

# Study Guide and Commentary

## ACIM® Text, Chapter 26

### Holy Ground

#### Section VI

## *Your Only Friend*

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

### Special Note

Due to lack of time, I've omitted any study questions and answers from this particular commentary. I hope to put them into the version I publish on the web or in print.

### Overview of Section VI

This small section is an expansion on the Course's opening declaration: "Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God."

Can anything, whatever it is, be threatened or taken away from you? If not, it is real. If so, it is unreal, and attaching to it will cause loss of peace, that is, suffering.

### Paragraph 1

Anything in this world that you believe is good and valuable and worth striving for can hurt you, and will do so—not because it has the power to hurt, but just because you have denied it is but an illusion and made it real. <sup>2</sup>And it is real to you. <sup>3</sup>It is *not* nothing. <sup>4</sup>And through its perceived reality has entered all the world of sick illusion. <sup>5</sup>All belief in sin, in power of attack, in hurt and harm, in sacrifice and death, has come to you, for no one can make one illusion real and still escape the rest. <sup>6</sup>For who can choose to keep the ones which he prefers and find the safety that the truth alone can give? <sup>7</sup>Who can believe illusions are the same and still maintain that even one is best?

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Notice how the seemingly harsh statement in 1:1 does not say that everything in this world is bad and will hurt you. What will injure you is how you hold it in your mind, what you think about it, or more exactly, what you believe about it. Believing that “anything in this world” (Can’t get more inclusive than that!) is “good and valuable and worth striving for”... is that what hurts you? Is the Course saying that nothing in the world is good or valuable or worth striving for?

Not quite. It seems to me that the key part is because we have made it real instead of an illusion. Nothing in this world can actually hurt us at all, but if we insist it is real and attach real value to it, it can hurt us just because it is not nothing to us. The true cause of all the various kinds of suffering we experience is that we are making illusions real and thus giving them the power to hurt us (1:2-5). Make one illusion real to yourself and all the illusions can hurt you (1:6). The value you give to your favorite illusion is unavoidably shared with all of them (1:7).

We need to learn to navigate our way through this illusory world, interacting with it as we do, while all the time knowing in our minds that it is only a dream.

## Paragraph 2

<sup>2</sup> Lead not your little life in solitude, with one illusion as your only friend. <sup>2</sup>This is no friendship worthy of God’s Son, nor one with which he could remain content. <sup>3</sup>But God has given you a better friend,<sup>1</sup> in whom all power in earth and Heaven rests.<sup>2</sup> <sup>4</sup>The one illusion that you think is friend obscures his grace and majesty from you, and keeps his friendship and forgiveness from your welcoming embrace. <sup>5</sup>Without him you are friendless. <sup>6</sup>Seek you not another friend to take his place. <sup>7</sup>There is no other friend. <sup>8</sup>What God appointed has no substitute. <sup>9</sup>And what illusion can replace the truth?

Don’t try to make friends with any illusion (2:1). Don’t try to live “in solitude,” separate from all else. To not befriend any illusion is similar to the Buddhist teaching of detachment, contained in its Four Noble Truths: 1. Life is suffering. 2. The cause of suffering is attachment or craving. 3. There is a way out of suffering. 4.

<sup>1</sup> The “better friend” is your brother. What is said about the “better friend” applies best to your brother, and further, the pronouns referring to this friend (“whom,” “his,” “him,” and “he”) are all lowercase in the Notes, in spite of Helen’s propensity for putting pronouns in uppercase that might refer to Persons of the Trinity.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 28:18 (KJV): “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” In the above reference, the one who has been given all power in earth and Heaven is your brother.

The way out is the Eightfold Path. In other words, live detached from the unreal, the physical universe. Attachment, or desire, or even aversion, will inevitably cause suffering.

Some examples: my physical possessions; money; reputation; bodily presence of loved ones. If you are attached to any of these things, loss of them (or not having them in the first place—desiring them, craving them) gives them the power to hurt you.

The Buddhists tell a parable of non-attachment:

Example of non-attachment: A Buddhist monk lived alone on the outskirts of a village. One day, a couple from the village came to him with a baby and said, “We cannot care for him. We want you to take care of him and raise him to be a monk.” This ran against his whole purpose of living in solitude, but he wasn't attached to that, so he replied, “Ah, so!”, took the baby and became as his father. He loved the child deeply.

A few years later, the couple returned and told the monk, “We are doing better now; we want our son back.” The monk's reply was the same: “Ah, so!” He released the boy back to his parents. He was not attached, and did not suffer.

Life lived attached to an illusion isn't worthy of any son of God, and will never bring contentment (2:2). There is a better way, a friend more worthy of you, a “better friend” who possesses all power in heaven and earth. That may sound like the Holy Spirit, but it's not. As the footnote in the CE points out, all pronouns referring to this friend are not capitalized in Helen's original notes. Look ahead at the last sentence of the third paragraph. Is that anything that could be applied to the Holy Spirit? Or is it what the Course has been repeating over and over: Give your brother or sister their true identity and they will give you yours! He or she is the Son of God, an extension of God, and as such possesses “all power in heaven and on earth.” Jesus claimed God had given him all power (Matthew 28:18). The Bible also says, “in this world we are as he is” (I John 4:17, REB). So this better friend is your special function partner, your brother or sister!

All power in earth and heaven rests in her/him (2:3). You really have no other friend (2:5,7). Stop trying to find a substitute, something else that can bring you happiness and contentment; there is none (2:6-8). How could an illusion replace the truth that has been appointed by God (2:8-9).

And yet, if you cling to any illusion as your friend, even one, you are blinded to the grace and majesty that lives in and as your brother or sister, and prevents friendship and forgiveness reaching from him/her to you (2:4). Workbook Lessons 128, 129, 132 & 133 are quite relevant here.

- The world I see has nothing that I want.
- Beyond this world there is a world I want.
- I loose the world from all I thought it was.
- I will not value what is valueless.

Reading them may help you understand this important topic.

### Paragraph 3

3 Who dwells with shadows is alone indeed, and loneliness is not the will of God. <sup>2</sup>Would you allow one shadow to usurp the throne that God appointed for your friend, if you but realized its emptiness has left *yours* empty and unoccupied? <sup>3</sup>Make no illusion friend, for if you do, it can but take the place of him whom God has called your friend. <sup>4</sup>And it is he who is your only friend in truth. <sup>5</sup>He brings you gifts that are not of this world, and only he to whom they have been given can make sure that you receive them. <sup>6</sup>He will place them on your throne when you make room for him on his.

God does not will that you be lonely, but when you value anything in this world, make it real, and stake your happiness on it, you are alone (3:1). Would you want to deny the Christ in your brother or sister if you realized that you are preventing yourself from seeing Christ in yourself (3:2)? Of course not! We need to bear this in mind when we find ourselves having judgmental thoughts about someone. When we judge, we are blocking our own awareness of our Christ-Self. To me, this is the real meaning of Jesus' statement, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged." (Matthew 7:1 NIV11)

Here, though, Jesus is emphasizing that it is our attachment to things of this world that result in our judging one another (3:1; 3:3). Many times that is an easy connection to make: Someone damages my car and I judge them to be a bad person. But sometimes, the connection isn't so obvious. Jesus stresses that it always works this way. Any illusion we make our friend will inevitably displace our true friend, the Christ in our brothers and sisters (3:3).

Truly, Christ in our brothers and sisters is our only friend (3:4). Seen sinless, your brother or sister brings you gifts from beyond this world, and the only way you are going to receive these gifts is if you give them to your brother (3:5). The gifts will be laid on your throne of power when you have granted him the right to sit on his throne.

It may bring this home if you read over most of this paragraph, replacing any reference to "he" or "him" or "his" with "your brother." Try reading this aloud to yourself. If it is appropriate, use the word "sister" instead of "brother."

2Would you allow one shadow to usurp the throne that God appointed for your brother, if you but realized its emptiness has left yours empty and unoccupied?  
3Make no illusion friend, for if you do, it can but take the place of your brother whom God has called your friend. 4And it is your brother who is your only friend in truth. 5Your brother brings you gifts that are not of this world, and only your brother to whom they have been given can make sure that you receive them.  
6Your brother will place them on your throne when you make room for your brother on his throne.

**Legend:**

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

The 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 identical to the FIP version, the division into paragraphs is often entirely 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.