

# Study Guide and Commentary

## ACIM® Text, Chapter 21, Section VII

### *The Last Unanswered Question*

#### Legend:

Light underscoring indicates emphasis that appears in the Urtext or shorthand notes.

Text is taken from the Circle of Atonement's Complete and Annotated Edition (which I refer to as the "CE" for "Complete Edition" or "Circle Edition"). Please be aware that, even when the wording is exactly the same as the FIP version, the division into paragraphs is often quite different in the CE, which restores the paragraph breaks found in the original notes. This results in different reference numbering as well. I will indicate for each paragraph the corresponding sentences in the FIP edition. You should be able to locate specific sentences in that edition if you need to, with a minimum of visual clutter in the commentary. Passages that lie outside the current section will continue to have footnoted references. References to quotations are from the CE unless another version is being quoted, in which case that version is indicated.

Footnotes by the commentary author are shown in this font and size. Other footnotes come from the Complete Edition of ACIM itself.

## Overview of the Section

Having spoken at length about the function and importance of reason in our spiritual awakening from madness, Jesus first pauses to point out that, in realizing that we are at our own mercy (VI.12:8),<sup>1</sup> that we have the power to choose mercy or condemnation, we are *not* powerless, as we often think we are. He stresses the need to leave powerlessness behind and to recognize our strength. He calls us, finally, to clearly answer one last question, leading us with reason to realize that our true desire is for truth and happiness, and that our fear of truth is groundless.

It should be noted that this section combines what, in the FIP edition, are two sections, VII and VIII.

<sup>1</sup> VI.11:8 (FIP)

## Paragraph 1

Do you not see that all your misery comes from the strange belief that you are powerless? <sup>2</sup>Being helpless is the cost of sin. <sup>3</sup>Helplessness is sin's condition, the one requirement that it demands to be believed. <sup>4</sup>Only the helpless *could* believe in it. <sup>5</sup>Enormity has no appeal save to the little, and only those who first believe that they are little could see attraction there. <sup>6</sup>Treachery to the Son of God is the defense of those who do not identify with him. <sup>7</sup>And you are for him or against him:<sup>2</sup> either you love him or attack him, protect his unity or see him shattered and slain by your attack.

### • Study Question •

1. *In order to believe in sin, we must believe we are helpless or powerless. Believing we are powerless is the same as not identifying with the Son of God, because the Son is powerful (2:1). What, specifically, does being “powerless” mean in the context of this chapter?*
  - A. *Failing to assert your rights and set your boundaries as a Son of God.*
  - B. *Being affected by forces in the world that are beyond your control.*
  - C. *Being lacking in will power.*

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We are at our own mercy, according to VI.12:8, but our egos tell us that isn't so; we are the victims of powers outside of us over which we have no control. Therefore, we believe that we are powerless to do anything about our distress and unhappiness. Jesus calls on us to wake up to the fact that all of our misery comes from this strange belief in our powerlessness (1:1). He has just spent the last section arguing that reason would tell us otherwise! Belief in powerlessness comes from our belief in sin, and our *desire* to believe in it (1:2). Remember that “sin” is *separation*. If I believe I am separate, then I am a tiny speck in a near-infinite universe, and in competition even on Earth with 7.4 billion other separate human beings, to say nothing of all the animals, microbes, viruses, and insects. How could I see myself as anything but powerless?

Or, if you consider the guilt aspect of sin, then if I believe I am guilty of sin, offending God, deserving punishment, then once again seeing myself as powerless is unavoidable. The traditional view of “original sin” even means that I have inherited a sinful nature as a result of *Adam and Eve's* sin! I am *born* in sin! How helpless is *that!*?

Looking at the connection of sin and powerlessness from another angle, Jesus points out that, “*Being helpless is the cost of sin. Helplessness is sin's condition, the one requirement that it demands to be believed*” (1:2–3). If we *did not* believe we were helpless, we *could not* believe in sin! To say, “I am sinful,” is to accept that my very being has been somehow stained and altered by my betrayal of God, in a way that I am

<sup>2</sup>. Matthew 12:30 (RSV): “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.”

helpless to control or reverse. Only those who accept their own helplessness *could* believe in sin (1:4).

He then makes an unusual connection between being helpless and believing in our sinfulness. To believe that I have somehow altered God's own creation (myself), and have become irretrievably lost in sin, is a belief in an *enormous* disruption in the fabric of the universe as God created it. It's actually kind of *appealing* to think that "little me" could achieve such an enormity! This is why Jesus says, "Enormity has no appeal save to the little, and only those who *first* believe that they are little could see attraction there" (1:5). Notice that the belief in littleness *comes first*, and that's what makes the idea of "sin" seem attractive. Helplessness makes sin attractive, and helplessness is the cost of sin. Each spawns the other.

So, do as the Course asks. Think about it. *Can* you see that all your misery comes from a belief in your own powerlessness? What if, instead of believing that you were helpless, you realized that you have all power? What if you totally believed that you alone are in control of your happiness?

The last two sentences, about "treachery to the Son of God," has to do with our attitude toward one another. It's not obvious how they relate to the discussion of sin and helplessness, but remember: sin = separateness. The "Son of God," here, is the Christ as represented by your brother or your sister, the person you are in relationship with at this time (for minutes or for years). Are you *identifying* with your shared nature, or are you holding on to separateness? If you hold on to separateness, you will inevitably attack him or her, seeing them as sinful and undeserving of love. But if you hold on to your oneness, you will be *for* him or her; you will love them and protect their unity with you and with God (1:7–8).

This will become clearer in the next few paragraphs.

## Paragraph 2 (2:1–6, (FIP))

2 No one believes the Son of God is powerless. <sup>2</sup>And those who see themselves as helpless must believe that they are *not* the Son of God. <sup>3</sup>What can they be except his enemy? <sup>4</sup>And what can they do but envy him his power, and by their envy make themselves afraid of it? <sup>5</sup>These are the dark ones, silent and afraid, alone and not communicating, fearful the power of the Son of God will strike them dead, and raising up their helplessness against him. <sup>6</sup>They join the army of the powerless, to wage their war of vengeance, bitterness, and spite on him, to make him one with them.

• **Study Question** •

2. *What are some ways in which we wage a “war of vengeance” against the Son of God? Identify two from the following list, and name one way of your own.*
- A. *Starting holy wars in God’s name.*
  - B. *Envyng people who are at peace in their own innocence.*
  - C. *Trying to bring holy people down to our own level.*
  - D. *Attacking ourselves by making ourselves guilty or sick.*
  - E. *Accusing a brother, silently or aloud, of sin.*
  - F. *Being anti-religious.*

In this first line, the phrase “Son of God” clearly refers to the Christ, the perfect creation of God. No one believes *that* Son is powerless (2:1). Obviously, then, if you see yourself as helpless, you cannot believe that you are the Son of God (2:2)! Therefore, you end up *envyng* the Son, fearing His power, and viewing Him and yourself as enemies (2:3–4). But notice something unusual here, unusual at least for the Course. Rather than speaking primarily about “you,” it begins speaking about a *group*: “those who see themselves as helpless.”

This, and the next three paragraphs, are, according to Robert Perry, “the only depiction of group behavior in the Course.” It can be educational to apply what is said here to real-life groups we know of, and for that matter, to *ourselves* as members of different groups.

Seeing themselves as helpless, these “dark ones” operate in silence, communicating with no one, terrified of the tremendous power of the Son of God, knowing they are weak *and* deserve to be punished. They believe the Son of God is out to judge and (eventually) kill them; perhaps, sending them to hell (2:5). Together they comprise “the army of the powerless,” fighting against God’s Son. They want to drag the Son down to their own level (2:6).

### Paragraph 3 (2:7–3:5 (FIP))

**3** Because they do not know that they are one with *him*, they know not whom they hate.<sup>3</sup> <sup>2</sup>They are indeed a sorry army, each one as likely to attack his brother or turn upon himself as to remember they thought they had a common cause. <sup>3</sup>Frantic and loud and strong the dark ones seem to be. <sup>4</sup>Yet they know not their enemy, except they hate him. <sup>5</sup>In hatred they have come together, but have not joined each other. <sup>6</sup>For had they done so, hatred would be impossible. <sup>7</sup>The army of the powerless must be disbanded in the presence of strength.

<sup>3</sup>. Luke 23:34 (RSV): “And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.’” The army of the powerless, who know not that they are trying to kill God’s Son, is being likened to those who crucified Jesus, who knew not that they were crucifying God’s Son.

The army of the powerless are striving to make the Son like themselves (powerless and sinful), but do not realize they already are one with Him (powerful and holy). Not realizing that they are one with the Son, in waging war on the Son they don't realize they are attacking themselves (3:1). People in this state of mind can turn on one another in a flash, forgetting that "they *thought* they had a common cause" (3:2). If we realize our oneness we will know that attacking one another is senseless, since we *are* each other, and our attacks on one perceived as "another" are really attacks on ourselves.

Such power-blind people can *seem* "frantic and loud and strong" (3:3). The emphasis on "seem," to me, is really saying the reverse: They are *not* strong, nor even loud and frantic. They don't know who they are attacking, only that "*they hate him*" (3:4). I think that, at times, most of us have either encountered or felt that kind of blind rage, in which one just wants to hurt *someone*. *Someone* must be to blame for my misery!

I think we have seen this recently in politics, and certainly we saw it in history, in times like Nazi Germany. People joined together in hatred and yet never really joined *each other* (3:5). The proof of that is this: If they had truly joined with one another, hatred would be impossible (3:6). True joining involves the recognition of common being, and when you recognize that, it dawns on you that all your actions, including hate, are directed at yourself.

Therefore, if true strength meets "the army of the powerless," that army will be "disbanded" (3:7). The army's apparent strength is really illusory because their unity is not real.

## Paragraph 4 (3:6–13 (FIP))

4 Those who are strong are never treacherous, because they have no need to dream of power and to act out their dream. <sup>2</sup>How would an army act in dreams? <sup>3</sup>Any way at all. <sup>4</sup>They could be seen attacking anyone with anything. <sup>5</sup>Dreams have no reason in them. <sup>6</sup>A flower turns into a poisoned spear, a child becomes a giant, and a mouse roars like a lion.<sup>4</sup> <sup>7</sup>And love is turned to hate as easily. <sup>8</sup>This is no army, but a madhouse. <sup>9</sup>What seems to be a planned attack is bedlam.

<sup>4</sup>. *The Mouse That Roared* was a 1955 satirical book by Leonard Wibberley that was made into a 1959 movie. In it, the tiny country of the Duchy of Grand Fenwick decides to declare war on the United States with the intention of losing. Its "army," equipped with bows and arrows, arrives in New York, where the streets have been emptied by a nuclear drill, and wanders about trying to find someone to surrender to—all of which is clearly reminiscent of "the army of the powerless."

• **Study Question** •

3. *The description of the army of the powerless (i.e. all those who believe they are powerless) continues. Which one of the following is not given as a characteristic of the powerless?*
- A. *They seem to be frantic, strong, and loud.*
  - B. *They are bedlam, a madhouse.*
  - C. *Their actions have no reason in them.*
  - D. *They have joined with each other to fight God's Son.*
  - E. *They are treacherous.*
  - F. *They dream of power and act out the dream.*
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The truly strong “are *never* treacherous,” as are members of the powerless army. Ego-based groups are inherently unstable because the individuals in them, at the core, believe in their *powerlessness* and are primarily committed to their own separate interests. They “need to *dream* of power and to act out their dream” (4:1), which often leads to conflicts of interest that result in profound disharmony within the group, but the truly strong have no such needs.

Because the group is driven by dreams of grandeur and a need to *prove* their power by outward acts, those acts can be entirely random. The army might attack “*anyone* with *anything*” (4:2–4). In literal dreams, there is no reason. Anything can happen: “A flower turns into a poisoned spear, a child becomes a giant, and a mouse roars like a lion” (4:5–6). And, in dreams, “*love is turned to hate* as easily” (4:7). The point here is that the actual, waking behavior of ego-driven groups is as random and unreasonable as dreams are, and it shows up in the way that what *looks like* love can suddenly turn into hatred, and those who were trusted members of the group can suddenly become the enemy. Such groups are not armies, they are “a madhouse” (4:8). Its apparently “planned attack” is really “bedlam” (4:9).

## Paragraph 5 (4:1–5:2, (FIP))

5 The army of the powerless is weak indeed. <sup>2</sup>It has no weapons, and it has no enemy. <sup>3</sup>Yes, it can overrun the world and seek an enemy, but it can never find what is not there. <sup>4</sup>Yes, it can dream it found an enemy, but this will shift even as it attacks, so that it runs at once to find another, and never comes to rest in victory. <sup>5</sup>And as it runs, it turns against itself, thinking it caught a glimpse of the great enemy that always eludes its murderous attack by turning into someone else. <sup>6</sup>How treacherous does this enemy appear, who changes so much it is impossible even to recognize him. <sup>7</sup>Yet hate must have a target. <sup>8</sup>There can be no faith in sin without an enemy.

• **Study Question** •

4. *The description continues. They are warring against the Son of God, and yet this army “has no enemy” (6:1, (4:2 (FIP)). Why is this true?*
- A. *The Son of God is not their enemy.*
  - B. *Their enemy is so clever, it shifts, changes, and always eludes them.*
  - C. *The army is really its own enemy.*

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These groups are truly weak. They have no weapons. They don't even know who it is they need to attack and, of course, there really *is no enemy* (5:1–2). The army “can overrun the world and seek an enemy” but cannot find “what is not there” (5:3). The idea that such groups may, indeed, “overrun the world,” seems frightening, but we need to recall that such groups are weak and weaponless. They may believe they've found their enemy, but they cannot remain focused, and they shift blindly from one target to another, without ever winning a single battle (5:4).

Veiled behind the “enemies” they can see is always “the great enemy” (5:5). What they are really attacking is not other persons or groups. It is the Son of God. Even more ironic, the target of attack is actually their own identity and their own power. That true identity is the threat that the ego perceives and projects on first one and then another external target. But “hate *must* have a target” (5:7). Belief in sin requires it (5:8)!

This line of thought is continued in the next paragraph.

## Paragraph 6 (5:3–5:14 (FIP))

**6** Who that believes in sin would dare believe he has no enemy?  
<sup>2</sup>Could he admit that no one made him powerless? <sup>3</sup>Reason would surely bid him seek no longer what is not there to find. <sup>4</sup>Yet first he must be willing to perceive a world where it is not.<sup>5</sup> <sup>5</sup>It is not necessary that he understand how he can see it, nor should he try. <sup>6</sup>For if he focuses on what he cannot understand, he will but emphasize his helplessness, and let sin tell him his enemy must be himself. <sup>7</sup>But let him only ask himself these questions, which he must decide, to have it done *for* him:

*<sup>8</sup>Do I desire a world I rule instead of one where I am ruled?*

*<sup>9</sup>Do I desire a world where I am powerful instead of helpless?*

*<sup>10</sup>Do I desire a world in which I have no enemies and cannot sin?*

*<sup>11</sup>And do I want to see what I denied **because** it is the truth?<sup>6</sup>*

### • Study Question •

5. *What is the key to our resigning from this insane army?*
- A. *We must understand how we can see a world without enemies.*
  - B. *We must realize that the enemy is ourselves.*
  - C. *We must be willing to see a world without enemies.*

[The four italicized questions will be dealt with in subsequent paragraphs. Note them carefully. Make a mental note, too, of the phrase, “*because it is the truth.*” We will see forms of this phrase recurring throughout the rest of the Text, and if we grasp the germ of its meaning here, it will help unfold the meaning of those later occurrences.]

You can’t hate without having an enemy, so the “army” has invented one. (see 5:7–8). If you believe in sin you have to think you have an enemy, someone to blame for making you powerless, for stripping you of strength, for making you a sinner. You could never admit that *nobody* did this to you (6:1–2).

But there is no enemy. Nobody *has* done this to you (or to anyone). If you listen to reason<sup>7</sup> you will stop looking for a non-existent enemy (6:3). What would happen if you recognized there is no enemy? You would have to admit that “no one made [you]

<sup>5</sup>. “It” (“where it is not”) refers to “what is not there to find” from the previous sentence. In other words, “he must be willing to perceive a world” that does not contain what is not there to find—an enemy.

<sup>6</sup>. “What I denied” is the real world, in which I rule, am powerful, have no enemies, and cannot sin. The question thus means “Do I want to see the real world for the simple reason that it’s the truth?”

<sup>7</sup> Here comes reason, that means for rescuing us from madness. It shows up again in 7:3. You’ll find reason cropping up over and over from now on, along with the phrase “because it is the truth.”



powerless” (6:2), that you have done this to yourself. But before you can listen to such an argument from reason, you have to become *willing* to see the world *without any enemies* (6:4). And *that* is a huge step. It may seem a step you cannot take. It seems self-evident that we would *want* the world to be free of enemies, so why would we *not* be willing to see it that way? Probably, we are *not* willing to see it that way because we don't believe it to be true! And that leads to the discussion that follows.

How can you become willing to see the world without enemies? You do not have to ask that question, and you should not even *try* to understand *how* it is possible (6:5). *Trying* to understand just increases your feelings of powerlessness, because you really *cannot understand it* (6:6). It ends up with you thinking that *you* are your own worst enemy (6:6). Instead of asking, “How can I see the world without enemies?”, ask yourself the following four questions, which contain decisions that you *must* make, and the new perception of the world will be “done *for you*” by the Holy Spirit (6:7) the moment you realize that you *really do* want to see an enemy-free world. Rather than asking a question you *can't* answer, ask yourself these questions that you *can* and *must* answer. Read over those four questions now (6:8–11). They will be the subject of several paragraphs.

Notice that all four questions concern what you *desire* (first three questions) or *want* (fourth question). The final question adds an all-important “because” clause: “*because it is the truth.*” Reading them over, you probably find the first three questions easy to answer, or seemingly so. Of course I prefer to rule instead of being ruled; I prefer being powerful to being helpless; and I prefer having no enemies and being *unable* to sin. At least that is my first reaction on reading them over; yours may vary, although I cannot imagine why.

The last question, however, requires some thought, and some explanation. What does it mean to “see what I denied”? And what does it mean to see this “*because it is the truth*”? (6:11) As Robert Perry explains in his footnote to 6:11, the first three questions all refer to a way of seeing the world, a world where I rule, I am powerful, I have no enemies, and I cannot sin. *That world* is “what I denied”; it is what the Course calls “the real world.” So the final question means, “Do I want to see the real world for the simple reason that it is the truth?” We'll engage in considerable further discussion of this point in what follows.

## Paragraph 7 (6:1–7, (FIP))

7 You have already answered the first three questions, but not yet the last. <sup>2</sup>For this one still seems fearful, and unlike the others. <sup>3</sup>Yet reason would assure you they are all the same. <sup>4</sup>We said this year would emphasize the sameness of things that are the same.<sup>8</sup> <sup>5</sup>This final question, which is indeed the last you need decide, still seems to hold a threat the rest have lost for you. <sup>6</sup>And this imagined difference attests to your belief that *truth* may be the enemy you yet may find. <sup>7</sup>Here, then, would seem to be the last remaining hope of finding sin and not accepting power.

### • Study Question •

6. *All four questions deal with what we desire or want. Yet the last question seems “unlike the others.”*
- (a) *Most of us would answer “yes” to the first three questions, but probably hesitate about the last one. It seems fearful and threatening in some way. What makes this last question seem different to us?*
- (b) *What is it that will tell us these questions are really all the same?*
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Although we may answer affirmatively to the first three questions, the fourth question, “the last unanswered question,” supposedly seems fearful to us and unlike the others (7:1–2). I say “supposedly” only because not everyone has that reaction immediately. Some of us may hesitate to answer the final question simply because we don’t understand just what it means and what it implies. Is it some kind of trick question? What other motivation for answering “yes” is there *except* “because it is the truth”?

That’s what makes it somewhat fearful. We are afraid that we are being asked to perceive the world this way—a world I rule, a world where I am powerful, a world in which I have no enemies and cannot sin—in some kind of blind faith even though we know darn well *it isn’t that way!* Beside that, we also imagine that we get some benefit from having enemies, because we get to blame them for our problems, our unhappiness, our anger, and so on. Without enemies, we have no scapegoats; we have to take full responsibility for ourselves.

Chapter 31, Section V, talks about “the face of innocence,” that aspect of our self-concept that sees ourselves as “good within an evil world.” It goes on to say:

This aspect never makes the first attack. But every day a hundred little things make small assaults upon its innocence, provoking it to irritation, and at last to open insult and abuse.

The face of innocence the concept of the self so proudly wears can tolerate attack in self-defense, for is it not a well-known fact the world deals harshly with

<sup>8</sup> T-15.XI.8:4: “Make this year different by making it all the same.”

defenseless innocence? No one who makes a picture of himself omits this face, for he has need of it. The other side he does not want to see. (T-31.V.3:3-4:3).

The ego needs this face of innocence and it needs enemies to justify its “attack in self-defense.” We do not *want* to see a world without enemies as the truth! We may *think* we would like it, but some part of us knows it would not like the consequences of such a view. That’s the source of the vague uneasiness we feel when considering that final question.

*Reason*, however, says all the questions are the same. The emphasis on sameness is one that will run through much of the rest of the Course (7:3–4). The first three questions seem simple enough to answer, but the last one has threatening overtones (7:5). Somehow the idea of believing this *because* it is the truth runs into a hidden belief that “*truth* may be the enemy you yet may find” (7:6). The ego wants to find sin in the world and to believe we are powerless against it (7:7). We run into a conflict of seeing the world the way our egos *want* to see it, or seeing it *as it really is*. Because we unconsciously *do not want* to see a world without enemies, we react with fear to the idea that a world without enemies *is the truth*.

As we shall see, that implies that although we believe we have answered the first three questions in the affirmative, we have held back the option of changing our minds about it. That last question, however, calls for an absolute, irrevocable decision. That is what makes it fearful.

## Paragraph 8 (7:1–8, (FIP))

**8** Forget not that the choice of truth or sin, power or helplessness, is the choice of whether to attack or heal. <sup>2</sup>For healing comes of power, and attack of helplessness. <sup>3</sup>Whom you attack you cannot want to heal, and whom you would have healed must be the one you chose to be protected from attack. <sup>4</sup>And what is this decision but the choice whether to see him through the body’s eyes or let him be revealed to you through vision? <sup>5</sup>How this decision leads to its effects is not your problem, but what you *want* to see must be your choice. <sup>6</sup>This is a course in cause and not effect.<sup>9</sup>

### • Study Question •

7. The last sentence says, “This is a course in cause and not effect” (8:6). What is the “cause” referred to; that is, what determines whether or not we see a world we rule instead of one that rules us?

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<sup>9</sup>. *Cause* here is your decision that you want to see your brother through vision. *Effect* is actually receiving the vision that reveals to you who your brother is. The point is that you need only concern yourself with the first.

This paragraph deals with our choice. In choosing sin and helplessness, we are choosing to attack. In choosing truth and power, we are choosing to heal (8:1). Attack and healing are mutually exclusive. When we own our power, we can heal; when we buy into helplessness, we attack (8:2). You cannot attack and heal the same person. If you desire to heal someone, you certainly have no desire to attack them, and the reverse is equally true (8:3).

The choice between healing and attack is nothing more than the choice between the revealed vision of someone as the holy child of God or the limited perception of them offered through the body's eyes, which is usually judgmental (8:4). Each time you encounter anyone, this is the choice you have: the body's perception alone, or the vision revealed by the Holy Spirit. You may not yet understand just how this decision leads to either attack or healing, but that isn't your concern (8:5). Your decision must be about what you *want* to see. Do you want to see your brother sinless, or not? (See T-20.VII.9:1–2)

The final sentence (8:6) is worth considering in its own right, apart from the context. It states a basic principle of this course: It deals with the *cause*, not with the effects. It isn't about changing behavior, for instance, but deals with changing the cause of behavior, which is our thoughts. It isn't about changing the world, but about changing our mind (which is the cause of the world we see). And so on.

In this specific context, however, the cause being referred to is our decision to see with vision; the effect is the gift of vision that is given by the Holy Spirit. We don't need to be concerned with the latter, only with the former: the decision.

## Paragraph 9 (8:1–9:4, (FIP))

**9** Consider carefully your answer to the last question you have left unanswered still. <sup>2</sup>And let your reason tell you that it must be answered, and *is* answered in the other three. <sup>3</sup>And then it will be clear to you that as you look on the effects of sin in any form, all you need do is simply ask yourself:

*<sup>4</sup>Is this what I would see? <sup>5</sup>Do I **want** this?*

<sup>6</sup>This is your one decision; this the condition for what occurs. <sup>7</sup>It is irrelevant to how it happens, but not to *why*. <sup>8</sup>You have control of this. <sup>9</sup>And if you choose to see a world without an enemy, in which you are not helpless, the *means* to see it will be given you.

• **Study Question** •

8. *The logic being used here is simple. It says, “If you have answered the first three questions with a ‘yes,’ you have already answered the fourth question.” (Paragraphs 10 and 11 will explain further why this must be so.) For now, assuming the truth of this logic, it then tells us that we will realize that all we need ever ask ourselves, when confronted with “the effects of sin in any form,” is: “Is this what I would see? Do I want this?” Why is realizing what we want to see the only question? (Think “cause and effect.”)*

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Returning to the discussion of the four questions, Jesus asks us to carefully consider our response to the final, unanswered question (9:1). Allow your reason to engage, and think about it. If you answer “Yes” to the first three questions then, logically, you have *already* answered the fourth question. If you desire a world in which you rule, are powerful, have no enemies, and cannot sin, you *are* desiring to see what you have been denying—the real world. The truth.

If you can see that, “it *will* be clear to you” that whatever you may be looking at, the only question you need to ask yourself is, “Is this what I *would* see? Do I *want* this?” (9:4–5)

Why must that realization follow from realizing you’ve already answered the final question in answering the first three? The clue is in the words, “as you look on the *effects* of sin in *any* form” (9:3), specifically, in the word “effects.” Jesus just told us this is a course in cause and not effect. He is directing our attention, not to the effects of sin, but to the *cause* of what we see—which is *what we want to see*.

Thus, the only concern we need have is the choice of what we *want* to see, the choice between vision and the body’s eyes. What we want to see is “the *condition* [or cause] for what occurs” (9:6). *How* our choice affects what occurs “is irrelevant,” but our choice is directly connected to *why* it occurs (9:7). And you and I are not helpless; we “*have* control of this” (9:8). The promise is this:

If you choose to see a world without an enemy, in which you are *not* helpless, the *means* to see it *will* be given you. (9:9)

Don’t worry about whether that is possible, or how it can happen, what is the mechanics the Holy Spirit uses to open your spiritual eyes. Just decide what you want to see, and ask for the vision. *You are not helpless*.

## Paragraph 10

**10** Why is the final question so important? <sup>2</sup>Reason will tell you why. <sup>3</sup>It is the same as are the other three, *except in time*. <sup>4</sup>The others are decisions which can be made and then unmade, and made again. <sup>5</sup>But truth is constant, and implies a state where vacillations are impossible. <sup>6</sup>You can desire a world you rule, which rules you not, and change your mind. <sup>7</sup>You can desire to exchange your helplessness for power, and lose this same desire as a little glint of sin attracts you. <sup>8</sup>And you can want to see a sinless world, and let an “enemy” tempt you to use the body’s eyes and change what you desire.

Now, Jesus amplifies what he has already said, explaining why answering the first three questions means you have already answered the fourth. The final question is the most important one because it differs from them in one particular way, in respect to *time* (10:1–3). The answer to Questions 1 to 3 can change over time; they represent “decisions which can be made and then unmade, and made again” (10:4). Truth, on the other hand, *does not change over time*, it is *constant*; once you decide something *because* it is the truth no vacillation is possible (10:5).

Today you may desire a world you rule; tomorrow, you might change your mind and prefer to believe you are a victim of the world you see (10:6). You may choose power over helplessness but, later, be tempted by some attractive temptation to believe in sin’s reality and your inability to resist or combat it, or in its reality in another you wish to judge (10:7). You may want to see a sinless world and then be tempted by the imaginary advantage of seeing someone as your enemy (10:8). All these decisions are subject to change. The last one is different.

## Paragraph 11

**11** In *content* all the questions are the same, for each one asks if you are willing to exchange the world of sin for what the Holy Spirit sees. <sup>2</sup>For it is this the world of sin denies, and therefore those who look on sin are seeing the denial of the real world. <sup>3</sup>Yet the last question adds the wish for constancy in your desire to see the real world, so the desire becomes the only one you have. <sup>4</sup>By answering the final question yes, you add sincerity to the decisions that you have already made regarding all the rest. <sup>5</sup>For only then have you renounced the option to change your mind again. <sup>6</sup>When it is this you do not want, the rest are *really* answered.

• **Study Question** •

9. *The fourth question does have one difference from the other three. What is this difference, and why is it so important?*
- A. *The first three are questions of form; the last is a question of content. Choosing content is more important than choosing form.*
  - B. *The first three are questions dealing with perception, while the last deals with vision; vision is what leads us to the real world.*
  - C. *The first three questions are within time, and our answers to them can change within time; the last question deals with truth, which is outside of time. The last question includes a desire for constancy, so that it means we have renounced the option of changing our minds.*

•

All four questions deal with the same basic content: the “exchange [of] the world of sin for what the Holy Spirit sees” (11:1), which is the real world. So, in that sense, if you answer “Yes” to any of the questions, you have answered all of them. In choosing to be ruled, to be helpless, to have enemies, and to see sin, we have been denying the real world (11:2). That’s what “what I denied” refers to in 6:11. That final question, which asks us if we want to see what we have denied, in adding the phrase “*because it is the truth,*” makes your desire for the real world *constant*, because as was pointed out in 10:5, “truth is constant.” It removes the element of time from the equation, and thus “your desire to see the real world... becomes the *only* one you have” (11:3). Answering “Yes” to this final question adds *sincerity* to your decisions about questions 1 to 3 (11:4), because by making the choice *because it is the truth*, “you have *renounced* the option to change your mind again” (11:5). Until you make that absolute decision, you have not *finally* answered any of the questions, but when you have sincerely let go of the possibility of changing your mind, then they’re *really* answered” (11:8). Vision will follow.

## Paragraph 12

**12** Why do you think you are unsure the others have been answered? <sup>a</sup>Could it be necessary that they be asked so often if they had? <sup>b</sup>Until the last decision has been made, the answer is both yes and no. <sup>c</sup>For you have answered yes without perceiving that yes must mean *not no*. <sup>d</sup>No one decides against his happiness, but he may do so if he does not know he does it. <sup>e</sup>And if he sees his happiness as ever-changing—now this, now that, and now an elusive shadow attached to nothing—he *does* decide against it.

• **Study Question** •

10. *We may think our answer is “yes” to the first three questions, and yet we are not always sure of that. Our answer to the questions is both “yes” and “no.” In answering the last question we finally perceive that “‘yes’ must mean ‘not no.’” What does that mean?*
- A. *We give up the option of denying what the Holy Spirit sees, the real world, in which there are no enemies.*
  - B. *We refuse to see our happiness as ever changing.*
  - C. *We see that the choice for vision totally excludes any reliance on perception.*
  - D. *We give up the right of changing our mind again.*
  - E. *All of the above.*

•

The problem with the way we answer even the first three question is that we equivocate. We hesitate to make a full commitment. If there is any doubt about our answers, it can only be because we have not *truly* answered (12:1–2). “Until the last decision has been made, the answer is both yes and no” (12:3). We need to be honest with ourselves. Try this experiment: Say, out loud when you are alone, “I want to see a sinless world, where there are no enemies and my power to bless can be exercised without restraint.” Say it and do your best to mean it with all your heart. But as you say it, ask yourself: “Do I want this permanently, or do I want it only as long as it feels good? Do I still reserve the right to change my mind?”

“‘Yes’ *must* mean ‘not no’” (12:4). In other words, unless your “yes” is 100% yes, it isn’t really a yes. There cannot be any “no” left in your “yes.” Our 3-year-old grandson was with us recently in a gift shop. My wife offered to buy him a T-shirt, but he said, “No. I don’t want a T-shirt.” So my wife, lovingly, told him, “All right. But if you ever want to change your mind, I’ll come back here and buy one for you.”

He replied, “I *don’t* want to change my mind!”

His “no” definitely did not include any stray “yes.” Not even any “maybe.” He got that his answer was not complete unless it included no option to change his mind. We could all learn from that.

The Course insists that our happiness lies in heeding its advice, and that in hesitating to give that decisive answer, we are deciding *against* our own happiness. No one does that *consciously*. We don’t go around telling ourselves, “Better not do that; it might make me happy” (12:5). However, if we are unaware that we are making the wrong choice or that the choice we are making will result in our unhappiness, we *may* make such a decision. We are certain to make this decision for unhappiness if we believe our happiness comes from outside things that come and go over time or place (12:6). We are looking for happiness in all the wrong places.



## Paragraph 13

**13** Elusive happiness, or happiness in changing forms that shift with time and place, is an illusion that has no meaning. <sup>2</sup>Happiness must be constant, because it is attained by giving up the wish for the *inconstant*. <sup>3</sup>Joy cannot be perceived except through constant vision, and constant vision can be given only those who *wish* for constancy. <sup>4</sup>The power of the Son of God's desire remains the proof that he is wrong who sees himself as helpless. <sup>5</sup>Desire what you will and you shall look on it and think it real. <sup>6</sup>No thought but has the power to release or kill. <sup>7</sup>And none can leave the thinker's mind or leave him unaffected.

### • Study Question •

11. *The power of our desire is the proof that we are not powerless: "Desire what you want, and you will look on it and think it real."*

A. *What, then, is the key to an experience of constant happiness?*

A. *Our wish for constancy.*

B. *Arranging the world perfectly to our liking.*

C. *Getting rid of all our enemies.*

B. *What must we give up in order to find constant happiness?*

A. *Our power of decision.*

B. *Our desire for the inconstant.*

C. *Anything God asks us to.*

•

We are choosing unhappiness if we think happiness comes from “changing forms that shift with time and place.” We are chasing phantoms (13:1). Like truth, “Happiness must be constant.” The second clause of the sentence, which gives the explanation of *why* happiness must be constant, is fascinating and eminently logical: Happiness “is attained by *giving up* the wish for the *inconstant*” (13:2). This reminds me of the biblical book of Ecclesiastes, with all its talk about “chasing after wind.” For instance:

I have seen everything that has been done here under the sun; it is all futility and a chasing of the wind. (Ecclesiastes 1:14 REB)

As pessimistic as that may sound, it is an accurate description of the pursuit of happiness through the inconstant, and to find true happiness, that pursuit is what must be given up!

Ponder that a moment: Happiness must be *constant*. Happiness isn't affected by anything that shifts and changes with time or place. Do you think your happiness depends on where you live? Where you work? Having the best streaming TV service? Being with certain people? If your happiness depends on anything that can change, it *cannot* be constant.

Have you even *imagined* the possibility of *constant happiness*? Does that seem in the realm of the possible? This is a really radical view of happiness, and it bears thinking about. The Course says that constant happiness, “pure joy,” is the one thought that should be remembered throughout every day (M-16.6:1-2). The Workbook says that “God's will

for me is perfect happiness” (W-101). How is that even possible? Perfect, constant happiness is possible when our vision is set on only what is eternal and constant (13:3)—i.e., the Truth. The reality of our eternal, invulnerable, radiant Being. The key factor is “the power of the Son of God’s desire” (13:4). We must *wish* for constancy (13:3). The fact that it depends on our wish, our desire, is the proof that we are not powerless!

“Desire what you will and you shall look on it and think it real” (13:5). If we want *constant* happiness *because* it is the truth, we will see it; it will become real to us. If we settle for intermittent happiness, unwilling to give up the possibility of changing our minds, then intermittent happiness is what we will see and experience. Every thought “has the power to release or kill” (13:6). Thoughts stick with us; they do not leave the mind that thinks them. And every thought we think affects us, whether we know it or not.

3 Your mind and mine can unite in shining your ego away, and releasing the strength and beauty of God into everything you think and will and do. 4 Do not settle for anything less than this, and refuse to accept anything but this as your goal. 5 Watch your mind carefully for any beliefs that hinder its accomplishment, and step away from them.

12. 1 Judge how well you have done this by your own feelings, for this is the one right use of judgment. (T-4.VI.11:3–12:1)<sup>10</sup>

## Paragraph 14 (VIII.1:1–2:2, (FIP))

**14** Are thoughts, then, dangerous? <sup>2</sup>To bodies, yes. <sup>3</sup>The thoughts that seem to kill are those which teach the thinker that he *can* be killed. <sup>4</sup>And so he dies, because of what he learned. <sup>5</sup>He goes from life to death, the final proof he valued the inconstant more than constancy. <sup>6</sup>Surely he thought he wanted happiness. <sup>7</sup>Yet he did not desire it *because* it is the truth, and therefore must be constant. <sup>8</sup>The constancy of joy is a condition quite alien to your understanding. <sup>9</sup>Yet if you could even imagine what it must be, you would desire it although you understand it not.

### • Study Question •

12. Read the first sentence along with VII.13:7–8 to give the question the proper context. Thoughts can be dangerous, but only to bodies; they can cause bodies to die. Based on what you have read up to and including this paragraph, what does it mean to desire happiness because it is the truth?

•

It should be clear that no section break belongs here, as there is in the FIP edition. The first line *depends on* the last line of the preceding paragraph. We’ve just been told that no thought leaves us unaffected, and thoughts can kill as well as release (13:7–8). So it’s quite natural to wonder: Are thoughts dangerous?

<sup>10</sup> T-4.IV.8:3-6 (FIP)

The answer is straightforward and sobering: Yes, thoughts are dangerous—to bodies. Of course, if we're identified with our bodies that makes thoughts a bit scary. But it's really nothing more than a simple statement of the mind/body connection that is pretty much taken for granted in recent years. We know very well that thoughts affect our bodies. Worry and stress can make our bodies sick. Positive, affirmative thinking can heal them.

It's more than that, however. Thoughts can actually kill our bodies. The next few lines seem to be teaching us that the only reason our bodies die is because of the thoughts that tell us we *can* be killed (14:3–4). We die *because* of what our thinking has taught us (14:4–5). In sentences 5 to 7, Jesus links this back to our pursuit of happiness and our mistaken seeking it in “the inconstant more than constancy” (14:5). This is the cause of our physical ailments and death.

Looking at it in the other direction, from cause to effect, may make it clearer. We *think* we want happiness (14:6). We make the mistake of seeking for it in the impermanent things of this world, including our bodies, instead of wanting *constant* happiness *because* that is the truth (which is constant by definition) (14:7). We are valuing the *inconstant* over the constant, but to be inconstant is to cease to exist: to die. Hidden in the ego's valuing of inconstancy is its valuing of death, so that is what, eventually, we get. Robert Perry states it elegantly: “Our body dies as an outward statement of what we really valued.”

As I pointed out earlier (see 13:3 above) regarding pure joy and constant happiness, the very concept of it is “quite alien to your understanding” (14:8). I have to confess that, before I read about it in the Course, it never entered my mind that happiness not only *could* be constant but *should* be. Maybe the idea seems alien to you as well. Jesus seems to assume that it is, but he suggests that simply *imagining* what it *must* be is enough to cause us to *desire* it, even if we don't *understand* exactly what it is like or how to obtain it (14:9). And the power of our desire is enough to open us to receive it—at least that is the implication I see here.

The following paragraphs from the Workbook call for our imagining in the same way. Although they speak of peace rather than happiness, they are speaking of the same state of mind, that rests in the eternal truth and has let go of the ephemeral and inconstant:

Can you imagine what a state of mind without illusions is? How it would feel? Try to remember when there was a time, - perhaps a minute, maybe even less - when nothing came to interrupt your peace; when you were certain you were loved and safe. Then try to picture what it would be like to have that moment be extended to the end of time and to eternity. Then let the sense of quiet that you felt be multiplied a hundred times, and then be multiplied another hundred more.

And now you have a hint, not more than just the faintest intimation of the state your mind will rest in when the truth has come. Without illusions there could be no fear, no doubt and no attack. When truth has come all pain is over, for there is no room for transitory thoughts and dead ideas to linger in your mind. Truth occupies your mind completely, liberating you from all beliefs in the ephemeral.

They have no place because the truth has come, and they are nowhere. They can not be found, for truth is everywhere forever, now (W-pI.107.2:1-3:6).

## Paragraph 15 (VIII.2:3–8, (FIP))

**15** The constancy of happiness has no exceptions, no change of any kind. <sup>2</sup>It is unshakable as is the love of God for His creation. <sup>3</sup>Sure in its vision as its Creator is in what He knows, it looks on everything and sees it is the same. <sup>4</sup>It sees not the ephemeral, for it desires that everything be like itself, and sees it so. <sup>5</sup>Nothing has power to confound its constancy, because its own desire cannot be shaken. <sup>6</sup>It comes as surely unto those who see the final question is necessary to the rest as peace must come to those who choose to heal and not to judge.

### • Study Question •

13. *True joy or happiness is constant and unchanging. It does not see the “ephemeral” (the inconstant), and it desires everything to be constant, and sees it that way. We have been told that if we desire this constancy, we will be given the means to see it. What will help bring about this desire in us?*
- A. *Gaining a thorough understanding of what consistent happiness must be like.*
  - B. *Allowing ourselves to imagine what it must be like.*
  - C. *Nothing can help, since such happiness is alien to our understanding.*

•

When a person is *constantly* happy, it means “there are no exceptions.” There is never a moment of sadness. The person is happy, and there is no change of *any* kind in that happiness (15:1). It is *unshakable* happiness, as constant as the love of God (15:2)! Our body’s existence is temporary. “Against this sense of temporary existence, the spirit offers the knowledge of permanent and unshakable being” (T-4.V.5:1<sup>11</sup>). That *does* seem unimaginable to us, or to me at least; but we must attempt to at least *imagine* what it would be like. We may not come close, but having a “faint intimation” of what it is like is all we need.

Constant happiness is based on certainty; it is as certain as God.<sup>12</sup> Its vision sees everything is the same (15:3). It’s all God, so if God is certain, all is certain, and happiness, therefore, is constant. Constant happiness does not see “the ephemeral.” It sees everything as eternal, as eternal as *it* (the happiness) is, because that is how this happy mind *wants* to see it (15:4). Its *desire* for seeing all things the same cannot be shaken, so as a consequence, that happiness cannot be shaken either (15:5).

<sup>11</sup> T-4.VI.8:1 (FIP))

<sup>12</sup> “You are as certain as God because you are as true as He is, but what was once certain in your mind has become only the ability for certainty” (T-6.VI.1:1–2; T-6.IV.7:6 (FIP)).

And then, tying all this back to that last unanswered question:

It comes as surely unto those who see the final question is necessary to the rest as peace must come to those who choose to heal and not to judge. (15:6)

“The final question is necessary to the rest.” In other words, your “yes” to any of the questions, to be a true yes, must be constant. It must be without equivocation or hesitation. It must be given “*because it is the truth*” that the world is without sin, without enemies, and without any power greater than ours. It must be based on the eternal and without any value or belief in the ephemeral. If that choice for constancy can be made, this constant and unshakable happiness will be ours, just as peace comes “to those who choose to heal and not to judge.” Those two things are closely related, if not identical.

### Paragraph 16 (VIII.3:1–6, (FIP))

**16** Reason will tell you that you cannot ask for happiness inconstantly. <sup>2</sup>For if what you desire you receive, and happiness *is* constant, then you need ask for it but once to have it always. <sup>3</sup>And if you do not have it always, being what it is, you did not ask for it. <sup>4</sup>For no one fails to ask for his desire of something he believes holds out some promise of the power of giving it. <sup>5</sup>He may be wrong in *what* he asks, *where*, and *of what*. <sup>6</sup>Yet he will ask, because desire *is* a request, an asking for, and made by one whom God Himself will never fail to answer.

#### • Study Question •

Here is the logic *reason* presents to us:

1. Happiness is constant (because it is the truth, which is constant)
2. What you desire, you receive.

Therefore, if you desire happiness, you will receive it *constantly*. You cannot ask for happiness *inconstantly* (16:1–2).

It follows then, that if you *don't have* constant happiness, you didn't ask for it (16:3). The “*because it is the truth*” aspect is essential. And if you truly believed that constant happiness is something God could give you, you *would* have asked for it (16:4).

It's quite possible you could be wrong, in any of several ways: you might be wrong that what you are asking for happiness can really deliver; you might be wrong about *where* you are asking (or where you are *looking* for what you want); you might be wrong that what you are asking for actually exists. But if you want it, you would ask. In fact, you *are* asking, simply by desiring it, “because desire *is* a request.” And if *you* were asking, as a being that God would never fail to answer, you would have received it (16:5–6).

All of this paragraph, it seems, has one central point: You have not yet asked for constant happiness. If we do not have constant happiness, we have not asked.

That may seem like a negative message but actually it's good news. If you *had* asked, but did not receive it, what then? Has God failed? But, knowing we have not yet asked

for constant joy, our task is clear: We need to ask for it. This is where I believe affirmations come in. We need to affirm what we want to be true, even if it is not yet true in our experience. So we can affirm:

*I want constant joy.*

*I do not desire the ephemeral things of this world.*

*I desire constant happiness because it is the truth.*

Spend time often with affirmations like this, and eventually, you will receive what you are asking for.

## Paragraph 17 (VIII.3:7–4:3, (FIP))

17 God has already given him all that he really wants. <sup>2</sup>But what he is uncertain of, God cannot give. <sup>3</sup>For he does not desire it while he remains uncertain, and God's giving must be incomplete unless it is received. <sup>4</sup>You who complete His will and are His happiness, whose will is powerful as His—a power that is not lost in your illusions—think carefully why it should be you have not yet decided how you would answer the final question. <sup>5</sup>Your answer to the others has made it possible to help you be but partially insane. <sup>6</sup>And yet it is the final one that really asks if you are willing to be *wholly* sane.

### • Study Questions •

14. *If happiness is constant, and is the truth, why then do we not experience constant happiness?*

- A. *We have not asked earnestly enough for it.*
- B. *We have not believed that God could give it to us.*
- C. *We have not asked constantly but uncertainly.*

15. *17:4 simply asks us to “think carefully why you have not yet decided how you would answer the final question,” although you have answered the others. If we are not experiencing constant happiness, then it must be true that we have not yet decided on our answer; “If you do not have it [happiness] always, being what it is, you did not ask for it” (16:3). For yourself, why do you think you have not answered the question yet?*

•

The “him” and “he” of 17:1 refer to the “one whom God Himself will never fail to answer” in 16:6, the one for whom his very “desire *is* a request.” It is absolutely certain that, if you desire it, you will have it, because “God has already given him all that he really wants” (17:1). In other words, God has already give each of us constant happiness! But if we are not certain that we want it “*because it is the truth*”, we don't really desire it. (17:2) God may have *given* it to us, but, lacking our desire, we have not *received* it, and therefore, “God's giving must be incomplete” (17:3).

What can we do, then? We've somehow blocked God's giving. Our will is as powerful as His, because we are those who complete His Will and are His happiness. That power, given for the purpose of creation, is just as powerful making illusions! So, what we must do is "think carefully," reflect, do some introspection. "Why have I not decided how to answer that final question?" (17:4) That question is, "Do I want to see what I denied *because* it is the truth?"

We've pointed out how the first three questions are really variants of the final one: "Do I want to see a sinless world because it is the unchanging truth?"

"Do I want a world without enemies, where nothing prevents my self-expression as the extension of God's love?"

The fact is we are hesitating to give solid, affirmative answers to these questions. We must be, because if we gave whole-hearted "Yes" answers to those questions, we would be experiencing constant, unending joy and happiness. So, ask yourself, "Why do I hesitate? What is holding me back?"

You and I have already answered "yes" to those first three questions, albeit inconsistently, with reservations. That makes it possible for us to be at least *partially sane* (17:5). That gives us a leg up; we are part way there. We need to go on to give a constant, unreserved "yes" to that final question to become *wholly sane* (17:6).

## Paragraph 18 (VIII.5, (FIP))

**18** What is the holy instant but God's appeal to you to recognize what He has given you? <sup>2</sup>Here is the great appeal to reason, the awareness of what is always there to see, the happiness that could be always yours. <sup>3</sup>Here is the constant peace you could experience forever. <sup>4</sup>Here is what denial has denied revealed to you.<sup>13</sup> <sup>5</sup>For here the final question is already answered, and what you asked for given. <sup>6</sup>Here is the future *now*, for time is powerless because of your desire for what will never change. <sup>7</sup>For you have asked that nothing stand between the holiness of your relationship and your *awareness* of its holiness.

<sup>13</sup>. "What denial has denied" is the real world, the world referred to in the four questions in paragraph 6.

• Study Question •

16. Suddenly we are talking about “the holy instant.” How is the holy instant related to our discussion of the last unanswered question, and our constant happiness? (All but one are valid answers.)

- A. In the holy instant we experience what it will be like when we have answered the question; we experience the happiness that could always be ours.
- B. The holy instant is God’s way of appealing to us to answer the question.
- C. In the holy instant we are being given the opportunity of answering the question.
- D. In the holy instant the question is already answered.
- E. The holy instant appeals to our reason, helping us to recognize what is always so.

•

When we experience a holy instant, it is a wonderful experience. But, typically, it is short-lived. We pop in and then pop out again. We need to realize that these holy instants are *invitations* to the realm of constant joy, a realm God has already given us. “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32 NRSV). They are indications of what it would be like to “recognize what He has given you,” to consistently desire constant happiness, to see the world without sin, to see ourselves as powerful rather than helpless victims, to see all this *because* it is the truth (18:1). Holy instants are foretastes of that.

The holy instant shows us “what is *always* there to see, the happiness that *could* be *always* yours.” In that instant of peace, we experience “the *constant* peace you could experience forever” (18:2–3). In a holy instant we experience, for a moment at least, “what denial has denied,” the real world free from sin, bondage, and enemies (18:4). You are experiencing, in that instant, the fruits of answering that final question and receiving all that you have asked for (18:5).

The a holy instant, the future is *now*; you have momentarily leaped to the end of time to experience the changeless. In a holy instant, within a holy relationship, you have become *aware* of its holiness (18:6).

Thus, holy instants are like God’s advertising, like free trials of Heaven. As we experience them over and over, we grow more and more willing to leave behind the ugly world we have made for the real world, to finally say, “Yes! I want this *because* it is the truth.”



# Answer Key

1. B
2. B,C,D, or E
3. D
4. A
5. C
6. (a) We believe that the truth may be the hidden enemy. This seems to be our last "hope of finding sin, and not accepting power." In other words, we still want sin to be real, and to deny our true Identity as the Son of God.  
(b) Reason.
7. A
8. Because our choice or desire of what we want to see determines what we see; it is the cause, and what we see is only the effect. If we choose to see a world without an enemy, the means to see it will be given to us.
9. C
10. E
11. (a) A  
(b) B
12. It means desiring happiness that is based upon the constancy of truth, and not happiness that is based on the presence (or absence) of inconstant things.
13. B
14. C
15. The answer to this question will differ for individuals, but the general idea should include the thought that we are still holding on to our desire for "the inconstant" or "ephemeral" things of this world, and/or that we are afraid of giving up our ego identity (which is one of those ephemeral things).
16. A,B,D,E