

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 17, Section VII

The Call for Faith

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
~~strickethrough blue text~~ = Not in Urtext, in FIP edition
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Overview of the Section

This section continues the discussion of our need for faith in dealing with difficulties in our holy relationship, a discussion that began in the final two paragraphs of the preceding section. Some scholars feel the section break should have included those two paragraphs in this section. (You may wish to re-read those paragraphs now.) Faith must be extended to everyone involved, and to every situation.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹The substitutes for **aspects** of the situation are the witnesses to your **lack** of faith. ²They demonstrate that you did **not** believe the situation **and the problem** were in the same place. ³The problem *was* ~~the~~ **[this]** lack of faith, and it is **this** you demonstrate when you **remove** it from its source and place it elsewhere. ⁴As a result, **you do not see the problem**. ⁵Had you not lacked faith ~~that~~ it **could** be solved, the **problem** would be gone. ⁶And the situation would have been **meaningful** to you, because the **interference** in the way of understanding would have been removed. ⁷To remove the problem **elsewhere** is to **keep** it, for you remove yourself **from** it and **make** it unsolvable.

• Study Question •

1. *So you are involved in a holy relationship, but some aspect of it seems difficult, e.g. your need for support and encouragement is not being met by your partner. In an attempt to resolve this problem you turn to a close friend to supply this lack. Which of the following are true, according to Paragraph 1? (More than one)*
 - A. *Your action demonstrates a lack of faith in your holy relationship*
 - B. *You do not believe the problem must involve your relationship*
 - C. *You are not seeing the real problem*
 - D. *The real problem will persist*
 - E. *You miss the meaning behind the situation*
 - F. *You are making the problem unsolvable*
 - G. *All of the above*

The reference to “substitutes for *aspects* of the situation” (1:1) clearly points back to Section VI.7, where we were told: “Confronted with any *aspect* of the situation that *seems* to be difficult, the ego will attempt to *take this aspect elsewhere*, and resolve it there” (T-17.VI.7:1). When we do this, Jesus says here, we are bearing witness to our “*lack of faith*” (1:1). Sentence 2 seems puzzling at first: What does he mean that we don’t believe that the situation and the problem are in the same place? If we are having a problem in the relationship, that’s the situation, right? Aren’t they the same thing? How could they *not* be in the same place?

The key to understanding this, I believe, is Sentence 3: *The lack of faith is the problem*. What we *think* is the problem isn’t the problem. The problem is *thinking there is a problem*. The situation, and the problem (lack of faith), are both *in me*. But when I “*remove* it from its source and place it elsewhere” (1:3), that is, when I change the location of the problem from its source (me) to something outside of me, I am demonstrating lack of faith. I am not trusting that everyone and everything will do its part. “As a result” I “do not see the problem” (1:4).

This is the same paradoxical way of speaking about problems as occurs in Workbook lessons 79 and 80: “Let me recognize the problem so it can be solved,” and “Let me recognize my problems have been solved.” These lessons tell us quite clearly, “If you are willing to recognize your problems, you will recognize that you have no problems” (W-pI.80.1:1). As Jesus says here about our relationship problem, “Had you not lacked faith it *could* be solved, the *problem* would be gone” (1:5). With faith, no problem. Without faith, there *seems* to be a problem, but the real problem is the lack of faith. Lack of faith interferes with our understanding of the situation (1:6), seeing it in the light of our relationship and its goal, as something that can contribute to the goal of peace and union, rather than seeing it as an obstacle. By seeing the problem in someone or something outside of ourselves, or rather, seeing someone or something outside of ourselves *as the*

problem, we have taken ourselves out of the picture and thus effectively have made the problem “unsolvable” (1:7).

Paragraph 2

2. ¹There is **no** problem in **any** situation that faith will not solve. ²There is no **shift** in any **aspect** of the problem but will make **solution impossible**. ³For if you shift **part** of the problem elsewhere the meaning of the problem **must** be lost, and the **solution** to the problem is **inherent** in its meaning. ⁴Is it not possible that **all** your problems **have been** solved, but you have removed **yourself** from the solution? ⁵Yet faith **must** be where something has **been** done, and where you **see** it done.

• Study Question •

2. *In a holy relationship, which has been dedicated to the goal of truth and holiness, faith will solve all problems in any situation. Faithlessness, then, must mean attempting to resolve the problem outside of the relationship. Why does this make true resolution impossible?*
- A. *The solution is already present in the relationship, but we are looking outside the relationship*
 - B. *Only our partner has the special something we need*
 - C. *Faith is the solution, and it is available only in the holy relationship*
 - D. *Nobody can solve all problems in a relationship*
 - E. *A and C*
 - F. *B and D*

That first sentence is radical. Maybe you are inclined to think it is ridiculously idealistic: “What? *No* problem in *any* situation that faith will not solve? Come on! Get real! You should meet my boss!” Or with you maybe it’s a neighbor, your mother, brother, sister, or teen-aged son or daughter. “I’d love to think that all I have to do is have faith and everything will be hunky-dory, but it just doesn’t work that way.”

But, do you see what I was doing there? Every example of the “unsolvable problem” that I gave was *something outside of myself*. And if something I cannot control is the problem, then yes, the problem is unsolvable.” “There is no *shift* in any *aspect* of the problem but will make *solution impossible*” (2:2). Just trying to make myself believe that it will all work out won’t work; my “faith” will evaporate the first time the other person does something “wrong” that “proves” the problem still exists.

As we have seen before, the ego always tries to fragment the problem or situation, shifting part of it somewhere else. It seems to me there are two ways this is so; perhaps you can think of others. First, if you think of the problem as existing entirely within your own mind, within yourself, then any effort to focus on another person or some material

aspect of the situation represents shifting “part of the problem elsewhere” (2:3). Second, if the problem is thought of as some personal need that isn't being met by the relationship, which I then try to meet *outside* the relationship, that is another way of shifting part of the problem elsewhere. The Course says that any kind of shifting destroys the integrity of the problem, which can only be understood when viewed in its entirety, as a unified whole. The meaning of it all is lost when you break it apart (2:3).

He asks us to consider the possibility that *all* of our problems *have already been solved*, but we have removed ourselves from the solution (by attempting to shift our focus to some fragmented aspect of it) (2:4). Again, this echoes Lessons 79 and 80. Our faith is meant to be in this fact, that all our problems have already been solved. Jesus lists “trust” as the first characteristic of a true teacher of God, and in that description, “trust” sounds an awful lot like “faith”:

The teachers of God have trust in the world, because they have learned it is not governed by the laws the world made up. It is governed by a Power That is *in* them but not *of* them. It is this Power That keeps all things safe. It is through this Power that the teachers of God look on a forgiven world (M-4.I.1:4-7).

What we trust in, or have faith in, is that Power that governs the world, a power that is *in* us, and “That keeps all things safe.” Here we are, in some distressing situation in our holy relationship, and—if we trust that Power—we recognize that, despite appearances, we are safe. Everyone involved, including both myself and my partner or partners in the relationship, is doing their part—again, *despite appearances to the contrary*. In fact that is about how Unity defines “faith.” In the Unity exam for Licensed Teachers, faith is defined as follows: “Our ability to perceive the reality of God's Kingdom of Good and Divine Ideas, despite evidence to the contrary, and then to use this to mold and shape substance.” Faith means realizing that, when we see what appears to be a problem, *it has already been solved*. The needed solution has been done, and faith *sees* it as done (2:5).

Paragraph 3

3. ¹A situation is a relationship, being the joining of thoughts. ²If problems are perceived, it is because the thoughts are judged to be **in conflict**. ³But if the goal is **truth**, this is impossible. ⁴Some idea of bodies **must** have entered, for minds **cannot** [can not] attack. ⁵The thought of bodies **is** the sign of faithlessness, for bodies **cannot** solve anything. ⁶It is their **intrusion** on the relationship, an error in **your** thoughts **about** the situation, which then becomes the **justification** for your lack of faith. ⁷You **will** make this error, but be not at all concerned with that. ⁸The error does not matter. [But do not use the error to what *seems* to be to your advantage, for this *does* matter.] ⁹Faithlessness brought to faith will never interfere with truth. ¹⁰But faithlessness used *against* truth will **always** destroy faith. ¹¹If you lack faith, ask that it be restored **where it was lost**, and seek not to have it **made up to you** elsewhere, as if you had been unjustly **deprived** of it.

• Study Question •

3. (a) *How do we attempt to justify our lack of faith? (3:1–6)*
- (b) *If we make this error, what should we not do? (3:7,8,10,11)*
- (c) *If we make this error, what should we do? (3:9,11)*

Having set the bar quite high, asking us to have faith that the problems are already solved, that everyone will play their necessary parts, and that this world is not governed by the laws the world has made up, but by the Power of God, Jesus proceeds to explain where our lack of faith comes from, or rather, how we justify it. He goes on to tell us both what we *should not* do when we make the mistake of lacking faith, and what we *should* do to remedy it.

He begins by defining his terms. A *situation*, he says, is a relationship, a joining of thoughts (3:1). This may seem a strange perspective at first, but if we think about it a bit, it makes sense. Think about some situation in your relationship with another person. What is the root of the situation? Isn't it the confluence of *your* thoughts with *the other person's* thoughts? Your thoughts meet his or her thoughts, and there is a situation. Right? No judgment yet about *what kind* of situation!

“If problems are perceived, it is because the thoughts are judged to be *in conflict*” (3:2). That seems clear. My thoughts encounter your thoughts and we differ about something; there is a perception of conflict. “If the goal is *truth*,” however, “this is impossible” (3:3). Let's see if we can understand that. If you and I are in this relationship, and we have come together to agree on the goal of truth. What is the goal of truth? The *Song of Prayer* gives us a hint:

Prayer now must be the means by which God's Son leaves separate goals and separate interests by, and turns in holy gladness to the truth of union in his Father and himself (Song of Prayer.Int.2:4).

To me, the goal of truth means that we are dedicated to recognizing our oneness with one another and with God, determined to leave behind separate goals and separate interests. We can find confirmation of this closer to home than the Song, however. After all, the previous section was called, “Setting the Goal.” What does it tell us about the goal of truth? In Paragraph 5, it links this goal to peace and sanity. If the goal is peace and sanity, knowing the truth of unity, then it is impossible that our thoughts be in conflict.

And yet, surely, we have all experienced situations in which two apparently loving, spiritual people have thoughts that seem to conflict. How can we explain that? Jesus explains: “Some idea of bodies *must* have entered, for minds can *not* attack” (3:4). There is another statement that requires some explanation.

Commenting on the idea that “mind cannot attack,” Robert Perry, in his glossary of Course terms, says:

[This is] a basic principle concerning the nature of mind. Minds may seem able to attack each other, yet they cannot. For they are all united and attack assumes the collision of separate objects. Minds also cannot truly be attacked, for

this assumes injury and minds cannot be injured, being changeless. Bodies, however, are both separate and changeable. They can attack and be attacked. Identifying with the body, then, makes the mind seem capable of attack. When the mind wants to attack, it directs the body to act out the attack. This produces guilt, which the mind then projects upon the body, blaming the body for its actions.

The seeming ability of our minds to attack is a delusion:

It cannot attack, but it maintains it can ... The mind cannot attack, but it can deceive itself" (T-18.VI.4:2-3).

This is why Jesus says, in the paragraph we are discussing, that “some idea of bodies *must* have entered” (3:4), because only bodies can attack or be attacked. It may seem to us that the conflict is between differing thoughts, but the conflict will actually show up in the behavior of bodies, which includes speech. When we identify with our bodies, we will perceive conflicts. Conversely, if we are perceiving conflicts, we *must* be identifying with our bodies! When we are wholly living in recognition of oneness, there *cannot* be any conflict visible to us. When we identify with our body, it is “the sign of faithlessness” (3:5). By identifying with the body, we are failing to have faith in our reality as spirit, in Oneness.

When I am looking upon my brother or sister as a body, seeing their words and actions as indicative of who they are and what they are—an assumption that seems so natural and easy, yet is so profoundly “an error in *your* thoughts *about* the situation” (3:6)—my lack of faith in that brother or sister seems entirely justified! “How can I trust her when she says one thing and does another?” It is not their words or behavior that you are being asked to have faith in!

Jesus is not under any illusions about us or *our* behavior. He says flatly, “You *will* make this error” (3:7). Notice how, right here, he is demonstrating the very thing he is talking about. He *knows* that we have, and will, manifest this sign of faithlessness. We will mistake our brother’s body or ego as what he is. We will make an error in our thoughts about many of the situations that arise. But he goes on to say, “be not at all concerned with that. The error does not matter” (3:7)! Just imagine yourself having this attitude about the errors of your relationship partners!

So, what will you do when you *do* make this mistake? The first thing to bear in mind is to refrain from using the error to attack your partner in some way, to try to gain an advantage over her or him (Urtext sentence following 3:8). Rather than engaging in conflict with your partner’s ego, which will destroy faith in both of you, bring your faithless thoughts to the Holy Spirit (3:9–10). Pray. Ask that your faith be restored *in the relationship*, not through looking outside of it. Let your faith *in your partner and in yourself* be restored, instead of trying to find comfort with someone else (3:11).

Paragraph 4

4. ¹Only what *you* have not given **can** be lacking in **any** situation. ²But remember this; the goal of holiness was set for **your** relationship, **and not by you**. ³**You** did not set it because holiness ~~cannot be seen~~ [*can not be seen*] except through faith, and your relationship was not holy **because** your faith in ~~your brother~~ [*one another*] was so limited and little. ⁴Your faith must grow, to meet the goal that has been set. ⁵The goal's **reality** will call this forth, for you will see that peace and faith will not come separately. ⁶What situation can you be in **without faith**, and remain faithful to ~~your brother~~ [*each other*]?

• Study Question •

4. Which of the following is not true about faith, according to this paragraph (there may be more than one)?
- A. Faith is only lacking because we are not giving it
 - B. We cannot give faith if our brother has not earned it
 - C. We need faith to enable us to set the goal for our relationship
 - D. Once the goal is set, our faith must grow to meet it
 - E. The goal itself will call forth our faith

The first sentence could easily be misapplied, as if it had universal application. The word “lacking” in 4:1 seems to be related to our sense of having been “unjustly deprived,” mentioned in 3:11; there, what we think we lack is *faith*. So, what this sentence is saying is that, if we see anything lacking in the situation, the real lack is *our* lack of faith. The lack is within, not without. It isn't your partner's misbehavior; it's your lack of faith that is the real problem. We need to remember that we have accepted the Holy Spirit's goal of *holiness* for our relationship. This was His goal, not ours. Prior to the growth of faith that is being nourished by the Holy Spirit within our holy relationship, we would have been incapable of setting a goal such as *holiness*, because holiness can only be seen *by faith* (4:2–3).

Before we gave the relationship to the Holy Spirit, my partner and I had “limited and little” faith in one another, so seeing holiness as our goal would have been impossible (4:3). And, I believe, that implies that at the onset, we *still* do not understand what a goal of holiness *means*. That comes only with the growth of faith (4:4).

Faith *will* grow; “the goal's *reality* will call this forth” (4:5). Holiness as a goal calls forth our faith in one another. We will gradually come to realize more and more deeply that when we have faith, we have peace, and when we don't have faith, peace disappears. We will realize that the only way to remain faithful to one another, to cherish one another in our hearts, is to live in faith (4:6).

Paragraph 5

5. ¹Every situation in which you find yourself is but a means to meet the purpose set for **your** relationship. ²See it as something **else** and you **are** faithless. ³**Use not your faithlessness.** ⁴Let it enter, and look upon it calmly, but **do not use it.** ⁵Faithlessness is the servant of illusion, and wholly faithful to its master. ⁶**Use it,** and it will carry you straight to illusions. ⁷Be tempted not by what it offers you. ⁸It interferes, not with the goal, but with the **value** of the goal **to you.** ⁹Accept not the illusion of peace it offers, but look upon its offering and recognize it *is* illusion.

• Study Question •

5. *Listed below are several instructions about what to do when we make the error of faithlessness in our relationship. Pick two, one which seems best to summarize what we should not do, and one which summarizes what we should do.*
- A. *See the situation as something that is not a means for meeting the purpose of our relationship*
 - B. *When faithlessness arises, listen to it, use it, and follow its lead*
 - C. *Let faithlessness enter our minds and look upon it calmly*
 - D. *Look at faithlessness and the illusion it offers, but recognize it is illusion*

Every situation we encounter can become for us “a means to meet the purpose set for *your* relationship” (5:1). I do not think this means that some external power is carefully arranging things, manipulating and intervening in our lives to bring things to us that we need for growth. God isn’t an external Being; God is a Life Force within us. But the Course says here that *every* situation is a means for growth; there is no selectivity necessary! Whatever it is can propel us onward to the goal, *if we choose to see it that way and use it that way.*

“See it as something *else* and you *are* faithless” (5:2)! If your relationship partner misbehaves in some way, fudges the truth perhaps, or fails to express love when you really need it, or lets you down in some way, if you see that *as a problem* you are being faithless. No; it isn’t a problem. It is a means to meet the purpose of your relationship, to attain the goal of holiness.

Now, as Jesus said previously (3:7), you inevitably *will* make this mistake. Of course; we all do. You will feel let down, offended, hurt in some way. Of course! That isn’t a problem. But, Jesus says, *don’t use it.* Don’t buy into it. As one of my wife’s favorite bumper stickers says, “Don’t believe everything you think.” Don’t waste any effort trying to figure out, “Why did she say that? Did she mean to hurt my feelings?” “Aha! I knew he was self-centered and that proves it!” No; don’t use it (5:3). “Let it enter, and look upon it calmly, but *do not use it*” (5:4). That is such a freeing instruction! Don’t *resist*

your doubts—let it enter. There is nothing to be afraid of or guilty about. Don't turn away from it, either; "look upon it calmly." Don't pretend your faithless thoughts are not there. It's no surprise, and you don't need to be concerned about it. It doesn't matter (3:7–8). *Just don't engage!* Don't believe those thoughts, and most especially, *do not act on them as if they were true.*

This is such gentle advice, isn't it? We are so inclined to beat ourselves up when our egos flare up and dark suspicions about our relationship partners enter our minds. The point is that we are still learning; our faith hasn't grown yet to the point where such thoughts never enter. But that growth is just what the situation is for, and if we don't allow ourselves to be governed by the dark suspicions, our faith *will* grow.

Faithless thoughts are "the servant of illusion," and if you engage with them, chew on them, mull them over, and let them dictate your response to the situation, the result can *only* be more illusions (5:5–6). It *is* tempting, at times, when I feel attacked, to lash back. I want to retaliate. It does not seem fair to let her get away with it (whatever "it" is). I am tempted to think I will feel better if I just express my pain. Don't be tempted (5:7)!

Even if we do give in to the temptation, it won't interfere with the eventual goal of holiness, but the goal will lose some of its luster in our sight (5:8). Our motivation will shrink. The promised satisfaction with which revenge tempts us is only an illusion, and we need to recognize that and turn away from it.

Paragraph 6

6. ¹The **goal** of illusion is as closely tied to faithlessness as faith to truth. ²If you lack faith in **anyone** to fulfill, **and perfectly**, his part in **any** situation dedicated **in advance** to truth, **your** dedication is divided. ³And so you have been faithless ~~to your brother~~ [*to each other*], and **used** your faithlessness ~~against him~~ [*against each other*]. ⁴No relationship is holy unless its holiness goes with it **everywhere**. ⁵As holiness and faith go hand in hand, so must its faith go everywhere **with** it. ⁶The goal's reality will call forth **and accomplish** every miracle needed for its fulfillment. ⁷Nothing too small or too enormous, [**nothing too insignificant or too imposing**], too weak or too compelling, but will be gently turned to its use and purpose. ⁸The universe will serve it gladly, as it serves the universe. ⁹**But do not interfere.**

• Study Question •

6. *What calls forth the faith in everyone to play their part, and the requisite miracles that will achieve the goal, if we do not interfere with it by holding on to conflicting goals?*
- A. *Our persistent efforts will call them forth.*
 - B. *The reality of the goal will call them forth.*
 - C. *The universe will call them forth.*
 - D. *Our holiness will call them forth.*

Faithlessness breeds illusions just as faith breeds truth (6:1). If we have dedicated a situation to truth *in advance*, and then fail to have faith in everyone involved in that situation to do their part, we have divided our dedication (6:2). We are no longer wholly dedicated to truth, and to some extent, we are now *dedicated to illusion!* Because illusion is always the outcome of faithlessness, and that is what we have chosen. There is a rift between you and your partner; you see him or her as failing you in some way and inevitably you are going to show your animosity and blame (6:3).

The holiness of your relationship has to *permeate* it to the core, to be everywhere and every when, and for that to happen, *faith* has to “go everywhere *with*” the holiness (6:4–5). Without faith, holiness cannot happen; they “go hand in hand.”

If you refuse to interfere (by buying in to the dark suspicions about your partner’s acts, words, and motives), and maintain *faith* in her or him, there will be miracles (6:6)! The shared goal of holiness will call them forth, and call forth every miracle that is needed to achieve the goal. The goal will take over everything, great or small. “Nothing too small or too enormous, nothing too insignificant or too imposing, too weak or too compelling, but will be gently turned to [the] use and purpose” of the goal (6:7). The entire universe will serve the goal (6:8)! *Just don’t interfere* (6:9)! Don’t *use* your faithless thoughts.

Paragraph 7

7. ¹The power set in you in whom the Holy Spirit’s goal has been established is so far beyond your little conception of the infinite that you have no idea how great the strength that goes with you. ²And you can use *this* in perfect safety. ³Yet for all its might, so great it reaches past the stars and to the universe that lies beyond them, your little faithlessness can make **it** useless, if you would use the faithlessness instead.

• Study Question •

7. *What can immobilize the power that has been established in us by the Holy Spirit's goal in our relationship?*
- A. *Having faithlessness in our thoughts*
 - B. *The misalignment of the stars*
 - C. *Using the faithless thoughts we have*

If we have wholly dedicated a situation to the goal of truth, we have aligned ourselves with the most powerful force in the universe (7:1). If we trust in that Power, we *will* have faith in everyone involved in the situation to play their part perfectly; if we do not have such faith, it is evidence of divided dedication. As Ernest Holmes used to say at the start of his every radio broadcast, "There is a Power for good in the universe greater than you are, and you can use it." We can tap into that Power and use it "in perfect safety" (7:2). Yet, despite the unimaginable greatness of the Power, our little faithlessness can render it totally ineffective (7:3), much as a small hand can block the light of the sun from our eyes. It's no wonder that Jesus calls us so forcefully, and repeatedly, not to *use* our faithless thoughts when they arise. We are cutting ourselves off from the Life Flow of the universe when we do.

Paragraph 8

8. ¹Yet think on this, and learn the **cause** of faithlessness: You think you hold against ~~your brother~~ [the other] what he has done to you. ²But what you **really** blame him for is ~~what you did to him~~ [what you did to him]. ³It is not **his** past but **yours** you hold against him. ⁴And you lack faith in **him** because of what **you** were. ⁵Yet **you** are as innocent of what you were as **he** is. ⁶What never was is causeless, and **is not there** to interfere with truth. ⁷There **is** no cause for faithlessness, but there *is* [a] Cause for faith. ⁸That Cause has entered **any** situation that shares Its purpose. ⁹The light of truth shines from the center of the situation, and touches everyone to whom the situation's purpose calls. ¹⁰**It calls to everyone.** ¹¹There is **no** situation that does **not** involve your **whole relationship**, in every aspect and complete in every part. ¹²You can leave **nothing** of yourself outside it and keep the situation holy. ¹³For it shares the purpose of your whole relationship, and derives its meaning **from** it.

• Study Question •

8. (a) *Explain both what we think is the reason for a lack of faith in our brother, and what the real reason is.*
- (b) *God's Will is the real Cause for faith. How does this counteract both the imagined and real reasons for lack of faith?*

Now, we dig behind the scenes to discover *why* we buy into our faithlessness. It's projection! We *think* we are judging the other person for what he or she did to us (8:1). What we are really blaming her for is what *we* did to *her* (8:2). That requires a little explanation. The way it works is this: We know that we have not been perfect in this relationship, and we feel guilty because of it. Our ego, in a mad and deceptive attempt to get rid of the guilt, instructs us to project the guilt onto our partner, and to see *them* as the cause of our problems. When this train of thought is operating in our minds, we are unconsciously on the alert for any deviation from perfection in the other person, and the minute we spot one, we jump on it. Because we know ourselves and our own failures (or we think we do), we *don't trust* our partner: "You lack faith in *him* because of what *you* were" (8:4).

It isn't the other person's past but our own that we are holding against them, but the irony is that *we* are as innocent as *they* are (8:5)! Neither one of us is guilty. There is no reason to lack faith in either one of us (8:7)! The past simply is not here (8:6). And there is a very substantial, firm foundation and Cause for faith (8:7)—we both remain as God created us! We are as reliable as God because God is our Cause, a Cause that "has entered *any* situation that shares Its purpose" (8:8).

There is an intriguing passage about trust that occurs in Chapter 26. I think it is relevant here, because faith and trust are very similar:

There is a **distance** you would keep apart from ~~your brother~~ [one another], and this space you perceive as time because you still believe you are **external to him** [each other]. This makes trust impossible. And you **cannot** believe that trust would settle every problem **now**. Thus do you think it **safer** to remain a **little** careful and a **little** watchful of interests perceived as separate. From this perception you cannot conceive of gaining what forgiveness offers *now*. The interval you think lies in between the giving and receiving of the gift **seems** to be one in which you sacrifice and suffer loss. You see **eventual** salvation, not **immediate** results.

Salvation *is* immediate. (T-26.VIII.2:1-3:1).

We are asked to have faith, to *trust* in God as Prime Cause in everyone. Forgiveness pays immediate dividends. If we will just trust, the problem will be immediately settled! It will be settled because we will no longer *perceive* a problem. We will no longer see one another as separate.

"There is a Cause for faith" (8:7). The truth (perhaps it should be "Truth"?) calls to everyone involved in the situation (8:9–10). What truth? I believe he is speaking about the truth concerning who and what we all are: the holy Son of God Himself, not separate, but One. The purpose that fuels our relationship also fuels this situation and every situation. We may think the situation is a small aspect of our relationship, but in fact it involves the entire relationship (8:11). The situation is an outgrowth of the relationship, and shares the holy purpose of the relationship (8:12). We cannot treat it as something

separate from the relationship. *Nothing* is separate from the relationship because nothing is separate. Period.

Paragraph 9

9. ¹Enter each situation with the faith ~~you give your brother~~ [that you would give each other], or you **are** faithless to your own relationship. ²**Your** faith will call the others to **share** your purpose, as ~~the~~ [this] same purpose called forth the faith in you. ³And you will see the means you once employed to lead you to illusions transformed to means for truth. ⁴Truth calls for faith, and faith makes room **for truth**. ⁵When the Holy Spirit **changed** the purpose of your relationship by exchanging yours for His, the goal He placed there **was** extended to every situation in which you ~~enter~~ [entered], or will **ever** enter. ⁶And **every** situation was thus **made free** of the past, which **would** have made it purposeless.

• Study Question •

9. *Arrange the following steps involving faith in the order of their occurrence (list the letters in the proper order).*
- A. *The holy purpose of the relationship calls forth faith in you*
 - B. *The Holy Spirit changes the purpose of your relationship by exchanging your goal for His*
 - C. *You enter into a situation with faith in your brother*
 - D. *The goal of the Holy Spirit is extended to every situation you will ever enter*
 - E. *Your faith calls others in the situation to share your purpose*
 - F. *You see the situations you once used to lead into illusions now used to lead you into truth*

Because every situation grows out of the relationship, we must go into each situation bearing the faith that drew us together in holy relationship in the first place (9:1). Failure to do so is to betray our faith to the relationship. When we bring our faith into any situation it will call forth the same faith from everyone who is involved (9:2)¹. When we choose to believe, to see the situation, not as a problem but as an opportunity for growth, and ask the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to see things differently, all the evidence that appeared to justify our anger or suspicion will suddenly change in our eyes; we will see it all as “means for truth” (9:3). This new perception is a perception of the *truth*. To see it requires faith, which makes room in our minds for that perception of truth (9:4).

The initial blessing of the Holy Spirit—His impartation of a new and holy purpose for the relationship when we chose to let go of the purpose we had given it—was in that very instant extended to “every situation in which you entered, or will *ever* enter” (9:5). In that instant every problem that we encounter in the relationship was already solved; we just have to accept it over and over as we go on. From henceforth no situation need ever again

be interpreted in the “light” of the past (which, if heeded, would have seen no holy purpose at all in the situation) (9:6)².

Paragraph 10

10. ¹You **call for** faith because of Him Who walks with you in every situation. ²You are no longer wholly insane, **nor no longer alone**. ³For loneliness in God **must** be a dream. ⁴You whose relationship **shares** the Holy Spirit's goal are **set apart** from loneliness because the truth has come. ⁵Its call for faith is strong. ⁶Use not your faithlessness against it, for it calls you to salvation and to peace.

• Study Question •

10. *The image here is that, because the Holy Spirit walks with you in every situation, your very presence (or your holy relationship) calls forth faith from those around you because of what you carry with you. What is the “it” in sentence 5 that calls for faith?*

- A. *Your relationship which shares the goal of the Holy Spirit*
- B. *The truth*
- C. *The Holy Spirit*

God has entered your relationship when it became a holy relationship (10:1–3). Your healing has begun; “You are no longer wholly insane” (10:2). God is with you, and you are in God; you can no longer be alone. (In fact, you were *never* alone.)

Sometimes, even in holy relationships, it feels as if we are alone. Our partner seems cut off somehow, distant, or perhaps incomprehensible. Communication seems to have failed. When this happens, remember that you aren't alone. Remember that your relationship has a holy purpose, and that you are dedicated to that purpose, and *so is your partner*. The truth is in you, and it is also in your partner, despite what your senses are telling you. Stop, and ask within for a holy instant. It will always come, and “it will come to both at the request of either” (T-18.V.6:7).

The truth of our inherent divinity is at the core of our relationship, and that truth, deep within each of us, calls for our faith, and calls us to salvation (10:5–6). Our task is to resist the temptation to faithlessness, the temptation to mistrust, doubt, and blame our partners, and instead to call for a holy instant, for a new perception that will reveal to us the truth.³

Some Additional Thoughts

Just a gentle reminder: All of this discussion is about *a holy relationship*, not about *every* relationship. And a holy relationship, as Robert Perry writes in his *Course Glossary*: “...begins when two or more people truly join in a common goal, at least for an instant.” It is a relationship in which the participants have agreed (at least for an instant)

to set aside all goals of meeting their private, imagined needs, and have accepted the Holy Spirit's purpose of giving healing to the world.

Sometimes, people try to imagine applying the teachings of these sections to relationships such as one between a woman and an abusive husband, or between a parent and a fiercely rebellious child, and so on. Those relationships are not holy until that initial joining in a common goal has occurred. We are still called to practice forgiveness in such situations, of course. We can still ask for a new perception to come to us. And it is still true that the other person, however ugly their behavior may be, is a holy Son of God underneath all that, and that—eventually—they *will* awaken to their true identity. But if the other person is not dedicated to the goal of truth as we are, we cannot count on their response to our forgiveness. They may reject it. They may continue their unloving behavior. And, in my opinion, in such situations we need to respond realistically. We love the person, we do not condemn or judge the person, but we do not approve or condone their behavior, and in case of severe misbehavior, we may need to take severe measures in response. We may need to leave the abusive spouse, to practice tough love with the rebellious child, or to lock up the habitual thief or sociopath.

To practice forgiveness in holy relationships does not mean we become doormats to the egos of the less than spiritually minded around us. Although we are told to overlook our brothers' illusions and see their attacks as calls for love, we aren't supposed to be naive. Most people around us are nasty sometimes because, like us, they haven't learned their lessons yet. We need to be aware that everyone has an ego, and egos can be vicious. We do not become doormats, but neither do we counterattack. Someone who lacks learning does not need punishment, he needs teaching, and what will our attack teach him? Nothing but more attack. Those who make mistakes need to be helped, not punished. Our response of love and forgiveness, rather than attack and punishment, will teach and help them by showing them another way.

When the Holy Spirit judges through us, we lift people up out of their insanity by seeing their sanity for them. We see their reality as far beyond their appearance, and we reflect that reality to them:

Answer Key

1. G

2. E

3. (a) We allow the thought of bodies to intrude, which makes it seem possible that our ideas are in conflict (which is impossible). The thought of bodies generates the illusion of conflicting ideas, which seems then to justify our lack of faith.

(b) If we make the error of allowing the thought of bodies to produce the illusion of conflict, we should *not* be concerned about it; we should not buy into the temptation to faithlessness; and we should not try to have our lack of faith made up for someplace else, outside the relationship.

(c) We should, instead, bring our faithlessness to faith; we should ask that our faith be restored *in the relationship*, where it was lost.

4. B and C

5. B and D

6. B

7. C

8. (a) We think we lack faith in our brother because of what he did, his sins; what really causes our lack of faith is our belief in our *own* sins, which we project onto him. We lack faith in him because of what we believe *we* are. (b) God's Will is the only real Cause; He wills our holiness and innocence and therefore that is what we are. Neither we nor our brothers are guilty. The power of God's Will has entered any situation we have dedicated to truth and holiness, because we have aligned with It.

9. B, D, A, C, E, F

10. B

1 This is beautifully portrayed in this passage from the next chapter: "When you feel the holiness of your relationship is threatened by anything, stop instantly and offer the Holy Spirit your willingness, in spite of fear, to let Him exchange this instant for the holy one that you would rather have. He will never fail in this. But forget not that your relationship is one, and so it must be that whatever threatens the peace of one is an equal threat to the other. The power of joining its blessing lies in the fact that it is now impossible for you or your brother to experience fear alone, or to attempt to deal with it alone. Never believe that this is necessary, or even possible. Yet just as this is impossible, so is it equally impossible that the holy instant come to either of you without the other. And it will come to both at the request of either.

Allen Watson's Commentary on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

Whoever is saner at the time the threat is perceived should remember how deep is his indebtedness to the other and how much gratitude is due him, and be glad that he can pay his debt by bringing happiness to both. Let him remember this, and say:

I desire this holy instant for myself, that I
may share it with my brother, whom I love.
It is not possible that I can have it without him,
or he without me.
Yet it is wholly possible for us to share it now.
And so I choose this instant as the one to offer
to the Holy Spirit, that His blessing may
descend on us, and keep us both in peace" (T-18.V.6:1-7:6).

2 "Your part is very simple. You need only recognize that everything you learned you do not want. Ask to be taught, and do not use your experiences to confirm what you have learned. When your peace is threatened or disturbed in any way, say to yourself:

*I do not know what anything, including this, means.
And so I do not know how to respond to it.
And I will not use my own past learning as the light to guide me now.*

By this refusal to attempt to teach yourself what you do not know, the Guide Whom God has given you will speak to you. He will take His rightful place in your awareness the instant you abandon it, and offer it to Him" (T-14.XI.6:3-11).

3 LESSON 313

Now let a new perception come to me.

1. 1 *Father, there is a vision which beholds all things as sinless, so that fear has gone, and where it was is love invited in. 2 And love will come wherever it is asked. 3 This vision is Your gift. 4 The eyes of Christ look on a world forgiven. 5 In His sight are all its sins forgiven, for He sees no sin in anything He looks upon. 6 Now let His true perception come to me, that I may waken from the dream of sin and look within upon my sinlessness, which You have kept completely undefiled upon the altar to Your holy Son, the Self with Which I would identify.*

2. 1 Let us today behold each other in the sight of Christ. 2 How beautiful we are! 3 How holy and how loving! 4 Brother, come and join with me today. 5 We save the world when we have joined. 6 For in our vision it becomes as holy as the light in us.