

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM® Text, Chapter 18, The Passing of the Dream

Section I, The Substitute Reality

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
~~strikethrough blue text~~ = Not in Urtext, in FIP edition
-

Overview of the Section

This section deals with substitution. It leaps from discussing substitution in the context of a holy relationship to the “original error” of choosing separate fragments in place of wholeness, and shows how our inclination to seek substitutes within our relationships is simply a continuation of that original error. Despite the magnitude of that original error, it advises us, *above all*, not to be afraid of it when it crops up in our lives and relationships. Rather, recognize that in our relationships we have a holy ministry; they offer the opportunity of uniting all the broken fragments of the Sonship. The Holy Spirit, by introducing healing into our holy relationships, is retracing our journey into madness, leading back to the healing of the original tiny, mad idea. He is using the specific form of a relationship between two people to bring healing to the entire world.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹To substitute is to **accept instead**. ²If you would but consider exactly what this entails, you would perceive at once how much at variance this is with the goal the Holy Spirit has given you, and would accomplish **for** you. ³To substitute is to **choose between**, renouncing one aspect of the Sonship [“**aspect of the Sonship**” was apparently added by the editors] **in favor** of the other. ⁴For this **special** purpose, one is judged more valuable and the other is **replaced** by him. ⁵The relationship in which the substitution occurred is thus fragmented, and **its purpose split** accordingly. ⁶To fragment is to **exclude**, and substitution is the strongest defense the ego has for separation.

• Study Question •

1. Which of the following is not true of substitution?
 - A. Substitution means accepting one thing (or person) in place of another.
 - B. Substitution is a normal way to fulfill needs that are not being met by our relationship partner.
 - C. Substitution renounces one aspect of the Sonship in favor of another.
 - D. Substitution uses one aspect of the Sonship to replace another, seeing one as more valuable than the other.
 - E. Substitution fragments our relationships.
 - F. Substitution means exclusion.

We are asked here to consider carefully what *substitution* in our relationships really involves, in order to perceive the fragmenting principle behind all such ideas. We need to see substitution as the strongest defense of separation. Substitution is defined very simply: “to accept instead” (1:1). Jesus has already pointed out¹ that we do this frequently in our relationships, accepting someone else in place of our relationship partner in some aspect of our lives, or—as so many do—leaving one person behind to “try to make it” with another.

He then asks us to examine more closely just what we are doing when we substitute one relationship for another, because if we are willing to look at it honestly, we will realize that it drastically conflicts with the goal the Holy Spirit has given to our relationship (1:2). To substitute one relationship or one person for another means that we are *choosing between* them, “renouncing one...*in favor* of the other” (1:3). You make a judgment that one person is more valuable (to you), and you use them to replace the other person, at least in some aspect of the relationship (1:4). Clearly, this fragments the relationship that is supposed to be holy, an expression of wholeness (1:5). In Reality, no one is “favored.” Everyone is loved for the truth of their being. When you substitute you fragment, and “to fragment *is to exclude*” (1:6), which is clearly a *separating* action. Thus, “substitution is the strongest defense the ego has for separation” (1:6). Jesus wants us to realize that our individual acts of favoritism within a relationship actually contribute to and perpetuate the ego’s core illusion: separation.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹The Holy Spirit ~~never uses~~ [*never*] substitutes. ²Where the ego perceives one person as a **replacement for** another, the Holy Spirit sees them joined and indivisible. ³He does not judge **between** them, **knowing** they are one. ⁴Being united, they are one **because they are the same**. ⁵Substitution is clearly a

¹ For instance: T-15.V.6:1-4; T-16.IV.8:4; T-17.IV.3:2-3; and especially, T-17.V.7:1-4.

process in which they are **perceived as different**. ⁶One would **unite**; the other **separate**. ⁷**Nothing** can come **between** what God has joined and what the Holy Spirit sees as one. ⁸But everything *seems* to come between the fragmented relationships the ego sponsors to destroy.

• **Study Question** •

2. *Which statement most completely summarizes the contrast between substitution and the healing that comes from the Holy Spirit? All the statements are true; choose the one that most clearly states the fundamental principle being taught in this paragraph.*
- A. *Substitution emphasizes differences; the Holy Spirit emphasizes sameness.*
 - B. *Substitution shows many seeming barriers; the Holy Spirit sees no barriers.*
 - C. *Substitution separates; the Holy Spirit unites.*

When we live in accord with the Holy Spirit, we will never substitute one person for another, or one aspect of a person for another person's aspect. Instead, we will see all people as "joined and indivisible" (2:1–2). There will be no comparison judgment, no favoritism, because we will know they are one (2:3). "*They are the same*" (2:4). How could you possibly prefer one over another if you truly saw that people are one because they are the same? When we substitute, we must be perceiving the two persons as different (2:5). The perception of sameness unites; the perception of differences separates (2:6).

Of course, we still have individual relationships with particular people; that is just the way the world is constructed. We cannot possibly have equal relationships with several billion people. However, these *holy* special relationships never conflict:

It is impossible to use one relationship at the expense of another and not to suffer guilt. And it is equally impossible to condemn part of a relationship and find peace within it. Under the Holy Spirit's teaching all relationships are seen as total commitments, yet they do not conflict with one another in any way. Perfect faith in each one, for its ability to satisfy you completely, arises only from perfect faith in yourself (T-15.VI.1:1-4, my emphasis).

In relationships under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit, *nothing* can come between the participants in the relationships, or between the various relationships (2:7). That's a stark contrast with what we experience in "the fragmented relationships the ego sponsors to destroy," where "everything *seems* to come between" everyone (2:8).

Let me point out two interesting things about that final sentence. Firstly, when the ego sponsors a relationship, its purpose is *to destroy the unity*. Its goal *is* conflict! Its purpose is separation, not union. But, secondly, even in the most severely fragmented relationship, the separation and distance we experience *is not real*. Things only *seem* to come between

us. In Reality, we are *always one*. And recognizing that oneness, claiming it, and enjoying it is always the goal of the Holy Spirit in that relationship.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹The one emotion in which substitution is impossible is love. ²[But] Fear involves substitution by definition, for it is love's **replacement**. ³Fear is both a fragmented **and fragmenting** emotion. ⁴It **seems** to take many forms, and each one seems to require a **different** form of acting out for satisfaction. ⁵While this appears to introduce quite variable **behavior**, a far more serious effect lies in the fragmented **perception** from which the behavior stems. ⁶**No one is seen complete**. ⁷The body is emphasized, with special emphasis on certain parts, and **used as the standard for comparison of acceptance or rejection [for either acceptance or rejection of suitability]** for acting out a special **form** of fear.

• Study Question •

3. *What is pointed out as the really serious aspect of the many forms fear seems to take in our relationships?*
- A. *We get caught up in trying to find different forms of acting out to find satisfaction.*
 - B. *Fear introduces very variable behavior.*
 - C. *Fear, and the behavior it fosters, supports the fragmented perception that results in the behavior.*
 - D. *Fear causes us to place an emphasis on the body, and certain parts of the body, as a standard of comparison.*

Now, Jesus begins to trace our behavior in relationship back to the emotion behind that behavior. Substitution is impossible in *love*; substitution is inevitable in *fear*, which is our substitute for love (3:1–2). Thus, fear itself *is a substitution*; we have replaced love with fear. Besides *being* a fragmenting exclusion of love, fear also *causes* fragmentation (3:3). When we come from fear, we judge and reject what we fear.

Our fear takes many forms (3:4), and shows up in a wide variety of ways in which we seek for substitutes to satisfy our cravings. It may be a sexual affair, or it may be over-eating or binge-watching *Game of Thrones*, or perhaps extensive Facebook chats with a person we find more stimulating than our partner. The real problem, though, isn't the particular behavior we manifest. It's "the fragmented *perception* from which the behavior stems" (3:5). The real culprit is our way of seeing the world. "*No one is seen complete*" (3:6). We are relating just to *part* or *parts* of each person, not to a whole. Sentence 3:7 speaks again of our emphasis on certain parts of the body, which we use "as the standard for comparison" by which we select or reject particular people when we wish to act out "a special *form* of fear." Perhaps you have, at one time or another, made a written or mental list of characteristics you look for in a mate: height, weight, hair color

(or quantity of hair), eye color, physical shape all come into consideration. Certainly people looking for sexual partners usually have a mental image of the kind of body they are looking for, and for some, not much matters *but* the body.

We all do this kind of thing, probably more than we realize. And, almost certainly, we *do not* realize that when we engage in this constant evaluation of people's "suitability" for meeting our needs, we are acting out a special form of *fear*. I find myself uncertain exactly how that is so. How is my substituting one person for another, for instance, a form of fear? What am I afraid of? Perhaps I am afraid of being alone, or being unworthy of love. Perhaps I am afraid of silence and need something to distract me from my inner angst. Or perhaps I am afraid that no one can be fully trusted, that I have to have backup sources of affection. You may be able to think of other ways your fear manifests.

Paragraph 4

4. ¹You who believe that God is fear made but **one** substitution. ²It has taken many forms, because it was the substitution of ~~illusion for truth~~ of fragmentation for wholeness. ³It has become so splintered and subdivided and divided again, over and over, that it is now almost impossible to perceive it once was one, and still **is** what it was. ⁴That **one** error, which brought truth to illusion, infinity to time, and life to death, was all you ever made. ⁵Your whole world rests upon it. ⁶Everything you see reflects it, and every special relationship that you have ever made is **part** of it.

• Study Question •

4. (a) *What is the one substitution we must have made in order to believe that God is fear?*
- (b) *What has "splintered and subdivided and divided again"? Note the pronouns and nouns in sentences one through four. (Pick one.)*
- A. *The Sonship*
 - B. *The original error of substitution*
 - C. *God's creation*
 - D. *Our minds*
- (c) *What is the relationship of the things we perceive, and of our special relationships, to "that one error?"*

Do you and I "believe that God is fear" (4:1)? Probably not consciously. But don't make the mistake of thinking that this does not apply to you. If you experience guilt feelings, if you are afraid of what follows death, if you ever think, "What did I do to deserve this?" then somewhere imbedded at the root of your thoughts is a fear of God. Do you ever have the thought, when pain, death, grief, separation, or loss come into your life, that this is God's will somehow? Then God is fear to you.

And this is so because, in some primordial time, you (and all the rest of us in this illusion) “made but *one* substitution” (4:1). It was “the substitution of fragmentation for wholeness,” and because of its very nature, “it has taken many forms” (4:2). At some point prior to the dawn of the world, “the tiny, mad desire to be separate, different and special” (T-25.I.5:5) seemed appealing to us, and we chose to differentiate ourselves from the One. At least we *tried* to.

Into eternity, where all is one, there crept a tiny, mad idea, at which the Son of God remembered not to laugh. In his forgetting did the thought become a serious idea, and possible of both accomplishment and real effects (T-27.VIII.6:2-3).

Time lasted but an instant in your mind, with no effect upon eternity. And so is all time past, and everything exactly as it was before the way to nothingness was made. The tiny tick of time in which the first mistake was made, and all of them within that one mistake, held also the Correction for that one, and all of them that came within the first. |s And in that tiny instant time was gone, for that was all it ever was. |s What God gave answer to is answered and is gone (T-26.V.3:3-7).

Only in the past, - an ancient past, too short to make a world in answer to creation, - did this world appear to rise. So very long ago, for such a tiny interval of time, that not one note in Heaven's song was missed (T-26.V.5:3-4).

That one, ancient error, being the substitution of fragmentation for wholeness, went on to shatter into billions of pieces, with so many variants that “it is now almost impossible to perceive it once was one, and still *is* what it was” (4:3). All the many forms of fragmentation we have been discussing are just manifestations of that one tiny, mad idea (4:4). My relationship issues and yours are all expressions of it. “Everything you see [a world where every fingerprint is unique, for instance] reflects it, and every special relationship that you have ever made is *part* of it” (4:5–6). This is the meaning of Workbook Lessons 79 and 80; “One problem, one solution.”

Paragraph 5

5. ~~¹You may be surprised to hear~~ [¹You have expressed surprise at hearing] how **very** different is reality from what **you** see. ²You do not realize the magnitude of that **one** error. ³It was so vast and so **completely** incredible that from it a world of total unreality *had* to emerge. ⁴What else **could** come of it? ⁵Its fragmented **aspects** are fearful enough, as you begin to **look** at them. ⁶But nothing you have seen **begins** to show you the enormity of the **original** error, which seemed to cast you out of Heaven, to shatter knowledge into meaningless bits of disunited perceptions, and **to force you to make further substitutions.**

• Study Question •

5. *In this paragraph, which of the following things are said to have come from or been part of that one original error? (More than one of the following may be correct.)*
- A. *A world of total unreality emerged from the error.*
 - B. *It seemed to cast us out of Heaven.*
 - C. *It seemed to shatter knowledge into meaningless bits.*
 - D. *Its magnitude made us into guilty sinners.*
 - E. *It seemed to force us to make further substitutions.*
 - F. *All of the above.*



We've probably all had the reaction Helen and Bill did when Jesus first described "Reality": surprise (5:1). Jesus' view of reality sure does not line up with what *we* see in the world, does it? All are one? Everyone is wholly lovable and wholly loving? *What?*

We have put that primordial error out of our minds, and if some dim awareness of it pops up we immediately minimize it and think it has very little to do with our current situation. It has *everything* to do with it. We do not realize the monstrous and monumental consequences of that "tiny" idea (5:2). Tiny and mad, yes, but also "vast and...completely incredible"; it was inevitable that "a world of total unreality *had* to emerge" from it (5:3). *Of course* the world we see is *very* different from Reality. What else could come from choosing to perceive fragments instead of wholeness, illusion instead of truth, time instead of eternity, and death instead of life?

The "fragmented aspects," such as our attempts to find substitutes in our relationships, "are fearful enough" (5:5). We do get ourselves into some awful messes, don't we? But they are just pale reflections of the colossal *original* error we made—the one that *seemed* to separate us from God and Heaven, and that disguised and distorted the original knowledge we all had "into meaningless bits of disunited perceptions," the fruits of fragmentation that now force us to sift, compare, evaluate, and substitute one bit for another (5:6). In a sense, this is the Course's version of the "big bang," only in this case, the Formless Oneness only *appeared* to shatter and fragment, exploding bits of matter through seemingly infinite regions of emptiness.

Paragraph 6

6. ¹That was the first projection of error outward. ²The world arose to hide it, and became the screen on which it was projected and drawn between you and the truth. ³For truth extends **inward**, where the idea of loss is meaningless and only **increase** is conceivable. ⁴Do you **really** think it strange that a world in which **everything** is backwards and upside down arose from this ~~projection of error~~? ⁵**It was inevitable.** ⁶For truth brought to **this** could only remain within in quiet, and take no part in all the mad projection by which this world was made. ⁷Call it not sin but madness, for such it was and so it still remains. ⁸Invest it not with guilt, for guilt implies it was accomplished **in reality**. ⁹And above all, *be not afraid of it.*

• Study Question •

6. (a) *“That was the first projection of error outward” (6:1). What was?*
- (b) *What did the world arise to hide (6:2)?*
- (c) *Why should we not see this original error as “sin,” meriting feelings of guilt?*
- (d) *From this paragraph, what is the most important thing for us to remember about this original error?*

That illusory disintegration of Oneness “was the first projection of error outward” (6:1). Note the word “projection.” To me, this implies a Mind that is doing the projecting. We are not talking about the material universe *yet*. It was the Mind’s *knowledge* that was shattered, becoming bits of disunited perceptions rather than the direct knowing of Wholeness. *Then*, “The world arose to hide it.” We made the world (the material universe) as a screen on which we could project our error, hiding the fact that it was an error of the Mind (6:2). The material world provides an illusion of a reality that is external to our minds. The Course maintains that the world is *in* our mind². The truth is not “out there,” as Agent Mulder of the X-Files used to claim; it is “in there.” The Truth is in our minds, and in the reality within us, there is no such thing as loss, only increase (6:3).

If we are surprised at how different Reality is from the world we see (5:1), we shouldn’t be. When we first projected fragmentation onto Wholeness—a complete distortion of Reality—, it was *inevitable* that “a world in which everything is backwards and upside down” would arise from it (6:4–5). And if the Course’s depiction of Reality is accurate, as I believe it is, then “backwards and upside down” surely describes this world,

² "The world you made is therefore totally chaotic, governed by arbitrary and senseless "laws," and without meaning of any kind. For it is made out of what you do not want, projected from your mind because you are afraid of it. Yet this world is only in the mind of its maker, along with his real salvation. Do not believe it is outside of yourself, for only by recognizing where it is will you gain control over it" (T-12.III.9:6-9).

"He does not realize that he makes this world, for there is no world outside of him" (T-12.III.6:7)

and no wonder. Truth has nothing to do with this world; it has adopted, more or less, a “hands off” attitude toward our mad projection (6:6).

And yet, as colossal as our error was, with such seemingly far-reaching effects, it isn't *sin*. Just *madness* (6:7). There is no guilt attached to it because its effects are *illusory*; nothing happened *in reality* (6:8). Because we have believed in its reality, we have experienced incredibly profound guilt. There is a part of us, deep within our minds, that believe we have *really* shattered the unity of Heaven! We think we have, in effect, killed God, or at least all of God's creation. As a result of that primal guilt, we live in fear of retribution from God—a retribution that will never come, because we have never sinned. Sin produces guilt, guilt produces fear. But if there is no sin? There can be no fear! And this is why Jesus adds with such emphasis, “And above all, *be not afraid of it*” (6:9). We must come to look calmly and without fear upon that insane, original error, and take responsibility for it so that we can let it be undone in our minds.

Paragraph 7

7. ¹When you seem to see some twisted form of the original error **rising** [rise] to frighten you, say only, “God is **not** fear, but Love,” and it will disappear. ²**The truth will save you.** ³It has **not** left you, to go out into the mad world and so **depart from you.** ⁴Inward is sanity; **insanity** is **outside** you. ⁵You but **believe** it is the other way; that truth is **outside**, and error and guilt within. ⁶Your little, senseless substitutions, touched with insanity and swirling lightly off on a mad course like feathers dancing insanely in the wind, **have** no substance. ⁷They fuse and merge and separate, in shifting and totally meaningless patterns that need not be judged at all. ⁸To judge them **individually** is pointless. ⁹Their tiny differences in form are no **real** differences at all. ¹⁰**None of them matters.** ¹¹*That* they have in common and nothing else. ¹²Yet what else is **necessary** to make them all the same?

• Study Question •

7. *This paragraph says several things about our little substitutions (remember here that we have been talking about relationships). What one phrase, below, best sums up all that this paragraph says about them?*
- A. *They are insignificant, meaningless, and have no real substance.*
 - B. *They need to be judged individually and carefully dealt with.*
 - C. *They show that the real error is only within ourselves.*

We are told, whenever we feel frightened by some specific form of the original error of believing separation is real, to say, “God is not fear, but Love” (7:1), and your error, and its associated fear, will disappear. Behind our perception of “some twisted form of the original error” lies the fear of God that our belief in that error induced. By recognizing the truth—that God is Love, not fear—“*the truth will save you*” (7:2).

The truth is still within you; it has never left. Turn within to that truth; there lies sanity. It's the outside world of perception that is insane, not you (7:3–4). You think it is the other way around—that within you are sinful and guilty, and that the world outside is “objective reality” (7:5). The original error and all its offspring, referred to a moment ago as *enormous* (5:6), here are compared to “feathers dancing insanely in the wind,” “swirling lightly off on a mad course”; they “*have no substance*” (7:6). They are literally inconsequential: “There is no sin; it has no consequence” (W-pI.101.6:7). They are not even worthy of our attention (7:7), despite the way they seem to split and join and interact with one another, in the ego’s effort to distract us from the truth. Judging each of them individually “is pointless” (7:8). Oh! How we need to learn that lesson! I’ve wasted a lot of time trying to judge myself or exonerate myself from my imagined sins. “This one I can explain, but that one—well, I blew it!” They don’t deserve individual attention because they are all cut from the same cloth (7:9). “None of them matters” (7:10). The *only* thing they have in common is that they all do not matter! (7:11) But that is all that is necessary to make them all the same, no matter how different they appear to be, no matter how much greater or lesser any one of them seems to be (7:12). We need to stop spending so much time trying to deal with things that *do not matter!* Instead of trying to respond to each instance of error individually, we are urged (in 8:1) to “let them *all* go” (my emphasis)³.

Paragraph 8

8. ¹Let them ~~all~~⁴ go, dancing in the wind, dipping and turning till they disappear from sight, far, far **outside** of you. ²And turn you to the stately calm within, where in holy stillness dwells the living God you never left, and Who never left you. ³The Holy Spirit takes you gently by the hand, and retraces **with** you your mad journey **outside** yourself, leading you gently back to the truth and safety within. ⁴He brings all your insane projections and ~~the~~ **[your]** wild substitutions that **you** have placed **outside** you to the truth. ⁵Thus He **reverses** the course of insanity and restores you to reason.

• Study Question •

8. *How are we instructed to deal with the mad dance of the ego’s substitutions, the seeing of differences everywhere, and the perception of things that engenders fear in us?*
- A. *Carefully consider each situation’s individual problems and seek an answer from the Holy Spirit.*

³ In this case, I think the editors made a wise and helpful change by adding the word “all.”

⁴ See note 3.

- B. *See all such situations as the same—without any meaning—and simply let them go, turning instead to the stately calm within.*
- C. *Behave in whatever way is best suited to avoid guilt and to make recompense for our past mistakes.*

Just let them go! Don't try to individually engage with every issue; get rid of them wholesale (8:1). You may find it helpful to visualize your problems and relationship issues as leaves, "dancing in the wind," until they are blown out of "sight, far, far *outside* of you." Instead, you turn "to the stately calm within" (8:2). I love that phrase! "The stately calm within." I believe this is what the Fillmores, founders of Unity, called "the Silence." In that place within, "where in holy stillness dwells the living God you never left, and Who never left you" (8:2), you will find "a state of mind that nothing can threaten, nothing can disturb, and where nothing can intrude upon the eternal calm of the Son of God" (W-pI.50.3:3).

To effectively follow these instructions, for me, means taking a break and meditating, at least for a short time. Perhaps it is no more than taking a deep breath or two and, in my mind, picturing those leaves blowing away as I allow my consciousness to drop down within myself to find that "stately calm." I find that kind of short break works only if I regularly practice longer periods of similar meditation in a quiet environment. I think that if one practices diligently over a long period, such min-meditations become almost second nature. But I have not been the most diligent meditator, so frequently I still need to consciously remind myself to seek that inner calm, letting go of my projections and substitutions.

In that "secret place of the Most High" (Psalm 91:1, KJV), the Holy Spirit helps us undo our projections ("your mad journey *outside* yourself") and to rediscover "the truth and safety within" (8:3). He lays our projections and substitutions alongside the truth so that we clearly see that truth alone is true, thus restoring our sanity (8:4–5). Where we saw "sin," we now see only a mistake calling for correction and love. Where we perceived lack in another, we now see the lack was only in what *we* were not giving (T-17.VII.4:1).

Paragraph 9

9. ¹In your relationship with your brother, where He has taken charge of everything at your request, He has set the course inward to the truth you **share**. ²In the mad world **outside** you nothing **can** be shared but only **substituted**, and sharing and substituting have **nothing** in common in reality. ³~~Within yourself you love your brother~~ [**Within yourselves, you love each other**] with a perfect love. ⁴Here is holy ground, in which no **substitution** [**substitutes**] can enter, and where only the **truth in your brother** [**about each other**] can abide. ⁵Here you are joined in God, as much together as you are with Him. ⁶The original error has not entered here, nor ever will. ⁷Here is the radiant truth, to which the Holy Spirit

~~has committed~~ [submitted] your relationship. ⁸Let Him bring it here, where you would have it be. ⁹Give Him but a little faith in ~~your brother~~ [each other], to help Him show you that no substitute you made for Heaven can keep you from it.

• Study Question •

9. Which of the following are things we find when we turn to the stately calm within when confronted with a problem in our relationship? (More than one may be correct)
- A. I love my brother with a perfect love.
 - B. The original error has not entered this holy place.
 - C. I find the truth to which our relationship has been committed, and I allow the Holy Spirit to bring our relationship to this truth.
 - D. I am as closely joined with my brother as I am with God.
 - E. My brother's errors, and my own, cannot exist here.
 - F. All of the above.



Our way of dealing with relationship problems has been substitution. Having reached back beyond time to show us (as advised in 1:2) that our approach really entails a perpetuation and expression of the original separation error, the discussion now resumes its clear focus on relationships. In a relationship that we have given to the Holy Spirit to use for His purposes, He is in charge. Movement and development in the relationship will now be “inward to the truth you *share*” (9:1). The emphasis here is on *sharing*, an emphasis carried on in the rest of the paragraph, which contrasts sharing with substituting. Consider these dictionary definitions:

Share—use, occupy, or enjoy (something) jointly with another or others.

Substitute—replace (someone or something) with another.

Clearly these two have nothing in common (9:2). Sharing is a joining; substituting is a separation. In the outside world, we are told, “nothing *can* be shared but only *substituted*.” In the sense in which the Course understands sharing, it is an exclusively *inward* thing. “Within yourselves, you love each other with a perfect love” (9:3). *That* is sharing. It is the recognition of common Being; that we are part of one another; that you *are* me and I *am* you. That love—that *perfect* love—is something that *does* exist within each of us, and between every two people in relationship with one another. It is there, whether we have connected with it or not, because it is what we are, as God created us.

This love “within yourselves” is the basis of sharing, and it is the “holy ground, in which no substitution can enter,” that we are seeking to live in and from. This is the Realm of God Jesus spoke of in the gospels, the “kingdom” within us. Here, “only the *truth* about each other can abide” (9:4). With Christ's vision, we can brush past the disturbing, separating disguises of the ego to perceive this love and to know it is the truth of us all.

In this place, we are “joined in God,” joined both with one another and with God (9:5). This is a place in you, and in me, that has been preserved *untouched* by “the original error” (9:6). It is pristine. It is, as was said, “holy ground.” Here, the truth is “radiant,” emanating its essence into every part of our minds (9:7). The error will *never* reach this place, and it is here, now, holy, pure, undefiled, in *everyone*. *In you*. The Holy Spirit wants to bring your relationship to this place, which is the place in which *you* truly desire to experience it (9:8). Imagine what a relationship can be when lived in and from this holy ground, sharing perfect love, in full awareness of your shared perfection!

It is up to us to “let Him bring it here.” We can do so by giving the Holy Spirit a little faith in one another, trusting that this perfect love, this radiant truth, this stately calm within, is truly in your partner and yourself, despite any appearance to the contrary. Your faith in one another will demonstrate that *this* is what you are seeking, and that you will accept no substitutes (9:9)!

Paragraph 10

10. ¹In you there is no separation, and no substitute can keep you from ~~your brother~~ [each other]. ²Your reality was **God's** creation, and **has** no substitute. ³You are so firmly joined in truth that only God is there. ⁴And He would **never** accept something else **instead** of you. ⁵He loves you both, equally and as one. ⁶And as He loves you, so you **are**. ⁷You are **not** joined together ~~in~~ [by] illusions, but in the Thought so holy and so perfect that illusions cannot remain to darken the holy place in which you stand together. ⁸God is with you, my ~~brother~~ [brothers]. ⁹Let us join in Him in peace and gratitude, and accept His gift as our most holy and perfect reality, which we share in Him.

• Study Question •

10. Which of the following best summarizes what that reality is? (More than one may be correct, but pick just one which seems to most completely summarize our reality.)

- A. My reality is what God created me to be.
- B. My reality is that I am alone and separated from God and my brother.
- C. My reality is that I and my brother, equally and as one, are loved by God and joined together in Him.

What is the truth of you? All your life you have experienced yourself as a separate being, but “in you there is no separation” (10:1)! And perhaps, in your current relationships or ones gone by, you have often wondered if you could ever truly be united with another person, but now you are being told that “no substitute can keep you from each other.” Let your thinking be from “Will we ever be united?” to this, “Nothing can keep us from being united!”

Why is that so? Because God created us united! And there is nothing that can replace that (10:2). Our union with one another is *so total* that nothing but God exists in us, and God “would *never* accept something else *instead* of you” (10:3–4). We are not 99 and 44/100 % pure God; we are 100% pure God. Nothing exists but God, including God in and as you.

What God did not create does not exist. And everything that does exist exists as He created it (W-pI.14.1:2-3).

God created nothing beside you and nothing beside you exists, for you are part of Him. What except Him can exist? Nothing beyond Him can happen, because nothing except Him is real (T-10.Int.2:1-3).

The only miracle that ever was is God's most holy Son, created in the one Reality that is his Father (T-13.VIII.6:5).

You and I, and our relationship partners, all exist as equals in the love of God *because we are one* (10:5). Because God loves us equally and as one, *that* is how we *are*: equal, and one (10:6). What joins us together is not any external similarities or commonalities, any physical proximity, any social arrangements, any verbal or written agreements. Those are all part of the illusion. We are joined together by the Thought of God, which is so holy and perfect “that illusions cannot remain to darken the holy place in which you stand together” (10:7).

We struggle with this. We quibble with it. We tell ourselves it is hard sometimes to believe it. As I read this, I get the sense that our need is to shake off all of our faith in the appearances of separation. Faith in separation is the faithlessness in our Oneness that we have been urged to lay aside. So let's do it! “God is with you, my brothers” (10:8)! We can do this. Jesus himself appeals to us, treating us as his equals (which is the truth of us): “Let us join in Him in peace and gratitude, and accept His gift as our most holy and perfect reality, which we share in Him” (10:9).

Paragraph 11

11. ¹Heaven is restored to all the Sonship through your relationship, for in it lies the Sonship, whole and beautiful, safe in your love. ²Heaven has entered quietly, for all illusions have been gently brought unto the truth in you, and love has shined upon you, blessing your relationship with truth. ³God and His whole creation have entered it together. ⁴How lovely and how holy is your relationship, with the truth shining upon it! ⁵Heaven beholds it, and rejoices that you have let it come to you. ⁶And God Himself is glad that your relationship is as it was created. ⁷The universe within you stands with you, together with your brother. ⁸And Heaven looks with love on what is joined in it, along with its Creator.

• Study Question •

11. As best you can, in your own words (but using thoughts from the rest of this paragraph freely), explain why “Heaven is restored to all the Sonship through your relationship” (11:1).

“Heaven is restored to all the Sonship through your relationship” (11:1). What a startling statement! Take a good look at your relationship. You know which one. Can you believe that Heaven is (not “will be,” but “is”) restored to all the Sonship” through *this* relationship? But it is. Every relationship has this within it. Every relationship contains the entire Sonship, whole and beautiful, safe in your love” (11:1). Of course it does because what seems like a multitude is really all One. This can be your relationship when you give it to the Holy Spirit, as Helen and Bill did theirs.

God's Son is one. Whom God has joined as one, the ego cannot put asunder. The spark of holiness must be safe, however hidden it may be, in every relationship. For the Creator of the one relationship has left no part of it without Himself (T-17.III.7:2-5).

One brother is all brothers. Every mind contains all minds, for every mind is one. Such is the truth (W-pI.161.4:1-3).

The holy instant shines alike on all relationships, for in it they *are* one (T-17.IV.16:8).

Remember that what is being spoken of here is a holy relationship, specifically that of Helen and Bill. The event that sparked it all didn't seem momentous, but it was. Heaven “entered quietly,” without fanfare. God's love enters when we join together, and blesses our union. It assists us in leaving illusions behind and embracing the truth of our Being (11:2). As ordinary as your joining may be, or may have been, never doubt that “God and His whole creation have entered it together” (11:3). When looked upon with enlightened eyes, your relationship—yes, yours—is lovely and holy, “with the truth shining upon it” (11:4). You bring joy to heaven (11:5), and gladden the heart of God (11:6). The entire

“universe within you stands with you, together with your brother” (11:7). Heaven joins with God to look on you with love (11:8).

That phrase, the “universe within you,” is intriguing, isn’t it? We balk at the notion that the world is in our mind, but *the universe*? Yet the Course says that there is *nothing* outside of you!

There is nothing outside you. That is what you must ultimately learn, for it is the realization that the Kingdom of Heaven is restored to you. For God created only this, and He did not depart from it nor leave it separate from Himself. The Kingdom of Heaven is the dwelling place of the Son of God, who left not his Father and dwells not apart from Him. Heaven is not a place nor a condition. It is merely an awareness of perfect oneness, and the knowledge that there is nothing else; nothing outside this oneness, and nothing else within (T-18.VI.1:1-6).

Paragraph 12

12. ¹Whom God has called should hear no substitutes. ²Their call is but an echo of the original error that shattered Heaven. ³And [For] what became of peace in those who heard? ⁴Return with me to Heaven, walking together with your brother out of this world and through another, to the loveliness and joy the other holds within it. ⁵Would you still further weaken and break apart what is already broken and hopeless? ⁶Is it **here** that you would look for happiness? ⁷Or would you not prefer to **heal** what has been broken, and join in making whole what has been ravaged by separation and disease?

• Study Question •

12. *The call of substitutes is nothing but “an echo of the original error that shattered Heaven.” Therefore the healing of the illusion of separation in one relationship is actually the healing of the original error itself. Based on this, what is this paragraph asking us to do?*
- A. *To heal that which has been broken, to use our relationship to end separation.*
 - B. *To weaken and break apart all special relationships.*
 - C. *To give up on all the forms of this world and to walk out of it into formless reality.*

Jesus now seems to be summing up. We’ve been called by God; we should not listen to the call of substitutes, that only echo that original error (12:1–2). He asks us to consider what happened to those who *did* listen to that siren call? “What became of peace in” them (12:3)? We know very well what happened: Peace evaporated. Why would we listen to them, given that history?

Instead, let’s follow Jesus and return to Heaven, walking out of this world with our partner (Notice that we don’t go singly!) into the loveliness and joy of the real world

(12:4). In other words, let's get serious about allowing our relationships to mature into what they were created to be. Let's stop bickering and learn to have faith in one another.

Do we really want to "further weaken and break apart what is already broken and hopeless" (12:5)? Do we want to continue the endless fragmentation that began with the original error? Or do we want to leave it behind and return to the pristine Oneness that is our inheritance in God? Why on earth would we continue to look for happiness in this "broken and hopeless" world (12:6)? Healing "what has been broken," and "making whole what has been ravaged by separation and disease" (12:7) is a much more appealing and uplifting way to live, isn't it? This way of life is within our grasp, and offers us purpose and meaning for our lives, but it isn't *individual* meaning or *individual* salvation.

The ark of peace is entered two by two, yet the beginning of another world goes with them. Each holy relationship must enter here, to learn its special function in the Holy Spirit's plan, now that it shares His purpose (T-20.IV.6:5-6).

The spiritual path of the Course is one of relationship. We *join* in making the world whole. We walk *together* with our brothers or sisters.

Everyone seeks for love as you do, but knows it not unless he joins with you in seeking it. If you undertake the search together, you bring with you a light so powerful that what you see is given meaning. The lonely journey fails because it has excluded what it would find (T-14.X.10:5-7).

Separation therefore remains the ego's chosen condition. For no one alone can judge the ego truly. Yet when two or more join together in searching for truth, the ego can no longer defend its lack of content. The fact of union tells them it is not true.

It is impossible to remember God in secret and alone (T-14.X.9:4-10:1).

Doesn't that make sense? How better to become aware of the vacuousness of the ego than by experiencing union? How better to restore the awareness of oneness than by *demonstrating* it?

Paragraph 13

13. ¹You have been called, together with your brother, to the most holy function this world contains. ²It is the **only** one that has no limits, and reaches out to every broken fragment of the Sonship with healing and uniting comfort. ³This is offered **you**, in your holy relationship. ⁴Accept it **here**, and you **will** give as you have accepted [**and received**]. ⁵The peace of God is given you with the glowing purpose in which you join with your brother. ⁶The holy light that brought you and him together **must** extend, as **you** accepted it.

• Study Question •

13. *In your own words, and summarizing this entire section, how would you describe the holy function of a holy relationship?*

So “you have been called...to the most holy function this world contains,” yes, but you were called “together with your brother” (13:1). It is one *truly* joining with one other that “reaches out to every broken fragment of the Sonship with healing and uniting comfort” (13:2); *only* this has no limits and can accomplish this holy purpose. Of course we are not actually *reuniting* all the broken fragments because fragmentation never really happened; we are restoring the awareness of oneness. This “most holy function” is what is offered to *you*, dear reader, “in your holy relationship” (13:3). This is what your life is for. You are the light of the world; that is your only function. That is why you are here (W-pI.61.5:3-5). If you are willing to accept this function, you will receive that gift of oneness *and* you will give it to others (13:4). As we join together in common cause with our brothers or sisters, we receive the peace of God (13:5).

The final sentence of this section is a foretaste of what we will read in Chapter 19⁵, namely, that the peace and light that has entered our holy relationship “must extend” beyond the relationship itself to every broken fragment of the Sonship, bringing healing, ending separation (13:6). The “most holy function this world contains” is something that can be carried out only “with your brother.”

⁵ The extension of the Holy Spirit's purpose from your relationship to others, to bring them gently in, is the way in which He will bring means and goal in line. The peace He lay, deep within you and your brother, will quietly extend to every aspect of your life, surrounding you and your brother with glowing happiness and the calm awareness of complete protection. And you will carry its message of love and safety and freedom to everyone who draws nigh unto your temple, where healing waits for him (T-19.IV.1:5-7).

Yet the peace that already lies deeply within must first expand, and flow across the obstacles you placed before it (T-19.IV.2:2).

When the peace in you has been extended to encompass everyone, the Holy Spirit's function here will be accomplished (T-19.IV.3:6).

Answer Key

1. B
2. C
3. C
4. (a) We must have substituted illusion for truth, or fragmentation for wholeness.
(b) B, The original error of substitution.
(c) Everything we see reflects the one error; all our special relationships are part of that one error.
5. A, B, C, and E
6. (a) The appearance of being cast out of Heaven, seeing knowledge fragmented, and being forced to make substitutions. In other words, taking the tiny, mad idea seriously.
(b) The world arose to hide this first projection of error, our imagined guilt over separation from Heaven and God.
(c) We should not see this as sin, but rather as an error, because that is all it has ever been. We should not invest it with guilt because to do so implies it was accomplished in reality.
(d) Not to be afraid of it!
7. A
8. B
9. F
10. 1C
11. "Heaven is restored to all the Sonship through [our] relationship" because that relationship, in its reality, includes the entire Sonship. Where one person is seen as loved by God equally with myself, and as one with myself, the illusion of separation has been laid aside. If one brother is one with me because we are both in God, then all who are in God are one with me. The entire universe "within you stands with you, together with your brother."
12. A
13. In the holy relationship, we are tempted to use substitutes, choosing against one part of the Sonship in favor of another. This is merely a reflection and perpetuation of the original error, believing separation to be real. Our goal, the purpose to which we in a holy relationship are called together, is to end separation, to draw all the fragmented aspects of the Sonship together as one. Through our relationship, the Holy Spirit will do this for us, if we are willing to let go of all the illusions of substitution, and turn to Him in the stately calm within ourselves, where, in truth, we are all already perfect, joined in God.