

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM® Text, Chapter 22

The Function of the Holy Relationship

Section VIII

Becoming the Means to His End

Explanation of underlining, italics and footnote formats can be found at the end of the commentary.

Overview of Section VIII (22.VI.1–9)

This section and the next were a single section in the FIP edition, numbered VI, titled “The Light of Your Holy Relationship.”

This section deals with allowing your relationship to become the means by which the Holy Spirit can bring healing to the world.

Paragraph 1

Do you want freedom of the body or of the mind? ²For both you cannot have. ³Which do you value? ⁴Which is your goal? ⁵For one you see as means; the other, end. ⁶And one must serve the other and lead to its predominance, increasing its importance by diminishing its own.¹ ⁷Means serve the end, and as the end is reached the value of the means decreases, and is eclipsed entirely when they are recognized as functionless. ⁸No one but yearns for freedom and tries to find it. ⁹But he will seek for it where he believes it is, and can be found. ¹⁰He will believe it possible of mind or body, and he will make the other serve his choice as means to find it.

¹. Pronoun clarification: “And one must serve the other and lead to its [the other’s] predominance, increasing its [the other’s] importance by diminishing its [the one’s] own.”

• **Study Question** •

1. *Paragraph 1 discusses freedom of the mind vs. freedom of the body, saying that you must choose one as goal and the other as means to that goal. Freedom of the body obviously means the body being free to do what it wants, say what it thinks, and go where it pleases. But what do you think freedom of the mind is? Free to do what? Free from what?*
- A. *Free to love, give, extend.*
 - B. *Free to make whatever choices it wants; what is commonly known as free will.*
 - C. *Free to think its own thoughts, as opposed to the thoughts of others.*
 - D. *Free from guilt, fear, mental burden, suffering.*
 - E. *B and C.*
 - F. *A and D.*

Sentence 1 is *not* a rhetorical question; he wants us to mentally answer it, because we cannot have freedom of *both* mind and body (1:1–2). That is so because whichever one we place first, we inevitably will use the other as means for achieving that goal. So, which one do we value the most? Which one is the goal, and which one becomes the *means* to the goal? Whichever we choose as the goal, it becomes predominant, while the other's importance lies only in how well it *increases* the importance of the other (1:3–6).

So, as the study question above states, the meaning of “freedom of the body” is pretty obvious: the ability to say, do, and go wherever we want to. That *would* be nice. But what is meant by freedom of the mind? The answer we gave to the question is: “free to love, give, extend; free from guilt, fear, mental burden, suffering.”

What seems to be said here, then, is that if you prioritize that kind of mental freedom, you can't have complete freedom of the body, and if you prioritize total physical freedom, you won't be free to love, you won't be free from guilt and suffering. The consequence of putting total physical freedom first is understandable. Total physical freedom amounts to extreme narcissism, to caring about myself and damn the consequences to anyone else. It's literally saying, “Get out of my way!” to everyone else. Such an attitude clearly precludes being an expression of love! And it will lead to guilt and suffering in the end.

But, we may wonder, why does prioritizing mental freedom prevent complete physical freedom? The simple answer is: To experience total mental freedom, you must take *other people* into account. You cannot always put yourself first. If mental freedom is your top value, you will willingly sacrifice physical freedom to maintain it. The more you realize your goal of mental freedom, the less important the body and its actions become to you (1:7).

Everyone wants freedom and seeks for it (1:8). But some think freedom can be achieved by the body, while others will believe it can only be achieved by the mind (1:9). The Course falls in the latter camp. The locale of the freedom you seek determines the

relative importance of body and mind. Make the body the supposed source of your freedom, and you will use your mind only as a tool to achieve that goal (1:10). This is the thought that is developed in the next paragraph.

Paragraph 2

2 Where freedom of the body has been chosen, the mind is used as means whose value lies in its ability to contrive ways to achieve the body's freedom. ²Yet freedom of the body has no meaning, and so the mind is dedicated to serve illusions. ³This is a situation so contradictory and so impossible that anyone who chooses this has no idea of what is valuable. ⁴Yet even in this confusion, so profound it cannot be described, the Holy Spirit waits in gentle patience, as certain of the outcome as He is sure of His Creator's love. ⁵He knows this mad decision was made by one as dear to His Creator as love is to itself.

• Study Question •

2. *Based on this paragraph, if you decide that your goal is to be wealthy so that you can buy what you want, live where you want, travel where you want, what might be some of the purposes you will give your mind at this point?*
- A. *To serve illusions.*
 - B. *To see things differently.*
 - C. *To think of ways to achieve wealth.*
 - D. *To find inner freedom from guilt.*
 - E. *To use positive thinking to attract wealth to yourself.*

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Most people, I believe, use their minds to figure out “ways to achieve the body’s freedom” (2:1). Consider all the attention we place on things like diets, exercise programs, clothing choices, finding or building the perfect dwelling, seeking for better paying jobs, sexual identity, abortion rights, and health care. Health care! Wow! What a focus of attention *that* has been recently!

There isn’t anything wrong with any of these things, but it’s the priority we give them. Is mental freedom or spiritual well-being anywhere near as important to us as our bodies, to people in general? I think not.

The irony is that “freedom of the body has no meaning” (2:2). That forceful statement isn’t elaborated on here, unfortunately. I think it is based on the fact that (in the understanding of the Course) the body is only an illusion of who we are. Our understanding may be helped some by study of Lesson 135 in the Workbook, which begins by detailing why every attempt to *defend* the body is really an attack on ourselves. That lesson goes on to show that when you make plans whose purpose is to defend your small “self” (the image you have made of yourself, comprised of your ego and its expression, the body), which is something so weak it needs defense — you are indirectly

attacking your true Self, which is mind or spirit (which needs no defense), because you perceive that the true Self is attacking the self you believe you are. In the end, what happens to the body does not really matter, since it is only a temporary learning device.

When we dedicate our mind to preserving the freedom of our body, our mind has been “dedicated to serve illusions” (2:2). There is no way to give an illusion freedom; it’s an impossible goal. It contradicts the actual purpose of mind, which is to achieve its own universal freedom (2:3), which is freedom from guilt. It necessitates a defensive posture, and it involves perceiving others as competing for our freedom, which leads to a perception of sin, laying blame on others for depriving us of our total physical freedom in some way. And therein lies the contradiction. You cannot pursue a goal of guiltlessness while perceiving guilt in others.

Even Jesus is at a loss for words when speaking of this degree of insanity! It is a confusion about what is real and valuable “so profound it cannot *be* described,” and yet, even in the face of such indescribable confusion, the Holy Spirit is *absolutely certain* that the outcome is sure, and it is good. The outcome rests on God’s love, and what is more certain than that? And we, the ones who have made this indescribable mad decision about putting our bodies above our minds, are “as dear to [our] Creator as love is to itself” (2:4–5). Our Creator loves us, and *that* is the guarantee that we’ll find our way back home. God will not allow us to fail.

Paragraph 3

3 Be not disturbed at all to think how He can change the role of means and end so easily in what God loves and would have free forever. ²But be you, rather, grateful that *you* can be the means to serve His end. ³This is the only service which leads to freedom. ⁴To serve this end, the body must be perceived as sinless, because the goal is sinlessness. ⁵The lack of contradiction makes the soft transition from means to end as easy as is the shift from hate to gratitude before forgiving eyes. ⁶You will be sanctified by one another, using your bodies only to serve the sinless. ⁷And it will be impossible for you to hate what serves what you would heal.

• Study Question •

3. Paragraph 3 says that the Holy Spirit can easily reverse your idea of means and end. In His scenario, to what purpose do you dedicate your body (there may be more than one right answer)? (Note that sentence 6 originally read, “You will be sanctified by one another, using your bodies only to serve the sinless.”)
- A. You use it to serve the Holy Spirit’s goal.
 - B. You use it to sanctify your brother
 - C. You use it to lure members of the opposite sex to you.
 - D. You use it to serve sinlessness.

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So, don't fret yourself trying to figure out *how on earth* the Holy Spirit can bring about a flip-flop in anyone's insane evaluation of means and end, bringing them to properly value the mind's freedom first, above their illusory bodies. God loves us all, and desires our perfect, eternal freedom. That settles it (3:1).

I believe he is speaking here not so much about *ourselves* as about the people around us, the people to whom we are called to extend true freedom and forgiveness. I think we all know people we have in our lives about whom we have pretty much given up hope. People who seem implacably dedicated to their egos and their material, bodily goals, people whose madness seems, to us, beyond redemption. *Nobody* is beyond redemption, because nobody is outside God's love.

Rather than worrying about how it could ever happen, he asks us to be "grateful that *you* can be the means to serve His end," that is, to be grateful that the Holy Spirit can use *you* to bring liberation to those around you (3:2). That always amazes me! I still recall one of the very first times someone told me that I had been instrumental in opening their mind to Spirit. I couldn't believe it! I'd been going through what I thought was a really dark time, full of spiritual struggle. Somehow — and I never could figure out exactly how — this person saw something of God's light through me. "This," says Jesus, "is the *only* service which leads to freedom" (3:3), because it is as you *give* freedom that you *receive* it.²

Since mental freedom equates to the realization of sinlessness, any means to achieve that goal must include the perception of bodies as sinless (3:4). Once the contradiction of belief in sin while pursuing sinlessness is set aside, using sinless bodies to serve a goal of sinlessness, it opens the way to an easy, "soft transition" from viewing our mind as *means* to serve the body's freedom, to understanding the mind's freedom as the *goal*, with our bodies serving that end (3:5). The shift will be as easy as it is for us to shift from hate to gratitude when someone views us through forgiving eyes (3:5).

In a holy relationship, we experience these kinds of shifts. We forgive one another. Our perception of each other changes from enemies to saviors. Our attitude toward one another shifts from animosity to gratitude. Our view of each other's bodies will change from seeing guilt (sin) to seeing holiness. We each will use our bodies "*only* to serve the sinless" (3:6).³ We will find it impossible to hate one another because the other is serving the healing of *our* minds (3:7).

² The Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* has a number of prayers which include the oft-quoted phrase, "God... whose service is perfect freedom." I suspect that line was in Helen's (or Jesus's) mind when this line was written.

³ "The body is the means by which God's Son returns to sanity. Though it was made to fence him into hell without escape, yet has the goal of Heaven been exchanged for the pursuit of hell. The Son of God extends his hand to reach his brother, and to help him walk along the road with him. Now is the body holy. Now it serves to heal the mind that it was made to kill." (W-pII.5.4:1-5)

Paragraph 4

4 This holy relationship, lovely in its innocence, mighty in strength, and blazing with a light far brighter than the sun which lights the sky you see, is chosen of your Father as a means for His Own plan. ²Be thankful that it serves yours not at all. ³Nothing entrusted to it can be misused, and nothing given it but *will* be used. ⁴This holy relationship has power to heal all pain, regardless of its form. ⁵Neither of you alone can serve at all. ⁶Only in your joint will does healing lie. ⁷For here your healing is, and here will you accept Atonement. ⁸And in your healing is the Sonship healed, because your wills are joined.

• Study Question •

4. *Based on this paragraph in particular, please counter the following argument: “The Course is not about joining my will with yours. It is about accepting the Atonement for myself. Focusing on joining with you is a way to avoid that one crucial, inner decision to accept Atonement.”*

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The holy relationship is a means chosen by God for His plan. You may not see your relationships the way God does, though. Just as God sees us as whole, healthy, innocent, and “altogether lovely,” so He sees our relationships as beautifully innocent, powerful, and radiating light more brightly than that of the sun (4:1). No wonder, if this is how God sees our relationships, He has chosen them to bring about His Will, His plan for the universe.

We should be thankful that our relationship is not a means to carry out *our own* plans (4:2). The power of our holy relationship cannot be misused for lesser ends; all its resources will be directed to fulfilling the divine plan (4:3). It is so powerful that it can “heal all pain, *regardless* of its form” (4:4).

I admit that I find the assertion that no individual “can serve at all”; that all healing comes about as a result of “your joint will” (4:5–6). This makes sense when you realize that what is being healed is *separation*. With that in mind, it becomes obvious that healing *requires joining*, ending separation. No one individual can end separation; there must be a joining together to eradicate separateness. Furthermore, the Course repeatedly makes it very clear that the only way anyone can be healed, and can come to truly know they are forgiven, is by sharing forgiveness, by giving it to another.

You understand that you are healed when you give healing. ²You accept forgiveness as accomplished in yourself when you forgive. ³You recognize your brother as yourself, and thus do you perceive that you are whole. (W-159.2:1–3)

Atonement is accepted in relationship (4:7), and as two wills join in mutual forgiveness, the entire Sonship finds healing as well (4:8).

Paragraph 5

5 Before a holy relationship, there *is* no sin. ²The form of error is no longer seen. ³And reason, joined with love, looks quietly on all confusion, observing merely, “This was a mistake.” ⁴And then the same Atonement you accepted in your relationship corrects the error and lays a part of Heaven in its place. ⁵How blessed are you who let this gift be given!⁴ ⁶Each part of Heaven that you bring is given you, and every empty place in Heaven that is filled again with the eternal light you bring shines now on you. ⁷The means of sinlessness can know no fear, because they carry only love with them.

• Study Question •

5. *Section IV discussed the idea that when we look on errors, their physical form deludes us into thinking they are real, and therefore are sins. This paragraph now talks about the holy relationship looking on error with reason and with love, and thus seeing past it, seeing it was only a mistake. Let's try to be clear about this. Who is making the error here, and who is looking on it?*
- A. *One of the holy relationship partners is making the error, and the other partner is looking on it and forgiving it.*
 - B. *Either one or both of the holy relationship partners are making the error, and the relationship itself is looking at it and forgiving it.*
 - C. *The Sonship is making the error, and the two people in the holy relationship are looking at it from the standpoint of their joining and forgiving it.*
 - D. *We ourselves are making the error and we are also the ones looking on it.*

When two or more people are joined in a conscious holy relationship, the rest of the world appears to them to be just as sinless as they see one another to be (5:1). Sin simply does not exist; there *is* no such thing. When we look with shared vision from within a holy relationship, our sight of others no longer arrests at “the form of error.” We look past it, through it, to the spiritual reality of each person (5:2). Whatever the outside “misbehavior” may have been, we are clear: “This was a mistake,” not a sin (5:3). Having accepted within the relationship that nothing has broken our Oneness with God and one another, our hearts open to include the one being looked upon in that same Oneness (5:4).

What a blessing to be those through whom such blessing can be delivered to the world (5:5)! As our perception extends to include others, seeing them as equal parts of Heaven with us, we actually give that part of Heaven as a gift to ourselves. As we bring the light of God to shine away the darkness in the hearts of those we meet, that light now shines *on us* (5:6).

⁴. This is reminiscent of the Beatitudes. See Matthew 5:3-11 and Luke 6:20-22.

We have become “the means of sinlessness,” sharing the message of guiltlessness with the world. As such we cannot know any fear because all we bring with us is love, and “Perfect love casts out fear.” (5:7; see also T-1.50.2:4; T-1.VI.5:4 (FIP)).

Paragraph 6

6 Children of peace, the light *has* come to you.⁵ ²The light you bring you do not recognize, and yet you will remember it. ³Who can deny himself the vision that he brings to others? ⁴And who would fail to recognize a gift he let be laid in Heaven through himself? ⁵The gentle service that you give the Holy Spirit is service to yourself. ⁶You who are now His means must love all that He loves. ⁷And what you bring is your remembrance of everything that is eternal.⁶ ⁸No trace of anything in time can long remain in minds that serve the timeless. ⁹And no illusion can disturb the peace of a relationship which has become the means of peace.

• Study Question •

6. *This paragraph speaks glowingly of the importance of serving the Holy Spirit in His plan, of giving the light to others. Yet it also acknowledges that you do not yet recognize this light. What does this imply about your ability to give the light?*
- A. *Because you do not yet recognize it, you cannot yet give it. You must first accept it and realize it in yourself, then you can give it.*
 - B. *You have accepted the light, but just don't know that yet. Through giving the light you will become aware that it must be in you.*
 - C. *You give the light merely as a messenger of the Holy Spirit. You don't have to have it before you can give it, because He gives it through you.*

Over and over, the Course drives home the threefold formula: receive, give, recognize. Here it is again, in this paragraph. We already have the light but do not recognize it (6:1–2). But if we *give* that light, we will remember it or recognize it, no longer able to deny the light in ourselves when we have given it to others (6:2–3). The theme is basic to all that the Course says. One of its clearest statements is in Lesson 159:

You understand that you are healed when you give healing. You accept forgiveness as accomplished in yourself when you forgive. You recognize your

⁵. Isaiah 60:1 (RSV): “Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.”

⁶. The “remembrance of everything that is eternal” seems to be a reversal of Shakespeare’s “*remembrance of things past*” from *Sonnet XXX*: “*When to the sessions of sweet silent thought / I summon up remembrance of things past, / I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought.*” For an earlier reference to this, see T-5.IV.15:6.

brother as yourself, and thus do you perceive that you are whole. There is no miracle you cannot give, for all are given you. Receive them now by opening the storehouse of your mind where they are laid, and giving them away (W-pI.159.2:1-5).

When we have opened ourselves to allow the Holy Spirit to offer God's gift through us to another, it's impossible for us not to recognize the gift for ourselves (6:4). We must be servants of God, yes, but service to the Holy Spirit *is* service to ourselves (6:5)!

Thus, to learn to offer miracles of forgiveness to others is absolutely central to our own freedom from guilt. And when a *relationship* "has become the *means* of peace" for others, the peace *within* the relationship has become unshakeable (6:9).

Paragraph 7

7 When you have looked upon each other with complete forgiveness, from which no error is excluded and nothing kept hidden, what mistakes can there be anywhere you cannot overlook? ²What form of suffering could block your sight, preventing you from seeing past it? ³And what illusion could there be you will not recognize as a mistake; a shadow through which you walk completely undismayed? ⁴God would let nothing interfere with those whose wills are His. ⁵And they will recognize their wills are His because they serve His will, *and serve it willingly*. ⁶How can it not be theirs? ⁷And could remembrance of what they are be long delayed?

• Study Question •

7. *The first three sentences say that when you have looked on your brother with complete forgiveness you will be able to overlook any mistake, any form of suffering, any illusion. What does this mean?*
- A. *When you have completely forgiven any brother, you will be able to forgive all brothers.*
 - B. *When you have completely forgiven any brother, you will be able to forgive any future mistakes of that same brother.*
 - C. *When you have completely forgiven your holy relationship partner, you will be able to overlook anything in anyone.*
 - D. *When you have completely forgiven your blood brother, you might just be able to forgive your parents.*

Complete forgiveness of our relationship partner brings with it the ability to overlook all mistakes *anywhere* (7:1). Of course, the catch is in that word, "complete." The forgiveness must be unconditional and have *no* exceptions, no limits. "No error is excluded." For forgiveness to complete, it has to be *blanket* forgiveness. My dictionary defines the word "blanket" in this sense as, "covering all cases or instances; total and inclusive." Thus, it makes perfect sense that such forgiveness would enable us to

overlook all mistakes anywhere; it covers all mistakes and all instances of a mistake; it is total and inclusive forgiveness. Within the relationship, to achieve such total forgiveness, the partners must have mutually decided to hide absolutely nothing from each other, and *not* to exclude any of the other's errors from forgiveness (7:1). Only if everything is exposed and nothing is excluded can forgiveness be considered to be "complete."

Total forgiveness not only enables *universal* forgiveness, it also frees our sight to see past all forms of suffering (7:2). It teaches us to recognize all illusions as mistakes, flimsy nothings that we can "walk [through] completely undismayed" (7:3). To forgive even the things that appear to cause suffering, we must have learned to see all forms of suffering as unreal, and to experience them without dismay. How else could we look past them and forgive? This is God's will: that absolutely *nothing* should interfere with our joy and peace. He wills this for all those who share His will. We know we are doing God's will in forgiving and offering miracles, and what's more, we do so, not grudgingly, but *willingly*. If we willingly do His will, clearly His will and ours are one. His will *is* ours (7:4–6). Once this realization sinks in—that our will and God's are the same, that our willing *is* God willing as us—it would be impossible to keep the truth of our divinity from dawning on us.

This, to me, explains why the Course so insists on the mutuality of awakening, that relationships are our salvation. The relationship is the only thing that offers the context in which this awareness of shared wills can arise. The next paragraph brings this out even more directly.

Paragraph 8 (8:1–7 (FIP))

8 You will see your value through each other's eyes, and each one is released as he beholds his savior in place of the attacker who he thought was there. ²Through this releasing is the world released. ³This is your part in bringing peace. ⁴For you have asked what is your function here, and have been answered. ⁵Seek not to change it, nor to substitute another goal. ⁶This one was given you, and only this. ⁷Accept this one and serve it willingly, for what the Holy Spirit does with the gifts you give each other, to whom He offers them, and where and when, is up to Him.

• Study Question •

8. Paragraph 8 speaks a great deal about "this"—your function, your part in bringing peace, the gifts you give the Holy Spirit that He then offers to others. What is "this"? Please choose the most accurate answer.
- A. Saving your holy relationship partner by no longer being an attacker and instead behaving as a savior.
 - B. Looking on your holy relationship partner as a savior rather than an attacker.
 - C. This was meant for Helen and Bill's holy relationship and was really about their function of bringing the Course into the world (note the sentence in paragraph 4, "Nothing entrusted to it can be

misused....” This is a direct reference to the Course, which Jesus had entrusted to Helen and Bill).

D. It is not entirely clear from this paragraph what “this” is, so we can only assume it is the generic function of saving the world.

In a holy relationship, each person becomes aware of his or her own value *through the eyes of the other*. Each person finds their own release as their misperception of the other as someone who attacks me is replaced by the vision of them as the one who *saves me* (8:1). And as this occurs within the relationship, it explodes outward to embrace the entire world (8:2). *This is our divinely appointed role in life*: to forgive another person completely, and so bring peace to the world (8:3).

Have you ever wondered what your function is in the world? What role you are meant to play? Helen surely did, and I think we all have. Well, *this is it*. You’ve asked; you’ve been answered (8:4). This is it. Don’t think of it as too little nor too difficult nor too unimportant. *Nothing* is more important. Don’t try to change it, to substitute something else more to your liking; this is the function, the only one, given to you by God (8:5-6).

Find someone to forgive. That’s our job. Accept it, dive into it willingly, and leave the extension of your forgiveness into the world to the Holy Spirit. He’ll take care of it (8:7). Again, this thought of leaving extension up to the Holy Spirit is expanded on in the next paragraph.

Paragraph 9 (8:8–9:5 (FIP))

9 He will bestow them where they are received and welcomed. ²He will use every one of them for peace. ³Nor will one little smile or willingness to overlook the tiniest mistake be lost to anyone. ⁴What can it be but universal blessing to look on what your Father loves with charity? ⁵Extension of forgiveness is the Holy Spirit’s function. ⁶Leave this to Him. ⁷Let your concern be only that you give to Him that which can *be* extended. ⁸Save no dark secrets that He cannot use, but offer Him the tiny gifts He can extend forever.

• Study Question •

9. Paragraphs 9 makes a very puzzling statement: “Extension of forgiveness is the Holy Spirit’s function. Leave this to Him.” What does this mean? Please look carefully at the rest of this paragraph, and Paragraph 10, to interpret this important, and potentially misleading statement.
- A. Just forgive your brother in your mind, and the Holy Spirit will take that thought and extend it to others. You don’t do anything.
 - B. Let the Holy Spirit guide you in whom you would extend to.
 - C. Extend forgiveness to your relationship partner, and the Holy Spirit will take that gift and carry it around the world, giving it to others.
 - D. Salvation of the world is in good hands. Go enjoy a good TV show.

The paragraph is speaking about how the Holy Spirit will utilize the gifts of forgiveness you give to your brother or sister. He knows where such gifts will be “received and welcomed,” and He carries them there (9:1). I believe this refers to a direct impartation of the mercy and peace of God into the minds of many around the world who are ready to receive them. All minds are joined, and when you or I drop a gift of love into the mental pool, it immediately reaches all those who are open to receiving it.

3 The peace of God is shining in you now,⁷ and from your heart extends around the world. ²It pauses to caress each living thing and leaves a blessing with it which remains forever and forever. ³What it gives must be eternal. ⁴It removes all thoughts of the ephemeral and valueless. ⁵It brings renewal to all tired hearts and lights all vision as it passes by. ⁶All of its gifts are given everyone, and everyone unites in giving thanks to you who give and you who have received.

4The shining in your mind reminds the world of what it has forgotten, and the world restores the memory to you as well. ²From you salvation radiates with gifts beyond all measure, given and returned. ³To you, the giver of the gifts, does God Himself give thanks. ⁴And with His blessing does the light in you shine brighter, adding to the gifts you have to offer to the world. (W-188.3-4)

9 Be still and listen to the truth today. ²For each five minutes spent in listening, a thousand minds are opened to the truth, and they will hear the holy Word you hear. ³And when the hour is past, you can again release a thousand more who pause to ask that truth be given them along with you. (W-106:9)

Every gift of love given to one another is shared with the world by the Holy Spirit, bringing peace to every mind through your forgiveness (Lesson 63 Title: “The light of the world brings peace to every mind through my forgiveness”). It does not matter how small or seemingly trivial is your gift! “One little smile” will be shared by anyone open to it. “Willingness to overlook the tiniest mistake” will be joyfully carried around the world (9:3)! When you look with love and charity on your brother or sister, one whom the Father loves, it becomes a *universal blessing* (9:4).

This whole process of extending forgiveness to the world is the Holy Spirit’s job; not yours (9:5-6). The only thing we need to focus on is *providing the little gifts of love and forgiveness* within our relationship that He can scoop up, turn into universal blessing, and distribute them “where they are received and welcomed” (9:7; 9:1). Don’t harbor those dark grievances. Open up, give them to Him, let Him transform your mind’s perception to one of forgiveness, something He can use to save the world (9:8).

⁷ . “The peace of God” is the same thing as “the light” that is discussed in the first two paragraphs. This is made especially clear by the fact that the peace of God is “shining.”

Paragraph 10 (9:6–11 (FIP))

10 He will take every one and make of it a potent force for peace. ²He will withhold no blessing from it, nor limit it in any way. ³He will join to it all the power that God has given Him, to make each little gift of love a source of healing for everyone. ⁴Each little gift you offer to each other lights up the world. ⁵Be not concerned with darkness; look away from it and toward each other. ⁶And let the darkness be dispelled by Him Who knows the light, and lays it gently in each gentle smile of faith and confidence with which you bless each other.

• Study Question •

10. *The last three paragraphs have been referring to “the gifts you give each other” and “the tiny gifts He can extend.” This paragraph continues, telling what the Holy Spirit will do with these gifts. What are the gifts?*
- A. *The birthday and anniversary gifts by which we express our love to one another.*
 - B. *The loving thoughts we extend to each other.*
 - C. *Each time we overlook the appearance of attack from our partner and perceiving the other as our savior instead.*

Every “tiny gift” (9:8) we offer to the Holy Spirit, He takes and makes “of it a potent force for peace” (10:1). We sometimes wonder what we, as common individuals, can do to help promote world peace. We hear of crimes and wars and hatred, and feel helpless. We’re not helpless. We can forgive one another. As David Friedman’s song says, “We can be kind.” The Holy Spirit takes our tiny gift and combines it with “*all* the power that God has given Him,” making our little gift, a small smile, a gentle overlooking of a tiny error, into “a source of healing for everyone” (10:2–3).

Each little gift you offer to each other lights up the world (10:4).

We need to soak that in, to remember it. Our daily interactions with each other are no small thing! They are the fodder of peace that is uplifting the entire world! Stop worrying about the darkness and how great it seems; look away from all that, and look *toward* your brother or sister. Practice peace *there*; that and that alone will save the world (10:5). Bless one another with gentle smiles of faith and confidence, that He may take them to bring light to the far corners of the earth (10:6).

Legend:

Light underscoring indicates emphasis that appears in the Urtext or shorthand notes.

Text is taken from the Circle of Atonement’s Complete and Annotated Edition (which I refer to as the “CE” for “Complete Edition” or “Circle Edition”). Please be aware that, even when the wording is exactly the same as the FIP version, the division into paragraphs is often quite different in the

CE, which restores the paragraph breaks found in the original notes. This results in different reference numbering as well. I will indicate for each paragraph the corresponding sentences in the FIP edition. You should be able to locate specific sentences in that edition if you need to, with a minimum of visual clutter in the commentary. Passages that lie outside the current section will continue to have footnoted references. References to quotations are from the CE unless another version is being quoted, in which case that version is indicated.

Footnotes by the commentary author are shown in this font and size. Other footnotes come from the Complete Edition itself.

Answer Key

1. F

2. A,C,E.

3. A,B,D.

4. Sentence 7 says that here in the holy relationship, in joining your will with your brother's, do you accept Atonement. In other words, you accept Atonement by joining with your brother, not as a separate act in your own mind.

5. C

6. B

7. C

8. B

9. C

10. C