

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM® Text, Chapter 29

The Worship of Idols

Section VI

The Changeless Dwelling Place

Explanation of underlining, italics and footnote formats can be found at the end of the commentary. See also the note there on the effects of switching from the FIP edition to the Complete and Annotated Edition. Please note that the FIP and CE versions may differ in where paragraph breaks occur.

Overview of Section VI

This section and the next discuss the idea of change in depth. The topics of change, and its counterpart, changelessness, occur numerous times in the Course (for instance, T-7.V (FIP), T-7.IV (CE), “Healing and the Changelessness of Mind,” T-25.VII, “The Rock of Salvation” (FIP), called “God Is Not Insane” (CE), T-30.III; “Beyond All Idols” (FIP), “The Search for Completion” (CE); and T-30.VIII, “Changeless Reality” (FIP), “One Changeless Meaning” (CE)). One way of defining the tiny, mad idea that led to our false separation experience is this: We, God’s changeless creations, have the power to change ourselves. In that sense, atonement is the realization that we cannot change God’s creation, and therefore remain as God created us.

Sections V, VI, and VII contain some of the most poetic and beautiful material in the Text. Much of it has been recorded, with Beverly Hutchinson of Miracle Distribution Center doing the dramatic reading and Steven Halpern providing the musical background. The tape or CD is well worth listening to.¹

• Study Note •

Browse through this section and the next, and mark every occurrence of the words “change”, “changeless,” or “changelessness.” If you have already marked the words “core” and “function” or its synonyms, such as

¹ I believe *The Forgotten Song*, by Beverly Hutchinson and Steven Halpern, may still be purchased on CD from the Community Miracles Center, on the web at http://www.miracles-course.org/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=bookstore&Product_Code=Bev0020

“purpose” or “role while studying Section IV, you may want to use a different color or symbol here.

•

Paragraph 1

There is a place in you where this whole world has been forgotten; where no memory of sin and of illusion lingers still. ²There is a place in you which time has left, and echoes of eternity are heard. ³There is a resting place so still no sound except a hymn to Heaven rises up to gladden God the Father and the Son. ⁴Where Both abide are They remembered, Both. ⁵And where They are is Heaven and is peace. ⁶Think not that you can change Their dwelling place. ⁷For your identity abides in Them, and where They are, forever must you be.

• Study Question •

1. *Where is this “place in you”? What other words can you think of to describe it?*
2. *(1:6) In what way or ways do we think we can change Their dwelling place?*

•

In moments of deep meditation, have you ever forgotten entirely about the world and its drama, its sins, and its sorrows (1:1)? Have you ever been to that place that “time has left” (1:2)? Have you heard the “echoes of eternity”? Has your heart and mind ever been so quiet that the only sound you could hear was a hymn to God the Father and the Son (1:3)? That is the “place” the Course is speaking of here, in such beautiful language that it evokes the same experience of which it speaks.

If you have had that experience, you know what Jesus is speaking of here. If you have not had it yet, you will, for it is your heritage. Think back to the section on “The Forgotten Song” at the start of Chapter 21. Remember its instruction, in an equally poetic passage:

“Listen—perhaps you catch a hint of an ancient state not quite forgotten; dim, perhaps, and yet not altogether unfamiliar. Like a song whose name is long forgotten, and the circumstances in which you heard it completely unremembered.” (T-21.I.8:2–3 (CE), (T-21.I.6:1 (FIP))

Just a single word: *Listen!* Close your eyes; close your ears; close the door and be alone with God, and *listen*. Listen for the quiet, in which the forgotten hymn can still be heard.

“When you are afraid, be still and know that God is real, and you are His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased.” (T-4.I.8:6 (FIP), T-4.II.18:1 (CE))

“Let us be still an instant, and forget all things we ever learned, all thoughts we had, and every preconception that we hold of what things mean and what

their purpose is. Let us remember not our own ideas of what the world is for. We do not know. Let every image held of everyone be loosened from our minds and swept away." (T-31.I.12:1-4 (FIP), T-31.II.1:1-4 (CE))

"Listen, and hear your Father speak to you through His appointed Voice, Which silences the thunder of the meaningless, and shows the way to peace to those who cannot see. Be still today and listen to the truth." (W-pl.106.2:1-2)

"Only be quiet. You will need no rule but this, to let your practicing today lift you above the thinking of the world, and free your vision from the body's eyes. Only be still and listen. You will hear the Word in which the Will of God the Son joins in his Father's Will, at one with it, with no illusions interposed between the wholly indivisible and true." (W-pl.125.9:1-4)

In that quiet place, the heavenly music we hear is a song of praise to God the Father and the Son. Sentence 4 emphasizes that we remember and honor *both* Father and Son (the corporate Sonship, not just Jesus), which differs from the traditional conception of worship. In this place, "both abide," "And where They are is Heaven and is peace" (1:5).

What is the dwelling place of God the Father and the Son? *You are* (T-18.IV.5:10; T-18.VI.1). So, when we believe that we can change ourselves, that our supposed sins have somehow corrupted our nature, we are doing what sentence 6 tells us *not* to do. Sentence 7 confirms it because it refers to our Identity in a way that identifies it with that dwelling place. We cannot change ourselves because Heaven's own changelessness is in us, part of us (2:1).

Practice Suggestion: *Think for a moment and let this sink in: God the Father and the Son both "abide"—that is, have their permanent residence—in this place in you. Try saying to yourself, quietly, "God the Father and the Son abide in me, and where they are is Heaven and is peace."*

Paragraph 2

2 The changelessness of Heaven is in you, so deep within that nothing in this world but passes by, unnoticed and unseen. ²The still infinity of endless peace surrounds you gently in its soft embrace, so strong and quiet, tranquil in the might of its Creator, nothing can intrude upon the sacred Son of God within. ³Here is the role the Holy Spirit gives to you who wait upon the Son of God and would behold him waken and be glad. ⁴He is a part of you, and you of him, because he is his Father's Son, and not for any purpose you may see in him. ⁵Nothing is asked of you but to accept the changeless and eternal that abides in him, for your identity is there.

• **Study Questions** •

3. *Who does the pronoun, "Their," refer to? How do you know?*
4. *In the light of sentence 5, what is your role, which was referred to in sentence 3?*

•

In a place "so deep within" (2:1), we are eternally at peace. Like the stillness of the ocean depths or the quiet of a deep, hidden cavern, our inner being is far removed from this world's turmoil. Whatever it is, when we are in this place, it "passes by, unnoticed and unseen" (2:1). This place is so distant from the insanity of the world that it surpasses distance; an *infinity* of peace surrounds us (2:2). It embraces us with the serene strength of God Himself, guarding and protecting "the sacred Son of God within". "Nothing can intrude." (2:2)

***Practice suggestion:** Close your eyes and let your awareness turn toward that place deep within, the quiet center, the stately calm within you. Repeat the words, "Nothing can intrude; nothing can intrude," and let that awareness sink into you. Imagine yourself wrapped in an "infinity of endless peace" like a giant blanket. Or picture yourself floating on a soft raft in the middle of a placid lake that stretches from horizon to horizon. Practice finding this calm center often, over and over, until you can find it at will.*

Here (2:3), Jesus sums up what he asks of us as his disciples and as teachers of God: As Lesson 122 in the Workbook puts it, our task is, in a phrase, to "see the changeless in the heart of change; the light of truth behind appearances" (W-pI.122.13:4). Not only is the changeless within us, but it is also within our brothers, and seeing that in our brothers on their behalf is our job. Most recently, we have seen in T-29.III that our goal is to see our brother waken (T-29.III.5:6–7 (FIP), T-29.IV.5:6–7 (CE)). It's surprising how frequently the Course speaks about seeing changelessness in others, and how little we Course students seem to focus on it. For instance:

"How wrong are you who fail to hear the call that echoes past each seeming call to death, that sings behind each murderous attack, and pleads that love restore the dying world! you do not understand Who calls to you beyond each form of hate, each call to war: you will recognize Him as you give Him answer in the language that He calls." (T-31.I.10.3–5)

"Your brother has a changelessness in him beyond appearance and deception both. It is obscured by changing views of him which you perceive as his reality." (T-30.IX.2:1–2 (CE), T-30.VIII.2:3–4 (FIP))

"When you heal, that is exactly what you are doing. You are recognizing the changeless mind in your brother by perceiving that he could not have changed his mind. That is how you perceive the Holy Spirit in him. It is only the Holy Spirit in him that never changes His mind. He himself must think he can, or he could not

perceive himself as sick. He therefore does not know what his self is. If you see only the changeless in him, you have not really changed him at all. But by changing your mind about his for him, you help him undo the change his ego thinks it has made in him.” (T-7.IV.11:1–8 (CE), T-7.V.8:1–8 (FIP))

When our brother is coming across to us as a flaming ego—self-centered, self-involved, self-serving—the Course asks us to *look past* that appearance and see something changeless that lies beyond that ugly surface. It is asking us not to mistake his ego for his reality, but to realize that what we are seeing *obscures* his reality, which is that “he is a part of you, and you of him, because he is His Father’s Son” (2:4). If you want your brother or sister to “waken and be glad” (2:3), you *must* “accept the changeless and eternal that abide in” him or her (2:5). You have to recognize that the garbage you are seeing is not who he is; it is a mask, a “distressing disguise,” as Mother Teresa called it.

Practice Suggestion: Think of a relationship in which someone seems to be part of you. Then, think about why this person seems part of you. Is it because you are blood-related, because you have similar interests, because you share a mutual history, or because you satisfy physical and emotional needs in each other? Now, take sentence four and apply it to this relationship, inserting this person’s name and switching it from “you” to “me,” e.g., “Peggy is a part of me, and I of her...”

Paragraph 3

3 The peace in you can but be found in him. ²And every thought of love you offer him but brings you nearer to your wakening to peace eternal and to endless joy. ³This sacred Son of God is like yourself, the mirror of his Father’s love for you, the soft reminder of his Father’s love by which he was created and which still abides in him, as it abides in you. ⁴Be very still and hear God’s Voice in him,² and let It tell you what his function is. ⁵He was created that you might be whole, for only the complete can be a part of God’s completion, which created you.

• Study Question •

5. The Course discusses this idea of hearing the Holy Spirit in your brother more than once. See especially T-9.II.4–5 (FIP), T-9.II.4:1–6:4 (CE). What would it be like for your mind to be so still that you could actually hear God’s Voice in someone else? His Voice will tell you what your brother’s function really is, in contrast with the roles that you assign him (see previous section). What does God’s Voice tell you that your brother’s function is?

•

² Psalm 46:10 (KJV): “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” In the above reference, we hear God’s Voice in our brother.

By seeing the changeless in others, we find it in ourselves, because it is the same Identity we are remembering. Your Identity is in your brother, and the *only* way to find your own peace is to find it in your brother (3:1). It is a process. Each time you offer your brother a thought of love, it moves *you* a little further on the road to “wakening to peace eternal and to endless joy” (3:2).

Finding our changeless Identity is what brings us eternal peace and endless joy. Our pain comes from identifying with the ephemeral. Our peace comes from identifying with the eternal. God creates nothing that changes. Nothing that changes is, in reality, me. What is changeable is *threatened* by change, and “nothing real can be threatened” (T-In.2:2). Therefore, nothing that changes is real. That truth applies not only to the things we do not like, such as our brother’s ego or our own, but also to things that we like.

All changing things are no more than fleeting landmarks along the path to eternity, like milestones that flicker by on the highway. They are nothing to be held on to. Think of a line of stepping-stones by which you cross a creek; you do not cling to each stone as you pass it. You appreciate its value in moving you toward the other side, but you do not lament its passing. Your goal is on the other side. That is the only value of things in this world, including our bodies and the bodies of our loved ones, other material things, or even concepts in our thought system. Changing things are to be valued only as stepping-stones to the eternal, to be gently released as we take the next step toward the changeless.

I think one of the most helpful things to think of when interacting with others is, “This brother/sister is like me, a sacred Son of God” (3:3). Why is it so hard to remember that? Why is it so easy to believe this other person is not like me, or, often more to the point, “I am not like *her*!” Why is it so easy to believe that I am a saint, and this other person is a devil? Try saying that silently to yourself or the other person: “Bob is like me,” “Bob, you are like me; may I remember that.” At the core, all of us are so beautiful, “the soft reminder of his Father’s Love by which he was created, and which still abides in him” (3:3).

Try saying that, silently, to that person who really bugs you! “Bob, you are the soft reminder of God’s Love; that love still abides in you.” Seriously! Try saying this; *it is your purpose on earth to do so*.

Sentence 4, I think, is meant to encourage a practice in our meditation, in which we become still and think of our brothers and sisters, and allow ourselves to recognize that the Holy Spirit is in them and speaks to us through them if we listen (3:4). Such a practice can transform our relationships. Time spent in quiet, contemplation of the changeless in our brothers will have a far more significant effect than any attempt to grit our teeth and “grin and bear it.” If we listen, God’s Voice will tell us that our brother is our savior, created so that we might be whole (3:5). Together we are essential parts of our singular, common Identity. As the *Song of Prayer* pamphlet puts it, we learn to pray, “I cannot go without you, for you are part of me” (S-1.V.3:9).

Paragraph 4

4 There is no gift the Father asks of you but that you see in all creation but the shining glory of His gift to you. ²Behold His Son, His perfect gift, in whom his Father shines forever and to whom is all creation given as his own. ³Because he has it is it given you, and where it lies in him behold your peace. ⁴The quiet that surrounds you dwells in him, and from this quiet come the happy dreams in which your hands are joined in innocence. ⁵These are not hands that grasp in dreams of pain. ⁶They hold no sword, for they have left their hold on every vain illusion of the world. ⁷And being empty, they received instead a brother's hand in which completeness lay.

• Study Questions •

6. *You may have believed in the past that God wanted certain things from you, such as attending church, or giving up certain food, drink, or drugs, or sacrificing something you wanted to do His Will. Now, you realize that all He wants is to see in everyone the shining glory of His gift to you. What is this gift?*
7. **(4:3)** *“Because he has it”; what is “it”? Using the answer to this question, restate this sentence applying it to someone in your life, replacing the three occurrences of “it” with your understanding of what “it” is, and “you” with “me.”*

•

The Course asks us to see God's hand in everything and everyone (4:1). All of it is His magnificent creation. That is all that God asks of us.

It may seem hard to believe that you could see everyone as God's gift to you, but that is the goal (4:1). Each of us is God's Beloved Son, a shining being of love and light, God's perfect creation, loved by angels and cherished by Heaven. The Course teaches that when we see a person as they are in reality, we will see “his loveliness reflected in a form so holy and so beautiful that you could scarce refrain from kneeling at his feet” (W-pI.161.9:3). Picture “that person” (you know who) and say to him or her in your mind, “If I could see you as you are, I could barely stop myself from falling down and worshipping your holiness.” If such a vision of a brother or sister seems beyond you, pray for vision. It will come! I've tasted it, and it is delicious! It is breath-taking. The words come to mind without equivocation, “My God, you are beautiful!”

“Behold His Son!” (4:2). This hurtful and hurting being, seemingly nothing much, hidden in a body that may be ordinary or extraordinary, is one in whom God shines forever, one to whom God has given all of creation! (4:2). Can we allow ourselves to see it (because it is the truth)?

How odd and yet wonderful it is to realize that our resistance to seeing the glory in one another is the projection of our resistance to seeing glory in ourselves! When we open our minds to recognize this glory in another, we find it in ourselves (4:3).

Notice how 4:4 refers to “the quiet that surrounds you,” which is a reference to 2:2’s “still infinity of endless peace [that] surrounds you gently in its soft embrace, so strong and quiet.” Notice that Jesus says, not that the same quiet surrounds your brother, but that the quiet that surrounds you “dwells in him” (4:4). He is the source and repository of the divine peace in which you live. From the quiet dwelling in your brother emerge the happy dreams of your joining together (4:4).

Wow! Imagine how you would treat people if you had even a nascent suspicion that all this was true of them. Imagine what each of them could give to you, the gifts they could bring to you if you let them and if you were willing to see them as your saviors.

“When you meet anyone, remember it is a holy encounter. As you see him, you will see yourself. As you treat him, you will treat yourself. As you think of him, you will think of yourself. Never forget this, for in him you will find yourself or lose sight of yourself. Whenever two Sons of God meet, they are given another chance at salvation. Do not leave anyone without giving salvation to him and receiving it yourself.” (T-8.II.6:1–7 (CE), T-18.III.4:1–7 (FIP))

(4:4–7) So often in the Course, Jesus urges us to take our brother’s hand. What he has in mind by that image, I believe, is dropping the illusions of the world and separate identities, two minds joining as one, seeing their salvation in one another, recognizing the light of God in one another.

“In this world, God’s Son comes closest to himself in a holy relationship. There he begins to find the certainty his Father has in him. And there he finds his function of restoring his Father’s laws to what was held outside them, and finding what was lost. Only in time can anything be lost, but never lost forever. So do the parts of God’s Son gradually join in time, and with each joining is the end of time brought nearer.” (T-20.V.1:1–5)

Those who have joined their brothers have detached themselves from the belief that their identity lies in the ego. A holy relationship is one in which you join with what is part of you in truth. (T-21.IV.3:1–2 (CE), T-21.IV.3:4-5 (FIP))

A holy relationship, however newly born, must value holiness above all else. ... Yet reason sees a holy relationship as what it is: a common state of mind, where both give errors gladly to correction, that both may happily be healed as one (T-22.IV.9:1, 7 (CE), (T-22.III.9:1,7 (FIP))

Practice Suggestion: Visualize these sentences. To begin with, see your hand reaching out in dreams of pain, grasping after money, pleasure, security, or other people. Then see your hand release its hold on all of these vain illusions. See it let go of the sword of attack. Now that your hand is empty and innocent, see it receive “a brother’s hand in which completion lies.” Holding this hand in which completion lies is a reflection of the perfect union of you and your brother beyond the dream of form.

Paragraph 5

5 If you but knew the glorious goal that lies beyond forgiveness, you would not keep hold on any thought, however light the touch of evil on it may appear to be. ²For you would understand how great the cost of holding anything God did not give in minds that can direct the hand to bless, and lead God's Son unto his Father's house. ³Would you not want to be a friend to him, created by his Father as His home? ⁴If God esteems him worthy of Himself, would you attack him with the hands of hate? ⁵Who would lay bloody hands on Heaven itself and hope to find its peace? ⁶Your brother thinks he holds the hand of death. ⁷Believe him not. ⁸But learn instead how blessed are you who can release him just by offering him yours.

• Study Question •

8.(5:5). *What does laying bloody hands on Heaven itself mean?*

•

(5:1). A compelling sentence. If we only knew what awaits us, the most “harmless” idle thought would become unacceptable. There are many sentences in the Course with this theme of “if you only knew”:

O my children, if you knew what God wills for you, your joy would be complete! (T-11.III.6:6 (CE), T-11.III.3:1 (FIP))

If they knew the truth about themselves they could not be sick. (T-12.II.1:4)

If you knew Who walks beside you on the way that you have chosen, fear would be impossible. (T-18.III.3:1 (CE), T-18.III.3:2(FIP))

If you but knew the meaning of His Love, hope and despair would be impossible. (W-pl.168.2:1)

If you but knew how much your Father yearns to have you recognize your sinlessness, you would not let His Voice appeal in vain.... (W-pl.7.3:1 (FIP), W-WI.7:3:1 (CE))

O my brothers, if you only knew the peace that will envelop you and hold you safe and pure and lovely in the Mind of God, you could but rush to meet Him where His altar is. (C-4.8:1 (FIP), C-3:8:1 (CE))

I believe the main difference between someone like Jesus or Buddha and us is that we don't know these things, and they do. We know *about* them, but we don't *know* them. Why do I say that? Well, am I rushing to meet God at His altar? Does despair seem impossible? Do I immediately dismiss every thought that has even the slightest touch of “evil”? Alas, no. But *if I knew*, that's what I would do. That's where growth comes in: growing into knowing.

³ John 14:2 (KJV): “In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

We simply do not understand “how great the cost” (5:2) of allowing tainted thoughts to linger in our minds. Jesus has spoken of this earlier in the Text: “You are much too tolerant of mind wandering, thus tacitly condoning your mind’s miscreations. (T-2.VI.4:6 (FIP), T-2.IX.5:6 (CE)). Speaking of what such mental foot-dragging costs, he says, “Delay does not matter in eternity, but it is tragic in time” (T-5.VI.1:3 (FIP), (T-5.VI.16:4 (CE)). There is a cost. We delay our return; we delay the fullness of joy. “God weeps at the ‘sacrifice’ of His children who believe they are lost to Him” (T-5.VII.4:5 (FIP), (T-5.X.5:2 (CE)).

There is a whole section dedicated to vigilance early in the Text, which means to carefully watch our minds (T-6.V(C) (FIP), T-6.VII(C) (CE)). The theme crops up often in the early chapters. Note that the CE version used here incorporates material omitted in the FIP version:

“It has never really entered your mind to give up every idea you have ever had that opposes knowledge. You retain thousands of little scraps of meanness which prevent the Holy One from entering. Light cannot penetrate through the walls you make to block it, and it is forever unwilling to destroy what you have made. No one can see through a wall, but I can step around it.”

“Watch your mind for the scraps of meanness, or you will be unable to ask me to do so.” (T-4.V.13:1-14:1 (CE), T-4.III.7:1-5 (FIP))

“If you cannot hear the Voice of God, it is because you do not choose to listen. The fact that you do listen to the voice of your ego is demonstrated by your attitudes, your feelings, and your behavior. Your attitudes are obviously conflicted, your feelings have a narrow range of variation on the negative side but are never purely joyous, and your behavior is either strained or unpredictable. Yet this is what you want. This is what you are fighting to keep, and what you are vigilant to save. Your mind is filled with schemes to save the face of your ego, and you do not seek the face of God.” (T-4.VI.1:1-6 (CE), T-4.IV.1:1-5 (FIP))

“Watch your mind for the temptations of the ego, and do not be deceived by it. *Know* it offers you nothing.”

“Those with a habit of disengagement often do not make consistent efforts to change their minds except through applying their old habit pattern to these new ideas.⁴ Even then, however, they can learn that the mind gains control over itself when they direct it genuinely toward perceiving someone *else* truly. Their lack of vitality is due to their efforts at solving their needless depression and anxiety through disinterest. Because their egos were protected by this unfortunate negative attitude, they are afraid to abandon it. When they exert real efforts to give up this voluntary dispiriting, they will see how their minds can

⁴ This seems to mean that if one uses disengagement as a way to buffer oneself from life, that person will tend to apply that same habit pattern to the Course’s new ideas. Those ideas, in other words, will just become a new tool for disengagement, a new method of buffering.

focus and rise above fatigue and heal. But they are not sufficiently vigilant against their egos' demand to disengage themselves. *This need not be.*" (T-4.VI.8:1-9:7 (CE), (T-4.IV.6:1-5 (FIP))

Our laxity is not unavoidable; "this need not be." If we remembered who our brothers are, and realized that God created them to be His home (5:3), how could we harbor any thought against them? If they are worthy of being God's dwelling place and we recalled that fact, would we attack them with our hatred? (5:4). Of course not! How could we expect to attack Heaven (which is what God's home is, and that home is in our brother) and still think we could attain Heaven's peace? (5:5). If we often remind ourselves of these facts, we *will* watch our minds and refuse to allow the ego to deceive us.

Your brothers and sisters, those around you every day, think they hold "the hand of death" (5:6); that is, they have convinced themselves that they are guilty and doomed to die. As we have seen in previous sections, the core of everyone's dream is fear. Your mission, if you care to accept it, is to refuse to agree with their dreams of death (5:7). Refuse to see them as guilty sinners holding death's hand, and offer them *your* hand instead (5:8). In making that offer, you will learn how blessed *you* are, because you can release your brother from self-condemnation.

"Reach out to all your brothers and touch them with the touch of Christ. In timeless union with them is your continuity, unbroken because it is wholly shared. God's guiltless Son is only light.⁵ There is no darkness in him anywhere, for he is whole. Call all your brothers to witness to his wholeness, as I am calling you to join with me. (T-13.VI.8:2-6 (CE), T-13.VI.8:2-6 (FIP))

Paragraph 6

6 A dream is given you in which he is your savior, not your enemy in hate. ²A dream is given you in which you have forgiven him for all his dreams of death; a dream of hope you share with him, instead of dreaming evil separate dreams of hate. ³Why does it seem so hard to share this dream? ⁴Because unless the Holy Spirit gives the dream its function, it was made for hate, and will continue in death's services. ⁵Each form it takes in some way calls for death. ⁶And those who serve the lord of death have come to worship in a separated world, each with his tiny spear and rusted sword, to keep his ancient promises to die.

⁵. John 1:5 (RSV): "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all." The Course applies this to "God's guiltless Son"—all of us.

• Study Question •

9. *What is the answer to the question in 6:3? Try to go beyond just quoting the words that follow.*

•

There is an alternative to the dream of death, in which our brother is our enemy. We can come to see him as our savior—to see every brother or sister as our savior. We can come to share a common dream of hope in which we all have forgiven one another for our dreams of death, instead of being locked in perpetual conflict (6:1–2). The miraculous nature of such a claim becomes evident when you think of it as applying, for instance, to the Israelis and the Palestinians, or the Irish Catholics and Protestants, or the KKK and the NAACP—or to you and “that *special* person” you find impossible to get along with, or to whom you never speak. That’s the promise of the Course. That miracle *can* happen and *will* happen.

What makes it hard to share this dream (6:3), what keeps us clinging to our dreams of hate and fear, is that we have to relinquish control of our dreams to exchange the dark dream for the happy one. We have to allow the Holy Spirit to give the dream its function (6:4), whether the dream seems good or bad (as we saw earlier in Section V on “Dream Roles”). We want to assign the roles in the dream. We want people to fulfill their function as we perceive the function, in a way that meets our imagined needs. [See the answer to study question 9 for more thoughts on this.]

Any dream to which we assign the function is a dream made for hate. It is a dream of fear. It will serve death, and every form it takes will call for death (6:5–6). I believe this means that when we try to arrange the world based on the concepts of separate identities, we end up each with our puny weapons fighting over the cross-purposes we have set up. In such a dream, you come to this separated world carrying pitiful weapons, to worship the god of death, and keep your ancient promise to die. Can you relate to this? Can you detect in your life your worshipping of death? Can you see *your* tiny spear and rusted sword?

Paragraph 7

7 Such is the core of fear in every dream that has been kept apart from use by Him Who sees a different function for a dream. ²When dreams are *shared*, they lose the function of attack and separation, even though it was for this that every dream was made. ³Yet nothing in the world of dreams remains without the hope of change and betterment, for here is not where changelessness is found. ⁴Let us be glad indeed that this is so, and seek not the eternal in this world. ⁵Forgiving dreams are means to step aside from dreaming of a world outside yourself. ⁶And they lead finally beyond all dreams, unto the peace of everlasting life.

• **Study Question** •

10. *What is the relationship between the two ideas in sentences 3: “nothing in the world of dreams remains without hope of change and betterment” and “here is not where changelessness is found”?*

•

Remember the “core” of the dream, first mentioned in the previous section (3:4)? Fear is the core of the ego’s dream, while love is the core of the Holy Spirit’s dream. Sentence 7:1 tells us that sentence 6:6 (the referent of “such”) was a depiction of what makes up that heavy lump of fear: In every situation of your life, whether it be romantic relationships, jobs, schooling, or dreams of personal glory, you stand at the center with your tiny spear and rusty sword, surrounded by potential enemies, determined to die to protect your non-existent independent identity.

But, although our dreams were made for attack and separation, the Holy Spirit can transform every dream into an instrument of change and betterment (7:2–3). The very nature of things in this world of dreams is that they are *changeable*, which works to your advantage (7:3). Your salvation turns upon the fact that you are changeless, yet in this case, “Let us be glad indeed” that this world is *not* the place of changelessness; these dreams *need* changing! (7:4). As we become willing to share our dreams with the Holy Spirit and allow Him to use them for a very different function from the one we have dreamed up, we can erase the picture of ourselves alone against the world with our tiny spear and rusted sword (this is implied by 7:1–2).

The dreams of attack and separation become, instead, forgiving dreams. These forgiving dreams are how we recognize the world that we thought was outside of us is actually within us. Forgiving dreams lead us eventually beyond dreams altogether, into everlasting life (7:5–6). A familiar formula in the Course is: Forgiving dreams lead us, first, out of the nightmares into happy dreams, and finally, past dreaming altogether, to the changeless dwelling place.

We see this formula in many forms:

Nightmare, dream of fear	Happy, forgiving dream	Waking
The world	The real world	Heaven
Wrong mind	Right mind	One mind
False perception	True perception	Knowledge
Conflict	Peace	Union

Answer Key

1. The “place in you” can be thought of as your right mind, or your spirit. It is referred to in T-18.VII.8:2–3 (T-22.VII.10:5–6 (CE)) as “the quiet center” where the Holy Spirit has come to dwell. We find this place when we become quiet and turn our attention within, seeking it. You may recall a few sections ago, in T-29.II.5, the Course spoke of this place in these words:

“Yet He Who entered in but waits for you to come where you invited Him to be. There is no other place where He can find His host, nor where His host can meet with Him. And nowhere else His gifts of peace and joy, and all the happiness His Presence brings, can be obtained. For they are where He is Who brought them with Him, that they might be yours.”
2. The pronoun, “Their,” refers to God the Father and the Son. We know from the last two sentences of paragraph 1, which identified Them and used the word “Them” to refer to Them.
3. If *we* are the dwelling place of Father and Son, then thinking that we can change *ourselves* is thinking we can change Their dwelling place. We cannot change our Identity (2:1–2 (FIP), 1:6–7 (CE)).
4. Your role is to accept the changeless and eternal that abide in your brother and so find your own Identity.
5. His function is in Sentence 3: to complete you so that you can be part of God’s completion. He completes you presumably by being part of you in your true Identity, not by anything he does in this world.
6. Sentence 2 lists two gifts: His Son, and all creation, which are really the same thing.
7. All creation. “Because [name] has all creation is all creation given me, and where all creation lies in [name] I behold my peace.”
8. It means attacking your brother who, as God’s home, is Heaven itself.
9. It seems hard to share in this wonderful dream with our brothers because doing so means giving up our power of assigning the dream (our life, our relationships) its function. We have to let the Holy Spirit give the dream its function, which we find difficult. To give a concrete example, we imagine that the purpose of our relationships is to meet our (imagined) needs; the Course teaches that we must let go of this purpose, and see that the relationship has no purpose but what the Holy Spirit gives to it:

You can place any relationship under His care and be sure that it will not result in pain, if you offer Him your willingness to have it serve no need but His. All the guilt in it arises from your use of it. All the love from His. Do not, then, be afraid to let go your imagined needs, which would destroy the relationship. Your only need is His. (T-15.V.5:4-8)

10. The fact that nothing in this world is changeless means that anything can change.

Legend:

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

The 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 identical to the FIP version, the division into paragraphs is often entirely 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.

Effects of Switching Editions of the Course

The commentaries on Chapters 29, 30, and 31 were written prior to the publication of the Complete and Annotated Edition (CE) of the Course in 2017. Originally they were based on the edition published by the Foundation for Inner Peace (FIP). The references to other parts of the Course were based on the FIP edition, and the comments themselves were based on the same edition. There were significant changes made in the CE, although for the most part there was no alteration in the meaning of the text, and these final chapters had far fewer changes. There are some changes in section and paragraph breaks and sentence structure that result in different numbering in references to the same text in the two editions.

I have attempted for all references to add a separate CE reference if it differs from the FIP reference, but I may have missed some. If so, I apologize. Please let me know of any referencing problems you find.

I have also tried to edit my commentary so as to reflect any wording changes in the CE. For instance, the CE restored the plural use of "you" where the FIP had substituted the phrase "you and your brother."