

Study Guide and Commentary ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 11

God or the Ego Introduction and Section I The Gifts of Fatherhood

This chapter, “God or the Ego,” continues to contrast the thought systems of God and the ego, as the title clearly implies. It continues to emphasize that the only way out of the ego thought system is to look at it honestly and clearly, without fear, allowing the Holy Spirit to reinterpret the ego and to replace its thoughts with His own. The way to know what we receive from the Holy Spirit is to give it away to others, that is, to grant the gift of innocence to everyone around us through forgiveness. We will be free from our egos when we no longer perceive the egos of others as their reality.

Introduction

Paragraph 1

1. ¹Either God or the ego is insane. ²If you will examine the evidence **on both sides** fairly, you will realize this **must** be true. ³Neither God nor the ego proposes a partial thought system. ⁴Each is internally consistent, but they are diametrically opposed in all respects so that partial allegiance is impossible. ⁵Remember, too, that their results are as different as their foundations, and their fundamentally irreconcilable natures **cannot** be reconciled by [*your*] vacillations ~~between them~~. ⁶Nothing alive is fatherless, for life is creation. ⁷Therefore, your decision is always an answer to the question, “Who is my father?” ⁸And you **will** be faithful to the father you choose.

• Study Question •

1. *Can you give an example from daily life of doing or thinking something that implies that the ego is your father?*

Our choice is always and *only* between the ego and the Holy Spirit. The intent of the whole Course is to bring us to realize, first, that we have a mind capable of choice and that mind is all that matters; second, that the external world is nothing more than a reflection of mind and its choices; and, third, that there is only one choice to be made—between the ego and God. The intent of the Course is to make us aware of our minds and the choices we are making, and to prepare us to spend the rest of our lives learning to make the right choice consistently.

The choice is clear-cut, black or white. It cannot be gray; you can't *rationally* mix the ego's thought system with God's. We *do try* to mix them, which is why our minds seem so conflicted—because the thoughts are “diametrically opposed in all respects” and *cannot mix* (1:4).

The ego's thought system is insane (1:1), but it is not illogical, if you accept the ego's initial insane premise of separation and self-creation.

Because both thought systems are “internally consistent” you cannot be consistent and choose both; you must choose one or the other completely, in the end (1:3–4). It is a totally black-or-white choice (1:4). So eventually, the only possible outcome for any one of us is to choose 100% for either God or the ego. In fact, the only *truly possible* outcome is to choose God, since the ego's basic premise, separation from God, is false and impossible. That is why the outcome is certain (T-2.III.3:10) and “guaranteed by God” (T-8.V.4:4 and also W-pI.93 throughout).

The process of working with the Course, or with any other form of the universal course, can then be seen as ferreting out every last way in which we cling to aspects of the ego's thought system and letting them go: to be “vigilant only for God and His Kingdom,” as Chapter 6 says (T-6.V(C)).

The last half of this first paragraph points out that “nothing alive is fatherless” (1:6). That is, we all have a *cause*—*some* cause, some father, some creator. So the choice we are making between these thought systems really comes down to a basic question: “Who is my father?” (1:7).

Accepting God's thought system can be boiled down to one simple thing: accepting God as the *only* Creator, and myself as His creation. “Who created me? God or the ego?” If we choose to believe that the ego made us, our minds will serve that decision and will channel every bit of input into supporting that decision. All of our perceptions will be adjusted to bolster the ego. If, on the other hand, we choose God, the mind will, just as faithfully, serve God.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹Yet what would you say to someone who [*really*] believed this question really involves [*this question involves*] conflict? ²If **you** made the ego, how can the ego have made **you**? ³The authority problem is still the **only** source of [*perceived*] conflict, because the ego was **made** out of the wish of God's Son to father **Him**. ⁴The ego, then, is nothing more than a delusional system in which **you made your own father**. ⁵Make no mistake about this. ⁶It sounds insane when it is stated with perfect honesty, but the ego never looks on what it does with perfect honesty. ⁷Yet that **is** its insane premise, which is carefully hidden in the dark cornerstone of its thought system. ⁸And either the ego, which you made, *is* your father, or its whole thought system will not stand.

• Study Question •

2. *The first sentence implies that the question of whether God or the ego is your father is not a real or sensible question. Why is it inherently contradictory to think that the ego is your father?*

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“God? Or the Ego?” The question, when stated that way, seems almost foolish. The answer is obvious; there can't really be any conflict about answering. The way Jesus speaks about this here implies that taking this question seriously is an incredibly stupid thing to do. The decision is a no-brainer; the choice is so evident that anyone who seems conflicted about the choice is beyond the reach of rational argument (2:1). He points out the obvious: Something we have made cannot possibly have created us! (2:2)

Yet we *do* believe that the ego made us. We may not think so consciously, in terms like, “My ego created me,” but we cannot deny that we often believe that we are helpless victims at the mercy of an external world, when in fact the world of our perceptions was made up by the ego. We make projections and then believe ourselves to be affected by what we've projected. That is the same thing: We are being “made” by something made by us.

Chapter 7 called this “the unbelievable belief” (title of T-7.VIII) and said that the Course's purpose is to teach us “that the ego...will forever be unbelievable” (T-7.VIII.7:1).

This chapter will go further towards that purpose: looking at the ego thought system and seeing that, while we *do* believe it, the ego and its beliefs are unbelievable and impossible. This conflict about “Who created me” is what the Course calls *the authority problem*.

The *authority problem* is the problem of who is my father, who is my creator, who is my *author* (T-3.VI.8.1–2). It is at the root of the entire world of conflict in which we find ourselves—“the root of all evil” as it is called in Chapter 3 (T-3.VI.7.3), quoting the Bible verse (I Timothy 6:10) that attributes that title to “the love of money”.¹ It clearly means to say that *all* “evil,” that is, all that is not good, stems from our difficulty in accepting the fact that God created us and we did not create ourselves (T-10.V.4:3).

The idea here is that the Father created the Son, and then the Son, feeling deprived of being the creator, wished to become God's creator (2:3). The Son wanted to make his own father. The idea is clearly *delusional*, insane, impossible, and ridiculous (2:4, 6). The point is—*the ego believes it, and everything the ego thinks is based on this idea* (2:3–4, 7). The ego's premise, that *it* is the creator, is not possible—but we can think it is possible and we do believe it: “No one can really do this, but that you can think you can and believe you have is beyond dispute” (T-10.V.1:7).

Simply by acknowledging God as your Creator, you undermine the entire ego thought system. You cut it off at its root! This is why the Workbook so often repeats the thought, “I am as God created me” (W-pI.94, 110, and 162). If God is the only Creator, then

¹ The Course uses the phrase from the Bible, but totally disregards the use the Bible makes of it. In the King James translation of the Bible, love of money (not money itself) is said to be “the root of all evil.” Later translations of the Bible amend that translation from the Greek considerably. For instance, the New International Version translates: “The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” The Weymouth translation of the New Testament says: “From love of money all sorts of evils arise.” The Course appropriates the phrase in a way that apparently has nothing to do with money, and that reverts to the KJV's absolute wording, “the root of all evil” rather than “a root of all kinds of evil.” Most, if not all, of the Course's references to the Bible quote (or approximately quote) the KJV. Apparently this was the translation Helen Schucman was most familiar with.

anything we see that appears to be something God did not create—pain, sickness, death, evil, suffering, hatred, or injustice—simply cannot be real. If the ego did not create you, the ego's entire thought system is undercut, and will tumble to the ground (2:8).

Paragraph 3

3. ¹You make [have made] by projection, but God creates [has created] by extension. ²The cornerstone of God's creation is **you**, for **His** thought system is light. ³Remember the Rays that are there unseen. ⁴The more you approach the center of **His** thought system, the clearer the light becomes. ⁵The closer you come to the foundation of the ego's thought system, the darker and more obscure becomes the way. ⁶Yet even the little spark in your mind is enough to lighten it. ⁷Bring this light fearlessly with you, and **bravely** hold it up to the foundation of the ego's thought system [bravely]. ⁸Be willing to judge it with perfect honesty. ⁹Open the dark cornerstone of terror on which it rests, and bring it out into the light. ¹⁰There you will see that it rested on meaninglessness, and that everything of which you have been afraid was based on nothing.

• Study Question •

3. *We are told to bring the little spark in our minds and fearlessly hold it up to the dark, obscure foundation of the ego's thought system. What do you think this little spark is? (Hint: There was an earlier reference² to "little spark.")*

The contrast between our *making* and God's *creating* is quite clear (3:1). We project what we do not want out of our minds, and by so doing *make* our fearful world (T-12.III.9:6–7). The world we make is thus quite *unlike* our true nature. God, by contrast, "creates by extension" (3:1). What He creates is an extension of Himself. Because of that we, ourselves, are "the cornerstone of God's creation" (3:2). We are light, extensions of God's own light. We are thoughts in His Mind. God extended His light in creation, and the "Rays" of that light are still within us, although they are not currently visible in their full glory (3:3). When Jesus asks us in sentence 3 to remember the Rays, he is referring to his previous mention of the Great Rays that, despite the darkness of our ego illusions, still reside within us in all their effulgent glory (T-10.IV.8:1–3).

In that earlier mention, he pointed out that the way to recover a full vision of those Great Rays is through choosing to see the little spark of them that remains visible in everyone. Here, he says that the light of God's thought system shines brighter as we penetrate into it more deeply (3:4). To me, this means that the more completely we understand the thought system of God, which is based on love, and on the principle that giving is receiving or creating is sharing, the clearer our minds become, the more free of confusion. The more of God's thought system we expose as we excavate, digging away the ego's thoughts which have covered it, the more its simplicity shines forth, and the more its inherent *obviousness* becomes apparent to us. The more of it we see, the more *right* it becomes to us.

² T-10.IV.7–8.

By contrast, if you dig into the *ego's* thought system, it is like descending into the maze of Hell itself (3:5). Have you ever visited a well-constructed hall of mirrors, and found yourself quite lost and confused? “Which way is out? Which way did I come?” I believe the *ego's* thought system, like the hall of mirrors, is *designed* to be confusing because the *ego* is trying to hide the fact that its thought system is without basis.

When we first turn within to look at our thoughts and the foundation on which they rest, the way seems to be dark and terrifying. The *ego* has deliberately made it that way because it does not want its foundations to be looked at; it is trying to scare you off. It may seem that you are frightened by your own thoughts, but really, it is the *ego* that is terrified of *you*.

In the woods, when the path gets dark, what do you do? You take a lamp with you. The lamp is the “spark” or the Holy Spirit in your mind. The last chapter told us that the spark “is everywhere and it is eternal” (10.IV.7.6). When your own mind seems dark and terrifying, you need to ask the Holy Spirit to look with you, to shine His light on the darkness. It may seem that the light in our mind is very small, a mere candle flame; we may be afraid to explore the dark depths of the *ego* with such a small light. The Course assures us that, as small as it is, it is bright enough to do the job, just as a tiny candle can suffice to light a path in the darkness (3:6).

Pay attention now to the way the Course appeals to us to *look at the ego* (3:7–10). This is the guts of the Course; this is the way out of hell. The imagery seems to me straight out of Tolkien. I can almost see the small, frightened hobbit holding up a candle as he tiptoes through the dark and forbidding caves, certain that the lords of darkness will consume him at any moment. We wonder at his remarkable bravery and are inspired by it.

The Course wants us to confront our own demons in like fashion, without fear (“fearlessly,” 3:7). The “foundation of the *ego's* thought system” must be exposed if the *ego* is to be undone. Jesus is clearly referring to the *ego's* belief that you made your own father—that you were created by the *ego*—the premise on which its entire thought system rests (2:4–8). What does it mean to expose that foundation to the light? I believe it means that we allow ourselves to understand just how our “normal” *ego* thinking rests on this insane presumption.

For instance, we consider it quite normal to believe that someone is attacking us. In order to believe that such attack is possible, however, we *must* first believe that both the attacker and we are no longer the wholly loving and wholly lovable Sons of God. We must believe that God's creation has been altered. By what? By us. But for us to choose to alter God's creation, we would have had to be altered already! Plus, we would have to be more powerful than our Creator. The whole complex of ideas is quite insane. Therefore, there must be something fundamentally flawed in our perception of attack.

This, I believe, is what it means to hold up the *ego's* foundation to the light of the little spark. The *ego* shrouds that “dark cornerstone” with terror (3:9); it tries to keep us from exposing it as the fraud that it is. One of the Workbook lessons expresses it very clearly (see W-pI.93.1:3). We are certain that if we probe into the depths of our minds we will find something horrible. We will find just how terribly guilty we are. Jesus asks us, “What if you looked within and saw no sin?” (T-21.IV.3:1). That is what he says will happen. If we are brave enough to go with the Holy Spirit to look upon the *ego's*

foundation, we will discover that there *is* no foundation; the great cornerstone is made of soapsuds, and is really *nothing* (3:10). Hallelujah!

In the light of the Holy Spirit, it is plain that your whole belief in sin and its effects is rooted in your crazy belief that you are the creator instead of God. All of your guilt presumes your ability to alter God's creation. And when you see just how impossible that is, all its power to disturb you will be gone.

Paragraph 4

4. ¹My brother, you are part of God and part of me. ²When you have at last looked at the ego's foundation without shrinking you will also have looked upon ours. ³I come to you from our Father to offer you everything again. ⁴Do not refuse it in order to keep a dark cornerstone hidden, for **its** protection will not save you. ⁵I **give** you the lamp and I will go with you. ⁶You will not take this journey alone. ⁷I will lead you to your true Father, Who hath need of you, as I have. ⁸Will you not answer the call of love with joy?

• Study Question •

4. *Spend five or ten minutes with your eyes closed, silently considering the help Jesus offers you. Picture him holding out a lamp to you, ready to lead the way for you.*

When you have seen the insanity clearly, what is sane will also be clear: You are part of God and of Christ (4:1–2). You are not what you think you have made of yourself. You are God's creation, God's Son.

The Course's basic methodology of enlightenment is clearly set forth here: Look unflinchingly at the ego's insanity and it will evaporate. When it does, the truth, which had been hidden by it, will become apparent without effort. If we try to discover the truth without ridding ourselves of the ego's camouflage we will find the way exceedingly difficult.

Just last night I was listening to a Buddhist teacher speaking of what Buddha called *dukha* (suffering or pain). Buddha taught that *dukha* is inherently part of being incarnate in a body, and stems from desires and craving (wanting things to be different than they are now). The teacher advised us, "Become an avid student of *dukha*." He did not mean that we should become fascinated by suffering; rather, he meant that we should study *how suffering occurs* by observing our minds and noticing how we make our own suffering by the way we think. In other words, examine the ego's thought system and discover its intrinsic unreality.

Perhaps the biggest difference between Buddhism and the Course in this regard is that the Course does not leave us on our own to perform such difficult self-examination. Jesus promises to be with us. This paragraph is one of the most wonderful first-person passages in the Course, in my opinion. Jesus assures us that he has been sent by God to offer us a way back to the wholeness that God gave us but that we believe we have lost (4:3). He entreats us to accept what he offers us. That means ceasing our efforts to cover up the ego's foundation, believing that in hiding it we are protecting ourselves from some awful consequence (4:4).

The drama here is the same one we saw in the previous chapter regarding accepting responsibility for what we experience, and learning that we are responsible for everything that happens to us. We fiercely resist that lesson because it seems as though to accept it is to accept massive guilt. That is how it seems to us. We try to hide the fact that “all evil” grows out of our allegiance to our own ego. We urgently desire to lay the blame for most or all of that “evil” on something outside of ourselves. Taking that inward journey of discovery into forbidden territory does not come easily to anyone.

Jesus, therefore, assures us that he gives us the lamp (the lamp appears to symbolize the same thing as the spark, so as I understand it, this means that he puts us in touch with the Holy Spirit) and goes with us (4:5–6). I think he means this quite literally. In Lesson 70 of the Workbook, he speaks of walking through the clouds of ego thoughts and says:

If it helps you, think of me holding your hand and leading you. And I assure you this will be no idle fantasy. (W-pI.70.9:1-4)

If it isn't a fantasy, it must be a *reality*. In some sense that perhaps we cannot understand, Jesus is really with us. We are not alone (4:6). Once we accept the idea, central to the Course, that a body is not a required part of existence, we can at least conceive of a being who exists in spirit without a body. Such a being communicates with us, according to the Course, using his ideas or thoughts, rather than his physical form. Communing with such a being, according to the Course, is the most natural thing in the world (M-23.3, 7; M-26.2; C-5.5).

In a practical sense, what this means to me is what looks very much like typical Christian prayer. I talk with Jesus. I tell him my concerns; I share my problems with him. I ask him questions, and I listen for answers. The answers do not come in words (with one or two very notable exceptions in my life), but usually for me as mental impressions, or a sense of what the answer is. Sometimes, I write down what I imagine Jesus might say in response to my questions and receive wonderful and amazing advice. Other people see mental pictures that they have to interpret, just as I interpret my inner sensing. Some receive dreams.

What comes to me most powerfully, however, is not any kind of words or “message” from Jesus. What comes through most strongly is simply a sense that I am not alone. If I am walking down a dark, frightening path, perhaps the most comforting thing I can have is a hand to hold, the hand of someone who knows the way. That sense of being accompanied and guided is what Jesus is offering to us. He says he will lead us “to [our] true Father” (4:7), which clearly implies leading us away from our *false* father, the ego.

Both Jesus and God the Father, he says, need us. The archaic use of “hath need of” here makes me think that the author had some biblical passage in mind, but the only one I know of using that phrase occurs in three of the gospels when Jesus tells the disciples to go fetch a donkey for him to ride on into Jerusalem—the triumphal entry we celebrate in some churches as Palm Sunday. He tells them that if someone asks why they are taking the donkey, they are to reply, “the Lord hath need of it.” And perhaps that's it! Perhaps Jesus here is implying that *we* are the means by which the Christ consciousness rides into the world. Workbook Review V says, “You are my voice, my eyes, my feet, my hands through which I save the world” (W-pI.rV.Int.9:3).

We've discussed before the idea that our absence renders God incomplete, an idea that is common in the Course (see T-2.III.5:6; T-4.VII.6:4; T-9.VII.8:2; T-8.V.6:10; and

T-16.IV.9:1, 11:10–12). This does not imply any *true incompleteness* in God because our lack of completion is only apparent, not real. Rather, it implies the opposite: Since God *cannot* be incomplete, and He *would be* incomplete without us, He cannot be without us, or we without Him.

If all of this talk about Jesus bothers you, perhaps the first thing to do is to ask yourself, “Why? What is my objection to having a spiritual elder brother who helps me on my journey?” You may discover that your mental picture of who Jesus is and how he behaves is out of accord with the picture presented in the Course, which the Course clearly maintains is the true picture. Speaking of Jesus, the Course says, “Some bitter idols have been made of him who would be only brother to the world” (C-5.5:7).

If, after considering that, you still feel it would be best for you to proceed on your journey without seeking assistance from Jesus, that does not mean you cannot follow the path of the Course. While you might find additional help from his companionship, there is nothing to prevent your following the Course’s teaching without interacting directly with Jesus. He is more concerned with your learning the lesson the Course teaches than with the form your learning takes, as the Course itself assures you (C-5.6:6-12).

The only way we can block our own enlightenment is by refusing to look at the darkness we think is within us. Refusing to look is just a mistaken attempt at protecting ourselves, but all we are protecting is the source of our own misery. The only way out of the darkness *is* to look at it “without shrinking” (4:2).

Jesus is with us every step of the way. Love is calling you home; won’t you answer? (4:8). Won’t you say, “Yes”?

Section I.

The central message of this section, “The Gifts of Fatherhood,” is that what God gave to us in creation cannot be lost. We still have everything we received when God created us; we still *are* everything God created us to be. God is a Giver and a Lover, and He created givers and lovers; that is what we are.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹You **have** learned your need of healing. ²Would you bring anything **else** to the Sonship, recognizing your need of healing for yourself? ³For in this [bringing healing to the Sonship] lies the beginning of the return to knowledge [the beginning of knowledge]; the foundation on which God will help build again the thought system you share **with** Him. ⁴Not one stone you place upon it but will be blessed by Him, for you will be restoring the holy dwelling place of His Son, where He wills His Son to be and where he **is**. ⁵In whatever part of the mind of God’s Son you restore this reality, you restore it to **yourself**. ⁶For you dwell in the Mind of God **with** your brother, for God Himself did not will to be alone.

• Study Question •

5. *The whole paragraph is based on the idea of you not bringing "anything else" (1:2) to the Sonship but one certain thing. What is the thing that you are supposed to bring to the Sonship?*

When we begin to expose the ego within our minds, we learn to recognize our own need for healing; then, we can bring that recognition to the Sonship. That is, we can understand that everyone needs healing, not punishment (1:1). They have the same problem with the ego we have, but as with us, so with them: It is a mistake that asks for healing, not a sin that demands punishment. We see that our purpose in the world is simply to allow our own mind to be healed, and to offer that same healing to others. When we have decided to take our place in the world only to heal and to be healed, we have begun the journey back home (1:2). It lays the groundwork on which God can help us to rebuild His thought system in our minds (1:3), because creating by sharing *is* the foundation of God's thought system. Any thoughts we build on this foundation will be sure to endure because they are founded on God's own nature. Furthermore, as we extend healing to one another we are "restoring the holy dwelling place of His Son" (1:4). The term "dwelling place" has to refer to God's thought system, since we are said to "dwell in the Mind of God" (1:6) and, in 1:3, it is the thought system we are said to be rebuilding with God's help. Our dwelling place is a mental space, not a physical one. It is a structure of divine thought joined by spirit, rather than stones connected with mortar.

The imagery of restoring a dwelling place is, I believe, a reference to Old Testament history. After a long period of decline, the nation of Israel (split into northern Israel and southern Judah) was conquered by its enemies. The temple of God was torn down. For decades the people languished in captivity in Babylon. Some poignant poetry recalls their anguish at the loss of their homeland and their temple:

- 1 ¶ By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down, yea, we wept, When we remembered Zion.
2 Upon the willows in the midst thereof We hanged up our harps.
3 For there they that led us captive required of us songs, And they that wasted us [required of us] mirth, [saying], Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
4 How shall we sing Jehovah's song In a foreign land?
5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, Let my right hand forget [her skill].
6 Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, If I remember thee not; If I prefer not Jerusalem Above my chief joy. (Psalm 137:1–6, American Standard Version)

The entire book of Lamentations commemorates the distress of that captivity. The leader Nehemiah was one of those who wept (Nehemiah 1:4). He helped spearhead a return to Israel and a rebuilding of the temple. The prophet Haggai proclaimed:

- "I will fill this house with glory," says the LORD Almighty.
"The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house," says the LORD Almighty. "And in this place I will grant peace," declares the LORD Almighty. (Haggai 2:7, 9)

I think that Jesus intended us to understand his references to that story to indicate that the events are, in some way, parallel. The story of the rebuilding of the temple foreshadows the rebuilding of the *true* temple, which even the New Testament calls a temple “made without hands” (Mark 14:58). I think that, just as the people in exile longed for their return to the land and the rebuilding of the temple, Jesus wants to encourage us to aspire, with deep longing, for the restoration of God’s thought system in our minds. He wants us to exuberantly lay the foundation stone and welcome each new layer of stones with great anticipation and rejoicing. This mystical temple, made without hands, is constructed not in any individual mind but in all of our minds joined together. The Apostle Paul wrote of it when he said:

“Thus you are no longer aliens in a foreign land, but fellow-citizens with God’s people, members of God’s household. You are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the corner-stone. In him the whole building is bonded together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built with all the others into a spiritual dwelling for God.”
(Ephesians 2:19–22 REB)

God created because He did not will to be alone (1:6). What He created must share that will *not to be alone*. You and I are what He created; therefore, remembering what I am means not being alone, but sharing God’s gifts. God is a Giver; He created givers. That theme runs through this section; for example, see 6:7. Earlier, in Chapter 6, Jesus pointed out that the Holy Spirit’s first lesson is, “To have, give all to all” (T-6.V(A).5:12–13). This beginning lesson is fundamental; it serves to initiate the undoing of the ego’s thought system because it undermines the ego’s belief in salvation through attack.

The final sentence, in the Urtext, begins with the word, “For,” clearly linking its contents to the preceding sentence as the reason why restoring or recognizing God’s dwelling in any part of the Sonship is to restore it to *yourself*: You and your brother are inextricably linked in the Mind of God.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹To be alone is to be separated from **infinity**, but how can this be if **infinity** has no end? ²No one can **be** beyond the limitless, because what has **no** limits must be everywhere. ³There are no beginnings and no endings in God, Whose universe is Himself. ⁴Can you exclude yourself from the universe, or from God Who *is* the universe? ⁵I and my Father are one with **you**, for you are part of us. ⁶Do you **really** believe that part of God can be missing or lost to Him?

• Study Question •

6. *List several of the reasons given why you cannot be alone or separate.*

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This paragraph catalogs several reasons why the separation is literally impossible. We have already been told that God created us in order to share reality with us. This paragraph expands on that, showing how the very nature of reality as created by God

precludes the possibility of an existence apart from God. It talks of infinity and the limitless. These terms must refer to God Himself, Who is also timeless (2:3).

God is infinite. That means He extends everywhere; there is nowhere God is not. If you tried to escape Him, you could not do so. Wherever you would go, He is there (2:1). As the psalmist said:

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. (Psalm 139:7–12, NIV)

God is limitless. In order for us to be separate, a place that is somehow beyond the range of God would have to exist, but God's limitlessness, by definition, means that *nothing* is beyond the range of God (2:2). Therefore, being alone is impossible.

God *is* the universe (2:3–4). This is not pantheism, equating God to the material universe, the sum total of all physical "things." Rather, we are saying that all things are forms of God, that everything that truly exists is an extension of God. This is called *panentheism*. God includes and interpenetrates the universe. That is how the Course uses the word *universe*: not meaning the totality of physical things, but the totaling of *real* things. It is virtually synonymous with *creation* in the sense of that which is created. Another way of putting this is: God is All There Is. The Bible echoes the thought: "In Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). How can you be anywhere else? (2:4).

Perhaps we have a bit of difficulty with this idea. How can God be all there is when we clearly experience ourselves as distinct individuals or persons? I am not of the school that simply dismisses our experience as nothing more than illusion. The Course speaks of "sons" of God in the plural, and hints at partness in the wholeness, referring to "aspects" of reality, and of the Sonship (T-13.VIII.3:7–8; T-23.II.5:5). The entire concept of this paragraph about *not being alone* clearly implies some form of *companionship* within the Oneness. So, for me, there is a certain degree of reality to the notion of individual persons who collectively make up the Sonship, and then, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, comprise the Trinity (T-3.II.5:3–4; T-3.IV.1:7–8; T-5.I.4:1; T-8.IV.8:8–13).

The point here, however, is that now, in this world within time, we have over-identified with the separateness to the point of excluding the oneness. We have been captured and blinded by a distorted concept of the function of the human self. About the only way to remove that false concept and replace it with the true one is to virtually throw out the concept of an individual self, only bringing back the notion of "partness" in Heaven, after we have restored our minds to the right perspective.

Jesus then declares that we are part of the divine Unity between him and God (2:5). So we are part of God. It is inconceivable that God could somehow lose *part of Himself*. That is so absurd it is laughable.

All of these points are meant to drive home one single lesson: *You cannot be separated from God*. Our experience of being separate and alone is completely false.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God.
(Romans 8:38–39, NIV)

Paragraph 3

3. ¹If you were not part of God, His Will would not be unified. ²Is this conceivable? ³Can part of His Mind contain nothing? ⁴If your place in His Mind cannot be filled by anyone **except** you, and your filling it **was** your creation, **without** you there would be an empty place in God's Mind. ⁵Extension cannot be blocked, and it has no voids. ⁶It continues forever, however much it is denied. ⁷Your **denial** of its reality may arrest [**arrests**] it in time, but not in eternity. ⁸That is why your creations have not ceased to be extended, and why so much is waiting for your return.

• Study Question •

7. *According to this paragraph, where are you right now, and what are you doing?*

Perhaps we question the premise that we *are* a part of God, but Jesus shows that we *must* be part of Him. Otherwise, “His Will would not be unified” (3:1). That is so because we are His Will; anything He creates must be His Will. Our separation from God would mean that part of God's Will is not part of Him, which is a logical impossibility (3:2). The very phrase is self-contradictory: “part of . . . is not part of.” If you are a thought in God's Mind, if your creation consisted in the occurrence of that thought, a completely unique thought that only you can fill, then for you to be separate from God a part of His Mind would have to be empty (3:3–4). Again, an absurdity!

Extension is an irresistible force; it has to go on expanding forever and ever. Therefore, not only are we still at home in God's Mind, we are still creating or extending, although we are not aware of it (3:5–6). We are not aware because we are denying our true Identity and therefore denying our creative powers. Jesus says that our power to create may be squelched *in time*, but it continues uninterrupted in the eternity of Heaven (3:7). We have lost neither our home, nor our nature, nor our function. In a phrase that is becoming familiar as we move through the Text, Jesus assures us that “so much is waiting for your return” (3:8; see also T-5.VI.1:2; T-9.II.3:6–7; T-10.II.2:3; T-16.IV.8:1; and W-pI.132.12:2). When we finally awaken, we will find so much we thought was lost simply waiting for us to reclaim it and to acknowledge it as our own.

Paragraph 4

4. ¹Waiting is possible **only** in time, but time has no meaning. ²You who made delay can leave time behind simply by recognizing that neither beginnings nor endings were created by the Eternal, Who placed no limits on His creation or upon those who create like Him. ³You do not know this simply because you have tried to limit what **He** created, and so you believe that **all** creation is limited. ⁴How, then, could you know **your** creations, having **denied** infinity?

• Study Question •

8. *How long does it take to return to God?*

In time—which is part of the illusion and has no meaning (4:1)—the universe of love may be invisible. But it has never ceased to be. Clearly, excluding yourself from the universe is simply impossible; yet this is what the ego thinks it has done.

The experience we have of a long time passing as we return to God, a lifetime or many lifetimes, is nothing more than the projection of the mind's foot-dragging. In order to wait for anything you must have time to wait in (4:1). But time is an illusion made by us, in order to manifest some kind of distance between God and ourselves. We made delay (4:2). Our making of time was for the very purpose of delay. We can move past our tedious experience of time by thinking differently about things. Only the eternal can be real, and we should choose to see only that, as we saw in the last chapter:

Time itself is your choice. If you would remember eternity, you must look only on the eternal. If you allow yourself to become preoccupied with the temporal, you are living in time. As always, your choice is determined by what you value. Time and eternity cannot both be real, because they contradict each other. If you will accept only what is timeless as real, you will begin to understand eternity and make it yours (T-10.V.14:4-9).

The world we see is not real. Yet because we *want* it to be real, we hold on to it. That holding on is what blocks our seeing of the universe of love. Yes, it *is* frightening to be told that the world is not real, our bodies are not real, our personalities are not real, and all of our experience in this world is just a dream. But holding on to that illusory reality *is* the denial of God spoken of in the last chapter. We are actively choosing to deny God's Fatherhood, in favor of what we made for ourselves. That is the dark cornerstone, the insane premise of the ego, which we need to look at squarely if we want to move beyond it and find God.

The Course says here that we tried to limit what God created (4:3). When we decided to see ourselves as self-created, we were removing ourselves from the scope of God's creation. We thus put a limit on Him (or tried to). In order to make that absurd mental leap we had to view all creation as limited (4:3). This made it impossible for us to perceive our own creations (4:4). But they are still there, whether or not we see them.

Paragraph 5

5. ¹The laws of the universe do not permit contradiction. ²What holds for God holds for you. ³If you believe **you** are absent from God, you **will** believe that He is absent from you. ⁴Infinity is meaningless **without** you, and **you** are meaningless without God. ⁵There **is** no end to God and His Son, for we *are* the universe. ⁶God is not incomplete, and He is not childless. ⁷Because He did not will to be alone, He created a Son like Himself. ⁸Do not deny Him His Son, for your unwillingness to accept His Fatherhood has denied you yours. ⁹See His creations as **His** Son, for yours were created in honor of Him. ¹⁰The universe of love does not stop because you do not see it, nor have your closed eyes lost the ability to see. ¹¹Look upon the glory of His creation, and you will learn what

God has kept for you.

• Study Question •

9. *The central idea of this paragraph is, “What holds for God holds for you” (5:2). The idea is applied in several ways. Which one is most meaningful to you, and why?*

The Course posits an orderly universe (remember we are talking about the universe as the totality of all that is real, not the totality of physical things). It is governed absolutely (5:1) by laws that derive from the nature of God. “What holds for God holds for you” (5:2). This reciprocal relationship applies in a positive sense: For example, if God is Love, we must be Love as well. But it applies in the opposite way: If we believe something false about ourselves we will believe the same falsehood about God.

For instance, consider our false belief in separation. According to the Course, we are totally responsible for this belief, but as long as we hold onto it, we will repress our awareness of our own responsibility for the separation from God that we sense. Instead, we will blame *God* for separating from *us* (5:3). We will see *Him* as responsible for our estrangement. Of course, God is infinite, which means He must include everything. There is no such thing as an infinity that does not include you; therefore, you *must* be included in God (5:4). God and His Son, together, encompass everything; nothing else exists (5:5).

It is absurd to imagine that God—being *God*—could somehow be incomplete. But to be complete, God’s Son must be contained in Him. If the Son were somehow separate, God would not be complete. Therefore, the Son simply cannot be separate from the Father. Any theology that presumes such a separation is (in the Course’s view, at least) presuming something that is impossible (5:6). When we refuse to recognize our brothers and sisters as the Son of God, we deny God His Fatherhood. We have accepted that separation from God is possible. If *they* are not in union with God, however, neither are *we*. By allowing separation *in principle* we have allowed it for ourselves. In denying *their sonship* we have denied our own (5:8).

Moreover, we have also denied our own creations. Our creations were created in honor of God (5:9); they are the extension of His creative power and love through us. Because we deny His creative power, we deny its extension. We become unable to perceive our own creations because we have closed our eyes to the entire stream of creation. However, the extension of God’s Love, both by God and through us, continues. It does not matter that we have closed our eyes to it, any more than the sun stops shining because it goes behind a cloud (5:10). The flow of God’s creation *through us* is still continuing, and if we open our eyes to “the glory of His creation” in our brothers, we will realize the reality of our own creations, creations that have remained unchanged even while we drifted in unconsciousness, unaware of them (5:9–11).

There is a phrase in this paragraph that occurs four times in this section: God “did not will to be alone” (1:6; 5:7; 6:3; and 11:2). It occurs just one more time in the Course in the very next section (T-11.III.2:4). Clearly, this is a key concept in this discussion about the impossibility of separation. The Son, or Sonship, was created *because* God did not will to be alone. God willed that there be *companionship*. What is being implied here is that some sort of interpersonal exchange is part of the very nature of God. We blithely

affirm theological concepts that seem to be mutually exclusive. We say, “God is One,” or “One Presence, One Power in the universe,” and at the same time we declare, “God is Love.” But how can God be love if God is alone, “One Presence”? Love requires that there be at least two, does it not? In some sense, then, there is partness in the oneness. There is the Father and the Son, the Creator and the created. And yet they are One.

I think we need to focus on the word “will” in that phrase: God did not *will* to be alone. You and I and all of us together as the united Sonship were the result of God’s will for us to be with Him and in Him, part of Him. God’s Will was that togetherness; therefore, we cannot be separate.

Paragraph 6

6. ¹God has given you a place in His Mind that is yours forever. ²Yet you can keep it only by giving it, as it was given [to] you. ³Could **you** be alone there, when [if] it was given you because **God** did not will to be alone? ⁴God’s Mind cannot be lessened. ⁵It can **only** be increased, for [and] **everything** He creates has the function of creating. **6Love does not limit**, and what it creates is not limited. ⁷To give without limit is God’s Will for you, because only this can bring you the joy that is His and that He wills to share with **you**. ⁸Your love is as boundless as His because it *is* His.

• Study Question •

10. Why should we give without limit? List at least three reasons.



Over and over, the Course assures us that we have not lost our place in God’s Mind (6:1). Over and over, it counsels us that the only way to remember our inheritance in God is to grant that inheritance to others within our minds (6:2). Over and over, it drives home the point that ours is by nature a shared reality, and *cannot* be experienced by us alone; only in association with all our brothers and sisters can we know our union with God (6:3). Just as God gives without limit, so also, “To give without limit is God’s Will for you” (6:7, my emphasis). We are an extension of His Love, and to know ourselves as such we must become the *manifestation* of His Love in this world (6:6–7). In fact, our love *is* His Love, and being His, it must express itself in the same way His Love expresses Itself: without any limit or bounds (6:8).

As I’ve studied this paragraph with some study groups, several students have expressed concern over the idea of loving “without limit.” To them, this sort of statement invites abuse or—in the term used by Twelve-Step programs of recovery—*enabling*. In such a program, “enabling” is continuing to give an addict what he or she asks for even when to do so allows (“enables”) them to continue their addiction. For instance, if an alcoholic husband abuses his wife or children and the family covers up his misbehavior, doing so in the name of love for him, that is enabling.

That is not what the Course means by loving without limit. Of that, I am quite certain, because that kind of behavior is not really *love* at all; it is fear; it is denial; it is martyrdom; and as such, it is actually an *attack* on the addict, an ego-based attempt to project guilt onto the addict. “Behold me, brother, at your hand I die!” (T-27.I.4:6).

Loving without limit means loving without restrictions on *who is loved*. It means loving *all* of God's creations. It means that you do not exclude anyone from your heart. In the case of the addict, of course you love the addict. You do not condemn him as a hopeless sinner. But to contribute to his addictive sickness is not loving! Love does not contribute to the sickness, it moves towards healing.

Paragraph 7

7. ¹Could any part of God be **without** His Love, and could any part of His Love be contained? ²God is your heritage, because His one gift is Himself. ³How can you give except **like** Him if you would know His gift to **you**? ⁴Give, then, without limit and without end, to learn how much **He** has given **you**. ⁵Your ability to **accept** Him depends on your willingness to give as He gives. ⁶Your fatherhood and your Father are one. ⁷God wills [**willed**] to create, and your will is His. ⁸It follows, then, that **you** will to create, since your will follows from His. ⁹And being an extension of His Will, yours **must** be the same.

• Study Question •

11. If you are moved to give to others in a material or behavioral way, acting within the world of illusion, does this make the world real? Is such giving co-dependent? Does it distract from your only true responsibility, which is to accept the Atonement for yourself? (Justify your answer with reasons from this paragraph.)

The same line of thought continues here: Our separation from God is simply not possible. More than that: God creates by sharing of Himself (7:2). Since we are part of God, His Love must be in us. Since this Love is God's Love, its outflow is irresistible; it will overflow any boundary or limitation that attempts to restrict its free expansion (7:1).

We are made out of the same substance (so to speak) as God; therefore, our love is just like His; it *is* His. To become aware of that Love in us, we need to give like God does: "without limit and without end" (7:5). Our willingness to *express* God's Love through giving determines how much of God we can accept (or recognize in ourselves) (7:5).

It must be, ultimately, our will to love as God does. Our will *cannot* be other than God's Will, because God created us (7:6–9). We are an extension of God—therefore, if we *acknowledge* His Fatherhood, we realize that our will must be identical to His (7:9).

This is really a fundamental idea in the Course: "God is but Love, and therefore, so am I" (W-pI.171–180; see also W-pI.67; T-6.I.13:2; and T-1.III.2:3–4). God cannot create anything that does not share the characteristics of His Love because He creates *by sharing*. As we, in turn, begin to share His Love with others, we come to recognize the truth about ourselves; we discover that we are wholly loving. Thus, as the Course so often points out, we receive through giving; we give forgiveness and acceptance, and we receive awareness of our divine Self.

Paragraph 8

8. ¹Yet what you will you do not know. ²This is not strange when you realize

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that to deny is to “not know.”³ God's Will is [was] that you are His Son. ⁴By **denying** this you deny your **own** will, and therefore **do not know what it is**.⁵ [The reason] You must ask what God's Will is in everything, [is merely] because it **is** yours. **6**You do not know what it is, but the Holy Spirit **remembers it for you**. ⁷Ask Him, therefore, what God's Will is for you, and He will tell you **yours**. ⁸It cannot be too often repeated that you do **not know** it. ⁹Whenever what the Holy Spirit tells you appears to be coercive, it is **only** because you have not recognized your will [*you do not recognize your own will*].

• **Study Question** •

12. Sometimes we feel guided by God to give up something. If our will and God's are one, giving it up must be our will. Yet we often react to such guidance as if it were a sacrifice. Why do we react in this way?

Sentences 1, 4, 6 and 8 deliberately repeat the same thought: We do not know our own will. This is such an important idea that we should take every opportunity we can to impress it upon our minds (8:8). Though, as paragraph 7 pointed out, it must be our will to give and to love as God gives and loves, we don't *know* that is our will (8:1). This might seem strange. How could we be unaware of our own will? Basic psychology can help us understand. When we *deny* something, psychologically speaking, we are blocking it out of our minds. If I am denying my anger, for instance, I am not allowing myself to *know* that I am angry. Anger is present in my mind but I do not allow myself to be conscious of it. Therefore, “to deny is to ‘not know’” (8:2).

We are denying that we are God's Son; instead, in our ego minds, we maintain that we are what we made of ourselves. Since being God's Son is His Will for us (8:3), we are denying God's Will. However, as God's Son, His Will is also our own; therefore, we are denying our own will (8:4). And because we deny it, it is lost to us; we have blocked it out of our minds.

Let's repeat this thought a few times more, to imbed it in our consciousness. We do not know what we want. We do not know our own true will. When God does speak to us, it often seems as if His Will differs from ours because we do not know what our will really is. Realizing our ignorance is of critical importance.

Later in this chapter, in Section VIII, Jesus tells us more of what we do not know (T-11.VIII.3:1–3). Recognizing the extent of our ignorance about ourselves is said to be the beginning of salvation (T-31.V.17.6–9).

This is why we need to consult the Holy Spirit (8:5): God's Will is our own (8:7), but we have forgotten it. The Holy Spirit remembers it for us (8:6). Some students of the Course question the need for the Holy Spirit. They reason, “If we all have God's nature within us, why is the need for a distinct Being like the Holy Spirit to help us? Isn't the idea of asking the Holy Spirit for guidance reinforcing our belief in separation, and our belief that we are less than perfect?” The Course offers a simple explanation. Yes, we have God's nature within us, but we have denied that nature and therefore we do not know it. We have blocked it from our minds. We need the Holy Spirit because He remembers what we have forgotten.

In consulting the Holy Spirit, we are learning that to know God's Will is to know our own will. As we look without fear on the apparently separate "will" we think we have, and bring it to the Holy Spirit for healing, asking to be shown God's Will, we are beginning to remember that our will *is* God's.

[For additional practical instruction on listening to the Holy Spirit, and on why listening is crucial to our salvation, see M-29.3-5.]

Paragraph 9

9. ¹The projection of the ego makes it appear as if God's Will is **outside** yourself, and therefore **not yours**. ²In **this** interpretation it seems [*is*] possible for God's Will and yours to conflict. ³God, then, may seem to demand of you what you do **not** want to give, and thus **deprive** you of what you want. ⁴Would God, Who wants **only** your will, be capable of this? ⁵Your will is His life, which He has **given** to you. ⁶Even in time you cannot live apart from Him. [*, for*]
⁷Sleep [*the sleep of time*] is not death. ⁸What He created can sleep, but **cannot** die. ⁹Immortality is His Will for His Son, and His Son's will for **himself**. ¹⁰God's Son cannot will death for himself because his Father is Life, and **His Son is like Him**. ¹¹Creation is your will *because* it is His.

• Study Question •

13. This paragraph gives a second reason why God's Will might seem to ask for sacrifice from you. What is this reason?

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When we ask what God's Will is, we often are afraid of what we will be told. This occurs only because we believe that we created ourselves and that we have made a will for ourselves that differs from God's Will. We have God's Will within us, but we project it and see it as a power outside of us trying to impose itself on us (9:1). When we think our will and God's are different, *any* divine guidance seems like coercion (9:2-3). It does not matter what the guidance is. Because it seems as though the guidance isn't our own idea, it seems as though it is being imposed by an outside power (8:9).

This is what keeps us from trusting and listening to the Holy Spirit, Who always is speaking within us. To fully trust the Holy Spirit, we have to recognize that He speaks *for us* as well as for God (11:1-2; compare with T-6.II.10:3-4, T-30.II.1:1-2, and C-6.4:1-3); that our will and God's are the same. He is the light within that will lead us from darkness.

It is not surprising, however, that God's Voice seems alien to us, since "dissociation is nothing more than a decision to forget" (T-10.II.1:2) and "to deny is to 'not know'" (1:2). Through denial, we have forgotten what we really want. When the Voice for God speaks to us, we don't see its guidance as something we really want. Instead, the Voice seems to be demanding something from us, to be depriving us of something we want (9:3).

We should ask ourselves the question posed in sentence 4. Would God really set out to take something away from us that we really want? I know that when I love someone, one of my greatest joys is in giving them what they want. When my son was young and wanted a bicycle, giving him that bicycle was one of my happiest moments. When our

partner in relationship particularly loves something—let's say opera—that I do not enjoy all that much, I still can find great delight in going to the opera with her, because I can share her happiness. When you love someone, you *want* them to be happy; you *want* them to have the things they want.

God would never deny us our happiness; He would never take away anything that we *truly* want. He knows exactly what we truly want, because everything about us, including our will, is an extension of God's life (9:5). His Will and ours are one. Life apart from God is simply not possible, even in time (9:6). The Course compares our belief that we are separate from God to the ocean's deciding it wants nothing to do with water (W-pI.156.3:3). It is absurd on the face of it. The ocean *consists of* water. Likewise, we consist of God. All that God wants for us is what we want; all that we want is what God wants for us.

Of course, as has been said repeatedly, we don't *know* that. We have fallen asleep and are dreaming a bad dream in which we want what God does *not* want, and so we are in conflict with Him. But "sleep is not death" (9:7). The union of our life with God's life has not been severed by sleep; the union still persists. Perhaps we *can* fall asleep and dream nightmares, but we cannot die (9:8). Life has a universal characteristic, found everywhere, even in plants and animals: a will to survive. Our life and God's life share a united will to continue life; we want immortality, and God wills immortality for us (9:9).

Life is what we want; life is what God wants for us; so life is what we will have. In fact, because we are so intertwined with God's life and will, it is impossible for us to *truly* choose to separate from God, which would mean separation from life—that is, death. We *can't* choose to die (9:10; see also W-pII.223.Title, 1:1–3).

This union of life means that our will *must be*, like God's Will, to eternally extend ourselves in creation (9:11). What He asks of us is not alien or foreign. It does not come to us as an external demand, calling for the sacrifice of things we hold dear. To the contrary! What God asks of us is nothing less than the perfect expression of the deepest desires of our heart. It is the fulfillment of our nature, the perfect complement to our every characteristic.

Paragraph 10

10. ¹You cannot be happy unless you do what you will truly, and you cannot **change** this because it is immutable. ²[But] It is immutable by God's Will **and yours**, for otherwise His Will would not be [have been] extended. ³You are afraid to know God's Will, because you believe it is **not** yours. ⁴This belief is your whole sickness and your whole fear. ⁵Every symptom of sickness and fear arises here, because this is the belief that makes you *want* not to know. ⁶Believing this you hide in darkness, denying that the light is in **you**.

• Study Question •

14. *In some places, the Course describes our central problem as a belief in separation (for example, W-pI.79.1:4). In this paragraph, our central problem is described in a similar manner with a different slant. What is the core of our problem, as seen here?*

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This discussion of God's Will and our reaction to it, believing that it asks sacrifice of us because we've lost sight of our true will, is really preparing us for a consideration of the function for which God has created us. "God's Will for me" is another way of describing "the purpose of my life" or "my function in life." As we have seen in previous chapters, our function in Heaven is creating, and we can be truly happy only when we are fulfilling that function (T-4.I.9:1-6; T-7.VI.13:1-7; T-7.IX.3:1-5; T-8.III.2:1; and T-12.VII.4:7). That function is reflected on earth as extension of love and forgiveness, or as acceptance of our brothers and sisters as equally sharing our identity as the Son of God.

The Course contends that true happiness lies solely in carrying out the function God gave us when He created us. This is expressly stated in the Workbook, but is certainly implied by passages in the Text we have already studied (W-p1.66; W-p1.64.4:1; T-4.I.9:4; T-7.VI.13:1). Here, we are told that unless we are doing our own true will we cannot be happy (10:1). When you think of it that is just common sense. If I can't do what I want to do, I'm not truly happy; to the extent that I am doing what I want to be doing, I am happy. However, Jesus is referring not simply to what we normally think of when we speak of what we want to do (being with certain people; working at a certain job; entertaining ourselves by our chosen means), but to the deepest desire of our hearts. That desire stems from our very nature; it is a desire to fulfill our being, to be what we were intended to be and to do what we were designed to do. In other words, "what you will truly" (10:1) and our function are the same thing.

What is often hard for us to accept is that our function is not something we determine by ourselves. "It is immutable by God's Will," Jesus says (10:2). It should be obvious: What we are designed to do is predetermined by our Designer. God created us, so He assigned our function to us. For some reason that galls us. As the Course says, we would prefer to have been our own creator, the one who determines what our function is. That is a logical impossibility, of course. Our true happiness only begins when we learn to accept that our function is given to us by God.

However, Jesus adds more words at the end of sentence 2. Our function cannot be altered, but that is not a restriction imposed on us from without; our will is the extension of God's, so the immutability is *our* will as well as God's (10:2).

We resist knowing God's Will, because we think it is not *our* will (10:3). But it *is*. Our insane differentiation between our will and God's is at the root of all our problems (10:4). It not only puts a barrier between God and us, it causes us to *block* God's attempts to communicate the truth to us (10:5). We have become afraid of God, afraid of His Will, and afraid of the very Voice that God created to lead us out of our distress. Rather than seeking Him out, we hide from Him in our darkness (10:6).

Paragraph 11

11. ¹You are asked to trust the Holy Spirit only because He speaks for **you**. ²He is the Voice for God, but never forget that God did not will to be alone. ³He **shares** His Will with you; He does not thrust it **upon** you. ⁴Always remember that what He gives He keeps [**holds**], so that nothing He gives **can** contradict Him. ⁵You who share His Life must share it [**with others**] to **know** it, for sharing *is* knowing. ⁶Blessed are you who learn that to hear the Will of your

Father is to know your own. ⁷For it is **your** will to be **like** Him, Whose Will it is that it be so. ⁸God's Will is that His Son be one [One], and united with Him in His Oneness. ⁹That is why healing is the beginning of the recognition that **your will is His**.

• **Study Question** •

15. This section ends as it began, on the theme of offering healing to others. Why is extending healing the "beginning of the recognition that your will is His" (11:9)?

The Holy Spirit is our own voice, as well as God's. Being asked to trust *your own voice* is not an onerous task! It's rather like B'rer Rabbit and the briar patch, from the "Song of the South" stories. The fox was always chasing B'rer Rabbit, trying to catch him and eat him. One day, finally, the fox managed to catch him. As the fox is about to eat him, B'rer Rabbit convinces him, instead, to throw him in the briar patch with its terrible thorns. He then runs away laughing, because the briar patch was where he was born! It was his native environment.

Being asked to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit is simply being asked to do your own will, to follow your native inclinations. The ego believes it is a thorny place, but in fact it is a place where you can be truly happy.

Because God is a Sharer (11:3), we must be sharers as well, sharing His life with others. Sharing that life is how we know it (11:5). At the very heart of our being, we yearn to partake of God's nature, and He wants nothing more or less than for us to do just that (11:7). We cannot be unlike God because nothing God gives can contradict Him (11:4). As we have said before, to heal our minds means to divest them of the illusion of having a will that is separate from, and different from, God's Will (11:9).

So the very deep metaphysical teaching, that we have denied God's Fatherhood and have tried to make our own father, is brought down to this very practical and concrete practice: Simply try to remember, in each moment, to say, "Holy Spirit, I don't know what to do; I don't know what anything means. Please show me. Show me how to heal instead of to attack." The problem may seem deep and profound, but the beginning of the solution is very simple: Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Learn to trust Him (11:1), and allow Him to teach you to heal others. This is the way to find your own healing.

Answer Key

1. Any example that affirms that what we do, think or say changes, defines or makes us. Some examples that come to mind: Feeling that some misdeed in the past has altered us forever, beyond hope of redemption; making a judgment about who a person *is* on the basis of something they said or did; accepting our sense of separation from God as being real separation.
2. Because you made the ego. How can it make you?
3. The little spark is something in us that is associated with our true Identity as defined by the Great Rays (the Light of God's own nature). It brings clarity (3:4) and sight (3:10), it is associated with awareness (3:9), and it allows us to judge honestly (3:8). I would associate the spark specifically with what the Course calls *reason*, although that term is not used in this chapter, or with our *right mind*, and more generally with the light of God's thought system in us (3:2–3) that was placed there by God in creation. As we said in discussing the phrase "little spark" while commenting on T-10.IV.7–8, "The spark is the remnant of that greater light, 'the remaining call of creation'" (T-10.IV.8:6). The Holy Spirit personifies the spark; He *is* that call (T-5.II.2:1–2).
4. No written answer is expected.
5. Healing.
6. Reasons why you cannot be alone:
 - a. You cannot be separated from infinity because infinity is endless.
 - b. You cannot be beyond the limitless, for it is everywhere.
 - c. You cannot exclude yourself from the universe.
 - d. You are part of God and part of God cannot be missing.
7. You are in God's Mind in Heaven, and you are creating.
8. Actually, it takes no time at all to return to God. God is accessible now. We made delay and we can unmake it.
9. This is a personal question. Your answer should be based on one of the following:
 - a. If you think you are absent from God you will think He is absent from you.
 - b. God is meaningless without you and you without Him.
 - c. Deny Him His Fatherhood and you have denied your own.
10. Reasons why we must give without limit:
 - a. You can keep your place in God's Mind only by giving it (6:2).

- b. Your place in God's Mind is a shared position by its very nature, since "it was given you because God did not will to be alone" (6:3).
 - c. He created you with the function of creating (6:5).
 - d. You were created by Love, and what Love creates cannot be limited (6:6).
 - e. It is God's Will for you (6:7).
 - f. Only this can give you the joy He wants to share with you (6:7).
 - g. "Your love is as boundless as His" (6:8).
11. No, to all of the questions. Giving within the world is far from being *contrary* to our responsibility to accept God's gifts for ourselves. In fact it is *the way* that we accept God's gifts (7:5). We are loving beings like God; the only way to discover that is *through giving* (7:3, 7:9).
12. When we react to God's guidance as though He were asking us to sacrifice, it shows that we do not know what our own will is; therefore, we do not recognize it.
13. Another reason God's Will can seem to be asking sacrifice of us is that projection causes God's Will to appear to be external to us, and able to conflict with our will.
14. Our central problem is that we are afraid to know God's Will because we believe that our will is separate from, and thus different from, His (10:3-4).
15. God's Will is that the Sonship is one (11:8). Extending healing causes you to recognize that oneness. Thus when you extend healing, you are sharing His Will, which leads you to realize "that your will is His" (11:9).