

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM® Text, Chapter 4, Section III

Love Without Conflict

Overview of the Section

This section deals with our doubt of God's love for us, and the part that the ego plays in maintaining that doubt.

Paragraph 1

1. [When H. reads this to you, Bill, try to listen very carefully.]¹It is hard to understand [Ur: You have never understood] what "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" really means. ²This is because it is not understandable to the ego, which interprets it as if something outside is inside, and this does not mean anything. ³The word "within" is unnecessary [Ur: does not belong]. ⁴The Kingdom of Heaven *is* you. ⁵What else *but* you did the Creator create, and what else *but* you is His Kingdom? ⁶This is the whole message of the Atonement; a message which in its totality transcends the sum of its parts. [Christmas is not a time; it is a state of mind. The Christ Mind wills from the Soul, not from the Ego, and the Christ Mind *is* yours.] [This material was dictated on December 27, 1965.] ⁷You, too, have a Kingdom that your spirit created. ⁸It has not ceased to create because of the ego's illusions [Ur: because your ego has set you on the road of perception]. ⁹Your [Ur: Soul's] creations are no more fatherless than you are. ¹⁰Your ego and your spirit will never be co-creators, but your spirit and your Creator will always be. ¹¹Be confident that your creations are as safe as you are.

¹²The Kingdom is perfectly united and perfectly protected, and the ego will not prevail against it.

¹³Amen.

• Study Question •

1. *As we come across passages that are italicized, like the twelfth sentence of this paragraph, be aware that such passages are usually meant to be actual practice instructions. We are meant to remember these words and to use them often. A suggestion: Start a notebook in which you copy all such italicized practices as you encounter them in the Text, and spend a week or two practicing each one every day until you have memorized it.*

The section opens with Jesus' interpretation of a line from the gospels: "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." This is an inexact quotation of Luke 17:21, KJV, which actually uses the nearly synonymous phrase, "the Kingdom of God." Many modern translations say the kingdom is "in your midst" rather than "within you," but this is a mistake, in my opinion. The Greek word, entos (εντος), is most commonly translated "within" or "inside." Conservative scholars have changed this to "in your midst" because Jesus spoke the words to the Pharisees, and, in the understanding of these scholars, the Pharisees could not have had God's Kingdom within them!

We tend to think of a kingdom as a physical or geographical thing, something akin to a nation or country. The meaning of the term is actually closer to "divine order" or "the reign of God" or "God's sovereignty."¹ It speaks of God's sovereignty over all that He created, which is all that is. The full phrase, then, means that the Kingdom of God is already here, within each of us; it is God's reign in our hearts. And we are "in" the Kingdom to the degree to which we align with God's sovereignty.

Here, Jesus goes even further: The bottom line is that we *are* the Kingdom of God (1:4). The Kingdom is not something outside of us that we have to attain or hold on to; it *is* us. We are all that God created (1:5) and, therefore, we are His Kingdom.

The aside about Christmas seems a bit out of place at first, but really, it isn't. Just as the Kingdom is not a place but a state of mind, so Christmas is not a time but a state of mind. The Kingdom within is very much the same thing as the Christ Mind within. Charles Fillmore, in *The Revealing Word*, defines the Kingdom of God as "The Christ consciousness, kingdom of heaven," and the Kingdom of Heaven as "the realm of divine ideas, producing their expression, perfect harmony. It is within man."

We too have created, and our creations are *our* kingdom (1:7–8). The Sonship extends the Kingdom, creating more "sons of God." They are safe no matter what delusions may have captured our minds, just as we, as God's Kingdom, are likewise safe (1:8–11).

I love the prayer given in sentence 12, and I've been using it lately:

The Kingdom is perfectly united and perfectly protected, and the ego will not prevail against it. Amen. (T-4.III.1:12–13)

[The following two paragraphs were written in November of 1999, at a time when the *Foundation for A Course in Miracles* owned a copyright to the Course and was attempting to restrict its use by others, including myself.] This seems especially meaningful to me as it applies to the current legal challenges concerning the copyright on *A Course in Miracles*. It sure looks as if the ego is going to tear down everything the Course has built up. My ego and Robert's are prone to being drawn into attack against Ken Wapnick, or at the very least, into perceiving Ken as attacking us when he tries to stop our teaching and writing work, claiming it violates his ownership of the copyright. Nearly all of our "supporters" seem to be voicing the opinion that Ken is in his ego,

¹ Since the term kingdom in Judaism referred to the rule or sovereignty of God rather than to the territory or sphere ruled over by God, a more appropriate translation of the Gk phrase *basileia tou theou*... would be "reign of God." (Anchor Bible Dictionary)

attacking us, falsely seeing the Course as threatened and needlessly trying to protect the purity of something that needs no protection. Others perceive Robert and me as falling prey to attack thoughts simply by seeking the court's protection from the legal threats proffered by the *Foundation for A Course in Miracles*.

It may *seem* as if the ego is prevailing. But Jesus, in this prayer, thinks otherwise. The Kingdom is "perfectly protected, and the ego will not prevail against it." I take comfort in that. I take comfort in knowing that, even if Ken Wapnick fails to demonstrate the Course, even if Robert Perry fails, even if I, myself, fail, the ego will not prevail against the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God will go on, with or without us. As Jesus goes on to say, this prayer is useful in moments of temptation, when we are tempted to feel discouraged.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹This is written in the form of a prayer because it is useful in moments of temptation. ²It is a declaration of independence. ³You will find it very helpful if you understand it fully.

In its characteristic upside-down way, the ego has taken the impulses from the superconscious and perceives them as if they arise in the unconscious. The ego judges what is to be accepted, and the impulses from the superconscious are unacceptable to it, because they clearly point to the unexistence of the ego itself. The ego therefore experiences threat, and not only censors but also reinterprets the data. However, as Freud very correctly pointed out what you do not perceive you still know, and it can retain a very active life BEYOND your awareness.

Repression thus operates to conceal not only the baser impulses, but also the most lofty ones from the ego's awareness, because BOTH are threatening to the ego and, being concerned primarily with its preservation in the face of threat, it perceives them as the same. The threat value of the lofty is really much greater to the ego, because the pull of God Himself can hardly be equated with the pull of human appetites.

By perceiving them as the same, the ego attempts to save itself from being swept away, as it would surely be in the presence of knowledge. The upper level of the unconscious thus contains the call of God as well as the call of the body. That is why the basic conflict between love and fear is unconscious. The ego cannot tolerate either and represses both by resorting to inhibition. Society depends on inhibiting the former, but SALVATION depends on disinhibiting the latter.

⁴The reason you need my help is because you have denied [Ur: repressed] your own Guide and therefore need guidance. ⁵My role is to separate the true from the false [Ur: in your own unconscious], so truth can break through the barriers the ego has set up and can shine into your mind. ⁶Against our united strength the ego cannot prevail.

• Study Question •

2. *Whom have you denied, according to paragraph 2, and as a result, whom do you need?*



If we unite our minds with Jesus, the ego cannot prevail against us: “Against our united strength the ego cannot prevail” (2:6). There seems to be a tight connection between “perfectly protected” and “perfectly *united*.” If we are united with Jesus, we are protected. If we are not united, then in that time and place, we are not protected. This reminds me a bit of Jesus’ words in John 15, about the vine (Jesus) and the branches (us); it is the branches that *abide* in the vine that bear fruit, while branches that separate from him wither and die. We cannot be separate in truth, and therefore “nothing real can be threatened.” However, that which we *think* we are, i.e., beings separated from God, *can indeed be threatened*. Our safety is in our union with Jesus, God and one another.

In my identification with the ego, I have denied my own Guide (2:4), that is, my direct connection with God. Therefore, I need help from Jesus. He sorts out the true from the false, so that the truth can break through into my mind again (2:5). He opens the way to put me back in touch with my Guide. I can do it without his help, I suppose; it just takes longer. But eventually I *must* do it with him, because this whole stance of wanting to do things on my own is what got me into trouble in the first place!

As you can see from the lengthy insertion from the Urtext (which I won’t comment on here, but which we can discuss in our groups), what seems to be a very simple paragraph actually introduces what becomes a major theme of this section: The ego has set up barriers to the truth within our subconscious minds, barriers we can’t handle by ourselves. These barriers block out not only the “baser impulses” or “the call of the body,” but also the “impulses from the superconscious” or “the call of God.” We need the help of Jesus and the Holy Spirit to distinguish what is false from what is true, so that the truth can finally break through to our conscious minds.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹It is surely apparent by now why the ego regards spirit as its “enemy.” ²The ego arose from the separation, and its continued existence depends on your continuing belief in the separation. ³[Ur: Reducing the Soul impulses to the unconscious {though they are really superconscious},] The ego must offer you some sort of reward for maintaining this belief. ⁴All it can offer is a sense of temporary existence, which begins with its own beginning and ends with its own

ending. ⁵It tells you this life is your existence because it is its own. ⁶Against this sense of temporary existence spirit offers you the knowledge of permanence and unshakable being. ⁷No one who has experienced the revelation of this can ever fully believe in the ego again. ⁸How can its meager offering to you prevail against the glorious gift of God?

• **Study Question** •

3. *Have you ever thought of yourself as permanent? Spend a little time meditating on how your life might be different if you really knew that you were “permanent and unshakable.”*

The ego depends on our continued belief in the separation (3:2). The gifts of God spell doom to the ego. Therefore, it regards spirit as an enemy (3:1), and it tries to ensure our continued belief in separation by offering us the “reward” of the temporary existence of physical life (3:3–5), all that the ego has, and therefore all it can offer to us.

Spirit offers me “the knowledge of permanence and unshakable being” (3:6). We begin with snippets of revelation about this permanence. We have brief tastes of a profound *knowing*. We go back to believing in the ego, but we can never again “fully believe in the ego” (3:7). I have had a few such moments of revelation. Those I have had are unforgettable. There have been a few times recently. Other times go back through my Christian experience all the way to when I was eleven or twelve and sat on a hillside in New Jersey, during a Methodist summer camp, and simply knew that God was present and that He loved me. Those moments have shaped my life.

At times, my belief in the ego seems so strong that it threatens to entirely overwhelm my awareness of my own “permanence and unshakable being.” But it never does entirely. The song of God continues unabated, singing radiantly within and through everything, muted perhaps, but never entirely forgotten.

Paragraph 4

4. ¹You who identify with your ego cannot believe God loves you. ²You do not love what you made, and what you made does not love you. ³Being made out of the denial of the Father, the ego has no allegiance to its maker. ⁴You cannot conceive of the real relationship that exists between God and His creations because of your hatred for the self you made. ⁵You project onto the ego [Ur: your own idea of yourself] the decision to separate, and this conflicts with the love you feel for the ego [Ur: for what you have made] because you made it. ⁶No love in this world [Ur: No human love] is without this ambivalence, and since no ego has experienced love without [without] ambivalence the concept is beyond its understanding. ⁷Love will enter immediately into any mind that truly wants it, but it must [must] want it truly. ⁸This means that it wants it without [without] ambivalence, and this kind of wanting is wholly without the ego's

“drive to get.”

• **Study Question** •

4. *List as many reasons as you can find in this paragraph for why the ego does not love us.*

When I identify with the ego, when “the” ego seems like “my” ego or even like “me,” I cannot believe that God loves me (4:1). Putting that in reverse: If I have trouble believing God loves me, I must be identified with the ego. I am mistakenly projecting my relationship as maker of my own ego, onto God and His relationship with me. I think that God must feel about me the way that I feel about “my” ego. I blame the ego for the decision to separate (4:5), when that is actually my own responsibility. But because of that blame, I don’t love the ego (4:2); I hate it (4:4)! How could I love the thing that has gotten me into this mess of separation? Yet at the same time, because I made it, I *do* feel love for the ego (4:5)! Likewise, the ego does not love me (4:2), and bears me no allegiance, since “denial of the Father” is its basis (4:3). I am its father, so it denies *me*. My entire relationship with the ego is one of extreme ambivalence.

When I am identified with the ego, how could I possibly understand the relationship between God and His creations? That relationship is one of “love without ambivalence” (4:6), which no ego has ever experienced. There is no love without ambivalence in this world (4:6). And yet, to experience that love without ambivalence, we must *want* that love *without ambivalence!*

I think *ambivalence* is a fascinating word. It means having two opposite feelings about something; being pulled in two opposite directions or wanting to do two opposite things; to draw something toward you while simultaneously pushing it away. Therefore, to want love without ambivalence means to want it with no overtone of resistance or doubt. And love without ambivalence, God’s love toward us, is utterly pure love. There is not even a tiny bit of rejection or blame or pushing us away. In this world we cannot know what that kind of love feels like. Only with difficulty can we imagine that God loves us completely, totally, absolutely, with no admixture of repulsion or judgment. We’re no so sure that God *really* loves us. But He does. It’s the ego that keeps us from knowing that and believing that.

Paragraph 5

5. ¹There is a kind of experience so different from anything the ego can offer that you will never want to cover or hide it again [Ur: that you will never recover. The word is used quite literally here, -- you will never be able to hide again]. ²It is necessary to repeat that your belief in darkness and hiding is why the light cannot enter. ³The Bible gives many references to the immeasurable gifts which are for you, but for which you [Ur: you] must ask. ⁴This is not a condition as the ego sets conditions. ⁵It is the

glorious condition of what you are *[are]*.

6. 6. 1No force except your own will is strong enough or worthy enough to guide you. 2In this you are as free as God, and must remain so forever. [Ur: You can never be bound except in honor, and that is always voluntary.]

To know love completely, to have love enter our mind, we must want it truly, without ambivalence (4:7–8). Our mind must be purified; all the ego's "drive to get" must be removed (at least for an instant). All judgment and attack must be relinquished (at least for an instant). Our belief in the ego must be so thoroughly shaken that, for a moment, we have no desire at all left for the ego. Then, in that moment, *something* enters. "There is a kind of experience so different from anything the ego can offer that you will never want to cover or hide it again" (5:1). You will "never recover." That is what happens. It is a revelation of "permanence and unshakable being" (3:6).

We must realize that all that prevents this light from entering is our belief in darkness and hiding (5:2). God is not withholding it; we are blocking it. We may not be conscious of the ways we are blocking it, but learning to become conscious of them is a large part of what the Course is teaching us. God is not setting up "conditions" we have to meet in order to receive our inheritance. We must ask for it, yes (5:3); we must want it without ambivalence. That is not "a condition as the ego sets conditions" (5:4). It is not some kind of externally imposed requirement. It is a matter of "what you are" (5:5). It is a condition in the sense that it is an attribute of our being. Nothing can be imposed on us against our will! We must *want* something in order to receive it; if we choose to block the light, it *will* be blocked. That is the power of our minds at work. Our own will is the only thing that controls our destiny; that is why we *must* ask for the gifts. They can only come by *our choice*.

Remember, though, what Jesus said earlier. Our subconscious minds are so mixed up, the superconscious impulses comingled with the baser impulses so thoroughly, and all of it hidden from our conscious awareness, that we *need help* to sort them out. I read a sentence like the opening line of paragraph 5 and I think, "Yes! I want that kind of experience! I want to know my permanence and unshakable being." But there are subterranean currents in my mind that dilute my wanting, that water it down and make it ambivalent. So I pray, I ask to connect with the pure current of Spirit within me, I ask for a pure heart. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:7,10, KJV).

Paragraph 6

³Let us ask the Father in my name to keep you mindful of His Love for you and yours for Him. ⁴He has never failed to answer this request, because it asks only

for what He has already willed. ⁵Those who call truly are always answered.
⁶Thou shalt have no other gods before Him because there *are* none. [Ur: Note: HS {Helen Schucman} became very fearful here, and rather vaguely thought the answer was: “Thou shalt have no other Gods before me, because there *are* none. You still think there are.”]

• Study Question •

5. Spend at least five minute, asking the Father, in the name of Jesus, to keep you mindful of His Love for you and yours for Him. Try to feel both His Love and your own.

The power of our minds, or the force of our own will, is the only force strong enough to guide us (6:1). We must invite Love to enter; it cannot be forced upon us, which would be a kind of mental rape. We *really do* have free will, as free as God Himself (6:2). When any one of us has *truly* chosen to ask Love to enter (or to remember God's Love for us, and our love for Him), God has never failed to answer, because such a request is perfectly in line with what He has already willed (6:3–4). The Course emphasizes this certainty over and over: T6.V.4:2; WpII.221.1:5, WpII.232.1:3, WpII.290.2:2–3, WpII.327, WpII.356.1:1, WpII.357.title, WpII.358.title.

At times in my life, it has seemed as though I have “asked” and have not been answered. Other times, I *have* been answered, so that I became transcendently aware of God's Love for me, and was flooded with an intense and burning love for God. Why only sometimes? The answer has to be in that little word, “truly.” “Those who call *truly* are always answered” (6:5). “Truly” means “without ambivalence,” as was discussed in 4:8. *Ambivalence* is such an interesting word! My American Heritage Dictionary defines it as, “the coexistence of opposing attitudes or feelings.” The last part of the word comes from the Latin *valentia*, meaning “vigor” or “strength”; the first part of the word, *ambi*, means “in both directions.” It shows up in words like “ambidextrous” (equally strong or skilled with both hands). So “ambivalent” means “strong in both directions.”

That's the problem. We have a strong desire to experience the Love of God, but, at the same time, we have a strong investment in our egos or a strong attraction to the world. We are being pulled in two directions, and until we can invite the Love of God *without* ambivalence, we cannot “ask truly.” We must recognize that having other gods is out of the question, not because it is forbidden but because *there are none* (6:6).

This reminds me of what Emmet Fox wrote about *The Ten Commandments* in his book by that name. He says that all the “Thou shalt not” statements can be read to mean, “Thou cannot.” Instead of “Do not kill” it can mean, “You cannot kill; life is eternal.” Instead of “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” it really means, as the Course says here, “You *cannot* have other gods because there are none.” As most New Thought

churches constantly affirm, "There is One Presence and One Power active in the universe: God, the good, omnipotent."

I have found it important to my spiritual sanity to recognize that, when I ask for God's Love and feel as though I haven't been answered, it is not because God does not care to hear me. It is because, somewhere in my mind, there is a strong pull in the opposite direction that is counteracting my strong desire for God. The desire for God is *real*; the reality of my desire isn't at issue. It is being blocked, however, by an equally strong pull in the opposite direction. In order for that to change, I have to be willing to acknowledge the presence of that opposing pull. I need to bring that resistant thought into the light, to recognize it for what it is, and to let it go.

Paragraph 7

7. ¹It has never really entered your mind to give up every idea you ever had that opposes knowledge. ²You retain thousands of little scraps of fear [Ur: scraps of meanness] that prevent the Holy One from entering. ³Light cannot penetrate through the walls you make to block it, and it is forever unwilling to destroy what you have made. ⁴No one can see through a wall, but I can step around it. ⁵Watch your mind for the scraps of fear [Ur: scraps of meanness], or you will be unable to ask me to do so. ⁶I can help you only as our Father created us. ⁷I will love you and honor you and maintain complete respect for what you have made, but I will not uphold it [Ur: I will neither love nor honor it] unless it is true. ⁸I will never forsake you any more than God will, but I must wait as long as you choose to forsake yourself. ⁹Because I wait in love and not in impatience, you will surely ask me truly. ¹⁰I will come in response to a single unequivocal call.

• Study Question •

1. *This section discusses the principle of bringing our darkness to the light for healing. In this paragraph, which of the following are ways in which opposites such as light and darkness can be reconciled? (There may be more than one.)*
 - A. *By bringing them together*
 - B. *By union*
 - C. *By conflicting and competing with each other*
 - D. *By one fading away in the presence of the other*
 - E. *All of the above*

The next paragraph addresses exactly that process: "It has never really entered your mind to give up every idea you ever had that opposes knowledge" (7:1). That is just what we have to do if we are to break free. We have to begin watching our minds for the thoughts that oppose knowledge.

This leads us into one of my favorite areas in the Text, an area that presents what I have called “The Practice of Mental Vigilance.” If you have access to the World Wide Web, you can find a copy of an article I wrote on that topic, which covers the early sections of Chapter 4, focusing on Section IV:

<http://www.circleofa.org/articles/MentalVigilance.php?dig=vigilance>

Here's how that article summarizes the importance of mental vigilance, as the first three sections of Chapter 4 present it. I have extracted some key portions here:

The fundamental choice that confronts us all is, which voice will we listen to, the ego or the Holy Spirit? (T-4.Int.2:1). Mental vigilance consists of recognizing that this choice is our fundamental responsibility. Until we dismiss the ego from our minds, through conscious choice, we will simply reenact the separation in every moment of our lives. The ego can only be given up *voluntarily* (T-Int.3:4-6).

Teaching and learning enable us to change our minds, which makes them great strengths. But without willingness to change, we cannot learn anything. Our ego thinking got us into this mess, and unless we are willing to change that thinking, we will stay in it (T-4.I.4:1,2). We are being called to active participation in the transformation of our thoughts. Jesus tells us, “If you are willing to renounce the role of guardian of your thought system and open it to me, I will correct it very gently and lead you back to God” (T-4.I.4:4-7).

It is unsettling to realize how we have tried to cordon off our own minds from conscious awareness. In listening to the ego, we have many thoughts we desire to retain in our minds to support the ego; however, we dare not be conscious of those thoughts. If we became conscious of them, we would either feel too much guilt, or we would recognize their insanity and let them go. So, we think them and, simultaneously, we refuse to look at them.

Workbook Lesson 136 makes it clear how we do this.
[The ego defenses] seem to be unconscious but [that is, only] because of the rapidity with which you choose to use them. In that second, even less, in which the choice is made, you recognize exactly what you would attempt to do, and then proceed to think that it is done (W-pI.136.3:3,4).

We must be conscious to cooperate with the ego while we set up defenses (W-pI.136.4:1–2). “But afterwards, your plan requires that you must forget you made it, so it seems to be external to your own intent...” (W-pI.136.4:3). I believe that what we call the unconscious mind consists of nothing but thoughts that once were conscious but which we

have deliberately forgotten. We program the computer of our unconscious and then conveniently forget we wrote the program.

In personal guidance to Helen and Bill, recounted in *Absence from Felicity*, Jesus explained quite clearly why we must watch our minds. He said:

You persist in believing that when you do not consciously watch your mind, it is unmindful. It is time to consider the whole world of the unconscious or unwatched mind. This will frighten you because it is the source of fright.... The unwatched mind is responsible for the whole content of the unconscious... (*Absence from Felicity*, pages 256–257).

As we saw in Section II, the Course responds to our questions about how the mind could have made the ego long ago by telling us to watch our minds in the present. It asks us to look at our minds in the present to see how we are making the ego *now*. If we can answer that question, the past will no longer matter (T-4.II.1:1–3 and T-4.II.3:1, 4). We are “doing” the ego now, and it is in this present moment we need to expose the making of the ego and choose to let it go. That’s what mental vigilance is all about.

When we catch our mind “making” the ego in the present, the next step is to realize that “the mind need not work that way” (T-4.II.3:6). That is, we have the power to choose differently.

This is where I usually get stuck. So often, it seems that I am powerless to free myself from the ego’s beliefs in fear, guilt and attack. This is where the Course seems most infuriating. It insists that my belief in powerlessness is just another ploy of the ego to enable me to deny responsibility for my thoughts. All of the ego’s defenses get triggered to keep me from taking that responsibility. Perhaps I simply deny that the ego thoughts are there, or that they are even worth bothering with. Or perhaps I make myself guilty for having them. Until I am ready to be responsible for the thoughts, to forgive myself for having them, and to acknowledge my mind’s power to change them, they seem to have a power all their own that is beyond my control.

The prospect of changing all these ego thoughts seems so intimidating that we simply tolerate them.

That brings us back to paragraph 7 again. It has never occurred to us to clean our minds of all thoughts that oppose knowledge (7:1). Either we feel so overwhelmed with the multitude of ego thoughts that it seems an impossible task, or we are so unaware of them we think there are none there to worry about, except trivial ones of no importance. The point is that *nothing else but our own thoughts in opposition to knowledge* are preventing the Holy One from entering, and there are *thousands* of these “little scraps of fear” (7:2). The light cannot penetrate walls we have made expressly to block it for two

reasons. One, our minds are that powerful. Two, the Light is not willing to destroy what we have made; it maintains “complete respect” for what we have made (7:4, 7).

Jesus is asking us now to do what has never before entered our minds, namely, to give up every idea that opposes knowledge. He wants us to watch our minds for the little “scraps of fear” (7:5) and, when we find them, *ask him to step around them* (7:4–5). If he is to enter, it must be by our will, it must be at our request: *we must ask for it*.

He treats us with such respect! He won't forsake us, but neither will he impose himself on us. He will continue to wait as long as we choose to forsake ourselves (7:8), in other words, as long as we let those scraps of fear exist unattended and unnoticed.

Perhaps the thoughts of fear that flicker through your mind seem too small and too unimportant to merit your attention. They aren't. Jesus calls them “little scraps” to let us know that those seemingly insignificant thoughts are what he wants us to watch for.

If you believe that what you think is ineffectual you may cease to be afraid of it, but you are hardly likely to respect it. There *are* no idle thoughts. All thinking produces form at some level. (T-2.VI.9:12–14)

Those apparently idle thoughts are what we have to watch for and recognize as blocks to the light. When we find them, we simply ask Jesus to step around them. If he is invited to do so, he will.

Even if we neglect this vigilance and fail to ask him, he will wait patiently knowing that, eventually, we “surely will” ask him and ask him “truly” (compare with 4:7). All it takes is a *single unequivocal call*, a desire without ambivalence (7:10). He is again implying the inevitability of our choice (compare with T-4.I.9:9); we *surely* will ask truly. So, if you are doubting yourself and your ability to be free of ambivalence and to call unequivocally, rest assured. You *surely will*. Notice the implication, however, that nothing will really change until we *do* so ask! Until we voluntarily give up the ego, we will just go on endlessly re-enacting the separation (T-4.In.3:5–6).

• **Study Question** •

6. *As an exercise in practicing the above, read Workbook Lesson 26, and do the suggested practice.*

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Paragraph 8

8. ¹Watch carefully and see what it is you are really asking for. ²Be very honest with yourself in this, for we must hide nothing from each other. ³If you will really [*Ur: really*] try to do this, you have taken the first step toward preparing your mind for the Holy One to enter. ⁴We will prepare for this together, for once He has come, you will be ready to help me make other minds ready for Him. ⁵How long will you deny Him His Kingdom?

• Study Question •

7. *In light of 7:1, 7:2, 7:5 and 8:1, what must you be very honest about (8:2)?*

We need, therefore, to watch our minds and to become aware of what we are really asking for. The simple fact is, we always get what we ask for! Therefore, if you've got it, you must have asked for it. If you don't have it, you must not have asked truly. That's the law of mind; that's how our minds work.

What is really asked for cannot be denied. Your will *is* granted.

(T-30.III.5:9-10)

I am responsible for what I see.

I choose the feelings I experience, and I decide upon the goal I would achieve.

And everything that seems to happen to me I ask for, and receive as I have asked. (T-21.II.2:3-5)

We need to be “very honest with” ourselves here, and hide absolutely nothing from Jesus. I'm constantly amazed how hard it seems to do this! Some thoughts I just don't want to bring into the presence of Jesus, and usually these are the thoughts I *most need* to bring to him.

Let us ask ourselves, “What am I thinking that is blocking the light from entering? What illusion am I holding on to that opposes knowledge?” And then, when we find such thoughts, bring them to Jesus. Section IV, as we shall see, has a number of very concrete instructions in how to practice this kind of mental vigilance. That is the key: *practice*. This teaching is not just something we read this week and then leave behind as we move on; it is meant to become a permanent part of our lives. Jesus says, “If you will *really try to do this*, you have taken the first step toward preparing your mind for the Holy One to enter” (8:3, my emphasis). He wants us to *really try to do it*. He knows us so well! We read about it, we may read it hundreds of times in the Course, but do we really try to do it? Or do we make a token effort and then forget it? If we “really try” we have taken the “first step.”

Together with Jesus, we can prepare our minds for the entrance of God Himself (that must be what “Holy One” refers to). Of course, since God is omnipresent, He doesn't really have to *enter* our minds. I think this means that we must allow our minds to become conscious or aware of God's Omnipresence. Not until He *does* “enter” (into our awareness) will we “be ready to help [Jesus] make other minds ready for Him” (8:4). That is how His Kingdom is extended (8:5)—mind after mind consciously entering God's Presence, and each mind that knows this Oneness extending It to other minds around itself. Such extension is our function, our reason for being.

Paragraphs 9 & 10

9. ¹In your own mind, though denied by the ego [Ur: In your own

unconscious, deeply repressed by the ego], is the declaration of your release. ²*God has given you everything.* ³This one fact means the ego does not exist, and this [therefore] makes it profoundly afraid. ⁴In the ego's language, "to have" and "to be" are different, but they are identical to the Holy Spirit [Ur: the Soul]. ⁵The Holy Spirit [Ur: It {the Soul}] knows that you both *have* everything and *are* everything. ⁶Any distinction in this respect is meaningful only when the idea of "getting," which implies a lack, has already been accepted. ⁷That is why we make no distinction between *having* the Kingdom of God and *being* the Kingdom of God.

10. ¹The calm being of God's Kingdom, which in your sane mind is perfectly conscious, is ruthlessly banished from the part of the mind the ego rules. ²The ego is desperate because it opposes literally invincible odds, whether you are asleep or awake. ³Consider how much vigilance you have been willing to exert to protect your ego, and how little to protect your right mind [Ur: higher mind]. ⁴Who but the insane would undertake to believe what is not true, and then protect this belief at the cost of truth?

• Study Question •

8. *Enumerate some ways in which you have been vigilant to preserve your ego.*

The answer we are all looking for, our "declaration of...release," is in our own mind, not outside of us (9:1). It may be deeply repressed. It may be unconscious. But it is there! The key is in our own hands. All we need to do is to watch our minds and bring every scrap of fear to Jesus. God has already given us everything (9:2); there is nothing we need to obtain. We have everything because we *are* everything (9:5); we are God's only creation and His Kingdom, as Jesus pointed out before (1:5) and reiterates in 9:7. To think we lack something (and therefore have reason to fear) is already a denial of God's creation. We don't need to *enter* the Kingdom of God because we *are* the Kingdom of God. That awareness is already in our minds (10:1). As we accept that awareness, we can extend it and assist other minds in accepting it for themselves.

The ego, however, has banished that awareness, that "calm being" (10:1) from the part of the mind ruled by the ego. The ego is fighting a losing battle against "invincible odds" (10:2). It does not even matter if our minds are awake or asleep, and I don't think this means physical sleep. No matter how spiritually blind a person may seem to be, the odds against the ego are unbeatable! Everyone *must* eventually awaken, because everyone shares in the calm being of God's Kingdom, and everyone possesses that "sane mind" which is "perfectly conscious" of that Kingdom. The ego cannot possibly overcome that inner consciousness.

This makes the ego desperate, and drives it to unbelievable lengths to preserve itself (10:3). We have, every one of us, been painstakingly vigilant in protecting our egos. We have watched like hawks for every thought of truth and have squelched it. We have

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rehearsed the ego lies repeatedly until we have overlearned them, until they have gone beyond belief to “unquestionable fact” in our minds. What we have chosen to learn has been untrue, and we protect these untruths in our minds at the cost of truth. Such behavior proves we must be insane (10:4). All that Jesus is asking is that we give just a little of the same kind of vigilance to removing the thoughts that block our awareness of Love’s presence.

Answer Key

1. No written response is expected.
2. We have denied the Holy Spirit. As a result, we need Jesus as our guide or helper.
3. No written response is expected.
4. The ego does not love us because:
 - We do not love it. It mirrors back to us the unlove that we feel toward it.
 - It was made out of the denial of our Creator. The unlove we felt toward our Creator while making the ego, it now carries toward its maker: us.
 - You blame it for your problem—the separation—and presumably it mirrors this blame back at you and blames you in return for its problems (basically the same as #1).
 - It does not understand love without ambivalence. At best it knows love mixed with unlove—so unlove is always present in all its attitudes.
5. No written response is expected.
6. Because of the sovereignty of our will, our power to choose our own experience. Because we must ask to receive God's gifts. Because we must want him truly, without ambivalence, just as we must want love without ambivalence.
7. What you are really asking for, or, more specifically, the scraps of fear, the ideas the block knowledge, the walls you make to block the light.
8. Possible examples: Defending myself against criticisms; filling my mind with thoughts of things I want to "have"; constant self-criticism; worry, particularly obsessive worry and rehearsing of what might go wrong.