

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM® Text, Chapter 25

The Holy Spirit's Justice

Section IV

The Light You Bring

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

Overview of Section IV

This section focuses on the joy that comes to us as we fulfill our divine purpose of bringing the light of Heaven to all the world. It is filled with poetic description of the impact that a healed mind has on the world around it, and the powerful motivation of being a vehicle for God in the world.

Paragraph 1

Minds that are joined and recognize they are can feel no guilt. ²For they cannot attack, and they rejoice that this is so, seeing their safety in this happy fact. ³Their joy is in the innocence they see, and thus they seek for it, because it is their purpose to behold it and rejoice. ⁴Everyone seeks for what will bring him joy as he defines it. ⁵It is not the aim, as such, that varies. ⁶Yet it is the way in which the aim is seen that makes the choice of means inevitable and beyond the hope of change unless the aim is changed. ⁷And then the means are chosen once again, as what will bring rejoicing is defined another way and sought for differently.

• Study Question •

1. *Minds that are joined feel no guilt because they cannot attack. That makes sense, but why are minds that are joined unable to attack?*

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You will seek for joy. But how you define joy will determine the means you use in seeking it. Minds that are joined know that their joy lies in seeing innocence. They cannot attack and so cannot feel guilt.

The recognition of our union with one another has far-reaching effects. When I say “union,” I mean it in the sense of *complete unity*. Minds that are joined in the way I

believe the Course means it (1:1) are not separate minds in communication with one another, or minds united by identical thoughts; rather, the minds that thought they were independent minds have realized that in fact they are one mind, the Mind we all share. As Marianne Williamson used to say in talks I heard, “There’s really only one of us here!” Your mind is the Mind of God. We recognize that a person we believed was a separate person is actually a part of our Self.¹

When we recognize this total union we cannot feel guilt, because guilt always involves our interaction with someone else, someone we have mistreated in some way. But if there is no “other person” at all, guilt is simply impossible. There is nobody to attack (1:2) and therefore, no guilt. Those thus united “rejoice” that they cannot attack, because it also means they cannot be attacked. There is no “other” to attack them.

The joy they feel is deeply connected with “the innocence they see” in one another and themselves. They actively *want* to see innocence and rejoice, and therefore they seek to see it (1:3). They have defined joy as “seeing innocence,” and their desire for joy motivates their seeking to see it (1:4). Think about it: Can you say, “My greatest joy is seeing the innocence in those around me”?

This is just one example of the simple truth that we all seek for what we think will bring us joy. Everyone aims for joy; it’s inherent in us to do so; that does not change. But what we think will *bring* joy — that changes, and unless it does the way we go about seeking joy is beyond hope of change. The ego thinks separateness and autonomy and the ability to offload our guilt on others through projection will bring us joy. The truth is, only union and the perception of mutual innocence can bring true joy. Once we define “what will bring rejoicing” in “another way,” we will choose different means to achieve that goal of joy. We will choose love rather than hate, union instead of separation (1:5–7).

¹ "Alone we can do nothing, but together our minds fuse into something whose power is far beyond the power of its separate parts. By not being separate, the Mind of God is established in ours and as ours" (T-8.V.1:6-7 (FIP), (T-8.IV.4:2–3 (CE))).

This is your responsibility, because once you have really done this you will accept the Atonement for yourself. What other choice could you make?

Having made this choice, you will begin to learn and understand why, when you have met someone else, you have thought he was someone else. And every holy encounter in which you enter fully will teach you that this is not so. (T-8.II.9:5-10:2 (CE), T-8.III.6:5-7 (FIP))

Paragraph 2

2 Perception's basic law could thus be said, "You will rejoice at what you see because you see it to rejoice." 2And while you think that suffering and sin will bring you joy, so long will they be there for you to see. 3Nothing is harmful or beneficent apart from what you wish. 4It is your wish that makes it what it is in its effect on you, because you chose it as a means to gain these same effects, believing them to be the bringers of rejoicing and of joy. 5Even in Heaven does this law obtain: The Son of God creates to bring him joy, sharing his Father's purpose in his own creation, that his joy might be increased, and God's along with his.²

• Study Question •

2. (2:3). What does "nothing" refer to here? Isn't it true that certain thoughts are inherently harmful?

This dynamic of goals, of means and end, is actually the basic law that rules our perception of everyone and everything in the world. That law could be stated like this: "You will rejoice at what you see because you see it to rejoice" (2:1). In other words, we choose a goal of what we want to see, what will bring us joy, and then we actually see it — and rejoice! Notice: We see what we want to see. The law is stated even more simply elsewhere: "Perception is a choice and not a fact." The notion is repeated several times with varying embellishments:

Perception selects, and makes the world you see. It literally picks it out as mind directs it. ... For what you look for you are far more likely to discover, regardless of its color, shape, or size, than what you would prefer to overlook. The still, small Voice for God is not drowned out by all the ego's raucous screams and senseless ravings, to those who want to hear.

Perception is a choice and not a fact. But on this choice depends far more than you may realize as yet. For on the voice you choose to hear and on the sights you choose to see depends entirely your whole belief of what you are. Perception is a witness but to this, and never to reality. (T-21.V.7:1-2:4 (CE), T-21.V.1:1-10 (FIP))

*"Who is my brother but Your holy Son? And if I see him sinful I proclaim myself a sinner, not a Son of God; alone and friendless in a fearful world. Yet this **perception is a choice I make, and can relinquish. I can also see my brother sinless, as Your holy Son**" (W-pII.351.1:1-4 (FIP)).*

The law was also clearly stated in Section I of this chapter:

². John 15:11 (GNT): "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

Perception is a choice of what you want yourself to be; the world you want to live in and the state in which you think your mind will be content and satisfied. It chooses where you think your safety lies at your decision. It reveals yourself to you as you would have you be. And always is it faithful to your purpose, from which it never separates, nor gives the slightest witness unto anything the purpose in your mind upholdeth not. (T-25.I.6:1–4 (CE))

It seems like Jesus wants us to get this, yes? We believe that the way we see things is the way they are — a *fact*. Really, the way we see things is the result of our choice, of how we *want* to see them, because we believe, perhaps subconsciously, that seeing things this way will bring us joy. The quote above from Lesson 351 makes it quite clear. Seeing a brother as a sinner “is a choice I make,” but it is also a choice I “can relinquish. I can also see my brother sinless.” Note carefully that the only thing changing here is my choice. Do I want to see him as sinful, or sinless? There is no change happening first in my brother. It is just my choice of what I want to see.

Why on earth would I want to see anyone as a sinner? Because a sinner is an independent being, separate from God, and that is what I want to be! The ego believes that suffering and sin will bring us joy, and as long as we accept that belief, actively or tacitly, sin and suffering will be there for us to see (2:2). The harm or blessedness we experience from anything is determined by our choices (2:3–4). We experience harm from things because we *want* it. “You chose it as a means to *gain* these same effects, believing them to be the bringers of rejoicing and of joy.”

The belief that our feelings are caused by people and things outside of us is almost universal, but what the Course is saying is that our egos *want* these feelings. The feelings reinforce the ego. Because we want them, we interpret what others say and do in whatever way we think will justify those feelings. We believe that the *feelings* are caused by what we perceive, when in fact, the *perceptions* are caused by the feelings our egos want to experience!

Remember that the next time you feel a negative reaction to someone or have a judgmental thought about them.

There is a positive side to all of this that shows up in the final sentence (2:5). The law we are discussing is, “You *will* rejoice at what you see *because* you see it *to* rejoice.” The law applies even in Heaven. There, we know that, as offspring of God created in His image, creating as God creates is what brings us and God joy, so that is what we do.

With this sentence, the thrust of the section becomes entirely positive, enticing us with a picture of what our lives can be like if we choose a different means that can bring us true joy, and inspiring us with a vision of the expanding effect of our choice on the rest of the world.

Paragraph 3

3 You maker of a world that is not so, take rest and comfort in another world where peace abides. ²This world you bring with you to all the weary eyes and tired hearts that look on sin and beat its sad refrain. ³From you can come their rest. ⁴From you can rise a world they will rejoice to look upon, and where their hearts are glad. ⁵In you there is a vision which extends to all of them and covers them in gentleness and light. ⁶And in this widening world of light, the darkness they *thought* was there is pushed away, until it is but distant shadows, far away, not long to be remembered as the sun shines them to nothingness. ⁷And all their evil thoughts and sinful hopes, their dreams of guilt and merciless revenge, and every wish to hurt and kill and die will disappear before the sun you bring.

• Study Question •

3. (3:2). *Think of some specific weary eyes and tired hearts from your life and let this line sink in—you can give them rest. Write a personalized version of this paragraph, applying its images to those persons.*

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So by our choices we are the maker of the world we see (3:1). Recall what was said in the previous section:

"But this world has two who made it, and they do not see it as the same. To each it has a different purpose, and to each it is a perfect means to serve the goal for which it is perceived." (T-25.III.3:3-4 (FIP) & (CE)).

We made the world we see. But it's an illusion, "a world that is not so" (3:1). With the help of the Holy Spirit's vision we can let it go, and "take rest and comfort" in the real world, a "world where peace abides." This requires our choice to see one another as sinless, as the Spirit sees us.

This world is what we share with everyone we encounter. We are surrounded by people with "weary eyes and tired hearts that look on sin and beat its sad refrain" (3:2). Seeing sin makes people weary and tired. Their hearts beat like the drumbeat of a dirge, a sorrowful lament at the condition of the life they see.

We have the great privilege of bringing them rest (3:3). We are makers of the world, and we can make a different world if we so choose (3:4). Our choice to see a different world will show them a joyous sight, shifting their heartbeats from sorrow to gladness. Our new vision will extend to those around us, showering them with gentleness and light (3:5). We bring them an expanding world of light, pushing away "the darkness they *thought* was there...until it is but distant shadows," shadows that soon disappear in the new light that is dawning, to be remembered no more (3:6). "And all their evil thoughts and sinful hopes, their dreams of guilt and merciless revenge, and every wish to hurt and kill and die will disappear before the sun you bring" (3:7).

This is why we are here! “I am the light of the world. That is my only function. That is why I am here” (W-pI.61.5:3-5 (FIP)).

Paragraph 4

4 Would you not do this, for the love of God? ²And for *yourself*? ³For think what it would do for *you*. ⁴*Your* evil thoughts that haunt *you* now will seem increasingly remote and far away from *you*. ⁵And they go farther and farther off, because the sun in you has risen that they may be pushed away before its light. ⁶They linger for a while, a little while, in twisted forms too far away for recognition, and are gone forever.

• Study Question •

4. What is “this” that you are being asked about in this paragraph?

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Given that vision of light flooding into the world through *you*, don’t you want to do this (4:1)? If you love God you do. And not only for God, but for the love of *yourself* (4:2)!

Jesus asks us to think what taking our place as the light of the world will do for *us*, not just for the world or for God (4:3). The light that shines in and through us carries away not only *their* dark and evil thoughts and their sinful hopes, their dreams of guilt and revenge, but the evil thoughts that haunt *you* will begin to recede from your awareness, farther and farther off, pushed away by the light of the sun that has risen in you (4:4–5).

The light expels them farther and farther from your awareness until they are nothing but a faint wisp of smoke on the horizon, unrecognizable, and then, almost without notice, they are gone forever (4:6).

What an attractive picture this paints! Think for a bit about what it would feel like to have your mind washed clean of all dark thoughts, all guilt feelings, and all resentments, driven out by the influx of divine sunlight arising within you! Wow!

Paragraph 5

5 And in the sunlight *you* will stand in quiet, in innocence, and wholly unafraid. ²And from you will the rest *you* found extend, so that *your* peace can never fall away and leave you homeless. ³Those who offer peace to everyone have found a home in Heaven the world cannot destroy, for it is large enough to hold the world within its peace. ⁴In *you* is all of Heaven. ⁵Every leaf that falls is given life in you. ⁶Each bird that ever sang will sing again in you. ⁷And every flower that ever bloomed has saved its perfume and its loveliness for you.

• **Study Question** •

5. (5:1). *What would it be like to be the person in this sentence? You may want to look up 20.VI.2:5-7 (FIP, CE).*

This paragraph is a beautiful, poetic attempt to describe what that purified mind feels like and what it creates all around itself. When your mind has been purified of all its dark thoughts, guilt feelings, and resentments, you will feel as if you are standing bathed in golden sunlight, quiet within and without, unselfconsciously innocent, and free from all fear (5:1).

The peace of God that we find is safe-guarded by the fact that it *radiates* from us to those around us. This implies that once we truly find it we can never lose it. The peace of God creates its own buffer zone (5:2). The expanse of God's peace is great enough to contain the entire world within it, and because the world is *contained* in it, the world cannot destroy it (5:3).

When we have recognized our union with God's Mind and all minds, *all of Heaven* is within us (5:4). We have connected with the Source and Sustainer of all things; we have become the Creator! We are That which gives life to leaves and songs to birds. The fragrance of every flower is its love-offering to us for the life we give (5:5–7).

Ken Wilber, in his book, *The Religion of Tomorrow*, has a similar and even more descriptive passage of what a Whole Mind is like:

This is a Wholeness beyond ideation, beyond comprehension, superabundantly overflowing into every nook and cranny in the entire Kosmos, filling it with a pure Awareness beyond thoughts and feelings and existing as the simple opening, space, or clearing in which the entire universe is arising right now, timeless moment to timeless moment. It is a "Consciousness," says Aurobindo, "always free from Ignorance." Imagine every vacancy, every hollow, every barren spot anywhere in your existence, and imagine them flushed with a radiant superabundance that engorges them with the utter Fullness of a radical infinity, overflowing to the utter ends of the universe itself, constantly bubbling over in an effervescent Kosmic Fulfillment with no boundary and no barrier, just bubbles of infinity tickling your being top to bottom. Imagine, at the same time, that every heaviness in your world, every solid, dull, and gravity-drenched item anywhere in your existence evaporates into a gleaming, glowing, Transparent Emptiness, a radiant, shining, brilliant Brightness that is lighter than Light and unobstructed as the sky on a summer morning's dazzling daybreak. You are as Full as you could possibly be, and as Free as you could possibly imagine, and it is all in the very Nature of your ever-present own true Thusness.

In this moment, it all comes to rest. In this present, it is all fully given. In this now, it all radically exists. As this Kosmos, your own Suchness arises moment to moment. When you feel the deepest you or I AMness "in here" and you feel the entire universe arising "out there," they are directly one and the same feeling—

one taste—with both of them arising in the clearing, the opening, the space where your head used to be but that is now seen and experienced as the One Taste of All That Is. You can drink the Pacific Ocean in a single gulp; taste the sky's deliciousness; inhale the sun till it fills your lungs with a radiant luminosity; step into the earth as your body's own skin, even for all eternity; feel a snowfall as your own being covering the world in a blanket of your gentle softness; greet each sunrise as the eternal return of the Light of your own Self-Realization. Truly, what is not given? When has this ever not been known? What could we ever possibly want? How could we ever possibly fear? Where could we ever possibly go? When could we ever possibly arrive? Why pretend anymore? (Ken Wilber, "The Religion of Tomorrow," pp. 249-250)

Paragraph 6

6 What aim can supersede the will of God and of His Son that Heaven be restored to him for whom it was created as his *only* home—nothing before and nothing after it, no other place, no other state or time, nothing beyond or nearer, nothing else in any form?³ ²This can you bring to all the world and all the thoughts that entered it and were mistaken for a little while. ³How better could your own mistakes be brought to truth than by your willingness to bring the light of Heaven with you as you walk beyond the world of darkness into light?

• Study Question •

6. *What aim or purpose is being talked about in 6:1, that in truth cannot supersede God's Will and our will that we be restored to Heaven, our only home?*
7. (6:2). *What can you bring to all the world?*

The ego's absurd aims of finding sin and guilt cannot possibly compete with this vision of Heaven. God's Will is that you and I, who were created for this very purpose, should be restored to our proper place in the Heaven of Oneness consciousness. Heaven is not a place; it is a state of mind that is one with Infinite Mind. It is That which has always existed and always exists, outside of which is nothing. It is the eternal state of All Being, containing the eternal Now that is all the "time" there is. It is so close and immediate that nothing is nearer; it is so vast that there is nothing beyond it. There is literally "*nothing else in any form*" (6:1).

You and I can bring this experience of Heaven to all the world. Yes; we can. The world is full of "thoughts that entered it and were mistaken for a little while" (6:2), which

³. This long sentence is a rhetorical question, which could be paraphrased this way: "What could possibly thwart God's will that His Son be restored to the Heaven that was created as his *only* home, with no other home before or after it and no other place or state in addition to it?"

refers to what we think of as our human selves. That's all you are: a thought that entered the world and was mistaken for a little while. You and I can bring Heaven to "*all* the world and *all* these thoughts"; notice the emphasized words, "all." What a glorious calling we have!

And this delightful mission for others is also the way we can bring our own mistakes to the truth. Our willingness to carry out this task, to "bring the light of Heaven with you as you walk beyond the world of darkness into light," is all that it takes to purify and enlighten our own minds.

We need to catch a vision of this, to let it inspire us and carry us through life's seeming difficulties, recharging and renewing our firm intention to, in every moment, with every person, be the light of the world. Ask yourself, "What purpose can get in the way of Heaven, my home, being restored to me?"

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. Attack implies the collision of separate objects. If you saw someone as one with you, you would not attack him or her, because you would not (knowingly) attack yourself.
2. “Nothing” refers to “nothing in the world,” to things you perceive with your eyes, not to thoughts, which *are* inherently harmful or beneficent. See 24.VII.6:1-3 (FIP, CE).
3. Individual responses will vary.
4. “This” is the activity described in Paragraph 3: Bringing rest to all the weary ones in this world, so that “all their evil thoughts and sinful hopes, their dreams of guilt and merciless revenge, and every wish to hurt and kill and die will disappear before the sun you bring.” Surely this is something you would want to do “for the love of God” and “for yourself.”
5. Individual responses will vary.
6. The aim of finding sin and suffering.
7. Heaven, our home. You might want to reread these sentences after rephrasing sentence 5 in this way: “What purpose can get in the way of Heaven, my home, being restored to me?”