

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 14, Section XI

Paragraphs 8–15

The Test of Truth

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
light blue text = editorial comments
~~striketrough blue text~~ = Not in Urtext, in FIP edition

Review of what came before:

Let's remember what we learned last week:

Whenever our “peace is threatened or disturbed in any way,” we are asked to remind ourselves (6:6):

⁷*I do not know what anything, **including this**, means.*

⁸*And so I do **not** know how to respond to it.*

⁹*And I will not use my own past learning as the light to guide me now.*

This is the practical application of the test of perfect peace:

- Notice whenever your peace is *not* perfect;
- Realize that this is a clear indication that you are not in your right mind;
- Therefore, you cannot trust your perception of things;
- You need to rely on the Holy Spirit instead of your past learning.

Refuse “to teach yourself what you do not know” (6:10). When you give up the role of teacher, the Holy Spirit, Whose rightful place it is, will take His role as Guide, and will speak to you (6:11–12). You won't have to beg Him. You simply have to stop teaching yourself, stop trying to figure it out.

Paragraph 8

8. ¹How can you, so firmly bound to guilt and committed so to remain, establish **for yourself** your guiltlessness? ²That is impossible. ³But be sure that you are willing to acknowledge that it *is* impossible. ⁴It is only because you think that you can run some little part, or deal with certain aspects of your life alone, that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is limited. ⁵Thus would you make **Him** undependable, and **use** this fancied undependability as an excuse for keeping certain dark lessons **from** Him. ⁶And by so limiting the guidance that you would **accept, you** are unable to **depend** on miracles to answer **all** your problems **for** you.

• **Study Question** •

1. *Paragraph 8. You can neither give yourself your guiltlessness nor run any part of your life by yourself. This paragraph gives a fascinating argument for why miracles seem sporadic and undependable. What is it?*
 - A. *Because the Holy Spirit gives you such challenging guidance that you feel it will not be helpful--will not meet your needs as you see them.*
 - B. *Because you think you can run things by yourself. You thus limit the guidance you receive, and then label His guidance undependable.*
 - C. *Because the Holy Spirit is sometimes trying to strengthen you by placing you in the absence of His help.*
 - D. *Because the Holy Spirit's guidance sometimes shows up in subtle and disguised ways, making you think it has not shown up at all and cannot be depended on to show up.*

You can't teach yourself God's lesson; you can't be your own guide to miracles; and you can't establish your own guiltlessness (6:1-2; 7:1; 8:1-2). Do you see a pattern here? Jesus is certainly drumming the lesson home, isn't he? We are not only bound to guilt; we're committed to *staying* bound! The *attraction of guilt* is a topic the Course is going to address beginning in the next chapter as it bears on special relationships (for instance, see T-15.VII.2:1-3:2). But the idea has been broached in general in Chapter 13:

In the strange world that you have made the Son of God *has* sinned. How could you see him, then? By making him invisible, the world of retribution rose in **the black cloud of guilt that you accepted, and you hold it dear**. For the blamelessness of Christ is the proof that the ego never was, and can never be. **Without guilt the ego has no life**, and God's Son *is* without guilt. (T-13.I.2:1-5)

If we are guiltless, it proves the ego never was; therefore, because our minds *want* the autonomous existence of the ego, we hold guilt dear. It sustains the ego. Guilt is the ego's breath, as Ken Wapnick has said. A mind committed to guilt will never establish itself as guiltless. It's *impossible!*

Notice the subtle segue in the next sentence: "But be sure that you are willing to acknowledge that it *is* impossible" (8:3). We read these words and nod approvingly, but fail to realize that our actions demonstrate that we don't believe the words. We don't think it *is* impossible to establish our own guiltlessness. The fact that we think we "can run some little part, or deal with certain aspects of [our lives] alone" (8:4), proves it. We believe we can run our lives without the Holy Spirit, at least in certain aspects, and stay guiltless. It's impossible. We will be listening to the ego somewhere along the way and we are sure to incur guilt. We'll blow it. We'll hurt someone, we'll hurt ourselves, we'll do or say the wrong thing, or we'll judge other people or ourselves unmercifully.

The object of the lesson here is the same:

- Let go and let God.
- Step back and get out of the way.
- Resign as your own teacher.
- Ask.
- Listen.

Because we do not totally surrender to the Holy Spirit, because we keep taking the wheel back from Jesus when we hit a stretch of road we think is familiar, we *do* lose our

way. And when we do, we blame the Holy Spirit. His guidance appears to be undependable to us because we only listen to *part* of it, and try to run things ourselves the rest of the time (8:4–5). Having decided that we can't entirely trust the Holy Spirit, we use "this fancied undependability as an excuse for keeping certain dark lessons *from Him*" (8:5). We make a bad situation worse. Remember that in 7:2 the Holy Spirit was presented as "the means on which you can *depend* for miracles." The word "depend" was emphasized in the Urtext. But by our limited allegiance to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we've made His guidance appear *undependable*. We could have miracles all the time; the only reason we don't is that we limit how much guidance we are willing to accept (8:6).

Paragraph 9

9. ¹Do you think that what the Holy Spirit would have you **give** He would withhold from **you**? ²You have **no** problems that He cannot solve by offering **you** a miracle. ³Miracles are for **you**. ⁴And **every** fear or pain or trial you have **has been** undone. ⁵**He** has brought **all** of them to light, having **accepted** them **instead** of you, and recognized [*that*] they never were. ⁶There **are** no dark lessons He has not **already** lightened **for** you. ⁷The lessons you would teach yourself He has corrected already. ⁸They do not exist in His Mind at all. ⁹For the past binds **Him** not, and therefore binds not you. ¹⁰He does not see time as you do. ¹¹And each miracle He offers you **corrects** your use of time, and makes it His.

• Study Question •

2. *Paragraph 9. The Holy Spirit would have you give miracles, and so He would also offer them to you. He has already freed you from every fear (4), pain (4), trial (4), all dark lessons (6), from the past (9) and your use of time (11). How can it be that He has freed you yet you do not feel free?*
- A. *This is as good as it gets. Don't complain.*
 - B. *All the things in your life that look like problems are really blessings if you would just appreciate them.*
 - C. *He has freed your mind of all its beliefs. Yet the tiny part of your mind close to and on the surface has retained a hold on those beliefs. That part is not yet free.*
 - D. *You will only experience your freedom after you die.*
 - E. *He has freed you from the past, and when you leave the past and enter the present, you will realize you are free.*
 - F. *C and E.*

How can we even imagine that the Holy Spirit is undependable? This is a course in *miracles*. We are supposed to learn how to offer miracles to everyone around us. It is unthinkable that God would ask us to give miracles to everyone else and withhold miracles from *us* (9:1). In *any* instance! "You have *no* problems that He cannot solve by offering *you* a miracle" (9:2).

"Miracles are for *you*" (9:3). We should tattoo that on our foreheads so we see it every time we look into a mirror, and so that everyone who sees us will read it. "Miracles

are for *you*.” You might want to read over Lesson 77 in the Workbook, “I am entitled to miracles.” It begins with these wonderful words:

You are entitled to miracles because of what you are. You will receive miracles because of what God is. And you will offer miracles because you are one with God. (W-pI.77.1:1-3)

The lesson goes on to instruct us to ask for a miracle in every situation that calls for them, assuring us that we “will recognize these situations” (W-pI.77.7:4-5).

In the very first section of the Text we are told:

Miracles are natural. When they do not occur something has gone wrong. (T-1.I.6:1-2)

The words “miracles” and “natural” are normally thought of as antithetical. The common definition of a miracle is something that cannot be explained by natural laws—*supernatural*. But, to the Course, miracles are *natural*! I do not believe this means that things such as walking on water or transmuting water into wine should be everyday occurrences. Rather, I think it means that the real meaning of “miracle” is something far broader than spectacular supernatural occurrences, although it can certainly include them. In fact, Lesson 77 declares:

Miracles do not obey the laws of this world. They merely follow from the laws of God. (W-pI.77.4:4-5)

A miracle is what occurs when we step back and let the Holy Spirit lead the way. It is what occurs when we refuse to guide ourselves by the light of our past learning, and instead open up to the in-this-moment guidance of God. It is what occurs when we respond to a situation without judgment, perceiving the guiltlessness of all involved. It is what happens when we act without fear, trusting in the constant supply of God, knowing that we have no needs our Father will not meet (7:3). Miracles erase “every fear or pain or trial” (9:4). They show us, not that the fear or pain or trial *can be* undone, but that it *has been* undone. It never *was*! (9:5).

That is what it is like to perceive with the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit’s assigned task, which He has already completed, was to bring all our fears to the light and to undo them. He has already lightened and corrected all the dark lessons we think we want to teach ourselves (9:6–7), and in His Mind they simply don’t exist (9:8). In our minds they may still seem to be real, but that’s exactly why we need to escape from the limitations of our minds and open to His Mind.

I went for years and years with gradually deteriorating vision. Although I used reading glasses, I used to pride myself on being able to pass the driving vision test without glasses. Each time I tested, it was a little worse, but I still squeaked through. But finally, one day, I failed the test. I needed to get glasses for distance vision as well. I lived in Sedona at the time, and I drove to Flagstaff to pick up my new glasses. I still remember driving back down Oak Creek Canyon (if you’ve never taken the drive, you owe it to yourself if you are ever in that area), wearing the new glasses, and coming to the top of the long, sudden drop from the plateau into the canyon, with vistas open for miles ahead. I gasped with amazement! I could see distinct leaves on the trees instead of the green blobs I’d become used to. I could see things I had not seen for so long I had no memory of seeing them.

Miracles are like that. They transcend the limits you have placed on your vision. They bring a sudden “shift to vision” that “release your vision and let you see the Great Rays [of Christ light] shining from them [your brothers and sisters], so unlimited that they reach to God” (T-15.IX.1:1–2). They allow you to see past, through, and beyond any limitations your mind has accepted because of fear or because of past “learning.” They allow you to see God in everything, as it is *now*. Because the Holy Spirit is not bound by the past, neither are you (9:9).

Sentences 10 and 11 of the 9th paragraph seem to me to make more sense when seen as the first two sentences of the next paragraph, so I'll consider them under Paragraph 10.

Paragraph 10

¹⁰He does not see time as you do. ¹¹And each miracle He offers you **corrects** your use of time, and makes it His.

10. ¹He Who has freed you from the past would teach you **are** free of it. ²He would but have you accept His accomplishments **as yours**, because He did them **for** you. ³And because He did, they *are* yours. ⁴He has **made** you free of what you made. ⁵You can deny Him, but you **cannot** call on Him in vain. ⁶He **always** gives His gifts in place of yours [*He always gives what He has made, in place of you*]. ⁷He would establish His bright teaching so firmly in your mind, that no dark lesson of guilt can abide in what He has established as holy by His Presence. ⁸Thank God that He is there and works through you. ⁹And all His works are yours. ¹⁰He offers **you** a miracle with every one you **let** Him do through you.

• Study Question •

3. **Paragraph 10.** *The Holy Spirit has freed us from the past and will always answer us. How, according to this paragraph, do we let Him do a miracle for us?*
- A. *We go to one of those Pentecostal healing services.*
 - B. *We give Him all of our dark lessons.*
 - C. *We let Him do a miracle through us (for another).*
 - D. *We send money to the Circle of Atonement.*
 - E. *We identify with His accomplishments by doing His works ourselves, thus experiencing what He has accomplished for us.*
 - F. *C and E.*

The Holy Spirit does not see time as we do, and by a miracle, causes us to use time as He does (9:10–11). How does He use it? What are we being given here? The answer to these questions won't be fully given until we read the first section of Chapter 15, titled, “The Two Uses of Time.” In a nutshell, though, time, for the Holy Spirit, is useful only as a means to remember eternity, to learn to live completely without fear, care, anxiety, or worry, to learn to *be* what we *are* and have always been.

A major learning goal for us is learning that we are free from the past (10:1). If you take a minute, you can probably think of more than one thing from your past that you wish wasn't there; something you'd like to have undone. You can, right now, accept a

miracle; you can learn that you are *already* free of it (10:1). This paragraph tells you how to receive that miracle.

According to this paragraph, the Holy Spirit has *already* freed you of the past; you only need to accept that what He has done, He did for you, and therefore, it has been done for you; the gift of freedom is yours for the taking (10:2–3). You made a mess; He unmade it and freed you from it (10:4). It is possible to live in denial of that truth—in fact, most of us, most of the time and about most things, probably *do* live in denial of what the Holy Spirit has already accomplished. As a result, we still experience the burden of our past, but only because we believe in it. It isn't really there! And if we call on the Holy Spirit for a miracle, He will *always* answer (10:5–6). That's His Will; it's what He wants to do: to so firmly establish His teaching in our minds that no lesson of guilt can remain there (10:7). No past, no guilt. Hallelujah!

How do we call on the Holy Spirit? How do we *accept* the miracle? By giving one.

Begin with thanksgiving: “Thank God that He [the Holy Spirit] is there and works through you” (10:8), and thank Him that “all his works are yours” (10:9). And then, *allow Him to do a miracle through you* (10:10). For every miracle you *give*, you will receive a miracle.

Giving a miracle to another person means that you choose to see *them* without their past, to see them without guilt. You let your grievances go. You allow that “shift to vision” that shows you the Great Rays radiating from them, the pure light of Spirit emanating from them. You recognize them as the Christ. When you see someone else that way, the Holy Spirit shows you *yourself* that way, free from the past.

Please notice that twice, in these few sentences, we've seen the phrase “through you.” “He...works through you”; “a miracle...you let Him do through you”. You don't squinch up your eyes and *try* to see the Great Rays shining from your brother; you *let Him* do it *through* you. You claim His works as yours; you claim His vision as yours. “Spirit, be my eyes. Let me perceive my brother as you perceive him.” This is *not* something that any of us can do by ourselves. That's why it is called a “miracle.” It *does* take divine intervention. Yes, it's natural; it's the way things *really* are. But “by ourselves” is *not natural*, and not the way things really are. We are one with God, and until we accept that union, spiritual vision is lost to us.

Paragraph 11

11. ¹God's Son will **always** be indivisible. ²As we are held as one in God, so do we learn as one in Him. ³God's Teacher is as like to His Creator as is His Son, and through His Teacher does God proclaim His Oneness **and** His Son's. ⁴Listen in silence, and do **not** raise your voice against Him. ⁵For He teaches the miracle of oneness, and before **His** lesson division disappears. ⁶Teach **like** Him here, and you **will** remember that you have **always** created like your Father. ⁷The miracle of creation has never ceased, having the holy stamp of immortality upon it. ⁸This is the Will of God for all creation, and all creation joins in willing this.

• **Study Question** •

4. *Paragraph 11. We all will always be one, and through listening to God's Teacher, we will learn this. How, according to this paragraph, do we remember our function of creating in Heaven?*
- A. *By entering the silence.*
 - B. *By joining in willing the miracle of creation.*
 - C. *By attaining perfect peace.*
 - D. *By teaching like the Holy Spirit here.*
 - E. *All of the above.*

When I see what seems to be a sentence out of context, I wonder what connection I'm missing. What does the indivisibility of God's Son (11:1) have to do with all the talk about giving and receiving miracles? Actually, the connection isn't that obscure. Jesus has just said that every time we offer a miracle we receive one. Now, he points out that the Son of God is indivisible; we are inextricably joined with one another. *That's why* we must give a miracle to receive one; that's why we receive one when we give one. "We" are really the indivisible one Son. What we give to our brother we also receive because we *are* our brother.

"As we are held as one in God, so do we learn as one in Him" (11:2). The Holy Spirit is teaching us the Oneness of the Sonship, and our Oneness, along with Him (the Holy Spirit), with God. There is no division; there is only One (11:3,5). Oneness is the lesson the Holy Spirit teaches, and we are admonished to, "Listen in silence, and do *not* raise your voice against Him;" that is, don't fight the recognition of your oneness with every person the Holy Spirit brings into your life, regardless of what your ego says. Learn to offer this miracle to everyone. The miracle demonstrates oneness to us because when we give a miracle, we receive one, and we *must* give one to receive one. Teach as the Holy Spirit teaches and you will learn what you are teaching (11:6).

When we teach with Him, we remember our function of creating. We remember that we have *always* created like God (11:6). We must listen to the Holy Spirit in silence, without raising our voice against Him. That's another way of saying what we read in T-14.XI.6:7-9 (the next paragraph confirms this parallel), acknowledging that we don't know what anything means and won't use our past learning to guide us. We listen in silence and then offer the world what we hear in the silence. As we acknowledge one another in Christ, we are affirming the truth of immortal, unceasing creation; we are reflecting Heaven on earth. We are affirming our eternal union in the Will of God (11:7-8), and eventually we will awaken to the reality of our function of creating in Heaven.

Paragraph 12

12. ¹Those who remember always that **they** know nothing, and who have become willing to learn **everything**, will learn it. ²But whenever they trust **themselves**, they will **not** learn. ³They have destroyed their motivation for learning **by thinking they already know**. ⁴Think not you understand **anything** until you pass the test of perfect peace, for peace and understanding **go together** and never can be found alone. ⁵Each brings the other **with** it, for it is the law of God they be not separate. ⁶They are cause and effect, each to the other, so where one is absent the other **cannot** be.

• **Study Question** •

5. **Paragraph 12.** *Remember always that you know nothing, until you pass the test of perfect peace. By realizing you know nothing you will come to know everything. What is the role of trusting yourself in this process, according to this paragraph?*
- A. *Do not trust yourself--trust in your own learning and ability to learn and decide--or you will think you already know.*
 - B. *Trust implicitly in yourself, or will not have confidence in your power to learn.*
 - C. *Trust in yourself and what you know, not as a final end, but as a good start.*
 - D. *Trust yourself to be a good follower of the Holy Spirit.*

Note the Urtext's emphasis on *they* and *everything* (12:1); I like to add an emphasis on "always" as well. It points up our need to *constantly* remember not to depend upon our self-taught (and erroneous) understanding, and to allow the Holy Spirit to teach us *in everything*—no "little part" held back in a stubborn belief that we can deal with it without His help.

You need offer only undivided attention. Everything else will be given you.
(T-12.V.9:4-5)

If we offer that undivided attention, we "will learn it" (12:1). Learn what? As usual, the answer lies in the context. The immediate context is in the same sentence: "everything." But that's almost as vague as "it." If we look back to the preceding paragraphs, we see several things that the Holy Spirit is attempting to teach us:

- The miracle of oneness
- The bright teaching of guiltlessness
- You will with the Father unto His Son
- The correction to every dark lesson you have taught yourself
- You are free from the past
- The unending miracle of creation

If we offer Him our undivided attention, that's what we will learn, *all* of it. Everything.

Whenever we trust ourselves, however, we won't learn (12:2). This is our choice in every moment of the day. Will we pay attention to the Holy Spirit, or will we trust ourselves instead? Do one, and we learn everything; do the other, we learn nothing. We won't learn because we won't be *motivated* to learn, and we won't be motivated because we *think we already know* (12:3). Why ask for help when we are convinced we don't need it?

This is where the "test of perfect peace," discussed in paragraph 5, comes in. Unless you can pass that test *in this very moment*, you don't understand anything (12:4). Peace and understanding go together; you can't have one without the other. Are you wholly free of every form of fear: worry, anxiety, anger, guilt, and so on? Does everyone you meet or

who even thinks of you share in your peace?¹ If that is not the case, you do not understand the situation. As I've pointed out, I think this is the case 99.9999% of the time. It would be so simple just to say, "Okay, I *never* understand anything." But our minds just won't accept that. Sometimes your interpretation of things seems self-evident and irrefutable. There simply is no other interpretation possible! So you are convinced that you do know, you do understand. That's when you need this test. Are you *perfectly* at peace? Really? If not, no matter how rock-solid your understanding may seem to be, it's wrong. It's worthless. You need to repeat the denial and affirmation from 6:7-9 again, and let the Holy Spirit teach you.

Some students have been confused by the teaching here. They say: If peace and understanding go together (12:4-6), then if I am at peace, I *do* understand. They ask: In instructing us to affirm that we don't know anything, isn't the Course fostering mental unrest by pointing out our lack of understanding? Sometimes, people have told me, they feel most at peace when they recognize that they don't understand and don't need to. They can just leave things in God's hands, and let go. That seems the opposite of what is said here.

I've thought about that. It seems to me that, oddly, when I say, "I don't know," I *am* correctly understanding the situation! I know that I don't know. When I recognize that I can't figure things out, and am better off placing things into God's hands and letting go, that *is* true understanding, and so it brings me peace. Likewise, releasing all attack thoughts and choosing peace is a reflection of the truth of our oneness and our eternal innocence, so the choice for peace is also the choice of true understanding. Peace causes understanding, and understanding causes peace (12:6). See 13:3-4 for confirmation of this idea.

Paragraph 13

13. ¹Only those who ~~recognize~~ [see] they **cannot** know **unless** the effects of understanding are with them, can really learn at all. ²For this **it must be peace they want**, and nothing else. ³Whenever you think **you** know, peace will depart from you, because you have abandoned the Teacher of peace. ⁴Whenever you fully realize that **you know not**, peace will return, for you will have invited Him to do so by abandoning the ego on behalf of Him. ⁵Call not upon the ego for **anything**; it is only this that you need do. ⁶The Holy Spirit will, **of Himself**, fill every mind that so makes room for Him.

¹ If you recall, in my comments on Paragraph 5, I argued that this means that I have a total lack of judgment and condemnation, or complete freedom from attack thoughts. The result is that nothing in *my* mind is disturbing the peace of another person. It does not imply that the other person might not be thinking his or her own disturbing thoughts.

• Study Question •

6. **Paragraph 13.** According to this paragraph, recognizing that you do not know will bring what?
- A. Learning, understanding.
 - B. Peace.
 - C. The Holy Spirit as your Teacher.
 - D. Nausea.
 - E. Lots of advice.
 - F. A, B and C.

The state of mind the Course is fostering in these paragraphs is clearly set out in the first sentence: to see, or recognize at all times, that unless we are experiencing perfect peace, we simply *cannot know* anything about what we are perceiving (13:1). The situation may seem perfectly clear to us. It may appear to us that our understanding of the situation is the only possible one. If, however, we cannot pass the test of perfect peace, our understanding cannot be trusted. Unless we recognize this, we simply can't learn. We think we know, and are not open to a different perception.

When we consciously recognize the untrustworthiness of our understanding, we are in a position to learn. We can ask the Holy Spirit; we can pray, "Above all else I want to see things differently" (W-pI.28.Title). To attain that state of mind we must come to the place where peace, and only peace, is everything we want (13:2). As long as we want something more than peace, or even something *in addition* to peace, our understanding of any situation or person will be skewed. Say, for instance, that I want the peace of God and I also want our tube of toothpaste to be squeezed from the bottom. My housemate, however, squeezes it in the middle or near the top. Because of my insistence on clinging to my "bottom squeeze" desire, my judgment of my housemate is going to be incorrect. I probably won't see him or her as a perfect, holy child of God. My picture of them will be tainted with overtones of "inconsiderate nincompoop." I won't truly be able to be at peace; therefore, my understanding will be unreliable.

To want nothing but peace means that *no matter what else happens* I choose to be at peace! This isn't a trivial accomplishment. So if peace is absent, understanding is as well.

Conversely, if I think I know (trusting my own understanding), peace will depart (13:3). If I recognize that I, on my own, *don't* know—that my understanding derived from listening to my ego and my individual desires is faulty—"peace will return" because I've abandoned the ego (13:4). Sentence 5 also makes it clear that we are talking about refusing or disregarding *ego* knowing, *ego* understanding; me apart from the Holy Spirit.

If all this sounds complicated, it really isn't. As sentence 5 tells us, all we need to do is *not* to call on our egos. Don't try to understand anything without the help of the Holy Spirit. If you refuse to listen to your ego, the Holy Spirit will fill your mind (13:6)! When that happens, you *will* understand truly, and you will know your understanding is true because, *no matter what happens*, you will be at peace. If you'd like a good description of what that state of mind is like, read Lesson 107, paragraphs 2 and 3.

Paragraph 14

14. ¹If you want peace you **must** abandon the teacher of attack. ²The Teacher of peace ~~will never~~ [*can never*] abandon you. ³You can desert Him but He will never reciprocate, for His faith in you **is** His understanding. ⁴It is as firm as is His faith in His Creator, and He knows that faith in His Creator **must** encompass faith in His creation. ⁵In this consistency lies His holiness which He **cannot** abandon, for it is not His will to do so. ⁶With your perfection ever in His sight, He gives the gift of peace to everyone who perceives the **need** for peace, and who would have it. ⁷Make way for peace, and it will come. ⁸For understanding **is** in you, and from it peace **must** come.

• Study Question •

7. *Paragraph 14 speaks of how the Holy Spirit will never abandon you, always has faith in you, sees you as perfect and gives you peace. How, according to this paragraph, do you acquire peace?*
- A. *Abandon the ego, which teaches attack and brings guilt.*
 - B. *Make way for peace, by realizing you do not know.*
 - C. *Make way for peace, by wanting it.*
 - D. *Accept understanding into your mind.*
 - E. *All of the above.*

The ego is always a “teacher of attack” (14:1). That’s the nature of the ego: “me against the world.” Therefore, peace is impossible if you listen to its counsel.

I told you that the ego is aware of threat to its existence, but makes no distinctions between these two very different kinds of threat. Its profound sense of vulnerability renders it incapable of judgment except in terms of attack. When the ego experiences threat, its only decision is whether to attack now or to withdraw to attack later. (T-9.VIII.3:2-4)

If you think about it, it makes sense. If you insist on having something besides peace, your ego will direct you to attack whatever keeps that something from you. You may attack now, or attack later, but the mental attitude of judgment will always eventuate in attack of some kind. We *must* abandon this teacher! (14:1) (Notice the emphasis on “must”; it occurs three times in the Urtext of this paragraph.)

The Holy Spirit, by contrast, is “The Teacher of peace”, a teacher Who will “*never* abandon you” (14:2). Actually, the Urtext says that He “*can never*” abandon you, not “*will never*.” His very nature, His very holiness, prohibits Him from abandoning you (14:3,5), because His understanding, the Truth He is aware of, *is His faith in you!* (14:3) His faith in you is as firm as His faith in His Creator (14:4) The Holy Spirit *is* God’s faith in His own creation. His being is founded in the fact that, since God can be relied upon, everything God creates can be equally relied upon (14:4)—and *you* are God’s creation! So the Holy Spirit *cannot abandon* His faith in you, nor can He abandon you (14:5). When anyone perceives the need for peace, the Holy Spirit *must* give the gift of peace (14:6), because it is predicated on the fact that that person, in perceiving the need for peace, has accepted a true understanding. The outflow of peace from Him to you is inevitable (14:7). It must occur.

Meister Eckhart once said something very similar. Comparing God to a carpenter, who can act however he wishes to act, Eckhart says:

It is *not* that way with God: where and when God finds you ready, he *must* act and overflow into you, just as when the air is clear and pure, the sun must overflow into it and cannot refrain from doing so.

This is what Science of Mind is getting at when it refers to Divine *Law*. As Ernest Holmes put it, “the great Love of the Universe must be One with the great law of Its Own Being” (*Science of Mind*, p. 26). God *has to* overflow into you when you open yourself, because creative flowing out is the law of His Being.

That same law also dictates that He never abandon me. He trusts me, and He trusts you. He knows, with absolute assurance, that we *will* come to understand everything, that we *will* open totally and allow ourselves to be transformed into perfect expressions of God, full of understanding and peace.

Paragraph 15

15. ¹The power of God, from which they both arise, is yours as surely as it is His. ²You think you know Him not, only because, alone, it is impossible to know Him². ³Yet see the mighty works³ that He will do through you, and you **must** be convinced you did them through Him. ⁴It is impossible to deny the Source of effects so powerful they **could** not be of you. ⁵Leave room for Him, and you will find yourself so filled with power that **nothing** will prevail against your peace. ⁶And this will be the test by which you recognize that you **have** understood.

• Study Question •

8. *Paragraph 15. This section concludes where it started--talking about God's power. As a summary of this section, please describe (in no more than a paragraph) what this section says about the relationship between:*
- A. *peace*
 - B. *power*
 - C. *knowledge/understanding*

You *have* the power of God. You *are* the power of God, and both peace and understanding arise from that power within you (15:1). Their arising is inescapable because that power is yours just as much as it is God's; you are God's extension (15:1). You may *think* you don't know God, but the only reason it seems that way to you is that you have separated yourself from your brothers and sisters, and “alone, it is impossible to know Him” (15:2). Earlier, we read, “It is impossible to remember God in secret and alone” (T-14.X.10:1). You must transcend the individualistic ego in order to encounter the truth of your being, which *is* transcendent.

You whose hand is joined with your brother's have begun to reach beyond the body, but not outside yourself, to reach your shared Identity together. (T-18.VI.10:2)

² "It is impossible to remember God in secret and alone" (T-14.X.10:1).

³ "You are not asked to do mighty tasks yourself" (T-14.VII.5:13).

The Kingdom cannot be found alone, and you who are the Kingdom cannot find yourself alone. To achieve the goal of the curriculum, then, you cannot listen to the ego, whose purpose is to defeat its own goal. The ego does not know this, because it does not know anything. But you can know it, and you will know it if you are willing to look at what the ego would make of you. This is your responsibility, because once you have really looked at it you *will* accept the Atonement for yourself. What other choice could you make? Having made this choice you will understand why you once believed that, when you met someone else, you thought he *was* someone else. And every holy encounter in which you enter fully will teach you this is not so. You can encounter only part of yourself because you are part of God, Who is everything. (T-8.III.6:1-7:1)

We think we don't know God only because we perceive ourselves as alone. This is exactly why the Course says,

To perceive the healing of your brother as the healing of yourself is thus the way to remember God. For you forgot your brothers with Him, and God's Answer to your forgetting is but the way to remember. (T-12.II.2:9-10)

If we allow the Holy Spirit to do “mighty works” through us, we recognize that God is *in* us (15:3). We are healed as we allow Him to teach us to heal (T-2.V.18:6); our healing comes as we bring healing to our brothers, restoring the awareness of our Oneness to our minds.

Have you ever realized that someone has been dramatically helped by something you said or did, with “effects so powerful they *could* not be of you” (15:4)? I recall one time in my life, in college, when I spent several weeks meeting with another fellow for prayer every morning. I was going through a period of depression and doubt, and I freely shared that with the younger man, despite the fact that he had told me he was skeptical about the reality of God. At the end of the period, he told me that my meeting with him each day had restored his faith in God! I was dumbfounded. I knew beyond a shadow of doubt that the effect *could* not have come from myself, and that brought me a new assurance that, despite my own doubts, God was in me and was acting through me.

At the end, all we are asked to do is to, “Leave room for Him” (15:5). It's that simple. Take your hands off the wheel, and let Him steer your life, and, as Jesus promised his disciples, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NIV). It will be such an influx of power that “nothing will prevail against your peace” (15:5). *Nothing* will be able to disturb your rest, your calm certainty, your faith and confidence in God. It is “a state of mind that nothing can threaten, nothing can disturb, and where nothing can intrude upon the eternal calm of the Son of God.” (W-pI.50.3:3) When you have reached that level of peace, a state of mind that has transcended conflict, “you recognize that you *have* understood” (15:6).

Answer Key

1. B
2. F
3. F
4. D
5. A
6. F
7. E
8. By trying to hoard power, you lost understanding.
Understanding and peace are cause and effect of each other.
Realize you do not understand until you have attained and extended perfect peace.
By realizing you don't understand, peace will come to you and bring understanding.
By making way for understanding, peace will come.
Let God's power flow through you, causing the effects of peace in everyone, and you will realize that you understood.