

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM® Text, Chapter 19,

The Attainment of Peace

Section I, Paragraphs 1 to 6

Healing and Faith (Part 1)

Legend:

Sans serif text = Material from ACIM 3rd edition (FIP)

Italic sans serif text = words emphasized in Urtext or Notes

Bold sans serif text = alternate or omitted material from the Urtext

Typewriter text = editorial comments

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Overview of the Section

This section contains a wonderful discussion of healing in relation to the body and the mind. Two sections which very much parallel the thoughts here are Workbook Lesson 136, “Sickness is a defense against the truth,” and Manual Chapter 5, “How is Healing Accomplished?” I highly recommend reading both of these sections along with the one we are studying. Note how all three indicate that knowing the ego’s *purpose for sickness* is a key to understanding what healing really is and really does.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹We said before that when a situation has been dedicated *wholly* to truth, peace is inevitable¹. ²Its attainment is the criterion by which the wholeness of the dedication can be safely assumed. ³Yet we also said that peace without faith will *never* be attained², for what is [**wholly**] dedicated to truth as its only goal is brought to truth *by* faith. ⁴This faith encompasses everyone involved, for only thus the situation is perceived as meaningful and as a *whole*. ⁵And everyone must be involved in it [the situation], or else your faith is limited and your dedication

¹ "If the situation is used for truth and sanity, its outcome must be peace" (T-17.VI.5:2).

² "The goal's reality will call this forth, for you will see that peace and faith will not come separately" (T-17.VII.4:5).

incomplete.

• **Study Question** •

1. *The following four elements are mentioned. Re-arrange them (by letter) in the logical order given them in this paragraph; what comes first? what then is required? what is the outcome? what is the final destination? (See also T-19.I.15:2–3.)*
 - A. *Truth*
 - B. *Dedication to truth*
 - C. *Peace*
 - D. *Faith*

The assertion that a situation dedicated *wholly* to truth must eventuate in peace (1:1), in the earlier reference in 17.VI.5:2, is tempered by this added remark: “And this is quite apart from what the outcome is” (T-17.VI.5:3). In other words, what is promised here is *internal* peace. If I decide in advance that “I want the peace of God,” then no matter what the external outcome is, *I* will remain at peace! It depends on “the wholeness of the dedication”; if I remain at peace it proves my dedication to truth was complete (1:2).

And yet, you can’t attain peace unless you have *faith* (1:3). It takes faith to claim inner peace and serenity when the outward circumstances seem to demand panic, fear, fight, or flight. As Kipling wrote:

If you can keep your head when all about you

Are losing theirs and blaming it on you, ...

Yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it,

To remain at peace in chaotic circumstances requires faith, a trust in the goodness of God, an assurance that God in you is enough for any circumstance. It means determining *in advance* that the outcome will be right, the truth about the situation, even though you don’t know what that outcome will be.

This faith must include everyone involved (1:4). You trust that everyone will do whatever is their part, and will play the rule they are meant to play. How can you possibly have faith in a peaceful outcome if you *don’t* trust that everyone will play their part, if there are participants who may derail at any minute? If your faith does not include everyone, “your faith is limited and your dedication incomplete” (1:5). This means really trusting that other people have the Spirit of God in them, and will act at the highest capacity of which they are currently capable. It means perceiving other people without judgment.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹Every situation, properly perceived, becomes an opportunity to heal the Son of God. ²And he is healed *because* you offered faith to him, *giving* him to the Holy Spirit and *releasing* him from every demand your ego would make of him. ³Thus do you *see him free*, and in this vision

does the Holy Spirit *share*. ⁴And since He *shares* it He *has* given it, and so He heals *through* you. ⁵It is this *joining* Him in a *united* purpose that *makes this purpose real*, because *you* make it *whole*. ⁶And this *is* healing. ⁷The *body* is healed *because you came without it*, and joined the Mind in which all healing rests.

• **Study Question** •

2. Which of the following things (more than one) are said to contribute to the healing of “the Son of God” (which, from the context, appears to refer to our brother)?
- A. I offer faith to my brother.
 - B. He has faith in his healing.
 - C. I give the Holy Spirit to my brother.
 - D. I free my brother from every demand my ego would make of him.
 - E. The Holy Spirit heals through us because we share vision with Him.
 - F. All of the above.

In my opinion, it would be possible to work with this first sentence for days and days! Imagine, over and over during each day, reminding yourself: “This situation is another opportunity to heal the Son of God” (2:1). How do we do that? By acting on what was said in the first paragraph: setting the goal of peace, and extending faith to everyone involved in the situation. Healing of those involved with us occurs when we offer faith to them, give them to the Holy Spirit, and *release* them “from every demand your ego would make of them” (2:2). That’s how we set one another free (2:3). That vision of our brothers is shared with us by the Holy Spirit (2:3), and it becomes the means by which He heals through us (2:4). It takes our conscious decision to join with Him in bringing healing into every situation to realize that purpose in our lives (2:5). Healing is a collaborative venture between the Holy Spirit and us.

This, says Jesus, is what healing *is* (2:6). We can bring healing to our body, and the bodies of others, by approaching the situation *without our body* to join with the Divine Mind “in which all healing rests” (2:7). Let’s reflect for a moment on what it means to come to a situation without the body. I think it means we forget bodies; we set them, with their needs, aside for the moment. We do not think of one another as bodies, but rather as eternal spirits. Instead of approaching others with the goal of having them meet our expectations and demands through external behavior, and so provide what we think we lack, we come with the exact opposite mind-set: We *release* them from serving our demands, and we have faith in *them* to serve the goal of peace. To do that, we have to overlook bodies. We have to see past bodies and behaviors to the Spirit within us.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹The body cannot heal, because it cannot *make itself sick*. ²It

needs no healing. ³Its health or sickness depends *entirely* on how the mind perceives it, and the purpose that the mind would use it *for*. ⁴It is obvious that a segment of the mind *can* see itself as *separated* from the Universal Purpose. ⁵When this occurs the body becomes its weapon, used *against* this Purpose, to *demonstrate* the “fact” that separation *has* occurred. ⁶The body thus becomes the instrument of illusion, acting accordingly; seeing what is not there, *hearing* what truth has never said and *behaving insanely*, being imprisoned *by* insanity.

• Study Question •

3. *Note carefully that the first three sentences make several things very clear: (1) The body cannot heal. (2) The body can't make itself sick, only the mind can. (3) The body does not need healing. These concepts run completely counter to our normal beliefs, and are important to what follows. What does this paragraph tell us about how sickness comes about, and why?*

There is a complete philosophy of healing expressed here! First assertion: The body cannot make itself sick (3:1). Sickness, whatever form it takes, does not have a physical cause! It does not occur because of heredity. Myrtle Fillmore, co-founder of Unity, heard the statement of this truth: “I am a child of God; I cannot *inherit* sickness,” and it transformed her health and life, and led to the creation of Unity. Nor is sickness caused by germs or dietary deficiency.

As hard as it is to accept, the Course insists: The body’s “health or sickness depends *entirely* [note the emphasis] on how the mind perceives it, and the purpose that the mind would use it *for*” (3:3). When our mind is split so that part of it sees itself as separate from the Oneness (“the Universal Purpose”), the split-off part of mind uses the body as its weapon to “*demonstrate* the ‘fact’ that separation has occurred” (3:4–5). The body sees, hears, and behaves in support of the illusion of separation. How the body shows up *entirely* depends on how the mind perceives it and uses it.

“Entirely”! Most of us are willing to accept that the mind affects our health to *some* degree, but we’re fairly certain that health and sickness also come from physical causes. Not so, says Jesus. The body is the effect of the mind, period.

Therefore, second assertion: “The body cannot heal” either (3:1)! It cannot heal and, in fact (third assertion), *it doesn't need any healing* (3:2)! It isn’t what we do *to* the body that makes it healthy or sick, but what we do *with* it, the purpose for which we use it. What needs healing, then, is our mind, and the way we *think* about our bodies:

Yet sickness is not of the body, but of the mind. All forms of sickness are signs that the mind is split, and does not accept a unified purpose (T-8.IX.8:6-7).

Health is the result of relinquishing all attempts to use the body lovelessly (T-8.VIII.9:9).

Paragraph 4

4. ¹Do not overlook our earlier statement that faithlessness leads

straight to illusions.³ ²For faithlessness *is* the perception of a brother as a body, and the body *cannot* be used for purposes of union. ³If, then, you see ~~your brother~~ [him] as a body, you have established a condition in which *uniting* with him becomes impossible. ⁴Your faithlessness to him has separated you from him, and kept you both apart from being healed. ⁵Your faithlessness has thus opposed the Holy Spirit's purpose, and brought illusions, *centered on the body*, to stand *between* you. ⁶And the body *will* seem to be sick, for you have made of it an "enemy" of healing and the *opposite* of truth.

• Study Question •

4. In 2:7 "the body is healed because you came without it;" here we are told that "faithlessness is the perception of a brother as a body," and that if we take this approach, we keep ourselves and our brother apart from healing. Which of the following do you think the Holy Spirit would not consider to be faithlessness?
- A. Seeing our physically sick friend as in urgent need of having her/his body healed.
 - B. Seeing our physically sick friend as perfectly OK despite his bodily illness, and having no expectations about what she/he should do.
 - C. Seeing our physically sick friend as guilty of faithlessness because he/she is sick.

Sentences 1 and 2 state that to perceive a brother *as a body* means that you have no faith in him. If he is a body, he is subject to all the selfish desires and needs of a body. He is a separate being, by nature in competition with all other beings. You cannot *possibly* have faith in him to fulfill his divine function, to unite with you in Oneness. Bodies *cannot* unite.⁴ By limiting your perception of another to the body, you have made it *impossible* for you to unite with them (4:3). This keeps you apart, and thus keeps you "both apart from being healed" (4:4).

This perception of one another contributes to, and apparently even *causes* the body to be sick (4:5–6). It has become an obstacle ("enemy") to healing, rather than a vehicle through which healing comes to the world.

Paragraph 5

5. ¹It *cannot* be difficult to realize that faith *must* be the opposite of *faithlessness*. ²~~Yet~~ [But] the difference in how they operate is less apparent, though it follows directly from the fundamental difference in

³ "Faithlessness is the servant of illusion, and wholly faithful to its master. Use it, and it will carry you straight to illusions" (T-17.VII.5:5-6).

⁴ Sexual union of bodies does not produce spiritual union. The kind of union the Course is talking about is union of minds and spirits.

what they *are*.³ Faithlessness would always *limit and attack*; faith would remove *all* limitations and *make whole*.⁴ Faithlessness would destroy and *separate*; faith would unite and *heal*.⁵ Faithlessness would interpose illusions between the Son of God and his Creator; faith would remove *all* obstacles that *seem* to rise between them.⁶ Faithlessness is wholly dedicated to illusions; faith wholly to truth.⁷ *A partial dedication is impossible*.⁸ Truth is the *absence* of illusion; illusion the *absence* of truth.⁹ Both cannot *be* together, nor perceived in the *same place*.¹⁰ To dedicate yourself to *both* is to set up a goal forever impossible to attain, for *part* of it is sought through the body, *thought of* as a means for seeking out reality ~~through attack~~. The [**through attack**,¹¹ **while the**] *other* part would *heal*, and therefore calls upon the mind and *not* the body.

• **Study Question** •

5. (a) List in two columns the contrasting things said about faith and faithlessness.
- (b) For added thought (no written reply required): Consider how seeing a brother as a body expresses the “faithless” side of your chart.
- (c) What do you think is being depicted here by “partial dedication” or dedication to both truth and illusion; that is, what would be an example of such divided dedication?

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Clearly, “faithless” is the opposite of “faith” (5:1); that’s a no-brainer. We all know that. What we *may not* know, however, is how faith and its opposite, faithlessness, operate. Their manner of operation is determined by the difference in what they *are* (5:2). Here is a table that presents the comparisons given in sentences 3 to 6:

Faithlessness	Faith
Limits and attacks	Removes limits and makes whole
Destroys and separates	Heals and unites
Inserts illusions between Son and Creator	Removes barriers between Son and Creator
Dedicated to illusions	Dedicated to truth

Here is how those qualities show up when they operate in us in regard to another person.⁵

Faithlessness	Faith
“You are of the body and its lower nature. How can I count on you to reach a spiritual goal with me?”	“You are not confined to that body, and thus you are whole. You’ll get there with me.”

⁵ Borrowed from the commentaries of Robert Peggy and Greg Mackie.

“You are just that lump of clay, separate from me. How can we genuinely join?”	“Your true vastness could never be contained in that body. How can we <i>not</i> join?”
“You are a body, driven by its instincts and needs. And for that, you deserve to be punished.”	“Since the body is not your reality, you never really did those things your body did. That is why you deserve to be healed. And that is why you deserve my faith in you.”
“There is so much between you and God that you might as well forget about uniting with Him.”	“I truly believe that all that seems to lie between you and God is pure illusion, nothing more.”
“I believe in your darkest illusions about yourself.”	“I believe in the radiant truth in you, and I want my belief to strengthen yours.”

It will be productive if you examine some of your relationships in the light of whether they exhibit faith, or faithlessness.

You cannot *partially* have faith in another; you either have faith, or you don't (5:7). You cannot be partially dedicated to the truth in one another. Either you are committed to seeing the truth, or you are going to see illusions, because one is the opposite of the other (5:8–9). It is *impossible* to see them both in the same person (5:9).

What this means is that you cannot treat another person as partly body, partly spirit. You cannot on the one hand believe in their wholeness while, on the other hand, you doubt their ability to reach a spiritual goal with you. Faith calls upon their mind (or spirit) as their reality, while faithlessness treats their bodily presence and behavior as their reality (5:10–11).

Paragraph 6

6. ¹The *inevitable* compromise is the belief that the *body* must be healed, and *not* the mind. ²For this divided goal [see 5 : 10] has given both an *equal* reality, ~~which could~~ **[and can seem to]** be possible only if the mind is limited *to* the body and divided into little parts ~~of~~ **[with]** *seeming* wholeness, but *without connection*. ³This will *not* harm the body, but it *will* keep the delusional thought system *in the mind*. ⁴Here, then, is healing needed. ⁵And it is here that healing *is*. ⁶For God gave healing not *apart* from sickness, nor established remedy where sickness *cannot* be. ⁷They *are* together, and when they are *seen* together, *all* attempts to *keep* both truth *and* illusion in the mind, where both *must* be, are recognized as *dedication to illusion*; and *given up* when *brought* to truth, and seen as totally *unreconcilable* with truth, in *any respect* **[aspect]** or in *any way*.

• Study Question •

6. *What happens when we realize that only the mind needs healing, and that healing is already there (6:4–7)?*
- A. *We realize we cannot keep both truth and illusion in our minds, and so stop trying to make the body real.*
 - B. *We see that having both sickness and its remedy in our minds is unreconcilable with truth.*
 - C. *We put a band-aid on our brain.*

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“The inevitable compromise” (6:1) is referring to the *result* of the mixed dedication described above; and the compromise is “the belief that the body must be healed, and not the mind” (6:1). Remember the earlier statement, that the body “*needs* no healing” (3:2). The mind’s divided goal, wanting both truth and illusion, makes the body as real as the mind (because to want illusion is to want the body to be real); believing the body needs healing actually shows we want the illusion to be real (6:2). Thus, seeking to heal the body reinforces the illusion of separation in our minds.

In order to think both body and mind are equally real, we must think that the mind is limited to the body (6:2). That is, the mind and the brain are one and the same; mind is contained in the brain. That is certainly the way most people commonly see it. I think of the brain more like a receiver, similar to the way a radio receives programming. The radio is just a mechanism responding to signals from a distance, and to me, the brain is simply a biological tool that is *used* by the mind.

A consequence of seeing the mind limited to the brain is that there seem to be many little parts of mind scattered among billions of bodies, none of them connected to any of the other “parts” of mind (6:2).

None of this actually harms the body, but it *does* “keep the delusional thought system *in the mind*” (6:3). Thus, the mind is where healing is needed; not in the body (6:4). But—Good news!—in the mind is where healing *is* (6:5). God has *already* sent healing to our minds in the form of the Holy Spirit. God does not heal bodies; He heals *minds*. Sickness, in truth, is in the mind, not in the body, so that is where God sends healing (6:6). What needs to be healed isn’t the body; it is the mind’s belief in a divided dedication to truth and illusion, in seeing body and mind as equally real. Jesus says this divided dedication must be “recognized as *dedication to illusion*; and *given up* when *brought* to truth, and seen as totally *unreconcilable* with truth, in *any* aspect or in *any* way” (6:7).

The practical application of this is summed up neatly by a passage in Chapter 8 of the Text:

When the ego tempts you to sickness do not ask the Holy Spirit to heal the body, for this would merely be to accept the ego's belief that the body is the proper aim of healing. Ask, rather, that the Holy Spirit teach you the right *perception* of the body, for perception alone can be distorted. Only perception can be sick, because only perception can be wrong (T-8.IX.1:5-7).

Extending this to interaction with others who need healing, we would need to avoid thinking that it is their body that needs healing. In that instance, *my* mind needs to be healed of its dual dedication to illusion (the body) and truth (the mind). The other person's mind may also need healing, but that is not *my* concern. The Holy Spirit always speaks *to you*, and your only responsibility is to accept Atonement *for yourself*. How is *your faith in your brother*? Do you believe he or she can accept the healing of mind the Holy Spirit is offering? Do you believe that they are as whole as you are?

Note: The remaining paragraphs of this section will be covered in the next commentary.

Answer Key

1. B, D, C, A

2. A, C, D, E. Further thought: Yes, I think expecting my brother not to be sick can be an ego demand.

3. Sickness comes about because of how the mind perceives the body, and the purpose for which the mind wants to use the body. The mind uses the body as a weapon against the Universal Purpose, to demonstrate the “fact” that separation has occurred.

4. B

5. The contrasts between faith and faithlessness:

Faith	Faithlessness
Wants to remove limitations and make whole	Wants to limit and attack
Unites and heals	Separates and destroys
Wants to remove all obstacles between the Son of God and His Creator	Wants to interpose illusions between the Son of God and His Creator
Dedicated wholly to truth	Dedicated wholly to illusions

(c) Coming to the brother to bring healing, and then focusing on the healing of his body rather than of his mind, or making the focus healing by physical means.

6. A