to **replace** it in your awareness. ⁶God and the power of God will take Their rightful place in you, and you will experience the full communication of ideas with ideas. ⁷Through your ability to do this you will learn what you **must** be, for you will begin to understand what your Creator is, and what His creation is along **with** Him.

• Study Question •

8. “Communication” here, and in the previous paragraph, seems to refer to what? (Pick one.)
- A. The Internet
 - B. A verbal exchange of information
 - C. Telepathic exchange of messages from mind to mind
 - D. A direct knowing of one mind by another
 - E. U.S. West Telephone



The holy instant involves not just an experience of God, but an experience of joining with all our brothers (8:1–2). We know in that moment that minds are truly joined. The holy instant is characterized by a sense of *oneness* (8:3). Mystics of all religions down through the ages have spoken of this. Richard Bucke, in 1901, called it “cosmic consciousness” in a book by that title.

In the holy instant the Sonship gains as one, and united in your blessing it becomes one to you (T-15.V.10:2).

Yet in the holy instant you unite directly with God, and all your brothers join in Christ (T-15.V.10:8).

There is no exclusion in the holy instant because the past is gone, and with it goes the whole basis for exclusion (T-15.VI.8:3).

There is a falling away of barriers, an absence of reasons to exclude anyone or anything from your love.

This kind of experience is not something you experience every time you turn your mind to God. Yet it *could be*. The oneness is inherent in the holy instant; it is *our mind* that is not ready, and not willing, to accept it. If it were forced upon us, it would probably terrify us. Sometimes, I think, God grants us a quick, unexpected preview—a foretaste, a teaser. I had one such experience. I don’t know how it happened, and it has not happened since. But the memory of it lives in me.

Helen had an experience of oneness on the subway in New York one day, which she related in her writings, quoted in Ken Wapnick’s book, *Absence From Felicity*. There was a cab strike, which Helen took as a personal affront. She needed to visit some friends “who lived some distance away.” Her husband said they should take the subway. “I regarded this as an unpardonable insult, but without expressing further objections I marched angrily to the subway, grimly determined to suffer, but not alone.”

She relates how uncomfortable and crowded the subway was. She was seated over a heater, but faced “a freezing gale...as the doors opened” at each station. “As an additional hazard, people were coughing and sneezing all around me, and I could almost see the germs attacking.” Besides all that, she found the train “thoroughly revolting.”

“The train smelled of garlic and peanuts, and the people crowded in with us looked dirty and shabby. Across the aisle a child with hands streaked with chocolate had patted his mother’s face and coat, leaving smudgy fingerprints all over her. Two seats away another mother was wiping off her dress where her baby had thrown up. A group of older children were making a lot of noise, and one of them picked up a wad of chewing gum from the floor and put it in his mouth...I was finding the whole situation increasingly disgusting, and closed my eyes to shut it out, feeling sick to my stomach.

“And then a stunning thing happened. It was very brief. The intense emotions associated with it began to fade almost at once, and disappeared entirely in something less than a minute. An accurate account of what happened is impossible. As an approximation, however, I can say that it was as though a blinding light blazed up behind

my closed eyes and filled up my mind entirely. Without opening my eyes, I seemed to be watching a figure of myself as a child, walking directly into the light.”

She goes on to describe an incredible experience of finding herself in the presence of God, embraced by His Everlasting Arms, aware of “the most indescribably intense love streaming from the light to me. It was so powerful I literally gasped and opened my eyes.”

“I saw the light an instant longer, during which I loved everyone on the train with that same incredible intensity. Everyone there was unbelievably beautiful and incredibly dear. Then the light faded and the old picture of dirt and ugliness returned. The contrast was truly shocking.”

The last paragraphs of “The Forgotten Song” in Chapter 21 amplifies the vision she had at that time:

Beyond the body, beyond the sun and stars, past everything you see and yet somehow familiar, is an arc of golden light that stretches as you look into a great and shining circle. And all the circle fills with light before your eyes. The edges of the circle disappear, and what is in it is no longer contained at all. The light expands and covers everything, extending to infinity forever shining and with no break or limit anywhere. Within it everything is joined in perfect continuity. Nor is it possible to imagine that anything could be outside, for there is nowhere that this light is not.

This is the vision of the Son of God, whom you know well. Here is the sight of him who knows his Father. Here is the memory of what you are; a part of this, with all of it within, and joined to all as surely as all is joined in you. Accept the vision that can show you this, and not the body. You know the ancient song, and know it well. Nothing will ever be as dear to you as is this ancient hymn of love the Son of God sings to his Father still.

And now the blind can see, for that same song they sing in honor of their Creator gives praise to them as well. The blindness that they made will not withstand the memory of this song. And they will look upon the vision of the Son of God, remembering who he is they sing of. What is a miracle but this remembering? And who is there in whom this memory lies not? The light in one awakens it in all. And when you see it in your brother, you <are> remembering for everyone (T-21.I.8:1-10:7).

When we experience a holy instant we not only see the world differently, we see *ourselves* differently, because we experience the “indescribably intense love” that streams from us to everyone. We are experiencing “the full communication of ideas with ideas” (8:6) in that moment, and it teaches us what we are and what we “*must be*,” because we have begun to understand what our Creator is, and that we, like Him, are perfect Love (8:7).

Answer Key

1. C
2. A and C
3. D
4. Either A or C could be correct
5. “The laws of God” appears to refer to the principles that govern God, which can be summed up in one word: love. It also includes the ideas that in giving love there is no loss, only completion; and that my only function is giving.
6. B, C and D
7. We come to understand love’s meaning by being willing to enter the holy instant, where judgment is suspended because all reference to the past is gone in the present. The frame of reference we made is gone, and so the Holy Spirit can replace it with His, which is love. We experience *being* love, loving all the Sonship equally, and we share love with all the Sonship. In giving love, we come to understand what it is because we realize we *are* love. We know it by being it.
8. D