

STUDY GUIDE AND COMMENTARY

ACIM TEXT, SECTION 3.III

Perception Versus Knowledge

The section is aptly titled; the chapter has been discussing perception in the last two sections, and now it will contrast perception with knowledge. The purpose here seems to be to placate our premature craving for knowledge—premature, because perception must become true before we can gain any knowledge. Knowledge will continue to be the topic for discussion through Sections IV and V as well. This chapter mentions knowledge more times than any other chapter in the Text.

• STUDY QUESTION •

1. *It would be a useful exercise to go through the entire section and, in two columns, list the things said about perception as contrasted with knowledge.*



PARAGRAPH 1

1. [You are confused about the difference between perception and cognition. You will note that]¹We have been emphasizing perception, and have said very little about knowledge as yet. [Ur: (Aside: One of the exceptions is in the correction formula for fear, which begins with *know* first)]²This is because perception must be straightened out [Ur: you must get your perceptions straightened out] before you can know [*know*] anything.³To know is to be certain. ⁴Uncertainty means that you do not [Ur: *don't*] know. ⁵Knowledge is power because it is certain, and certainty is strength. ⁶Perception is temporary. ⁷As an attribute of the belief in space and time [Ur: *the space-time belief*], it is subject to either fear or love. ⁸Misperceptions produce fear and true perceptions foster love, but neither [*neither*] brings certainty because all perception varies. ⁹That is why it is not knowledge. ¹⁰True perception is the basis [*basis*] for knowledge, but knowing [*knowing*] is the affirmation of truth and beyond all perceptions.

• STUDY QUESTION •

1. *2The Course defines “knowledge” differently than we usually define it. What different and more restricted meaning does the Course give to this word, based on what this section says about it? (Your answer to question #1 will be helpful here.)*



In the last few sections, the emphasis has been on correcting perception so that we may perceive the perfect innocence in everyone, including ourselves. Not much has been said yet about knowledge, although surely all of us want to gain spiritual knowledge. We want to know the truth, not just change our way of looking at things.

Jesus says he has down-played knowledge because “perception must be straightened out before you can know anything” (1:2). That line is good enough to merit memorizing. It explains why the Course focuses on training our minds to have a different perception. Having a true perception is not the ultimate goal, but it is the way to that goal. When speaking of itself, the Course over and over points out that it is concerned with means, not ends. It deals less with where we are going and more with how we get there. Its focus is on straightening out our perception. If it can do that, knowledge will be possible for us. If we persist in misperception, knowledge will remain beyond our reach.

To understand why knowledge is impossible if perception is skewed, we need to understand a few things about the nature of knowledge. First, it is certain (1:3-4). The idea is simple and obvious. If you are not certain, you do not really know. You believe, you think, you theorize, you suspect, but you don't know unless you are certain. Knowing is certainty.

Perception is anything but certain. We may say, “Seeing is believing,” but notice we don't say that seeing is *knowing*. We often see something that later turns out to be incorrect. The inconsistency of eyewitness testimony is a well-known phenomenon. One person saw a man, another saw a woman, and so on. Some people, like Siegfried and Roy, or David Copperfield, make their living figuring out ways to make us see things that did not really happen.

Because of its certainty, knowledge is power (1:5). When you know something you are unassailable. No one can convince you otherwise because you know. Perception, on the other hand, is vulnerable because it is temporary, or changeable. Perceptions can produce fear if they are misperceptions; they can foster love if they are true perceptions. We can be perceiving the same thing, but perception can vary from false to true; it cannot produce certainty (1:8), which distinguishes all perception from knowledge.

In summary, then, perception falls short of knowledge. True perception leads to knowledge, but “knowing is the affirmation of truth and beyond all perceptions” (1:10).

We still have not completely answered the question we posed, which was, “Why does perception need to be straightened out before we can know anything?” It will become clearer in the next couple of paragraphs, but we already have a hint: Misperception produces fear. Fear blocks our minds so that we actually defend ourselves against knowledge.

PARAGRAPHS 2 & 3

2. 1All your difficulties stem from the fact that you do not recognize [Ur: or know] yourself, your brother or God. 2To recognize means to “know again,” implying that you knew before. [Ur: (Note that it does not mean *saw* before.)] 3You can see in many ways because perception involves interpretation, and this means that it is not whole or consistent. 4The miracle, being a way of *perceiving*, is not knowledge. 5It is the right answer to a question, but you do not question [Ur: ask questions at all] when you know. 6Questioning illusions [Ur: delusions] is the first step in undoing them. 7The miracle, or the right answer, corrects them. 8Since perceptions change, their dependence on time is obvious. [Ur: They are subject to transitory states, and this implies variability by definition.] 9How you perceive at any given time determines what you do [*do*], and actions must [*must*] occur in time. 10Knowledge is timeless, because certainty is not

questionable. ¹¹You know [*know*] when you have ceased to ask questions.

3. ¹The questioning mind perceives itself in time, and therefore looks for future answers. ²The closed mind [Ur: *The unquestioning mind is closed merely because it*] believes the future and the present will be the same. ³This establishes a seemingly stable state [Ur: *an unchanged state, or stasis*] that is usually an attempt to counteract an underlying fear that the future will be worse than the present. ⁴This fear inhibits the tendency to question at all.

• **STUDY QUESTION** •

1. *3. Are these paragraphs speaking favorably of questioning, or unfavorably? Is it good or useful to question? Why, or why not?*

At its core, Jesus says, our problem is a lack of knowledge. We do not know ourselves, our brothers, or God (2:1). You may recall that in T-2.VII.3:4-6, Jesus told us we were afraid of God, himself, and ourselves, which is a similar trio. If we do not know our brother and do not recognize him because we misperceive him, we will fear him. The same is true with God, with Jesus, and with ourselves. What we do not know, we fear.

Actually, he says “do not recognize” rather than “do not know,” but he explains that recognize means “know again” (2:2). Break the word into parts--Re-Cognize--and that meaning is clear. We are recovering lost knowledge, not learning something new.

We do not know one another: We see or perceive one another, and we “see in many ways” (2:3). I’ve often been amazed when I and some friends meet a new person, and later share our impressions of the new person. One of us likes her. One of us doesn’t trust her. Perhaps one of us is convinced she is manipulative, or devious, or wants something from us. Each of us sees people very differently!

“Perception involves interpretation” (2:3). That is what instills it with inconsistency. That is why I may love someone while someone else hates that same person: interpretation. This is only one early instance of the Course’s emphasis on this important idea: Perception is an interpretation, not a fact (see T-21.V.1:7, W-pII.304.1:3, and M-17.8:6). Jesus tells us later: “You cannot be aware without interpretation, for what you perceive is your interpretation” (T-11.VI.2:6). What he is leading up to here, I think, is that we need to begin by *questioning our perceptions*, recognizing that they are interpretations and not necessarily the truth.

The miracle is “a way of perceiving” (2:4). Therefore it isn’t knowledge. It moves us toward knowledge but in itself it is still only perception. We ask a question: “What is this I see?” The miracle is the right answer (2:5), some form of, “This is the holy Son of God Himself, completely innocent in every way.” Through the miracle, we see the truth. We see one another as God created us. So the questioning is good; the miracle, of course, is good. The true perception is good. But questioning, miracles, and true perception are not knowledge; they are all about perception getting straightened out. When we know, we do not ask questions (2:5). We are certain.

There is a fascinating picture here of the place uncertainty or questioning has in our journey back to knowledge and certainty. One might think from the remark about “When we know, we

don't ask questions," that we should aspire to not question. And that is true; we should aspire to know. And yet "questioning illusions is the first step in undoing them" (2:6). Illusions must be undone. How can we know anything if we are perceiving illusions? But to undo them, we need to question them. Only then can the miracle correct them (2:7).

We need to question our perceptions of one another. We see someone and believe they are attacking us; they don't like us; they have it in for us; they are disgusting, or stupid, or boring, or crude, or uncouth, or ignorant, or inconsiderate, or even evil. Or, they are wiser than us, they have what we need, we can't get along without them. The first step is to question those perceptions (2:6). Perceptions come from interpretations, and interpretations have a marked tendency to be wrong! We need to recognize that we don't *know* one another; we only *perceive* one another. And our perceptions, when they are misperceptions, produce fear:

"This brother who stands beside you still seems to be a stranger." You do not know him, and your interpretation of him is very fearful.

(T-19.IV.D.12:1-2)

The closing remarks of paragraph 2 (2:8-11) seem to be saying that although questioning is essential in order to dispel illusions at the start, and within time, the ultimate goal, beyond time, is questionless certainty. If you consider what these lines say, it seems likely that complete certainty, or knowledge, simply is not possible within time. While we are in time, then, we should be content to be in the process of questioning and correcting our perceptions.

The third paragraph continues the same themes. We read of "the questioning mind" (3:1) contrasted with "the closed mind" (3:2). The previous paragraph was speaking of a mind that knows, which we can call "the knowing mind" (although the Text does not use those exact words). To make the transition from a closed mind to a knowing mind, we must pass through the stage of the questioning mind. A knowing mind does not question. Neither does a closed mind, but it shuns questions out of fear (3:3-4) rather than rendering questions unnecessary through certainty. A closed mind does not allow for any change (3:2). The questioning mind is open to change and correction, which is why it is an essential stage in the undoing of error.

If we are afraid of change it indicates that we are afraid that the future will be worse than the present (3:3). Such fear "inhibits the tendency to question" (3:4). This kind of closed-mindedness is often characteristic of fundamentalist religions (whether Christian, Islamic, or even secular religions such as communism). A rigid thought-system that refuses to allow questioning offers "a seemingly stable state" which is actually quite precarious. If one brick in the thought structure crumbles, the whole edifice falls. The apparent certitude of the fundamentalist actually hides a deep-seated fear that any change will only make things worse.

While we can see this tendency readily in others, where we need most to watch for it is in ourselves.

• STUDY QUESTION •

1. 4. *Are there any areas of your thinking in which you are afraid to allow questions?*

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PARAGRAPH 4

4. ¹True vision is [Ur: Visions are] the natural perception of spiritual sight [Ur: the spiritual eye], but it is still a correction rather than a fact. ²Spiritual sight [Ur: The “spiritual eye”] is symbolic, and therefore not a device for knowing. ³It is, however, a means of right perception, which brings it into the proper domain of the miracle [Ur: but not of revelation]. ⁴[Ur: Properly speaking,] A “vision of God” would be a miracle rather than a revelation. ⁵The fact that perception is involved at all removes the experience from the realm of knowledge. ⁶That is why visions, however holy, do not last.

• STUDY QUESTION •

1. *5. Have you ever experienced anything that might be called “a vision of God”? If you have (or if you ever do), what attitude toward the experience does this paragraph seem to suggest to you?*

Even what the Course calls “true vision” is “still a correction rather than a fact” (4:1). I continue to find it remarkable that the Course, over and over, seems to point out the limitations of the very things it advocates. In a way, it is a kind of apology for the focus on what seem to be “lesser things” like perception and true vision, and the lack of attention that is paid to “higher things” like the direct and unmediated knowledge of God. Two things are being emphasized here: First, that these “lesser things” are not really lesser at all, they are foundational and essential predecessors; and second, that as wonderful as these lesser things are, they are only means, and not the end.

The purpose of all this discussion, it seems to me, is to be sure that we neither neglect the development of true vision, nor fixate upon it as all we need. We can err in either way. On the one hand, we may vainly try to attain knowledge without first correcting our perception. In my experience, this usually leads to frustration. We lose heart and give up our spiritual quest for knowledge, believing we are unable to attain the knowledge we seek.

On the other hand, we may limit our search to spiritual sight and perception. We may endlessly seek more and more experiences or visions of God, thinking that these are all that we need. We falsely believe we have attained knowledge, when all we have had are experiences of spiritual sight. With egoistic presumption, we try to attribute spiritual certainty to our visions. The result is the same: We do not aspire to true knowledge because we falsely believe we already have it.

True vision and spiritual sight are types of perception, and perception is symbolic (4:1-2) and dualistic. Therefore, vision and sight are not means of knowing. Even a “vision of God” is not knowledge, not revelation (4:4-5). Therefore, although the Course does center on the development of spiritual vision, it does not mistake that vision for knowledge. It does not encourage us to believe that just because we have had a vision of God, we are enlightened. We’ve experienced a higher form of perception, that’s all; it isn’t yet knowledge. And “that is why visions, however holy, do not last” (4:6). We should never get swelled heads because we’ve had a vision. All visions pass. Knowledge, however, never fades.

And yet, spiritual sight is extremely useful. It is “a means of right perception, which brings it into the proper domain of the miracle” (4:3). Miracles, as we know, are the message of this course. Spiritual sight is something brought to us by miracles, and works to open our minds to the final advent of knowledge.

PARAGRAPH 5

5. ¹The Bible [wrong—it was actually the Oracle of Delphi] tells you to know yourself [Ur: thyself], or to be certain. ²Certainty is always of God. ³When you love someone you have perceived him as he is, and this makes it possible for you to know him. ⁴Until you first perceive him as he is you cannot know him. [Ur: But it is not until you recognize him that you know him. Only then are you able to stop asking questions about him.] ⁵While you ask questions about him [Ur: God] you are clearly implying that you do not [Ur: not] know God [Ur: him]. ⁶Certainty does not require action. ⁷When you say you are acting on the basis of [Ur: sure] knowledge, you are really confusing knowledge with perception. ⁸Knowledge provides the [Ur: mental] strength for creative thinking, but not for right doing. ⁹Perception, miracles and doing are closely related. ¹⁰Knowledge is the result of revelation and induces only thought. ¹¹Even in its most spiritualized form perception involves the body. ¹²Knowledge comes from the altar within and is timeless because it is certain. ¹³To perceive the truth is not the same as to know it.

• STUDY QUESTION •

1. 6. Read 5:3-4. Apply this thought to several specific people you relate with, particularly anyone you dislike or find hard to get along with. Spend some time meditating on variations of the idea, such as: “If I perceived [name] as she is, I would love her completely.” “Until I perceive [name] as he is, I cannot know him.”



In his Glossary-Index, Ken Wapnick associates the words, “The Bible tells you to know yourself” (5:1), with the Bible verses Matthew 7:3-5 and 23:25-26. Frankly, I see little relationship between those verses (about removing the “beam” from your own eye) and these words. The Bible does not specifically tell us to know ourselves, nor to be certain, as far as I can determine—both from my past study and through use of a computer Bible search program. This is either a mistaken understanding of Helen’s that is intruding here, or else an interpretive rendering of the Bible’s general message.

We can assume, however, that Jesus, as author of the Course, does advise us to know ourselves and to be certain. “Certainty is always of God” (5:2), he says. Being certain is good; as we were told in the first paragraph, “To know is to be certain” (1:3). Like knowledge, certainty is associated with God, or with the realm of Heaven; the two words are used almost interchangeably in this paragraph. It is the result of revelation (5:10), which should remind us of the contrast between revelation and miracles in T-1.II.

Despite starting out speaking of knowing ourselves, this paragraph immediately turns to speaking about knowing others. Though it isn't specifically mentioned in this section, I think that behind this switch is the fundamental message of the Course: To know my true identity as the Christ, I must first recognize Christ in my brothers and sisters. The way I come to know my Self is by knowing my spiritual siblings--who are, in fact, part of that shared Self.

To perceive someone as they are is to love them (5:3). That makes perfect sense if we are all, as the Course teaches, wholly lovable and wholly loving (T-1.III.2:3). Take anyone, strip away all the illusions we have woven about them and all the illusions they have woven of themselves, and what is underneath is thoroughly, absolutely, perfectly lovable. How could we do anything except love them? I think it is important to remember, in all the Course's discussion of true perception and spiritual vision, that when you perceive someone as they are, you love them. And conversely, if you do not love them, you are not perceiving them truly! The Workbook tells us that every brother or sister is so incredibly, awesomely magnificent that "in Christ's vision is his loveliness reflected in a form so holy and so beautiful that you could scarce refrain from kneeling at his feet" (W-pI.161.9:3).

That lets me know I still have a way to go, since I don't often find myself swept up in a nearly irresistible urge to kneel at the feet of the people around me! But I do believe that, if I saw them as they really are, I would feel that way. I've had tastes of it. I've had glimpses of the spiritual beauty in people that have taken my breath away, and made me feel as if I would follow them to the ends of the earth.

That perception of holiness is what opens the way to knowing. We must perceive a person as they are before we can know them (5:4). This obviously applies to ourselves as well.

The next sentence makes another switch. First, we switched from knowing ourselves to knowing others; now, we switch to knowing God. And again there is a link, quite clear here: If we are still asking questions about him (our brother) it is clear we do not yet know God (5:5). Knowing ourselves hinges on knowing our brothers, and apparently, so does knowing God. Everything then, is wrapped up in coming to true perception of our brothers and sisters, thus making it possible to know them. If we know our brothers, we will know ourselves, and we will know God. Remember back in 2:1 we were told that all our difficulties "stem from the fact that you do not recognize yourself, your brother or God." The author is still following up on that theme.

There are several related ideas about knowledge and certainty that are not immediately obvious: "Certainty does not require action" (5:6); knowledge does not provide strength for right doing (5:8); "Knowledge...induces only thought" (5:10). Knowledge is "timeless" (5:12) and therefore seems to be unrelated to anything within time. It does not lead to doing of any kind. If I know you, that knowledge does not necessitate any action on my part; it does not guide my actions in regard to you. Knowledge operates on a deeper level than that, more of a mental level than physical. Knowledge guides my thinking about you. It induces my mind to mentally extend and join with yours, recognizing you as part of my Self.

If we are talking about actions or doing, we are talking about perception (5:6; 5:9). We are talking about what bodies do, even when it involves the "most spiritualized" form of perception (5:11). Perceiving the truth isn't the same as knowing it (5:13). We do not act "on the basis of knowledge" (5:7), not knowledge in the sense the Course understands it. We act on the basis of

our perceptions. Everything here, in this world, is about coming to a correct perception. When we know, there is no need to act at all!

I don't think this means that when we come to full knowledge that all action ceases. The two just aren't related. Action is something related to the physical realm of bodies; it is guided by perception, whether true or false. Knowledge simply does not have anything to do with doing. Knowledge exists even when all perception and all action ceases.

In this spot in the Urtext there is a lovely example of Jesus pausing to apply his teaching personally to Bill and Helen. I'm including it here without comment.

To perceive the truth is not the same as to know it. This is why B. is having so much trouble in what he calls "integrating" the notes. His tentative perception is too uncertain for knowledge, because knowledge is SURE. Your perception is so variable that you swing from sudden but real knowledge to complete cognitive disorganization. This is why B. is more prone to irritation, while you are more vulnerable to rage. He is consistently BELOW his potential, while you achieve it at times and then swing very wide of the mark.

Actually, these differences do not matter. But I thought you might be glad to learn that you are much better off with DIFFERENT perceptual problems than you would be if you suffered from similar ones. This enables each of you to RECOGNIZE (and this is the right word here) that the misperceptions of the other are unnecessary. It is because you do not KNOW what to do about it that B. reacts to yours with irritation, and you respond to his with fury.

I repeat again that if you ATTACK error, you will hurt yourself. You do not RECOGNIZE each other when you attack. Attack is ALWAYS made on a stranger. You are making him a stranger by misperceiving him, so that you CANNOT know him. It is BECAUSE you have made him into a stranger that you are afraid of him. PERCEIVE him correctly, so that your Soul can KNOW him.

PARAGRAPH 6

6. ¹Right perception is necessary before God can communicate directly to His altars, which He established in His Sons. ²There He can communicate His certainty, and His knowledge will bring peace without [Ur: *without*] question. ³God is not a stranger to His [Ur: *Own*] Sons, and His Sons are not strangers to each other. ⁴Knowledge preceded both perception and time, and will ultimately replace them. ⁵That is the real meaning of [Ur: *the Biblical account of God as*] "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end," and [Ur: *It also explains the quotation*] "Before Abraham was I am." ⁶Perception can and must be stabilized, but knowledge *is* stable. ⁷"Fear God and keep His commandments" [Ur: *is a real scribal error.*] becomes [Ur: *It should read,*] "Know God and accept His

certainty.” [Ur: (This error is why the commandments are all negative, in contrast to Christ's {positive} statement about “Thou shalt love”, etc.)]

• **STUDY QUESTION** •

1. *7. Once again, in slightly different words, we are told that right perception is necessary before we can “know,” or before God can communicate directly to His altars (revelation is direct communication). (a) Do you recall (from T-2.III) what the symbol of the altar represents? (b) Based on this often-repeated thought about true perception preceding knowledge, should we be expecting to receive much direct communication from God?*

To get the most from a paragraph like this one, which is filled with seemingly arcane, abstruse and esoteric statements, we need to sit with it and chew on it for a while. What possible significance to me is the fact that right perception is necessary in order for God to communicate directly to His altars, which He established in us all? (6:1) Why should I care about this at all?

Let me ask myself: Does having God communicate to me matter to me? Of course it does--it matters a lot. In that holy place within, God “can communicate His certainty, and His knowledge will bring peace without question” (6:2). Naturally, that is something I greatly desire. Then, if right perception has to come before such communication can take place, the gaining of right perception becomes equally important to me. The last paragraph showed me that to perceive truly is to love. Therefore, loving those around me is the way I can prepare myself for communion with God.

If God and our brothers are not strangers to us (6:3), we must already know them; we have just forgotten. We had knowledge in the beginning; we will have knowledge after perception and time are past (6:4). When Jesus said, “Before Abraham was I am” (6:5, quoting John 8:58), and “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending” (quoting Revelation 1:8), he laid claim to an existence preceding and following time. “Before Abraham was” (past tense) “I am” (present tense). He had reconnected with knowledge, which is timeless. “Knowledge is stable” (6:6); that is, it has never faltered or failed; knowledge has persisted. “I am”; knowledge is. Therefore, knowledge is now. Time is, as Joel Goldsmith called it, a “parenthesis in eternity.” Time is a state in which knowledge has been temporarily forgotten, covered over with falsehood, but never lost. Misperception has obscured it, and must be cleared up in order for knowledge to return again to our awareness.

Thus, “Fear God and keep His commandments” (Ecclesiastes 12:3), which is how a separated being starts out relating to a distant God who seems like a stranger, becomes “Know God and accept His certainty” (6:7). While misperception rules, we fear God and cannot know Him. While misperception rules, we relate to God externally, governed by rules or commandments, and always unsure of where we stand. But when true perception comes, fear becomes knowledge, separation becomes union, and the ever-anxious attitude of the rule-keeper becomes the settled certainty of God's own Being.

PARAGRAPH 7

7. ¹If you attack error in another, you will hurt yourself. ²You cannot know your brother when you attack him. ³Attack is always made upon a stranger. ⁴You are making him a stranger by misperceiving him, and so you cannot know him. ⁵It is because you have made him a stranger that you are afraid of him. ⁶Perceive him correctly so that you can know him. ⁷There are no strangers in God's creation. ⁸To create as He created you can create only what you know [Ur: *know*], and therefore accept as yours. ⁹God knows His children with perfect certainty. ¹⁰He created them by knowing them. ¹¹He recognizes them perfectly. ¹²When they do not recognize each other, they do not recognize Him. [Ur: Brothers can misperceive one another, but they rarely maintain that they do not *know* each other. This is possible only if they maintain that they are *not* really brothers. The Bible is *very* specific on this point.]

• **STUDY QUESTION** •

1. *8. Think of someone you know who has made a mistake, done something wrong; something you would normally be inclined to criticize and condemn. Remind yourself that if you attack the error in another, you hurt yourself. Pray that you might perceive this person correctly, come to love them, and to know them as your own, part of yourself.*

What makes it possible to know your brother is loving him; you cannot know him when you attack him (7:1-2). And if you cut yourself off from knowing your brother, you cut yourself off from knowledge of your Self and of God; that is why attacking error in another hurts you.

It seems so natural to attack error in other people, doesn't it? It seems right. It even seems loving. "I just want to be helpful; I'm doing this for your own good." The Course will deal with this whole issue at length in a later section, "The Correction of Error" (T-9.III), which sums up the question like this: "If you point out the errors of your brother's ego you must be seeing through yours, because the Holy Spirit does not perceive his errors" (T-9.III.3:1). The key word in the paragraph we are studying is "attack": "If you attack error..." You can't attack someone you know and love; you attack strangers (7:3-4). By attacking you are making your brother a stranger. You are misperceiving him (by perceiving his errors and giving them reality), which prevents you from knowing him (7:4). And because you don't know him, because he seems to be a stranger due to your misperception, you fear him (7:5).

This seemingly abstract discussion has suddenly gotten disturbingly practical and down-to-earth. The upshot of this whole dissertation about perception versus knowledge is, "Don't attack error in your brother!" Yikes! How can it apply like this? Because, as we've seen, true perception equals loving. I can't be attacking my brother for his errors and loving him at the same time; so if I want to perceive him correctly so that I can know him (7:6), I have to stop "correcting" him and start loving him.

I don't think this means that I play "see no evil" and deny the reality or the severity of my brother's mistakes. But I see them as mistakes, not as sins. I do not attack him. I do not condemn him. I do not make a stranger out of him because "there are no strangers in God's creation" (7:7). I continue to see him as a holy child of God, and worthy of my love. I believe in him, I see the

reality of him, and I do not focus on the shabby covering of mistakes in which he has attempted to hide.

We must come to know one another and to accept each other as belonging to us. You belong to me; and I belong to you. We are one. God created us by knowing us (7:10). We acknowledge His creation when we know one another as God's children. When we fail to recognize one another as God's creations, we are failing to recognize God Himself (7:12).

ANSWER KEY

1. Characteristics of Perception and Knowledge:

PERCEPTION: Must be straightened out before we can know.	KNOWLEDGE: Clear perception must precede it.
PERCEPTION: Uncertain	KNOWLEDGE: Certain
PERCEPTION: Temporary	KNOWLEDGE: Eternal
PERCEPTION: Subject to either fear or love	KNOWLEDGE: Only love
PERCEPTION: Varies	KNOWLEDGE: Unchanging
PERCEPTION: Involves interpretation	KNOWLEDGE: Whole and consistent
PERCEPTION: Depend on time	KNOWLEDGE: Timeless
PERCEPTION: Involves doing	KNOWLEDGE: Fosters creative thinking
PERCEPTION: Related to miracles	KNOWLEDGE: Related to revelation (effect of)
PERCEPTION: Involves the body	KNOWLEDGE: Comes from altar within
PERCEPTION: Within time	KNOWLEDGE: Preceded perception and time
PERCEPTION: Can and must be stabilized	KNOWLEDGE: Is already stable

2. Knowledge is certain, unchanging, eternal, wholly consistent, stable, and timeless in that it preceded all time and all perception. "Knowledge" in ACIM is an unseparated awareness of something; there is no separation between subject and object, between the knower and what is known. Therefore, you cannot really know something in the Course's sense of the word unless you recognize it as part of your being, one with you. In the normal understanding of "knowledge," I can "know" something that is not part of my being. To the Course, this type of "knowledge" is really perception. ACIM is very consistent in its use of the word "knowledge" in this special sense. Knowledge is distinct from time and space, and belongs to the realm that the Course calls "Heaven."
3. Basically they are speaking favorably of questioning, at least in time. Questioning our illusions leads to them being corrected by the miracle, so questioning is a good and useful thing. Eventually, when all our illusions have been corrected, we will no longer question because we will know. Indeed, ceasing to question is how we know that we know.
4. No written response is expected.
5. A vision of God should be welcomed and honored as a learning device, a means of correcting our perception. We should not, however, cling to such an experience (it will not last), or be swelled up with pride over it. We should not imagine that it constitutes spiritual knowledge, but recognize it as a kind of heightened perception. We should not be distressed if the vision fades, since all visions eventually will fade.
6. No written response is expected.
7. (a) As I said in the commentary on T-2.III, the altar represents the part of us that "holds" what we value or treasure, which we often also symbolize in the word heart. The image of God communicating directly to His altars seems to picture revelation, in which God is imparting direct knowledge--not a vision, which is only perception, and not a verbal communication, which is symbolic, but a certainty based on vital union.
(b) I believe that right perception is required before God can directly communicate with us, we should expect such communication only to the extent that our perception has been corrected. Since right perception of anyone means that we are filled with a profound love for them, we could say that to the extent we have learned to love, we will hear the Voice for God.
8. No written response is expected.