

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM® Text, Chapter 22

The Function of the Holy Relationship

Section VI

The Need to Defend

Explanation of underlining, italics and footnote formats can be found at the end of the commentary.

Overview of Section VI (T-22.V, “Weakness and Defensiveness” (FIP))

This section focuses on the idea that only the weak need defenses, and only the ego is weak. The Truth of us needs no defense. And the seemingly impressive defenses of the ego (the block of sin that looks like granite, for instance) are really false defenses, mere illusions.

Paragraph 1

How does one overcome illusions? ²Surely not by force or anger, nor by opposing them in any way, but merely by letting reason tell you that they contradict reality. ³They go against what must be true. ⁴The opposition comes from them, and not reality. ⁵Reality opposes nothing. ⁶What merely is needs no defense, and offers none. ⁷Only illusions need defense, because of weakness. ⁸And how can it be difficult to walk the way of truth when only weakness interferes? ⁹You are the strong ones in this seeming conflict, and you need no defense. ¹⁰Everything that needs defense you do not want, for anything that needs defense will weaken you.

• Study Question •

1. According to this paragraph, we can easily overcome the illusion of sin that seems to separate us by:
 - A. Getting angry at it and trying to force our way past it
 - B. Carefully defending ourselves against every appearance of the illusion
 - C. Letting the reason of our right mind tell us that illusions contradict reality

•

The previous section ended by telling us, “only an illusion stands between you and the holy Self you share” (T-22.V.5:8 (T-22.IV.7:8 (FIP))). The logical question which then arises is, “How does one overcome illusions?” Here, that question is asked rhetorically, and then answered — at first in the negative, or how *not* to overcome illusions: by direct opposition, anger, or force (1:1–2). There is no need to fight against illusions; you merely need to allow your reason “tell you that they contradict reality,” that illusions oppose the truth (1:3). “The opposition comes from them [illusions], and not reality. Reality opposes nothing” (1:4–5).

The particular illusion that the Course has had in focus for the last few sections is “the veil of sin,” that is, our belief in our own and others’ sinfulness, which lead to “the fear of God.” So what we are being told here is that it is not necessary to fight against feelings of guilt, or to struggle to overcome any fear we might have of encountering God directly. That guilt, and that fear, are both illusions. They are not *real*. Oh, the *feelings* of guilt and fear are real enough, but *actual* guilt? *Truly justifiable* fear? They do not exist. Any struggle or opposition comes from those illusions; reality simply *is*. It need not fight, nor defend itself (1:6). The reality is that God is Love and has never judged us, that God does not see any sin in us, only mistakes needing correction, correction that is freely offered to all who ask.

The illusions, however, *do* need defenses — because they are *weak* (1:7). Illusions have no basis in reality, they are groundless; therefore, they require frantic, constant defense against the truth. Recall the description of the ego’s frantic defensiveness in the last chapter:

Loudly the ego tells you not to look inward, for if you do, your eyes will light on sin and God will strike you blind.¹ ²This you believe, and so you do not look. ³Yet this is not the ego’s hidden fear, nor yours who serve it. ⁴Loudly indeed the ego claims it is—too loudly and too often. ⁵For underneath this constant shout and frantic proclamation, the ego is not certain it is so. ⁶Beneath your fear to look within because of sin is yet another fear, and one which makes the ego tremble: What if you looked within and saw *no* sin? ⁷This “fearful” question is one the ego never asks. ⁸And you who ask it now are threatening the ego’s whole defensive system too seriously for it to bother to pretend it is your friend. (T-21.IV.2:1–8; T-21.IV.2:3-3:2 (FIP))

If the only thing blocking your path are these *weak* illusions, it can’t be difficult to follow Truth (1:8). The illusions are weak; *you* are strong. You are real, and as part of reality you need no defense (1:9)! In fact you do not want anything at all that *needs*

¹. 2 Kings 6:18 (RSV): “And when the Syrians came down against him, Eli’sha prayed to the LORD, and said, ‘Strike this people, I pray thee, with blindness.’ So he [the LORD] struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Eli’sha.” Deuteronomy 28:28-29 (RSV) “The LORD will smite you with madness and blindness and confusion of mind; and you shall grope at noonday, as the blind grope in darkness, and you shall not prosper in your ways; and you shall be only oppressed and robbed continually, and there shall be no one to help you.”

defense, because only *weak* things need defense, and holding on to weak things will make *you* weaker (1:10). In particular, the Course focuses in on the defenses related to our bodies (see Workbook Lesson 135, especially paragraphs 4 to 11). The general idea is that we need to dis-identify with anything that needs defenses to survive, and to identify with the eternal. As the Workbook page on “What is the Body?” (#5 “What is” section) puts in in its final paragraph:

You will identify with what you think will make you safe. Whatever it may be, you will believe that it is one with you. Your safety lies in truth and not in lies. Love is your safety. Fear does not exist. Identify with love, and you are safe. Identify with love, and you are home. Identify with love, and find your Self. (W-WI.5.5:1–8)²

Paragraph 2 (2:1–3:2 (FIP))

2 Consider what the ego wants defenses for: always to justify what goes against the truth, flies in the face of reason, and makes no sense. ²Can this be justified? ³What can this be except an invitation to insanity to save you from the truth? ⁴And what would you be saved from but what you fear? ⁵Belief in sin needs great defense, and at enormous cost. ⁶All that the Holy Spirit offers must be defended against and sacrificed. ⁷For sin is carved into a block out of your peace, and laid between you and its return. ⁸Yet how can peace be so fragmented? ⁹It is still whole, and nothing has been taken from it.

• Study Question •

2. *What do our defenses really defend against? (More than one answer.)*
- A. *The truth*
 - B. *Sin*
 - C. *Pain*
 - D. *What we fear*
 - E. *The gifts of the Holy Spirit*
 - F. *Belief in sin*
 - G. *All of the above*

The ego is defending illusions. Therefore, the ego is attempting to “justify what *goes against* the truth, flies in the face of reason, *and makes no sense*” (2:1). There *is* no justification for the untrue, unreasonable, and nonsensical (2:2)! All these defenses,

² Locating “What is” sections in the Workbook has always been troublesome in every edition of the Course. For me, the easiest way to do so is to recall that the first “What is” section comes just before the first lesson in Part II of the Workbook, Lesson 221, and that the “What is” sections precede every tenth lesson. So I take the “What is” number (in this case, 5), subtract 1, multiply by 10, and add 221. (Or, with one less step, take the “What is” number, multiply by 10, and add 211; same result.) That yields 261. And, sure enough, “What is” #5 is right there before Lesson 261. Still not simple, but at least it works.

therefore, are nothing but “an invitation to insanity” (2:3). They are the ego’s attempts to “save you *from* the truth,” and surely, if you become convinced of a false picture of reality, living in an *alternate* and *unreal* reality, you *are* insane. Why on earth would anyone listen to such an invitation?

You must be terribly *afraid* of something if you feel such a need to be protected against it that you sacrifice your sanity (2:4). Yet, this is what we have done, because, being an illusion itself, the ego *must* defend itself against the truth. So it engages us in all kinds of defensiveness to occupy our time and our minds: defense of the ego’s feelings; defenses of the body; defense of one group against another; and so on. All of this is designed to defend the ego’s belief in sin, which is its ultimate defense against God. We don’t realize that our preoccupation with all these various forms of self-protection are really various expressions of the ego’s fear of the truth, and amount to an attack on our True Self.

This business of defenses is hard to grasp. Workbook Lesson 136 refers to it, in regard to sickness, and says that our decision to defend ourselves against the truth is “doubly shielded by oblivion” (W-136.5:2). First, we decided to defend against truth. Next, we *forgot* about making that decision. And finally, we forgot that we chose to forget! *Two* forgettings; two shields of oblivion. It says that all this can be undone if we are willing to reconsider the original decision to run from truth, that truth is something dangerous to us.

Let’s look at what this insane fear costs us; the costs are enormous (2:5). All the various gifts offered by the Holy Spirit “must be *defended against* and *sacrificed*” (2:6). Peace, for example, has to be sacrificed. No one who is constantly on the defensive can be at peace. Anything you are defending against is something you are afraid of, and peace is incompatible with constant fear. Jesus uses a vivid image here: “Sin is carved into a block out of your peace, and laid between you and its [peace’s] return” (2:7). I picture this demonic figure of the ego, approaching the solid rock of my peace and, with some infernal tool, carving out a huge block which somehow transmutes into “sin,” which the ego then sets up as a wall between me and my peace, preventing any chance that peace can reach me. I think “sin,” here, is shorthand for the whole complex of separateness, belief in imperfection, desire for ego autonomy, the wish to be special (which seems like an acceptable form of being separate), judgment, victimhood, competition, and so on. The image of carving this out of peace is a pictorial way of saying that any and all of these forms will rob us of peace.

The good news, however — the *truth* — is that peace *cannot be carved up*. “It is still whole, and nothing has been taken from it” (2:8–9). God’s creation cannot be affected by illusions.

Paragraph 3 (3:3–12 (FIP))

3 See how the means and the material of evil dreams are nothing!
²In truth you stand together, with nothing in between. ³God holds your hands, and what can separate whom He has joined as one with Him?³ ⁴It is your Father Whom you would defend against. ⁵Yet it remains impossible to keep Love out. ⁶God rests with you in quiet, undefended and wholly undefending, for this quiet state alone is strength and power. ⁷Here can no weakness enter, for here is no attack, and therefore no illusions. ⁸Love rests in certainty. ⁹Only uncertainty can be defensive. ¹⁰And all uncertainty is doubt about *yourself*.

• Study Question •

3. *When we think we are defending ourselves from our brother, we are really defending ourselves against God, and against His truth. What is the truth about our relationship?*
 - A. *We are two immature beings seeking to find a way to join with one another.*
 - B. *We are both joined with God and therefore joined with one another, with nothing in between.*
 - C. *We are only partially joined together because we are still uncertain of one another.*

Our evil dreams have had no real effects. Although our defenses *seem* to have butchered peace and altered it into an impenetrable *block* to peace, the *means* for that transformation — our evil dreaming — and the *material* of those dreams, the threats, the pains, the tragedies, the divisions — are nothing, nothing in reality. In truth, we and those we are in relationship with “stand together, with nothing in between” (3:2). Hard as it is to grasp — and I think we would all agree that it is often difficult to believe — nevertheless, we are One. As Marianne Williamson used to say when I attended her lectures in New York City, “There’s only one of us here.” When you are face-to-face with a person you are having trouble getting along with, it’s hard to believe in “*nothing* between.” But that’s the reality the Course is speaking of, and the divisions and barriers between us? *Those* are the illusions. *Those* are what he has in mind when he says, “...the means and the material of evil dreams are nothing.”

The phrase, “God holds your hands,” does not point to an anthropomorphic God with hands. It’s a figure of speech that tells us we are both, or all, joined to God, part of God. If we are both joined with God, how can we be separate (3:3)? In recoiling from union with one another, retreating behind our defenses, we are actually recoiling from God, our Father (3:4). Our egos know quite well that if we succeed in entering into true union with one another, we *have* opened up to God, and that’s why the ego fights it so fiercely.

³. Matthew 19:6 (KJV): “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

Nevertheless, “it remains impossible to keep Love out” (3:5). Hallelujah! It reminds me of a poem:

On the far reef the breakers recoil in shattered foam,
While still the sea behind them urges its forces home.
Its song of triumph surges o’er all the thunderous din:
The wave may break in failure, But, the tide is sure to win!

The reef is strong and cruel upon its jagged wall.
One wave, a score, a hundred, broken and beaten, fall.
Yet in defeat they conquer, the sea comes flooding in,
Wave upon wave is routed, But, the tide is sure to win!

Oh! Mighty sea, thy message in clanging spray is cast.
Within God’s plan of progress it matters not at last
How wide the shores of evil, How strong the reefs of sin.
The wave may be defeated, But, the tide is sure to win!
--- Priscilla Leonard

And for that matter, another poem I love:

He drew a circle that shut me out —
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in.
---Edwin Markham

The Course is calling us to always, over and over, draw that wider circle. But that means letting go of our defenses.

The thing about Love (and God *is* Love) is that it is quiet, undefended and wholly undefending (3:6). This seemingly weak state is true strength and power. It’s the way God is, and the way *we* must be to connect with the Self God created as us. You must let down your defenses to let the other enter. Some time soon, we really need to study the longest lesson in the Workbook, #135, “If I defend myself I am attacked,” and also Lesson 153, “In my defenselessness my safety lies.” To be *defenseless* sounds dangerous, doesn’t it? But the Course insists that we must be done with defenses, we have to take down the barriers to experience our oneness. “Defenses are the costliest of all the prices which the ego would exact” (W-153.4:1).

No one who is weak can afford to be defenseless — but the fact of us, the truth of us, is that we are strong with all the strength of God. In our true Self, there is no weakness and no attack, and therefore no illusions (3:7). The strong don’t need to attack because they have nothing to fear, and so illusory barriers simply don’t exist. They are open.

A simple example. Think of the way your hand is when you are trying to hold on to something and keep it from others. Your hand is tightly closed, and in that posture, your hand cannot receive anything, either. Now, think of how your hand looks after you have given a gift to someone; it's open, and capable of receiving. Separation is constrictive. We shut ourselves into little cocoons, tightly closed off from giving or receiving, closed off from communication. The next time you are feeling defensive, try a simple experiment: Form a fist. Look at it and slowly open it. And tell yourself, "My heart is open to give, and to receive."

"Love rests in certainty" (3:8). Love *rests*. It's quiet, not agitated. And it rests *in certainty*. Certainty is the direct knowing that I talk about. It is the absence of doubt. Love can be quiet because it knows the truth, and knows it deeply, profoundly — you are me, and I am you; we are one. Defensiveness arises only when we are uncertain of that oneness (3:9), and — startling thought here — "all uncertainty is doubt about *yourself*" (3:10). If I doubt that you are (or anyone is) a perfect, holy child of God, one with God and one with me, I will be uncertain around them and therefore defensive. But any doubt I have about *anyone* is doubt about myself, because I know deep down that what is true of another human being must also be true of me! And if I no longer doubt my own holiness, I cannot doubt yours, for the same reason, and defenses become unnecessary.

This is the ideal truth, but, we wonder, is it *practical*? Can I really walk around *defenseless*? Won't I get stomped on? Won't I be the world's doormat?

My mind goes back to that poem about the waves and the tide. Will *this* wave break on the rocks? Maybe. Maybe I'll be stomped on. But, I believe, if I refuse to let that extinguish my love, if I hold fast to the Truth that Love is what I am, then love wins. And ultimately, I believe, the tide of Love is sure to win. It's impossible to keep Love out.

Paragraph 4

4 How weak is fear; how little and how meaningless! ²How insignificant before the quiet strength of those whom love has joined! ³This is your "enemy": a frightened mouse which would attack the universe.⁴ ⁴How likely is it that it will succeed? ⁵Can it be difficult to disregard its feeble squeaks that tell of its omnipotence, and would drown out the hymn of praise to its⁵ Creator that every heart throughout the universe forever sings as one? ⁶Which is the stronger? ⁷Is it this tiny mouse or everything that God created? ⁸You are not joined together by this mouse, but by the will of God. ⁹And can a mouse betray whom God has joined?

⁴. This mouse whose squeaks would drown out the universal hymn of praise to God appears to be another reference to *The Mouse That Roared*. See T-21.VII.4:6.

⁵. "Its" refers to "every heart."

• **Study Questions** •

4. *What is the mouse, and what is the universe?*
 - A. *The mouse is the ego (fear), and the universe is everything that God created as one with Himself.*
 - B. *The mouse is any individual, and the universe is the Christ.*
 - C. *The mouse is a tiny rodent, and the universe is the entire Galactic Federation.*
5. *What is the main point of the imagery of the mouse against the universe?*

•

Fear is weak, little, and meaningless (4:1). It dwindles to insignificance in the face of the strength of shared love (4:2). In a holy relationship, that shared love is what we must draw upon. There *will* be fear. In fact, fear and defensiveness are usually our first reaction. We have two voices in us, the ego and the Holy Spirit, and both are giving our conscious mind their interpretation of everything:

What you do not understand is that two voices speak for different interpretations of the same thing simultaneously, or almost simultaneously, for the ego always speaks first. ²Alternate interpretations are unnecessary until the first one has been made, and speaking itself was unnecessary before the ego was made. ³The ego speaks in judgment, and the Holy Spirit reverses its decisions, much as a Supreme Court has the power to reverse a lower court's decision about the laws of this world. (T-5.VIII.1; (T-5.VI.3:5-4:1 (FIP))

So, there *will* be the response of fear, but also the response of Love, the Love that *has* always joined us together. In every moment, God is holding both of our hands. That response of fear is the “enemy” that is blocking our experience of union, but “before the quiet strength of those whom love has joined,” that “enemy” is totally insignificant, like “a frightened mouse which would attack the universe” (4:3). It has no chance of succeeding in its attack (4:4).

Great analogy! Let me take it down a notch, to bring it closer to home: Imagine a frightened mouse trying to attack an elephant. Would the elephant be frightened? Would it feel a need to defend itself? Would it attack the mouse? It probably would not even notice the mouse was there!

The elephant is your holy relationship, the reality of your union in Love. Identify with Love, and you are safe, as the Workbook says. Identify with Love, and you will be as indifferent to attack, or to fear, as the elephant is to the attack of the mouse. You will easily “disregard its feeble squeaks that tell of its omnipotence” (4:5).

Fear is the mouse; Love is the universe fear would attack. It hasn't a chance of winning its battle. The feeble squeaks of fear are trying to drown out the universe's hymn of praise to its Creator, the song that “every heart throughout the universe forever sings as one” (4:5), but which is stronger: “this tiny mouse or everything that God created” (4:6–7)? The answer is obvious. Love wins!

Let me pause for a moment to ask you: Have you felt that “hymn of praise...that every heart throughout the universe forever sings”? There's a song that, for me, captures

the sense of this heart-song. “How can I keep from singing?” (I’ll play this for us in class.) There are two versions of it I particularly like, one by Pete Seeger, the folk singer, and another by the contemporary artist, Enya. I especially like the line in the song that says, “I hear its music ringing, It sounds an echo in my soul.” (The full lyrics are attached as an Appendix.) When we open to the Kingdom within, there is music, and “It sounds an echo in my soul.” We hear it and we *resonate* with it. It’s the music of Home.

Paragraph 5

5 If you but recognized how little stands between you and your awareness of your union! ²Be not deceived by the illusions it presents of size and thickness, weight, solidity, and firmness of foundation. ³Yes, to the body’s eyes it looks like an enormous, solid body, immovable as is a mountain. ⁴Yet within you there is a force which no illusions can resist. ⁵This body only *seems* to be immovable; this force is irresistible in truth. ⁶What, then, must happen when they come together?⁶ ⁷Can the illusion of immovability be long defended for what is quietly passed through and gone beyond?

• Study Question •

6. *The apparent barriers are nothing, only illusions that can easily be overcome by the irresistible Force within us all. What is it that Jesus is trying to get us to recognize and to do?*
- A. *Realize that what seems to stop us from becoming aware of our union with one another is nothing, and to accept that union.*
 - B. *Realize that the Force of Love within us is irresistible, and to give in to it.*
 - C. *Recognize that sin has no foundation, and to end our belief in its power to keep us apart.*
 - D. *All of the above.*

•

We don’t realize how close we are to Home, how thin the veil is, how nearly we can almost be aware, right now, of our union with each other (5:1). As the poet Tennyson wrote,

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet-

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

Do you feel fairly close to your body? Of course you do! But the Kingdom of God, your true Self, the Oneness of which we are all a part, is closer than that, nearer than all

⁶. This is a reference to the classic paradox “What happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object?” The answer in this case is that the force within you is truly irresistible, while that which stands between you and your brother (the body, sin) only *seems* immovable.

physicality could possibly be. What we see of the barrier between us with our body's eyes seems enormous and solid, like an immovable mountain. Defensiveness seems the only reasonable — the only *possible* — response. Hope of dissolving the barrier and achieving union seems absurd. Don't believe it! Do not allow appearances to deceive you (5:2–3)! In all of us, including you, “there is a force which no illusions can resist” (5:4). “Yet it remains impossible to keep Love out” (3:5). No illusion can stand against Love, and Love is what you are (T-6.I.20:1–2; T-6.I.13:1-2 (FIP)). Our physical sight stops at the outside of the other. It seems impossible to get past that illusion, but the physical “only *seems* to be immovable; this force [Love] is irresistible in truth. We've all heard the old paradox of the irresistible force meeting an immovable object, and, as the song says, ”Somethin's gotta give.”⁷ And what gives is the illusion. The immovability is only seeming, the irresistibility is “in truth” (5:5). When we meet illusions with Love, we quietly pass through and go beyond, proving the barrier was no barrier at all (5:6–7).

We dance around the edges of Truth every day, so near, yet unseeing, thinking the obstacles are real and solid. They're not. If we identify with Love, if we allow our hearts to open, the barriers will fade and disappear, and the song of Love being sung by the universe will fill our hearts, and we will know we are One.

Paragraph 6

6 Forget not, when you feel the need arise to be defensive about anything, you have identified your self with an illusion, and therefore feel that you are weak because you are alone. ²This is the cost of all illusions. ³Not one but rests on the belief that you are separate. ⁴There is not one that does not seem to stand, heavy and solid and unmovable, between you and your brother, and not one that truth cannot pass over lightly, and so easily that you must be convinced, in spite of what you thought it was, that it was nothing. ⁵If you forgive each other, this must happen. ⁶For it is your unwillingness to overlook what seems to stand between you that makes it look impenetrable and defends the illusion of its immovability.

• Study Question •

7. *What, then, is the bottom line? What response has all of this argument and persuasion been trying to produce in us?*
- A. *Remembering that in being defensive we are identifying with an illusion.*
 - B. *Realizing we are not separate.*
 - C. *Forgiving one another.*
 - D. *Recognizing the illusory nature of the barriers.*
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⁷ Somethin's Gotta Give, lyrics by Johnny Mercer

So, let's get practical. When you feel the need to be defensive about anything — stop.⁸ Realize you've identified with an illusion of yourself that is weak and lonely, and realign yourself with the truth of your being, which is strong and forever joined with God and all of His creation (6:1). Thinking you are weak and alone is “the cost of all illusions” (6:2). All illusions are based on “the belief that you are separate” (6:3). They are all derived from that basic illusion. And that illusion of separation is a total lie!

If we are open to the truth about ourselves and one another, the “heavy and solid and unmovable” illusions can be lightly passed over, “so easily that you must be convinced, in spite of what you thought it was, that it was nothing” (6:4). It doesn't matter what the walls are between us, the age of the unforgiveness, the magnitude of the crime, truth will wipe them away, *if you forgive each other* (6:5). Let go of your unwillingness to overlook the misdeed of the other. Your belief in its immovability is what makes it appear immovable, unforgivable (6:6). Recognize that the wall is there because some insane part of your mind *has wanted it there*, and take responsibility for your ego. Decide that you have decided wrongly, that you want to be at peace, that you want to release the imprisoned love in your heart. If you do, “this must happen” (6:5). The wall must fall, and you must pass lightly beyond it, learning once and for all that it was nothing.

⁸ The song by Devotion, “Stop. Step back” comes to mind.

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 itself.

Answer Key

1. C
2. A, D, E
3. B
4. A
5. Jesus wants us to see how ridiculous it is to believe that the ego, or fear, or sin, can possibly win its battle against all of God's creation.
6. D
7. C

How Can I Keep From Singing?

My life goes on in endless song
Above earth's lamentations,
I hear the real, though far-off hymn
That hails a new creation.

Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear its music ringing,
It sounds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing?

While though the tempest loudly roars,
I hear the truth, it liveth.
And though the darkness 'round me close,
Songs in the night it giveth.

No storm can shake my inmost calm,
While to that rock I'm clinging.
Since love is lord of heaven and earth
How can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble in their fear
And hear their death knell ringing,
When friends rejoice both far and near
How can I keep from singing?

In prison cell and dungeon vile
Our thoughts to them are winging,
When friends by shame are undefiled
How can I keep from singing?

Songwriters: Eithne Ni Bhraonain / Nicky Ryan / Roma Ryan