

# Study Guide and Commentary ACIM<sup>®</sup> Text, Chapter 11, Section VI

## Waking to Redemption

### Legend:

blue text = Material from ACIM 3rd edition (FIP)  
**bold blue text** = words emphasized in all caps in Urtext  
red text = alternate or omitted material from the Urtext  
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The closing three sections of the chapter focus on what it means to wake to redemption and to enter the real world. Having presented the ego's thought system in all its ugliness, having shown how everything of the ego is based on an insane and impossible goal—independence from God—the chapter now concludes with three sections that show how desirable it is for us to choose God rather than the ego. The goal is nothing more or less than a return to our natural inheritance as the Son of God. In truth this goal is the deepest desire of our holy minds (T-11.VI.6.2).

This section launches the discussion of this return by using the imagery of the crucifixion and the resurrection. These terms refer literally to Jesus' death and return to life, but they are used here as symbols. Crucifixion represents the ego's way of life; resurrection represents our rising above the ego to claim our everlasting life in God, recognizing that life in our brothers and sisters and so awaking to our own divine inheritance.

### Paragraph 1

1. <sup>1</sup>It is impossible not to believe what you see, but it is equally impossible to see what you do **not** believe. <sup>2</sup>Perceptions are built up on the basis of experience, and experience leads to beliefs. <sup>3</sup>It is not until beliefs are fixed that perceptions stabilize. <sup>4</sup>In effect, then, what you believe you *do* see. <sup>5</sup>That is what I meant when I said, "Blessed are ye who have not seen and still believe,"<sup>1</sup> for those who believe in the resurrection **will** see it. <sup>6</sup>The resurrection is the complete triumph of Christ over the ego, not by attack but by transcendence. <sup>7</sup>For Christ **does** rise above the ego and all its works, and ascends to the Father and **His** Kingdom.

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<sup>1</sup> John 20:39, "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

• Study Question •

1. Paragraph 1 discusses the relationship between perception (seeing), belief, and experience. Based on a careful reading of the paragraph, try to put them in the proper order. Which comes first, and which causes which?

The gist of the first paragraph is summarizing what has already been said at length: “What you believe you *do* see” (1:4). That is, our minds determine what our perception will be. We believe the reverse. We think perception reports to us objectively what exists outside of us. We think that we perceive when something occurs external to our minds and bodies, or our body brings us into contact with something, and that something, by its nature, determines what we perceive. As an ordinary example, a friend speaks some words. We hear them, and we perceive the person as attacking us. In our ordinary understanding that is the truth of the situation.

The Course says it works the other way around. Our mind determines what it wants to see. It *expects* to see that. When some external stimulus presents itself, our mind projects its belief onto the external stimulus, and we perceive it *as we want to perceive it*. “Projection makes perception” (T-21.in.1:1; see entire paragraph).

Your mind chooses what it *wants* to see. Those thoughts are projected upon the world, and you see what you wanted to see. When you see a thing, you automatically believe in its reality (1:1). Seeing it gives you an *experience* that seems to prove that what you have projected is real (1:2). That reinforces your belief, which leads to more projections, and the cycle continues.

Everything we see in the world, then, can be traced back to our mind's choice between God, or the ego. The choice is sometimes seen as between resurrection and crucifixion, between love and fear, between innocence and guilt, or between freedom and imprisonment, but it is always the same choice (see 2:1–4).

To see the resurrection and to experience it, we must start by believing in it *without seeing it*. You must make a fundamental choice about what you *want* to see (1.5). This sentence speaks of *resurrection*. What does the Course mean by that term? This paragraph gives a clear definition that we should consider carefully:

...the complete triumph of Christ over the ego, not by attack but by transcendence. (1.6)

The first important thing to notice is that nothing is said here about the body. The resurrection, as the Course defines it, is not primarily a physical thing. The body isn't what is being resurrected. To resurrect, in Course terms, is to transcend the ego and to take on or manifest our true nature as the Christ.

In his booklet, *A Course Glossary*, Robert Perry defines resurrection like this:

The rising of the mind, and of the entire Sonship, from the ego's dream of death to the awareness of eternal life, from insanity to perfectly healed perception. The release from guilt by guiltlessness (see T-14.V.10:3).

(*A Course Glossary*, p. 64)

Second, although the resurrection is referred to as a triumph, it isn't the kind of triumph we normally think of, such as the triumph of one football team over another, or

the triumph one army over another. Both of those involve a conflict, with one side attacking and vanquishing the other. The resurrection is not an attack on anything. This passage is one of the clearest statements that Christ does not attack the ego. Christ *transcends* the ego.

You are not asked to fight your ego; you are encouraged to transcend it, which means to rise above it or to go beyond its limits. You don't struggle against the ego; you overlook it, you go beyond it, you deny its power to limit you. That is resurrection: rising above the ego to be your True Self, which is the Christ. Resurrection means denying the ego's picture of yourself and waking up from the dream of death.

The ego is the misperception by one tiny part of mind that it is the whole of mind, and is separate from all the rest of mind. The tiny part perceives itself as separate, but Christ welcomes it back into the whole. Christ is the entire mind. He does not annihilate the ego because there is no such thing; rather, he reabsorbs the part that has mistaken itself for the ego. He transcends its imagined boundaries and welcomes it back into the whole of the Christ mind. (Compare this passage with T-5.IV.2:6, T-5.VII.2:6, and T-8.VII.9:5; see also the discussion in T-18.VIII.4-7.)

Now, let's go back to sentence 5. Jesus spoke those words, "Blessed are ye who have not seen and still believe," on the occasion of his post-resurrection appearance to "doubting" Thomas (John 20:26-29). Incidentally, this is another of those places where the author unmistakably identifies himself as Jesus of Nazareth, and confirms his physical appearance after the death of his body. Nobody else uttered those words but the Jesus whose body had died and been buried. He was remarking on the fact that Thomas had refused to believe in his resurrection "unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side" (John 20:25, NIV). His taking ownership of that particular quotation lends veracity to the entire story of Thomas, and makes it a virtual certainty in my mind that Jesus actually did physically rise up from the dead. How else could Thomas have fulfilled his desire to touch and see the wounds?

Jesus announces that those who believe first, without prior physical evidence such as Thomas required, will be blessed. Apply that to the resurrection as the Course presents it, keeping in mind the description just given of how perception works. What you see depends on what you believe, so you *must believe before you can see anything*. Jesus is asking us to believe in the transcendence of the ego before we see evidence that such a thing exists. He is asking us to believe that Christ can transcend the ego in us, and in all our brothers and sisters, even though at present we cannot perceive any evidence to support that belief. He is saying that *if we believe* we will see it.

## Paragraph 2

2. <sup>1</sup>Would you join in the resurrection or the crucifixion? <sup>2</sup>Would you condemn your brothers or free them? <sup>3</sup>Would you transcend **your** prison and ascend to the Father? <sup>4</sup>[For] These questions are all the same, and are answered together. <sup>5</sup>There has been much confusion about what perception means, because the [same] word is used both for awareness and for the **interpretation** of awareness. <sup>6</sup>Yet [But] you cannot **be** aware without interpretation, for [and] what you perceive *is* your interpretation.

• Study Question •

2. *When we perceive, what is the true object of our perception? Choose one of the following:*
- awareness (the raw sense data that comes into our awareness)*
  - our interpretation of that raw sense data (2:5)*

The first and third questions that open paragraph 2 seem rhetorical. Who would not choose resurrection, or to transcend their prison? The second question is perhaps not so quickly answered; at times it certainly seems more desirable to condemn my brother than to free him! But then sentence 4 points out that all three questions are the same. That is, when I choose to condemn a brother, I am choosing to crucify myself and to remain in prison! I am not choosing resurrection, and that is why I do not perceive it.

As we just mentioned in discussing paragraph 1, we misunderstand perception (2:5). In common usage perception has two meanings. The *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* shows both meanings quite clearly:

a : awareness of the elements of environment through physical sensation;  
*color perception* b : physical sensation interpreted in the light of  
experience.

Notice that the first meaning is purely objective *awareness*, while the second meaning introduces the element of *interpretation*. The Course, in sentence 6, contends that there is no such thing as perception without interpretation.

Thus, we never see a sister without interpreting her in one way or another. We condemn her or we free her, based on how we choose to perceive her. We may think that we have evidence to support our condemnation, evidence we have seen with our own eyes. What we fail to realize is that our eyes perceive only what we have told them to perceive. They are seeing our sister as guilty because that is how our mind, directed by our ego, has chosen to see her. We are not seeing our sister; we are seeing our interpretation of her.

### Paragraph 3

3. <sup>1</sup>This course is perfectly clear. <sup>2</sup>If you do not see it clearly, it is because [You do not see it clearly, because] you are interpreting **against** it, and therefore do not **believe** it. <sup>3</sup>And since [if] belief determines perception, you do **not** perceive what it means and therefore do not **accept** it. <sup>4</sup>Yet different experiences lead to different beliefs, and with them different perceptions. <sup>5</sup>For perceptions are learned *with* beliefs, and experience does teach [experience teaches]. <sup>6</sup>I am leading you to a new kind of experience that you will become less and less willing to deny. <sup>7</sup>Learning of Christ is easy, for to perceive with Him involves no strain at all. <sup>8</sup>His perceptions are your **natural** awareness, and it is only the distortions **you** introduce that tire you. <sup>9</sup>Let the Christ in you interpret **for** you, and do not try to limit what you see by narrow little beliefs that are unworthy of God's Son. <sup>10</sup>For until Christ comes into His Own, the Son of God **will** see himself as Fatherless.

• Study Question •

3. *In this paragraph and in paragraph 2, the word "interpretation" is introduced into the cycle of perception described in the first paragraph (belief, perception, experience). Can you place interpretation into its appropriate spot in the cycle, listing the now complete cycle?*

One good example of how your perception can be skewed by your interpretations and beliefs is the way you perceive the Course itself. If your mind is still very identified with your ego, you will interpret what the Course says incorrectly, and will therefore not believe it. It will seem quite unclear to you, and its reasoning will seem muddy and shoddy (3:1–3). If, however, you let the Christ in you interpret it (3:9), it can give you a different kind of experience (3:6) that will lead to entirely different beliefs (3:4).

I believe the Course works at every level of the cycle of perception (belief, interpretation, perception, experience) to undo the ego and open our minds to spirit. The Course presents a set of different beliefs and uses them to dislodge the beliefs of the ego. The Holy Spirit offers us different interpretations of ourselves and of those around us. We are asked to “let a new perception come” to us (W-pII.313). And Jesus promises that he will give us different experiences that will change the way we perceive (3:4).

Perceptions and beliefs, for the most part, come as two parts of a single package (3:5). Our experiences in the world of the ego seem to have taught us that the ego is right: that sin is real, evil is real, sickness is real, death is real, and suffering is real. That is what we believe, and that is how we perceive the world. All of these things are saying in one way or another that the separation from God is real.

Now, Jesus calls us to experience something new (3:6). The picture the world is showing us has to stop deceiving us. We have to realize that what we see is the result of what we believe, that “belief determines perception” (3:3). What we think of as *facts* about the world are only our *interpretations* of what we see. As an example, in speaking about anger, the Course says several times that anger is brought on by our interpretation of things, and is never based upon fact (M-17.4:1-2).

We interpret what we see according to what we believe. We project that interpretation on the person, so that we now *perceive* them in light of the projection. As a result of our perception, we “experience” the person or situation. That experience leads to a new or strengthened belief, and it all starts over. Jesus says that the miraculous experiences he will bring into our lives will lead us to a different belief. Gradually, they will convince us of the truth. That shift in our thinking will lead to a different interpretation, a new projection (really an *extension*), a new perception, and, starting the cycle over, a new experience.

The new experience is a moment of forgiveness, or a holy instant. As we choose, in some small way, to listen to the Holy Spirit rather than the ego, we have a new experience. That leads to a new belief, and so on. It does not change us overnight. At first, we may be willing to deny what the new experience is teaching us. But each time we experience the presence of God’s Love in our life, the experience becomes increasingly convincing to us.

Earlier Jesus told us that we are being asked to reject what our beliefs try to tell us and respond to situations as if we didn’t believe them (T-6.V(B).3:10). We must be

willing to question our perceptions, realizing that they are interpretations and that they come about from our own minds; they are not facts. When we *make that choice* to see something different, we change the cycle. At first, the new perception is not there because the belief has to come first. The belief can come on the basis of a new experience, which is what he promises to give us.

It is not a strain to see your brothers and sisters as the perfect creation of God when you let the Holy Spirit give you a new experience of them (3:7–8). What we are to do is to let go of our beliefs and open to the interpretation Christ in us has of our brothers (3.9). When you think you perceive something unworthy in a brother or sister, *or in yourself*, do not accept the thought as true. The way you judge others, you judge yourself, and the way you judge yourself, you judge God. It all goes back to which god you accept: the real God, or the ego. Accept a new interpretation and you will have a new experience that leads to new perception and new belief.

The final sentence, I believe, means that until we begin to acknowledge Christ in all our brothers and sisters we will remain unaware of our own connection to the Father.

## Paragraph 4

4. <sup>1</sup>I am *your* resurrection and *your* life.<sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup>You live in me because you live in God. <sup>3</sup>And everyone lives in **you**, as **you** live in everyone. <sup>4</sup>Can you, then, perceive unworthiness in a brother and **not** perceive it in yourself? <sup>5</sup>And can you perceive it in yourself and **not** perceive it in God? <sup>6</sup>Believe in the resurrection because it has **been** accomplished, and it has been accomplished **in you**.<sup>3</sup> <sup>7</sup>This is as true now as it will ever be, for the resurrection is the Will of God, which knows no time and no exceptions. <sup>8</sup>But make no exceptions yourself, or you will not perceive what has been accomplished **for** you. <sup>9</sup>For we ascend unto the Father together, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, for such is the nature of God's Son as his Father created him.

### • Study Question •

4. *What does the first sentence mean to you personally?*

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Sentence 1 is an adaptation of a biblical statement: “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25, KJV), in which Jesus substitutes the pronoun “you” for the article “the,” making what was a general statement into a very specific and personal one. Notice the italics on the pronouns. Try reading it aloud with an emphasis on those pronouns. He wants us to apply this to ourselves very specifically. Jesus is continuing to talk about the subject of resurrection, and he is pointedly making sure we know he is talking about *us*, now, and not just about some historical event in his earthly life (or after it, to be more accurate) that occurred two thousand years ago.

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<sup>2</sup> **John 11:25 (KJV)**, “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”

<sup>3</sup> **Ephesians 2:4–6 (KJV)**, “But God...hath quickened us together with Christ...And hath raised us up together.” **Colossians 2:12 (KJV)**, “ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

What happened for him also happened for us. The Course makes it quite clear that when Jesus arose, we arose with him (C-6.5:5; see also T-19.IV(B).6:5 and M-23.6:8-10). That is the absolute truth, as difficult as it may be for us to see it. Our problem is that we have not accepted it as truth. This section concerns itself with the very process we must go through to join with Jesus in his resurrection, which is to free our brothers from guilt through our forgiveness (2:1–2). Paragraph 4 explains more thoroughly why forgiveness of our brothers is essential if we are to experience resurrection for ourselves. (If you would like to read more on the subject of our resurrection with Jesus, see the article by Greg Mackie on the website of The Circle of Atonement: [http://www.circleofa.com/Q\\_and\\_A/resurrection.html](http://www.circleofa.com/Q_and_A/resurrection.html).)

To put the message of this paragraph simply, if you see unworthiness anywhere you will see it in yourself because all is one. You must believe in the resurrection without exempting *anyone* from it or you will exempt yourself.

Sentences 2 and 3 express the way in which you and I, Jesus, God, and everyone are intermingled in oneness. It defies ordinary logic—and ordinary geometry, for that matter—to say that “everyone lives in you, as you live in everyone” (4:3). In ordinary geometry, if one object is in a second object, you cannot in any way envision the second object as being in the first. One thing is outside, the other inside. You can’t have both objects being both outside and inside. That’s why I use the word “intermingling”; it comes closest to expressing what the Course is saying here. Webster’s defines the word “mingle” as: “to bring or mix together or with something else, usually without fundamental loss of identity.”

Think, for instance, of a cup of tea. You have hot water, you add a tea bag, and suddenly you have tea. The tea has been mingled with the water, so you cannot separate them, although there has been no chemical change; the water is still water, the tea is still tea. The imagery the Course uses concerning the union of the Father and the Son (of which we are all parts) carries just this implication (please see W-pI.132.12:4).

If that is the truth of our union, if we are so intimately entwined that we cannot be delineated as separate beings, how can we possibly see a brother as unworthy without seeing ourselves in the same way? (4:4). We cannot. Nor can we avoid tarring God with the same brush (4:5). What we see in one, we see in all, because all are inseparably one.

You awaken to your own resurrection by accepting the reality of resurrection for Jesus and for everyone. If Jesus transcended his ego and came to know himself as the Christ, what he discovered about himself must also be true of us because we are one. It must also be true of every brother and sister we know (as well as those we do not know). If Jesus has been resurrected then you and I must also be resurrected! (4:6).

Perhaps we think that Jesus arose from the dead in the past, and that we, like him, will one day arise—but not yet, not now. But, Jesus argues, “the Will of God...knows no time and no exceptions” (4:7). As he often does in the Course, Jesus says that what God wills is true instantly and always. If He wills the resurrection into reality then it is real *right now*, without regard to time, and it is real *for everyone*. Therefore, it *must* be true for you if it is true at all. You must have already transcended your ego and your body on some level, apart from time. You are already free! The victory over the ego has already been won.

If the resurrection has already been accomplished for you why don’t you know it? You unwittingly exclude yourself from the resurrection because you exclude some of

your brothers or sisters. You exclude them by failing to completely forgive them. If you see someone as unworthy, you haven't forgiven them. If you don't like a person, or if you find they irritate you, or if there is someone you try to avoid, you have not forgiven them. If your forgiveness is incomplete (and whose isn't?), you cannot perceive those unforgiven people as included in the resurrection (i.e., not identical with their egos). And since we are all one, and what is true of one is true of all, you cannot perceive yourself as part of the resurrection either (4:8).

Sentence 9 forcefully states the unity of the Sonship. Whatever happens to us, it happens to us all together or not at all. In the face of such statements many have asked, "Does the Course mean that none of us can experience resurrection, or enter Heaven, until *all* of us have done so? Must we all enter at once? Or is it possible for any one of us to achieve enlightenment, while most of humanity still lingers behind?" Along the same lines, some ask, "If we all must go together, how can the Course say that Jesus has already become identified with the Christ, while we have not?"

My understanding is that, as was said in sentence 6, we have all already experienced resurrection. We are already home in Heaven. Enlightenment is not a distant target, it is a present state, but one we are as yet only dimly aware of. The Course is not saying, "No one can enter an enlightened state until everyone goes together." It is saying, "If anyone has entered an enlightened state, everyone has already entered." As long as we exempt anyone from enlightenment in our minds, however, we will exempt ourselves, and fail to experience what is already true. We cannot experience enlightenment while, *in our minds*, anyone else is left behind.

## Paragraph 5

5. <sup>1</sup>Do not underestimate the power of the devotion of God's Son, nor the power the god he worships has over him. <sup>2</sup>For he places **himself** at the altar of his god, whether it be the god he made or the God Who created him. <sup>3</sup>That is why his slavery is as complete as his freedom, for he will obey **only** the god he accepts. <sup>4</sup>The god of [the] crucifixion demands that he crucify, and his worshippers obey. <sup>5</sup>In his name they crucify **themselves**, believing that the power of the Son of God is born of sacrifice and pain. <sup>6</sup>The God of [the] resurrection demands nothing, for He does not will to **take away**. <sup>7</sup>He does not require obedience, for obedience implies submission. <sup>8</sup>He would only have you learn your [own] will and follow it, not in the spirit of sacrifice and submission, but in the gladness of freedom.

### • Study Question •

5. *Examine your own thinking and the goals you have set for yourself. Is your thinking infected with the ego's outlook: that "power...is born of sacrifice and pain"?* (5:5).



To wake to redemption is the way of freedom, not sacrifice. The ego is the one who demands sacrifice and suffering. "No pain, no gain" is the ego's motto. If you worship the ego it will have you seek power through sacrifice, through crucifying yourself. If you

place yourself at God's altar, He will demand nothing, wanting you only to learn your will and your freedom.

For the second time in this chapter Jesus asks us not to underestimate something (the previous instance was in T-11.V.16:1). Obviously, he is concerned that, left unwarned, we *would* underestimate it. The warning in the last section concerned our underestimating the appeal of the “evidence” presented by the ego to support its case, namely the perception of the world seen through the ego’s eyes. In this paragraph, the thing we are likely to underestimate is “the power of the devotion of God’s Son,” and particularly that devotion when given to the ego. Both warnings are about the ego. When we give our minds to the ego, the enormous power of our minds goes into supporting the ego. Jesus seems quite concerned that we not “dismiss it lightly” (T-4.VI.1:4). Our devotion to the ego can have devastating consequences. It can lead us into such things as crucifixion (5:4), both literally and figuratively.

The power of our devotion to the ego can be seen in the terrifying extent to which we can go in hurting and destroying one another. Like me, you have probably read accounts of the Nazi concentration camps and their torture chambers and crematoriums. You have shuddered at the terror of the Gulag prisons in the Soviet Union. Perhaps you have read accounts of Vlad the Impaler, a Romanian prince who ruled in the Fifteenth Century. He was the original Dracula, famous for executing between 40,000 and 100,000 people during his reign, most of them by public impalement on wooden stakes. Or perhaps the horrors of modern times come more readily to mind: stories out of Bosnia, Rwanda, San Salvador, Iraq, or Afghanistan, or even items from our own local evening news. When Jesus tells us not to underestimate the power we grant to our false gods, he has good reason.

The same power motivates our cruelty to one another in less obvious ways: cutting words, psychological stress, or callous exploitation of our fellow men and women. We are all Nazis in our own ways, whenever we follow our egos. We even crucify ourselves (5:5), insanely believing that suffering somehow gives us power, a delusion as mad as the primitive priest cutting the heart from a living victim to win the favor of the gods.

The ego *attacks* to make separate; it crucifies your brothers and yourself. It fixates on the unworthiness it perceives and makes it real, and attacks to punish that unworthiness. That is crucifixion.

The Holy Spirit *accepts* to affirm wholeness; He resurrects your brothers and yourself. The Holy Spirit overlooks the unworthiness you perceive and denies its reality, and looks beyond it to the Christ in everyone. He accepts everyone to acknowledge their worthiness as God’s Son. That is resurrection.

When we give our devotion to God in place of the ego, choosing resurrection instead of crucifixion, that same enormous power of our devotion will be exhibited with a force that resurrects rather than crucifies. God is not seeking our submission; He wishes only that we learn our true will and follow it (5:8).

## Paragraph 6

6. <sup>1</sup>Resurrection must compel your allegiance gladly, because it is the symbol of joy. <sup>2</sup>Its whole compelling power lies in the fact that it represents what **you** want to be. <sup>3</sup>The freedom to leave behind everything that hurts you and humbles you

and frightens you cannot be thrust upon you, but it **can** be offered you through the grace of God. <sup>4</sup>And you can **accept** it by His grace, for God **is** gracious to His Son, accepting him without question as His Own. <sup>5</sup>Who, then, is *your* own? <sup>6</sup>The Father has given you all that is His, and He Himself is yours **with** them. <sup>7</sup>Guard them in their resurrection, for otherwise you will not awake in God, safely surrounded by what is yours forever.

• **Study Question** •

6. Sentence 5 asks, "Who, then, is your own?" What is the answer to this question?

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Resurrection is compelling because it represents what you—the true You—want to be (6:1–2). When you experience a holy instant, or a moment of forgiveness, you *instantly* know it is right because you are filled with joy! It corresponds with your true nature as God's Son and carries a compelling power with it. You recognize in it the way out of all your problems (6.3).

Have you ever had an experience like that? Uncharacteristically, you choose to do something truly loving and unselfish. You go out of your way to be kind to someone for seemingly no reason; or you genuinely forgive and forget; or you let someone know that they are loved and deserving of love. And when you do, your own heart lightens and, for a moment at least, your fears lift. You feel wonderful. You feel *alive*. You feel *free*. And perhaps you think, "Wow! I should do this more often!" Ego transcendence is inevitable because when we experience it, it is so intensely rewarding.

You cannot be *forced* or *commanded* to be free (6:3). But you *can* choose freedom, and it can be yours if you choose it, because God is offering it to you. It is the same choice offered in 2:1: "Would you join in the resurrection or the crucifixion?" That is the choice before us every moment.

The Father, Jesus says, accepts us without question as His Own (6:4). As He accepts everyone without question, so we should accept everyone without question as *our* own, that is, part of our shared being. God has given Himself to us along with all that belongs to Him (6:6), and He looks to us to honor and acknowledge both Himself and His Kingdom as part of ourselves. To identify something as "my own," to me, implies a kind of intimate possession. I might say, "This is my son," which certainly indicates a close relationship, but if I say, "This is my *own* son," it implies an even more personal connection and identification with my son. It is in that spirit that we should look upon one another, with the sense that, "This is my own brother, my own sister; these are my own people, and this is my own God." That is what it means, I believe, to "guard them in their resurrection" (6:7). See everyone in their perfection; see them in their proper place in God, with you. This is the only way you can become aware of your own place in God (6:7). The next paragraph will continue this theme in great detail.

## Paragraph 7

7. <sup>1</sup>You will not find peace until you have removed the nails from the hands of God's Son, and taken the last thorn from his forehead. <sup>2</sup>The Love of God surrounds His Son whom the god of [the] crucifixion condemns. <sup>3</sup>Teach not that

I died in vain. <sup>4</sup>Teach rather **that I did not die** by demonstrating that **I live in you**. <sup>5</sup>For the **undoing** of the crucifixion of God's Son is the work of the redemption, in which everyone has a part of equal value. <sup>6</sup>God does not judge His guiltless [**blameless**] Son. <sup>7</sup>Having given **Himself** to him, how could it be otherwise?

• **Study Question** •

7. *What does it mean to demonstrate that Jesus lives in us?*
8. *Visualization: Picture a brother or sister you have condemned in some way. See your condemning words or thoughts as nails in his or her hands, and a crown of thorns on his or her head. You have been crucifying this person. Imagine yourself now coming to him or her, and carefully, gently, and lovingly removing every last nail and thorn, applying healing balm to every wound.*

Sentence 1 makes its point through powerful imagery (see visualization above).

When we stop crucifying one another, we will have that “new kind of experience” Jesus talks about (3:6). The ego, “the god of crucifixion” (7:2), leads us to attack and judge our brothers. But God *loves* the person we are condemning (7:2), and if we are to awaken into God we need to demonstrate the same love. Jesus appeals to us demonstrate his resurrection by allowing him to live in us (7:3–4).

We demonstrate his life through our forgiveness and acceptance. We undo the crucifixion by lifting condemnation from our brothers and sisters and accepting their guiltlessness; this reversal or removal of judgment is the task the God has assigned to us all (7:5). No one is to be judged. If God does not condemn anyone, how can we do so? (7:6–7).

It is a sobering thought to realize that if I am condemning someone, I am by my actions teaching that Jesus died in vain. He endured the crucifixion to bring us the message, “Teach only love, for that is what you are” (T-6.I.13:1–2). He died and rose to show that sin has no consequence. If I condemn someone, I show that I have not accepted that lesson, because I am teaching condemnation, not love.

## Paragraph 8

8. <sup>1</sup>You have nailed **yourself** to a cross, and placed a crown of thorns upon your own head. <sup>2</sup>Yet you **cannot** crucify God's Son, for the Will of God cannot die. <sup>3</sup>His Son **has been** redeemed from his own crucifixion, and you cannot assign to death whom God has given eternal life. <sup>4</sup>The dream of crucifixion still lies heavy on your eyes, but what you see in dreams is not reality. <sup>5</sup>While you perceive the Son of God as crucified, you are asleep. <sup>6</sup>And as long as you believe that **you** can crucify him, you are only having nightmares. <sup>7</sup>You who are beginning to wake are still aware of dreams, and have not yet forgotten them. <sup>8</sup>The forgetting of dreams and the awareness of Christ come with the awakening of others to **share** your redemption.

• Study Question •

9. *Our experience of crucifixion is only a dream, but it is still very real to us. How can be end, or forget, this awful dream?*

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Jesus loves to use the images of the thorns and nails, borrowed from the biblical crucifixion story, to represent the punishment our judgment inflicts on one another and on ourselves. When you choose the ego, and condemn others, you are not only crucifying them, you are crucifying yourself (8:1). To choose the Holy Spirit is a choice to *stop* crucifying yourself. Is that so hard a choice? (See also Lesson 196 in the Workbook, “It can be but myself I crucify” and T-20.II.3–5, especially 3:8.)

And yet you cannot *really* crucify yourself because you are God’s Son, the product of God’s Will—and nothing that is His Will can cease to exist simply because it is His Will that it exist (8:2). As the Course said earlier: “No one can really” crucify God’s Son, “but that you can think you can and believe you have is beyond dispute” (T-10.V.1:7). When God gives eternal life to someone, you can’t give him death! (8:3). Any appearance of death is only a dream; it cannot be real. If you see death, or guilt that seems to demand punishment (which is what crucifixion symbolizes), “you are asleep” and “only having nightmares” (8:4–6). Our perceptions are not reality. We still perceive the ego’s world but it is only our nightmare, the projections of our fearful thoughts.

*Even though you have begun to awake*— and you would not be reading the Course if you had not begun to awake, because the Course is just the form given in the world to your *prior* decision to awake (W-pII.329)—yet even though you have begun to awake, you still see the world through the eyes of the ego. Don’t let that surprise you. And don’t let it upset you. You are still asleep and having nightmares, but at least you are now aware that you are only dreaming.

How do we become *fully* awake? How do we forget these terrible nightmares? By awaking others (8.8). Full awareness of Christ comes only as you *share* your redemption, as you give redemption to others by acknowledging them as redeemed, and see them awake with you.

## Paragraph 9

9. <sup>1</sup>You will awaken to your own call, for the Call to awake is **within** you. <sup>2</sup>If I live in you, you **are** awake. <sup>3</sup>Yet **you** must see the works I do through you, or you will not perceive that I have done them unto **you**. <sup>4</sup>Do not set limits on what you believe I can do **through you**, or you will not accept what I can do *for* you. <sup>5</sup>Yet [**For**] it is done **already**, and unless you give **all** that you have received you will not know that your redeemer liveth<sup>4</sup>, and that **you** have awakened **with** him. <sup>6</sup>Redemption is recognized **only** by sharing it.

• Study Question •

10. *What do you think sentence 1 means?*

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<sup>4</sup> Job 19:25 (KJV), “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.”

That is the long process we are involved with. In a word, forgiveness. Again and again, open your heart to your brother or sister and be willing for them to share the joy of God. Count no one as unworthy, and as you do this, one by one others will *choose*, as you have done, to awaken. When they do, this new experience will lead you, more and more, to see the world as Christ sees it. You must give it away to know that you have it (W-pI.159.1:7). We allow Christ to speak *through us* (9:2–4), offering forgiveness and freedom from guilt—the removal of the thorns and nails. He speaks through us. We call our brothers to awaken, and our own call wakens *us*, just as our own condemnation has crucified us (9:1,3–4).

You already *are awake*. You just don't know it. You will know the power of the Christ is *in you* when you see it reach out *through you* to heal others (9:3), as the prayer for healers says (T-2.V.18:6).

Sentences 4 through 6 repeat the same message in three different ways. We find our salvation in allowing Christ to work through us, giving salvation and healing to others, sharing redemption with everyone around us. Nothing could be clearer: It is by what the Holy Spirit does *through us* that we come to accept what He does *for us*.

Sentence 5 repeats the message given in 4:1 and 4:6, that when Jesus awoke, we awakened with him.

## Paragraph 10

10. <sup>1</sup>God's Son *is saved*. <sup>2</sup>Bring only **this** awareness to the Sonship, and you will have a part in the redemption as valuable as mine. <sup>3</sup>For your part must be **like** mine if you learn it of me. <sup>4</sup>If you believe that **yours** is limited, **you** are limiting **mine**. <sup>5</sup>There is no order of difficulty in miracles because all of God's Sons are of equal value, and their equality is their oneness. <sup>6</sup>The whole power of God is in every part of Him, and nothing contradictory to His Will is either great or small. <sup>7</sup>What does not exist **has** no size and no measure. <sup>8</sup>To God **all** things are possible.<sup>5</sup> <sup>9</sup>And to Christ it is given to be **like** the Father.

### • Study Question •

11. *Try to think of at least one specific way that, within the next 48 hours, you can share the awareness that "God's Son is saved" with someone you know.*

Sharing redemption doesn't mean you go around trying to save people! It means you go around demonstrating by your attitude, in word and in deed, that you know they are *already saved* (10:1–2). After all, that is basically what Jesus has done with us. He is only asking us to do as he did (10:3).

Three times in this section he has advised against "limiting" our part in the redemption (3:9, 9:4 and 10:4) or limiting what he can do through us. That refers, I believe, to our tendency to make exceptions, or to decide that certain people are simply outside the reach of the Atonement. You know the kind of people I mean! They are the kind of people that cause us to think, when we hear that we are to offer forgiveness and recognize our oneness with everyone, "Surely Jesus doesn't mean for me to reach out to

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<sup>5</sup> **Matthew 19:26 (KJV)**, "With God all things are possible."

*her!*” Or we may try false humility: “I’m just not advanced enough to forgive so-and-so.” That is exactly the sort of withholding that will block our own awareness of redemption. If we think our forgiveness is limited, we will think Jesus’ forgiveness is limited also.

Jesus comes back to the first principle of miracles, that “there is no order of difficulty” (10:5, compare with T-1.I.1:1 and T-2.I.5:5). No one is harder to forgive than anyone else because everyone is equal; everyone is one (10:5). If forgiveness exists at all it exists for everyone in totality. When the Course says there is no sin it means *no sin*. None. As will be explained in some detail later in the Text, forgiveness “is *always* justified”; it is “the natural reaction” (T-30.VI.2:1,7). When confronted with someone who seems difficult or impossible to forgive, we should expect, and ask for, a miracle. In sentence 8 Jesus quotes himself from the gospels to remind us: “With God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). Then, in sentences 7 and 9, he tells us that the same power is in Christ the Son, and therefore in us, as the Bible also says: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phillipians 4:13, NKJV). With that power in us, we can offer forgiveness to everyone.

The way to waken to the full awareness of Christ is to let everyone know they are already saved and already awake. We do that by refusing to judge or condemn them in any way. We demonstrate their own reality to them by reacting, not to their illusion of themselves as egos, but to their reality in Christ. That is our whole mission in this world.

## Answer Key

1. Belief, perception, experience, belief, perception... (it's a loop). Belief causes perception; perception causes experience; experience causes belief; and so on.
2. b, the interpretation of the sense data. When the native of a Stone Age tribe perceives a chair he will probably perceive it as "firewood," rather than as furniture, because he has no conception of furniture. What we see is always our interpretation of the raw data. We *never* see anything without the distorting lens of interpretation (T-21.V.1:7 and W-pII.304.1:3).
3. Since "what you perceive *is* your interpretation" (2:6), interpretation must come before perception. And since "belief determines perception" (3:3), interpretation must come between the two. The cycle is thus:

Belief, interpretation, perception, experience; belief, interpretation, perception....

What you believe determines how you interpret things. How you interpret people's actions becomes your perception of them. Your interpretation becomes fact *to you*. When you are convinced that your perceptions are facts, you will react to them as if they were facts. Your belief becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, and your experiences just seem to prove that your belief was right. The experiences produced by your own interpretations and perceptions just serve to reinforce the original beliefs.

4. Since we all are part of the one Son of God, and since the resurrection of God's Son is God's Will, Jesus' resurrection is everyone's resurrection. Thus, what this sentence means to me is that knowing that Jesus arose (transcended his ego-body identity) is the guarantee that I, too, will arise (in time), or the confirmation that I have already arisen (in eternity). Because we are one, whatever is true of Jesus must be true of me as well.
5. No written answer is expected. The belief that sacrifice and pain produce power is nearly universal. All of us have bought into it to some degree. Yet it is a clear indicator of ego thinking.
6. God and His Kingdom.
7. We demonstrate that Jesus lives in us by removing the thorns and nails from the head and hands of everyone, bringing the Love of God to everyone, and thus taking our part in the redemption of God's Son.
8. No written reply is expected.
9. We can forget our dream of crucifixion by awakening others to share in our redemption (8:8).

10. In line with what was just said in 8:8 and what follows in paragraph 9, I believe this sentence (9:1) means that I will awaken as the Call to awake goes out through me to others and awakens them. We allow Jesus to live in us and through us, reaching out to others, and that is what being awake consists of.
11. No written answer is expected.