

# Study Guide and Commentary

## ACIM® Text, Chapter 20, Section VII

### *The Consistency of Means and End*

#### Legend:

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

*Italic sans serif text* = words emphasized in all caps in Urtext

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

Typewriter text = editorial comments

~~strikethrough sans serif text~~ = Not in Urtext, in FIP edition

### Overview of the Section

Both the ego and the Holy Spirit have a goal or purpose, and we use two different *means* to attain the two *ends*: We use judgment (or unforgiveness) to attain the ego's goal, and we use divine *vision* to attain the goal of the Holy Spirit. We can never reach the goal of the Holy Spirit by using the ego's means, but somehow we believe we can.

#### Overview Question

1. *The entire section is about means and ends. All the discussion becomes more meaningful if you already have in mind what those terms refer to. Therefore, scan through the entire section, looking for the answers to the following questions. Then, choose your answers from the list that follows all four questions on the next page. (Some questions have more than one correct answer.)*

- A. *What is the end, or purpose, of the Holy Spirit?*
- B. *What is the means the Holy Spirit uses to bring about this end?*
- C. *What is the end, or purpose, of the ego?*
- D. *What is the means the ego uses to bring about this end?*

*Hints: Holy Spirit, see 4:2, paragraphs 8 and 9. Ego, see paragraph 5.*

- a. Joy
- b. Holiness
- c. Sin
- d. Vision
- e. Seeing your brother sinless
- f. Judgment
- g. Seeing your brother with a body
- h. The body
- i. Salvation

## Paragraph 1

1. <sup>1</sup>We have said much about discrepancies of means and end, and how these must be brought in line before your holy relationship can bring you *only* joy. <sup>2</sup>But we have also said the means to meet the Holy Spirit's goal will come from the same Source as does His purpose. <sup>3</sup>Being so simple and direct, this course has *nothing* in it that is not consistent. <sup>4</sup>The *seeming* inconsistencies, or parts you find more difficult than others, are merely indications of areas where means and end are still discrepant. <sup>5</sup>And this produces great discomfort. <sup>6</sup>This *need* not be. <sup>7</sup>This course requires almost *nothing* of you. <sup>8</sup>It is impossible to imagine one that asks so little, or could offer more.

### • Study Question •

2. *Why do parts of the Course seem inconsistent or difficult to us?*
  - A. *The language used is archaic and unfamiliar*
  - B. *We still value the body and judgment*
  - C. *What the Course asks of us is very difficult*

If you have a good memory you will realize how often in this Text Jesus has addressed this issue of “means and end.”<sup>1</sup> Apparently he thinks is an extremely important point. The “end” being talked of is the goal we desire to reach, which is, in mundane terms, happiness or “only joy” (1:1); in more spiritual terms, the goal is consistent union with our Christ-self and with God, which is what will produce joy.

<sup>1</sup> T-17.V.3:3: “For the relationship as it is is out of line with its own goal.” T-17.V.16:4: “It is just this same discrepancy between the purpose that has been accepted and the means as they stand now that seems to make you suffer, but which makes Heaven glad.” T-17.VII.7:7: “Every situation in which you find yourselves is but a means to meet the purpose [goal] set for your relationship.” T-19.IV.2:1-2: “The extension of the Holy Spirit’s purpose from your relationship to others, to bring them gently in, has already begun. This is the way in which He will bring means and goal in line.” T-20.V.5:4: “And while you look upon each other thus, the means and end have not been brought in line.”

The “means” are the actions or methods we use to accomplish our goals. The clear implication of the frequent repetition, with the emphasis on bringing the means and end “in line” with one another, is that we are caught up in using methods and doing things that aren’t consistent with the goal we proclaim to be pursuing. We are acting in ways that are counter-productive to our goals. For instance, any means that is exclusively private is inconsistent with a goal of total unity. A means that is focused on “getting” anything, or taking from others, is inconsistent with our nature as love, which is expansive and giving.

The crucial issue is really the *source* of the means we use (1:2). Are we inventing them from our limited consciousness, or are we asking and receiving them from the Holy Spirit? If we truly share the purpose of the Holy Spirit, He will provide the means for accomplishing that purpose, and the result will be “only joy” (1:1). He has said this previously (T-17.V.16:3; also 1:2). The end and means go together, and *must* go together. If we wish to pursue the goal of the Holy Spirit and to find joy, we must be consistent, and use the *means* He provides. This kind of consistency runs all through the Course, and it calls for us to reflect that consistency in our lives (1:3).

The message of the Course really is “simple and direct” (1:3), as Jesus claims it is. Only the truth is true. What could be more simple and direct than that? And the Course has a degree of internal consistency that is nothing short of incredible; it is 100% consistent. Perhaps in your reading of the Course you have detected some things that seem inconsistent to you, but Jesus claims the fault lies with you, not the Course. You are still trying to follow the ego’s instructions while pursuing the Holy Spirit’s goal<sup>2</sup>. “This produces great discomfort” (1:5), which is perhaps an enormous understatement.

We are causing ourselves unnecessary distress (1:6). Things will go much easier for us if we can bring the means we use in line with the goal we are pursuing. It will help immensely if we can be clear about both goals and the means that go with them. We will discover that we do not have to struggle, and that what the Course is asking of us is *not* all that difficult! In fact, “This course requires almost *nothing* of you” (1:7). That may seem hard to accept. Perhaps you’ve done the Workbook for a year or several years. Perhaps you’ve read the Text more than once, and feel as if you are only just beginning to understand it. The Course has a reputation of being impenetrable, difficult to understand. Jesus here claims that the reputation is undeserved; that, “It is impossible to imagine one [a course] that asks so little, or could offer more” (1:8). No one could *invent* a simpler Course! And once we align means and end, that is how we will experience it.

<sup>2</sup> The rest of the section will clarify just how we do this. I’ll try to provide some concrete examples along the way.

## Paragraph 2

2. <sup>1</sup>The period of discomfort that follows the sudden change in a relationship from sin to holiness may now be almost over. <sup>2</sup>To the extent you still experience it, you are *refusing* to leave the means to Him Who changed the purpose. <sup>3</sup>You recognize you *want* the goal. <sup>4</sup>Are you not also willing to *accept* the means? <sup>5</sup>If you are not, let us admit that *you* are inconsistent. <sup>6</sup>A purpose is *attained* by means, and if you *want* a purpose [Ur: goal,] you *must* be willing to want the means as well. <sup>7</sup>How can one be sincere and say, "I want this above all else, and yet I do not want to learn the means to get it?"

### • Study Question •

3. *The "period of discomfort" was discussed in T-17.V.3; rereading that paragraph will aid understanding of this section. What inconsistency in us (see 2:3–5) may be causing continuing distress in our relationships?*
- A. *We say we want the goal of salvation, but we are not willing to accept the means of using vision to see our brother without sin.*
  - B. *We want the goal of salvation, but we still want the ego's goal of sin as well.*
  - C. *We are willing to use the means of forgiveness, but we don't want the goal of holiness enough.*
- 

As we said with the final paragraph of the previous section, some of this material is clearly addressed primarily to Helen and Bill, but has universal application. When a holy relationship is first initiated, there is almost always a "period of discomfort" when the purpose of the relationship is switched abruptly "from sin to holiness" (2:1). A new purpose, a new *end*, has been accepted, but the habits of a lifetime (the means, the actions and methods used to achieve one's goals) take a while to shift and to be replaced with new behaviors. Jesus is saying that for Helen and Bill, that uncomfortable transition period may be almost over. At the time this was dictated to Helen, she had been taking notes for over 1 ½ years. What can we take away from this? That there is still a lot of growth to experience when a holy relationship has been launched, and that we should not be discouraged when our progress seems to be slow.

As we study the rest of the section, let us pay attention to Jesus' diagnosis of why they are still experiencing some, and perhaps even great, discomfort, and his prescription of how to bring that discomfort to an end. What is said to them applies to us all.

The discomfort remaining, to whatever degree, is indicative of a continuing effort to try to apply the old methods to the new goal, instead of opening to the Holy Spirit and following His program for the relationship (2:2). We are guilty of trying to put new wine into old wineskins, to use the biblical analogy.

There is no question that we *want* the new goal (2:3). (He has not stated clearly here just what that goal is, although he will shortly. But he has told us before (See T-17.V, “The Beginning of the Holy Relationship”, for instance), and I think he expects us to remember. In T-17.V.3:9, he says the goal is “holiness.” This isn’t the typical understanding of holiness, which is holding oneself pure and separate from all contamination or evil; rather, it is the opposite, it is *oneness* with all things and beings, in recognition that everything in reality remains as God created it, already pure, whole, and complete—without sin. We might say that in the Course, holiness is the same thing as conscious union with the One. To me, the goal of a holy relationship is the experience of that Oneness in one another.

So, having formed a holy relationship, that experience is indeed what we want. We’ve accepted the *goal* from the Holy Spirit; why not accept the *means* for reaching it from Him as well (2:4)? If, on learning what those means are, we aren’t willing to accept them, “let us admit that *you* are inconsistent” (2:5). If we really want the goal, we *must* want the means to get it (2:6–7). We may be wondering at this point, “What exactly are (or is) the means, and why would I *not* want them (it)?” The answer may surprise you.

### Paragraph 3

3. <sup>1</sup>To obtain the *goal* the Holy Spirit indeed asks little. <sup>2</sup>He asks no more to give the means as well. <sup>3</sup>The means are second to the goal. <sup>4</sup>And when you hesitate, it is because the *purpose* [the goal] frightens you, and *not* the means. <sup>5</sup>Remember this, for otherwise you will make the error of believing the *means* are difficult. <sup>6</sup>Yet how *can* they be difficult if they are merely *given* you? <sup>7</sup>They *guarantee* the goal, and they are *perfectly* in line with it. <sup>8</sup>Before we look at them a little closer, remember that if you think *they* are impossible, your wanting of the *purpose* has been shaken. <sup>9</sup>For if a *goal* is possible to reach, the means to do so *must* be possible as well.

#### • Study Question •

4. *Both the goal and the means are given to us by the Holy Spirit. If they are both given to us, then neither the goal (holiness or salvation) or the means (forgiveness) can be difficult (3:6). If we are hesitating on our path, or finding it difficult to forgive our brothers, then, what must be so? (Pick two.)*
- A. *Jesus has no idea how hard it is for us to forgive.*
  - B. *We are actually frightened by the purpose, and therefore resisting the means of achieving it.*
  - C. *We are not really sure we want holiness.*
  - D. *Holiness is possible, but complete forgiveness is not possible.*
-

The Holy Spirit doesn't ask much from us to obtain the *goal*, and He gives us the means just as freely, demanding almost nothing from us (3:1–2). But in order to obtain either means or goal, we must *want the goal*. If we want the goal, clearly we will want the means that brings it to us. To illustrate: If I want to become a doctor (the goal), I have to attend medical school (the means). If, for any reason, I resist going to medical school, then clearly I don't really want the goal, or I don't want it badly enough to put up with the rigors of medical study and residency. And that is pretty much what Jesus is telling us here: If we resist the *means* the Holy Spirit offers us that lead to holiness and oneness with God, all it proves is that we don't really want that oneness (3:3–4).

“The means are second to the goal” means that our problem is never with the means, but always with the goal. We may complain that the Course is too difficult, but the Course is just telling us the means; the real problem is that we're afraid of the goal, the oneness. This is something we need to keep in mind (3:4). The means are actually something that is *given* to us, not anything we must *do*; how difficult can that be (3:5)? Remember the whole section that was devoted to this idea: “I Need Do Nothing.” And accepting the mean *guarantee* the goal to us (3:6).

Jesus is going to delve more deeply into the means, and what they are, but he is warning us not to react by thinking they are difficult or even impossible, and that, if we do think the *means* are beyond our capacity, what's happening is that our resolve to attain the *goal* is wavering (3:7). We need to renew our motivation, to recognize what it is that we truly want and what we do not want. If the goal is possible, he says, the means to that goal *cannot be impossible* (3:8)

## Paragraph 4

4. <sup>1</sup>It is impossible to see your brother as sinless and yet to look upon him as a body. <sup>2</sup>Is this not perfectly consistent with the goal of holiness? <sup>3</sup>For holiness is merely the result of letting the effects of sin be lifted, so what was *always* true is *recognized*. <sup>4</sup>To see a *sinless* [i.e., holy] body is impossible, for holiness is *positive* and the body is merely neutral. <sup>5</sup>It is *not* sinful, but neither is it sinless [holy]. <sup>6</sup>As nothing, which it *is*, the body cannot meaningfully be invested with attributes of Christ *or* of the ego. <sup>7</sup>*Either* must be an error, for both would place the attributes where they cannot *be*. <sup>8</sup>And *both* must be undone for purposes of truth.

### • Study Question •

5. *While seeing our brother as sinless is not impossible, “It is impossible to see your brother as sinless and yet to look upon him as a body” (4:1). Why?*
- A. *Because the body is sinful.*
  - B. *Because the body symbolizes sin.*
  - C. *Because the body is neutral and has no meaning, good or bad.*

•

So what is the means that has been given us? From the first sentence of this paragraph, it would seem to be “to see your brother sinless” (4:1). This should not be a surprise. Back in T-20.IV.2, we were told:

Sin has no place in Heaven, where its results are alien and can no more enter than can their source. And therein lies your need to see your brother sinless. In him *is* Heaven. See sin in him instead, and Heaven is lost to you. But see him as he is, and what is yours shines from him to you (T-20.IV.2:1-5).

So, seeing your brother as sinless is what brings us “Heaven,” which (to me, at least) is shorthand for the goal. And a bit later, it says:

And each one finds his savior when he is ready to look upon the face of Christ, and see Him sinless (T-20.IV.5:6).

Now, admit it: To see one another as sinless seems nigh unto impossible to most of us. And most of us have one or two people, at least, for whom we are dead *certain* it's impossible to see them sinless. This is the problem Jesus is addressing here.

In Unity churches, we talk about seeing the Christ in one another. I think seeing one another as sinless is the same thing. We probably don't make that connection right away. What does seeing the Christ in someone mean to you? Does it include seeing them as sinless? Probably not.

For a long time, the call to see the Christ in someone meant little more to me than believing that somewhere under all that crap there is probably a nice person. If he or she would only get their act together, they might be pretty decent people!

Maybe we should switch the phrase around a little. Instead of, “I behold the Christ in you,” maybe we should be saying or thinking, “I behold you *as the Christ*.” Put that way, it clearly includes the notion of seeing the person as sinless, as without sin, as holy.

He begins by pointing out that if we look upon another person *as a body*, it is impossible to see them as sinless (4:1). This statement is consistent with what our goal is (4:2). Our goal is holiness, which is “the result of letting the effects of sin be lifted, so what was always true is recognized” (4:3). That is, we are using spiritual vision to see *past* the body and its behavior and words, and to see the spiritual being that the other person truly is. If you are seeing someone as a body, you are definitely *not* seeing the truth about them.

The body is simply *neutral*, neither sinful nor sinless (4:4–5). You cannot see a sinful body, nor can you see a *holy* body. When it comes down to it, the body is nothing at all (4:6)! Seeing a person as a holy body would be just as much of a mistake as seeing them as a sinful body (4:7). Both views need to be undone if we are to see them truly (4:8).

To sum up the teaching of this paragraph: The goal is holiness, that is, conscious certainty of our own true holiness. The means is seeing your brother as holy, which is accomplished by vision. If you want to know your own holiness, the way is to see your brother as holy (sinless). The problem is that we've been trying to reach the goal of

holiness while continuing to see our brothers as bodies, which makes attaining the goal seem impossible.

## Paragraph 5

5. <sup>1</sup>The body *is* the means by which the ego tries to make the unholy relationship seem real. <sup>2</sup>The unholy instant *is* the time of bodies. <sup>3</sup>But the *purpose* here is sin. <sup>4</sup>It cannot *be* attained but in illusion, and so the illusion of a brother as a body is quite in keeping with the purpose of unholiness. <sup>5</sup>*Because* of this consistency, the means remain unquestioned while the end is cherished. <sup>6</sup>Seeing **[Vision]** adapts to wish, for sight is *always* secondary to desire. <sup>7</sup>And if you see the body, you have chosen judgment and *not* vision. <sup>8</sup>For vision, like relationships, *has* no order. <sup>9</sup>You either *see* or not.

### • Study Question •

6. *The body is part of the ego's way of making unholy relationships seem real, with the purpose of making sin real: an impossible goal. Why, according to this paragraph, do we continue to see our brother as a body?*
- A. *We have chosen to see sin rather than to see holiness.*
  - B. *We have held on to the ego's purpose of unholiness.*
  - C. *We still cherish the ego's end, and so we do not question its means, the body.*
  - D. *All of the above.*

The body is the means the ego uses to make unholy relationships seem real (5:1). It's the wrong means for holy relationships because the body cannot be holy; it is neutral. The Course states clearly that the ego made the body as a tool for achieving *its* goal, which is "sin," that is, separation from God, or autonomous life. The following statements from earlier in the Text and in the Workbook assert the same ideas:

The ego holds the body dear because it dwells in it, and lives united with the home that it has made (W-199.3:3).

The ego separates through the body (T-8.VII.2:3).

Thus, the ego *made* the body and uses it to promote separation. As recently as the previous section, we read something similar:

The instant that the mad idea of making your relationship with God unholy seemed to be possible, all your relationships were made meaningless. In that unholy instant time was born, and bodies made to house the mad idea and give it the illusion of reality (T-20.VI.8:6–7).



Time itself, otherwise known as "the unholy instant," "is the time of bodies" (5:2). Bodies were made by the ego to give the "tiny, mad idea" of separation "the illusion of reality" (5:3–4; T-20.VI.8:7). Therefore, seeing a brother as a body is completely consistent with the ego's unholy goal (5:4). As long as you cherish the mad idea of a separate identity, you will never question the reality and desirability of the ego's means, that is, the body (5:5). You see what you want to see; your vision adapts to your desire (5:6). So, if you are seeing other people *as bodies*, putting value on the ego's *means*, it only proves that you are still valuing separateness, that is, valuing the ego's *goal*.

You are using judgment (another tool of the ego) and not real vision (5:7). Back in Chapter 3 we read:

The choice to judge rather than to know is the cause of the loss of peace. Judgment is the process on which perception but not knowledge rests. (T-3.VI.2:1–2).

You *perceive* the body; only vision sees the spirit. It is a direct kind of *knowing*. That is what we are called to: vision. We need to make use of the appropriate means that is consistent with the goal of holiness. Notice: to judge rather than to know is a *choice* we are making! And (as we'll see in the next paragraph), seeing someone as a body *is a judgment*; it is a choice that we have made.

## Paragraph 6

6. <sup>1</sup>Who sees a brother's body has laid a *judgment* on him, and sees him not. <sup>2</sup>He does not *really* see him as sinful; he does not see him at all. <sup>3</sup>In the darkness of sin he is *invisible*. <sup>4</sup>He can but be *imagined* in the darkness, and it is here that the illusions you hold about him are *not* held up to his reality. <sup>5</sup>Here [in the darkness] are illusions and reality kept *separated*. <sup>6</sup>Here are illusions *never* brought to truth, and *always* hidden from it. <sup>7</sup>And here, in darkness, is your brother's reality *imagined* as a body, in unholy relationships with other bodies, serving the cause of sin an instant before he dies.

### • Study Question •

7. *Seeing a brother as a body is the same thing as laying a judgment on him, and is a rejection of true vision (6:1). Which of the following things is not listed in this paragraph as one of the results of judging our brother and seeing our brother as a body?*
- A. *We do not really see our brother at all, he becomes invisible to us.*
  - B. *We see illusions of our brother.*
  - C. *We keep our illusions about him separate from his reality.*
  - D. *We imagine him in unholy relationships with other bodies.*
  - E. *We see real in sin our brother.*

•

Seeing someone as a body lays a judgment on them (6:1). Let that sink in, and you will realize that you are judging almost everyone all the time! How many people do you *not* see as a body?

What does it mean to see someone as a body? I think it means that you see the person as defined by how he or she looks, and by what their body does. You see them as separate from yourself. Even before you form any opinions about what they do or say, just thinking of them as identical or congruent with their body judges them to be far less than what they truly are.

But it's even worse than that. Seeing someone as a body means you are not seeing them at all (6:1–2)! Bodies, according to the Course, are *nothing* “As nothing, which it is, the body...” (T-20.VII.4:6). You are seeing *nothing*. How, then, could you be seeing the person at all? The real person, their spirit as God created it, is invisible (6:3)

So, if we realize that almost all the time we are seeing everyone (probably) as bodies, we must realize we are not really seeing anybody at all! We just *imagine* we are seeing them. We are making up our mental picture of each person and, because this is “in the darkness of sin,” we can't see his or her reality to compare it to the illusions we hold about them (6:4); the darkness allows us to keep illusions and reality *separate* (6:5). Most, if not all of what we think we know about one another is just our imagination, because people are *not bodies*.

When, in sentence 6:7, Jesus speaks of imagining someone “as a body, in unholy relationships with other bodies,” I don't think he means to refer to sexual misconduct—although that could certainly be included. unholy relationships are about projecting guilt on one another, about attack and taking from one another. When we see people as bodies, we see relationships like that. Or imagine that we do.

Keep in mind the basic argument here: That we think the *means* (which is seeing one another as sinless) is too difficult if not impossible, and *that's* why we are having so much trouble really laying hold of the message of the Course for ourselves. Jesus is saying, no, the reason really is that *we don't want the goal*. We still value the ego's means: projecting guilt, finding fault, judging. We still insist on believing that this will somehow bring us happiness.

## Paragraph 7

7. <sup>1</sup>There is indeed a difference between this vain imagining and vision. <sup>2</sup>The difference lies not in *them*, but in their purpose. <sup>3</sup>Both are but *means*, each one appropriate to the end for which it is employed. <sup>4</sup>Neither can serve the purpose of the other, for each one is a *choice* of purpose, employed on its behalf. <sup>5</sup>Either is meaningless *without* the end for which it was intended, nor is it valued as a *separate* thing apart from the intention. <sup>6</sup>The means seem real because the *goal* is valued. <sup>7</sup>And judgment *has* no value unless the *goal* is sin.

• **Study Question** •

8. *The ego's means (judgment) is nothing but a "vain imagining;" the means used by the Holy Spirit is vision. What makes them differ is not something in those things themselves (projection and extension are very much alike in what they are and do); the difference lies "in their purpose" (7:2). "The means seem real because the goal is valued" (7:6). What point do you think Jesus is trying to make here, in reference to what has already been discussed?*
- A. *If we are seeing our brother as a body, and judging him, it is because we have made a choice for the ego's goal of sin.*
  - B. *Vision is meaningless to us if we are not choosing the goal of holiness.*
  - C. *The goal of sin and judgment go together.*
  - D. *A and B*
  - E. *A, B and C*

•

We have here two very different means: "vain imaging" (judgment, projecting guilt, seeing sin in others) and vision, and they are very, very different (7:1). It's very clear if you think about it. Am I seeing this person as my eyes show them to me, a mixed up, imperfect, and perhaps evil person? Or am I seeing them as the holy child of God, radiant in divine perfection? What could be more different?

What makes them different is the *purpose* they serve (7:2). They match up perfectly with "the end for which [they are] employed" (7:3). We are constantly choosing which means to use—vision or vain imagination—and we are choosing on the basis of the goal they lead to (7:4–5). And we are talking here about the goal they lead *you* to, sinfulness or holiness. Because the ego *wants* to see you as sinful and wants you to see yourself that way—this is what keeps the ego going, guilt is its breath—it leads you to see *others* as sinful. And because you have not yet truly let go of your separateness, your body and your ego, *you listen to the ego*. If you truly, only, wanted the goal of holiness for yourself, you would choose the vision that shows that to you in others. "The means seem real because the goal is valued. And judgment *has* no value unless the *goal* is sin" (7:6–7).

## Paragraph 8

8. <sup>1</sup>The body cannot be looked upon *except* through judgment. <sup>2</sup>To see the body is the sign that you *lack* vision, and have *denied* the means the Holy Spirit offers you to serve *His* purpose. <sup>3</sup>How can a holy relationship achieve its purpose through the means of sin? <sup>4</sup>Judgment you taught *yourself*, vision is learned from Him Who would *undo* your teaching. <sup>5</sup>*His* vision cannot see the body *because it cannot look on sin*. <sup>6</sup>And thus it leads you to reality. <sup>7</sup>Your holy brother, sight of whom is *your* release, is no illusion. <sup>8</sup>Attempt to see him not in darkness, for your

imaginings about him *will* seem real there. <sup>9</sup>You *closed* your eyes [your true eyes, the eyes of Christ] to shut him out. <sup>10</sup>Such was your *purpose*, and while this purpose seems to have a [Ur: *any*] meaning, the means for its attainment will be evaluated as *worth* the seeing, and so you will *not* see.

• **Study Question** •

9. *What sentence in this paragraph gives a good summary of the ego's purpose, which we have chosen and must let go?*

The choice seems to be between vision and judgment, both of which are means, each to a different goal. The true choice is one of purpose, however, not of means; if we choose the purpose, the means will fall in line with it: "Seeing adapts to wish, for sight is always secondary to desire" (5:6). This is why the only way to see the body—to see it as real, to mistake it for the person—is "through judgment" (8:1). If we are seeing someone as a body in this way, it's clear evidence that we "*lack* vision," which is direct, inward perception of their holiness. But "vision is His gift" (W-pI.42.title; see also T-13.V.10:1-6, which very nicely sums up the gift of vision).

If vision is a gift, and not something we have to develop for ourselves, then if we *lack* vision we must have refused the gift, or "*denied* the means the Holy Spirit offers you to serve His purpose" (8:2). We are continuing to rely on our human judgment, which is "the means of sin" (8:3). There's no way this is going to achieve the goal of holiness in our relationships.

Judgment is something we have taught ourselves. The Holy Spirit wants to undo what we have learned and teach us vision, or true perception (8:4). Practically speaking, this means developing a habit of questioning our perceptions, which are invariably based on our judgments. Why can't true vision see the body (8:5)? "*Because it cannot look on sin*" (8:5). That is, it looks without judging. Judgment is our problem; holding on to it blocks vision. Section 10 of the Manual for Teachers, "How is Judgment Relinquished?", is very relevant here. It tells us we need to give up judgment, to realize that, for us, it is impossible. And this is *not* hard to do:

"It is not difficult to relinquish judgment. But it is difficult indeed to try to keep it. The teacher of God lays it down happily the instant he recognizes its cost" (M-10.6:1-3).

Laying down judgment leads to true perception of reality (8:6). When we can see another as they truly are, and not the illusion of him or her that we have made, *we* are released from bondage (8:7). Don't make the mistake of *trying* to see someone as guiltless while operating on the level of human judgment; it will never work, and we won't be able to get past the faults we believe we see (8:8). We chose to shut off vision ("closed your eyes") to maintain the illusion of separateness (8:9). As long as separateness continues to have *any* meaning to us, we will continue to value our

judgments (because they support the goal of separateness), and vision will continue to elude our grasp (8:10).

## Paragraph 9

9. <sup>1</sup>Your question should not be, "How can I see my brother without the body?" <sup>2</sup>Ask only, "Do I *really* wish to see him sinless?" <sup>3</sup>And as you ask, forget not that *his* sinlessness is *your* escape from fear. <sup>4</sup>Salvation [or holiness] is the Holy Spirit's goal. <sup>5</sup>The means is vision. <sup>6</sup>For what the seeing look upon *is* sinless [holly]. <sup>7</sup>No one who loves can judge, and what he sees is *free* of condemnation. <sup>8</sup>And what he sees he did *not* make [through his imagination], for it was *given* him to see, as was the vision that made his seeing possible.

### • Study Question •

10. *Seeing the body is part of the ego's means for making sin and separation real. It seems worth seeing, to us, because we still think the goal of separation and sin has meaning (8:10). How, then, can we ever achieve the apparent ideal of the Course for us, which is to see our brother as without a body, or not identified with his body? (More than one answer is correct.)*

- A. *We can close our eyes and try to imagine him without a body.*
- B. *We can truly desire to see him without sin.*
- C. *We can do our best to ignore his body.*
- D. *We can accept the gift of the Holy Spirit's vision, which does not see bodies.*

•

When we hear the Course tells us we are supposed to see one another without the body, our usual reaction, voiced or not, is, "How on earth am I supposed to do that?" Wrong question (9:1)!

The right question is, "Do I *really* wish to see him sinless?" (9:2).

As I said in commenting on Paragraph 3, it's a question of our motivation. Do we *really* want the goal? If I do, the means is a given, and judgment is laid down with a sigh of relief. It would behoove us to ask this question often, and to do our very best to answer it honestly. Look at the ways we foolishly cling to judgment, and recognize what that clinging is *costing* us in terms of lost peace, stress, sickness, and pain. And then decide to let it go. Remember that relinquishing judgment and using vision to see another's sinlessness is *my* escape from fear (9:3).

The goal is salvation, or holiness (9:4). "The means is vision" (9:5). Holiness is all that vision sees (9:6). When you love in truth *you cannot judge*, leaving the one looked upon free from any condemnation (9:7). Looking with vision, you see only what God created, what was *given* you to see, as was the vision with which you see it (9:8).

Seeing with vision is seeing sinlessness. It necessitates the realization that the person is not their body, and is not defined by what his or her body does. You see *past* the body to the being of light that animates it. The ability to do so is the gift of the Holy Spirit. When you find it seems difficult or impossible, examine your mind for judgments, see if there are outward behaviors that you are focusing on, and set them aside. Then *ask* for vision. The following lines from Review I and Lesson 351 of the Workbook may prove useful as you attempt to put this into practice:

2. 1 (42) God is my strength. 2 Vision is His gift.

3 Let me not look to my own eyes to see today. 4 Let me be willing to exchange my pitiful illusion of seeing for the vision that is given by God. 5 Christ's vision is His gift, and He has given it to me. 6 Let me call upon this gift today, so that this day may help me to understand eternity.

3. 1 (43) God is my Source. 2 I cannot see apart from Him.

3 I can see what God wants me to see. 4 I cannot see anything else. 5 Beyond His Will lie only illusions. 6 It is these I choose when I think I can see apart from Him. 7 It is these I choose when I try to see through the body's eyes. 8 Yet the vision of Christ has been given me to replace them. 9 It is through this vision that I choose to see.

4. 1 (44) God is the light in which I see.

2 I cannot see in darkness. 3 God is the only light. 4 Therefore, if I am to see, it must be through Him. 5 I have tried to define what seeing is, and I have been wrong. 6 Now it is given me to understand that God is the light in which I see. 7 Let me welcome vision and the happy world it will show me.

## LESSON 351

My sinless brother is my guide to peace. My sinful brother is my guide to pain. And which I choose to see I will behold.

1. 1 Who is my brother but Your holy Son? 2 And if I see him sinful I proclaim myself a sinner, not a Son of God; alone and friendless in a fearful world. 3 Yet this perception is a choice I make, and can relinquish. 4 I can also see my brother sinless, as Your holy Son. 5 And with this choice I see my sinlessness, my everlasting Comforter and Friend beside me, and my way secure and clear. 6 Choose, then, for me, my Father, through Your Voice. 7 For He alone gives judgment in Your Name.

# Answer Key

1. A: b,i B: d,e C: c D: f,g
2. B
3. A
4. B,C
5. C
6. D
7. E
8. D
9. You closed your eyes to shut him out. Such was your purpose (8:9-10)
10. B and D