

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 16, Section II

The Power of Holiness

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 this section Jesus addresses our tendency to doubt what we have learned, and to doubt our own ability to live a miraculous life. We insist on thinking that “holiness is difficult.” We have learned many things, but we have not learned to put them into practice. Our self-doubt is just another ego ploy to keep us from manifesting the Light.

Paragraph 1

1. ~~¹You may still think that holiness is impossible to understand~~ [You still think holiness is difficult], because you cannot see how it can be extended to include **everyone**. ²And you ~~have been told~~ [*have learned*] that it **must** include everyone to *be* holy. ³Concern yourself not with the **extension** of holiness, for the nature of miracles you do **not** understand. ⁴Nor do you **do** them. ⁵It is their extension, far beyond the limits you perceive, that demonstrates you do **not** do them. ⁶Why should you worry how the miracle extends to all the Sonship when you do not understand the miracle itself? ⁷One **attribute** is no more difficult to understand than is the whole. ⁸If miracles *are* at all, their attributes would have to be miraculous, being **part** of them.

• Study Question •

1. Which of the following (more than one) are answers to our feelings of ignorance and inadequacy?
 - A. Extension of miracles to include everyone is not our concern, but His.
 - B. The way miracles touch people we were unaware of proves we do not do them, but the Holy Spirit does.
 - C. We will be guided in helping the miracle extend to everyone.
 - D. We don't understand the miracle itself; why expect to understand its extension?



I like the stark directness of the Urtext in the first sentence: Not, “You may still think,” but “You still think”! And I don't think “impossible to understand” says quite the same thing as “is difficult.” It isn't a matter of *understanding* holiness, it is a matter of *doing* it or *living* it. I don't find understanding holiness to be a great stretch, but *being holy*? That, I think, seems difficult!

The reason we think holiness is difficult, says Jesus, is that we “cannot see how it can be extended to include *everyone*” (1:1). To practice holiness as the Course understands it means that “it *must* include everyone to *be* holy” (1:2). For *me* to be holy, I must see *everyone* as holy—and *that* is what makes holiness seem so difficult.

Perhaps it will help if, for a moment, we pause to consider what the Course means by the word *holiness*. Holiness is innocence and purity, untainted by the slightest sin or guilt, a purity that comes, not from separating from what is impure, but by oneness with all things. It is an all-inclusive quality which, as we were just informed, *must* include everyone in order to *be* holiness. If it leaves anything out, the oneness is shattered, and it is no longer holy because it is no longer whole. You might say that holiness is synonymous with *wholeness*.

Therefore, we are advised not to be concerned with *extending* holiness to anyone or anything. Holiness already includes everyone and everything. I've always like the song, “Everything is holy now,” by Peter Mayer (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiyPaURysz4>); it expresses the same idea. We don't have to extend holiness, and thinking that we do shows we don't understand the nature of miracles (1:3). Miracles *are* the recognition of holiness. We do not *do* miracles; they are perpetrated by a power and energy that far exceeds anything that we, as individuals, possess (1:4–5). The fact that a miracle has effects reaching far beyond our field of perception, beyond anything we are aware of at the time, proves they come from a Source greater than our limited minds, a source that is well capable of taking care of their extension. Therefore, we don't need to concern ourselves with doing that or wondering how it can happen (1:6). Miracles are *miraculous*; we can just leave it at that (1:7–8). We don't do them (they are done through us), and we don't understand them anyhow. The fact that we cannot understand how to

extend a miracle to the entire Sonship need not distract us from making ourselves available to be miracle workers.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹There is a tendency to fragment, and then to be concerned about the truth of just a little **part** of the whole. ²And this is but a way of avoiding, or looking **away from** the whole, to what you think you might be better able to understand. ³~~For~~ [And] this is but another way in which you would still try to keep understanding **to yourself**. ⁴A better and **far** more helpful way to think of miracles is this: You do **not** understand them, either in part **or** in whole. ⁵~~Yet they have been done through you~~ [**Yet you have done them**]. ⁶Therefore your understanding **cannot** be necessary. ⁷Yet it is still impossible to accomplish what you do not understand. ⁸And so there must be Something **in** you that *does* understand.

• Study Question •

2. *We try to break things down and deal with a “manageable” part. What “better and far more helpful way” is there to respond to the seeming multiplicity of needs in our lives?*
 - A. *Recognize that we don't understand miracles at all, but that miracles happen through us anyway, proving (1) we don't need to understand on our own and (2) Something in us does understand.*
 - B. *Recognize that since we do not understand the totality of miracles, we just need to concern ourselves with our little part, and leave the rest to the Holy Spirit.*
 - C. *Since we don't understand miracles at all, we can't expect miracles until our understanding improves.*

When faced with anything too complex or too large to comprehend, such as how holiness can be extended to the entire Sonship, we tend to break it down into component parts and then find some aspect of the problem that we think we *can* handle (2:1). We think that by handling that particular aspect, somehow we'll get on top of the whole thing. It is a flawed attempt at coping with what exceeds our abilities, and really all it does is keep us from looking at the whole thing (2:2). It is just another way our ego is trying to stay in charge (2:3), to do as the book of Proverbs advises us *not* to do: “lean not unto thine own understanding” (Prov. 3:5).

A better way to respond to the complexity and mystery of miracles is to simply recognize that we *don't* understand them, “either in part or in whole” (2:4), and we don't need to. We've performed miracles *without understanding them*, and that proves that our understanding is not necessary (2:5–6). Now, perhaps not all of us are aware that miracles have occurred through us. This was spoken originally to Helen, whose skills at

counseling others were remarkable, but who had difficulty applying what she knew to herself. In the next section, Jesus tells Helen:

You may have taught well, and yet you may not have learned how to accept the comfort of your teaching (T-16.III.1:2).

I think we all have had similar experiences, where good results have occurred from something we said or did, without our really understanding how it happened—which goes to show that we don't have to understand. Or do we? Jesus then adds that “it is still impossible to accomplish what you do not understand” (2:7). Huh? So, if I have done miracles, but do not understand them either in part or in whole, yet can't possibly do what I don't understand—isn't that a contradiction? And, in fact, it is: “And so there must be Something *in* you that *does* understand” (2:8). Apparently, that Something would seem to be the Holy Spirit, although Jesus does not make that explicit until Paragraph 4. It seems on the surface to imply a separation or division between you and that Something that understands, but as we will see, that is an inaccurate inference.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹To you the miracle **cannot** seem natural, because what you have done to hurt your ~~mind~~ [minds] has made ~~it~~ [them] so **unnatural** that ~~it does~~ [they do] not remember what is natural to ~~it~~ [them]. ²And when you are ~~told what is natural~~ [told about it], you cannot **understand** it. ³The recognition of the part as whole, and of the whole in every part is **perfectly** natural, for it is the way *God* thinks, and what is natural to Him **is** natural to you. ⁴**Wholly** natural perception would show you instantly that order of difficulty in miracles is quite impossible, for it involves a contradiction of what miracles **mean**. ⁵And if you could understand their **meaning**, their **attributes** could hardly cause you perplexity.

• Study Question •

3. Give this some thought: Based on what you know and what this paragraph is saying, what is the meaning of miracles? Choose only one most appropriate answer.
- A. Miracles mean that there is nothing that cannot be forgiven.
 - B. Miracles mean that the oneness of the Sonship was never shattered, each part is still whole and the whole is in each part, and therefore all the things that miracles “heal” never really happened.
 - C. Miracles are the extension of the Holy Spirit through us to others.

Miracles don't seem natural to us because “what you have done to hurt your minds has made *them* so *unnatural* that they do not remember what is natural to them” (3:1). Miracles really *are* natural to us; we remain as God created us. But we have corrupted or

twisted our minds so severely that we've forgotten that native state, and can't even understand it when we are told about it (3:1–2).

Meeting everyone's needs simultaneously and perfectly is completely *natural* to us: "The recognition of the part as whole, and of the whole in every part is *perfectly* natural, for it is the way *God* thinks, and what is natural to Him *is* natural to you" (3:3). But we don't see it as natural because we have made our minds unnatural and crippled our memory. Seeing some miracles as more difficult than others is actually "a contradiction of what miracles mean" (3:4). To me, this implies that the miracle means that the wholeness and perfection of everyone has never been diminished or altered in any way. Each part *is* the whole, and the whole is in each part. If we were capable of understanding the overall meaning of miracles, "their attributes," such as how they can extend to everyone, "could hardly cause you perplexity" (3:5).

Recently I was reading a quotation from the 13th Century mystic, Meister Eckhart, that beautifully expressed the idea behind the miracle:

The eye wherewith I see God is, the same eye wherewith God sees me. My eye and God's eye are one eye—one seeing, one knowing, one loving...I say more: he begets me not alone as his Son, he begets me as himself and himself as me—me his essence and his nature. (Quoted in Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *A History of Christian Thought, Vol. II* (NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933) 362–363).

If we could somehow grasp that we are one with God—not in the sense of separate beings somehow *aligned with* one another, but literally one, of the same essence, God is my being, my essence, I am God *as me*, but perfectly still God, and that this is the reality of everyone and everything—what is meant by "miracle" would no longer seem strange or miraculous! "Me his essence and his nature"! Truth be told, I can put that into words, I can quote Meister Eckhart and the Course, but do I *truly understand* it? To whatever degree I find it difficult to attribute holiness to another person, to that degree I have not truly understood.

Paragraph 4

4. ¹You **have** done miracles, but it is **quite** apparent that you have *not* done them alone. ²You have succeeded whenever you have reached another mind and **joined** with it. ³When two minds join as one and share one idea equally, the first link in the awareness of the Sonship as one has been made. ⁴When you have made this joining as the Holy Spirit bids you, and have **offered** it to Him to use ~~as He sees fit~~ [as *He knows how*], His natural perception of your gift [the joining?] enables **Him** to understand it, and **you** to **use** His understanding on **your** behalf. ⁵It is impossible to convince you of the reality of what has clearly **been** accomplished through your willingness while you believe that *you* must understand it or else **it** is not real. [You think your *lack of understanding* is a *loss* to you, and so you are unwilling to believe that what *has* happened is true.]

Yet can you *really* believe that all that has happened, *even though* you do *not* understand it, *has not happened*? Yet this *is* your position. You would have *perfect* faith in the Holy Spirit, and in the *effects* of His teaching, if you were not *afraid* to acknowledge what He taught you. For this acknowledgement *means* that what has happened you do *not* understand, but that you are willing to *accept* it, *because* it has happened.]

5. ¹How can faith in reality be yours while you are bent on making it **unreal**? ²And are you **really** safer in maintaining ~~the reality of illusions~~ [the *unreality* of what has happened,] than you would be in joyously accepting ~~truth~~ [it] **for what it is**, and giving thanks for it?

• **Study Question** •

4. (a) *What is the element of miracles that is highlighted here as being behind successfully doing a miracle (4:1–2)?*
(b) *What is the significance of this event in the overall restoration of the Sonship (4:3)?*

Returning now to what was said in paragraph 2, that we *have* done miracles even though we don't understand them, Jesus adds the fact that "you have *not* done them alone" (4:1). We may be thinking, "Ah! Now he is going to tell us that we have done miracles with the assistance of the Holy Spirit." If that's what you were thinking, you were wrong. He points out that we have "succeeded" (that is, we've accomplished a miracle) "whenever you have reached another mind and *joined* with it" (4:2). So quite clearly, then, miracles always involve at least two people, two minds that join. This notion occurs so often in the Course that it astonishes me that some people think that it only takes one person to have a miracle. Miracles are *interpersonal*; in fact, the Course uses that very word about them:

Revelation is intensely personal and cannot be meaningfully translated. That is why any attempt to describe it in words is impossible. Revelation induces only experience. Miracles, on the other hand, induce action. They are more useful now *because of their interpersonal nature* (T-1.II.2:1-5, my emphasis).

For the instant of holiness is shared, and cannot be yours alone. Remember, then, when you are tempted to attack a brother, that his instant of release is yours. Miracles are the instants of release you offer, and will receive (T-15.I.12:2-4).

Sentence 3 is key. What is the "first link in the awareness of the Sonship as one" (4:3)? What is it that can begin to return to our minds that original awareness that we lost and have forgotten, "The recognition of the part as whole, and of the whole in every part" (3:3)"? How can we begin to recover that profound recognition? By joining our mind with another mind and sharing one idea equally, which we can do as we listen

to the urging of the Holy Spirit to do so, and offer that joining to Him to "use as He knows how" (4:3–4). This has to mean something more than two people having the same idea. You "reach" another mind and "join" with it (4:2). The "two minds join as one and share one idea equally" (4:3). There is a much deeper coming together here than simply having the same thoughts.

The quintessential example of such a joining was that between Helen Schucman and Bill Thetford, in the moment when Bill, describing the wreckage of their departmental relationships, said, "There must be a better way!" and Helen, inspired, declared that she believed he was right and would help him find it. Their minds joined and shared that one idea equally. Something in both of them united, and they recognized, although not consciously at the time, the divine spark in one another. That was a miracle.

We do not really understand how miracles work. When we obey the Holy Spirit in any situation, He understands for us, and allows us to use His understanding, so that the miracle happens (4:4). However, if we think a miracle isn't real unless we understand it, we will be unable to accept the reality of the miracles happening through us (4:5). I'm sure that many miracles have happened through you, and through me, that we overlooked because we could not understand them at the time. Are you letting your need to understand interfere with the recognition of the miracles happening in, through, and around you?

There is a fairly large section of text that was omitted from the published Text, indicated by square brackets following Sentence 5. We can't know why it was omitted, but it makes a clear transition between Sentence 5 and the following paragraph. Helen and Bill were living in the midst of miraculous happenings, not the least of them the dictation of the Course itself. But, according to this passage, because they did not understand what was happening or how it was happening, they tended to dismiss it, or to doubt that it had really happened at all. Have you ever had something that seemed miraculous happen and then doubted that it really was something from God? Maybe it was just a coincidence. Maybe I'm making this up. Maybe I did not really hear guidance within myself; it's probably just my own imagination.

Many people, today, feel that if they cannot come up with a "scientific" explanation for the paranormal or mystical, then the experience, whatever it is, can't be real. The Bible says, "Faith...is the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Most people, in fact, are skeptical that anything that cannot be seen, or perceived with one of the five senses, actually exists. The Course teaches that the invisible, spiritual realm, Divine Mind, is in fact the only unchanging reality. We do not realize how much our assumptions about reality cause us to mentally discard the miraculous around us. The reason we do so, the Course says here, is that we are afraid to accept anything we cannot understand. But, as was said in 2:6, "Your understanding cannot be necessary."

We must be prepared, at times, to *accept* some things we do not understand, rather than dismissing them all as unreal. As long as we dismiss the incomprehensible as unreal, we cannot have faith in *reality* (5:1). Consider: Which is safer—maintaining the *unreality*

of the unseen (the world of spirit), or joyously and gratefully accepting it for what it is (5:2)? Yes, the latter stance calls for faith. In fact it is the very definition of faith: accepting the reality of the invisible realm of spirit. And *faith* is what this section is really all about!

Paragraph 5

We have already considered the first two sentences of this paragraph along with the preceding material from the Urtext.

5. ³Honor the truth that has been given you, and be glad you do **not** understand it. ⁴Miracles are natural to [**God, and to**] the One Who speaks for **God** [**Him**]. ⁵For His task is to **translate** the miracle into the knowledge which it **represents**, and which is ~~hidden~~ [**lost**] to you. ⁶Let **His** understanding of the miracle be enough for you, and do not turn away from all the witnesses that He has given you to His reality.

• Study Question •

5. *We have been told that our understanding is not necessary, and that insisting that it is makes it “impossible to convince you of the reality” of what is within us. In this paragraph, what seems to be the general attitude in us that is being addressed and counteracted?*
- A. *Our refusal to accept the witnesses to the truth of what reality is, and our insistence on continuing to believe the illusions are real.*
 - B. *Our desire to play it safe.*
 - C. *Our belief that what we need is the knowledge that comes from miracles.*

People who read *A Course in Miracles* sometimes get caught in the trap of believing that, if they don't completely understand what they are reading, they cannot accept it. Probably the most frequent objection to the Course's teaching is along these lines: “The Course says we were created perfect and remain perfect. How, then, is it possible that we have become trapped in illusion? How did the separation ever occur? And what is to guarantee that, if we return, it won't happen again?” People sometimes get locked into that line of thought and end up dismissing the Course as unreliable, illogical, or nonsense. That is what is being addressed here when Jesus instructs us to “Honor the truth that has been given you, and be glad you do *not* understand it” (5:3). It takes faith, but faith is essential *because* it produces solid knowledge. That's the Holy Spirit's job, *translating* “the miracle into the knowledge which it *represents*” (5:4–5). That Bible verse in Hebrews 11:1 that I partially quoted earlier, in Darby's translation says that, “Faith is the *substantiating* of things hoped for,” that is, faith *makes the invisible real*, it gives substance to it.

One of my early Christian teachers (by means of his writings) was Watchman Nee, a little-known but deeply spiritual Chinese Christian teacher. He wrote these words about faith, which I think fit perfectly what the Course is trying to tell us:

Faith is not making something out of nothing. Faith is substantiating what is there. Faith is not daydreaming or the speaking of a dream. Faith is to manifest what is there already. (Nee, *The Gospel of God*).

We are asked to allow the Holy Spirit's understanding of the miracle be enough for us. We may not understand, but we have faith that He *does*. There are enough "witnesses...to His reality" to persuade us, if we are willing to relinquish our skepticism (5:6).

Paragraph 6

6. ¹No evidence will convince you of the truth of what you do **not** want. ²Yet your relationship with Him **is** real * [**and has been demonstrated**]. ³Regard this not with fear, * but with rejoicing. ⁴The One you called upon *is* with you *. ⁵Bid Him welcome, and honor the witnesses who bring you the glad tidings He **has** come. ⁶It **is** true, **just as you fear**, * that to acknowledge Him **is** to deny **all** that you think you know. ⁷But ~~what you think you know~~ [**But it**] was never true. ⁸What gain is there to you * in clinging to it, and denying the evidence for truth? ⁹For * you have come too near to truth to renounce it now, and you *will* yield to its compelling attraction. ¹⁰You can delay this now, * but only a little while. ¹¹The Host of God has called to you, and you **have** heard. ¹²Never again will you be wholly willing **not** to listen.

• Study Question •

6. *Which of the following elements are part of the attitude of resistance that is being discussed here?*
- A. *Our doubt that we really have a relationship with the Holy Spirit.*
 - B. *Our fear of having a relationship with the Holy Spirit.*
 - C. *Our fear that acknowledging the Holy Spirit means denying everything we think we know.*
 - D. *Our lingering desires to turn away from the Holy Spirit.*
 - E. *Our fear that we will turn away from the Holy Spirit.*
 - F. *Our concern about delaying our final commitment to the truth.*
 - G. *All of the above.*

We have remarkable power to block things out of our minds if we do not *want* them there. We see this plainly in instances where a loved one suddenly dies, or is accused of some terrible crime, and when their family is told, the response is, "No! That can't be right. That isn't him (or her)." In such cases, the hard physical evidence eventually makes the facts undeniable. But when what we are denying is *not visible*, such as our

relationship with the Holy Spirit, it becomes much easier to deny its reality if we don't *want* it to be real (6:1–2). He is really there. His presence has been demonstrated to us (6:2; 6:4). We ought to be rejoicing in the fact of His presence (6:3, 5), honoring those who witness to us of His presence, but we resist knowing it to be real.

Why on earth would I *not* want a relationship with the Holy Spirit to be real? Because there is an underlying fear: “that to acknowledge Him is to deny all that you think you know” (6:6). *And that is true* (6:6)! Denying all that we think we know is no great loss because “it was never true” (6:7). That's why, elsewhere, the Course says:

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. No belief is neutral. Every one has the power to dictate each decision you make (T-24.Int.2:1-4).

Simply do this: Be still, and lay aside all thoughts of what you are and what God is; all concepts you have learned about the world; all images you hold about yourself. Empty your mind of everything it thinks is either true or false, or good or bad, of every thought it judges worthy, and all the ideas of which it is ashamed. Hold onto nothing. Do not bring with you one thought the past has taught, nor one belief you ever learned before from anything. Forget this world, forget this course, and come with wholly empty hands unto your God (W-pI.189.7:1-5).

The demand to let it all go may seem extreme, but it is inevitable. Holding on to the ego is a losing proposition (6:8). We've crossed the point of no return: we *will* yield to the compelling attraction of the Truth (6:9); although we may drag our feet, we cannot do so forever (6:10). We have heard the Voice for God, and there is something in us that knows we've heard the Truth (6:11–12). There is no turning back.

Paragraph 7

7. ¹This is a year of joy, in which your listening will increase and peace will grow with its increase. ²The power of holiness **and the weakness of attack are both being brought into your awareness** [have both been brought into awareness]. ³And this has been accomplished in ~~a mind~~ [in minds] firmly convinced that holiness is weakness and attack is power. ⁴Should not this be a sufficient miracle to teach you that your Teacher is **not** of you? ⁵But remember also that whenever you listened to **His** interpretation the results have brought **you** joy. ⁶Would you **prefer** the results of **your** interpretation, considering honestly what they have been? ⁷God wills you better. ⁸Could you not look with greater charity on whom God loves with perfect love?

• Study Question •

7. *Jesus asks us to look at the results in our lives of listening to our own interpretation of things, and listening to the Holy Spirit's interpretation.*

What interpretation does he seem to be talking about; or rather, what is being interpreted? (See 7:8 especially, "whom God loves with perfect love." What does this refer to?)

- A. *The Holy Spirit*
- B. *Our brothers and ourselves (the Sonship)*
- C. *Jesus*

Remember that this was written over the Christmas and New Year holiday period; thus, the reference to "a year of joy" ahead of us (7:1). Jesus is promising Helen and Bill, and all of us, that once we have set out on the path of the Course, our listening (to the Holy Spirit) will increase, resulting in a growing sense of peace (7:1). We have become aware of "the power of holiness and the weakness of attack" (7:2), despite the fact that at the onset our minds were "firmly convinced that holiness is weakness and attack is power" (7:3). Listening is the key, because "all things we perceive are upside down until we listen to the Voice for God" (W-pII.328.1:1). When the Course says that, "The purpose of the workbook is to train your mind in a systematic way to a different perception of everyone and everything in the world" (W.Int.4:1), it means it. Everyone, everything.

Considering where we were when we began, it's a miracle that we have gotten to where we are. And that's the point: this alone is enough of a miracle to convince us that "your Teacher is *not* of you" (7:5). These thoughts of the power of holiness and the weakness of attack could not have arisen from minds so diametrically opposed to them. I recall clearly the day, as I sat reading the Course and finding myself agreeing with parts I had previously rejected completely, that I thought, "Someone's been messing with my mind!" Indeed, Someone had been.

And listening to that voice has brought me nothing but joy (7:5)! When I think about how I used to behave, and how I used to *think*, I am so happy that I've allowed my mind to be messed with! *My* interpretation of things, and of the people I interact with, has resulted in conflict and stress; why would I want to hold on to such interpretations (7:6)? Would it not be preferable to allow myself to "look with greater charity on whom God loves with perfect love" (7:8)? Which is, like, everyone!

Paragraph 8

8. ¹Do not interpret **against** God's Love [His love for you], for you have many witnesses that speak of it so clearly that only the blind and deaf could fail to see and hear them. ²This year **determine not** to deny what has been given you **by** God [to use for Him. He has *Himself* reminded you of Him.] ³Awake and **share** it, for that is the only reason He has called to you. ⁴His Voice has spoken clearly, and yet you have so little faith in what you heard, because you have preferred to place still greater faith in the disaster **you** have made. ⁵Today, let us resolve **together** to accept the joyful tidings that disaster is **not** real and that reality is **not** disaster. ⁶Reality is safe and sure, and wholly kind to everyone and

everything. ⁷There is no greater love than to accept this and be glad. ⁸For love asks only that **you be happy**, and will **give** you everything that makes for happiness.

• **Study Question** •

8. *What do the following sentences, very strong in their tone, mean? (Notice what is "the only reason He has called to you.")*
"This year determine not to deny what has been given you by God to use for Him. He has Himself reminded you of Him. Awake and share it, for that is the only reason He has called to you" (8:2-3). (For some hints about what is given and to be shared, see footnote below¹.)
- A. *Do not continue to resist the Course, but speak about it to everyone who will listen.*
 - B. *Do not continue to resist the truth of the Course's ideas concerning our true Identity, release from guilt, and the miracle of forgiveness, but share these ideas with everyone by joining with them in their truth, forgiving as you have been forgiven.*
 - C. *Do not continue to deny the voice speaking in you, but open yourself to channel His wisdom to the world*



Jesus speaks to us with great reassurance and passionate exhortation, urging us to stop interpreting against God's Love for us (8:1). It is strange, isn't it, how we seem intent on finding evidence that God does *not* love us? He says only the blind and deaf can fail to see the witnesses for God's Love in our lives (8:1). He tells us we have placed greater faith in the disaster we have made (the results of our projections) than in the truth of what we have heard from him, and he assures us: "...that disaster is *not* real and that reality is *not* disaster. Reality is safe and sure, and wholly kind to everyone and everything" (8:5-6)). That is more than a poetic turn of phrase; it is a profound philosophical statement

1 "Let yourself be healed completely that you may join with Him in healing, and let us celebrate our release together by releasing everyone with us. Leave nothing behind, for release is total, and when you have accepted it with me you will give it with me" (T-15.XI.3:2-3).

"No needs will long be left unmet if you leave them all to Him Whose function is to meet them. That is His function, and not yours. He will not meet them secretly, for He would share everything you give through Him. That is why He gives it. What you give through Him is for the whole Sonship, not for part of it. Leave Him His function, for He will fulfill it if you but ask Him to enter your relationships, and bless them for you" (T-16.I.7:4-9).

"When two minds join as one and share one idea equally, the first link in the awareness of the Sonship as one has been made" (T-16.II.4:3).

"This is the year for the application of the ideas that have been given you" (T-16.II.9:4).

about the nature of reality. It is a perfect example of what the philosophers call *monism*, the denial that anything but good exists. Charles Fillmore, co-founder of Unity with his wife, Myrtle, wrote:

Evil is a parasite. It has no permanent life of itself, its whole existence depends on the life it borrows from its parent, and when its connection with the parent is severed, nothing remains. In Divine Mind there is no recognition of evil conditions.... Apparent evil is the result of ignorance and when Truth is presented the error disappears. (*The Revealing Word*, p. 64)

Or, as the Introduction to the Text puts it, “Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists.” “There is no greater love than to accept this [accept that only good exists, that disaster is not real] and be glad” (8:7). Happiness, based on this simple but profound philosophy of reality, is all that is asked of us, and love will give us all that enables us to do it (8:8).

So, he asks us to make a New Year’s resolution, to determine this year *not* to deny what God has given us to use for Him. In the words of the biblical parable, to make good investment with the “talents” or gifts He has given us (8:2). “Awake and *share* it” (8:3), he urges, “for that is the only reason He has called to you.” The only reason? What is that reason? “Share it.” God’s gifts are given to be shared. Sharing involves, as he said a moment ago, looking “with greater charity on whom God loves with perfect love” (7:8). It means accepting God’s Love for ourselves and then turning to shine that same Love on everyone.

Some see two different approaches to spirituality: the path of individual salvation or enlightenment, and the path of social responsibility. One focuses inward, the other focuses outward. Interestingly, the Course does both. Yes, as it says, the only responsibility of the miracle worker is to accept atonement for herself or himself. But *the only reason* such a gift is given to an individual is that he or she may share it with everyone!

Paragraph 9

9. ¹You have never given **any** problem to the Holy Spirit He has not solved for you, **nor** will you ever do so. ²You have never tried to solve **anything** yourself and been successful. ³Is it not time you brought these facts **together** and made **sense** of them? ⁴This is the year for the **application** of the ideas that have been given you. ⁵For the ideas are mighty forces, to be **used** and not held idly by. ⁶They have **already** proved their power sufficiently for you to place your faith in **them**, and **not** in their denial. ⁷This year invest in truth, and let it work in peace. ⁸~~Have faith in Him Who~~ [Have faith in what] has faith in **you**. ⁹Think what you have **really** seen and heard, and **recognize** it. ¹⁰Can you **be** alone [without the Holy Spirit] with witnesses like these?

• Study Question •

9. *What is the message that you, personally, get from paragraphs 8 and 9?*

Again, think first of what these words meant to Helen and Bill. They had experienced so much, their doubt and hesitation almost seems ludicrous in hindsight. The Course material had proven itself to them over and over, and yet they held back from investing themselves in it fully. It makes sense that Jesus would say to them, “It’s about time you woke up and *applied* the ideas I’ve given you.”

We, though, are in very much the same position. By this time, if you have been studying starting at Chapter 1, you are about halfway through the Text. How are you doing at applying what you have read? You may feel the first two statements are a bit too black and white—that you have *never* successfully solved anything by yourself, and that *every* problem you’ve given to the Holy Spirit has been solved (9:1–2). But you have to admit that they are close to being totally true, and I suspect that if you, or I, really examined the record carefully, we’d find that they are much more accurate than we care to admit.

The ideas of the Course “are mighty forces, to be *used* and not held idly by” (9:5). I know that, for me, I can do more at applying them to my life and the relationships I am involved with. I feel I can say, “This is the year,” every year (9:4). I cannot argue that the ideas have earned my faith (9:6), are worthy of my investment (9:7), and that I want to focus my attention on having faith in these ideas that have faith in me (9:8). And they certainly do have faith in me. They say things like, “Teach only love, for that is what you are”; “You remain as God created you”; “I am the holy Son of God Himself”; and they tell me I am entitled to miracles. To have faith in the ideas, then, is to believe what it says about me, and to believe what it says about *you* as well.

The final line, “Can you *be* alone with witnesses like these?” (9:10), seems to address another aspect of our doubt and hesitation: The feeling that we are alone, that nobody understands us or stands with us. The line is saying that we can’t really be alone because of “witnesses like these”. But what witnesses is it referring to? The ideas that have been given to us? No, I don’t think so; I think the answer lies in 9:9: “Think what you have *really* seen and heard, and *recognize* it.” It is referring to the results we have seen of the Course’s ideas in the lives of the people with whom we have shared them, in word or deed. I know I feel that way about all the people who have passed through my study groups in the last 29 years, in New Jersey, in Sedona, and here in Portland. With witnesses like these—like *you*—how could I ever be alone?

The theme of the teacher who has not quite accepted their own teaching continues in the next section, “The Reward of Teaching.”

Answer Key

1. A, B and D
2. A
3. B
4. (a) Reaching to another mind and joining with it.
(b) It is the “first link in the awareness of the Sonship as one.”
5. A
6. G
7. B
8. B
9. Answer depends on the individual.