

## Class #108

# Study Guide and Commentary ACIM<sup>®</sup> Text, Chapter 13, Section VII Paragraphs 10–17

We are continuing with our study of Section VII. This second part deals largely with our relationship with the Holy Spirit, and how He provides for us as we live in this world. As you read, you will find that the discussion falls neatly under a sequence of headings, which correspond to particular paragraphs:

- 10: *The Holy Spirit knows our needs in the world.*
- 11: *You don't know what you need.*
- 12: *Only the Holy Spirit knows.*
- 13: *Therefore, let Him take care of your earthly needs.*
- 14: *Remember what you really want.*
- 15: *Don't waste your time on things that don't last forever.*
- 16: *The only real need.*
- 17: *You really live in eternity*

### Paragraph 10

10. <sup>1</sup>Praise, then, the Father for the perfect sanity of His most holy Son. <sup>2</sup>Your Father knoweth<sup>1</sup> that you have need of nothing. <sup>3</sup>In Heaven this is so, for what could you need in eternity? <sup>4</sup>In **your** world you **do** need things- <sup>5</sup>[because] It is a world of scarcity in which you find yourself *because* you are lacking. <sup>6</sup>Yet can [But can] you find yourself in such a world? <sup>7</sup>Without the Holy Spirit the answer would be no. <sup>8</sup>Yet **because** of Him the answer is a joyous *yes!* <sup>9</sup>As Mediator between the two worlds, He knows what you have need of and what will not hurt you [*which will not hurt you*]. <sup>10</sup>Ownership is a dangerous concept if it is left to you. <sup>11</sup>The ego wants to **have** things for salvation, for possession is its law. <sup>12</sup>Possession for its **own** sake is the ego's fundamental creed, a basic cornerstone in the churches it builds [un]to itself. <sup>13</sup>And at **its** altar it demands you lay **all** of the things it bids you get, leaving you no joy in them.

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<sup>1</sup> Another example of old, King James English. This is probably the Course's twist on, "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." (Matthew 6:8, KJV)

• Study Question •

1. *What are the "things" referred to in sentences 4 and 11 (Hint: Check immediate context)?*

How is it possible to live in the physical world while perceiving the real world? The next paragraphs give an answer to that question. One wonderful thing about the Course is the way it combines sublime metaphysics (the realm of Heaven) with very practical instruction on living in the world. Many spiritual teachings have seen the illusory dream-nature of the world. Some have fallen into the error of making the world into an evil thing, to be avoided and escaped. The Course sets forth a path of “living in the world but not of it,” as the saying goes. In this paragraph you can see this clearly: It acknowledges the truth that we have need of nothing (in Heaven, the ultimate reality) (10:2), but also recognizes that, “In your world you *do* need things” (10:4), and offers a way these two seemingly contradictory ideas can be reconciled.

The “then” in the first sentence (10:1) alerts us that this thought proceeds from the previous paragraph, which spoke of what the Father has given us as “what always was” (9:7), which is our Identity as “His most holy Son” (10:1). For this Gift we can praise the Father. Praising God, or gratitude towards God, is often recommended in the Course, but not in the same sense as in traditional religions. The Course makes it clear that God does not need our thanks, our praise, or our gratitude. Rather, *we* need the experience of gratitude and praise.<sup>2</sup> Our gratitude is expressed in our receiving His Gift, which is the Christ, in ourselves and in others. Miracle Principle 31 (T-1.31) counsels us to thank God for what we are. In a sense, when we accept what we really are (and what others really are), that *is* the miracle, and that *is* our praise to God.<sup>3</sup>

We are called on so to live as to honor God's creation in ourselves and in others, affirming their perfection as creations of God. But what does that look like? How can we affirm perfection in this world of imperfection? Can we truly see the Christ, our true Self, while living in this world? (10:6).

That's the question, isn't it? In Heaven we have need of nothing; that's a wonderful, metaphysical truth; but *in this world* we *do* need things! (10:2, 4). So how can we affirm the truth about ourselves (that we have no needs) and yet exist practically in a world of scarcity, a world we are in precisely because we *do experience lack* (10:5). Is it even possible? The key, we are told in 10:7–8, is the Holy Spirit.

This is an extremely important idea for us to learn: *Without the Holy Spirit we could not find our true Self in this world.* He is the Gift of God to us in our dark dream—the memory of our true Self Who came with us and Who is part of us, part of everyone. The Holy Spirit appears to us as a Presence in our minds, almost a foreign presence at first

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<sup>2</sup> “The Bible repeatedly states that you should praise God. This hardly means that you should tell Him how wonderful He is. He has no ego with which to accept such praise, and no perception with which to judge it” (T-4.VII.6:1-3).

“I do not need gratitude, but you need to develop your weakened ability to be grateful, or you cannot appreciate God. He does not need your appreciation, but *you* do” (T-6.I.17:1-2).

<sup>3</sup> “Miracles praise God through you. They praise Him by honoring His creations, affirming their perfection” (T-1.I.29:1-2).

because His thoughts are so different from what we have grown used to as *our* thoughts. We do not recognize for quite some time that He is really a part of ourselves, the only real part:

Your teaching has already done this, for the Holy Spirit is part of you. Created by God, He left neither God nor His creation. He is both God and you, as you are God and Him together (T-16.III.5:1-3).

But that earlier stage, of relating to the Holy Spirit as if He were a separate being, is a necessary stage of learning. It cannot be skipped over.

We have totally identified our self with the twisted, confused and insane thought patterns of the ego. We cannot break out of that pattern without what will seem at first intervention from a different source, the Holy Spirit. We need to give up control of our lives to His power, letting go of the ego's control. We need to resign as our own teacher (T-12.V.8:3) and to accept a different teacher, the Holy Spirit. From the ego's perspective this seems like surrender to an alien will; the ego does not and cannot recognize that we are in reality surrendering to our own Higher Self. The concept of *surrender to God* is useful, as long as we do not stop there, relating to an external God who is separate and different from us. If we stop at that, it can lead to actual resentment and hatred of God, Who is always imposing His Will on us. *It will seem that way* at first. We have to go through that, but knowing, as the Course teaches, that the Holy Spirit is really part of my Self, a part that remembers God, is a big help in not being fooled by the illusion of separateness.

Because of the Holy Spirit, the answer to the question, "Can I know my true Self in this world?" is a joyous *yes* (10:8).

He knows what we need (10:9). We don't. We *think* we know what we need and what will hurt us, but we are nearly always wrong. And if we reflect on it for a while, we know that is so. That is why Jesus goes on to say, "Ownership is a dangerous concept if it is left to you" (10:10).

The ego wants to have things for salvation, for possession is its law. Possession for its own sake is the ego's fundamental creed, a basic cornerstone in the churches it builds to itself. (10:11–12)

The ego is driven by *possession* (10:11). The Holy Spirit knows that everything in this world is temporary and simply on loan to us, as we saw in paragraph 8. Because we are so identified with our egos, He realizes that we cannot be trusted to know what we really need; we will always be led astray by the ego's need to possess things.

The phrase "the churches it builds to itself" refers partly to religions based on ego ideas. In some churches, material possessions are a measure of spiritual well-being. Even many New Age belief systems judge your spiritual achievement by your prosperity and physical health. But the phrase also refers to the ego belief systems that look nothing like typical religions but which are, for instance, devotion to sheer materialistic living and striving for more possessions. The ego's "religions" are all religions of idolatry, and an idol is anything of this world to which we grant power to affect our happiness, either positively or negatively.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Let not their form deceive you. Idols are but substitutes for your reality. In some way, you believe they will complete your little self, for safety in a world perceived as

The ego instructs you that happiness is found in acquiring things—a bigger, nicely decorated home; the best new car; the ideal family; the prestigious job—and then when you get them, it takes them away or robs them of all the joy they were supposed to bring you (10:13).

## Paragraph 11

11. <sup>1</sup>**Everything** [that] the ego tells you that you need will hurt you. <sup>2</sup>For although the ego urges you again and again to **get**, it **leaves** you nothing, for what you get it will **demand** of you. <sup>3</sup>And even from the very hands that grasped it, it will be wrenched and hurled into the dust. <sup>4</sup>For where the ego sees salvation **it sees separation**, and so you lose whatever you have gotten in its name. <sup>5</sup>Therefore ask not of yourself what you need, for **you do not know**, and your advice to yourself **will** hurt you. <sup>6</sup>For what **you** think you need will merely serve to tighten up your world **against** the light, and render you unwilling to question the value that this world can **really** hold for you.

### • Study Question •

2. *What two reasons are given why listening to the ego's advice about what we need can hurt us?*



Let's look first at what this paragraph *means*, and then at what it means *to us*; in other words, the *interpretation* and then the *application*.

The first sentence has an obvious meaning: Whatever the ego tells us we need will hurt us. Why is the ego's advice so harmful? Because no matter how much I get, it is never enough; the ego goes on demanding more and more. And what I do get crumbles into dust and is eventually taken from me (11:2–3). The ego's way generates pain at every level. First, I will suffer the pain of wanting something I don't have. Next, I suffer the fear of losing it after I have it. And finally, I suffer the pain of inevitable loss. Everything in this world follows that pattern; there are no exceptions. This is true because the ego believes that separation is salvation (11:4), and so whatever you go for in its name produces separation in your life. The ego gives you the illusion of acquiring something, but all you ever acquire is a deeper sense of your own separation. For instance, possessing a fancy car can separate me from everyone who does not have one.

So what is the *application*? What does this mean to us? Very simply, stop listening to the ego and stop trying to acquire things of this world as a means for our salvation, that is, as a way to making us happy. It does not work; in fact, it makes us miserable rather than happy.

Remember, this section is telling us how to attain the real world. It has said we need, first, to be willing to learn that the world we made is false, or in other words “to question the value that this world can really hold” for us (11:6). Now it is saying we need to let go

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dangerous, with forces massed against your confidence and peace of mind. They have the power to supply your lacks, and add the value that you do not have. No one believes in idols who has not enslaved himself to littleness and loss. And thus must seek beyond his little self for strength to raise his head, and stand apart from all the misery the world reflects” (T-29.VIII.2:1-6).

of the idea that anything in this world has true value to us. It is the other side of the coin of forgiveness. If forgiveness on one hand means realizing that nothing in this world has the power to hurt us, on the other hand it means that nothing in this world has the power to make us happy or to give us what we want. In a sense, we learn to forgive the world for not making us happy.

Letting go of the world's value to us is as much a part of forgiveness as letting go of our judgments against the world; both are essential, and in fact each implies the other. If I believe the world has power to make me happy by acquiring some possession, I must believe the world has the power to block my happiness by preventing me from acquiring that thing, or to take away my happiness by taking that thing away from me.

Jesus is instructing us to stop trying to determine by ourselves what we need; we cannot do it alone, listening only to what our egos tell us. That leads only to pain and disappointment, and we need to stop doing it: "Ask not of yourself what you need" (11:5). When we follow the ego's advice, we only succeed in tightening up our world against the light (11:6). We are blocking out awareness of the real world every time we place value in something of this world.

If I don't know what I need, who does? How am I to live in this world? Is it possible to live without self-originated desires? This brings us back to the earlier statement that, because of the Holy Spirit, there is a way out (10:7-8)

## Paragraph 12

12. <sup>1</sup>Only the Holy Spirit **knows** what you need. <sup>2</sup>For **He** will give you all things that do **not** block the way to light. <sup>3</sup>And what else **could** you need? <sup>4</sup>In time, He gives you all the things that you need have, and will renew them as long as you have need of them. <sup>5</sup>He will take nothing **from** you as long as you have **any** need of it. <sup>6</sup>And yet He knows that **everything** you need is temporary, and will but last [**and need but last**] until you step aside from **all** your needs and realize that all of them **have been** fulfilled. <sup>7</sup>Therefore He has no investment in the things that He supplies, except to make certain that you will **not** use them on behalf of lingering in time. <sup>8</sup>He knows that you are not at home there, and He wills no delay to wait upon your joyous homecoming.

### • Study Question •

3. *True or false (please support your answer from the paragraph), the Holy Spirit will make you materially prosperous in order to make life on earth really comfortable and pleasurable.*

Relationship to the Holy Spirit is the key. *Without* Him, to live in this world but not of it would be impossible. Following my own advice about my needs will just block the way to light. *With* Him, it is possible to quite happily live in the world but not of it. In myself, of myself, I do not know what I need. With the Holy Spirit, I will have all the things that do *not* block the way to light (12:2). Truly, "what else could you need?" (12:3). What I truly need is all things that lead me to the light of the real world; what I do not need is anything that would block the way.

This does not mean that the Holy Spirit does not actually give us anything material. It's obvious from this passage that He *does* provide material things in a material world (12:2,4). And He does not ask us to sacrifice anything we truly need (12:5).

To me, learning to live in relationship to the Holy Spirit in regard to my needs means learning to trust Him. It means not second-guessing Him, not doubting that He knows what He is doing. That means that as far as things of this world go—possessions, money, income, job, prestige, relationships, all of it—I do not want to become permanently attached to anything. If it comes, I must have needed it; if it goes, my need is past. I trust that everything I need (in light of what advances me towards the real world) I will have. Anything I don't have, I don't really need. The Holy Spirit has “no investment in the things that He supplies” (12:7), that is, in themselves they are of no importance. All that counts is the purpose they serve in advancing me towards the light. If I start to use them to linger in time (12:7), they are harming me. If He has no investment, I should also have no investment. I must realize that my happiness does not depend on any *thing*. My life is not about this world, not about the things of this world; my life is about going back home.

Having no investment in something does not mean I do not want it. At one period of my life, for several years I wanted one of those large-screen, high density TV sets, which cost, at the time, over \$2000. Ever since I saw one demonstrated in a store I wanted it. The picture was stunning in its clarity. I felt I was looking through a window, not looking at a TV screen. Even regular TV would look better on this type of screen than on a normal TV set, and the special high density broadcasts look incredible. So I want it. But I don't think I *need* it. I am perfectly happy without it.

If I had *an investment* in having such a TV set, I would be devoting time, talent, and emotional energy to acquiring it. Having it would *matter* to me, and *not* having it would also matter. I would believe, consciously or unconsciously, that I couldn't be completely happy unless I have it.

That kind of example is relatively easy to understand. Not having an investment in something like a relationship, or in curing a physical disease, is not anywhere near as easy for us because we believe in what the Course calls “a hierarchy of illusions” (T-23.II.2:1–3). To us, some illusions are more real and more valuable than others. The Course's position is that there is no hierarchy of illusions; all are equally valueless. When we are faced with our obvious attachments to things of this world like our primary relationship, or our bodily health, we can simply notice that attachment and remind ourselves that what we perceive is not the way things really are. For instance, if we lose a loved one, we are going to feel pain and grief. It can help, even if only slightly, to remind ourselves that only the reflection is lost, and that the real thing, the love we shared, is eternal and changeless. It may not take away the pain, but it is a step in the right direction. We can say to the Holy Spirit, “I don't know what I need. I don't understand this. But I still trust You.” Sometimes, trust means being willing to sit with that state of not knowing and not understanding.

## Paragraph 13

13. <sup>1</sup>Leave, then, your needs to Him. <sup>2</sup>He will supply them with no emphasis at all upon them. <sup>3</sup>What comes to you of Him comes safely, for He will ensure it never can become a dark spot, hidden in your mind and kept to hurt you. <sup>4</sup>Under His guidance you will travel light and journey lightly, for His

sight is ever on the journey's end, which is His goal. <sup>5</sup>God's Son is not a traveller through **outer** worlds. <sup>6</sup>However holy his perception may become, no world **outside** himself holds his inheritance. <sup>7</sup>Within **himself** he **has** no needs, for light needs nothing but to shine in peace, and from **itself** to let the rays extend in quiet to infinity.

• **Study Question** •

4. *Why does the Holy Spirit not try to make you happy through the possessions He gives you?*

What is being asked of us is a “hands off” attitude, or a letting go of control (13:1). “True prayer,” according to the *Song of Prayer* pamphlet, is “to forget the things you think you need,” and to step back, to let go (S-1.In.4:1; S-1.In.5:1) “I will step back and let Him lead the way,” says Workbook Lesson 155. It means I stop believing that I know what is in my own best interest, and I leave my needs to the Holy Spirit. It means taking my hands off the controls.

Outwardly it may look like business as usual. The difference is solely in the emotional energy I put into it, or in the mental attitude. I will still want things, and I will still do things to achieve what I want. But I let go of my certainty that I *know* what is good for me, and I will remain on the alert for any guidance that may come to me. For instance, if I go for a job interview and I want that job, I will do all within my power to convince the company to hire me. But I also remind myself that I don't know for certain that I want the job. Unless the job serves to bring me closer to the real world, I don't really want it. I remind myself that I do not know what I need, and that the Holy Spirit does. Then, if I don't get the job, I'm fine. I don't feel destroyed. It's also possible that, even as I go for the interview, I will get a clear inner sense that this job isn't the one for me. I pass all my decisions by the Holy Spirit.

More and more, I will find that what I need “just shows up.” There is no emphasis put on it about having it or not having it (13:2). It's just there or not there, no big deal.

When I leave my needs to Him, the Holy Spirit supplies me *safely* (13:3). The things that come to me don't ‘stick.’ I don't mistakenly get attached to them in a way that is unhealthy for me. I “travel light and journey lightly” (13:4).

Have you ever gone on a trip with few or no possessions? Just what you can carry with you? There's no baggage to drag through the airport or to worry about, no wondering if the bags got on the wrong plane, and no delays at the destination airport waiting for the luggage to come up. You're free to just walk out of the airport and get to where you are going. That's what life is like when you let the Holy Spirit take care of your needs. You don't have to bring everything with you; what you need will be there when you get there.

In fact you are not really traveling through this world (13:5). You are here only in a dream, and your real self *has* no needs (13:7). Your inheritance is not in the world outside of you (13:6). Everything you need is within yourself. You are Light, and all you need is to *shine in peace* (13:7).

## Paragraph 14

[14. <sup>1</sup>Whenever you are tempted to undertake a useless [foolish] journey

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that would lead **away** from light, remember what you **really** want, and say:

<sup>2</sup>*The Holy Spirit leads me unto Christ, and where else would I go?* <sup>3</sup>*What need have I but to awake in Him?*

• **Study Question** •

5. *This paragraph gives you something to say to yourself when you are tempted to get invested in pursuing some "thing" in this world. Think of such a thing now, and quietly practice this saying.*

A “useless journey” is anything related in some way to this world: the feeling that you absolutely have to have a certain thing; feeling discouraged when your plans are thwarted; feeling unfairly treated by the world; longing for a special relationship; being sure you know what you lack but need to make you happy. Let it go. Tell yourself you don’t know what you need in this world. And remind yourself that the Holy Spirit is leading you to awaken in Christ. That is all you need, all you really want. The rest is just props on the stage.

## Paragraph 15

15. <sup>1</sup>Then follow Him in joy, with faith that He will lead you safely through all dangers to your peace of mind this world may set before you. <sup>2</sup>Kneel not before the altars to sacrifice, and seek not what you will surely lose. <sup>3</sup>Content yourself with what you will as surely **keep**, and be not restless, for you undertake a quiet journey to the peace of God, where He would have you be in quietness.

• **Study Question** •

6. *In what specific ways do we kneel before altars to sacrifice and seek what we will lose? (You can include material from anywhere in the section in your answer.)*

When we remember what we really want (14:1), we can follow the Holy Spirit in joy, and with faith (15:1). If we forget what we really want, and mistakenly think that what we want is something in this world, we cannot find that same joy and faith. If I think what I want is that particular job, that particular relationship, any particular form in this world, and I don’t get it, I lose faith in the Holy Spirit. I may think, “My prayers were not answered.” I lose my joy because I didn’t get what I wanted.

Following the Holy Spirit means setting aside my ideas about what I need and trusting that He knows what I need better than I do. This world seems to set before me many dangers to my peace of mind (15:1). Following the Holy Spirit means I have faith in Him to lead me safely through all those dangers to my real goal, to what I really want, which is to awaken in Christ and to remember my true Identity. That is where peace of mind lies. The attainment of goals in this world, or the failure to attain goals in this world, no longer affect my peace of mind because I know that nothing in this world is what I want.



Identifying our needs as things within the world causes pain in two forms: We lament what we have 'sacrificed' in the past and we hunger for what we desire in the future, but do not now have. We focus on the past and the future, and ruin the present in so doing. Jesus advises us to be content with what we always have (15:3), something we cannot lose because it is what we *are*, the Identity God gave us in Creation.

Jesus tells us not to be restless. *Restlessness* is a sure sign we are not listening to the Holy Spirit's voice. Restlessness on the spiritual journey is self-contradictory because this journey is a quiet journey to the peace of God (15:3). Whenever I get that sense of restlessness, of dissatisfaction with my spiritual progress, I know I am hearing my ego's voice. I have forgotten what the Course tells us: that I already possess the end of the journey; there is really nowhere to go:

The journey to God is merely the reawakening of the knowledge of where you are always, and what you are forever. It is a journey without distance to a goal that has never changed (T-8.VI.9:6-7).

I already *am* where I think I want to be. It is thinking I am not there that is the problem. The appearance of my being something else is only a dream and has no real significance. It cannot change the facts. Therefore, there is no reason to be restless. Jesus emphasizes this point in the next paragraph.

## Paragraph 16

16. <sup>1</sup>In me you have **already** overcome **every** temptation that would hold you back. <sup>2</sup>We walk together on the way to quietness that is the gift of God. <sup>3</sup>Hold me dear, for what **except** your brothers **can** you need? <sup>4</sup>We will restore to you the peace of mind that we **must** find together. <sup>5</sup>The Holy Spirit will teach you to awaken unto us and to yourself. <sup>6</sup>**This** is the only **real** need to be fulfilled in time. <sup>7</sup>Salvation **from** the world lies **only** here. <sup>8</sup>My peace I **give** you. <sup>9</sup>**Take** it of me in glad exchange for all the world has offered but to **take away**. <sup>10</sup>And we will spread it like a veil of light across the world's sad face, in which we hide our brothers **from** the world, and it from them.

### • Study Question •

7. *According to this paragraph, what is our true need in this world?*

Sentence 1 is hard to understand, isn't it? How can it be that we have "already overcome"? It sure does not seem that way to us. But the truth is that the journey is already over and we are at home in Heaven, dreaming of exile. The world is already over and we are back home, having a bad dream about it. Notice that Jesus says that we have overcome "in me." I believe that, in one sense, Jesus is simply the part of our joint mind that is already awake. He is the proof that the rest of us (which is truly the rest of *him*) have nothing to worry about. The Bible calls him a "forerunner," who has entered the holy place of the temple on our behalf (Hebrews 6:20). If he has done it, we all will surely follow.

Jesus, however, is not some being who is separate from us, like the first person to cross the finish line in a race. He is intimately tied to us; he and we are part of a single whole. Therefore, in some real sense, the steps he has taken have also been taken by you

and by me. The journey is truly *already over*; we are just retracing our steps. What we think of as the future only *seems* to have not yet happened. "The script is written." The videotape has already been recorded and we are just playing it back:

Yet there is no step along the road that anyone takes but by chance. It has already been taken by him, although he has not yet embarked on it. For time but seems to go in one direction. We but undertake a journey that is over. Yet it seems to have a future still unknown to us.

Time is a trick, a sleight of hand, a vast illusion in which figures come and go as if by magic. Yet there is a plan behind appearances that does not change. The script is written. When experience will come to end your doubting has been set. For we but see the journey from the point at which it ended, looking back on it, imagining we make it once again; reviewing mentally what has gone by (W-pI.158.3:3-4:5).

When you feel restless on your spiritual journey, remind yourself that the journey is really already over, and you are at the end of it, mentally reviewing what has already passed (W-pI.158.4:5). There is nothing to be restless about—you are already home, and you feel restless only because you have forgotten that. You are restless because you think the dream is real. The only thing you need is to remember your real Self, Which cannot change. Everything that needed doing about this bad dream has already been done, and you need do nothing but remember that.

Quietness, the opposite of restlessness, is the goal of the journey. It is also the journey itself, the gift of God, something given to you, not something you have to attain (16:2). It is a *gift* and you already have it. Yet here in this world we often feel restless and see ourselves as restless. We cannot and should not deny that. We identify with an image of our self that is separated from the gift God gave us. Therefore we need a symbol of that 'other' Self, the Self that is always at peace. That is what Jesus represents in the Course. Perhaps I cannot yet see myself in perfect quietness and peace, but I can see Him that way, and I can take His hand and walk together with Him on the journey, until I realize that the One I walk with is my Self.

We need to *hold Jesus dear*, to *cherish* Him, rather than the things of this world (16:3). What we need is only the memory of our Self, and He is the picture of that memory, its perfect symbol. We can find Him in ourselves and in all our brothers and sisters. This is the way to the happy dream, to the real world.

When Jesus says "we" in sentence 4, he is referring to himself and all our brothers. Peace of mind will be found only *together* with all minds, because *peace* and the *unity* of all minds is the same thing (16:4). (If there is disunity, how could there be peace?) In our journey through this world, the Holy Spirit teaches us to awaken to Jesus, to our brothers, and to ourselves (16:5). We learn to see Christ in all of them. "This is the only real need to be fulfilled in time" (16:6), this rejoining of all the apparently separated parts of the one Sonship. This is why the Course says, "The real world is attained simply by the complete forgiveness of the old" (T-17.II.5:1). Forgiveness means seeing that whatever *form* a brother presents to me, his *content* is always the same: love, or a call for love. Whatever the behavior of a brother, whatever my own behavior, the content is always Christ, always the Son of God, and never anything else. Awakening to that, remembering that, becoming aware of that, is the only purpose of the world, the only reason for being here. There are no other goals worthy of the name.

The only purpose of this false world of sin, guilt and fear is that we may learn it is false, and thus attain the *real* world. In a word, the purpose of the world is *forgiveness*. The Course has many names for the same experience or process:

For true perception is a remedy with many names. Forgiveness, salvation, Atonement, true perception, all are one. They are the one beginning, with the end to lead to Oneness far beyond themselves (C-4.3:5-7).

Healing, forgiveness, and the glad exchange of all the world of sorrow for a world where sadness cannot enter, are the means by which the Holy Spirit urges you to follow Him (W-pI.137.9:1).

All are different ways of describing a shift in perception that suddenly sees that the world as we see it is really *nothing* that looks like *something*, that there is no sin, and everything is love or a call for it.

When you catch a glimpse of the real world, that glimpse is what is termed a holy instant. It can be compared to the shift in perception that comes when looking at an optical illusion that seems to switch from one picture to another depending on how you look at it. For example, is this a picture of a young woman, or an old hag?



If you really want to bend your mind, stare at the next image until your eyes go out of focus, or really, till you focus on a spot about a foot *behind* the image, and you will see a large heart in 3D!



Seeing the real world is that same kind of 180° shift in perception, from black to white, from 2D to 3D. You are looking at the same thing, but suddenly the entire picture is different. Nothing outside changes; the change is all in your mind, and in what you are choosing to look at. To “awaken unto us and to yourself” (16:5) is just like that. One moment you don’t see it, it isn’t there at all; the next moment, it is all you see. You *know* in that moment that everything you have been seeing to that point was nothing but a construct in your mind. You know because nothing external to your mind has changed, but what you *see* has totally changed because of a change *within your mind*.

From that point you can’t go back. You can’t *un-see* what you have seen. Even if you ‘lose it’ and can’t seem to make the mental shift to see the real world in the false, you still know it is there, and only your own mind is preventing you from seeing it. Even if what you seem to see is sin, guilt and fear, anger, hatred and attack, you *know* what you are seeing is not real.

Jesus is offering us His peace, which is His perception of the world, His vision of the *real* world (16:8). He is asking us to accept His peaceful vision in place of all the temporary gifts the world appears to offer us (16:9), to make this peace of God our only goal, and not to be distracted by lesser goals within the world.

Together with him we will “spread [this peace] like a veil of light across the world’s sad face” (16:10). We will see the entire world through this veil, through this perception, enabling us to see it all as deserving of our love and nothing as deserving of our condemnation or attack. This peace will become a veil “in which we hide our brothers from the world, and it from them” (16:10). No longer will we see any brother as part of that dark picture we have told ourselves constituted the world. Instead, we will see them all in light. Seeing everyone in the light is our only goal in time.

## Paragraph 17

17. <sup>1</sup>We cannot sing redemption's hymn alone. <sup>2</sup>My task is not completed until I have lifted every voice with mine. <sup>3</sup>And yet it is **not** mine, for as it is my gift to you, so was it the Father's gift to me, given me through His Spirit. <sup>4</sup>The sound of it will banish sorrow from the mind of God's most holy Son, where it cannot abide. <sup>5</sup>Healing in time **is** needed, for joy cannot establish its eternal reign where sorrow dwells. <sup>6</sup>You dwell not here, but in eternity. <sup>7</sup>You travel but in dreams, while safe at home. <sup>8</sup>Give thanks to every part of you that you have taught how to **remember** you. <sup>9</sup>Thus does the Son of God give thanks unto his Father for his purity.

### • Study Question •

8. *What is the underlying theme behind all the imagery in this paragraph?*

This is a vision of the end, when every voice is lifted in thanksgiving to God, in recognition of the truth. The vision that saves us is the vision that all is One, that separation is impossible and never happened. Jesus' task, and ours, will never be complete until every part of the Sonship lives in awareness of that fact, and not one thought of sin remains (17:1-2).

That day seems far off to all of us. And yet it is as near as this instant. In this instant I can choose to see the real world in all its glory. If my brother does not yet see it, it makes what I see no less real. In the Manual For Teachers, Jesus counsels us concerning how to live in the meanwhile before that final celebration; it's worth reading now:

The world will end when its thought system has been completely reversed. Until then, bits and pieces of its thinking will still seem sensible. The final lesson, which brings the ending of the world, cannot be grasped by those not yet prepared to leave the world and go beyond its tiny reach. What, then, is the function of the teacher of God in this concluding lesson? He need merely learn how to approach it; to be willing to go in its direction. He need merely trust that, if God's Voice tells him it is a lesson he can learn, he can learn it. He does not judge it either as hard or easy. His Teacher points to it, and he trusts that He will show him how to learn it (M-14.4:1-8).

Don't be restless and dissatisfied because you haven't arrived as yet. Just make your choice to approach the real world, and "to be willing to go in its direction" (M-14.4:5). Just trust that when the Course assures you that you are capable of learning its lessons, you are really capable. Just choose to head in that direction, and trust the Holy Spirit will show you how to get there.

When Jesus says "And yet it is not mine" in 17:3 I believe he is referring to the hymn or song. (The next sentence starts with the words, "The sound of it..." so "it" must be either the song, or the voice.) He has said that his task is to lift every voice with his, which might lead us to think of him as some special Savior, the only one who knows and has this song. Now he has to teach all of us. But he immediately counteracts that idea. The song is not 'his' but *ours*. Its origin was with the Father, who gave it as a gift to all of us; Jesus is just passing it along. One of the major stumbling blocks in our way, a

stumbling block that became an integral part of traditional Christianity, is seeing Jesus as special, as different from the rest of us. As he does so many places in the Course, Jesus here is telling us that he is *not* special or different. He received the gift of this song from the Father, and so have we. We are just as capable of learning the song and singing it as he was.

The song of our Identity in God will banish sorrow from our mind (17:4). To banish sorrow is to *heal*, and that is something necessary *in time* (17:5). For our minds to be filled with joy, sorrow must be banished. The illusions of false perception, which seem to merit our sorrow, must disappear. That washing of our minds, that healing, is the only purpose for time and for the world.

Our purpose is not here, in this world. Our home is not here (17:6). In fact, we *are not* really here: "You travel but in dreams." We dwell in eternity; we are here only in our dreams, yet all the while we are "safe at home" (17:7).

The phrase "every part of you" in the next to last sentence refers, I believe, to both our own minds and those of our brothers. The "you" here is the larger "you," that is, the Sonship, the Christ. Every aspect of the Sonship, whether in myself or in a brother, that I have forgiven is a part of myself that I have taught how to remember the true Self. I can feel grateful and express thanks to my brothers, or even to myself (17:8).

I find it useful from time to time to look at myself and notice the good things about myself. I notice that my work with the Course is much more consistent than it was several years ago, and I mentally *thank myself* for that. I notice that I remember God's presence far more often during the day than I used to. I notice that things that used to upset me for days now upset me only for an hour or two, and sometimes not at all. I notice that the basic direction of my life has changed. Even when something upsetting happens in my life, when it eventually leads me to bring my dark perceptions to the Holy Spirit for correction, I find myself feeling *grateful* that the upsetting thing happened and brought me this lesson in remembrance. I am grateful for the parts of myself that I have taught to remember the Christ in me.

When I see a *brother* as offending me and go through the process of forgiveness until I see no sin in what occurred but only love, I have taught a part of myself to remember my true Self, which is wholly loving and wholly lovable. I can then 'give thanks' to my brother, and to my own mind, for this reminder of the truth. I am actually *grateful* for the lesson. And that gratitude, that thankfulness to myself and to my brothers, is the way, in this world, I express my gratitude and thanks to God (17:9). That is the process by which I can attain the real world.

• Study Question •

9. *How would you briefly summarize this section?*

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## Answer Key

1. The things are the things you buy in stores.
2. The ego's advice will hurt us 1) because its goal is separation, so that what we get will be lost again (11:2-4); and 2) because it will also make us value this world more, thus shutting out the true light (11:6).
3. False. The Holy Spirit gives us only what we truly need (12:4); His guiding principle in supplying our needs is to make sure we do not use things to increase our investment in this world (12:7).
4. He doesn't try to make you happy via possessions because He knows that nothing outside you can make you happy and so He wants you to get to the end of the journey as quickly as possible where you will remember your being in which you have no needs.
5. Memorize lines.
6. We kneel before altars to sacrifice and seek what we will lose by pursuing "things" that will make us happy.
7. Our real need here is our brothers. To me this means we need to be reunited with them in our shared Identity.
8. The theme of extending healing in the plan of redemption.
9. Brief Summary: You do not want this world, for the things it gives you you will lose. Let the Holy Spirit supply the things you need. And let this world go, exchanging it for the real world. For your only need here is to awaken, and the real world is your welcome of the Love of God.

