

# Study Guide and Commentary ACIM® Text, Chapter 4, Section I.7–13

## Right Teaching and Right Learning

### Overview of the Section

[Repeated from previous commentary on paragraphs 1 to 6.]

In my opinion, there is an underlying continuity through the next four chapters. Here is the broad overview, as I see it:

Chapter 4 - Focuses on the illusions fostered by the ego thought system; *presents “the problem.”*

Chapter 5 - Focuses on the role of the Holy Spirit and how He heals, with a key section on the ego's use of guilt; *begins presenting “the Answer.”*

Chapter 6 - *Continues presenting “the Answer,”* showing the progression of the lessons the Holy Spirit teaches us, or the three major steps on our journey back to God and in correcting our thought system.

Chapter 7 - *Completes the progression of our journey,* starting with “the last step” which ended Chapter 6, and centering on the Kingdom of God (roughly synonymous with “the real world”).

This is the first section of the Text that has had an Introduction. Quite clearly, the theme of our need to relinquish the ego thought system carries over from the preceding chapter (T-3.VII.1:6–8). Other continuing themes include: 1) our fear of changing thought systems and how to overcome that fear (T-3.VII.5:6–10); and 2) the necessity to recognize and identify all traces of the ego in our mind and to bring them into the light for healing.

The Introduction properly sets the stage for the rest of Chapter 4. It presents the essential choice to listen to the ego or to the spirit, and urges us to make that choice. It equates listening to the spirit with devotion to our brothers. It emphasizes that being tired or discouraged does not come from devoted service to others; it is always a result of following the wrong voice (cf. T-3.VI.5:1–6).

### Paragraph 7

7. <sup>1</sup>Your worth is not established by teaching or learning [Ur: by your teaching]. <sup>2</sup>Your worth is [Ur: was] established by God. <sup>3</sup>As long as you dispute this everything you do will be fearful, particularly any situation that lends itself to the belief in superiority and inferiority [Ur: to the superior-inferior fallacy].

<sup>4</sup>Teachers must be patient and repeat their lessons until they are learned. <sup>5</sup>I am willing to do this, because I have no right to set your learning limits for you. <sup>6</sup>Again, - nothing you do or think or wish or make is necessary to establish your worth. <sup>7</sup>This point is not debatable [Ur: *is not debatable*] except in delusions. <sup>8</sup>Your ego is never at stake because God did not create it. <sup>9</sup>Your spirit is never at stake because He did. <sup>10</sup>Any confusion on this point is delusional, and no form of devotion is possible as long as this delusion lasts.

• Study Question •

1. Explain what you think is meant by the two contrasting sentences in 7:8 and 7:9.

We do not need any teaching or learning to *be* what we are; our worth was established by God's creation (7:1–2). (I prefer the “was” of the Urtext to the “is” of the published Text. Our worth is a done deal.) The whole concept of trying to prove our worth in some sort of ego-clash with the teacher (as mentioned in the preceding paragraph) is ridiculous; we already *have* our worth established. As long as we refuse to acknowledge God as our Creator, however, “any situation that lends itself to the belief in superiority and inferiority” (7:3), such as the teacher-pupil relationship, will give rise to fear.

I find it fascinating to see how Jesus has segued from the discussion of the authority problem to a discussion of his relationship to us as our teacher, which is a perfect example of the authority problem in action. Why do we resist the idea of submitting ourselves to his instruction? Isn't it exactly as he describes it here? Because we do not accept God's Authorship (which is the authority problem), we doubt our self-worth. Therefore, when we encounter Jesus, being insecure, we see Jesus as a giant ego and therefore a threat to our ego; we feel as though we are in competition with him in some way. We cannot accept his *temporary* superior knowledge and experience because, in our eyes, it demeans us. We insist on being his equal in every respect *immediately*, with no time spent in a learning process during which what he has learned can be transferred to us. If we knew our own worth, we would not be so defensive!

Jesus is prepared to be patient and to repeat our lessons until we learn them (7:4–5), knowing that until we resolve the authority problem we will resist learning. He says he has no right to set our learning limits for us (7:5). I think he means that it is up to us how quickly, or how slowly, we learn; he can't force us to go faster. How we go about learning, how well we do or how poorly, has nothing to do with our worth before God (7:6–7). He emphasizes this point by repeating and amplifying it, saying, “This point is not debatable” (7:7). So, even as he urges us to learn, he reassures us that nothing we *do*, *think or wish*—including learning (or refusing to learn)—has any effect on our worth. We are worthy whether or not we learn anything.

In the learning process we tend to think that somehow, something momentous is at issue. Our soul or spirit is at stake, or perhaps our ego. If we do not learn, we may lose

our spirit; if we do learn, we will lose our ego. Neither spirit nor ego is “at stake” (7:8–9) or at risk, however. The spirit cannot be at risk because God created it, and as we were told in the Introduction to the Text, “Nothing real can be threatened” (T-In.2:2). The ego cannot be threatened, either—not really!—because God did *not* create it, which means it isn’t real, and, “Nothing unreal exists” (T-In.2:3). A thing that does not exist cannot be at risk! If we still think we are somehow risking anything, we are “delusional” (7:10). As long as we are in such a state, we will never be devoted teachers (see 6:6) or devoted *anything*.

## Paragraph 8

8. [Ur: Bill, if you will to be a devoted teacher rather than an egocentric one, you will not be afraid. The teaching situation *is* fearful if it is misused as an ego involvement. If you become afraid, it is *because* you are using it this way. But the devoted teacher perceives the situation *as it is*, and *not* as *he* wills it. He does not see it as dangerous because he *is* not exploiting it.] <sup>1</sup>The ego tries to exploit all situations into forms of praise for itself in order to overcome its doubts. <sup>2</sup>It will remain doubtful [Ur: forever, or better,] as long as you believe in its existence. <sup>3</sup>You who made it cannot trust it, because in your right mind you realize [Ur: because you know] it is not real. <sup>4</sup>The only sane solution is not to try to change reality, which is indeed a fearful attempt, but to accept it as it is. <sup>5</sup>You are part of reality, which stands unchanged beyond the reach of your ego but within easy reach of spirit [Ur: your Soul]. <sup>6</sup>[Ur: Bill, again I tell you that] When you are afraid, be still and know that God is real, and you are His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased. <sup>7</sup>Do not let your ego dispute this, because the ego cannot know what is as far beyond its reach as you are.

### • Study Question •

2.
  - a) *What does it mean to you to not change reality, but to accept reality as it is (8:4–6)?*
  - b) *Try to think of at least one example from your own life in which you have been trying to change reality.*
  - c) *If you were to turn 8:6 into an affirmation you can use whenever you are afraid, how would you word it?*

The opening lines from the Urtext, addressed directly to Bill Thetford, make the subject of this paragraph quite clear and personal. If you have ever been in the position of a teacher, in any context, you know why Jesus is talking about *fear* here. Teaching anything evokes fear in us, but only because we are misusing the situation to pump up our egos. The ego tries to twist every situation into some form of ego-boosting (8:1). Have you ever noticed yourself doing that? Filled with doubts, the ego needs constant

reassurance of its worth from outside. Self-doubt is the reason why we so consistently crave external validation. The ego is constantly saying, "Believe in me! Believe in me!"

Ironically, the ego will continue to doubt itself as long as we believe in it (8:2). Only as we stop believing in the ego will we be free from the effects of its doubts. We can never fully trust in the ego, "because in [our] right mind [we] realize it is not real" (8:3). We can't reinforce the ego sufficiently to make it real; the only solution is to recognize its unreality. Reality cannot be changed, and the attempt to do so is a certain way to cause fear (8:4).

Our true Self is part of reality and cannot be changed. It cannot be spoiled by the ego because reality is beyond reach of the ego, but our spirits can reach it, easily (8:5). If we desire to experience the reality of our Self, there is a simple practice we can do (8:6-7):

- Notice whenever we become afraid.
- Take a moment to become still and quiet.
- *Know* that God is real; reflect on His presence and existence.
- Know also that you are His beloved Son, and that He is well pleased in you.
- Refuse to listen to the ego's counter-arguments; it does not know what it is talking about.

These simple, mental reminders of the truth will induce the experience of the Self. They are merely token reminders, but they turn the mind in the right direction and open it to the spirit. If you will do this simple practice *every time you become afraid*, you will very quickly see results.

In the next paragraph Jesus continues to address the fears that come up when we consider a major change in our thought system, such as the Course is trying to produce.

## Paragraph 9

9. <sup>1</sup>God is not the author of fear. <sup>2</sup>You are. <sup>3</sup>You have chosen to create unlike Him, and have therefore made fear for yourself. <sup>4</sup>You are not at peace because you are not fulfilling your function. <sup>5</sup>God gave you a very lofty function [Ur: responsibility] that you are not meeting. <sup>6</sup>[Ur: You know this, and you are afraid. But] Your ego has chosen to be afraid instead of meeting it. <sup>7</sup>When you awaken you will not be able to understand this, because it is literally incredible. <sup>8</sup>*Do not believe the incredible now.* <sup>9</sup>Any attempt to increase its believableness is merely to postpone the inevitable. <sup>10</sup>The word "inevitable" is fearful to the ego, but joyous to the spirit. <sup>11</sup>God is inevitable, and you cannot avoid Him any more than He can avoid you.

• Study Question •

3. *What does Jesus say about any of our attempts to understand the reasons behind our choice to make ourselves fearful instead of fulfilling the function God gave us? (See 9:6–9.)*

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This paragraph, when understood, gives what is perhaps the strongest answer to the perennial question: How did the ego happen, if God's creation is perfect?

*You* made fear, not God. You made it when you chose to create unlike God (Who creates love, fear's "opposite") (9:1–3). God created us to create like Himself (T-6.II.8:4), and until we willingly choose to fulfill that "lofty function," we cannot be at peace (9:4–5). Incredibly, instead of meeting our function, we listen to our egos, which have chosen to be afraid (9:6). If that does not seem to make sense, you are right. *It doesn't make any sense!* It is "literally incredible" (9:7); that is, it is so difficult to believe that belief is impossible! The ego's choice for fear *cannot be understood*, because it makes no sense at all. In our enlightened state we will be incapable of understanding it; if we think we can understand it now, all we are doing (perhaps without realizing it) is attempting to make the idea more believable! (9:8–9) All that does is "postpone the inevitable" (9:9) or delay the day of our awakening.

Our awakening *is* inevitable! That is the good news to our spirit, although it terrifies the ego (9:10). It is inevitable that we will again recognize our Self. It is inevitable that we will cease choosing fear. It is inevitable that we will choose to fulfill the function God gave us, i.e., to create like Himself. It is inevitable that all of us, eventually, will meet God, Who is Omnipresent. How can what is omnipresent be avoided (9:11)?

That's worth reflecting on for a while. Notice the contrast: the ego is incredible, and God is inevitable.

## Paragraph 10

10. <sup>1</sup>The ego is afraid of the spirit's joy, because once you have experienced it you will withdraw all protection from the ego, and become totally without investment in fear. <sup>2</sup>Your investment is great now because fear is a witness to the separation, and your ego rejoices when you witness to it. <sup>3</sup>Leave it behind! <sup>4</sup>Do not listen to it and do not preserve it. <sup>5</sup>Listen only to God, Who is as incapable of deception as is the spirit He created. <sup>6</sup>[Ur: As teachers and therapists,] Release yourself and release others. <sup>7</sup>Do not present a false and unworthy picture of yourself to others, and do not accept such a picture of them yourself.

• Study Question •

4. *Spend some time meditating on the injunctions in this paragraph, that is, the sentences that specifically tell you to do something. List these injunctions, and then pray about actually doing what they tell you to do.*



Except for the first two sentences, this whole paragraph is a series of injunctive statements—statements that tell us quite specifically to do something. Let's look first at the opening two lines, which set up the series of injunctions, to see what they tell us.

If we can tune in to the joy of the spirit (which we will do if we practice the exercise in paragraph 8, for instance), we will stop protecting our egos (10:1) and end our investment in fear. It's important for us to realize that unless we are totally joyful, *we are choosing fear right now*.

God is not the author of fear. You are. (T-4.I.9:1–2)

We are choosing fear, and we are choosing it because we have an *investment* in it, a *great investment* (10:2). Our egos are happy when we are afraid! We attribute enormous value to fear because it witnesses to the separation, which we (in our identification with the ego) desperately want to be real. When we experience fear, we are validating the ego.

What, then, is Jesus' advice regarding fear? "Leave it behind!" (10:3). Don't pay any attention to your thoughts of fear; listen only to God, Who cannot deceive you (10:4–5). The evident assumption behind these admonitions is that *we are capable of carrying them out*. Fear is a choice we are making, and we *can* make a different choice.

In fact, as I think about it, it appears to me that leaving our fears behind and listening only to God is exactly the same thing as acknowledging God as our Creator and ending the insanity of believing we can create ourselves. Fear and self-creation go together, as do peace and God's creation.

We are asked to do more than merely cease listening to the ego's fear and begin listening only to God. We are asked to *release others* (10:6) as well as ourselves; that is, to lift *their* fear from them as we have lifted our own. (Helen and Bill were both teachers and therapists, so this applied especially to them.) How can we release others? The next sentence tells us: by refusing to present a false picture of *ourselves* to them, and refusing to believe in any false pictures of *them* (10:7). The false pictures referred to, of course, are the self-images projected by the ego. This amounts to an injunction to accept ourselves and our brothers as God created us, recognizing that neither we nor they are our egos; it means to acknowledge each other and ourselves as the Son of God, holy and innocent, blessing and blessed.

Indeed, how could my own fear be banished if I continued to see my brothers as devils? If I see them as tarnished, sinful creatures, I will have reason to be afraid! For my own fear to be gone, I must refuse any "false and unworthy" picture of every person around me.

## Paragraph 11

11. <sup>1</sup>The ego has built a shabby and unsheltering home for you, because it

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<http://allen-watson.com/> • [allen@unityportland.org](mailto:allen@unityportland.org) • 503-916-9411



cannot build otherwise. <sup>2</sup>Do not try to make this impoverished house stand. <sup>3</sup>Its weakness is your strength. <sup>4</sup>Only God could make a home that is worthy of His creations, who have chosen to leave it empty by their own dispossession. <sup>5</sup>Yet His home will stand forever, and is ready for you when you choose to enter it. <sup>6</sup>Of this you can be wholly certain. <sup>7</sup>God is as incapable of creating the perishable as the ego is of making the eternal.

• **Study Question** •

5. a) *What does the ego see as its home? What is the home God created for us?*  
b) *What should characterize our attitude towards the ego and its "home"?*

The shabby and unsheltering home built for you by the ego is, of course, your body (11:1). The body is a major component of your false picture of yourself. As a shelter, the body really is quite poor and vulnerable; someone has described it as a flimsy bag of fluids. So when the Course urges you not to “try to make this impoverished house stand” (11:2), it is telling you not to waste undue effort in trying to preserve your body. Although a body is very much a part of your current self-image, a body is not your home. You need not be concerned if it is aging and beginning to wither. Your worth is not tied to its frailty.

In fact, the weakness of the body is actually our strength (11:3). It isn't worthy of us and we know it. Its weakness encourages us to look elsewhere for our home, and to rediscover the one we foolishly threw ourselves out of (“empty by their own dispossession”), the home God created for us and holds ready for us to enter whenever we choose to do so (11:4–5). We can be utterly certain that our home still stands ready because God can no more create something passing than the ego can make something permanent (11:6–7).

Just what this divine home is, is not spelled out in detail; but it cannot be anything other than “the spirit's joy” (10:1) or our place in reality (8:4), that is, our true being as part of God forever. In “What is the Christ?” in the Workbook, we are told:

[The Christ] has not left His holy home, nor lost the innocence in which He was created. He abides unchanged forever in the Mind of God. (W-pII.6.1:4–5)

Thus, the home of our true Self is the Mind of God. The ego's home is a body; the spirit's home is God Himself. Is this really a difficult choice to make?

The idea that I find here, i.e., that my body's weakness is somehow a good thing because it turns me to God, is a helpful reminder to me as I grow older and things start to “wear out.” I'm nearly sixty, and in good health, yet the signs of aging and slowing down are everywhere. I can let that discourage me, or I can realize that the body isn't my home, and turn my thoughts to the God-given home that is eternal in the heavens. “This old house is getting shaky,” as the old song says, but that's okay. I have a home that will stand forever.

## Paragraph 12

12. <sup>1</sup>Of your ego you can do nothing to save yourself or others, but of your spirit you can do everything for the salvation of both. <sup>2</sup>Humility is a lesson for the ego, not for the spirit. <sup>3</sup>Spirit is beyond humility, because it recognizes its radiance and gladly sheds its light everywhere. <sup>4</sup>The meek shall inherit the earth because their egos are humble, and this gives them truer perception. <sup>5</sup>The Kingdom of Heaven is the spirit's right, whose beauty and dignity are far beyond doubt, beyond perception, and stand forever as the mark of the Love of God for His creations, who are wholly worthy of Him and only of Him. <sup>6</sup>Nothing else is sufficiently worthy to be a gift for a creation of God Himself.

### • Study Question •

6. *Consider a situation in which you feel inclined to protect your ego or your body. What would it look like for you to be "meek" in this situation?*

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I have a home that will stand forever, and what's more, *I'm worth it*, as the woman in the TV commercial says. I deserve it! Humility is not a lesson for the spirit (12:2–3). "The Kingdom of Heaven is the spirit's right" (12:5). I used to have a bumper sticker that proclaimed, "Prosperity is my divine right!" I wouldn't sport that motto anymore, but I might be happy to post the words, "The Kingdom of Heaven is my divine right," onto my car.

The ego has chosen to live in fear; it exists in an atmosphere of self-doubt, inevitably so because it is an illusion. It casts that fear and doubt onto us; we identify with it, and its fear and doubt seem to be ours. The ego's home is shabby, unsafe, impoverished and weak. In truth, when we identify with the ego we cannot do anything to save ourselves or others (12:1). Humility is more than appropriate for the ego (12:2).

But *we are not our egos*. We can choose to identify with spirit, and in so doing, we are enabled, not only to save ourselves, but also to save others (12:1). The contrast between ego and spirit in respect to worthiness is striking. Although spirit is meek, it is "beyond humility" (12:3). *Meek* in the Course does not mean groveling and self-abasing; it designates a willingness to accept the truth of what is so. Spirit acknowledges the truth about itself; "it recognizes its radiance" and shines it everywhere (12:3). When we connect with spirit we *radiate* its light without discomfort. We do not doubt or belittle our own beauty and dignity (12:5); we know that we merit Heaven. More than that, we are "wholly worthy of [God] and only of [God]" (12:5). Nothing less than God Himself is worthy of being given to us! (12:6).

## Paragraph 13

<sup>1</sup>I will substitute for your ego if you wish, but never for your spirit. <sup>2</sup>A father can safely leave a child with an elder brother who has shown himself responsible, but this involves no confusion about the child's origin. <sup>3</sup>The brother can protect



the child's body and his ego [Ur: which are very closely associated], but he does not confuse himself with the father because he does this [Ur: although the child may]. <sup>4</sup>I can be entrusted with your body and your ego only because this enables you not to be concerned with them, and lets me teach you their unimportance. <sup>5</sup>I could not understand their importance to you if I had not once been tempted to believe in them myself. <sup>6</sup>Let us undertake to learn this lesson together so we can be free of them together. <sup>7</sup>I need devoted teachers who share my aim of healing the mind. <sup>8</sup>Spirit is far beyond the need of your protection or mine. <sup>9</sup>Remember this:

<sup>10</sup>*In this world you need not [Ur: not] have tribulation because I have overcome the world.* <sup>11</sup>*That is why you should be of good cheer.*

• Study Question •

7. *Discuss what you think Jesus means by “I will substitute for your ego if you wish” (13:1), and “I can be entrusted with your body and your ego” (13:4).*



Jesus offers to take the place of my ego (13:1). I think he means that he will take over the “duties” I have ascribed to my ego, such as protecting me (including my body), “looking out for number one,” and so on. In personal advice to Helen and Bill, Jesus told them:

The reason I direct everything that is unimportant is because it is no way to waste *your* free will. If you insist on doing the trivial your way, you waste too much time and will on it. ... You have to remember to ask Me to take charge of all minutiae, and they will be taken care of so well and so quickly that you cannot bog down in it. (Absence from Felicity, page 235)

I like to imagine what my life would be like if I followed this advice all the time. How often I “bog down” in the trivial, and waste my time and will on it! Sometimes I think half my days are wasted like this. I have not yet learned this lesson for myself. I need to consider all the trivial details of life, put them into Jesus’ hands, and let him take charge of them. I need to do that as a habit of life!

Though he wants to “take charge” of the trivia, this does not mean Jesus wants to dominate and subsume us. He says he will “never [substitute] for your spirit” (13:1). He then gives the analogy of a father who will leave a child in the care of an older brother, knowing the brother can protect the young child without confusing himself with the father (13:2–3). In like manner, Jesus does not confuse himself with God the Father. He can take care of us (we can entrust him with the care of our egos and our bodies) (13:4), but God is still our Father, and we are all still, equally with Jesus, God’s children.

When we place the care and concern for our body and our ego in Jesus’ hands, it enables us “not to be concerned with them” (13:4). Imagine being *unconcerned* about your body! Imagine being unconcerned about your ego, your feelings, your image! He

understands their importance to us (13:5) because, at one time, he was tempted to believe in the ego and body himself. So he takes that into consideration in caring for them, and treats our concern for them with respect. He does so to teach us that the ego and body are unimportant (13:4), and to free us from both of them (13:6). He wants to free us from our bodies and egos so that we can join him as “devoted teachers who share [his] aim of healing the mind” (13:7).

This underlying sub-theme of recruiting teachers to work with him in healing the mind keeps coming up. The phrase “devoted teachers” has come up three times in this chapter (T-4.In.1:3–5; T-4.I.6:6; and T-4.I.13:7). There is some sort of plan in action here. We need to be freed from our preoccupation with needs of the body and needs of the ego so that we can give our attention fully to the greater task of joining with Jesus in the healing of our own mind and the minds of others.

What about our true Self, our spirit? If we turn protection of the ego and the body over to Jesus, won't we still need to protect our spirits? The answer is, “No.” Spirit does not need protection at all because it is God's creation (13:8). Jesus asks us to remember these words, a variation on a quotation from the Bible. The original quotation said:

In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33, KJV)

Jesus here rewords it like this, entirely changing the meaning:

In this world you need not have tribulation because I have overcome the world. That is why you should be of good cheer. (T-4.I.13:10–11)

He has overcome the world in the sense that he can take care of all its trivia for us; that is why we don't need to endure tribulation and should be of good cheer!

I'll include below the concluding paragraphs to Jesus' counsel to Bill about teaching the class on abnormal psychology. It is too good to leave out.

[Ur: Bill's course was very carefully chosen, because “abnormal psychology” is ego psychology. This is precisely the kind of content which should never be taught from the ego {by the egocentric teacher} whose abnormality should be lessened by teaching, not increased. You, Bill, are particularly well suited to perceive this difference {between increasing and lessening the ego's abnormality}, and can therefore teach this course as it should be taught. Most teachers have an unfortunate tendency to teach the course abnormally {teach it from their ego's own illness}, and many of the students are apt to suffer considerable perceptual distortion because of their own authority problem {their belief that the teacher's ego has power to author them}.

Your teaching assignment (and I assure you it is an assignment) will be to present perceptual distortions {which is what abnormal psychology is about} without either engaging in them yourself, or encouraging your students to do so. This interpretation of your role and theirs is too charitable to induce fear. If you

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adhere to this role, you will both engender and experience hope, and you will inspire rather than dispirit the future teachers and therapists I am entrusting to you.

I promise to attend myself, and you should at least credit with me with some dependability in keeping my own promises. I never make them lightly, because I know the need my brothers have for trust.]

## Answer Key

1. When Jesus tells us that our spirit is “never at stake” because God *created* it, he offsets our fear of losing our spirit or its value. Nothing created by God can be altered or lost. His assurance that our ego is not at stake, either, because God *did not create* it, offsets our fear of losing the ego; nothing *not* created by God is real, and therefore cannot be lost. We literally cannot lose!
2. a) It means accepting that we are as God created us, and not what we have tried to make of ourselves. Reality is what God created, and trying to change it *is* the authority problem. The ego is an attempt to make ourselves into something God did not create, and this attempt produces fear. The answer to fear is to “be still and know that God is real, and you are His beloved Son.”  
b) An example might be simply trying to protect my ego against the changes the Course is trying to make.  
c) Let me be still and know that God is real, and I am His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased!
3. The choice for fear (that is, the choice to be an ego) simply cannot be understood because “it is literally incredible” (9:7). Once we have awakened we won’t be able to understand it. We should not even try to understand it now. Our attempts to do so just make it more believable, thus postponing our inevitable awakening.
4. The injunctions in this paragraph are:
  - Leave it [your fear] behind.
  - Do not listen to your fear, and do not preserve it.
  - Listen only to God.
  - Release yourself [from fear] and release others [from their fear].
  - Do not present a false and unworthy picture of yourself to others.
  - Do not accept a false and unworthy picture of others.

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5. a) The ego's home for us is the body, which is shabby, unsheltering, impoverished and weak. The home God made for us would appear to be Heaven, Spirit, Oneness; a "place" in His heart and mind, though not a literal place in form. Heaven, or God's mind, is what we chose to leave empty; it is our true home.  
b) The Course advises us not to attempt to make the ego's house stand. I think that translates into advice not to waste time trying to extend the life of the body, and especially not to try to achieve physical immortality. (Not everyone agrees with this. Some Course students, in fact, feel that the Course *supports* the possibility of physical immortality (for instance, see W-pI.136.18). Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, founders of Unity, both held physical immortality as a worthy goal.) So, an appropriate attitude to have toward our bodies is to be carefree, to regard it as of no real importance or significance (M-5.II.3:12); we "take no thought" for it (Matthew 6:25), but entrust it to God's (or Jesus') care (see 13:4, later in this section).
6. No written answer is expected.
7. We have looked to our own ego to protect "us" in this world, meaning to protect itself and our body. I think these statements of Jesus mean that we can turn the matter of our earthy protection over to him.