NOTES
On the Text of
A Course In Miracles
Condensed Version
by Stephen Wingate
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"Notes on the Text of A Course in Miracles – Condensed Version" is the compilation of my notes on a series of lectures given by Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D. entitled "Classes on the Text of A Course in Miracles." Wapnick's lectures were given on each chapter of the Text and highlight the key themes of each chapter within the context of the Course's general teaching and purpose. In this Condensed Version I have removed the quotes from the Text that Wapnick used in his classes and provided only my notes based on Wapnick's brilliant commentaries in his lectures. You will find this Condensed Version addresses the key themes of each chapter of the Text as the full version does, but is shorter in length and easier to read.

Here is a compilation of excerpts from the text of A Course in Miracles showing how the Course describes its purpose:

"The goal of the curriculum, regardless of the teacher you choose, is 'know thyself.' There is nothing else to seek. The journey to God is merely the reawakening of the knowledge of where you are always, and what you are forever. It is a journey without distance to a goal that has never changed. Yet the reason for the course is that you do not know what you are. What could God give but knowledge of Himself? What else is there to give? The belief that you could give and get something else, something outside yourself, has cost you the awareness of Heaven and of your Identity. This is not a course in the play of ideas, but in their practical application. This is a course in how to know yourself." - A Course in Miracles

As you will realize, A Course in Miracles could easily be titled "A Course in Self Knowledge," as ultimately the miracle is a radical shift in Identity.

My "Notes on the Text of A Course in Miracles – Condensed Version" follows the structure of Wapnick's lecture series and is based on the key themes of each chapter within the context of the Course's general teaching and purpose.

Wapnick's Heaven-Knowledge Chart follows this Introduction and is referenced throughout his series of lectures and my notes. You will find it very helpful in your understanding of the Course as it illustrates the Course's key terms in context, and provides a visual overview of the Course's theory and mythology.

Following the Heaven-Knowledge Chart is the Preface which is an excerpt from the section of the Course's Preface entitled "What it Says." The preface is a minor masterpiece in itself as it provides a brilliant overview of the Course's non-dual philosophy and metaphysics.

"Notes on the Text of A Course in Miracles – Condensed Version" is meant to facilitate and deepen your understanding of the spiritual masterpiece that is A Course in Miracles, and supplement your self-study of the Course.

Stephen Wingate
www.LivingInPeace-theNaturalState.com
HEAVEN - KNOWLEDGE

MIND   GOD   NON-DUALITY
SPIRIT  CHRIST - SELF  ONENESS TRUTH
WILL   CREATIONS       REALITY  LOVE
LIGHT  CREATION - EXTENSION  ETERNITY  CHANGELESSNESS

SON of GOD
Decision Maker
Dreamer
Observer

Dream of SEparation
ILLUSION
"Tiny Mad Idea"

CAUSE
Split Mind
Content

EGO
Wrong Mind - Insanity
Separation - Individuality - Specialness
"Ideas leave their source"
Error is real (Serious): Sin - Guilt - Fear
Scarcity
Battleground - Victimization
"One or the other" - "Kill or be killed"

HOLY SPIRIT
Right Mind - Sanity
Memory of God
Atonement - The separation never happened
"Ideas leave not their source"
Error is not real: Silly dream
Gentle laughter - Abundance
Real world
Forgiveness
Holy instant
Holy relationship
Salvation
Healing
True perception - Vision
Reason
Happy dream
Jesus

Veil of Forgetfulness (Denial)

WORLD OF SEPARATION - PERCEPTION
TIME - SPACE
Past - Present - Future
Hiding Place - Distraction - Smokescreen
Separation - Individuality - Specialness
"Ideas leave their source"
Error is real (Serious): Sin, Guilt, Fear - Scarcity
Battleground - Victimization
"One or the other" - "Kill or be killed"
Body (Brain - Psyche)
Problems (Pleasure - Pain - Sickness ) Solutions (Magic)

CLASSROOM
From the Preface of A Course in Miracles

What It Says

Nothing real can be threatened.
Nothing unreal exists.
Herein lies the peace of God.

This is how A Course in Miracles begins. It makes a fundamental distinction between the real and the unreal; between knowledge and perception. Knowledge is truth, under one law, the law of love or God. Truth is unalterable, eternal and unambiguous. It can be unrecognized, but it cannot be changed. It applies to everything that God created, and only what He created is real. It is beyond learning because it is beyond time and process. It has no opposite; no beginning and no end. It merely is.

The world of perception, on the other hand, is the world of time, of change, of beginnings and endings. It is based on interpretation, not on facts. It is the world of birth and death, founded on the belief in scarcity, loss, separation and death. It is learned rather than given, selective in its perceptual emphases, unstable in its functioning, and inaccurate in its interpretations.

From knowledge and perception respectively, two distinct thought systems arise which are opposite in every respect. In the realm of knowledge no thoughts exist apart from God, because God and His Creation share one Will. The world of perception, however, is made by the belief in opposites and separate wills, in perpetual conflict with each other and with God. What perception sees and hears appears to be real because it permits into awareness only what conforms to the wishes of the perceiver. This leads to a world of illusions, a world which needs constant defense precisely because it is not real.

When you have been caught in the world of perception you are caught in a dream. You cannot escape without help, because everything your senses show merely witnesses to the reality of the dream. God has provided the Answer, the only Way out, the true Helper. It is the function of His Voice, His Holy Spirit, to mediate between the two worlds. He can do this because, while on the one hand He knows the truth, on the other He also recognizes our illusions, but without believing in them. It is the Holy Spirit's goal to help us escape from the dream world by teaching us how to reverse our thinking and unlearn our mistakes. Forgiveness is the Holy Spirit's great learning aid in bringing this thought reversal about. However, the Course has its own definition of what forgiveness really is just as it defines the world in its own way.

The world we see merely reflects our own internal frame of reference – the dominant ideas, wishes and emotions in our minds. "Projection makes perception" (Text p. 445). We look inside first, decide the kind of world we want to see and then project that world outside, making it the truth as we see it. We make it true by our interpretations of what it is we are seeing. If we are using perception to justify our own mistakes – our anger, our impulses to attack, our lack of love in whatever form it may take – we will see a world of evil, destruction, malice, envy and despair. All this we must learn to forgive, not because we are being "good" and "charitable," but because what we are seeing is not true. We have distorted the world by our twisted defenses, and are therefore seeing what is not there. As we learn to recognize our perceptual errors, we also learn
to look past them or "forgive." At the same time we are forgiving ourselves, looking past our distorted self-concepts to the Self That God created in us and as us.

Sin is defined as "lack of love" (Text p. 11). Since love is all there is, sin in the sight of the Holy Spirit is a mistake to be corrected, rather than an evil to be punished. Our sense of inadequacy, weakness and incompletion comes from the strong investment in the "scarcity principle" that governs the whole world of illusions. From that point of view, we seek in others what we feel is wanting in ourselves. We "love" another in order to get something ourselves. That, in fact, is what passes for love in the dream world. There can be no greater mistake than that, for love is incapable of asking for anything.

Only minds can really join, and whom God has joined no man can put asunder (Text p. 356). It is, however, only at the level of Christ Mind that true union is possible, and has, in fact, never been lost. The "little I" seeks to enhance itself by external approval, external possessions and external "love." The Self That God created needs nothing. It is forever complete, safe, loved and loving. It seeks to share rather than to get; to extend rather than project. It has no needs and wants to join with others out of their mutual awareness of abundance.

The special relationships of the world are destructive, selfish and childishly egocentric. Yet, if given to the Holy Spirit, these relationships can become the holiest things on earth – the miracles that point the way to the return to Heaven. The world uses its special relationships as a final weapon of exclusion and a demonstration of separateness. The Holy Spirit transforms them into perfect lessons in forgiveness and in awakening from the dream. Each one is an opportunity to let perceptions be healed and errors corrected. Each one is another chance to forgive oneself by forgiving the other. And each one becomes still another invitation to the Holy Spirit and to the remembrance of God.

Perception is a function of the body, and therefore represents a limit on awareness. Perception sees through the body's eyes and hears through the body's ears. It evokes the limited responses which the body makes. The body appears to be largely self-motivated and independent, yet it actually responds only to the intentions of the mind. If the mind wants to use it for attack in any form, it becomes prey to sickness, age and decay. If the mind accepts the Holy Spirit's purpose for it instead, it becomes a useful way of communicating with others, invulnerable as long as it is needed, and to be gently laid by when its use is over. Of itself it is neutral, as is everything in the world of perception. Whether it is used for the goals of the ego or the Holy Spirit depends entirely on what the mind wants.

The opposite of seeing through the body's eyes is the vision of Christ, which reflects strength rather than weakness, unity rather than separation, and love rather than fear. The opposite of hearing through the body's ears is communication through the Voice for God, the Holy Spirit, which abides in each of us. His Voice seems distant and difficult to hear because the ego, which speaks for the little, separated self, seems to be much louder. This is actually reversed. The Holy Spirit speaks with unmistakable clarity and overwhelming appeal. No one who does not choose to identify with the body could possibly be deaf to His messages of release and hope, nor could he fail to accept joyously the vision of Christ in glad exchange for his miserable picture of himself.
Christ's vision is the Holy Spirit's gift, God's alternative to the illusion of separation and to the belief in the reality of sin, guilt and death. It is the one correction for all errors of perception; the reconciliation of the seeming opposites on which this world is based. Its kindly light shows all things from another point of view, reflecting the thought system that arises from knowledge and making return to God not only possible but inevitable. What was regarded as injustice done to one by someone else now becomes a call for help and for union. Sin, sickness and attack are seen as misperceptions calling for remedy through gentleness and love. Defenses are laid down because where there is no attack there is no need for them. Our brothers' needs become our own, because they are taking the journey with us as we go to God. Without us they would lose their way. Without them we could never find our own.

Forgiveness is unknown in Heaven, where the need for it would be inconceivable. However, in this world, forgiveness is a necessary correction for all the mistakes that we have made. To offer forgiveness is the only way for us to have it, for it reflects the law of Heaven that giving and receiving are the same. Heaven is the natural state of all the Sons of God as He created them. Such is their reality forever. It has not changed because it has been forgotten.

Forgiveness is the means by which we will remember. Through forgiveness the thinking of the world is reversed. The forgiven world becomes the gate of Heaven, because by its mercy we can at last forgive ourselves. Holding no one prisoner to guilt, we become free. Acknowledging Christ in all our brothers, we recognize His Presence in ourselves. Forgetting all our misperceptions, and with nothing from the past to hold us back, we can remember God. Beyond this, learning cannot go. When we are ready, God Himself will take the final step in our return to Him.

Excerpt from the Preface of *A Course in Miracles*
CHAPTER ONE
THE MEANING OF MIRACLES

Main Theme: The "Miracle."

Introduction: You will find it helpful to print the Heaven-Knowledge Chart now so you can refer to it easily. It is imperative that you become familiar with the Chart, as it illustrates the non-dual thought system of the Course, shows the key terms in context, and provides a visual overview of the Course's theory and mythology.

The ego's strategy is to keep the Son of God mindless, unaware of his capacity to choose the Holy Spirit and remember his true Identity as Christ. The belief in the reality of the separation from God leads to sin, guilt and fear in the ego mind (the wrong mind), which leads to the projection of the world and body as a distraction device. Special relationships are formed in the world as an attempt to fill the sense of lack, and to "get rid" of the sin, guilt and fear experienced in the ego mind.

The miracle facilitates a shift in identity from "I am a separate ego-body" to "I am the Self or Christ." People and bodies in the world appear to have many different problems requiring many different solutions. The first Miracle Principle says all miracles are the same because there is only one problem and one solution. The one problem is the belief in the separation from God, and the one solution is the Atonement which is the realization that the separation from God never happened.

The miracle is never "external" or in the world. The miracle happens in the mind of the Son of God at the point of the decision maker when he chooses the Holy Spirit as his teacher and the Oneness of Christ as his Identity; rather than the ego as his teacher and the separate body as his identity.

The miracle shifts the problem and solution from the effect (the body and world) to the cause (the mind).

The whole thought system of the Course is represented in the first Miracle Principle – **There is no order of difficulty in miracles.**

The "shift" is of focus from the body to the mind. "Invisibility" refers to the Son of God in the mind as the decision maker. The miracle is a shift in focus from the visible to the invisible.

"Levels" refer to the level of mind as the cause, and the level of body and world as the effect. Problems must be addressed at the cause (the mind) to get real results. Working at the level of effect (the body and world) treats only the symptom, but does not resolve the real cause.

The term "body" includes the physical and psychological body. The ego revels in attempting to "fix" problems at the body-psyche level because the body-psyche is a mindless smokescreen and distraction from the real problem and solution which is at the level of the mind — the decision maker or Son of God.

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. The belief in separation from God is the only problem. And the only solution is the Atonement — the realization that separation from God never happened. There is one problem and one solution.

It is important to understand why we focus on problems in the body and world rather than in the mind. When we believe we have separated from God we experience sin, guilt and fear in the mind that we find so unbearable we attempt to "get rid" of it by projecting it out and making the body and world. We then believe that our problems are indeed "out there" in the body and world rather than "in here" in our own mind.

Miracle Principles 5, 8 and 10 seem to imply that miracles are something we do in the world of bodies. This is not the case. The miracle takes place in the mind only. The miracle shifts the focus of attention from the body and world to the decision maker in the mind where the power of belief is. The mind's belief in sin (separation from God), guilt (over the selfishness of separation), and fear (of punishment and loss) leads to the mind making a body and world onto which it projects the sin, guilt and fear. All power is of the mind, not the body and world. All healing is of the mind, not the body.

Refer to the Chart. We could say the main purpose of the Course is for us to realize the power of our mind;
not the power to manifest miracles in the world, but to realize the power of the mind to believe in the dream. All power that appears to be in the world's dream was given by the mind of the dreamer (the Son of God). All power over the dream world is in the mind of the dreamer.

There is no power of evil in the world. The power is in the mind that believes in evil, separation, sin, guilt and fear. We must realize that sin, guilt and fear are in the mind (the cause), and not in the body and world (the effect).

Wrong-minded thoughts "make" the physical body and world. Right-minded thoughts "create" the spiritual. The term "create" refers to God — God creates. The term "make" refers to the ego — the ego "makes" the dream world and body.

Miracles reflect the Truth. Truth is of God. Miracles are illusions that reflect the truth. "Magic" is the attempt to solve problems in the world and body rather than in the mind.

We are free within the illusion to choose what we believe — the ego or the Holy Spirit. Contrast our relative freedom to choose within the illusion with the absolute freedom of Will which is of God and Christ. Within the illusion what we choose (the ego or the Holy Spirit) will reflect our experience in the world. When we choose the Holy Spirit as our guide, we experience peace. When we choose the ego as our guide, we experience conflict.

Within the illusion we have the freedom to choose to believe in the kingdom of the ego, or the Kingdom of the Holy Spirit. We will follow up on this statement later in the notes on this chapter.

The proper function of the mind is to choose the Holy Spirit not the ego, and place the mind in the service of the Holy Spirit. The ego's goal is to maintain our belief in separate existence. The Holy Spirit facilitates our acceptance of the Atonement which states the separation never happened.

We choose between the ego's loveless expressions and the Holy Spirit's miraculous expressions. The medium of communication is the body which can be destroyed. Your potential is the mind of the Son of God which cannot be destroyed.

We choose either the ego or the Holy Spirit. Our mind has the power to choose and believe, and we experience exactly what we choose and believe.

Do not make the mistake of trying to bring God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus into your dream world and ask them to help resolve your illusory problems. Bring the illusory problems to the light of God's Truth. Do not bring God into your illusory world. We made the world as a place to hide from God's Oneness. God knows nothing of our dream world. Remember the power of the mind to make up a world and believe it is real. The mind has the power to make illusion appear real.

Within the illusion we are free to believe whatever we want, but it does not make it real. We have the power to make the world and believe in it. The Course teaches us that what we want in the world is painful, and the peace and love we truly want is of God.

It is important to read and study the Course, especially the fundamental concepts illustrated in the Chart and presented in the early chapters. The fundamental concepts must be studied, understood and applied in your daily life so they become experiential. "This is not a Course in the play of ideas, but in their practical application."

Now we address the ego's projection of linear time and space. Sin, guilt and fear projected out of the mind make psychological time. Sin (the separation from God) is the past. Guilt (of selfishness of separation) is experienced in the present. Fear (of punishment for the separation) is the future. As the Son of God there is no time and space. Time and space come after sin, guilt and fear are projected out, which also makes the world. The holy instant is timeless, spaceless and free of sin, guilt and fear.

The miracle happens at the decision making point of the mind (see the Chart) which is timeless and spaceless. The miracle is also known as the holy instant.

Without sin, guilt and fear there is no psychological time; no past, present or future.

The horizontal plane refers to linear time which is made by the ego's projection of sin, guilt and fear.
The Son of God is beyond time and space. The miracle collapses time. The miracle is illusory but leads out of the illusion to the Son of God beyond time and space. 

Jesus is the same as us. We are all the One Son of God. Do not make the mistake of worshipping an idol. The Jesus of the Course is not the historical Jesus represented in the Bible. The Jesus of A Course in Miracles is a symbol of the non-egoic presence of perfect love in the mind.

Jesus is speaking in symbols. He does not mean that he personally is in charge of the Atonement. He is a symbol which represents that in each of us which facilitates the Atonement for all of us as the One Son of God. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are symbols that help us remember our oneness with God, and choose not to identify with the ego.

It is important to be aware of our preconceived notions of Jesus and realize he is not what our old ideas have portrayed him to be. He is a symbol that can help us get beyond all symbols and realize the reality of our oneness with God. 

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*Spirit is in a state of grace forever. Your reality is only spirit. Therefore you are in a state of grace forever.*

The three sentences in bold italics above are "God's reassurances." Fear of God's reassurances is due to the ego's fear of extinction. Our only reality is the oneness of spirit, not the separate existence of the ego-body. Our loyalty is misdirected when we put our trust in the ego rather than the Holy Spirit. Resistance and fear of what this Course teaches are due to the ego's fear of its own perceived death. When we project the ego's sin, guilt and fear onto someone else it reinforces their misperceptions of their self.

**Chapter One Summary**

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. There is one problem and one solution. The problem is the identification with the separate ego-body. The solution is the realization of my Oneness with God and Christ. As the Son of God I have the power to choose the Holy Spirit or the ego and to believe in what I make. All power over the dream world is in my mind as the decision maker — the Son of God.

**End Chapter One**
CHAPTER TWO
THE SEPARATION AND THE ATONEMENT

Main Theme: This chapter provides an overview of the entire thought system of the Course. It is the only chapter that does so. This chapter also illustrates the importance of recognizing and appreciating the power of the mind.

Introduction: Refer to the Chart to understand the key terms in the context of the overall thought system.

Above the solid horizontal line is Heaven-Knowledge, God, Christ, Self, Oneness: the only Reality. Everything below the line is illusion. This clear, uncompromising distinction between truth and illusion is what distinguishes a non-dual thought system from a dual thought system. The Course is based on a radical, uncompromising, non-dual thought system. Without exception: Truth is absolute and non-dual; Illusion is relative and dual.

In Heaven, cause and effect are one. God is the first and only Cause, and Christ is the Effect. God is love, and love extends itself; this is creation. God's creation is Christ, and yet they are one. There is no separation between God and His creation, Christ; this is non-duality.

God creates and extends; the ego makes and projects.

The mythology of the Course begins with "the tiny mad idea." The tiny mad idea is the idea that Christ, the Son of God, separated from His Father. Separation from the love and oneness of God leads to a sense of lack and incompleteness in the Son, who then turns to the ego in search of love, abundance and wholeness.

With exuberance, the ego presents its case for separation from God to the Son; the Holy Spirit remains calm and silent. The ego advises the Son that he can maintain his separate, individual existence and glorify his specialness independent of God. Still, the Holy Spirit remains serene and quiet. The Son weighs the evidence and decides in favor of the ego for individuality, specialness and separation from God.

Having made his decision for independence, specialness and separation from God, the Son begins to feel a sense of sin, guilt and fear: Sin of his separation from God, guilt over his selfish desire for specialness, and fear of loss and retribution from God for choosing against Him.

To relieve the pain of separation, the ego makes a world of bodies onto which it projects the sense of sin, guilt and fear so the Son can maintain his specialness and be free of the pain of separation. By making a world and projecting the sin, guilt and fear onto it, the true source of the Son's pain (his decision to be separate) is forgotten and hidden in the world behind the veil of Self-forgetfulness and denial.

The miracle, forgiveness and the Atonement remove the veil of Self-forgetfulness, undo the separation and remind the Son of his true Identity as the Son of God; not the son of the ego.

Behind the veil of Self-forgetfulness, problems appear to be in the body and world; therefore, solutions appear to be in the body and world. "Magic" is the term the Course uses for solutions sought in the body and world. Problems are in the mind, and solutions are in the mind. The miracle facilitates a shift from focusing on the body and world to focusing on the mind at the point of the decision maker where the Son can choose again (for the ego or the Holy Spirit).

God's Son is one. The Course frequently uses the term "Sons" of God, however there is one Son. All life in the universe is God's One Son — not only human beings; all beings, every grain of sand, the earth, our solar system and every galaxy in the universe are all included in the term "God's Son," or the "Sonship." This is not pantheism which we will address in later chapters.

Creation is God's extension of love. Creation and extension are of God. Only God creates. Projection is of the ego. The ego makes, projects or miscreates. Other than in the first few chapters these terms (create vs. project) are used consistently in the Course.
Chapter Three, the following chapter, addresses the "authority problem." The "tiny mad idea" is the idea that we separated from God's love and wholeness. The separation never happened. The ego thinks it knows the solution to the problem of lack, and will not listen to the Holy Spirit or God — this is the "authority problem." The ego set up the split mind (right mind – wrong mind) and made the world in order to maintain its separate existence and authority. The ego must maintain its authority in fear of the Son choosing the Holy Spirit as his guide instead of the ego.

When we are asleep, dreaming, and do not want to wake up, we bring external stimuli, a ringing phone or a shining light, into the dream so we can continue sleeping and dreaming, and avoid waking up. We do the same when the light of Atonement shines into our waking dream of separation. The light of Atonement engenders fear because waking up from the dream of separation means the extinction of the separate ego-self.

We are identified with the "hero" of the dream (the ego-body), and we wish to stay asleep in the dream of separation. The light of Atonement shines from outside the dream to guide us out, but we bring the light into the dream so we may stay asleep. This is what the ego (and religions) have done — they attempt to bring the light of reality into the illusory dream. The ego brings the light of truth into the dream hoping to "fix" the dream rather than allowing the light to wake us up and guide us out of the dream to reality. Often the ego will try to bring Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit into the dream to heal the dream.

The Son of God has the power to choose the ego or the Holy Spirit as a guide. It is difficult for the Son of God to believe that the Holy Spirit's gentle smile, silence and defenselessness is salvation. Once the Son as the decision maker chooses the ego as his guide, the maintenance of separation is the ego's goal; its modus operandi is defense and attack.

It is important to understand the fear of letting go of ego identification as it is perceived as extinction by the ego. The ego interprets true freedom as imprisonment and loss because the ego's idea of freedom is in the specialness of separation. Therefore, Atonement, the realization of oneness, is a threat to the ego's independence. The Holy Spirit corrects this misperception by showing the Son that freedom is in Atonement, not in separation. Again, the Son of God as the decision maker chooses the ego or the Holy Spirit as its teacher. The only true freedom is the freedom of the mind, not the body. Real freedom is the freedom from the belief in the sin of separation, guilt and fear. True freedom is the freedom that comes in our identification with Christ in Spirit.

The ego is afraid of Atonement because it fears extinction. For salvation we must turn to spirit, true perception or vision rather than the ego's misperception and projections of the body and world.

The Course employs terminology used in the Bible and psychology, and reinterprets them from the ego's wrong-minded view to the Holy Spirit's right-minded view. The psychological term "defense" is used often.

"Defenses" are everything the ego does to defend against the Atonement. The ego's aim is to keep the Son of God out of the mind, and in the mindless body and world. The ego motivates the Son to stay out of the mind by telling him he will be annihilated. The ego makes sin, guilt and fear real, and tells the Son that God will punish him if he stays in the mind. The ego makes the body and world to project the sin, guilt and fear out and to "free" the Son of the pain of separation, the guilt of selfishness, and the fear of punishment.

In reality no separation ever happened; therefore sin, guilt and fear are based on an illusion — "the tiny mad idea." The correct use of denial is to deny that the separation ever happened. The ego's use of denial is to believe the separation is real; sin, guilt and fear are real, but to deny it in me, and project it onto you and the world.

It is the Holy Spirit's view that the Atonement can only heal. The Atonement principle is that the separation from God never happened; therefore, sin, guilt and fear are based on an illusion. The reality is that God's Son never separated from the Father.
Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

- The Holy Spirit denies that the separation ever happened. The ego reinforces the illusion of separation by making it real, and attempting to avoid the sin, guilt and fear by projecting it into the body and world it made.

- The ego represents the denial of the truth of oneness. The Holy Spirit denies the denial of the truth of oneness. The Atonement needs no defense. The ego uses the body as a distraction from the true cause of illness which is in the mind. The mind is the cause of effects in the body and world. The mind is the cause. The body is the effect. Errors are of the mind and must be corrected in the mind. Miracles correct the level confusion of mind and body. In these early chapters we are laying the foundation for the understanding and application of true forgiveness and healing.

- The word "create" is used differently in the passage in the Text (p23 IV.3.1-5) than in the rest of the Course. The mind makes or projects. Only God creates. In this passage "miscreate" is more appropriate. In the right mind the body is a learning device. In the wrong mind the body is proof that the separation is real, and the body and world is a cause not an effect. In the right mind, the mind is the cause and the body and world are effects. Being sick or upset is caused by the mind, not by the "external" body or world. However, to deny the existence of the body and the world is a mistake.

- The "unmindful" refers to the body. Mistreating the body is a mistake. The body is an effect not a cause. This does not mean we should not take care of the body. The body has no inherent qualities apart from the mind. To deny or attempt to avoid the body is a mistake; as is making the body all-important. The body is neutral. Be kind and gentle to yourself and those identified with the body. Do not force yourself or others to deny the body by using the Course's concepts. Do not make the body or world evil. The body and world have no inherent qualities apart from those assigned by the mind.

- Denying the body or over-emphasizing the body are both distractions from the true source of healing and salvation which is in the mind. The ego's strategy is to keep us focused on and identified with the body and world. When we relax our attention away from the body and world, go back to the decision making part of our mind and choose to identify with the Holy Spirit, the ego dissolves.

- The language of the Course is often dual so as to meet people where they believe they are: in a body in the world, and to reduce the fear in the mind of the reader. "Magic" works on the level of the body. Magic is treating the body-symptom-effect, rather than the mind-cause.

- Magic works temporarily but not ultimately. Magic reduces pain. Pain (physical, mental or emotional) is a motivator to choose the Holy Spirit and the Atonement.

- Discomfort is a motivator for change. Pain or discomfort is not Atonement or sacrifice in the traditional Christian sense. We will address the idea of sacrifice, suffering and Atonement in later chapters.

- You must choose the miracle yourself. You must ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help, not the ego. Jesus and the Holy Spirit help in facilitating the Atonement, not in improving your experience in the world such as: finding a job, a lover, or winning the lottery.

- The miracle is a shift in identity from the ego-body to the mind-spirit. The mind is the cause; the body is the effect. Believing the body is the cause, and the mind is the effect is level confusion. You choose to believe separation, sin, guilt and fear in the mind are real, and project them into your body and world; so you must choose again. You have all power over the dream world.

- The level of mind is where problems are made and resolved; not the body. However, do not deny or ignore symptoms of the body. Treat the body lovingly.

- Mind is the source of behavior. Change happens at the level of mind, not at the level of the body. This does not mean that we should deny or ignore symptoms of the body — treat them! But also realize the ultimate cause of physical symptoms is in the mind.
Ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help at the level of the mind or cause, not the level of the body or effect. Prayer is not for change in the body or world, but for a shift in vision at the level of mind. Change the mind before the body and world. "Mind wandering" is into the illusory world and body. Correction is always the same — there is no order of difficulty in miracles.

• Fear is the choice not to love. When we choose the ego, we are guided by the voice of fear. When we choose the Holy Spirit, we are guided by the Voice for love.

• Those who are always fully aware of the power of the mind are living in the real world and are Self Realized. We will elaborate on the "real world" in later chapters.

• Pain, suffering, sin, guilt and fear; as well as pleasure, happiness, forgiveness, innocence and love all have their source in thought. The mind is the source of the entire universe of experience.

• You must realize the power of your mind. Your mind is the cause of the universe. This is a Course in cause and not effect. A Course in Miracles is a mind training course, and is a lifetime's work. Projection puts the problem "out there" in the body and world apart from you. The miracle brings the focus back to the mind and to the realization of our oneness with God.

  • Mind is cause. The body and world are the effects.

Now we begin to look at our responsibility in the Atonement, forgiveness and healing, and our relationship to others.

The sole responsibility of the miracle worker (all the Sons of God) is to accept the Atonement for oneself. Accepting forgiveness for myself is reflected in how I relate to others. When I am forgiven of sin, guilt and fear, I no longer project them onto you. My choice for Atonement through forgiveness is the same choice you can make. Forgiveness is a major theme of the Course; it is introduced in these early chapters and developed throughout.

End Chapter Two
CHAPTER THREE
THE INNOCENT PERCEPTION

Main Themes: True perception or vision; and perception versus Knowledge. The power of the mind is one of the main themes throughout the whole Course and is addressed in this chapter.

Introduction: Innocent perception is a synonym for true perception or vision. True perception is the correction of the ego's misperception. Chapter Three addresses the nature and structure of the split mind. It is important to know what the mind is to realize and understand its power.

The terms "right mind" and "wrong mind" are illustrated in the Heaven-Knowledge Chart. The Holy Spirit is in the right mind and represents the memory of God's oneness. The ego is in the wrong mind and represents the perceived separation from God's oneness. Heaven-Knowledge is the One Mind or one-mindedness. Consciousness refers to perception and the world of duality. Non-duality is Heaven-Knowledge, Truth. Forgiveness is the reflection of the oneness of Heaven within the illusory world. In the holy relationship we do not perceive another person's interests as separate from our own — there is no winner or loser, victim or victimizer. Forgiveness is part of the illusion of duality, consciousness or perception, but it undoes the ego's assertion of separate interests; you or me, winner or loser, victim or victimizer, one or the other. When there is the perception of a winner and a loser, everyone loses. In the ego's perception of separation, the ego was the winner and God the loser.

One-mindedness or the One Mind is the non-dualistic world of Heaven's Love. In Heaven, God is not separate from Christ. There is no Creator and created — there is only Love. There is only the Will of God which is Love. Once we are in the split mind there is the duality of the wrong mind and the right mind — both are illusory. Wrong minded thinking roots us deeper into the illusion of separation. Right minded thinking helps us to awaken from the dream of separation from God's love. Forgiveness is the final illusion; it does not lead us to further illusions, but ends all illusions.

Consciousness was the first split introduced into the mind after the separation. Consciousness implies a subject and an object. I am conscious of some thing — a person, a body, a behavior, an idea. In consciousness there is a perceiver and the object of perception. Subject/object duality is in consciousness and is illusory.

Once the split mind arises (right mind - wrong mind) there is a third part of the mind called the decision maker or the Son of God who now must choose between the right mind (the Holy Spirit), and the wrong mind (the ego). These "parts" of the mind are not parts, but functions of the mind. The thought system we choose, either the ego's wrong mind, or the Holy Spirit's right mind, becomes real to us because we believe in what we have made and chosen, not because it is real in itself. Belief is in the power of the mind as the decision maker or Son of God. The Son as the decision maker or the dreamer has all power over the dream world.

Faith means trust or belief. Faith in the ego is faithlessness because it is faith in nothing. Faith in the Holy Spirit is faithfulness because the Holy Spirit is the reflection of the real. The power of the mind as the decision maker is to choose the thought system with which to identify. Once we make the choice it becomes reality for us. The experience of separation of the ego remains with us until we realize there must be a better way, and we withdraw our faith in the ego and put it in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit represents the principle of the Atonement that says the separation from God never happened.

The ego makes or projects. The Holy Spirit reflects God's creation. In Heaven as Christ, creation is the extension of God's love. In our right mind we extend the forgiveness of the Holy Spirit. On the Chart, the black dot represents the decision maker or the Son of God which is the starting point of the split mind's thought system — also it is the ending point at the end of our journey. The journey began when the Son chose the ego, and ends when he realizes his mistake and returns to God.

The ego's thought system is of separation, sin, guilt, fear and the body. The Holy Spirit's thought system is of Atonement, forgiveness, innocence, love and spirit. Both thought systems begin with the decision maker's choice, and both are consistent, logical thought systems. Once believed they each follow
logically from the original premise — separation from God, or oneness with God. The Son's belief provides the power.

It is important to understand the power of the mind to make a world of separation and believe in what it makes. All power of the world is in the mind. We give the world all the power it has over us. The power is illusory, but within the dream the mind has all power. The Son of God is the dreamer and decision maker — all power is in him; and you are the Son of God.

The Holy Spirit does not "do" anything in our dream world. We get angry with God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit because they do not work on our imaginary problems in our imaginary world. Once we choose the ego, we experience the darkness of the ego's world as real. The light of spirit is perceived as a threat because it shines its light on our dream world and reveals that we and our problems are non-existent. The special separate self is a self that lives only in the darkness of ignorance. To protect the ego-self from perceived extinction we must banish the light. We resist non-dual teachings of true Self Knowledge because they threaten our separate egoic existence and our entire dream world. Rather than face egoic extinction, we attempt to bring the light (God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit) into our dream world. Later in this chapter we will address how religions based in dual thought systems have attempted to bring the light into the dream.

The reason your life seems to get worse rather than better when you first begin to learn and live this Course is explained here. The "Beginning" refers to God. "My life" is threatened by the light of forgiveness. The darkness of the ego fears the light of spirit. The more we become the observer of the dream, the weaker the ego-self becomes and this can engender fear. The ego-self is based on separation, sin, guilt and fear being real, and are buried in the unconscious. Observing sin and guilt arise from the unconscious into consciousness can be painful and fearful to the ego as it evokes fear of punishment and extinction. Rather than observing and facing our sin, guilt and fear we often resort to the ego's tactics of defense and attack to avoid the death of our thought system which is believed to be "myself."

When the decision maker takes on the function of observer more and more, we realize the light is not destroying "me," but the ego's thought system that I identified as me. Observing the dynamics of the ego is the way out of separation, ego, death and hell. Being completely aware of the selfishness and pain of the ego thought system is crucial to becoming free of it. The fear of release must be addressed.

Within the dream we are free to believe anything we want. The belief that we separated from and destroyed God and his perfect love and oneness, and established our own separate world that is better than Heaven does not make it so. The Atonement principle says the separation never happened — God and His Oneness were not destroyed. The mind has power to make illusions, but it does not have power to make the illusions real. Billions of people on this planet believe they have their own independent existence and are living in the world; belief makes it real to each one, but not to God.

Belief in illusion does not make illusion real — this thought makes the ego tremble with terror (consciously or unconsciously) fearing its own destruction.

The love of God, our true Identity as Christ, is still within our mind; we merely forgot where it is. We lost awareness of God's love first by covering it in the mind with the belief in separation, sin, and guilt; and then burying the sin and guilt by projecting it into the body and world we made. The Atonement principle is in our mind. The world distracts us from the mind by keeping us focused on the body and the world. The miracle reminds us where to look for salvation — in the mind, not in the body and world. The love of God is not in the world, the body or another person. The love of God is only in the mind.

We are free to refuse to accept our inheritance as Christ, God's one and only Son, but we are not free to alter who we truly are. The Atonement points us back to the right place to realize who we really are — within. First we look outside with the eyes of true perception to realize what we perceive as "outside" in the world was first made "inside" in the mind. And we realize there is no "outside." The inside is projected outside — the two are one.

Within the dream we believe we are the author of the reality of who we are — but belief in separation does not change the fact that we are one with God. Forgiveness helps us to disidentify with the ego's
thought system of separation. We are so afraid of ego death that we avoid or attack any idea that threatens our special separate existence; sometimes directly by outright denial; sometimes indirectly by trying to bring the light into our darkness by asking God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit to be active in our painful dream world.

• Traditional Christianity has fallen into the trap of trying to bring the light into the illusion. In the Bible the sin of separation is made real and God responds to it. In the Course, the sin of separation is something we believe happened, and because we believed in sin it became real for us and we suffer the consequences of guilt and fear. But the sin of separation is not real and God knows nothing of it — there is no separation, no sin, no ego and no world. If God believes in sin He would be the original sinner!

The notes below refer to the section of the Text called "Atonement without Sacrifice" which addresses what traditional Christianity has done with the historical Jesus. The Bible's idea of crucifixion makes sin real which evokes guilt and God's punishment. The ultimate punishment is death. The ego's god believes he has been sinned against and seeks retribution in the form of sacrifice. The ego believes the sin of separation is real and fears God's vengeance; so, to appease God the ego offers Him a "sacrificial lamb" — Jesus.

Atonement with sacrifice says sin is real and you must atone for it with a life of suffering and sacrifice for your sin against God, and pray that He is as insane as you are and accepts your offering! Atonement without sacrifice, as presented in the Course, corrects the error by saying the separation never happened and there is nothing to atone for. In the Course "atone" means to correct or undo; not to sacrifice, suffer or pay back.

The idea of Atonement with sacrifice plays a major role (albeit mostly unconscious) in our special relationships. We will address our special love and hate relationships in detail in later chapters.

• The authority problem is at the core of the mistake in traditional Christian thought. The authority problem is based on the belief that I (the ego) am in conflict with God. This conflict is represented by the terms "battleground" and "kill or be killed" in the ego's wrong minded section of the Heaven-Knowledge Chart. The ego believes "I have usurped God's role on the throne, and He is going to try to take it back from me."

The authority problem is the belief that we (the ego) have separated and taken power from God. The authority problems we have in relationships with others in the world are a shadowy fragment of the original authority problem with God. The ego is often looking to be abused and victimized by authorities. This ego dynamic is addressed more in later chapters.

• The source of the authority problem is the ego's belief that it separated from and killed God, evoking guilt and demanding punishment which engenders fear. Fear stems from what the authorities may do to me. I believe I have taken God's power and authority, and I fear God or another authority figure will try to take it back from me. My independent existence as a body in a world is proof that I have taken God's life, power and authority.

Knowledge versus perception is an important theme in this chapter and the whole Course. Refer to the Chart: Heaven-Knowledge is a state of oneness. Perception or consciousness is a state of separation.

• Heaven is perfect oneness. Once the separation seemed to happen, there appeared to be a dualistic universe instead of a one-minded universe. The dualistic universe is referred to as "perception." Perception is consciousness of a subject/object separation — this is duality. Knowledge or Heaven is non-dual, non-specific and abstract.

• The term “invention” refers to what the mind makes to fill its perceived lack. The world of duality and specifics is also the world of judgment. In the Course, judgment means condemnation. To give up judgment means to give up condemnation. Generally, judgment means selectivity in the world of duality. In Heaven or Knowledge there is nothing to select among — there is only God's wholeness. Once the split mind occurred, judgment was the split mind's foundation. In the world we must make judgments and select from various elements in the world. Perception is based on choosing for what we deem important, and against the unimportant. Conversely, God's creation is the abstract, unconditional love of all. Our true Identity as Christ is God's extension of His perfect love.
In Christian theology the Last Judgment is the end phase when God or Jesus makes the Final Judgment as to who will be saved (the sheep) and who will be condemned (the goats). The Course reinterprets it and says the Final Judgment is done by you, not God. When you, as the Son of God, look at what the ego has made and decide that the illusory separate existence is not what you want — that is the Final Judgment. The Course’s Final Judgment has nothing to do with punishment — it sees the error as an error, not a sin. And then you accept the Atonement, realizing the separation from God was only imagined.

"To know" is used as a synonym for Knowledge, Heaven, and Spirit. We judge things as unacceptable and then repress them, making them unconscious. What is repressed will be projected out at some point onto other people and the world. Because we are unaware of what we have repressed, we are sure we are justified in our judgments against others. Forgiveness provides the opportunity for us to find the source of our projected judgments within our mind. Observing what we judge against in others reveals what we have judged and condemned within ourselves, and offers us the opportunity to forgive, heal and release our self-condemnation, and our judgments of others.

We forgive our brothers for what they have not done to us; judgment and sin are in our own mind, not in our brother.

Recognition means to "know again," and refers to remembering the Knowledge of Heaven. It is difficult to give up judgment because it means the extinction of the ego which is founded in judgment and separation from God. Being "right" is critical to the ego. It is not suggested we give up judgment, but that we do not try to justify our judgments of others, or judge with a need to attack another or defend "yourself." What we refuse to accept, we reject and repress. The object we reject or dissociate (a term we will address in later chapters) is not important, but the fact that we have judged the object as real, negative, harmful or fearful makes it that way for us. Nothing is negative, harmful or fearful in itself, but our belief makes it so.

Repressing sin, guilt and fear led us to make up a wrathful God onto which we project our sin and guilt. People get upset when discussing God and religion because they have a need of seeing evil outside in others, not in themselves. When people defend and are willing to die for a religion or any "ism" you will find the belief in separation, and repressed sin, guilt and fear in their unconscious mind.

If you believe you are a separate body living in a world (as you do believe), you wish to be the author of reality. Being in the world means you have separated yourself from God and Heaven. In reality you are an idea in the mind of God, and you never left Him. To maintain our special separate existence, we make up a body and an entire world and then defend it. When we let go of our defense we realize we are the author of nothing, and God is the author of everything. And in truth we are part of all.

Judgment is necessary to remain separate from God. This constant judgment is intolerable. Guilt is intolerable, and judgment comes from guilt. Our guilt over the believed separation is so enormous that we are compelled to deny the guilt in ourselves and project it out by judging everyone else. The cause of our weariness is within us — the belief in separation, sin, guilt, judgment, and protecting the judge (the ego) from annihilation — all of this is exhausting. Our hope is in looking within ourselves for the cure, not in others or the world.

Jesus speaks of the symbol the world has made of him. Because we believe we are a separate body living in a world, we need a symbol of the Atonement in a shape and form we can understand. Jesus' essence is the Atonement, the thought of perfect love in the mind. The person called Jesus is the shape that love takes so we can relate to and understand that perfect love. The Atonement principle manifests through him. We must bring our misperceptions to him; he can not do it for us — this is not a Course in vicarious salvation. Jesus represents the perfect love we can turn to within our mind. His light is, and always has been, within us. Jesus represents the eternal light and love that we are. Our job is to bring our illusions to the light of his truth.

True perception or vision is the undoing of the ego's judgment. The light shines away the cloud of sin and guilt within my mind, and now I see with the vision of true perception. The misperception of the ego is of
guilt. The true perception of Jesus or the Holy Spirit is of innocence.

The ego's perception is of judgment, one or the other — if I am innocent, you are guilty. True perception of the Holy Spirit is of oneness. The whole Course is set on the principle of Jesus' saying, "My brother, choose again." Choose for the Atonement, not for separation. Choose the Holy Spirit as your teacher, not the ego.

We must realize we are the decision maker, the Son of God. We have the power to choose the wholeness of God, or the separation of the ego. In the ego's world our choice is who shall I attack or defend today; who shall I love or hate? All choices are among illusions in the ego's world. The whole Course is about returning our awareness to the power to choose in the mind; the power to choose the ego or the Holy Spirit. One is Heaven, the other is hell.

End Chapter Three
CHAPTER FOUR
THE ILLUSIONS OF THE EGO

Main Themes: This chapter introduces and provides a detailed examination of the ego and its thought system. Also, two principles that form the foundation of the Course are the Atonement principle, and the ego's fear of the Atonement. This chapter addresses both principles.

The Course says we are free to accept or reject our inheritance, but not free to determine what our inheritance is. Our inheritance as God's Son is perfectly safe and secure. The ego's thought of separation had no effect on our eternal oneness with God's love — "not one note in Heaven's song was missed." That is the Atonement principle. The separation from God never happened. The ego can only exist if we maintain our belief in separation; hence its fear of the Atonement, and its strategy to keep us identified with the body and world and ignorant of the Holy Spirit.

• The reality of our identity with spirit remains unchanged regardless of the ego's belief in separation.

• Our eternal home in Heaven is forever unchanged — the ego has no effect on our oneness with God.

• We are the Kingdom of Heaven. Our true Identity as Christ is unaffected by any of the "mad thoughts" of the ego. The separation never happened. The thought system of the world is an illusion. The only reality is Heaven's oneness.

• Within the illusion we are free to believe anything we want, but our belief in illusion has no effect on reality. You, as the Son of God, have all power over the world. You limit your power by choosing to identify with the ego. You assert your power by choosing to identify with the Holy Spirit.

• The ego cannot stop God's love from shining on us, but through our belief in the ego it can block the awareness of love's presence. We remain one with God even as we are identified with the ego.

• The ego's thought system of separation had no effect on who we truly are as spirit. Later in these notes we will address the dynamics of the split mind's "dissociation" of the Holy Spirit in the right mind from the ego in the wrong mind.

• Being is a synonym for Spirit. "Communicate" means to share or extend God's love. The Holy Spirit and Jesus remind us of our ability to communicate the love of God.

• The Atonement principle allows us to understand the underlying idea of the whole Course which is the first miracle principle: there is no order of difficulty in miracles. Because the separation from God never happened, the entire world is an illusion; therefore it is simple to heal any problem in the world. We go back to the source of separation in our mind that made all problems, choosing the ego, and choose the Holy Spirit instead, thus healing all illusory problems. The Atonement principle, the fact that the separation from God's perfection never happened, is the reason there is no order of difficulty in miracles. This is the first major theme that forms the foundation of the whole Course.

The second major theme is the ego's fear of the Atonement. The ego's fear of Atonement gives rise to the entire thought system of separation, specialness, individuality, sin, guilt, fear, death and the necessity to flee the mind and make up a body and world. The Atonement principle, and the ego's fear of the Atonement form the foundation for the whole thought system of the Course. It is important to be clear about this to understand the Course, and to express and demonstrate its teaching in your life.

Scarcity is a major theme in the ego's thought system. The ego's scarcity is contrasted with the Holy Spirit's abundance. Specificity is another aspect of the ego's thought system and is contrasted with the Holy Spirit's abstraction. Abstract means non-specific. The Spirit is whole, complete non-specific and abstract. The ego's world is made of separate specifics. The ego is dependent on specifics for its existence. The ego is born in the moment the Son of God believes he has a specific identity, separate from the whole, complete, non-specific and abstract reality of God and Christ. The world of specifics is the seeming witness to the apparent reality of the ego's specificity. The ego's fear is that if the Son chooses Knowledge or abstraction, the ego will disappear.
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Knowledge is a synonym for Heaven. Knowledge does not recognize separate persons — it is impersonal. Knowledge is only God, pure Spirit. The appearance of our separate, concrete world of specifics is the projection of our identity with an apparently concrete, separate, specific ego-self. All separate specifics are illusory because only abstract wholeness is real — this is why there is no order of difficulty in miracles. All specific difficulties are illusory and are healed by Knowledge or the oneness of Spirit. It is critical to understand this concept because the whole Course is based on it. There is no order of difficulty in miracles because the specifics of the problem are irrelevant — the specifics are not the problem. The ego made the body and world to make us think that problems exist where they do not — in the body and world.

Abstract means non-specific. The One Mind is perfect wholeness, perfect unity. The concrete is specific and separate. In Heaven there is only perfect oneness, there is no subject/object duality. Without separation there is no ego.

In the Course, “existence” is a synonym for the perceptual world — in contrast with “Being” which is of God. Existence is of a specific, separate, concrete object of the world. Being is the non-specific, abstract, oneness of Spirit or God. Existence, separation and judgment make the foundation of our special relationships (love and hate) which are addressed in later chapters. Being and Knowledge are of oneness, and are abstract and non-specific. There is no specialness or distinctiveness in Heaven. There is no separation of God and Christ — these are dualistic terms we use to express the relationship between God and His Creation, but they are not separate. Creator and creation are one.

Now we will address the ego's fear of the Atonement, and more specifically the ego's fear of the Son choosing the Atonement of the Holy Spirit instead of the specialness of the ego. On the Chart, the black dot represents the decision maker which is the part of the Son's mind that chooses the ego or the Holy Spirit. The ego fears the Son will realize that choosing the specificity of the ego was a mistake and will instead choose the abstract non-specificity of the Sonship. That would mean the demise of the ego, hence its fear of extinction. It is important to understand that this fear plays a major role in the strategy of the ego thought system.

Spirit and ego are mutually exclusive. Spirit knows nothing of the ego because the ego has no being — it is not real. Spirit does not try to change, correct or fight the ego because the ego is unreal. When the Son learns to choose Spirit, which the whole Course is about, the ego is undone by the Son withdrawing belief in it. God is not in opposition with the ego, but the ego and God are mutually exclusive states. This is not a Course in reconciling opposites (like Jung). Love and fear cannot be reconciled. In the presence of love, fear disappears.

The term "ego" is almost always a synonym for "wrong minded thinking," but in the passage in this chapter where it says "the ego can learn," it refers to the decision making part of the mind. So "ego" in this passage refers to the entire split mind. The decision making part of the mind can learn to change the decision it made for the ego and choose the Holy Spirit.

It is imperative that you understand the depth of the ego's fear of the Atonement because it is your fear of Atonement. These early chapters that expose how the ego's thought system arose lay the foundation for the rest of the Course and learning to forgive. You must understand the deep fear the ego has of its own demise which is the fear of the Atonement principle.

The ego's fear is that we will realize our mistake and choose the Holy Spirit instead. The ego is nothing more than our belief in it. The strength the ego and the world seem to have is derived from the power of the decision maker to choose and believe its choice is real. Heaven is totally unaffected by this, but in the dream, we believe Heaven was affected and God is angry! The ego does not want us to realize this is all made up. No fear — no ego. No ego — no "me." In Chapter Five the Holy Spirit is described as being God's Voice — the Voice that says, "Choose again."

Later in the Text it is made clear that "specialness" is what we believe we need most, and scream in rage at the thought of our specialness being taken away. We believe anything that reinforces our separate identity will benefit us. We value anyone or anything onto which we can project our sin and guilt. Projecting our sin and guilt allows us to maintain our separate identity without the sin and guilt. Anyone or
Notes on Chapter Four – The Illusions of the Ego

anything that protects the ego-self is defended. I will scream and yell if my ego-self protection is threatened. Any teaching that threatens our specialness and individuality we will fight against — all of this is born of the fear of Atonement.

Children do not know what is good for them, nor do we. Clinging to the ego-self is hurting us, not helping. The Holy Spirit's offer of Atonement will help us, but being like children we scream and yell when our beloved toys are threatened!

We all are trying to get God to pay attention to us. This is why the ego wrote the Bible. In the Bible, God pays attention to us: He creates us; He loves us; He hates us; He murders us; He saves us. Each intervention proves God recognizes us. From the ego's point of view, it does not matter if God loves us or hates us, saves us or destroys us — as long as He notices us.

In the Course, God does not know about individuals. This is not terrible, this is joyful. God's not knowing us is an expression of the Atonement principle — the separation never happened. Because the separation never happened, God cannot know a separate ego. And strictly speaking, the ego knows nothing of spirit. The ego's real threat is of the decision maker or the Son of God who has the power to withdraw his belief in the ego's existence, and the ego would disappear back into the nothingness from which it came.

Spirit has no "enemy." The ego is terrified the Son will withdraw his belief in it. Existence is specificity. The ego offers the "reward" of special separate existence. The ego's god offers eternal life — if you are good and do what he tells you! Or punishment in hell if you do not do as the ego's god tells you. Everybody's ego god is different in terms of good and evil.

Sane judgment is in the right mind with the Holy Spirit who represents the Atonement. The ego conceals the Atonement under the thought system of sin, guilt and fear in the mind, and then by making a body and world onto which it projects the sin, guilt and fear, thereby preserving the ego.

The ego's goal is to keep away the Atonement. To ensure we never realize our mistake of choosing the ego rather than the Holy Spirit, the ego develops a strategy. The strategy arose from the Atonement principle and the ego's fear of Atonement. The strategy is to make us mindless by making a world and a body and having us identify with it. The ego first makes us fear the mind by making sin, guilt and fear real and telling us God will punish us for our sin which motivates us to leave the mind and hide in the body and world. The ego then projects the sin and
guilt onto other bodies and the world so the Son can retain his innocence.

The ego's strategy is to protect itself. The threat to the ego's existence is in the mind, the decision maker's power to choose. The threat is not from God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit. The ego's strategy is to make us mindless by making a body and a world and having us identify with the body — not the mind.

The mind is the source of the body's appetites, desires and needs; the body is nothing without the mind. The body has no "needs" to satisfy. The ego's need to survive is satisfied by keeping us mindless and having us identify with the body and its special "needs."

In this chapter is one of the clearest descriptions of what the ego does and how it makes it virtually impossible to question what it does. The ego transfers its thought system of separation from the mind to the body and world, causing us to forget we made the body and world. The reason we chose the ego and its identity with the body was to protect us from the wrath of God that would result in our death. The ego says the body will protect us — but the body gets sick and dies! And we have no recourse because we do not know about the mind.

The decision maker is within the mind. We feel there is something wrong with us as a separate body in the world, but we do not know what is wrong because the ego has hidden the decision maker from our awareness. The ego says the body will protect you and make you safe, but we eventually realize we are not safe as a body in the world, and we make up a theology that says, "It is all the will of God." Chapter 13 declares that if our world is the real world, God is indeed cruel. Because we believe we are a body in a world we try to "fix" the body and world to resolve our perceived problems; but the solution is only in the mind.

The "real question" is why did we choose the ego in the first place? From the Course's point of view the whole world is a "tangential issue," and veils the real question. The purpose of the ego's world is to be a smokescreen to dissuade us from choosing the Holy Spirit instead of the ego. It is important to question the purpose of our body, the world and our behaviors and activities in the world. Sickness of the body and conflict in the world serve to distract the decision maker. Conversely, we can use the body and the world as a classroom to become free and get back to our mind and ultimately to our true identity as spirit. Jesus and the Holy Spirit serve as inner teachers who guide us out of the world, back to the mind and our Identity with God.

Jesus uses positive reinforcement as motivation to learn his teaching. By forgiving we feel better. By judging and condemning we feel worse. Controlling or punishing the ego keeps it firmly in place. Generally, we learn better through reward than punishment.

We threw away our Identity as Christ because we value our special separate egocentric identity. Releasing our separate self interests, and embracing shared interests brings joy. Holding on to the ego's separate interests brings misery. Learning to release the ego's selfishness takes time and is made easier with the help of Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Becoming aware of and looking at the ego is an important theme in the Course. Our relationship with Jesus or the Holy Spirit as our inner teacher helps us to choose the oneness and love of God rather than the separation of the ego.

When we ask for his guidance, Jesus helps us look at the ego thought system so we may choose again. Observing the ego mind and its dynamics is another important theme in the Course which helps us bring the darkness of the ego to the light of the Holy Spirit, and facilitates healing.

There are only two thoughts we can have: separation or Atonement. The experience of separation in a world of bodies is a projection of separation in the wrong mind or ego. The oneness of spirit, the Atonement, is the reflection of God's Love in the right mind or the Holy Spirit. As we bring our dark thoughts of separation and fear to the light of Jesus' love they disappear. Separation and fear are dissolved by oneness and love.

The thoughts you have and cherish are of your special separate egocentric existence. You have not thought of the Atonement, your oneness with spirit. It is easier to turn to the Holy Spirit than the ego; it only seems difficult at first.

The temptation is to believe that the ego's thought system of separation is to your benefit, and the Holy
Spirit's thoughts of Atonement are to your detriment. The temptation is to believe that judgment, specialness, attack and defense will make you happy, safe, strong, secure and loved; and forgiveness will make you unhappy, vulnerable, weak and insecure.

Forgiveness is a central theme in the Course and is touched upon in these early chapters. If we want to join with God, we must join with our brothers. We cannot reject or exclude our brothers if we are to return Home.

The Sonship is one. All are included. None is excluded. By accepting and forgiving our brothers, we are accepting and forgiving ourselves. Forgiveness facilitates the Atonement — the realization of oneness.

Your brother is not separate from God. To reject or exclude your brother is to reject and exclude Jesus and God. Rejecting and excluding your brother is rejecting and excluding part of yourself because your brother and Jesus are projections of your mind. By forgiving your brother, you are forgiving a part of yourself you had previously condemned and rejected. To condemn or reject even one person is to condemn and reject yourself, God and the whole Sonship.

The Sonship is one. There are no exceptions. The oneness of God's Son is crucial to understand now and is developed over the rest of the Course.

Teaching and learning is a key theme in the Course, and is developed in later chapters and especially in the Manual for Teachers. The key realization is that teaching and learning are the same; just as giving and receiving are the same. You receive what you give. Giving love, you receive it. To learn peace, you must teach it. This teaching and learning is of the mind, not the world.

To learn healing of the mind, we teach it by demonstrating it. To learn separation, judgment and condemnation, we teach it by demonstrating it.

The ego is specialness, separation, sin, guilt, fear, conflict, anger, war, hate and death. To demonstrate is to teach. To teach is to learn. Teach only love and oneness, and you learn it. Teach separation and fear, and you learn it.

End Chapter Four
CHAPTER FIVE
HEALING AND WHOLENESS

Main Theme: In Chapter Five we are formally introduced to the Holy Spirit. It is the first time in the Course the Holy Spirit is addressed in detail. The Holy Spirit is the loving teacher of oneness that guides us through the chaos of the separation of the ego. The Holy Spirit is always with us but is covered over by the loud voice of the ego.

It is important to be aware that the Course uses dualistic and anthropomorphic words and symbols that represent the ego, God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit; and we should not take the words and symbols literally. The underlying content of the Course is to be taken literally, but not the form. The Holy Spirit is a thought in our mind that represents the memory of our oneness with God.

The Holy Spirit speaks to us on the same level at which we believe we are — separate bodies in a world. We perceive most of our problems are in our special relationships, so the Holy Spirit addresses our special relationships and that is where our healing occurs. In reality there are no relationships between bodies; relationships are the projections of thought in our mind. As long as we believe we are bodies in relationship with other bodies, the Holy Spirit helps us heal our relationships. In reality healing only occurs in the mind. Strictly speaking it is not the Holy Spirit who heals, we heal, because we chose the ego which is the source of our problems, and we choose the Holy Spirit Who reminds us of our oneness with God's love that heals all problems. The Course uses what the ego made, and reinterprets and transforms it to facilitate healing.

The ego uses our perceived problems to keep us prisoner of the body and world. The Holy Spirit uses problems in the world as a classroom to help free us from identification with the body and world. The Holy Spirit operates in our mind with loving and gentle strength.

The Holy Spirit does not take action in our world or body. It does not heal sickness in the body or resolve conflicts in our world for us. The Holy Spirit is the quiet presence in our mind that reminds us of what we have forgotten — our oneness with God. When we choose to identify with the separation and conflict of the ego, the Holy Spirit is the Voice that reminds us to choose again.

Our original problem was not the "tiny mad idea" (the idea we separated from God), but our problem is that we believed it and took it seriously. As a later section in the Course says, "We remembered not to laugh." Even when we feel embroiled in our world of "serious" problems, the tender loving smile of the Holy Spirit is with us and reminds us there is another way to see this.

The Workbook for Students refers to the world as "the place where starved and thirsty creatures come to die." The ego made the world as an attack on God's oneness. The Holy Spirit uses the world we made to help us realize the world can have another purpose. We are not asked to deny the body or the world, but to see them differently. We cannot skip steps in our understanding. We need a gradual approach with a patient teacher who will help us look at the body and world differently at a pace that will not evoke fear. We must look at the world and realize it is a projection of the mind. So we use what we see in the world to get back to what our mind has chosen — the ego's conflict and separation rather than God's love and oneness.

Ideas make our world. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are ideas in our mind that represent symbols of the right minded choice for the Atonement rather than the ego's wrong minded choice for separation. I am an idea. You are an idea. The world is an idea. The ego is an idea. God is an idea. Everything is an idea.

Ideas are strengthened as they are shared. The more love you extend, the more you feel. The more guilt you project, the more you feel. Forgiveness is the way we share the Atonement. The Holy Spirit is an idea in the mind that represents the choice for God's oneness and shared interests. The ego is an idea in the mind that represents the choice for separation and selfish interests. The Holy Spirit serves as a reminder that we can choose the oneness of God's love rather than the ego's separation. The Course comes as a Text and Workbook because we must learn to remember the true identity of who we are, and unlearn our identity with the ego. We must learn the difference between reality and illusion.
Again we will address two important themes of the Course: First, the Atonement principle, and second, the ego's fear of the Atonement principle. It is crucial to understand these two key themes of the Course.

Free will means we can choose to deny Knowledge, which is the synonym for Heaven in the Course. We are free to deny the Holy Spirit's presence, but it is still always with us. We can choose to drown out the beautiful melody of the Holy Spirit with the raucous shrieking of the ego, but the melody is still with us.

Our will is an extension of God's Will as Christ or Spirit; we can choose to ignore it, but we cannot obliterate the Will of God. The Will of God is perfect Love.

The Knowledge of God's oneness can be forgotten temporarily, but not lost forever. The Holy Spirit reminds us the love of God is always with us.

The Holy Spirit is our communication link to God. We can hide God's Will under the ego's thought system of separation, but we cannot destroy God's Will of oneness. This is the Atonement principle: the separation never happened, and the love of God within us is totally unaffected.

This is the Holy Spirit's answer to the ego: You are free to believe any insane thought you want, but having thoughts and believing them does not make them real. We can have the most insane thoughts imaginable, and we all do, but it does not make them true. The fact that we alone believe in our insane thoughts, or ten people, or ten million people believe in our insane thoughts, does not make them real or true. It only means there are ten million people who are as deluded as we are.

The insanity is that we believe we can separate from God. The good news is we can make a voice that seems to drown out God, but does not. It only means for the moment we may not hear God's Voice. The melody of the Holy Spirit is always within.

Strictly speaking, God did not do anything; nothing needs to be done; nothing happened. The Biblical God is active in the world; the Biblical God is the ego's god. The true God does nothing in the world. If God were to take action in our dream world that would make God insane. The Course uses dual language and anthropomorphic symbology to speak to us at the level we can understand: as a body in a world. The ego's god must act in the world. The true God does nothing in the world because the world is our projected illusion.

It is the ego who told us that the Holy Spirit in our mind is God's General who is going to capture us and bring us back to God Who will destroy us. That is the ego's myth that drives us out of our mind, literally and figuratively, and makes the world. Jesus uses the same myth, but changes the meaning of the symbols. The Holy Spirit is placed in our mind to be a gentle reminder of God's love for us and to guide us home to Heaven. Do not mistake the symbols for reality.

The ego knows, as we do, that if the Son hears the Holy Spirit, Who is the Voice for God, the Son may choose the Holy Spirit which will lead to the dissolution of the ego. Therefore, the ego's strategy is to keep us focused in the world and identified with the body so we will remain mindless and unable to choose against the ego and for the Holy Spirit.

One reason the Bible is the most popular book in the Western world is because the Bible says God did create us as individual bodies, reinforcing the ego's special separate existence.

Dissociation is the psychological dynamic of splitting off. Dissociation is represented in the Chart by the split between the ego's wrong mind and the Holy Spirit's right mind. It is the dissociation of the Holy Spirit's Atonement principle that allows the ego to thrive. As separate egos we are afraid of the Holy Spirit because when we bring the darkness of the ego to the light of the Holy Spirit's Atonement the ego disappears.

By choosing the Holy Spirit we are choosing against the ego, against our special, individual existence.

The "vision" of the Holy Spirit is the Atonement. People love to fight because it makes the ego strong. The ego began with the thought that we were at war with God. And the war continues in the way we live our lives in conflict.

The ego does not know anything about the Holy Spirit. The ego's fear is that a power greater than
Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles* 

itself, the Son of God, can choose the Holy Spirit. The power is in the Son as the decision maker.

• It is crucial to understand the major themes of the Atonement and the ego's fear of Atonement. It is important to understand and appreciate how strong the ego's desire to maintain its separate existence is. We all will literally fight to the death to maintain our special separate existence. Whether we identify with a national, political, religious or racial group; or with our individual identity as a body; we are terrified of the non-specific, abstract nature of God's love and will kill to maintain our separate existence. The main reason people are unable to live this Course is that they are terrified (consciously or unconsciously) of the loss of their individual, special existence.

• In truth, sin is a call for love. All behavior is either an expression of love or a call for love. Sin is a lack of love. The remedy for a lack of love is the extension of love. To survive, the ego needs sin to be real, not merely a lack of love. Therefore, unconditional love evokes terror in the ego; as unconditional love means the end of the ego's specialness.

As long as we are identified with the body and forget we have a mind, the ego has our total allegiance. When we chose the ego we chose it totally. The ego's fear is that we will change our mind. When you first begin turning to the Holy Spirit rather than the ego, the ego strikes back viciously because it perceives you as a traitor. Anything less than full allegiance to the ego is perceived as an attack.

• The way the ego protects itself is by excluding the decision making part of the mind from the Atonement. It excludes the decision maker by keeping the focus on the body and world, and away from the mind.

• One of the ego's chief weapons in its war against our choosing God is guilt. The ego uses guilt as a way to preserve the belief in sin. Guilt means we have sinned, and because of our sin we deserve to be punished which evokes fear.

• Sin is the belief that we separated from God; guilt arises because of our belief in separation from God, and fear is of the punishment we will suffer for separating from God.

First we make up a wrathful, vengeful God, and then out of fear of our made up God we decide to punish ourselves so God does not have to punish us. We believe we have sinned against God and so we punish ourselves to mitigate our guilt.

• In a sense the whole Course is about making a decision. The ego is afraid of the Atonement principle and does its best to drown out the Voice of the Holy Spirit. Its strategy is to convince us that the sin of separation is real, have us feel guilty over separating from God, and fear God's wrath for separating from Him. Then we make a body and world onto which we can project our sin and guilt. By keeping us focused on the world, we forget we have a mind that made the original choice for the ego and separation, and can choose again for the Holy Spirit and oneness of God. This process is referred to as the double shield of oblivion. Sin, guilt and fear in the mind comprise the first shield against the Holy Spirit's Voice. The projection of the world and identification with the body form the second shield. At some point we realize there must be another way and we can make another choice.

The place we are called back to is the decision maker or the Son of God — a place we never left. We all have the same power to learn to choose the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. It takes effort and great willingness to learn because of our identification with the ego, the body and world; and the ego's fear of dissolution.

• The Holy Spirit calls us to forget the ego and remember our oneness with God. We are in a state of opposition because we believe we are at war with God for our own individual existence. Our conflicts and wars in the world are a reflection of the original war with God. We simply reenact the original war over and over again in our lives. There are groups of people in the U.S. who reenact the Civil War each year as a memorial. In our daily lives we reenact the original Civil War with God in each conflict we fight.

• Once we make a world of opposites, we can choose between the voice for the ego or the Holy Spirit. Free will only has meaning within the illusion. God's Will in Heaven is absolutely free.
Notes on Chapter Five – Healing and Wholeness

* Although the term "decision maker" is not used in the Course, clearly it is implied. Altars represent a choice: whether we are devoted to and worship at the altar of the ego which is dripping with blood; or the altar of the Holy Spirit which is strewn with the lilies of forgiveness. Jesus is teaching us that when we choose the ego we feel separation, pain and suffering. When we choose the Holy Spirit we feel wholeness, love and peace.

The decision we make for the ego or the Holy Spirit determines our experience; no one else. This realization is the beginning of true forgiveness.

* There is no order of difficulty in miracles because the cause of my distress is not in the world — whether my problem is a hang nail or cancer; an argument with a friend or a World War. The cause of my distress is in my mind, not in the illusory body or world. There is no hierarchy of illusions, and there is no order of difficulty in miracles. The one problem is the mistaken choice I made for the ego's separation and conflict; and the one solution is choosing the Holy Spirit's oneness and love.

The Holy Spirit does not "do" anything with our problems in the world. We bring our problems to the light of the Holy Spirit, and in the light they dissolve. The choice for despair and suffering, or true hope and peace is ours, not the Holy Spirit's.

* We cannot get to Heaven if we exclude anyone; this is the importance of forgiveness. Salvation is a collaborative venture. Excluding, rejecting, judging or condemning another is in fact excluding, rejecting, judging and condemning myself. I cannot feel peace, love and wholeness if I exclude anyone. To crucify one is to crucify the whole Sonship, including myself.

The "Call" for God is a synonym for the Voice for God or the Holy Spirit. Anger, judgment and condemnation are never justified. We may feel anger, judgment and condemnation, but they are never justified. No one can be excluded from forgiveness and love if you are to return to Heaven. In Heaven all is one.

* The "things that are God's" refer to the Sonship. All of us are of God with no exceptions. It can be a challenge for us to accept everyone as part of our self and part of God. The desire to project our sin and guilt out of ourselves and onto another can be a challenge to overcome, but it is impossible to know the love and peace of God while judging or condemning even one other person. This is the importance of all-inclusive, unconditional forgiveness.

Jesus’ role in our lives is to help us choose the Holy Spirit, awaken from the dream of separation, and accept the Atonement for ourselves.

* The decision for the ego is the decision to exclude. First we exclude God, and then we exclude everybody else. Choosing the Holy Spirit is the decision to share. I realize my shared Identity with God; God and I are one. In my shared Identity with God, I am one with you. We all share God's being and are one in Him.

The capital "M" Mind is the One Mind of God. The Call of the Holy Spirit is the Call to awaken from the dream. In awakening is true rest.

* "Teaching" does not refer to teaching the Course or its philosophy. We teach by choosing to listen to the Holy Spirit in our mind, and as we learn from the Holy Spirit we teach what we learn by demonstrating it.

End Chapter Five
CHAPTER SIX
THE LESSONS OF LOVE

Main Themes: In Chapter Four we were formally introduced to the ego, and we addressed the ego's strategy of trying to confuse us by having us believe we are a body instead of a mind. In Chapter Five the development of the ego's thought system was continued and we saw the introduction of the concept of guilt. We also saw the formal introduction of the Holy Spirit. And now in Chapter Six we see the further development of the ego thought system, and how once we have guilt it is inevitable that we project it. The main way guilt is projected is through anger and attack. We will see how and why the ego projects its thought of guilt. Also in this chapter we will address the lessons of the Holy Spirit and what they mean to us. Each chapter in the Text contains the whole thought system of the Course, but focuses on one or two particular themes.

The Atonement principle states that the separation from God’s love and wholeness never happened. And we are all perfectly united within the Mind and love of God. We will soon see how having, being, giving and receiving are all one and are not separate. We have the love of God because we are the love of God. And giving the love of God is receiving the love of God because we are all one in God.

Full awareness of the Atonement is the full awareness in our experience that we are absolutely whole and complete, in and as God's unconditional love.

The ego can only exist in conflict and difficulty, so it even makes the remembering of our true identity as the wholeness of God's love seem difficult.

The Holy Spirit's answer is always a form of the Atonement principle.

Our true nature is Being, which is our reality as Christ. We are free to ignore or attack our oneness with God, but we cannot change God's Truth. The ego's fear is that we will choose God's oneness over the ego's specialness and separation, and causes the ego to develop its strategy to cover the Voice of the Holy Spirit with sin and guilt, and then make a body and world onto which it can project the sin and guilt, further hiding the truth of our Identity with God under the veil of the world of bodies.

The ego fears the truth that we are not bodies living in a state of separation. We are free to believe we are separate from God, but believing does not make it so.

The ego is terrified of the mind because the mind can choose the Holy Spirit which would lead to the dissolution of the ego. The ego makes us mindless so we will not choose against its special separate existence. The ego's purpose for making the body and the world is to keep us out of the mind where we would realize our mistaken choice and choose again. You must understand the ego's strategy in order to understand this Course and its practical application in your life. The ego is terrified of the Atonement because the Atonement means the end of the ego. The ego cannot exist in the state of perfect oneness, which means you, as you believe yourself to be, cannot exist in the state of perfect oneness. This is your great terror and so you will literally fight to the death to maintain your egoic specialness.

The right mind or the Holy Spirit in our mind cannot be lost or defiled. The ego or wrong mind cannot touch our right mind. Separation cannot know oneness.

"What are you?" is the ego's question. The maker of the ego is the decision making part of the mind — the decision maker. "You" refers to the Son of God as the decision maker. The ego fears the decision maker because only he can undo the ego by choosing the Holy Spirit. And that is why the ego must keep you focused in the world, identified with a body, and out of the decision making part of your mind. Jesus cannot undo the ego; the Holy Spirit cannot undo the ego; God knows nothing of the illusory ego — only you as the Son of God can undo the ego by choosing to identify with the Holy Spirit instead.

You must understand the ego's fear in order to understand this Course, and to understand yourself, your behavior and your difficulty in applying what you are learning in your daily experience.

You, the Son of God as the decision maker, have chosen to identify yourself with the ego's nightmare of special separate existence as a body in a world. The ego's thought system is the dream: sin, guilt,
fear, the battleground, hate, attack, murder, the body and world. The Course is given to facilitate our waking up from the dream of separation to the truth of our Identity as Christ with God in Heaven. The ego's fear is that we will wake up; therefore it fights like hell to keep us mindless and asleep in its dream world. The dynamics of the ego and its strategy are exposed as we continue through the Text.

The reason people rejected Jesus is because he represented the Atonement which meant the dissolution of the ego's existence. Jesus and the Holy Spirit represent the thought system that leads to the dissolution of the specialness of the ego. The ego's thought system says we are separate from God; sin and guilt are real; the body and world are real; and we are bodies living in the world. Our separate, special identity is rooted in and dependent upon the ego's thought system. The Holy Spirit's thought system says the separation never happened; sin and guilt are illusions; the body and world are illusory projections of mind; and our true identity is one with spirit. If we as the Son of God choose the Holy Spirit, the ego is dissolved. This is why the ego does everything it can to keep us focused on the body and world and out of the decision making part of our mind. Any threat of the ego's thought system is perceived as an attack on its life and it will attack back to defend against the perceived attack.

The first lesson of the Holy Spirit is "To have, give all to all." We will cover the lessons of the Holy Spirit later in this chapter. Our conflict is between two opposing thought systems in the mind: the ego, and the Holy Spirit. Until we choose the Holy Spirit wholly, this conflict will be projected out into the world in the form of disputes, anger, hostility and war. This Course is given to facilitate a change in the mind of the thinker and to resolve our internal conflict, not to resolve or change anything at all in the world. The world is an effect. The mind is the cause. This is a Course in cause and not effect.

The ego's strategy to keep us identified involves the body. It is vitally important that you recognize the purpose that your body serves. When you understand the purpose of the body and world, the ego's strategy will become crystal clear.

You are the Son of God as the decision maker. The ego has no awareness of oneness, love or the Holy Spirit. The ego is born in separation, selfishness and fear. But it is aware that it owes its existence to the mind's power to choose it, and it is aware of every threat to its existence. The ego's terror is that the Son, its maker, will choose against it. The Son can end the ego in an instant — the holy instant. So the ego attacks its maker by making it mindless and identifying with the body and making the body its principal ally.

The ego would love to believe that this Course will make "me," this physical, psychological body, better, more holy and more loving, and teach me to heal other bodies and eventually the world. This Course is about healing the separation from God in the mind, and has nothing at all to do with healing the ego, the body or the world.

To "get rid" of my sin and guilt I need something onto which I can project it; this is the purpose of the ego's body and its world of bodies. In the next few passages we will address the ego's strategy of dissociation and projection of sin, guilt and fear.

You, as the ego, use dissociation and projection in an attempt to "free" yourself of sin, guilt and fear by putting it in someone or something else, and out of yourself. Through projection of your sin and guilt, you are able to maintain your face of innocence and rest comfortably in the arms of your specialness!

There are passages in the Text in which Jesus uses himself as a model for how we should deal with attack in the world. They address the story of the crucifixion of Jesus as someone who was attacked and killed, and shows his response. Jesus says to use him as a model for learning forgiveness; that is how to meet attack without attack. Being in your wrong mind you will perceive any threat to your ego as an attack, and you will attack back. Being in your right mind, you will perceive attack only as a call for love and not an attack on you at all — this is true forgiveness.

If you believe the darkness of separation, guilt and attack are real, you cannot know the light of God's wholeness, and you cannot extend His love. It is important to be aware of our responsibility in facilitating the Atonement through forgiveness.

 Forgiveness must begin in you and be extended unconditionally to everyone. If you accuse anyone of sin, guilt or attack you are saying they are children of...
darkness, and the light of the world does not shine in them. If I do not see the light shining in every single member of the Sonship, it is because there is a spot of darkness of guilt in my own mind that I have made real, and I want to exclude it and get rid of it by projecting it out onto you.

When Jesus refers to the crucifixion and his defenseless response, the key here is not the form of his response (his action in the world), but the content (the response in his mind). Whether or not the crucifixion of Jesus happened as portrayed in the Bible is irrelevant here. The story of the crucifixion has become a part of Western culture and is used as a symbol for teaching purposes in the Course.

Jesus made the firm and unequivocal decision for the Holy Spirit so there is no ego to defend. Persecution is not done to us; persecution is a perception or interpretation in our mind based on the need to see sin and guilt in someone else. Jesus sees all attack as an expression of fear, and fear is the expression of a call for love. He suggests that whenever we feel attacked or unfairly treated, to think of him. If you choose to respond to attack with attack it is because of the decision you made in your mind, not because of external events.

The Holy Spirit is a strong yet gentle Voice that reminds us we can choose to wake up from our nightmare of separate existence as Jesus did. The following notes illustrate the teaching methods the Holy Spirit uses to awaken sleeping children.

In the world, we all share the same insanity of the ego; in Heaven, we all share the same Identity as Christ. The ego always perceives differences. The Holy Spirit always perceives our common Identity with God.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit teach through love which is approach; not through projection, fear and attack which is avoidance.

Jesus' and the Holy Spirit's role is to help us wake up from our dream of separation. The content of the dream is not important. What is important is that we realize we have chosen the dream of separation which has brought us pain and suffering. And that we choose instead to wake up from the dream and realize the truth of our Identity with God. There is no order of difficulty in miracles because all problems are in our dream of separation and are healed by waking up from the dream. The miracle is the change of mind that shifts from the ego's deluded perception to the true perception of the Holy Spirit.

Our entire existence is rooted in the belief in our independence from God. Realizing we never separated from God heals all problems. This is why there is no order of difficulty in miracles.

Change can only occur in the mind. Jesus shows us how choosing the ego brings us pain, and choosing the Holy Spirit brings perfect peace and joy. This motivates us to persevere, to learn this Course and apply its principles in our daily lives. It can be a challenge for us to let go of our identity with the ego, therefore Jesus and the Holy Spirit are always with us providing guidance and love.

You are a child of love in truth, not a child of the ego.

Learning to accept the Atonement, which is accepting our oneness with God's love, is a process that happens over time. Salvation is instantaneous. In the holy instant we realize we are one with God, and the separation never happened. But the old habits of the ego mind and identity with the body can take time to unlearn so that our realization of our Identity with God becomes stable. It can take time to overcome the ego's tremendous fear of annihilation.

Now we will address the three lessons of the Holy Spirit. The first lesson is, "To have, give all to all." This lesson undoes the ego's idea, "To have, take all from all" (which is not part of the Course). The original ego thought was, "To have, take all from God." This is the ego's principle of one or the other. If God has life, I do not have it. If I take it, it is mine and God does not have it. This transfers to our daily life this way: to have innocence, I must take yours and give you my sin and guilt.

The first lesson of the Holy Spirit brings us back to the mind where the Holy Spirit operates and teaches that having, being, giving and receiving are the same. This works the same way with love or guilt. The second lesson of the Holy Spirit is "To have peace, teach peace to learn it." The ego's lesson was, "To have separation, teach attack to learn separation." The second lesson of the Holy Spirit makes it clear that I want peace, and ensures that I join with the
peace of the Holy Spirit in my mind rather than the conflict of the ego.

The sin, guilt, fear, hatred and violence that I see in you and the world are projected from my own mind — I see myself in you and the world.

The third lesson of the Holy Spirit is "Be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom." The ego's version is "Be vigilant only for the ego and its kingdom of guilt." The ego makes sin and guilt real in ourselves, then denies its presence in us, and is vigilant of the guilt in everybody else. This third lesson of the Holy Spirit shifts our vigilance to our mind and the peace of the Holy Spirit rather than the ego's conflict in the world we made. Now we are to be continually watchful with Jesus for our temptation to go back to the ego. We know we have gone back to the ego when we are not at peace and we are blaming other people for what we are feeling.

We are to be vigilant and watchful of our thoughts of judgment, condemnation, separation and specialness, and bring them to the light of the Holy Spirit's love to help purify our mind. When we are not at peace we are to stop and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance to help us see with the vision of Christ.

Learning the lessons of the Holy Spirit happens in the world of duality, but our attention is shifting from the world, back to the mind; and from the wrong mind of the ego, back to the right mind of the Holy Spirit. This is a process that happens over time.

More and more we are choosing for the peace of the Holy Spirit, and against the conflict of the ego. It can take time to overcome the temptation of the ego, but Jesus and the Holy Spirit are always with us providing loving guidance and support.

Vigilance means to be watchful for all the ways I try to exclude, judge, condemn, attack and blame others, and turn to the Holy Spirit and His peace instead. The altar to God is the center in the right mind with the Holy Spirit at the memory of God and His love. Turning to the Holy Spirit and away from the ego is a process that happens over time.

Vigilance and effort are required because of the ego's great fear of extinction, and its resistance to giving up its face of innocence and its special independent existence. Initially, vigilance of the dynamics of the ego can be quite painful, as we are realizing that all of the sin, guilt, conflict, hate, and war we perceived as outside of us, is actually within us. As we are more and more willing to bring the darkness of our hidden guilt to the light of the Holy Spirit's love and forgiveness, our experience turns from pain and suffering to happiness and great peace.

Again, the three lessons of the Holy Spirit:

To have, give all to all.
To have peace, teach peace to learn it.
Be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom.

End Chapter Six
CHAPTER SEVEN
THE GIFTS OF THE KINGDOM

Main Themes: The first theme of this chapter is the Oneness of Heaven, and the reflection of oneness in the mind which is forgiveness and healing. The second theme is the ego's belief in separation in the mind, and the reflection of separation which is the body and the world. The ego's strategy includes sickness and attack. Forgiveness is the correction for thoughts of attack. Healing is the correction for thoughts of sickness. The oneness of Heaven is defended against by the ego's belief in separation. This chapter provides a detailed exposition of the ego's strategy to maintain its separate existence.

When the ego believed it separated from God it said God is not the first cause, I am the first cause, and I am my own creator; meaning we are now self-created rather than God-created. That is the fundamental error of the ego's thought system. In Heaven there is no separate God, Christ, Creator and creation. These are dualistic terms that are symbolic expressions of our perfect unity in Heaven.

God's creation is not of the world of time and space. In Heaven, God extends Himself as love, and His extension is called Christ. Christ is part of God and has the same ability to create, and His extension of Himself as love is called creation. They are all one. The words are symbols for the sharing or extension of love beyond time and space. The perfect oneness and love of God can be reflected in the world of space and time as forgiveness and healing. The love of God is reflected in the mind and world when, with the Holy Spirit, we choose to forgive.

When you identify with God's love, His love is extended through you. When you identify with the ego's separation, sin, guilt and fear, they are projected through you. In Heaven joy is our eternal state.

The use of dualistic terms in the Course is symbolic only. God, Christ and the Holy Spirit are one and are absolutely non-dual. Terms that imply time, space, separation and duality (first, last, Creator, creation, Father, Son) are symbolic only and are not to be taken literally. God is one. Reality is one. There is no duality, separation, time or space in God, reality or truth.

The Atonement principle is a major theme through the whole Course and is reflected again here: Ignorance of love does not interfere with love's eternal being.

The Holy Spirit is in your mind, not your body. You must choose to allow the Holy Spirit to bring love (your creations) into your awareness. The thought of the Holy Spirit is the memory in our right mind of who we are as Christ. When we remember our Identity with God, His love extends or flows through us, as us.

God's Will is that we are one with His love. The ego does not want to hear that it is insane to believe we are separate, so its strategy is to deny and bury the Voice for God.

Our function in Heaven is to create which is to extend the love of God. Our function in the world is to forgive and accept the Atonement for ourselves. We can deny the truth of God's Will, but we cannot make the truth untrue.

The separation never happened. Believing in separation from God cannot make it true. The ego's fear is that we will realize we made a mistake in choosing to identify with the ego and the body, and we will choose the Holy Spirit instead. The ego is terrified that we will choose for the Holy Spirit which means the end of the ego.

The ego's strategy is to keep us identified with the body and world, and out of our mind. All of the apparent problems of the body and world: sickness, death, famine, conflict, and war are all part of the ego's strategy to keep us focused outside the mind where we could make the decision against the ego and for the Holy Spirit which would mean the end of the ego.

God's “meaning” is love, peace, oneness, and eternity. We become absent or unaware of God's meaning by being absent from the mind, focused on and identified with the body. By seeing problems in the body and world, and seeking solutions there, we remain ignorant of the true source of problems and solutions which is in the mind. This is the ego's
strategy to maintain its separate existence: keep the Son mindless by being attached and identified to the body and world. The ego, the body and the world are not of God, and therefore are not real. To maintain the appearance of separation we must believe we are something that is not real in the eyes of God. To break the belief in separation we must get back to our mind, realize we made a mistake in choosing to identify with the ego, and choose again — this time for the Holy Spirit.

The ego wants us to focus on the body and world, not the Kingdom of God. The altar is at the decision maker in the mind where we choose to identify with the Holy Spirit, and be devoted to the perfect love of God.

We, as the Son of God, have the power within our mind to choose the Atonement which reminds us of our true Identity with the ultimate power of the One Mind as Christ. The images of others we make in our mind and project into the world form the basis of our "special" love and hate relationships. The world is a projection of sin, guilt and fear in our mind. Special relationships provide a battleground and dumping ground for our sin and guilt, and serve to justify and maintain the ego's special separate existence. It is critical to understand the ego's strategy in order to be free of it. Without waking up to the ego and its strategy to keep you identified with the body and world, you remain asleep to the truth of who you really are.

Scarcity is the result of our belief in our separation from God's abundance. Deprivation is the projection of the belief in scarcity. The ego blames others for its scarcity by claiming it is being deprived by others. By projecting the cause of scarcity onto others, the ego hides the true source of scarcity which is the mind's choosing the ego's separation rather than the Holy Spirit's love and abundance. By choosing to identify with the Holy Spirit, God's love and abundance are extended through me. By choosing to identify with the ego, the ego's scarcity, sin and guilt are projected through me. The mind's purpose is to choose the Holy Spirit and return to the abundance and wholeness of God. The purpose of this Course is to help us strip away the veil made by the ego so we can see the insanity of the ego's thought system and choose again.

Belief in separation, sin and guilt is our problem which is in the mind. By making a world and projecting our sin and guilt onto the world, we forget the true source of our problem — our decision in our mind to identify with the ego. Ideas leave not their source. Sin and guilt do not leave the mind by projecting them onto the world. We are all part of the same mind, dreaming we are separate.

The ego needs friends and enemies onto whom it can project its sin and guilt, and maintain its face of innocence. The ego made the world as a dumping ground for its sin and guilt.

The ego is terrified of the power of our mind's ability to choose against it. The ego's strategy is to keep our focus on the illusory body and world, and out of our mind for fear we will choose against it.

We must learn that the source of all conflict is in the mind, not in the body and world.

The ego is represented in the Course using anthropomorphic terms; as if it is an evil person who is plotting and scheming against us — this is only symbolic. The ego is the thought of separation in the mind; it is a thought system based on the one thought of separation from God. Apart from belief in the thought of separation, the ego does not exist. The deep anxiety we all feel inside of us is rooted in the fear that at any moment God could annihilate us, and if we get back to our mind we will annihilate ourselves by choosing against the ego-self. So we project our fear and anxiety onto a source outside our mind so we can deal with it. We project our fear of annihilation onto other people, groups, germs, diseases or anything we feel we can attack and kill, hoping to relieve our fear of extinction. The source of our fear is not in other people, groups or diseases; the source of our fear is in our mind's belief in separation.

The ego's premise that the separation from God is real leads to the logical outcome that the world is real and is filled with real problems, real bodies, and real people who interact with each other. In order to be free of the ego and its projections we must look at it closely and realize it is based on an insane thought system, and then choose against it.
The Holy Spirit is the Answer to the ego's thought of separation from God. The Holy Spirit’s answer is always a form of the Atonement.

The ego's friend is the body, and is not part of the truth of who we are. The body is a projection of the wrong mind, which also is not the truth. The original separation was from God, and the original competition was with God (from the ego's point of view). The original separation and competition get projected onto the world and are experienced as conflict and competition with others in the world. It is important to be aware and vigilant of the ego's need to be in competition and make conflict with others in the world. In truth the source of conflict is in our mind's decision to be separate from God.

Though not named specifically, the theme of forgiveness is being developed here in these early chapters, and becomes more prominent as we get further into the Course.

When we hold a grievance against somebody or we find fault with somebody we are attacking ourselves. The Son of God is one. Reality is one. When we say one part of the Sonship is imperfect we are saying the whole is imperfect because the Sonship is one and cannot be divided. All your thoughts of condemnation, judgment and attack are aimed at yourself because you are the one Son of God.

Every time you meet someone it is a Holy encounter because it offers you the opportunity to recognize the projections of your guilt that you placed upon the other, and forgive it. The way we remember the truth of who we are is by seeing the face of Christ in someone else. If I want to know which teacher I chose, the ego or the Holy Spirit, I watch what I am feeling and thinking about others. If I do not feel love and peace then I have chosen the ego, and I must choose again. Forgiveness of others leads me back to my mind where the original conflict was born in my decision to be separate from the love of God.

You cannot experience the love of God if you exclude even one person.

To know and experience the love and peace of God, we cannot separate our brothers into good people and bad people. God's love is unconditional and all inclusive. To maintain its existence the ego needs "bad" people onto whom it can project its guilt, and "good" people who serve to reflect it's face of innocence.

"All creation" is who we are as Christ. The way I know myself as spirit is by seeing the oneness in all. Seeing God's love and oneness in all can take a lot of work because the ego fears the loss of its specialness.

Healing is not different from forgiveness; it is the correction for another form of guilt. Guilt projected onto a brother in the form of conflict is corrected by forgiveness. Guilt projected onto the body in the form of sickness is corrected by healing. Healing has nothing to do with the body, as forgiveness has nothing to do with our brother. Forgiveness is in the mind and healing is in the mind.

God does not heal nor forgive because He sees only perfect wholeness and love. The law of healing comes from the law of love. Healing in the world is the reflection of God's laws of love, oneness and wholeness; just as the Atonement principle is the reflection of God's oneness in the world. In God's eyes there is only perfect love, wholeness and oneness. God knows nothing of separation, sin, guilt, conflict, war, sickness or disease because they are not real. The world loves the Bible because the ego's god knows all about our sin, guilt, sickness and disease. The Bible's god not only knows about the world, but he creates it. The ego loves to bring God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit into the world to resolve our problems and heal our bodies, because if God knows the world and our individual bodies, our separate ego identities must be real.

There is no order of difficulty in miracles or in healing because there is only one problem; we turned to the ego rather than the Holy Spirit. And there is one solution; we turn to the Holy Spirit instead of the ego. You experience disquiet, disease and discomfort in your life because you turned the wrong way in your mind; you chose the ego over the Holy Spirit. The laws of God are reflected in the world when we realize we all have shared interests and we are all the same. The laws of the ego are reflected in the world when we decide we have separate interests, and we are all different.

The relationships we made to maintain our separate egoic existence are used by the Holy Spirit as a
classroom to unlearn what the ego taught us about who we are, and to remember the truth of who we are as God's Son. The ego and the Holy Spirit are spoken of in the Course as if they are people. Again, anthropomorphic terms are used as symbols that represent the thought systems of the ego and the Holy Spirit in our mind. The ego thought system is of separation from God. The Holy Spirit's thought system is of oneness with God. Healing is not of the body; healing is of the separation in the mind. We all share God's oneness, and we all share the ego's separation.

Only the mind identified with the Holy Spirit can create, not the body. Sickness and healing are of the mind, not the body. Healing of the mind is fearful to the ego because the healing of the mind means the end of the ego.

The unhealed healer says, I have something that you do not have. We are all healers because we all have the power to change our mind from identifying with the separation of the ego, to identifying with the oneness of the Holy Spirit — and this is true healing. Both healing and forgiveness are the undoing of the belief in separation in the mind.

If you have a gift of healing, of course you should use it, but do not fall for the illusion of specialness.

End Chapter Seven
CHAPTER EIGHT
THE JOURNEY BACK

Main Theme: This chapter glorifies the oneness of God and Heaven, and our oneness with God, the Holy Spirit, Jesus and all our brothers.

• Our true reality is in our Identity with God. This is the light of the Atonement principle to which we are asked to bring our dark thoughts of separation, sin and guilt.

• Our function in Heaven is to create which is to extend God's love. And our function in the world is to forgive and heal. In the world we are to turn to Jesus and the Holy Spirit for guidance and support.

• In our deluded mind we are able to believe that we can be outside the law of love, but believing does not make it true. It is within our power to deny the love of God, or choose again for the Holy Spirit and God's love and wholeness.

• Recognizing God in ourselves and in our brothers forms the basis of forgiveness. Forgiveness facilitates the realization of oneness by helping us to see God in ourselves and our brothers. The Atonement principle is stated here — there is no separation of God and His Creation.

• We join with our brothers through forgiveness and realizing our shared interest in returning Home together. This is a reminder that our strength is in our oneness with God, and our weakness is in separation from God. When we choose the Holy Spirit as our teacher we experience peace and joy, when we choose the ego as our teacher we experience conflict and pain.

• The story of the prodigal Son represents the story of our decision to separate from God, our experience of sin and guilt for choosing to be separate from Him, and our fear of returning Home. This story illustrates a major theme in the Course which is the experience of sin, guilt and fear in our mind which leads us to make the world onto which we project our sin, guilt and fear. But in truth ideas leave not there source whether we identify with the ego's sin, guilt and fear, or with the Holy Spirit and God's love, our projections and creations stay with us — there is no separation. The ego leads us to believe that ideas do leave their source and the separation is real.

The "conditions" of truth are peace and forgiveness, and as we repeatedly turn to the Holy Spirit throughout our day we are reawakened to the truth of our oneness with God. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are symbols that represent guides who help us remember our Identity as God's Son, and overcome our fear of loss of our separate egoic identity.

• Knowledge is the synonym for love, truth, reality and Heaven. Our motivation for learning this course is the peace that comes when we are free of all conflict and pain. The root of all conflict and pain is the ego's conflict with God. When we have true Self Knowledge our conflict and pain is released and we experience our natural state of peace. In our world of conflict, peace comes through forgiveness. We are afraid of Self Knowledge, forgiveness and peace because we are terrified of the loss of our special, independent existence — which can only exist in self ignorance, blame and conflict. When we choose to turn to Jesus and the Holy Spirit they help us overcome our fear, and experience the love and peace of God. Forgiveness of those with whom we believe we are in conflict facilitates the realization of our oneness with God and our experience of peace.

• It is the decision maker in your mind that has freedom of choice, and can decide to lay aside the ego. And that is the ego's fear.

• The ego uses the power of the mind to establish its existence, and then strives to keep us out of the decision making part of our mind by having us identify with the body. The ego believes in the power of attack because it believes its attack on God gave it separate existence. We then attacked the Voice for God by rejecting the Holy Spirit's Atonement principle that does not recognize our individuality, and we chose to make a body and identify with it and the ego instead of the Holy Spirit. And as the body we attack every other body (humans, animals, germs etc.) that threatens our separate existence as bodies.

Sickness is divided purpose; we are divided within ourselves. In sickness, minds and bodies are seen as having separate interests. Healing is unified purpose; we are unified within ourselves. In healing, minds and bodies are seen as having shared interests. The ego's purpose is attack and mindlessness. The Holy
Spirit's purpose is forgiveness and mindfulness. The miracle restores to the mind its power as the decision maker. The ego perceives a battleground of separate interests and split purposes. The Holy Spirit perceives a classroom of shared interests and the common purpose of forgiveness and healing.

- The ego's purpose is to maintain its separate existence through attack, and its purpose for the body is to use it as a weapon of attack. The Holy Spirit's purpose is to unite through forgiveness, and it uses the body as a communication device for Atonement and forgiveness.

In the wrong minded perception of the ego, it is in a war for its own survival with the right mind of the Holy Spirit. Health and sickness are of the mind, not the body. Health is a reflection of our choice for the Holy Spirit. Sickness is a reflection of our choice for the ego.

- The Holy Spirit's purpose of the body and the world is to serve as a classroom to learn the truth of who we are.

All power over the body and world is in your mind. The body has no purpose or power apart from the mind. Symptoms of the body are effects; the cause of symptoms is in the mind. The mind is the cause, the body and world are effects.

Sickness and healing are of the mind only, not the body. Let that sink in.

Sickness is the ego's defense against awakening to the truth of our Identity with God. Sickness is the ego's witness that the separation from God is real and the body is our true identity. Without sickness and conflict the ego dissolves. The faculties for seeing are in the right mind with the Holy Spirit. By identifying with the body the ego makes our faculties for seeing veiled and ineffectual. The body is the ego's way of distracting us from the power of our mind to choose for the Holy Spirit's oneness, and against the ego's separation.

- There is no order of difficulty in miracles because there is no hierarchy of illusions. All sickness and all healing is rooted in our one decision for the separation of the ego, or the wholeness of the Holy Spirit. Sickness and healing have nothing to do with the body. We choose guilt, separation and sickness; or we choose forgiveness, union and health. There is one problem and one solution.

Every time we meet someone we have the choice to realize our shared interests, allowing the love of God to extend through us; or to see separate interests, projecting the ego's sin, guilt and fear through us. We see in our brother what we believe we are. We see the love, peace and oneness of Christ; or the fear, conflict and separation of ego. Therein lies the importance of Self Knowledge. Our experience of ourselves and our brothers is rooted in our identity of self. The Holy Spirit tells us that freedom comes in realizing we are the same, and imprisonment comes in believing we are different. The ego tells us that freedom comes from separation, conflict and attacking our brothers; and imprisonment comes from our brothers attacking and imprisoning us.

- We have two teachers we can choose between: the ego or the Holy Spirit.

The motivation for learning this Course is to experience peace and happiness.

The Holy Spirit teaches peace and happiness through union with God and our brothers. The ego teaches conflict and anger through separation from God and our brothers.

- We cannot learn from two different teachers who are teaching diametrically opposed curricula. We must choose one or the other. The Holy Spirit's curriculum leads to peace through our identity with spirit. The ego's curriculum leads to conflict through our identity with the body and world. The two curricula are mutually exclusive. There is no peace in the world. There is no conflict in Heaven.

The difference between imprisonment and freedom is absolute. If we choose Jesus or the Holy Spirit as our teacher to guide us Home, we cannot be with the ego and the world. There is no compromise, and this is the ego's fear.

- In the Course, Jesus is not the historical figure we think of as a man with a body living in the world. Jesus is a symbol of the perfect love and wholeness of God and represents our Identity with Him. Jesus is the presence of God's love in our mind.
Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

- Love does not impose; it reminds patiently. *We must make the choice for the Holy Spirit and God, or the ego, because we are free to choose.*

- The Sonship is one and all inclusive — absolutely no one is excluded.

- We join with the reflection of God's oneness by joining with Jesus who represents God's love and wholeness in our mind. By joining with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we realize we share with our brothers the same Identity with God. We also share the same insanity of the ego, and further, we share the same interest of awakening from our dream of separation. With the help of Jesus and the Holy Spirit we are to remember that our identity with our brothers and with Christ is one.

- Our entire physical universe including our physical existence, the very life we think is our own, rests on the ego's thought that the love and wholeness of God is to be feared. More specifically, our choosing the love of God is to be feared. "Do not accept the Atonement" is the core belief of our thought system as individuals.

**End Chapter Eight**
CHAPTER NINE
THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE ATONEMENT

Main Themes: Forgiveness and the Atonement.

Introduction: Forgiveness is the correction for the ego's projection of sin, guilt and fear. The Atonement is the realization that the separation from God never happened.

Learning the truth of who we are is remembering the truth of who we are. We unlearn what we are not, a separate ego-body, and remember what we are, the Son of God. The ego is terrified that we will remember who we are because it means the "death" of the ego. The ego's fear of "death" is projected onto the world of bodies, hence virtually everyone and everything is a threat to the ego's existence, leaving it in a constant state of panic. The ego's primary fear is that the decision maker will decide against the ego and for the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit helps us go beyond the level of identity with form to our true identity with spirit. To ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help in the world on the level of form and behavior is exactly what the ego wants us to do because it keeps us identified with the body; asleep and buried in the world of illusion.

When we ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help with specific things in the world on the level of form and behavior, we are asking for "nothing." The help that Jesus and the Holy Spirit provide is to help us remember the truth of who we are beyond the world of form. They do not help us fix problems or accomplish goals in our dream world. When accepted, their help takes us beyond the illusory world to the real world. The help we ask them for is help with forgiveness and help choosing the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. By asking for help on the level of form and behavior we are doing exactly what the ego wants us to do. The ego wants to keep us focused on the body and the world, asleep under the veil of Self forgetfulness, mindless and unaware of our power to choose to remember our true Identity as Christ. The memory of our true Identity as Christ means the dissolution of the ego. Therefore the ego is ecstatically happy when we pray for help on the level of form.

There are two identities from which we can choose: the ego or the Holy Spirit. When we choose the "littleness" of the ego we choose for "grandiosity." When we choose the "magnitude" of the Holy Spirit we choose for our "grandeur." The littleness of the ego's grandiosity, and the magnitude of the Holy Spirit's grandeur are referred to as the "two evaluations" of ourselves in this chapter and are further developed later in the Course.

The ego does not love us because it does not know us. The ego only knows we have the power to choose to identify with it, thereby sustaining its existence; or to choose against identifying with it, thereby dissolving it. That is why the ego is always suspicious and vicious (paranoid, neurotic and psychotic) — it fears its own dissolution.

The two evaluations of yourself are in your mind, not in the body or world. Your problem is one of identity which is in your mind, not in the body or world. You have one problem, your mistaken identity with the ego and body; and one solution, your true identity as spirit. When you begin to choose to identify with the grandeur of spirit, the ego can become extremely suspicious and vicious. It is important to be vigilant of the ego's fear, suspiciousness and viciousness, and understand its motives. The ego is spoken of here and in the whole Course in anthropomorphic terms as if it is a person. It is not a person. The ego is a thought system that is based on the belief in separation from God. When I identify with the thought system of separation it becomes "me." It is this "me" that is fearful, suspicious and vicious when its existence is threatened. And because you have identified with the ego's thought system of separation it is "you." Identified with the ego thought system, you are suspicious, vicious, paranoid, neurotic and psychotic. Identified with the thought system of the Holy Spirit, you are the Son of God. When you are beyond all thought, you are God Himself.

The Holy Spirit never looks at the past; it is always in the present. The ego never looks at the present; it is always in the past. To get beyond our identity with the ego we must get guidance from beyond the ego. The Holy Spirit is beyond the ego and can help us choose to go beyond to spirit. If we turn to the ego
for help, we stay asleep, buried in the same deluded thought system that is the reason for all our problems in the first place. We must be aware of the tendency of the ego to try to bring the truth into the illusion. The truth is absolute. To realize the truth you must be completely out of the illusion. Truth and illusion are mutually exclusive.

• The decision maker is the sane point in you that is beyond the ego's insanity. The decision maker is the Son of God, the dreamer or observer that is beyond insanity. When the decision maker decides to go back to his mind he becomes the observer, and observes the insanity of the ego thought system. You must go beyond the ego to understand the ego. You cannot understand the ego from within the ego. The miracle brings us back to the decision maker as the observer where we can look at both dreams; the ego's nightmare of separation, and the Holy Spirit's happy dream of the Atonement. From that point we see the contrast of the ego's insanity with the sanity of the Holy Spirit, and we can choose again. This is the way out of our nightmare.

• There is no order of difficulty in miracles because every problem comes from our belief in our identity as a separate ego-body. All problems are resolved by realizing our true identity as the one Son of God. It is up to us to choose. Our problems are not caused by other people, bodies or the world, but only by our mistaken choice — with help from the Holy Spirit our mistaken choice can be corrected.

• Truth is absolute. We either identify with the darkness of ego or with the light of the Holy Spirit. The two are mutually exclusive. Identification with the grandeur and magnitude of God means the end of the grandiosity and littleness of the ego. Rather than face annihilation, the ego attempts to bring the light of God into its darkness. In the light of the Holy Spirit, the separation from God never happened; therefore sin, guilt and fear are not real. In the darkness of the ego, the separation from God, sin, guilt and fear are real; and the ego claims it will help us with forgiveness and Atonement for our sin.

• Once the ego makes sin and guilt real in the mind, it then makes a world of people onto which it projects the sin and guilt. This makes the ego innocent of sin, and others guilty. The "spiritual" ego then says, "Yes, you are guilty, but I will forgive you!"

The unhealed healer has not accepted true healing for himself. True healing is the acceptance of the Atonement which is the realization that separation from God never happened. The unhealed healer believes that separation, sin, guilt, the body and world are real and are in need of forgiveness and healing. The healed healer has realized the separation from God never happened; and sin, guilt, fear, the body and world are not real. This realization is the Atonement. The Atonement is the healing the healed healer shares through the miracle.

The Course addresses the unhealed healer in the context of theology and psychology. The theologian makes the error of sin real and attempts to resolve it through a religious act of sacrifice, atonement or spiritual discipline on behalf of a god who also believes in sin. The therapist believes that guilt is real and attempts to resolve it by bringing the light of psychological truth to the problem of guilt. Neither approach addresses the source of the problems of sin, guilt, fear, paranoia, neurosis, or psychosis which is belief in the original sin of separation from the wholeness of God’s perfect love.

• The ego can only exist in separation and specialness. In the realization of oneness, the ego is dissolved. The ego made the world of separate bodies to witness to its special separate existence. It is important to realize that the Sonship is one.

• Our individual existence as separate bodies living in a world of separate bodies is predicated on the belief in our original separation from God. Believing in our separate existence as a body, we see our brothers as bodies separate from us and God. We need to see our brothers as separate from us in order to maintain our special separate existence, and to have someone onto whom we can project our sin and guilt. As we begin to realize we are not separate from our brothers, and the Sonship is one, our individual egoic identity begins to dissolve, and we realize our oneness with Christ. Forgiveness facilitates our realization of oneness with our brothers and plays a key role in the Atonement.

• Rejecting, judging, and condemning anyone at all keeps the ego's identity safe and secure in its dream of separation, conflict and pain. Our brothers are mirrors who reflect back to us what we believe we are. If we see sin and guilt in our brothers, we
believe we are guilty and sinful. When we reject and condemn our brother, we are rejecting and condemning a part of ourselves we want to deny and keep hidden. By forgiving our brother we are actually forgiving ourselves. And this is how forgiveness facilitates the Atonement. We see the darkness in our brother, we realize the darkness is a projection of our self image, and we bring it to the light of forgiveness. This is true forgiveness. This is true healing. True forgiveness and true healing facilitate the realization of our oneness with God.

We are not to deny the foolish behavior of our brothers, but we are to look beyond the behavior to the Christ in them.

Forgiveness facilitates the realization of wholeness by refusing to reject, judge or condemn any part of the Sonship.

The oneness of God, Heaven, and Spirit are reflected in the world through forgiveness, and seeing the one light of Christ in all our brothers.

I remember my function in Heaven, which is extending the love of God, by learning to undo the barriers of separation I made in my mind and the world. I begin to undo the barriers of separation through forgiveness of my brothers, and realizing we have shared interests rather than separate interests. Our shared interest is in awakening from the nightmare of separation to the truth of our wholeness with God.

How do we facilitate healing, and correct errors and foolish behavior in our brothers? Our only function in the world is to accept the Atonement for ourselves. Accepting the Atonement for ourselves is accepting forgiveness and the love of God for ourselves. Knowing we are forgiven and loved is our only function in the world. Knowing we are forgiven and loved, the love of God naturally extends through us to the whole Sonship.

End Chapter Nine
CHAPTER TEN
THE IDOLS OF SICKNESS

Main Theme: This chapter is a variation on the theme of the first two Commandments in the Bible.

From Exodus Chapter 20: "I am the Lord thy God which has brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. First Commandment: Thou shall have no other God's before me. Second Commandment: Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shall not bow down thyself to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God."

Introduction: In the Course, the ego is the false god we make and worship. We make the ego and identify with it as if it is our self; we worship it, bow down to it and build shrines to it. We celebrate our birthday and memorialize our death because we worship at the shrine of the false ego-self. In the Course, God is perfect wholeness and perfect love; God is the only reality; there is nothing separate from Him. The Atonement principle in the Course says the separation from God never happened, therefore there is no separate self, and the ego is an illusion.

In the Course, the first and original idol is the ego's self image and its thought system within our mind. The ego is born with the belief that the separation from God is real and is a sin that evokes guilt and fear of God's revenge. To "get rid" of its sense of sin and guilt in the mind, the ego makes a body and world onto which it projects its sin and guilt, hoping to maintain its face of innocence and avoid the wrath of God. By making the body and world the ego has its second idol: the body and its special love and hate partners. The ego uses its idols of special relationship, both love and hate, as a dumping ground for its sin and guilt. The making and worshipping of false idols is called sickness.

The ego is the original idol made by the Son of God by believing he is separate from his Father. Worshipping the original idol is the Son of God's original sickness. The second idol made by the Son of God is the body, onto which the original sickness of the mind is projected, so that the original sickness in the Son's mind is reflected in the body and its special relationships in the world — both love and hate.

To understand and benefit from this Course it is crucial that you take the abstract concepts presented here and apply them to yourself in your daily life in a very practical way. It is important to be vigilant of your thoughts, feelings and all activities of your mind in your daily life, and turn to the Holy Spirit or Jesus for guidance. "This is not a course in the play of ideas, but in their practical application."

The only true laws are the laws of God which are the laws of love, oneness and eternal life.

The experience of the protection of God is a direct experience of your Identity with God's love and oneness, and the complete absence of separation of yourself and all being. God's protection is the knowledge and experience that you are one with God, there is only God, so there is nothing to be protected from.

Blasphemy is a Biblical term and is an expression of an attack on God; for example, when we take other gods before Him, when we are not reverent of God or are disrespectful toward Him. In the Course, blasphemy is not of God, but is directed at yourself because you are blaspheming against your true Self by believing you are the ego and body which is a parody and travesty of the truth of who you are as Christ.

Sickness and health are of the mind only. The body is a projection of the mind. Sickness is the belief that we are separate from God. Health is the realization that we are one with God. Only the mind has power to believe in sickness or health. Only the mind has the power to choose to deny the truth of our Identity as God's Son, and identify with the ego's son — which is the body.

Now we turn our attention to the power of our mind to choose. We do not know who we are as Christ, we do not know ourselves as beings that create as God does because we have chosen to push away the memory of our Identity with the magnitude of God, and identify ourselves with the littleness of the ego.
Notes on Chapter Ten – The Idols of Sickness

• When we choose the Holy Spirit as our teacher, and remember Christ as our true Identity, we let go of the worship of our false idols: the idol of individuality and the idol of sickness. The reality of God's oneness does not depend on our decision, but our *awareness* of God's oneness *is* dependent on our decision.

Dissociation refers to splitting off thoughts that you do not want. Specifically dissociation refers to the separation of the ego from God or the Holy Spirit, represented by the right mind and the wrong mind in the Chart. We made the decision to split ourselves from the Holy Spirit and identify with the ego, which is the decision to forget (dissociate) the truth of our oneness with God. Each and every moment of our day we are actively choosing to dissociate from and forget our true Identity with God, and remember our false identity of the ego. The line "you are afraid of your dissociation" means our fear is that we have actively chosen against the wholeness and love of God, and believe He will punish us for it. Our mind is so powerful that it can make up the entire story of the original sin of separation from God, and the concomitant guilt and fear, and actually believe it!

As we observe the darkness of the ego in our daily lives with the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are able to realize the ego's unreality and let it go. As the dark clouds of the ego dissolve, the reality of our true Identity with Christ is known.

The "you" who has power to endow the ego's gods is the decision maker. The world has no power in itself; all power is in the decision maker's belief. The decision maker is the Son of God. The Son's function in Heaven is to create; his function on earth is to forgive. Forgiveness undoes the belief in separation, and facilitates the memory of the Son's Identity with the Father.

Refer to the Heaven-Knowledge Chart. Above the solid horizontal line is Truth. Everything below the line is illusion. This must be understood in order to understand the Course. There is no truth in illusion, and there is no illusion in truth. This is why there is no order of difficulty in miracles, and no hierarchy of illusions. The true God is in Heaven, and is not in the world. The gods in the world are false idols born in the illusion of the Son's separation from the Father.

We did not separate from God, we did not blaspheme God; we made a mistake in our identity by choosing to be the son of the ego, rather than the Son of God. And we can correct our mistaken choice by choosing again, because the power of choice is within our mind. The mind of the Son has all power over the world, because he *made* the world. You are the Son of God.

There is no power in the world. All power is in the Son's mind. The ego, the body and the world are projections of mind; powerless in themselves. The Son is free to choose to identify with the illusions he made, or to identify with the reality of spirit. God created His Son free. God cannot save us. Jesus cannot save us. This is not a Course in vicarious salvation. Only we can save ourselves.

Now we will look at the mind's power of projection.

All time and space is a projection of your mind. Your mind is so powerful that it can make a world and believe that the world made you. And this is exactly what you have done!

You are the maker of your brothers and your world. You project the messenger, write the message, and deliver it to yourself.

You have denied the Father, He has not denied you. You denied the Father by believing you separated from Him. There is no division in God. The separation happened not in reality, but in your imagination. The face of Christ is in every brother when we choose to see Him as He is.

Now we turn to the Atonement principle, which states that the separation from God's love never happened.

God's laws are of perfect unity, love and eternal life. And His laws are inviolate, except in your imagination.

The separation from God happened only in your dream. "Waking up" means to wake up from the dream of separation, to the reality of your Identity with Christ.

"Waking up" is remembering the truth of who we are. We have always been God's one Son, but we
chose to forget. Forgiveness is a first step to remembering our Identity with God by seeing Christ in our brother.

By attacking our brother, we are choosing to forget who we truly are and who our brother is — the One Son. Attacking our brother is a reflection of our original attack on God, and an attempt to maintain our separate existence. To wake up from the nightmare of separation we must become aware of the choices and activities of our mind that keep us identified with the body and ego, and asleep to the truth.

Choosing the ego as our guide is the cause of our loss of peace. The theme of observing our thoughts and feelings in the mind, and our relationships in the world is an important theme in the Course.

Turning to the Holy Spirit or Jesus rather than the ego facilitates our waking up from the painful dream of separation. With the help of the Holy Spirit you look on your brothers through the eyes of forgiveness, innocence and love. With the help of the ego you look on your brothers through the eyes of sin, guilt and fear. The guide you turn to is your decision.

To make an educated decision we must be fully aware of our options and the consequences of our choice.

Forgiveness of one is forgiveness of all. We are one Son in truth, and we are one ego in the illusion. We share our true Identity with God, and we share our false identity with the ego. We have one shared interest: to wake up to the truth of our oneness with God. We suffer from the same illusion: the lie of our separation from God. My only function in the world is to accept the Atonement for myself, which means to forgive and accept the love of God for myself and as myself.

Your relationships are healed in your mind only, not in the relationship of bodies. Relationships are healed in the realization that there is no relationship. There is one Son who is not separate from himself, and therefore cannot be in relationship with himself. There is no separation in you. You are not divided from yourself. This is the Atonement; the realization of oneness.

The way to facilitate healing in others is to be healed yourself. You are healed by accepting the Atonement for yourself. The Atonement is the realization that separation from God's eternal love never happened. The first step toward accepting the Atonement for yourself is forgiveness of your brothers, because your brothers are your projections of yourself.

The miracle is the shift in perception from belief in the illusion of our separation from God to the vision and Knowledge of the truth of our oneness with God. The term "Great Rays" refers to the light of Christ that is the truth in all of us. The Atonement principle is the "spark" in our mind that is the memory of our true Identity with the Great Rays of Christ in Heaven.

End Chapter Ten
CHAPTER ELEVEN
GOD OR THE EGO

Main Themes: In this chapter we address the "authority problem" and the belief that we are in conflict with God. On the Heaven-Knowledge Chart, conflict and the authority problem are represented by the terms battleground, victimization, one or the other, and kill or be killed. The fundamental questions of all philosophy and psychology are "Who am I?" and "From where do I come?" In this chapter we address the question, "Who is the author of my reality: God or myself?"

We also look at the original separation from God in which we believe we usurped His place on the throne of creation establishing ourselves as the creator of ourselves. As separate egos we are not God-created, but self-created. As the ego develops its thought system, its purpose is to have us be so terrified of being in the mind that we choose to leave the mind, make up a body with which we identify, leaving us mindless and ensuring we will not change our mind and choose to follow the Holy Spirit instead of the ego. The belief we have really sinned by separating from God, and He is seeking revenge, generates the fear and provides the motivation for leaving the mind and making a body and world onto which we can project our sin and guilt, and in which we can hide. The belief in separation from God, the ultimate authority, is reflected in the world as the authority problem: our problem with authority figures in which we feel victimized; and our problem as authority figures in which we are the victimizers. The conflict which was born with the mistaken belief in our original separation from God is played out on the battleground we call our lives.

* God and the ego are mutually exclusive. God is the Truth, and the Truth is absolute. The ego is illusory, and there is no illusion in Truth. God is our Father, our Source. God is one and we are one with Him. We are not a body living in a world; we are spirit. The ego made the body and the world. If we were a body living in the world, the ego would be our father. In truth, we are the Son of God, father of the ego. God is our Father; not the ego. The Son of God did not create himself because he is not a body living in a world.

* God did not leave us; we believe we left God. We decide to come back to God; God does not come back to us because he never left. When we believe God abandoned us, we project it onto others: our parents, family, friends and intimate others, making ourselves lonely victims of abandonment. In reality the separation and abandonment never happened — this is the Atonement principle, the resolution to the authority problem.

When we believed we separated from God we established the situation in which our will was opposite from God's. God's Will is that we are one with Him. Our will is that we be on our own and remain on our own. God's will is that we come back to Him — that is the conflict, the authority problem.

* The belief in our original separation from God is the root of all conflict in the world we made. All conflict among family, friends and lovers; or among nations, and political and religious groups is rooted in the belief in our separation from God — the original conflict, the original authority problem. The realization that the separation never happened is the resolution of all conflict and problems with authority in our world, because the Atonement resolves the original conflict with God.

* The darkness in which we hide has two shields: the first shield is the darkness of sin, guilt and fear in our mind; and the second shield is the body and world onto which we project our sin and guilt hoping to avoid punishment by maintaining our face of innocence in the eyes of God.

* Our entire world is the projection of a neurotic, psychotic and paranoid schizophrenic thought system called the ego. The purpose of the world is to provide a dumping ground for the ego's delusions of sin, guilt and fear. To ensure its survival, the ego needs us to stay focused on the world and out of our mind, because if we go back to our mind we will become aware of the ego's insanity and choose the Holy Spirit instead. By observing the "dynamics" of the ego we learn of its sickness; and with the help of the Holy Spirit we can learn to choose again. God and the ego are mutually exclusive. We choose to identify with the ego and its delusions of conflict, sin and guilt; or we identify with the Holy Spirit and God's wholeness, innocence and love.
The ego's purpose is to maintain its special separate existence. The ego is illusory. God's Will is that He is one. God is the only reality. The conflict between the ego and God is the conflict between illusion and reality, which is no conflict at all. The separation never happened, and there is no real authority problem.

In the Knowledge of Heaven there is no separation of God and Christ, or of Creator and Creation. God is one with His Son in truth. Separation is impossible because God is one, and there is only God. The Son's freedom and autonomy is in the realization of his oneness with his Father. There is no other freedom. From the ego's perspective, being one with God is bondage, tyranny and slavery. So the ego fights with all its might against God, the original tyrant, to maintain its separation. Even the ego's longing for God is twisted into a strategy to maintain its specialness, autonomy and separation from Him; this is the "spiritual" ego.

What separates us from God is merely fear, not reality. Fear is part of the ego's strategy to keep us from getting back to the power of our mind to choose against it, and for the Holy Spirit. It is important to be fully aware of the dynamics of the ego in order to let it go.

God is not dependent on us or incomplete without us. This is another example of how the Course uses anthropomorphic symbology to facilitate our understanding. We can relate to and understand the incompleteness a parent feels when separate from its child — the Father from His Son. True freedom and autonomy is in the realization that the Father and Son are one. The ego's idea of freedom and autonomy is in the belief that the Father and Son are separate. Incompleteness is only imagined in the mind of the separated Son.

Now we will look at the Holy Spirit's Answer to the ego's authority problem.

In terms of our identity, the infinite and the finite are mutually exclusive. You identify yourself with one or the other. Either you are infinite or you are finite; eternal or temporal. This is another example of the first principle of miracles which is that there is no order of difficulty among them. God's universe is the universe of Spirit, not the physical universe.

To benefit fully from the teachings in this Course, it is imperative that you take its abstract concepts and principles and apply them to concrete situations in your daily experience — relationships with family, friends, enemies and intimate others.

The closer we get to realizing the original error, our belief in separation from God, the more fear we may experience as the ego shrieks in terror, petrified of its looming demise.

The "bleak little world" is your world. You are the hero of your bleak little world, and if it vanishes, you vanish with it — and this is your fear. There is no love, no peace, and no happiness in the world we made, because we made the world out of a projection of our sin, guilt and fear. To know true love, true peace and true happiness we must leave the bleak little world we made and go back to our Source.

The dark companions of specialness are sin, guilt, fear and hate. When brought to the light, the dark companions disappear into the nothingness from which they came.

To the ego, which is the child of darkness, the dark companions of sin, guilt, fear and hate are comforters because the ego cannot exist without them. To the Son of God, who is the child of light, there is no darkness at all. The peace of God cannot be found in the darkness of special relationships, separation, conflict, rejection or judgment; but only in the light of oneness, peace, acceptance and forgiveness.

Learning this Course means the end of the ego. Any resistance to learning the Course is an attempt by the ego to maintain its existence.

The underlying principle of the whole Course is summed up in the statements, "There is no order of difficulty in miracles, and there is no hierarchy of illusions. Only reality is true." This is simple, yet radical. The challenge is in applying these simple and radical principles to your own daily experience so you reap the full benefit of the Course. The Workbook for Students facilitates the application of the teachings learned in the Text.

This is not a Course in philosophical speculation. The Course is given to facilitate a shift in identity through the use of philosophy and its practical application in our daily lives. There is one problem
and one solution. The problem is our belief in separation from God and our identification with the ego. The one solution is the realization that the separation from God never happened and we are one with Him. The only help we need is with the correction of our mistaken choice in identity. To ask the Holy Spirit for help with specific problems we perceive in the world only maintains the ego and sustains the only real problem with which we need help — our identity with the ego and body.

We are to ask the Holy Spirit for help in undoing the thought system that gave rise to our individual existence as bodies in the world, thereby giving rise to all our problems. The Holy Spirit's Answer is the Atonement: the separation never happened. We are to bring all our manifold problems to the Holy Spirit's one Answer. The problem is not my disease, my broken relationships or my dwindling bank account; my problem is my belief that I managed to do the impossible and separated from God. The underlying principles of this Course are simple and direct, but we must apply the principles to ourselves in our daily lives to benefit from it.

In order to learn, it is important first to realize how little we know, and to be open to question everything we believe we know. Humility is the birth of wisdom.

Perception is interpretation. Meaning, value and purpose of the body and world are determined in the mind of the perceiver. When we are identified with the wrong mind of the ego, we perceive the world through the eyes of delusion. When we identify with the right mind of the Holy Spirit, we have true perception of the world through the vision of the Holy Spirit.

The Course facilitates a radical shift in the way we perceive our world and the whole universe. But this shift cannot occur unless we want it to occur, and we want it to occur when we realize there is something terribly wrong with the way we are living our lives, and say, "There must be a better way." Jesus and the Holy Spirit are our guides who lead us to the better way.

There is one problem: separation. There is one Answer: the Atonement.
the Sonship is one. We are saved together or not at all.

The dream of death is the belief in the separation from God. In the Course, resurrection is the awakening from the dream of death to the reality of our Identity as Christ — God's one Son. Resurrection, in the Course, is not the resurrection of the body of Jesus after the crucifixion.

Removing the nails and thorns refers to the story of the crucifixion, and is used as a symbol for the judgment and condemnation we express toward our brothers. The god of crucifixion is the ego. We demonstrate that Christ lives in us by choosing Jesus or the Holy Spirit as our teacher rather than the ego, and by choosing forgiveness and acceptance toward our brothers rather than judgment and condemnation.

Our function in the world is forgiveness and the acceptance of the Atonement for ourselves — and nothing else.

All our problems are the same because they are all equally nothing. There is no hierarchy in the Sonship. Jesus is not different from us. His mind is no more powerful than ours; he simply chose to identify with the Mind of Christ, and we can make the same choice. When we do, we awaken from the dream, accept the resurrection, and we are in what the Course calls the real world. The "real world" is a state of mind and is the reflection of the reality of Heaven in the world, but is not reality itself. When we realize that the world is a dream, and we know ourselves beyond the dream, we are in the real world.

**End Chapter Eleven**
CHAPTER TWELVE
THE HOLY SPIRIT'S CURRICULUM

Main Theme: The principle focus of this chapter is the Holy Spirit. We see the contrast between the Holy Spirit's judgment and the ego's judgment.

Introduction: In Chapter Five we saw the first shift in the beauty of the language relative to the first four chapters. In this chapter and going forward we see another shift in the beauty of the language and the depth of the content.

In the Course, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Answer and the correction for the ego's mistaken thought system. This chapter delves deeper into the ego's strategy and the Holy Spirit's answer to the ego. To maintain its individual existence, the ego's strategy is to keep us focused in the body and world, first by having us believe that the separation from God and the concomitant experience of sin, guilt and fear are real, and that God will punish us. To avoid God's punishment the ego makes a world and projects its sin, guilt and fear onto the world so the ego can maintain its face of innocence in the eyes of God and the world. The ego's fear is that it will be annihilated if we get back to our mind, realize our mistake in choosing to believe the ego, and choose for the Holy Spirit instead. Therefore the ego's strategy is to keep us identified with the body and distracted by the world, and out of the mind.

The fog that obscures the light of truth is the ego's thought system based on the belief in sin, guilt and fear. The ego is equated with sickness. The ego has no power apart from the power we, as the Son of God, give to it. When we withdraw our belief in the ego, it dissolves.

The mind of the Son, your mind, is saved from identification with the ego.

The ego is afraid the Son will withdraw his allegiance to the ego leading to its dissolution. The ego does not know of the love of God, but is aware of it as a threat to the ego's existence. When the Son remembers the true unconditional love of God, the ego comes to an end. To ensure the Son does not turn to God, the ego tells the Son that God is a wrathful, jealous, vengeful Father Who will punish the Son if he returns Home.

The ego is happy when we search for love where it cannot be found — in other people, the body and the world. The ego's idea of love is the glorification of its specialness. True unconditional love is the love of God in which there are no conditions or specialness. God's love is the end of the ego's special separateness.

To maintain the face of innocence the ego makes a world onto which it can "get rid" of its sense of sin, guilt and fear: this process is called projection. Your world is made of the projection of your sin and guilt. You made your world of specialness and separation as an attack on the wholeness of God.

Making a world and projecting our sin, guilt and fear onto it allows us to maintain the face of innocence, and avoid the wrath of God's punishment. Projecting our sin and guilt onto the world is an ego device that distracts us from the source of our problem which is in our mind. When we go back to our mind and realize our mistake of choosing to identify with the ego rather than the Holy Spirit, the ego is doomed. Because we have identified with the ego, we feel the end of the ego is the end of us.

The ego's world is the projection of separation, conflict, hate, and fear in the wrong mind of the Son. The real world is the end of the ego's world and is a reflection of the wholeness, peace and love of God in the right mind of the Son. Projection makes perception.

Choosing the guidance of the ego, you look out onto a world of separation, conflict and fear. Choosing the guidance of the Holy Spirit you look out onto a world of oneness, peace and love. When you look out you see the world you made within. Within and without are the same.

You project the ego's sin, guilt and fear; or you extend God's love reflected through the Holy Spirit as forgiveness, innocence and love. There is no independent, objective world. You choose your identity within and project the world without. You make the world you want based on who you believe you are. Are you the son of the ego, or the Son of God? Look at the world you made and you will
know who you believe you are. If you are not happy with your world, you can go within and choose again.

- We are prisoners of the world we made, and we are the jail keepers holding the key. The key is in our mind, not in the world.

- When you reject, judge or condemn anyone in the world, you have first rejected, judged and condemned yourself. When you see evil doers in the world, you have first seen yourself as an evil doer. By projecting the "evil" onto another you hope to maintain the face of innocence, avoid your punishment, and have the "evil" ones punished instead of you.

- In most of the Text, “you” refers to you as the Son of God, the decision maker. It is you as the Son of God who chooses to believe in and identify with the ego. As the Son of God it is the power of your belief that maintains the ego's existence. The ego has no power or existence without your belief — and that is the ego's terror.

- The memory of God's love is in our right mind.

- In some passages of the Text "you" refers to the Son identified with the ego. You as the Son do not know your true self or your Father because you have identified yourself with the ego. Even when you are identified with the ego, you remain alive as the Son. The Father and the Son are eternal and cannot be affected by the destructive thoughts of the ego because God is indestructible, and the Father and Son are one.

- The fear and hatred at the core of the ego's thought system have no power over God's love.

- Jesus is appealing to us to choose love instead of fear, but we must first realize we have chosen fear so we can choose again.

- The ego's thought system is "what is not true." The Holy Spirit is "what is true." Within the dream we determine our experience by what we believe is real, but our belief in illusion does not affect God's reality.

- Our identity with the ego and its body and world is nothing, because it is not real in the eyes of God. We were redeemed the instant we believed we separated from God, because we did not actually separate from God. The separation never happened — this is the Atonement principle. The Holy Spirit does not see our sin, hate, pettiness or guilt because the Holy Spirit knows the truth of who we are. By identifying with the Holy Spirit we look with His vision and see the real world.

- Our task is not to find truth, but to deny the denial of truth. The denial of truth is in our belief in separation and our identification with the thought system of specialness. When we deny the denial of truth, truth remains as it is — eternal.

- Realizing our ignorance is the first step to wisdom.

- We must look at our fear to realize we were afraid of nothing.

- This Course is an organized, structured plan that helps us look at the ego thought system and undo the blocks to our experience of God's perfect love.

- All speech, behavior and action in the world are either expressions of love or calls for love; this is the Holy Spirit's judgment. When you turn to Him instead of the ego, it is your judgment; and the beginning of the end of the world of pain you made, and the beginning of your perception of the real world. The real world is a reflection of the wholeness and love of God.

- Your mistake is your belief that the problems of evil, selfishness, ignorance and sickness are in others and not in yourself; and that the world needs healing, not you. By answering all evil in the world with an expression of love, you receive healing because you have given it. By projecting evil onto others, you keep it for yourself. We are healed together or not at all.

- Love is the one and only judgment and response of the Holy Spirit. By choosing the Holy Spirit as our guide, love becomes our one and only response to all our brothers in the world we made.

- The ego makes up the unholy trinity of sin, guilt and fear as a defense against our choosing the love of God. By making sin, guilt and fear real the ego motivates us to make a body with which we can identify, and a world onto which we can project our sin, guilt and fear; thereby maintaining our face of
innocence and avoiding punishment from the ego's wrathful god. We see sin, guilt, fear, conflict and attack in the world because we projected them there to maintain our innocence in the eyes of the ego's god.

We have two emotions; love and fear. Fear is the emotion of the ego. Love is the emotion of the Holy Spirit. Fear is the denial of love; therefore love must exist before it can be denied. Fear only has meaning in its role as a defense to keep love hidden. The only purpose of fear is to hide love. By seeing everything in the world as an expression of love or a call for love, we now see only love; rendering fear useless.

In your daily life, whenever you experience fear, anger, hostility, or feel you have been attacked — now you know these are all defenses against love. Knowing that everything in the world is an expression of love or a call for love, fear no longer serves any purpose. Fear, conflict and war are defenses against love, and nothing else. Defenses against love are calls for love; the only response to a call for love is love.

Your survival as a separate ego is dependent on fear, conflict and war; without them you dissolve. This is why you fear love, oneness and peace; and why you love fear, conflict and war, and refuse to let them go.

We are one Son in our right mind, and we are one ego in our wrong mind. There is no separation in Heaven or on earth.

It is important to be clear about what we truly want from our brothers and the world, and they from us. Ultimately we are all seeking for love, peace, and salvation from the world of hate and war we made. With the help of the Holy Spirit we see all outrageous requests as calls for love. We may or may not answer our brothers' requests with action in the world; but we respond only with love. Giving only love, we receive only love, as giving and receiving are the same.

The theme of cause and effect is addressed in detail later in the Text, and is briefly introduced in this chapter. The idea addressed here is that if attack has no effect then attack is not a cause. And what is not a cause, and has no effect is not real. Therefore attack is not real, because it has no effect.

The mind is the cause; the world is the effect. Your mind's perception is the cause of your experience in the world. The world is the effect. This Course teaches us how to shift our view of the world from the ego's distorted perception to the vision of the Holy Spirit's true perception. By changing our mind which is the cause, our world of experience, the effect, naturally changes.

A main theme of the Course is our need of choosing the Holy Spirit as our teacher, and turning away completely from the teaching of the ego. This requires a complete and radical change in the way we perceive ourselves and the world. We will not learn this Course if we try to have two teachers whose teachings are absolutely contradictory and mutually exclusive. The teaching of the ego and the teaching of the Holy Spirit are irreconcilable. To learn the teaching of the Holy Spirit requires you to unlearn the teaching of the ego.

The ego is the thought of separation, guilt, hate and fear. The ego can only exist in the absence of love. To find true love we must turn away from the ego, and turn to the Teacher Who is an expression of true love; the Holy Spirit.

Our learning aids are all our relationships — special love and hate. We learn from our relationships with others because "others" are reflections of projections of who we believe we are.

In this chapter we address the importance of the generalization of learning. We first learn our lessons of forgiveness with a few of our brothers, and then apply what we have learned to all.

The result of learning this Course is peace. When the result of learning is fully generalized to include all situations, we have realized the perfect peace of the real world. The real world is the borderland between the illusory world we made and the Truth of Heaven. The real world is where true perception meets the Knowledge of God. The real world is the reflection of heaven in the world. To be in the real world is to be in the world, but not of it. The real world is the state of mind of perfect peace, love and wholeness. The acceptance of the Atonement is the realization of the real world.

End Chapter Twelve
CHAPTER THIRTEEN
THE GUILTLESS WORLD

Main Theme: Guilt and the ego's strategy to defend against our choosing the love of God.

Introduction: Guilt is the ego's principal weapon against our choosing God. We begin our review of this chapter by revisiting the principle of the Atonement. The Atonement, accepting our Identity with the love of God, is what the ego's use of guilt is defending against.

The world of separation we made is an illusion. We remain as God created us, and where God created us as part of Him in Heaven.

The Holy Spirit's response to the "tiny mad idea" of separation is that it never happened, and had no effect on the reality of the Son.

The raucous shrieking of the ego has no effect on God and His Will. His Will is that we are eternally one with Him.

The Communication Link between the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit; the three are eternally one. We can choose to listen to the ego rather than the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit remains with us eternally linking us to God.

The love and peace of the Holy Spirit and the Atonement are always with us, but to experience God's love and peace we must accept them. When we choose to identify with the ego we experience the ego's fear and conflict.

And now we turn to the main theme of the chapter: the ego's strategy of guilt, and the truth of the Son's guiltlessness.

Peace and guilt are part of mutually exclusive thought systems. Peace is of the Holy Spirit; guilt is of the ego. When we are afraid of the peace and love of God, we choose guilt instead. The ego dissolves in the presence of peace and love; the ego can only exist in conflict, fear and guilt. When we believe we are the ego, we are terrified of God's peace and love because it means we are dissolved. The ego's strategy is to ensure we believe sin, guilt and fear are real.

Forgetfulness, sleep and death refer to repression and denial. We make sin and guilt real, and then we repress and deny them. The ego believes it is in a war against God, battling for its own separate existence. So the ego makes a body and world into which it can escape the wrath of God, and onto which it projects its sin and guilt, allowing it to maintain the face of innocence. By rising above the battleground as the observer, we are able to see the war is an illusion; the separation from God never happened; sin and guilt are unreal; and our Identity and unity with God are unchanged.

The original source of guilt is in our belief that we are separate from God. To be free of guilt we must go to the original source and question the reality of our separation from God. The Atonement is the realization that the separation never happened. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are our guides Who help facilitate the Atonement. The ego is our guide that helps us repress and deny our guilt by projecting it onto the world and blaming others.

To the ego, guiltlessness is sinful, and must be destroyed. The purpose of the crucifixion is the destruction of innocence, because innocence means the death of the ego. The ego cannot survive without sin, guilt and fear. To maintain its own existence, the ego is willing to murder its innocent brother. A brother who realizes his innocence through his Identity with God is a blasphemer to the ego, because innocence is a sin against the ego's god of sin and guilt.

Christianity, as we know it, is dependent on the belief that sin and guilt are real. As the citizen of a nation, if you do not believe in war you are branded a traitor and are subject to prosecution. As a member of the ego's brotherhood if you do not believe in sin and guilt you are branded a blasphemer and are subject to crucifixion. Separation, sin, guilt, conflict and fear form the foundation of the ego's thought system, without them the ego cannot stand.

This Course reveals that you are guiltless — that is why you resist and fear learning the Course. Without guilt, your independent existence dissolves.
Traditionally, atonement is granted through sacrifice and suffering in payment for our sins. Atonement in the Course is the realization that separation from God never happened, therefore sin and guilt are not real. Furthermore, sacrifice and suffering are not only unnecessary, but counterproductive to true redemption because they reinforce the belief in original sin.

Being crucified witnesses to the reality of our independent existence because we are being punished for it. This is why we do not fear crucifixion, we revel in it. Redemption is the realization that our independent existence is illusory; therefore we are terrified of it.

The intense and burning love for God is in our mind. The guilt that covers God's love is in our mind. Therefore the ego must keep us out of our mind, focused on the body and the world for fear we would realize that our guilt is not real, and we would choose the love of God instead of the ego.

We do not want a God Who only loves, because without guilt, fear and conflict we do not exist. Our whole world is built on sin, guilt, fear and conflict. In the presence of a God of perfect love, you, as you believe yourself to be, are destroyed. To survive you need a fearful god of wrath and vengeance, not a God of love.

We love fear, conflict, war and suffering because our independent existence depends on and thrives in them. We fear and hate unconditional love, because without fear and hate our special separate existence is undone.

Guilt and hatred are our gods, and we worship at their altars every day.

I first attack God, my true Self, and then make a world of people onto whom I project my guilt so they will be punished, not me. The world is the place of darkness because it was born of the original thought of darkness — I am separate from God.

If you choose the ego, you choose guilt; when you choose the Holy Spirit, you choose love.

As individuals and societies we are very good at finding the source of our suffering, sickness and conflict outside of us where they are not — the Course refers to this as magic. But at a deeper level we know the source of our suffering and conflict is within our mind, but we are afraid to look for fear of punishment, and ultimately our own dissolution.

One of the key themes in the Course is the ego's strategy of using special relationships, love and hate, to maintain its special separate existence. This theme is touched upon in these early chapters and thoroughly developed later in the Text.

The purpose of our relationships, special love and special hate, is to provide us with someone onto whom we can "get rid" of our sin, guilt and fear, and maintain our face of innocence.

To avoid the wrath of the ego's god we need to make a world of sinners and evil doers so they will pay the price for our sin and guilt, and we can maintain the face of innocence. This is a psychological axiom: when you feel guilty, you will project it.

We make up our own sick little world of good and evil, and spend our lives separate and alone at war in our private delusions. Such is the world you made.

We must rise above the insanity of the illusory battleground we made, and look at it with the vision of the Holy Spirit's true perception to wake up from our nightmare born of separation, sin, guilt and fear; and remember the truth of our Identity with the God of love.

And now we will look at the Holy Spirit's Answer to the ego's story of separation, guilt, hate and war.

The separation from God never happened. The world of sin, guilt and conflict was all a projection of mind.

Realizing your own innocence, you realize the innocence of all your brothers. We are all guilty or we are all innocent; God's Son is one.

One of the key strategies in the Holy Spirit's plan of atonement is observing the "dynamics" of the ego in our daily lives. The way to undo guilt is through looking at it. The deepest, darkest cornerstone of the ego's foundation is made of sin, guilt and fear: the ego believes it has sinned against God by leaving Him, is guilty of betrayal, and is afraid of His
revenge. Our sin and guilt must be dug up and looked at so we can be free of it.

The entire world of hate, fear, anger, conflict, and war is a projection of your deep, dark secret of guilt over the sin you believe you committed against God.

The "you" the ego wants to kill is the Son of God as the decision maker which is the power of your mind to choose against the ego and for the Holy Spirit. The one remaining freedom we have as a prisoner of the world we made is our freedom to choose, but we cannot choose until we realize we have a mind that can choose. The ego's strategy is to keep us mindless by identifying with the body and world so we will not remember we have the power to choose, and in fact made up the whole story of separation and made up the entire world.

Our illusions of separation, sin and guilt rest on the foundation of the Son's power of belief — which is your power, you are the Son of God. When your belief is withdrawn, the illusions fall and dissolve. The Holy Spirit's way of healing our sin and guilt is by looking at them and realizing they are nothing. The ego's way of "healing" our sin and guilt is by projecting them onto others and blaming them for our pain.

To be free we must bring the darkness of all our suffering, sin and guilt to the light of God's love; and refuse to project the cause of our suffering onto our brothers.

You must admit the ego's strategy is absolutely brilliant, and how well it works! Just look around you!

Now we will address the importance of the acceptance and forgiveness of all our brothers to our journey back Home.

Everything you see out in the world, you have projected from within; there is no separate, objective world. The good and evil you see in your brothers are your own projections. When you reject and condemn your brothers, you are rejecting and condemning yourself. When you accept and forgive your brothers, you are accepting and forgiving yourself. If you believe you are guilty, you will find guilt in your brothers. When you know you are God's love, you will see God's love in your brothers. You are what you see. You see what you are. There is no separation.

True love is absolute, unconditional and all inclusive. Only God's love is true. The ego's "love" is relative, conditional and exclusive. The ego's love is not love at all; it is but hate hidden behind the mask of specialness. When it is betrayed, its mask is withdrawn and its true face of hate and murder is revealed.

To the ego, time is a function of sin, guilt and fear. Sin is of our separation in the past. Guilt is our experience in the present. And fear is of the future punishment for our sin. The miracle heals as it transcends time in the holy instant.

Our first "birth" is when we believed in our separation from God as an independent ego-self. We are "born again" when we realize our true Self in the holy instant with no past or future, but only in the timeless present. The holy instant is the timeless present in which our true Self is realized as we choose the Holy Spirit rather than the ego.

Each time we stop for a moment and choose the Holy Spirit, time stops and we are born again — this is the holy instant.

Happy dreams are the corrections for the nightmares of sin, guilt and fear. Happy dreams are expressions of the holy instant in the real world when we choose innocence, forgiveness and love instead of the ego's nightmare of guilt, blame and hate. As we choose the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the holy instant, the light of the real world begins to be revealed.

We are in the state of mind called the real world when we realize the truth of who we are is beyond the dream of separation, beyond the illusory world of duality, beyond time and space at the doorway to Heaven. The real world is the reflection of Heaven in which all is one. The real world is the end of the journey; before God takes us back Home.

The real world and the illusory world of separation are mutually exclusive. Love and fear are irreconcilable.

End Chapter Thirteen
CHAPTER FOURTEEN
TEACHING FOR TRUTH

Main Themes: In this chapter there are three major themes: 1. Teaching and learning. 2. Looking at the ego with the Holy Spirit; bringing the darkness to the light. 3. Forgiveness.

You will notice the beauty of the language shines even brighter, and the depth of the message is even more profound as we take our journey through the Text. You may notice what you are learning in the Course sinks deeper into your mind and influences your daily experience more and more.

Bringing the darkness of the ego's sin, guilt and fear to the light of the Holy Spirit's forgiveness, innocence and love is a correction for the ego's attempt to keep the darkness from the light. The darkness represents the separation. The light represents the Atonement. The Atonement is the realization that you are not separate from God's perfect love. And we start by looking at the Atonement principle.

The Holy Spirit's answer to the "tiny mad idea" that God's Son could separate from Him is that the separation never happened.

God's separated Sons worship at the altar of their false gods: the ego, the body and its special relationships.

"Unknowing" refers to the ego's thought system based on the perception of duality and separation, not Knowledge. True Knowledge is of Heaven's oneness. The Sons of God have the power to believe they are separate from God, but belief in separation does not make it true. When the Son withdraws his belief in the ego, the ego dissolves and only God remains. God is unaffected by the Son's belief, but the Son loses awareness of the love of his Father when he chooses to believe he is separate from Him. The ego's strategy is to keep the Son out of his mind, identified with the body and world so he will not withdraw his belief in the ego.

Once the Son has chosen the darkness of the ego as his identity, the Son's memory of the light of his Father is veiled by his identity with the body and world, creating a split in his mind in which darkness and light seem to coexist. Splitting off and maintaining two mutually exclusive thought systems is called dissociation.

The ego's strategy to sustain its special separate existence is to keep the darkness from the light (this is dissociation), for light dispels darkness. The entire purpose of the body and world is to keep the Son in darkness, and out of the light. The ego's darkness is sin, guilt and fear. In a practical way in your daily life you can relate to the terms sin, guilt and fear like this: sin is selfishness — the desire for your own special separate existence; guilt arises in you because deep down you know you are motivated only by selfish interests; fear arises in you because you are afraid your true selfish motives will be discovered and you will be punished.

Guilt is dissolved by innocence. The ego is dissolved by the Holy Spirit — they cannot coexist in a healed mind. Sickness can only exist in the split, dissociated mind. The purpose of forgiveness and the Atonement is to heal the split mind by bringing the darkness to the light — this is the miracle.

The "life" of the ego is really death; and the body and world are expressions of death. Life is of God, and God is not in the body or world you made. God is Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the memory of Life in the split mind of the Son. The moment you believed you have your own life separate from God is the moment you died. True Self Knowledge is in the moment you remember you are eternal life. Eternal life was never born and can never die. The ego was never truly born, and therefore cannot die, but can be dissolved as you see it is an illusion of life.

What you see "out" in the world, you have projected from within. There is no separate, objective world apart from the world you project and believe. Your belief of being a separate ego, identified with a body in a world will not be taken from you. Nor will the reality of your Identity with God be forced upon you. As the Son of God it is your choice. The choice for the ego or the Holy Spirit is made within your mind, not in the body or the world.

Now we turn to the important theme of teaching and learning. Following the ego leads us to pain and suffering. The Holy Spirit is the teacher Who leads
us out of the world, back to the mind, and on to the truth of spirit.

As the Son of God Who knows His Identity with Christ, we are truly blessed. Having forgotten our true Identity, we need to remember it by unlearning our false identity with the ego. The conditions for learning are first the realization of our ignorance, then the willingness to consider a new way and a new teacher.

Indirect proof of truth is needed initially because direct statements of truth like "the body and world are illusions" are too radical and fearful to accept for one who is completely identified as a body in a world. Direct statements of truth made to the deluded mind are rejected or attacked.

The Holy Spirit serves as a gentle and loving guide out of the insane dream world you made and still hold sacred.

The memory of the truth of who we are as spirit is in our mind eternally, but we have denied it by identifying with the body. The Holy Spirit reminds us of the truth of our identity as spirit by leading us back to the point in the mind where we can choose to remember. The memory of who we are is in the mind only, not of the body or world. Healing is of the mind only, not of the body or world. Any teaching or teacher that shifts our attention to the body or world leads us deeper into illusion and sickness. The ego's teaching is focused on the body and world; the Holy Spirit's teaching is focused on God.

The phrase "What we can never learn" refers to the separation. We cannot learn it because it never happened. The Holy Spirit's message is direct: the separation from God never happened. The complexity of the ego's thought system is reflected in our relationships in the world — special love and special hate. The body and world are nothing to the Holy Spirit, but to the ego, the body and world are everything. To deny the reality of the body and world evokes attack by the ego. This Course uses both direct and indirect approaches to truth.

The realization that "I do not know" is the first sign of wisdom.

When you believe you are a separate ego with a body living in a world, everything you try to learn will be distorted through the delusions of ego. The first step toward wisdom is the realization of your own ignorance. And the next step is to turn to the infinite wisdom of the Holy Spirit and take Him as your teacher. To the ego you say, "You're fired!"

Proof that you have learned and understood this Course is in your experience of perfect peace.

We become happy learners when we have realized our own ignorance, and become disillusioned of our identity with the ego and are open to a new Teacher.

Everything in the world you made is equally illusory. A hang nail, a cold, or cancer; a mild annoyance, a conflict, or the Third World War; there is no hierarchy of illusions. The love of God is true; all else is false. There is no order of difficulty in miracles.

The key that unlocks the "dark door" is the Atonement that shines the light on the darkness of our belief in separation, dispelling the sin, guilt and fear that were based on the illusion of separation from God. The ego teaches separation. The Holy Spirit teaches Atonement.

And now we address the important theme of choosing teachers. Our experience of peace rests on the power of our mind to choose.

Opposites cannot be reconciled. Only truth is true. When you are clear on your Identity as Christ you are absolutely guiltless, absolutely free, and absolutely happy. These statements reflect the non-dual thought system at the foundation of the Course's philosophy.

We decided to believe in our separate existence as an ego in a body, apparently crucifying our true Self. By choosing to identify with the Holy Spirit we learn how to restore ourselves to our true Identity as Christ.

It is of crucial importance to observe the activities of the ego in our daily lives, and bring the darkness of the ego to the light of the Holy Spirit. Watching the ego is one of the most powerful ways to benefit from this Course. Ignorance dissolves as we bring it to the light of awareness.
• The guardians of illusion, the sentinels of darkness, are all the defenses the ego uses to maintain its special separate existence: the belief in sin, guilt and fear; denial, projection, dissociation; and special love and hate relationships.

• Power does not lie in the defense system of the ego; the power is in our belief given to the defenses, and the belief in the reality of what they defend — the ego. By withdrawing our belief in the ego and its defense system, it dissolves. Our only problem is the belief that we have a problem.

• Denying the sin and guilt in our mind, and projecting them onto our brothers, we keep the darkness away from the light, and allow sickness to fester within us. By bringing the sin and guilt to the light, we are healed along with our brothers.

• True perception is the vision of the Holy Spirit. To perceive truly we must look through the eyes of the Holy Spirit Who sees everyone equally in the light of God's all inclusive love. As we bring the darkness to the light, all is seen as either an expression of love or a call for love through the eyes of Christ.

• When we bring our illusions to the Holy Spirit, we realize that everything we believed about ourselves and the world is false, and that in truth we are all Sons of God — this is the miracle. The miracle establishes that we have dreamed a dream, and what we dreamed is not true. When we look through the eyes of the miracle or Christ we see our brothers' behavior as either an expression of love or a call for love. To the Holy Spirit, attack is a projection of guilt and fear, and is a call for love.

• The one meaning, one emotion and one purpose for our lives is love. Our one function in the world is to accept the Atonement for ourselves, which is to accept the love of God for ourselves.

• The "laws of another world" are the Atonement and the miracle. There is no order of difficulty in miracles because there is no hierarchy of illusions. There is one illusion, separation; and one solution, the Atonement.

• Looking through the eyes of the ego we see division everywhere. We can see wholeness only through the eyes of the Holy Spirit. We all share the same true Identity as Christ, and we share the same illusory identity as the ego.

• Where there is no love, put it, and there you will find it. The expressions of fear, anger, and hate are calls for love. Everything is either an expression of love or a call for love. Therefore your response is always the same: love.

• Underlying all attack is fear. Attack is the form; fear is the content. When we look on our brothers' behavior through the eyes of the ego's perception, we see our distorted projections in form. When we look upon our brothers with the vision of the Holy Spirit we see our brothers' behavior as either an expression of love or a call for love. To the Holy Spirit, attack is a projection of guilt and fear, and is a call for love.

• The study of the ego is not the study of the mind because the ego is the deluded form of the wrong mind. To study the mind is to be aware of the decision making part of the mind whose choice determines the content of the mind: the Holy Spirit's love or the ego's hate. Analyzing the ego is to study the form with "meaningless content" because the content of the ego is hate arising from the belief in separation from God, which never happened and is therefore meaningless.

• There is no hierarchy in our functions in the world. We each have one function in the world: to accept the Atonement for ourselves. No one is more spiritual than anyone else. Whether you are a preacher or a truck driver, your function is to accept the Atonement for yourself, which means to accept the love of God for yourself and as yourself. Acceptance of the Atonement is facilitated with the help of the Holy Spirit through forgiveness of yourself and others.

• Our role in the world is to be the reflection of the choice for love instead of hate; innocence instead of guilt; shared interests instead of separate interests; atonement instead of separation; light instead of darkness. The forms may differ, but the content is always love.

• And now we turn to the theme of forgiveness.

• The miracle is an effect of our having chosen for the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. Our choice is the cause, the miracle is the effect.
Because you cannot harm me, your sin against me had no effect. What has no effect is not a cause. What is not a cause does not exist. There is nothing to forgive, because there is no sin. This is the essence of true forgiveness. Perfect love sees only perfect love — this is the vision of Christ. This is the Atonement. This is the miracle. This is the truth.

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are One. There is no separation. You are one with the Father through the Holy Spirit.

We learn how to forgive by asking the Holy Spirit to help us bring all of our darkness to His light where it is forgiven and dissolved.

The "loveless place" is the world we made from our projection of sin, guilt and fear.

Our function here is to actively deny the appearance of separation and accept the Atonement. Love is a natural extension of God through us when we are not obstructing His love with our guilt. The extension of love is God's function not ours.

Our shared function, which unites us all in the world we made, is to accept the Atonement for ourselves, which is to awaken from our nightmare of separation.

Our one and only function is to reflect the love of Heaven by accepting the Atonement for ourselves. We keep the mirror of our mind clean by being free of sin and guilt. We free ourselves of sin and guilt by bringing them to the love of the Holy Spirit for the cleansing power of forgiveness.

Love, Holiness and Truth are not of the world, but they are reflected here through the innocent mind, and realized in the holy instant.

We teach what we learn, and we learn what we teach. By learning the truth of the Atonement for ourselves, we teach it by being a reflection of God's perfect love in the world.

End Chapter Fourteen
CHAPTER FIFTEEN
THE HOLY INSTANT

Main Themes: This chapter addresses two major themes in the Course: Special relationships and the holy instant.

Introduction: To understand the dynamics of the ego, it is important to understand what the ego is reacting against — the Atonement. The special relationship is the culmination of the ego's strategy to keep us distracted in the body and world, out of our mind where we could choose the Atonement instead of the ego. Once again we start by looking at the Atonement principle which states that the separation from God's unconditional love never happened.

The magnitude of our Identity as Christ is not lost even as we choose to identify with the littleness of the ego.

God’s "universe" is the universe of Spirit or Christ, not the physical universe. Our one true relationship is with God in Spirit as Christ, His one Son. Our special love and hate relationships are of the ego and are projections of sin, guilt and fear.

Our special love and hate relationships are not true relationships, but projections of the ego. Our only true relationship is with God, as Christ in Spirit. Our relationship with God is eternal, changeless and one.

Now we will address the ego's strategy to maintain its special separate existence, and deny the oneness of spirit by making a world of special relationships that never satisfy us, and keep us ignorant of our one true relationship with God.

Our belief in separation from the love of God is what "breaks communication" with Him, and is what we must be willing to let go. Our special love and hate relationships with other people in the world serve to maintain the broken communication with the one source of true love in Heaven.

Seeking for love in other people is a futile and fruitless endeavor. We made other people as a projection of our sin and guilt. There is no love in them. Love is found only in our relationship with God. The ego loves when we seek for love in other people because we are following the ego's edict to "seek but do not find!" When we find the love of God in our mind, the ego is no more.

As Sons of God we have the power to choose to identify with the ego and its guilt, or the Holy Spirit and its love. But our true Identity remains unaffected. Love is eternal. Believing we have separated from God by identifying with the ego and its guilt, we fear God's punishment and are afraid of Him.

To the ego, love is vicious because when love is betrayed it strikes back demanding justice for the evil perpetrated against it. Total love of God is the total sacrifice of the ego's special love and is perceived by the ego as death; and this is the prototype of our relationships in the world. Rather than face death by accepting the unconditional love of God, the ego seeks special love from other people in the world the ego made.

First we project our rejection and betrayal of God onto Him, and accuse Him of rejecting and betraying us. Then we make a world of people and accuse them of the same. This is the world we have made of special love and special hate, of kill or be killed, of victims and victimizers; the battleground of good and evil, love and hate.

The ego's love is based on guilt and sacrifice. When I get what I want from you, that is love. When you get what you want from me, that is love. When our "needs" dovetail that is the ego's version of the marriage made in heaven. The ego's way of demonstrating love is through sacrifice. We hope that through sacrifice we will atone for our sin and guilt over our selfish desire for special love. To the ego, love is always exclusive. To the Holy Spirit, love is always inclusive.

Guilt says I have sinned against God, pushed Him away, and crucified Christ Who is now fragmented into billions of pieces (people), and I need those people to serve as depositories for my guilt. I project my guilt onto them, sacrificing their innocence so I can have my innocence.

When we choose to believe we are bodies separate from the eternal love of God, we find ourselves
Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

incomplete and alone in a lonely world. So we seek to fill our emptiness with love from other people. When love is not given to us from others, we feel we are deprived victims, now justified in depriving and victimizing them.

* Love is only of God. Love is not in other people or the world. Love is Spirit. Love is in the Mind. Love is perfect oneness. We made the world so true love would be hidden, because to find true love means the end of the special love of the ego, which is not love but guilt, fear and hate.

* Our magnitude is in our Identity with Christ and our oneness with God. Our littleness is in our identity with the ego and separation from God. It is our littleness that we worship and defend. Now we will begin to take a closer look at our special relationships.

* The entire world you made is made of your littleness. True magnitude, beauty and brilliance are not of the world, but are reflections of God's magnitude, beauty and brilliance in a clear mind. We seek love in the world because we have clouded our mind and forgotten the true source of love which is in our Identity with Christ.

When we identify with our littleness, we need allies to make us feel strong; we need lovers, religions, armies, and weapons to defend our littleness. Special love is conditional and limited to only a few. True love is unconditional and all inclusive. Special relationships (love and hate) are the weapons we use to defend our littleness against the magnitude of the truth of who we are as Christ.

* True love is all inclusive. If we value one member of the Sonship more than another we have attempted to divide love which cannot be divided, as it is one. The all inclusive nature of love is known and extended in the mind (which is content); not through the body and the world (which is form). We cannot share love equally with all bodies in the world of time, space and form; but we can do so in the mind as we realize we are all one in the Mind of Christ. By offering all our special relationships to the Holy Spirit, He uses them to teach us of the love of God — which is our true Identity.

* All relationships of the ego are purely selfish. There is no love in relationships of the ego. There is no love between two people in the world. Love is of God only. Relationships between egos are born, live and die in guilt, fear and hate. There is no "I" or "you" in love. "I love you" is a lie. "I am afraid of you" is the truth.

* Until we are aware of the true source of perfect love which is God in Heaven, we will continue to seek for special love in this hell we made and call the world. Love that is freely given and shared is unknowable in the world you made.

* The ego really wants to murder, but represses, denies and projects its murderous intent onto others in the world it made. This is why we revel in seeking and finding guilty, evil doers in the world and bringing them to "justice." By denying our own selfishness and guilt, and projecting them onto the "selfish evil-doers" in the world, we are able to maintain our special separate existence and present ourselves to the world with the face of innocence and purity. But what we project from darkness, remains hidden in darkness and our suffering continues.

* The ego makes time by projecting sin, guilt and fear onto the world. Sin becomes the past, guilt becomes the present, and fear becomes the future. The original sin, the belief in separation from God, is the birth of the ego's linear time. As guilt is tied to sin and fear, the ego ensures we remain prisoners in an eternal state of separation and hell.

* By tying guilt to sin and fear, the ego projects itself eternally in linear time, ensuring its existence even after death — in Heaven for the innocent (the sheep); and in hell for the guilty (the goats). Once we identify with the ego, the only way out is to change our mind and choose the Holy Spirit in the holy instant instead.

* Now we will look at the important theme of the power of our mind to choose to identify with the magnitude of the Holy Spirit rather than the littleness of the ego.

* Our function in the world is to accept the Atonement for ourselves through forgiveness, which reminds us of our function in Heaven which is to create through the extension of love. By looking with the Holy Spirit at the dynamics of the ego we become aware of its insanity, and realize we can choose for the sanity of the Holy Spirit instead.
The "you" who chooses is the decision making part of your mind. By watching the ego in your daily life, without judgment, you come to realize there must be a better way, and you do have a choice as to whom you identify with. In your daily life observe how often you choose to identify with the selfishness, guilt, anger and conflict of the ego, and how much you suffer because of it.

Again we will highlight the importance of being aware of and watching the ego in action in our daily experience: Without judging yourself, be honest and aware of all of your selfishness, anger, hostility, hate, guilt and fear; and give it to the Holy Spirit so His light will shine it away. You cannot hide any thought or feeling from the light of truth, or you will remain a prisoner in your own darkness.

We think guilt is wonderful, as long as we can see it in others, not ourselves. We are not asked to overcome guilt, change it or modify it; we are asked to be fully aware of guilt by looking at it with the Holy Spirit so we will realize the insanity of the dynamics of the ego, and be willing to let it go. Your entire world is projected as part of the ego's strategy to avoid looking at your guilt. When you look at your guilt it dissolves, when you avoid it, it becomes the hell you call your life.

To be free of the suffering, fear, anxiety, hostility and savagery of the life we have made for ourselves, we must look at what we have made over and over again until we realize what a tragedy and disaster our lives have become. We must bring all of our darkness to the light so it can be shined away. The purpose of this Course is to help us bring our darkness to the light of God's love. If we refuse to bring all of our darkness to the light, we will continue to suffer.

Our experience of linear time, which was made by the ego's projection of sin, guilt and fear, is undone in the holy instant. As we bring the darkness of our guilt to the light of the Holy Spirit's forgiveness, linear time comes to an end as the eternal love of Christ is reflected in the holy instant.

In the Text the term "holy instant" is used sometimes as the final instant before God takes us into Heaven; and other times it is referred to as one of a series of holy instants that lead up to the final holy instant. In the holy instant there is no ego, no body, no guilt, no separation — there is only the reflection of Heaven's love and nothing else. The first birth of the ego was in the moment we chose to believe we were separate from God. We are "born again" when we choose to identify with the Holy Spirit in the holy instant.

Who would you be without your guilt and fear, your anger, viciousness, victimhood, sacrifice and specialness? No one! That is your fear.

Our role is to be aware of the darkness within us and bring it to the light. The light shines through the Holy Spirit and through us of its own. The extension of light and love is not our doing; it is of the Father. The results of the miracle of healing, forgiveness, and the Atonement are of God; not us.

The holy instant is the instant, out of time, when we choose the love of the Holy Spirit rather than the fear of the ego. Practicing the holy instant facilitates our release from the ego's identification with linear time.

The holy relationship is the special relationship as viewed through the holy instant. The holy relationship is not between two people or two bodies, but is the state of mind of one who, in the holy instant, sees the separation, sin, guilt and fear of the special relationship as healed by the Holy Spirit.

The term "holy relationship" refers to the content (which is love) of the relationship in the mind, not the form of the relationship (which is of the body and world).

Jesus and the Holy Spirit serve as our teachers who help us bring our darkness to the light of Their love. In the holy instant we realize our magnitude in our oneness with Them and all our brothers.

We are free to choose to be with the grandeur of Christ or the grandiosity of the ego.

End Chapter Fifteen
CHAPTER SIXTEEN
THE FORGIVENESS OF ILLUSIONS

**Main Themes:** 1. Special relationships: love and hate. 2. The bridge to the real world and on to Heaven.

**Introduction:** The term "bridge" is used to represent the bridge that takes us from the world of separation to the "real world" which is the state of mind of unity and love at the gates of Heaven. "Bridge" is also used to represent the bridge between the ego's world of illusions and Heaven. The Holy Spirit uses forgiveness as the bridge that takes us from the world of separation to Heaven.

Bridges go both ways. The ego uses the bridge to take us from Heaven to the ego's wrong mind of sin, guilt and fear, and then out to the world of bodies. Special relationships serve as dumping grounds for the guilt in our mind. The ego attempts to maintain the face of innocence by projecting its guilt onto other people with whom we are in relationship — special love and special hate. Once the ego takes us across the bridge from Heaven to the wrong mind and out to the world and body, it uses denial and repression to make us forget we ever were in Heaven, represented by the veil of forgetfulness in the Chart.

We will start by looking at the Atonement principle. Truth is absolute. The truth of who we are is Christ, God's one Son. The Creator and His Creation are one.

- God's Voice is the Holy Spirit, our eternal link to the Father. It is our choice to listen to Him or the ego.

- The ego fears that if we accept the truth of the Atonement the ego will be dissolved.

- The Host of God is the Holy Spirit in our right mind. The ego attempts to veil the Holy Spirits call to us by keeping us distracted in the body, and the world of special love and hate relationships.

- Our special relationships form the veil of fantasies behind which the truth of our holy relationship with God is hidden.

- The ego's bridge from Heaven to illusion is the thought system built of the belief in separation, sin and guilt. God's correction to the ego's fantasies is the Holy Spirit Who offers us escape from the ego's illusions.

- The ego uses relationships with others to prove its own reality, and to substitute for the true love of God. But the others with whom the ego is in relationship are projections of the ego mind and are themselves illusory.

- The decision making part of our mind has the power to choose to ally itself with the ego or the Holy Spirit. The ego fears that we will choose against it so it keeps us distracted in the world of special relationships.

- The Holy Spirit's Atonement says the separation from God never happened which makes sin and guilt unreal. The ego's version of atonement says separation from God is real and God requires atonement through punishment, suffering and sacrifice.

You chose against the wholeness and love of God by declaring your own separate existence. You rejected your true magnitude and power by denying your Identity with Him. Believing you have split off from God has left you feeling selfish, sinful, guilty, incomplete and lonely. So you make a world, fill it with people onto whom you project your sin and guilt, and from whom you hope to find love and wholeness. Failing to find love and wholeness from people in the world you made, you feel deprived, and attack them seeking revenge. This is the illusory world of special love and hate relationships you made real to sustain your special separate existence.

- The ego makes guilt real in our mind, and then projects it out onto other people believing that it can free itself of guilt by denying it in itself and giving it to others.

- In our special love relationships, the special love partner serves to reflect back to us our face of purity and innocence, and enables us to keep our face of guilt and hate buried under the illusion of love; until we are betrayed!
Notes on Chapter Sixteen – The Forgiveness of Illusions

Sharing refers to content, not form. Sharing content is the extension of love and forgiveness in the mind. Form is of the body and world. Sharing does not mean sharing your body or time with everyone in the world; that is the ego's idea of sharing, not the Holy Spirit's. Our purpose in the world is Atonement through forgiveness, and we are to share it equally with everyone — with no special exceptions.

Special love and special hate relationships are in essence the same. Special hate relationships provide us with someone or some group onto whom we can project our sin, guilt and hate. The special love relationship is a variation of the special hate relationship. It is especially obstructive to our salvation and is a strong ego defense because it appears to be love but actually is hate in disguise. In special love you have something that I lack. I have a need that only you can fill, and when you fulfill my needs I will love you. Special love is based on sacrifice — I sacrifice myself to you, and you to me — which breeds resentment, anger, hostility and hate. Special love is special hate in disguise. There is no love in special love. True love is of God.

In my mind I separated from God and then blame Him for abandoning me so I can avoid the feeling of guilt and maintain the face of innocence. Look what God has done to me! In the world, I blame you for abandoning me and depriving me of love so you will feel guilty, and I can continue to maintain the face of innocence. Look what you have done to me! Our relationships in the world are a reflection of what we believe is our relationship with God. The ego loves guilt because without it the ego dissolves. Guilt is the witness that separation from God is real. If the separation from God is real, the ego is real.

Hearing the words, "I love you, only you, and no one else!" is heaven to the ego. In truth it is hell.

Love is only in the wholeness of our Identity with God. There is absolutely no love between people in the world. The ego disparages and rejects this notion because it means the death of the ego and its specialness.

Through the death (separation) of our true Self as Christ, Who is our eternal life, love and wholeness, we think we can gain love and wholeness in relationship with someone else.

Now we will address the "past" as it is used in the ego thought system. The ego's projection of sin, guilt and fear makes linear time. Sin is the separation from God in the past. We feel guilt over our separation in the present. And we fear God's retribution in the future.

Our special relationships are a reflection of the belief in the "evil" of our original sin against God, and serve to reinforce the "reality" that we have actually separated from Him.

Now we will look at how we are to let go of the illusions of sin, guilt and specialness, and wake up from the nightmare of ego. Special relationships are smokescreens which are used by the ego to conceal the decision making part of our mind and stop us from choosing the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. With the help of the Holy Spirit we must look through the smoke and bring the ego's darkness to the light of God's love.

Our special love relationships veil our special hate relationships. We love our friends and hate our rivals. We love our allies and hate our enemies. Where there is good, there is evil. Where there is special love, there is special hate. Our special love relationships are an attempt to maintain the face of innocence while we murder our enemies. We realize our true motives in our special relationships by observing our thoughts and feelings and bringing them to the light of awareness where they can be healed, and true love can blossom.

We made the world to dump our guilt over a sin that was never committed. And we live in fear of the world we made as a place to hide from the wrath of God Who only loves us.

We need our illusions to be true, because we are illusions. Illusions dissolve when you look closely.

Now we will look at true empathy, true forgiveness and the holy instant. The holy instant is the instant, out of time, when we choose the love of the Holy Spirit rather than the fear of the ego.

We choose to communicate and heal with the strength of Christ or the weakness of ego.
Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

The ego's "miracle" is to try to fix the problem on the level of form, in the body and world. The Holy Spirit's miracle is of the mind, not the body and world.

Two minds that share the same purpose of forgiveness are joined as one. The shared interest of forgiveness is the first step on the bridge back to the Atonement.

Hate is a symptom of fear, and fear is a call for love. All communication and behavior is either an expression of love or a call for love — this is the vision of the Holy Spirit, and ours in the holy instant.

The ego believes it is made complete in its special love relationship when its needs are met by its partner in love; and is made innocent in its special hate relationship as it projects its guilt onto its partner in hate. So the ego maintains its separate existence and believes it is made complete and innocent in its special relationships — but pays a heavy price.

In the holy instant there is no separation, no sin, guilt or fear; there is no body, no world and no time — there is only God's peace, love and wholeness.

Forgiveness is the bridge that leads us from our perception of the world of separate bodies, to the true perception of the real world.

We first give away our true self as Christ, and then give away our ego-self in the sacrifice of special relationship, and we call that "love." The value of special relationships is in the opportunity they give us to realize the egregious error we have made in choosing the insanity of the ego thought system over the sanity, love and wholeness of the Holy Spirit.

The little spark is the memory of the love of Christ in our right mind. The Great Rays refers to the light of Christ which is our true Identity in Heaven.

To the ego, the purpose of special relationships is to gratify the needs of the body, and maintain the ego's special separate existence. As we cross the bridge from body consciousness to spirit consciousness, we are fulfilled in our identity with spirit, and see little value in special relationships based in the body and world. In the transition we may temporarily experience some disorientation.

"Crossing over" is not the death of the body, but refers to crossing the bridge in the mind from the illusory world of separation, to the real world of wholeness with spirit. From the ego's perspective we lose everything by gaining the real world. In the real world we realize we gave up nothing to remember we are everything.

Your true creations are love. It is love we seek and love that calls us Home.

When we believe we can attain love, peace, wholeness and joy in the world of bodies, we deny our true love, peace, wholeness and joy in our Identity with Christ; and we experience emptiness.

**End Chapter Sixteen**
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN
FORGIVENESS AND THE HOLY RELATIONSHIP

Main Themes: The holy relationship, forgiveness, and the power of the mind to establish meaning and purpose.

Introduction: Before the beginning, we are all one in God, as God. Until the "tiny mad idea" of separation from God arose in the mind. The Holy Spirit's answer to the tiny mad idea is that the separation never happened. The ego's answer is that the separation from God did happen, it is a sin, we are guilty of sin, and we better hide to avoid the wrath of God. The ego then makes a body and world onto which it can project itself, along with its sin and guilt into its special relationships in the world. The Holy Spirit responds by offering the holy relationship. The ego tries to turn the holy relationship into a special relationship by attempting to bring the love of God into the world. The Holy Spirit reiterates the holy relationship until we finally accept the holy relationship through forgiveness and the Atonement, which leads us on to the real world and back to Heaven with God where we were before the beginning.

The ego's motive is to defend against the Atonement to maintain its special separate existence.

Our special relationships were born in the same instant our belief in the original separation from God was born; the Holy Spirit was also with us from that very first instant.

By choosing the ego, our wish for independent existence has become true in our dream. Our dream of separation becomes our experience of reality because of the power of our mind. In the Course, faith refers to the mind's power to believe in the ego or the Holy Spirit. When we put our faith in the Holy Spirit, we put our faith in "everything." When we put our faith in the ego, we put our faith in "nothing," and faith in nothing is referred to as faithlessness.

The ego fears we will choose the truth of the Holy Spirit, which would mean the end of the ego.

When we put our faith in the ego by choosing against the Holy Spirit, we have rendered our true power and strength useless.

Displacement is a psychological term that refers to displacing the true cause of a problem onto a different cause to avoid facing the true cause. It is similar to projection and dissociation. Displacement, projection and dissociation are what we do with our sin, guilt and fear, which are all caused by our belief in the original separation from God. Our one problem is our choice to believe in the separation from God and identify with the ego. The one solution is to realize the separation never happened and identify with the Holy Spirit.

When we put faith in the ego, the body and the world, salvation cannot be found. The miracle shifts our faith from the ego to the Holy Spirit. Faith is restored where it was lost; at the decision making part of your mind. Special relationships serve to displace the real cause of suffering, the decision in our mind, onto other people and the world.

Vengeance is what we secretly believe we deserve from God for sinning against Him by leaving Him. But rather than face our sin and guilt, we blame God for leaving us, and project our sin and guilt onto Him and other people in the world; while secretly we seek vengeance of other people and fear their vengeance against us. The ego's modus operandi is denial, dissociation, projection and displacement. The truth about ourselves and the other is that we are all part of the one Christ.

The split mind is represented by two pictures. One is of the ego's thought system which is symbolized by death. The frame around the ego's picture is the special relationship. The purpose of the frame is to distract us from the picture. The other picture is the Holy Spirit's thought system which is the holy instant symbolized by Light. We will look at these two pictures and their frames later in this chapter.

Even as we are waking up to the delusion and insanity of believing we are a separate ego in a body, we still cling tenaciously to our special love and hate relationships, believing that we are exceptions somehow, and our relationships are grounded in true love, and those we hate are truly evil.
The special relationship is a defense against guilt. The fact that we believe we have something that needs to be defended means there is something that we are afraid of. There would be no defense without a problem we believe we need to defend against. The fact that we are invested in a special relationship reveals that we have a problem of guilt in our mind that we are trying to avoid. If we let go of the special relationship our defense will be gone and we will be directly faced with our guilt.

In the field of psychology, psychologists are taught not to take away a patient's defenses or they may become psychotic. Within the thought system of the ego there is an element of truth in that. Ultimately when all defenses are seen as illusory we become sane, but within the ego thought system, when special relationships are taken away, we become insane with guilt. However, using special relationships as a defense against guilt reinforces the fear that the defenses are supposed to protect you from. The fact that we feel we need special relationships to protect us from guilt says that the guilt is real and needs to be defended against.

Look, look, look at your special relationships, watch the dynamics of ego, and be aware so you can choose another way!

To go beyond the world, it is crucial to understand the purpose the world serves. There are two goals in the world — the goal of truth and the goal of illusion. When we decide that truth is our goal, everything we do in our daily lives is seen as a means to attaining our goal of realizing truth.

The purpose we set at the beginning determines what we accomplish in the end. The meaning and value we see in our daily experience is determined by the purpose we set for our lives.

What is true is everything that teaches me to forgive, accept, unite and love. What is false is everything that teaches me to blame, reject, separate and fear. Any act that breeds exclusiveness — special love or special hate — keeps me asleep in my nightmare. Any act that engenders inclusiveness helps me awaken from my nightmare to the peace of the real world and ultimately to the truth of my Identity with Christ. The purpose of the dream world we made is to awaken from it!

The ego sees itself as a victim of the world of circumstances beyond its control. The Holy Spirit knows that circumstances and experiences are determined by the power of the mind to choose its goals. When the goal is to identify with the ego and maintain its world of illusions; that is the result. When the goal is to identify with the Holy Spirit and wake up from the illusions of the ego; that is the result. All power is in the mind of the Son.

The purpose of the holy relationship is forgiveness rather than guilt.

As we turn our attention inside to our mind we realize that our special relationships are not between my body and another body, but are really between me and my ego. I, as the decision maker, have chosen to identify with the ego, and make the ego my ally.

When I am angry at you I am accusing you of taking away my peace. This means someone outside of my mind has the power to take peace away from me. The truth is that the decision making part of my mind is the only power in the universe that can choose against the peace of God. So I forgive you because you have not taken away the peace of God from me, I decided against peace myself. On a deeper level I forgive you because you do not exist except as a figure I put in my dream so I have someone onto whom I can dump my anger and guilt. It is not the evil or sin in you that needs to be forgiven, but the evil or sin I have made real in myself that is forgiven.

In the holy instant, the separation from God is undone, the past is forgiven, and the love of God is extended in the eternal present. The only true beauty is in choosing the Holy Spirit's love. The only ugliness is in choosing the ego's hate.

The source of the problem is in the mind and not the world. To ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help with the body or the world will not resolve your problem because your problem is in your mind. By asking for help with your body and the world you are trying to form another special relationship, which once again serves to avoid the real problem of separation and guilt in your mind.
 Forgiveness is not between two people. Forgiveness is in your mind only. Forgiveness facilitates the Atonement which is the realization that the separation from God never happened. Forgiveness is of the mistaken choice you made in your mind to believe in the separation, identify with the ego, and reject your true Identity with the wholeness of Christ. Forgiveness has absolutely nothing to do with people or their actions in the world. No one can betray me except my self by denying the truth of who I am. Therefore no one in the world needs to be forgiven.

What you did against your brother was to see him as an ego. You see him as a selfish ego because you believe you are a selfish ego, and you want to blame him for your selfishness. Whatever you are guilty and shameful of in your self, you project onto others. What you see in the world as evil, you believe is the evil in you. The value of others and the world is that they serve as a mirror for your hidden guilt, shame and fear. Seeing it in others gives you the opportunity to forgive it in yourself as you forgive it in others. You know when all guilt and shame are completely removed from your unconscious mind when you look out and see a bright, clean, beautiful and innocent world. For your world is yourself. There is no separation. This is why it takes only one person to save the whole world — you.

Once we choose the Holy Spirit's goal of Atonement through forgiveness, every situation in our lives becomes a vehicle for helping us accomplish our purpose of realizing the truth of who we are.

The Holy Spirit's picture is the holy instant symbolized by Light, framed in the holy relationship. When we focus on the picture it becomes the real world, then the picture and frame disappear, and what is left is God.

Through forgiveness we realize the common goal we share in purpose with our brothers, which becomes a reflection of our oneness in Christ. The one purpose of our relationships with others in the world is to get us back to the only real relationship — our relationship with God in Spirit — which is the purpose of the holy relationship. The purpose of our special relationships is to keep us identified with the ego, the body and the world.

The "two pictures" metaphor is inspired by Shakespeare's Hamlet. Throughout the Course, Jesus is presenting two thought systems, the ego's and the Holy Spirit's, and is asking us to look closely at them so we can make an enlightened decision.

The ego's picture of death and guilt framed in special relationships, and the Holy Spirit's picture of the holy instant and Light framed in the holy relationship are mutually exclusive and cannot be combined. The Light of the holy instant shines away the darkness of the ego. It is common for people, however, to try to bring the Light into the ego's darkness while maintaining the ego's existence. This happens when we try to make the holy relationship a special, exclusive relationship. We will address this dynamic later in the chapter.

The holy relationship is referred to as if it is with a person or an entity. The holy relationship is a process that happens over time as we go back and forth from the special relationship to the holy relationship, until our fear abates enough that we can stay in the holy relationship or holy instant. The holy relationship is the process of looking at the ego and choosing the Holy Spirit instead. The holy relationship is not a relationship you have with someone in a body in the world. The holy relationship happens at the decision making part of your mind in the process of looking at the ego with the Holy Spirit, and choosing for Christ instead of the ego.

As we begin to question the value of our special relationships, and see the tremendous pain and suffering they are causing us, we may feel a sense of disillusionment, distress and pending loss. This feeling is temporary.

When we ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help with our body or situations in our world, we are attempting to bring Their Light into our darkness for our personal benefit while maintaining our darkness. Attempting to use Jesus for our personal gain is trying to turn the holy relationship into an unholy, special relationship. Jesus and the Holy Spirit serve as our guides who lead us out of the world of illusion to the real world of spirit. When we ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help with our body and our world, we are doing exactly what the ego wants us to do by staying identified with the body and distracted by the world. This is what most religions do with their
religious leaders, and is what the Christian Church has done with Jesus.

- Your special relationships are the classroom in which the Holy Spirit teaches you of the holy relationship. Special relationships are not to be discarded, but are transformed as we turn to the Holy Spirit for guidance.

As we shift back and forth from the special relationship to the holy relationship we may feel a sense of disruption and fluctuation in our relationships. One day we may feel love and forgiveness toward others, the next day we may feel resentment and anger. Our purpose is to continue to turn to the Holy Spirit for guidance to learn the lessons offered to us through relationships in our daily lives.

- Forgiveness is all inclusive. To exclude even one person from love and forgiveness is an attempt to turn the holy relationship into a special relationship. You must see the entire Sonship in Light or you will remain in your own darkness.

- The ego will resist forgiveness, love and complete acceptance, because unconditional love, forgiveness, and all inclusive acceptance mean the end of the ego's specialness. Resistance is to be expected as part of the learning process.

- The forgiven world is a synonym for the real world.

- The Light filled picture of the holy instant disappears into the Great Light Who is God. While its beauty is unparalleled, we are terrified of the Great Light as it means the end of our special separate existence.

**End Chapter Seventeen**
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN
The Passing of the Dream

Main Theme: This chapter addresses the purpose of the body and world from the ego's point of view, and how the Holy Spirit uses the body and world to undo the thought system of the ego, and to facilitate our awakening from the ego's nightmare of separation.

As you read this chapter of the Text you will notice the beauty of the language, and the richness and depth of the teaching become more and more apparent.

Introduction: "The body was not made by love, yet love does not condemn it, and can use it lovingly." The body was made by the ego; not God. God does not condemn the body and world, but uses the body as a means to help awaken us from the dream.

When the Son accepts the Atonement, realizing the separation from God never happened, the ego dissolves. So the ego devises a plan to maintain its separate existence by convincing the Son that the separation from God is real, it is a sin that evokes guilt, and the Son should fear the revenge of God. To "get rid" of the sin, guilt and fear from the Son's mind, the ego makes a body and a world onto which it projects the sin, guilt and fear out of the Son's mind and tells him he is innocent; it is the world that is sinful and guilty, not me. The world was made to keep sin and guilt real, but to keep it out of the Son's mind, thereby maintaining the ego's separate existence and its face of innocence in the eyes of the ego's god.

When we consciously bring the darkness of guilt to the light of forgiveness, and see it through the Holy Spirit's vision of love, we begin to wake up to the truth of our Identity with the innocence of Christ.

The ego uses the body as a distraction and defense against the Atonement.

When we identify with the body we are identified with the illusion of separation and specialness. To wake up from the dream of separation, the identity with the body must be seen as illusory. Our true identity with spirit, and our identity with the body are mutually exclusive.

True love is in our identity with spirit. There is no love in the body or the world. The body and world are made specifically to block love. This is why we experience so much pain and suffering in our search for love in the world of bodies: love is not there! The Holy Spirit guides us to the true source of love by gently turning us away from the ego, body and world, and to the eternal love of Christ — our true Identity with God.

The body is the "embodiment" of the original thought of separation from God. The Atonement is the thought that the separation from God never happened. The Atonement undoes the separation from God, undoes the body, and undoes the ego; this is the ego's terror, and why it fights like hell against the Atonement and everything in the universe that threatens its special separate existence.
The divided ego-self, and the body and world with which we identify are unknown to God, as God knows only our perfect, undivided wholeness as Christ. When we choose to be separate from the unconditional love of God in spirit, we seek for substitutions in the form of special love in the world of separation we made.

Once we believe the ego’s mythology of separation, sin and guilt, God is not the God of love, but becomes the god of fear.

Once we believe in the original separation from God, the whole universe is projected and seen as separate fragments unrelated to the whole. The entire universe arises out of the one original thought of separation from God. This is why there is no order of difficulty in miracles, and no hierarchy of illusions; by healing the one original illusory thought of separation, the whole universe is healed — in your mind.

The original error of separation is in the mind, and is projected out making the world, and making the world appear to be divided and in need of healing. But the healing can only take place at the source of separation and sickness, which is in the mind. The body and world cannot be healed and united because they are not sick or divided. Seeking for love and healing in the world or for the world is to seek endlessly in darkness for nothing. The world does not exist apart from the mind that made it. The mind must be healed, not the body or world.

The resolution of sin and guilt is in the realization that they are not real because separation from God never happened. Guilt says sin is real and must be punished which evokes fear — it is all illusory.

Our pathetic substitutions for God’s unconditional love are our special love and hate relationships.

Now we will look at the world through the symbolism of the dream, and show that our sleeping dreams and our waking dreams are the same.

In our dreams we want to prove the separation is real, and we want someone else to be punished for it.

The cause of the dream is guilt, and the purpose of the dream is to provide someone onto whom you can project your guilt to maintain your innocence in the eyes of your god of fear.

Your original sleeping dream is that you have separated from God; and in your waking dreams the people in your special relationships serve as dumping grounds for your sin and guilt, so you can sustain your dream of separation from God and have your innocence too.

The Holy Spirit’s use of the body and world is to help us wake up from the nightmare we made.

The Holy Spirit does not punish the body, as the ego claimed, but respects the power of our mind and what it made, and uses the body for a loving purpose to help wake us from our nightmare.

By choosing the holy instant the imaginary shackles of the body are dissolved, and the peace we had been seeking through the body and world is found in our timeless identity with the love of the Holy Spirit.

The body is the effect of the original thought of separation. Through accepting the Atonement, the original thought of separation is undone, and with it the experience of the separate body. In the holy instant there is no thought of the body, and therefore no separation; there is only the wholeness of our true self as spirit. The body does not physically disappear, but your identity has shifted from the body to spirit.

The holy instant is a shift in identity from the body to spirit, and happens in the mind; not in the body or the world.

Sin, guilt and fear form the ego’s projection of linear time: sin is the past, guilt is the present, and fear is the future. In the holy instant linear time collapses along with sin, guilt and fear. In their place is the eternal present — the love of God.

The Holy Spirit uses the body as a communication device in the world for reflecting the love of God through forgiveness and the Atonement.

Through the holy instant, the Holy Spirit leads us out of the illusory body and world, back within to our right mind where we choose the holy relationship rather than the special relationship.
Notes on Chapter Eighteen – The Passing of the Dream

• In the Atonement everyone is included in God's love without exception. Love is all inclusive, not "special."

• To forgive one is to forgive all. To exclude one is to exclude all. Love is unconditional and all inclusive. We become aware of God's unconditional love as the Holy Spirit helps us let go of our "special" love, which is not love, but guilt and fear.

• Our function in the world of special relationships is to be a reflection of the forgiveness and the Atonement of the Holy Spirit.

• By turning to the Holy Spirit, our perception of the purpose of the world changes. The purpose of our world becomes Atonement through forgiveness; rather than serving as a dumping ground for guilt.

• There is a beautiful and powerful section in the Text called "The Little Garden." The ego's idea of the perfect garden is one of specialness and exclusion. The Holy Spirit's perfect garden is of inclusiveness and acceptance of all.

• The ego is on a journey from insanity, through the world, and on to sanity.

• The little wall of dust that stands between us and our brothers is sin, guilt and fear.

• Jesus and the Holy Spirit are always with us as we journey on. We can let go of the ego's hand knowing we have Jesus by our side.

• Jesus cannot help "fix" our special relationships because the purpose of the special relationship is to exclude him and the Holy Spirit. But if we ask him, he will help us turn to the holy relationship with the Holy Spirit instead.

• The purpose we share with our brothers is of forgiveness and Atonement. When we join hands with our brothers in forgiveness, our relationship becomes holy and Jesus walks with us.

• Our journey Home is a process that happens over time. The truth does not take time, but our fear slows our realization and acceptance of the truth.

• We will likely experience fear and resistance as the darkness of sin and guilt in our mind is brought into the light of awareness. As we continue looking at the darkness of sin and guilt with the Holy Spirit, the darkness fades into the nothingness from which it rose.

• We are to be aware of the dynamics of ego, and let them be. We are not to try to control, change or manipulate the ego, but we are to look at it with the Holy Spirit Who forgives all, heals all, and does all. The Holy Spirit does everything; you do nothing, but give everything to Him.

• There is a gentle shift from the ego's nightmare, to the happy dream, and on to our awakening to the real world.

• We choose the purpose — we want to leave the ego's hell of specialness, individuality, pain and suffering. The means is provided in the Holy Spirit's ability to transform our special relationships into the holy relationship.

• The Holy Spirit is with us eternally. When we are experiencing conflict we are to ask the Holy Spirit to help us see through the light of His eyes. Through the vision of the Holy Spirit all is forgiven; the Atonement is accepted and we move on to the real world. And finally we reach the end of the journey which never began.

End Chapter Eighteen
CHAPTER NINETEEN
THE ATTAINMENT OF PEACE

Main Themes: Overcoming the four obstacles to peace. And sin versus error.

Introduction: This chapter addresses the ego's strategy and purpose for making the body. The first three obstacles to peace address how the ego uses the body as a distraction to keep us out of our mind, away from the Holy Spirit, and focused in the world. The fourth obstacle to peace is the fear of God's punishment for our sin, and also the fear of God's unconditional love.

First Obstacle to Peace: The desire to get rid of it. The attraction of guilt.

Second Obstacle to Peace: The belief that the body is valuable for what it offers. The attraction of pain.

Third Obstacle to Peace: The attraction of death. The incorruptible body.

Fourth Obstacle to Peace: The fear of God. The lifting of the veil.

Also, we will look at the holy relationship and see how the Holy Spirit uses the body as an instrument of healing rather than attack.

We begin with a statement of the Atonement principle. There is one Will in the universe and that is God's Will of love and perfect oneness. All else is a projection of the ego mind, which is no power at all.

The ego's strategy is to convince us that the separation from God really happened, sin is real which leads to guilt and the fear of punishment. To avoid punishment the ego makes a body and world onto which it projects its sin and guilt. In truth the separation from God never happened, sin is not real, our guilt was based on a false premise, and God has no interest in punishment. If we get back to our mind, and look at our sin, guilt and fear with the Holy Spirit, we will realize our mistake in believing the ego's story, and we will choose for the Holy Spirit instead. Therefore, to maintain its special separate existence the ego uses the body and world to keep us out of our mind and distracted by the world of bodies.

Sin is the insane belief that we are separate from God and greater than Him. We cannot separate ourselves from God, nor can we be greater than Him. Therefore there is no sin, only an error in our identity, which can be corrected through Self Knowledge.

Sin is the belief in separation and is the foundation of the ego's religion. Without sin the ego's Bible has no meaning, value or purpose. Without sin the ego dissolves into the nothingness that it is.

Sin is a required belief to maintain our special separate existence. This is why we love conflict, war, pain and suffering — without sin, guilt, fear, conflict, war, pain and suffering we do not exist!

By fearing punishment by God for our "sin," we have made God as insane as we are. Would God punish His Son for a sin he cannot commit? Only the ego's insane god would do so. The ego's god is a god of wrath and vengeance — and the ego loves him so! For without a god of wrath, the ego melts into nothingness.

Guilt demands punishment which means that separation and the ego are real. This is the ego's attraction to guilt. An error can be corrected, which is the ego's fear. If the Son realizes his error in believing in sin (separation) the ego is dead on the spot. The ego lives only because of the Son's power to believe in sin.

Guilt and sin go together. Sometimes the Course emphasizes sin, other times guilt, but they are virtually the same as they coexist. Sin and guilt are felt as a sense of selfishness in your daily life. With selfishness comes the fear of loss and punishment. To avoid punishment the ego projects its selfishness onto others in the world so it can maintain its face of innocence and have others be punished.

The purpose of the ego's strategy is to keep us distracted by the body and world so we will not get back to our mind, realize our error, and choose for the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. Once we have projected our sin and guilt (selfishness) out of our mind and onto the world of bodies, we cannot correct
our error at its source which is in our mind. Therefore we begin the correction of our error by forgiving others, not for their sin, but for the sin we have projected onto them.

And now we turn to the first obstacle to peace — the desire to get rid of it. We do not want peace because without conflict and separation we have no special separate existence. Conflict proves we are real and separate.

The little wall of hatred is the sin and guilt (selfishness) we project onto our brothers. The projection of sin and guilt is referred to as an attack. Believing we are separate from and in conflict with God and our brothers, we feel justified in defending ourselves and attacking them back. This is the first obstacle to peace we must overcome: the desire to get rid of peace.

The "messengers of fear" is an anthropomorphic symbol that refers to the process of projecting our sin, guilt and fear onto the world of bodies. "Our lord and master" refers to sin, guilt, fear or the ego throughout the Text. We actively seek and love to find fault with people in the world; we love to condemn and judge because by finding guilt in others we believe we can maintain our innocence.

Many passages in the Text are disturbing because they represent all of us as separate egos. However, the reality of who we are is Christ Who does not attack and cannot be preyed upon. To realize the truth of who we are we must be willing to bring the obstacles of darkness to the light of the Holy Spirit.

Next we look at the second obstacle to peace: the belief that the body is valuable, and the attraction of pain.

We love to be treated unfairly, attacked and mistreated because it proves we are innocent victims, and that sin and guilt are outside of us in our victimizers. Pain means I am real. Identifying with the body provides the ego a "home." Pain and pleasure of the body seem to witness to the reality of the ego's special separate existence. This is the attraction of the body and pain that we must overcome to realize the truth of our eternal Identity with Christ in Spirit.

I am attracted to finding guilt in you because that is how I believe I can avoid guilt and pain in myself.

The third obstacle to peace, the attraction of death, and the fourth obstacle to peace, the fear of God, are closely related.

By bringing the obstacles to peace to the light of awareness we are able to make a conscious choice for the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. The ego makes the body as a distraction so the Son of God will not choose the Holy Spirit.

The Universal Purpose is the Atonement. The body has no purpose apart from the purpose the mind assigns to it. The Holy Spirit in our right mind uses the body as a communication device to extend forgiveness and the Atonement. The ego uses the body as a weapon to prove and maintain the ego's special separate existence. We, the Son of God as the decision maker, determine the purpose the body is to serve by choosing the ego or the Holy Spirit as our guide and teacher.

The "tiny mad idea" is the idea that the separation from God is real. This "tiny mad idea" of separation is embodied by the body in the world. The body is the tiny mad idea in the mind of the Son.

Sickness and healing are in the mind, not the body. Dissociation is the attempt to split off two irreconcilable thought systems in the mind by ignoring or dissociating one of them. This is referred to as the split mind in the Chart, and is represented by the Holy Spirit in the right mind, and the ego in the wrong mind. Dissociation, the split mind, is healed by bringing the darkness of the ego to the light of the Holy Spirit.

Ideas leave not their source. Sickness is the decision for guilt in the mind. The ego's goal is to maintain its separate existence. By having us identify our self with the body, it maintains itself, and keeps us from questioning our true identity in the mind. By believing sickness is of the body, not the mind, the ego keeps us focused on the body and maintains its separate existence — until we choose again.
Seeking physical pleasure or avoiding pain will not bring the peace of God to you. Pleasure, pain and the body are irrelevant to Self Knowledge. Self Knowledge is of the mind.

The original belief in the thought of separation from God was our "death." Identifying with the ego and the body is the expression of the original thought of separation, and is the "murder" of our true Self as Christ. The ego confuses life and death, birth and murder; the insane idea that Atonement is attained through sacrifice, suffering and death.

This Course is not asking us to give up or sacrifice the body or the world. With the help of the Holy Spirit we are asked to question our identity with the ego, the body and world because identifying with the ego is the cause of our pain.

We have chosen the body, a little mound of clay, to be our home. Until we choose again.

Peace is the home of love. Guilt is the home of fear. As we study the teachings in this Course over time, we will notice a change in the way we perceive ourselves and the world. We will notice we are experiencing peace, love and forgiveness more and more; and experiencing conflict, fear and guilt less and less.

Faith in the ego is faithlessness because it is faith in nothing. Faith in the Holy Spirit is faithfulness because it is faith in God Who is All.

The decision to identify with the body instead of God is the source of pain.

Being aware of the obstacles to peace serves to unveil the dark, hidden motives of the ego, and bring them to the light where they can be healed and released.

The third obstacle to peace is the attraction of death. To the ego, death of the body is the ultimate proof that separation from God was real.

The ego lives through the "murder" of Christ; the original error.

The purpose of death (the whole thought system of the ego) is to silence the Voice for God. The "retreat to death" is the choice to identify with the ego rather than the Holy Spirit — God's Answer.

The separate existence of the body and world with all the pain, suffering, conflict and death, proves that God is dead, and the ego lives! That is why we are attracted to guilt, pain, and death; and why we fear God's eternal life and unconditional love.

Our fear of anything in the world is a projection of the original sin, guilt and fear in our mind that arises from the belief in our separation from God's love and wholeness. The world we experience is a reflection of our own mind. The world is your mind. Ideas leave not their source. Your world leaves not your mind.

By looking at the ego through the eyes of Jesus or the Holy Spirit we are able to realize there must be a better way to live our lives. This little willingness leads us to consider choosing the Holy Spirit as our teacher, and letting go of the misery of the ego. After we have faced the first three obstacles to peace that involve our identity with the body, next we look at the fourth obstacle to peace which is our fear of God in our mind. The reason we made the body and world was to avoid facing the fear of God. The ego tells us that if we look within our mind, God will destroy us.

By raising his eyes and looking squarely upon his sin and guilt based on the ego's lies, the Son has the opportunity to take back the power he gave away by choosing again. You are the Son of God. And the Father and Son are one.

The obstacles to peace, which are in our mind, are reflected in our special relationships in the world. By looking at our special relationships with Jesus or the Holy Spirit, they are transformed into the holy relationship, which is with Christ through the Holy Spirit in our mind.

Our Redeemer is the Holy Spirit. We are to look upon all our brothers as sinless through the eyes of the Holy Spirit's forgiveness.

The purpose we share with all of our brothers is that of awakening from the dream of separation. We do this by accepting the Atonement for ourselves and through forgiveness of our brothers with the help of the Holy Spirit. Our special relationships are transformed into the holy relationship in the miracle
of the holy instant as we choose to see with the bright vision of Christ rather than through the dark clouds of the ego.

- The holy relationship is in your mind, not between two people or two bodies. In the holy relationship, fear's messengers, the hungry dogs of fear, are called off; and love's messengers are sent out in their place. The hungry dogs of fear were sent out to find sin and guilt in your brothers. Love's messengers are sent out to find love, peace and innocence in your brothers.

- Instead of choosing the ugliness of the ego's hatred, we choose the beauty of the Holy Spirit's love. And because projection makes perception, we find in our brothers what we projected onto them.

- The fear of death is a mask over our attraction to death. The ego wants us to believe in death, because it proves we have our own life separate from God.

- Death is the belief in our separation from God. The resurrection is the awakening from the belief in death.

- Forgiveness is the means by which we are able to undo the projection of guilt, and go back inside our mind to resolve the true source of guilt which is our decision to believe in the sin of separation from God.

- Our one and only purpose is to forgive all as a means for reaching the end of the journey which is the awakening to the real world. Now we look upon all of our relationships as an opportunity to look within. Looking at our special relationships, love and hate, serves as an opportunity to see the sin and guilt we have projected onto them from within ourselves.

- The first three obstacles to peace refer to the body as a hiding place for our sin and guilt. To overcome the fourth obstacle, the fear of God, we must go within our mind to the source of fear which is our belief in the original separation. Forgiveness helps us realize the sin is not in our brothers or in the world, but is in our mind. We must face this final obstacle, the fear of God, within our own mind before we can move on to the real world.

- We are healed together or not at all. All are forgiven or no one is forgiven. There are absolutely no exceptions to God's unconditional love. His love is all inclusive. The Holy Spirit's forgiveness is offered to all. The Sonship is one. You cannot realize the truth of your Identity with Christ if you withhold forgiveness from even one of your brothers. We go to Heaven together or not at all.

- We are to turn to the Holy Spirit to help us forgive everyone against whom we have ever held a grievance — past, present or future; dead or alive. Not one stain of sin can be held against a brother if we are to reach the real world. Our relationships are the perfect mirror for us to look back into our mind to find any remnants of sin and guilt that need to be released through forgiveness.

- Crucifixion is a symbol for the ego's thought system of sin, guilt and fear. As we project our sin and guilt onto our brothers we crucify them hoping to maintain our own innocence.

- Resurrection is the awakening from the dream of separation, death and separate interests.

- The purpose of our life, the purpose of our relationships, and our only goal is salvation from the hell of egoic existence; through forgiveness and Atonement, we realize the real world where God lifts us back into Heaven.

- Our choice of goals in the world is either to maintain our special separate egoic existence, or to realize the truth of our Identity with Christ in Spirit.

**End Chapter Nineteen**
CHAPTER TWENTY
THE VISION OF HOLINESS

Main Theme: The holy relationship, the right minded vision of the Holy Spirit.

Introduction: This chapter addresses the importance of purpose: the ego's purpose of the body and world, and the Holy Spirit's purpose of the body and world. There is also an increased emphasis on the power of the mind to choose.

We will begin by looking at the notion of sin as an adjustment (a change) from oneness to separation. The first adjustment is the thought of separation in the mind; the second adjustment is the experience of separation in the body.

No adjustments or defenses are required in the Knowledge of the truth of who we are as Christ in Spirit, but adjustments are required to experience ourselves as something we are not — a separate ego in a body. The adjustments that the ego makes are its defenses against the Atonement. First, that separation from God is a sin that is real, evoking guilt, and ultimately will be punished by an angry God. The next adjustment is the making of the body, the world, and our special relationships onto which the ego projects its sin and guilt to "get rid" of its sin and to maintain its innocence in the eyes of God.

The "stranger" in the Son of God's mind is the ego, who fears the Son will choose the light of the Holy Spirit as his guide which will lead to the ego's demise. The darkness of the ego is dispelled in the light of the Holy Spirit. The one wild thought is the "tiny mad idea" that we actually separated from God and are on our own as a separate ego in a body; and it is to this tiny mad idea, the ego, that we (the Son of God) turn to for guidance, until we realize our mistake and choose again. The ego looks upon the Son of God as a guilty sinner.

The Son of God as the decision maker has given the ego all the power it has. When the Son withdraws his belief in the ego, the ego is left powerless, lifeless and it dissolves instantly. The ego uses all the power the Son has given it to maintain its existence by keeping the Son identified with the body, distracted by the world and special relationships, and out of his mind where he could exercise his power to choose against the ego.

The Son of God in his true Identity with Christ is invulnerable. When he decides to identify with a separate ego in a body, he makes himself appear vulnerable and experiences himself as he believes he is. All power in the world is given by the Son. The Son has the power to believe that the world is all powerful, and that he is a powerless victim of an all powerful world. And this is the world you made.

We believe we are the original murderer as we believe we killed God and crucified His Son. Our guilt over that gets projected out and becomes the fear of punishment. The original sadness is of our separation from the love and joy of God in our Identity with Him. The ego adjusts to the sin, guilt and sadness of murder by making a world and projecting it onto others in our special relationships.

The sickly picture we made of our self is referred to in the Course as a parody and a travesty of the truth of who we really are. The truth is we have the power in our mind to choose how we perceive ourselves and the world. Either we choose to perceive ourselves as victims of a merciless world, or we choose to perceive the truth of who we are as the Son of God, the decision maker and dreamer of the world.

Hallucination is a psychiatric term that refers to the experience of seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing something that is not there in the "objective" world of consentual reality. People who are deemed schizophrenic or psychotic have hallucinations and experience their hallucinations as real. The Course expands the definition of the term "hallucination," saying that we all hallucinate because we are literally experiencing a world that has no independent existence, no real being. The entire world, the entire universe is a projection of a thought in our mind. Once the original thought of separation is believed in the mind and gets projected out making the world, we experience ourselves and the world as if they are an objective reality apart from our mind — our separate bodies and the entire world are our hallucinations. We are literally seeing, hearing and sensing something that is not out there, which is the essential symptom of psychosis and schizophrenia.
The body is the embodiment of the ego's thought system of separation, sin, guilt and death.

The ego makes the body and world in an attempt to make itself real.

The unholy relationship is the special love or hate relationship. The holy relationship is in the holy instant which is our timeless, formless identity as spirit. Judgment is when we see bodies as instruments of separation. Vision is when we see bodies as instruments for communication of the Atonement through forgiveness.

Strength is in the realization that our brother is a projection of our mind. We choose the body as our home so we can keep our separate identity from God, but blame others for it. Our power is in our mind, not the body. When we identify with the body we lose awareness of our true power in the mind. We use the body to attract other bodies, which keeps us distracted, powerless and out of our mind.

The mind is the cause, the body is an effect. Our actions as bodies in the world are a reflection of the purpose we hold for them in the mind. The purpose we hold for the body in the mind is a reflection of who we choose to identify with: the Holy Spirit or the ego, which determines whether our relationships are holy or unholy. The temple of the Holy Spirit is in the mind, not the body.

Idols are the sin and guilt of special relationships which are projections of the ego's thought system.

Relationships are not between two bodies. Relationships are in the mind, and are either a relationship with the ego which is not real, or the Holy Spirit which is real.

The face of Christ is the symbol for the face of innocence and forgiveness.

Your true self is the Son of God, one with the Father in Spirit. The Holy Spirit has set His temple in the Son of God's mind, not the ego's body.

We look closer now at the importance of purpose in our lives. Our goal is to either awaken from the dream of separation with the help of Jesus or the Holy Spirit through forgiveness and the Atonement; or to stay asleep in our nightmare by holding onto the ego and staying identified with the body and its special relationships based on sin and guilt. Our goal determines the purpose we assign to our relationships and will make them holy or unholy accordingly.

The Course will seem difficult when we try to use it for mutually exclusive goals. If we try to use it to awaken from our nightmare of special separate existence, and at the same time hold on to our special separate existence, we will be conflicted. The darkness of the ego must dissolve in the light of the Holy Spirit. The means to awakening are forgiveness, the Atonement, and looking within with Jesus and the Holy Spirit to bring the darkness of the ego to the light of love.

And now we turn to the holy relationship and the Holy Spirit's purpose for the body. The perception of the body and world serve as a reflection of what we believe we are in the mind.

Through forgiveness, our special unholy relationships become the holy relationship. Jesus represents the egoless state in us, and as we walk with him he takes us through the darkness of the ego and on to the light of love on the other side.

We offer the thorns of crucifixion to Jesus when we offer thorns to our brother. We offer the lilies of forgiveness to Jesus when we offer lilies to our brother.

The fear of God is the final obstacle to peace.

Our savior is our brother because we projected our guilt onto him, burying it in our mind. By letting Jesus reinterpret the relationship for us we become aware that what we condemned in our brother is a projection of what we condemned in ourselves. And looking within we realize the attack on ourselves was in the decision our mind made to put our belief in the ego instead of the Holy Spirit, and now we can choose again.

My fear of you is due to the sin and guilt I have within me, projected onto you, and now I fear your retaliation. When I am free of the illusion of sin and guilt in me, I have no fear of you. We walk in fear of the world because we have projected our own self image of a murderer onto the world. All fear is a
projection of our own murderous self image onto a neutral world.

We see the face of Christ in our brother and remember God. I learn to forgive and see the innocence in you, withdrawing the guilt I put on you, and doing that, I am withdrawing the guilt from myself. Through forgiveness of the guilt in you, the first veil is lifted. Through forgiveness of the guilt in myself, the second veil is lifted. What remains is the Atonement, and the memory of God dawns in my mind. This is the "formula" of the Course.

The insane laws of the ego make sin and guilt real in ourselves, project them onto our brothers, and return to us in the form of fear of our brothers and the world. When we give the lilies of forgiveness to our brother we are forgiven with him. When we give thorns of guilt to our brother we are crucified with him.

Through discernment we are to choose the Holy Spirit as our teacher Who is symbolized in the passage below by the eagle; rather than choosing the ego which is symbolized by the sparrow. The eagle lifts us out of our dream of separation; the sparrow keeps us grounded in our egoic nightmare.

Our special relationships, all those people in our lives we love and hate, are used by the Holy Spirit to lead us to salvation through forgiveness and the Atonement — making them the holy relationship. Special relationships are used by the ego to keep us asleep in the nightmare of separation from the love of God. The guide we choose determines the path we take and the goal we reach.

The holy relationship is in your mind only, not the body. The holy relationship is not between two people. Special relationships are perceived as being between the separate bodies of separate people.

Forgiveness and the Atonement embrace all people — past, present and future, with absolutely no exceptions. To exclude even one from forgiveness and the Atonement, you hold your self apart from the love of God in the hell of special relationship — until you choose again. Your one purpose in the world you made is to awaken from the dream of separation by accepting the Atonement for yourself through forgiveness of your brothers with the help of Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

The miracle is the realization of oneness, the acceptance of the Atonement through forgiveness.

Vision is of the Holy Spirit and embraces all people as one. Judgment is of the ego and sees all people as separate.

The statement, "Vision cannot see the body," does not mean the physical body is not perceived. It means the body is not seen as having separate existence nor as a projection of sin and guilt; the body is not the reality of God's Son as spirit.

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. All problems are equally illusory.

Change happens in the mind, not the world. Vision is of the mind, and change happens in our perception of the world.

As vision takes the place of judgment, our nightmares change to happy dreams, and we begin to experience the peace of the real world just before the gates of Heaven.

End Chapter Twenty
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE
REASON AND PERCEPTION

Main Theme: Reason and madness are contrasted. Reason is the term used for the right minded thinking of the Holy Spirit. Madness or perception are the terms used for the wrong minded thinking of the ego. The power of the mind to put its faith in the ego or the Holy Spirit is addressed again in this chapter.

Introduction: This chapter addresses the purpose of the body and world from the ego's perspective contrasted with the Holy Spirit's purpose.

The ego's fear is that we (the Son of God) will exercise the power of our mind to look within and choose against the ego and for the Holy Spirit. The ego's strategy is to keep us mindless. It first convinces us that the separation from God is real and if we remain in the mind God will destroy us. The ego then makes a body and a world onto which it projects its sin and guilt, and convinces the Son that the body is a safe place to maintain his separate existence and hide from God's wrath.

Our real fear is not of crucifixion but of redemption. The real fear is that if we choose to accept the Atonement for ourselves and the love of God through the Holy Spirit, the special separate ego-self will dissolve.

The ego's "enemies" are the Holy Spirit, God and the power of the Son to choose to identify with the Holy Spirit and reject the ego. Our core problem is our hidden belief in separation from God, the hidden guilt we feel for our selfish desire to have our own special separate existence, and our fear of looking at our guilt and selfishness for fear of being punished. It is helpful to think of sin, guilt and fear as the feeling of selfishness. Selfishness is reflected in our desire to be special, to get what we want, to have our own way, to be right, to be better than others, to have more than others, to take credit for good things, and blame others for the bad. Sin and guilt are terms the Course uses to symbolize our selfish desire for specialness, and we experience fear of retribution as a result of our selfish desire for specialness.

The ego can only survive if sin (separation from God) is real. The ego's deepest fear is that the Son will look within and realize the separation from God never happened which means the end of the ego.

Faith, perception and belief refer to the power of our mind to choose, and to perceive what we put our faith and belief in as real.

We are responsible for how we interpret what we see. The "objective" world has no meaning, no value, and no purpose apart from those we assign to it. We see the world through the thought system of the ego — separation, sin, guilt, fear and conflict; or with the vision of the Holy Spirit — wholeness, forgiveness, innocence, love and peace.

A major purpose of the Course is to remind us of the power of our mind to choose, and to help us get back to our mind so we can choose to identify with the Holy Spirit rather than the ego and the body.

Our mind's power to choose what we will believe is the only power in the world. Indeed the mind makes the world. The ego's strategy is to have us believe that someone else (God or other bodies) have done to us what we secretly believe we have done to them. The world's dream is that other's are victimizing me; the secret dream is that I am the original victimizer.

Projection makes perception. The ego's purpose of the world is to make the insanity of separation appear real.

The belief that we could be a separate creator and substitute for God is our first mistake. And making a world of separate bodies as a substitute for Heaven is our second mistake.

To perceive a sinless world we must answer these four questions for ourselves:

1. Do I desire a world I rule instead of one that rules me?
2. Do I desire a world where I am powerful instead of helpless?
3. Do I desire a world in which I have no enemies and cannot sin?
4. Do I want to see what I denied because it is the truth?

In the world the ego made, we feel helpless; everyone is separate from me and is my potential
enemy. The first three questions address the world we projected. The fourth question addresses what we denied in our mind — the Atonement principle. We denied our oneness with God which led to guilt and the projection of the world.

This Course facilitates a change in the mind (the cause), not in the body or world (the effect).

In this chapter we are asked if we are willing to accept the Atonement in our mind (the cause) for ourselves. Answering yes to the Atonement resolves the previous questions that refer to the world (the effect). It is not enough to say that I do not want to be a victim of the world anymore, which the first three questions address. The final question takes us back to our mind which is the cause of the world. When we choose to accept the Atonement for ourselves through the forgiveness of sin and guilt, we no longer need to make a world of sin, guilt, conflict, fear and attack.

My only responsibility is to accept the Atonement for myself. Period. Not to change anyone or anything in the world in any way. My only function is to accept the love of God as my Self; this is the Atonement.

The way I perceive the world tells me how I perceive myself. That is the value of the world; it serves as a mirror that reflects the identity my mind has chosen — the separation of the ego, or the wholeness of the Holy Spirit.

We are free to believe whatever we choose, but belief does not make it real except in our experience. We can believe we are separate egos imprisoned in a body and world, and we will experience it as so. But our wholeness with God is unaffected, merely outside of our experience, until we choose again.

The source of sin is the belief in separation. When the mind sets its goal of special independent existence, it protects it and strives for it unceasingly. When we place the power of our faith in sin (separation) we have given away our power — we take the sin and guilt in our mind, project it out onto others and give them power over us.

Faith refers to the power of our mind to believe in the ego or the Holy Spirit. What we put our faith in is what we believe, and what we believe is what we project onto the world. When we put our faith in the ego, we put our faith in nothing, which is faithlessness. True faith is in the Holy Spirit. The ego and the Holy Spirit are mutually exclusive thought systems. We can have faith in one or the other with no compromise. The miracle is when we shift our faith from the ego to the Holy Spirit. The purpose of A Course in Miracles is to facilitate this shift.

We made the body and the world because we desired to project our sin and guilt onto it, thereby reinforcing our special separate existence and maintaining our face of innocence in the eyes of God and the world we made.

By making a world of bodies and projecting my sin and guilt onto you, you are sacrificed so I can maintain my innocence and my special separate existence.

The ego's purpose for special relationships (love and hate) is to fulfill its need to sacrifice. I am innocent because you are guilty.

The mind and body cannot be integrated. The body does not exist apart from the mind's belief in separation. Reality and illusion are mutually exclusive and cannot be integrated. The Holy Spirit uses the body and special relationships as a teaching device to help us learn of our true power and identity which are in the mind, not in the body or world. The miracle is a shift in focus from the illusory identity with the body to the reality of our true identity with spirit.

Your special love relationships are not based in love at all. Those special ones you claim to love are special relationships based on sacrifice, fear, guilt and hate. There is no love in your special love relationships — to be free you must wake up to this fact. Love is in your Identity with God, and no where else. Face it. When you are willing to let Him, the Holy Spirit will change the purpose you have given to your special relationships, those you claim to love, to help you find the true source of love. The Holy Spirit does not interfere with your relationships, but helps you change the purpose they serve — to forgiveness, peace and love; from guilt, conflict, and hate.

All the Sons of God who live in the darkness of the ego are the "dark ones" who form a sorry army.
• The strong are those who are joined in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's strength is all powerful and all inclusive. No one is excluded from the Holy Spirit's strength; the Holy Spirit is for all, and against no one. The Holy Spirit's strength is the power of God's unconditional love.

• The ego cannot survive without an enemy. It is born in the conflict of separation from God, and it dies when the conflict is over. The ego needs conflict, war and hate to maintain its separate existence and to sustain its face of innocence. When one special love relationship ends in conflict, fear and animosity, we immediately seek another to keep the war going. True love is the death of the ego. True love is the end of conflict, fear, hate and war. There is no true love between people. True love and separate people are mutually exclusive.

• The "special one" in your special relationship, who you claim to love, is the enemy you need to maintain your existence as a separate ego. If you are not willing to face this in yourself, you will remain asleep in your egoic nightmare trying desperately to fix your dream rather than to wake up from it. It is your choice. There is no love in the world of bodies. Love is in your identity with Love itself, and nowhere else.

• The only true "positive" in the Course is God, Who cannot be taught. Forgiveness, healing, salvation, Atonement and the miracle have positive meaning only in their denial of their corresponding negative — sin, sickness, bondage, or separation. The separation is the denial of God. The Atonement is the denial of the denial of God. The purpose of the Course is to help us undo the denial of truth by undoing all that blocks or interferes with our realization of our Identity with Christ, the true Son of God.

• In the dream of the world the mind is all powerful. Our thoughts of fear, conflict and anger are somatized and felt in the body and projected onto the world. The mind is the only power in our dream world; but has no power in Heaven or Truth.

• By believing we killed God in the beginning so we could live, we guarantee our "death" in the end.

• We ask of the one whom we believe has the power to give us what we want. We ask the ego for our eternal happiness, or we ask the Holy Spirit; only one can give it because only one has it to give.

• The answer to the fourth question, “Do I want to see what I denied because it is the truth?” determines whether we are ready to go all the way with what this Course teaches. Most will stop after answering the first three questions in the affirmative. The questions are 1. Do I desire a world I rule instead of one that rules me? 2. Do I desire a world where I am powerful instead of helpless? 3. Do I desire a world in which I have no enemies and cannot sin? 4. Do I want to see what I denied because it is the truth? Most will try to bring the light of the teaching into their darkness. Most will try to hold on to their separate egoic existence and take control of the world. The fourth question is the complete undoing of the ego's thought system and the world as we knew it.

• Our relationships and the world we see are to be used as a mirror which reflects back to us what we have projected onto them. When we see sin, guilt and fear in the world, we know we have sin, guilt and fear in us. And we are to ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit to help us go back into our mind and look at the source of our sin and guilt, and choose forgiveness and the Atonement instead. When I see everyone in the world as either expressing love or calling for love, then I know I have chosen to see with the vision of the Holy Spirit, and my special, unholy relationships have become holy.

• We withdraw our faith in the ego when we realize what it is doing. The world did not make me miserable; I made myself miserable by identifying with the misery of the ego. Now I choose again.

• Forgiveness and Atonement are a process of the undoing of the ego, and happen over time.

• We do not choose vision, we choose against judgment. We do not accept the truth, but we choose against the lie of the ego. We do not choose for Love, but against hatred. Vision, truth and love are our natural state as the Son of God when we do not choose for judgment, ego or hatred.
Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

- By honestly looking at all of our anger, fear, hatred, selfishness and desire for specialness, we become aware of the ego's insanity, and with the help of Jesus or the Holy Spirit we are healed and become sane.

- As your identity shifts away from the ego to the Son of God as the decision maker or the observer, the ego becomes afraid of its imminent demise.

- "Seek not to change the world, but seek to change your mind about the world." Your mind is the world. There is no world apart from your mind, and no other mind apart from your mind. The world does not need to be saved; only your mind needs to be saved. Do not try to save the world you made in your mind.

- Our relationships and our world are to be used as a classroom to reflect back to us what we believe in our mind and have projected out onto others and the world. As we become aware of the sin and guilt in our mind it can be forgiven and healed.

- We have buried and are unaware of our identity with spirit because to be aware of it means the end of the special separate ego-self identified with the body living in a world.

- When we realize that the apparent separation from God was merely a mistaken choice in our mind, we can choose again to correct it. When we believe separation from God is a sin, we maintain the separation and fear God's punishment. We project onto our brothers and the world what we believe about ourselves. When we forgive our brothers for what they did not do, we are forgiven for what we did not do.

- We attempt to hide from the reason of the Holy Spirit by hiding behind the insanity of our special relationships. We even try to bring Jesus and the Holy Spirit into our madness by forming a special relationship with Them, and trying to use Them to improve our insane dream world.

- The decision making part of the Son's mind is where the Son's power is. He decides to identify with the ego, imprisoning himself, or he chooses to identify with the Holy Spirit, liberating himself.

- There is an eternal song of love playing in our mind, and though faint, is easily recalled as we listen closely to its soft melody.

*End Chapter Twenty-One*
CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO
SALVATION AND THE HOLY RELATIONSHIP

Main Theme: The holy relationship and reason.

Chapters 15-19, 23-24 and through the remainder of the Text are heavily focused on the darkness of the ego and special relationships. Chapters 20-22 are focused on the light of the holy relationship.

Introduction: This chapter also addresses the ego's perception of differences in form, contrasted with the Holy Spirit's perception of the sameness in content. "Nothing so blinding as perception of form." The ego's purpose for making the world of form is to blind us to the belief in sin and guilt in our mind, and project it out so we see sin and guilt in everyone else. The belief in sin and guilt in the wrong mind is a defense against the Atonement principle in our right mind.

The ego's strategy is to defend against the Son changing his mind and choosing the Atonement which would dissolve the ego, as the ego is only sustained by our belief in it. The ego has us believe that the mind is a fearful place from which we must flee to avoid the punishment of God for sinning against Him by leaving Him.

Reason is used as a synonym for the Holy Spirit's thought system or the Atonement which corrects the ego's thought system of separation. It is the ego's fear of our choosing reason that impels it to block the Voice of the Holy Spirit, because in the presence of reason, madness is dispelled.

Learning this Course facilitates the dissolution of the ego, and the realization of our identity as spirit. Our original error was in choosing to believe in the separation, sin and guilt. Reason helps us look at our mistaken choice so we can choose again for the Atonement instead of the ego's separation. To ensure we don't choose against it, the ego makes up a world of form that blinds us to the content of sin and guilt in our mind.

Our fear of dissolution is why we are so attached to our world of form, bodies and relationships. And why we try to drag the Course, Jesus and the Holy Spirit down into the world and make Them part of the world, rather than allowing Them to lead us out of the world and awaken to the dream entirely. We want to pull the Course, Jesus and the Holy Spirit into our world so we can maintain and glorify our special separate egoic identity. By doing so we are trying to bring the light into our darkness while remaining in the dark — exactly what the ego wants, and exactly what traditional religion has done with Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Believing that sin is real, we are blocking the Atonement and Heaven from our awareness. As we look on the form of sin with the reason of the Holy Spirit, we realize sin has no content as it is based on a separation from God that never happened — and that is the ego's fear, and why we do not want to learn this Course.

The ego has built its Church on sin. Sin says the ego is real because the separation from God is real.

The heavy garments referred to in this chapter are the world of form, our bodies and special relationships, whose purpose is to veil the inherent nothingness of the ego's thought system. We made the entire cosmos to veil the illusion of the ego's separate existence.

Pleasure and pain, beauty and ugliness, happiness and sadness are all forms of illusion. Joy is beyond the world of form, beyond duality in our Identity with the oneness of God's love.

Truth and illusion are mutually exclusive. To believe in one illusion is to deny the whole truth. Peace, love and joy are not in the world of illusion. To believe that peace or love or joy can be found in the world is to deny the truth and remain asleep in the misery of illusion. Forgiveness, love and the Atonement apply to all; no one can be excluded, or they apply to no one.

If we forgive everyone in the world except one person, the ego retains its "eternal" special separate existence.

This is a Course in content and not form. To be defenseless means to realize the truth (the content) of what you are needs no defense. To be defenseless does not mean we do not defend the body (the form). This Course addresses our identity with spirit.
(content) in the mind, not the behavior (form) of the body in the world.

• The entire world is made as a defense against the truth of who we really are. The world of separation is made as an attack on the wholeness of God.

• Because we believe in two powers, us and God, rather than go back into our mind and go to war with God over our sin and guilt of separation, we project a world and body in which we can hide. There is one power in the universe. The one power cannot attack itself, as it is not separate from itself.

• The term special relationships is a synonym for unholy relationships.

• We are all lonely and alone because we believe we separated ourselves from each other and our Creator. We think we are together when our bodies are together, but we are alone because we have separated ourselves in our minds.

• The decision making part of the mind is the observer that chooses to identify with the ego and see through the ego's eyes, rather than the vision and reason of the Holy Spirit. The Son of God as the decision maker is the "you" to whom the Course is addressed. "The eyes that are not yours" are the eyes of the ego whose perception sends messages back to you which cannot be understood because they are messages of separation, not of the wholeness of God.

• The body and world were made to keep our secret sin of separation hidden, and to project our sin, guilt and fear out of ourselves and onto others in the world. The purpose of the Course is to guide us back to the decision making part of our mind where we can break our identification with the ego and the body, and choose again for the Holy Spirit and our Identity with God as His Son.

• The miracle facilitates the shift in the Son's identity from the ego to the Holy Spirit where the Son remembers his Identity with the Father as Christ.

• It is important to be aware of the dynamics of the ego by observing it; awareness facilitates freedom. When we look at the ego through the eyes of the Holy Spirit we see it as it truly is.

• The “mouse” is the tiny mad idea that we separated from God. The Holy Spirit teaches us that the separation never happened, and He helps transform our unholy relationships into the holy relationship.

• We all share the same illusory egoic thought system; we all share the same Identity as the Son of God. We share the same illusion, and we share the same truth. There is no separation. And we all share the same need to awaken from the ego's nightmare of separation.

• As our special relationships are being transformed into the holy relationship, we are like infants, and it will take time for us to learn to let go of our unholy relationships as they are reborn into the holy one.

• The decision maker is the infant who is already Christ, but forgot, and is now remembering with the help of the Holy Spirit through the holy instant.

• The holy relationship is the reflection of the oneness of Christ and Heaven. Through forgiveness of our brothers, our unholy relationships are transformed into the holy relationship, and we remember the truth of our identity and our brothers' identity as the one Son of God. All brothers are included without exception, or the Sonship remains divided.

• Forgiveness is for everyone with no exception. If you leave even one person unforgiven (past, present or future) you hold yourself in hell.

• To see even one sinner in the world, you are refusing forgiveness for yourself and blocking the love of God from your awareness. The Sonship is forgiven and healed as one, or not at all.

• Healing is of the mind, not of the body or world.

• My part in the Atonement is to look past the differences I see between us, and see our common state of mind. I release you from the projection of my own belief in sin and guilt which was predicated on my belief that I had sinned against God by separating from Him. My function in the Atonement and forgiveness is to accept them for myself. The Holy Spirit's function is to extend the Atonement and forgiveness to the whole Sonship.
We are to offer all of our dark thoughts, feelings and experiences to the light of the Holy Spirit for forgiveness. We are to ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit to help us look at all our sin, guilt and hate, and let go of all our grievances.

More and more we experience the peace and joy of forgiveness as our natural state.

We all share the same insane thought system of the ego, and the same sanity of the Holy Spirit.

Healing is of the belief in separation in the mind only. There is no healing in the world. Passages in this chapter speak of messengers walking through the world sharing the healing love of God to all — this is beautiful, symbolic language used to paint a picture of the healing of the mind.

End Chapter Twenty-Two
CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE
THE WAR AGAINST YOURSELF

Main Theme: The "Laws of Chaos" are addressed here. The five laws of chaos are a detailed summary of the thought system of the ego. Chapters 20-22 were lighter emotionally than previous chapters. Beginning here in Chapter 23 to the end of the Text we get deeper into the darkness of the ego thought system.

Introduction: The Five laws of chaos:

The first chaotic law is that the truth is different for everyone.

The second law of chaos is that each one must sin, and therefore deserves attack and death.

The third preposterous belief is that God must accept His Son's belief in what he is, and hate him for it.

The fourth law of chaos is the belief you have what you have taken; another's loss is your gain.

The fifth principle of chaos holds there is a substitute for love.

The Holy Spirit's vision of the truth of who we are is Christ: Innocent and one with God.

Those who have realized the separation never happened, and that sin and guilt are based on an illusion, know we are all innocent and they share their innocence with others. Those who believe in separation, sin and guilt hide it by projecting it onto others, and showing their own face of innocence.

Our experience of ourselves and our life is set at the original instant (now) that we choose to believe the ego's story of separation from God, or we choose the Atonement of the Holy Spirit. If we choose the ego we belittle ourselves; when we choose the Holy Spirit we realize our magnitude as Christ.

The ego's strategy is to keep the Son's mind filled with the raucous shrieking of conflict, sin and guilt, distracted by special relationships between bodies in a world so he cannot hear the Voice for God. The way to remember God in the world is to see the face of Christ in our brothers through forgiveness. To maintain our special separate existence we make the world into a battleground and live our lives at war. Winning or losing the war is irrelevant; either way we maintain our special egoic existence. The ego is at war with a god of its own making. The true God is not at war and knows only love.

The ego's purpose of conflict is to replace love with fear, and by making the fear in our mind so terrifying that we have to defend against it by projecting it onto the world.

Our entire experience of being a body in a world of bodies in special relationships (love and hate) is a projection of the unconscious belief that we are at war with God. The ego loves the imaginary war. God knows nothing of it.

Your entire world is a defense against the imaginary war against God in your mind, and serves to maintain the existence of your imaginary ego. God knows nothing of your imaginings.

God will not be remembered in a noisy battleground. The conflict of the battleground serves to keep us distracted from the memory of our Identity with God.

The resting place of God is the Son of God. The house of God is the Son's mind. When the Son's mind is divided, God is forgotten.

The ego's strategy for perpetuating conflict is through the ego's "Laws of Chaos."

The ego's strategy is to maintain its special separate existence by keeping the truth of our Identity with God out of our awareness. The ego's laws of chaos serve to fulfill the ego's strategy. As we look at the dynamics of the ego and see the insanity of its "laws" we realize the error we made in choosing to identify with it, and we can choose the Holy Spirit instead.

Socrates' great philosophical debate with the sophists was on the nature of truth. Socrates, and later Plato, maintained that truth was absolute; the sophists held that truth was relative. The Course says that truth is absolute; one for all, not different for each. The general philosophy of the Course falls within the Neo-Platonic tradition. Only God is real. And God is love.
Sin is the belief in separation from God. Being separate from God we are in conflict with Him to maintain our separate existence. We project our belief in separation and sin onto the world, so the world becomes our battleground where our war with God is played out in the conflict of special relationships with our brothers. The world is an outward picture of an inward belief.

By separating from God we took His life; now we have life and He is dead. We projected our sin and guilt onto our brothers and took their innocence; now we have innocence and they have sin and guilt. The sin and guilt of separation from God has been buried and hidden from consciousness, but is experienced as selfishness in relationships in our daily lives. If you find it difficult to relate to the ideas of sin and guilt over the separation from God, you will find it easier to relate to the experience of selfishness; and when you observe your thoughts and feelings you will notice it is the fundamental emotion of your daily experience, and is the effect of the belief in separation from God and your brothers.

The ego's five “laws” of chaos are the laws by which we live our miserable lives.

When we observe the dynamics of the ego as codified in its laws of chaos, it is obvious that we are insane. So why do we continue to imprison ourselves by living under such an insane thought system? The reason is that we have not looked closely enough at our own insanity, and we have accepted insanity as our normal state. The insane thought system represented by the ego's laws of chaos has become deeply ingrained in our culture, religions, and governments. We have accepted illusion as truth; war as a means to peace; fear as love; insanity as sanity. To be free of our insanity, we must first become fully conscious of it; and that is the purpose of the scathing revelations in the horrific and painful passages of this chapter. As we become aware of our insanity we are able to make an enlightened choice for the Holy Spirit instead of the ego.

The insanity of the ego's thought system rules our lives because we do not go back into our minds and look at it. We have become so completely distracted and identified with the body and world of form, that we ignore the source of our insanity which is the content in our mind. We are so deluded by the effect (the body and world) that we have forgotten the cause (the mind). The purpose of the Course is to lead us back to the decision making part of our mind so we can make another choice. In the mind either we choose for the separation, conflict, fear and hate of the ego; or for the oneness, peace, joy and love of the Holy Spirit.

Love is all inclusive; it excludes no one. If even one person is excluded; past, present or future; it is not love. If your love is special, it is not love but fear and hate. Be not deceived by a special love that is in fact veiled hate.

The special love we offer is hate — boxed, wrapped and tied with a bow.

Love is absolute, unconditional, all inclusive, and excludes no one; otherwise it is fear and hate masked in special love.

If you believe and experience yourself as being in a body, living in a world of bodies, then you believe all five of the laws of chaos and you have imprisoned yourself by choosing to live under their rule.

Life is Spirit. Life is formless and eternal. Life has no opposite — there is neither birth nor death in life.

When we have had enough suffering and conflict, and are willing to ask for help, we rise above the battleground we made, and consider another way.

When we experience problems in our lives we are to ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit to help us rise above the conflict, and see it in the light of the Holy Spirit instead of the darkness of the ego.

The body by itself has no purpose. The Holy Spirit teaches us that our shared purpose in the world is to forgive, and accept the Atonement for ourselves. Our purpose in Heaven is to create and extend the love of God. By rising above the ego's battleground in the world we are able to ask the Holy Spirit for help in fulfilling our shared purpose. The ego believes in separation and separate interests. The ego's purpose for the body is to kill or be killed, and maintain a separate existence for ourselves. As Sons of God we all share the ego thought system, and the Holy Spirit's thought system, and we all have the power to choose between the two.
Forgiveness, like love, is absolute and all inclusive; not even one can be excluded or we remain on the battleground we made of sin, guilt, fear and hate.

Above the battleground you are the observer, the decision maker, the dreamer of the dream, the Son of God one with the Sonship. On the battleground you are the ego, the body, the dream character, separate from your brothers and at war.

Forgiveness undoes the laws of chaos which rule the battleground. As we rise above the conflict we see ourselves and our brothers with the vision and love of the Holy Spirit, and we are all forgiven together.

End Chapter Twenty-Three
CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR
THE GOAL OF SPECIALNESS

Main Theme: This chapter and the next contain some of the most pointed, hard hitting sections in the Text that address the ego's specialness. This chapter focuses on the goal of specialness which is to kill. In murder, somebody loses and somebody gains which is the sum and substance of specialness and the ego.

Introduction: We start with what specialness and the ego defend against: the Atonement.

The ego's world is temporal. The Kingdom of God is eternal.

Specialness is the ego's response to the function God gave us which is to create which means to extend His love. Specialness is an expression of the ego's function of miscreation. The origin of our specialness is in our belief that we can be separate from God, and have a special and separate identity apart from Him.

We made and see our brothers as bodies so we can project our sin and guilt onto them. When we are free of the illusion of sin and separation we see our brother's holiness, and the ego dissolves. Judging against the Christ in our brother establishes the need of our purpose of forgiveness and acceptance of the Atonement. By identifying with the ego's specialness we have substituted our true Identity as Christ, which is the attempt to substitute specialness for true love.

Looking within and watching the dynamics of the ego as reflected in our belief in specialness is crucial to be free of the self imposed limitations of egoic identity.

Our experience in the world of special relationships is a reflection of our belief in who we are. Are you a separate ego in a body, or are you the Son of God in spirit? Your belief (conscious or unconscious) in who you are determines your experience in the world. The world is your projection. This is the importance of looking within.

Specialness can be equated with selfishness and the guilt of separation; the selfish desire for specialness is the ruler of our lives as separate egos.

If we are like our sinful, guilty brothers, then we too are sinful and guilty.

Sin is separation. Specialness means sin is real. Specialness is the son of the ego. The ego is the mis-creator of all its sons of specialness with whom it forms special relationships — special love and special hate.

The vision of Christ sees everyone as the same. We all share the same insanity of the illusory ego, and we share the same perfect love in our Identity with God. The ego's specialness dissolves in the presence of God's all inclusive love — this is the ego's fear.

By looking within and watching the dynamics of the ego, we realize how much our specialness has imprisoned us, and we are able to choose again for the freedom and unity of the Holy Spirit.

Anything that I see as separate from me that does not support my special separate existence is seen as a threat, and I will seek to kill it; either physically or psychologically.

The guilt of separation and selfishness is so overwhelmingly painful, we deny it in ourselves, project it out onto everyone else and blame them for their sin and selfishness instead of facing it within. Disputes, conflict and wars are fought in the world in an attempt to kill the sin and guilt we feel within our mind.

Fear of death is the fear of death of the special separate ego-self. Our true Self is God's one life and cannot die.

Sin says separation from God is real. And the special separate ego-body you now identify as yourself is proof that separation from God is real. To question the reality of the special separate ego-body is to face your own "death." You are completely vulnerable as a separate ego; and absolutely invulnerable as the Son of God.

Our secret vow is our commitment to remain separate from God and eternally loyal to the special separate ego-self. The war between us is a reflection
of the secret vow we each make to ourselves and each other.

• I condemn you because I first condemned myself. When I forgive you, I forgive myself. We share the same need to be free of the ego's belief in sin and guilt. We share the same need to unite in our true Identity as Christ. We are the same in truth, and the same in the illusion.

• By identifying with the separate ego and body we are condemning ourselves to the temporal existence of birth, suffering and death. All to prove that separation from God is real, and we are special separate egos. What a shallow "victory" indeed!

• You cannot trust anyone because you believe you were born in sin, separation and selfishness; and you have projected your sin, separation and selfishness onto all your brothers — how can you trust them when you have condemned yourself, their maker? The world you made and live in is an abysmal battleground projected from your mind where you believe the original battle was won in the separation from your Creator. And in the world you made you are all alone; brotherless and Fatherless.

• The ego's purpose for the body and world is as a home, and a depository of our sin and guilt, in order to maintain our separate existence. The Holy Spirit's purpose of the body and world is as a classroom to learn forgiveness, and to remember the truth of who we are as the one Son of God.

• We perceive the world we have projected. The projection of a separate world serves as a means to proving our separate ego-self is real. Projection makes perception. I wish to perceive myself as a special separate self apart from God; so I project a special separate world to fulfill my wish. The world you see is the world you wish to see, and then made as you wished it be. The world serves the purpose you give it.

• I destroyed God and crucified His Son so I could glorify my own special separate bodily existence.

• We cherish and defend our special identity with the separate ego-body — even to the death.

• Forgiveness is absolute, unconditional, and all inclusive with not even one exception. All your dark, secret sins must be brought to the light of the Holy Spirit's love. All illusions must be brought to the truth.

This chapter addresses the importance of our forgiveness of God. Forgiveness of our brothers is a reflection of our decision to forgive God for what He never did.

• Through forgiveness, our special relationships become the holy relationship.

• The purpose of our special relationships with our brothers is to maintain our separate existence. The purpose of the holy relationship is to realize our shared Identity with Christ in Spirit through our shared function of forgiveness in the world. In the world, we are one in purpose: Forgiveness and Atonement. In Spirit we are one in God.

• We share the same nightmare of separation from God; and we share the same need to awaken to the truth of our Identity with God.

• Forgiveness of our brothers helps us go beyond the final obstacle to peace which is our fear of God's all inclusive love. In God's all inclusive love our specialness is dissolved.

• God's love excludes no one. The ego's special love excludes all except the "special" one, and in truth is not love, but hate veiled with a smile.

• Salvation is seeing the holiness in our brother. Bondage is seeing the sin and guilt in our brother.

• The one purpose of the world is to heal God's Son of the belief in separation and specialness through forgiveness and the Atonement. Who is God's Son? I am — God's Son is me. I see everything in my daily life as an opportunity to learn this lesson and fulfill this purpose. No longer does the world serve the purpose of keeping me asleep in the nightmare of specialness.

• The laws of chaos served to keep the Son asleep in the world of separation. The laws of forgiveness and the Atonement serve to awaken the Son to the truth of his shared identity in spirit.
Notes on Chapter Twenty-Four – The Goal of Specialness

• Every situation in your daily life offers you the opportunity to forgive and to accept the Atonement for yourself.

• Your sin is a projection of my belief in sin. By forgiving you, I am forgiven. Your holiness is my holiness.

• Christ's vision allows me to see your body and look beyond it to the wholeness of Spirit. The ego's eyes sees the body as proof of separation and as a depository of sin and guilt.

• The Holy Spirit perceives the truth of who we are as Christ, the one Son of God.

End Chapter Twenty-Four
Main Theme: The miracle and the aspect of the miracle referred to as justice. Justice is the Holy Spirit's principle that nobody loses and everybody gains. Justice is the Holy Spirit's answer to the ego's goal of murder in which somebody wins and somebody loses.

Introduction: The ego's justice is that I am innocent, and you are guilty and must die for my sins that I have projected onto you. I gain because I am innocent; you lose because you are sinful and are punished. The Holy Spirit's justice says that separation and sin never happened; all are innocent; everybody gains and nobody loses.

In this chapter we also address the purpose of the body and world from the ego's perspective with its desire to kill; and from the Holy Spirit's perspective of forgiveness and healing.

• The ego needs to imprison us in a body and world while keeping us unaware that it is a prison by distracting us from our mind where we could choose the miracle instead of murder.

• The Christ in you is the memory in your mind of who you are as Christ, God's one Son in Spirit.

• Forgiveness, the Atonement, salvation and the memory of our Identity with Christ are in our mind, and are realized when the decision making part of our mind chooses to be guided by the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. When we are identified with the ego we are distracted by the body and world so we are unable to use the power of our mind to choose for the Holy Spirit.

• Attack shows that the ego, sin and separation from God are real, and serve to keep the love of Christ away. All attack is a call for love.

• We have become so accustomed to living in the ego's darkness of guilt, fear, hate and attack that we cannot bear the light of God's love. The ego cannot survive in the light; it must remain in darkness. This chapter makes reference to Plato's Cave Allegory.

• Sin says that the separation from God is real and deserves punishment; so we flee the mind, hide in the body and project our sin and guilt onto others in the world.

• The original change is the original sin which is the belief in separation from God. Believing we are separate from God, we made a body with which we identified, thereby becoming our own father. By looking at the original change we realize that separation never happened, which means there is no original sin, no ego, no separate body and no separate world.

• The ego's separate existence is based on the belief that "I gained and God lost." The ego believes it attains its innocence by projecting its sin and guilt onto someone else and having them pay the price for sin. "I win and you lose" is the ego's form of justice. The Holy Spirit's justice says, "The separation from God never happened, there is no original sin; all are innocent!"

• The ego cannot exist without sin, guilt, conflict and fear. Innocence is the great heresy in the ego's thought system.

• The ego is terrified of unconditional love, as it is dissolved in the light of the Holy Spirit's forgiveness and declaration of the innocence of all. The ego needs sin and guilt to maintain its existence, and a body to call its home, proof of the ego's reality.

• The ego made the body and world as a depository for its sin and guilt, and as a hiding place to avoid God's punishment for sinning against Him. Can we find love, peace and happiness in a place we made out of sin, guilt and fear of God's vengeance?

• The ego loves when we seek for love, peace and happiness through the body and world of special relationships because there is no love, peace and happiness to be found there. The ego's creed is "Seek but do not find." If we find true love, peace and happiness, the ego is dead. The ego can only live in conflict, fear and seeking.

• Content is of the mind; form is of the body and world. Cause is of the mind; effect is the body and world. It is crucial to be clear on the relationship of content and form; cause and effect. The content of
sin and guilt in our mind projects the forms of the body and the world. Sin and guilt in the mind are the cause of the body and world which are effects. The cause of healing is in the mind, not the body or world which are but effects.

Special relationships between bodies form a lovely, glittery frame that distracts us from the content of the picture. The picture is pain, suffering, sin, guilt and death; the content of our special relationships.

Before we perceive the world outside, we first look inside and ask what it is we want to see. When we decide for the ego we choose to see a world of separation, selfishness and fear. When we decide for the Holy Spirit we choose to see a world of union, shared purpose and love. The ego's goal is to keep us out of our mind, distracted by and identified with the form of the body and world. The Holy Spirit's purpose is to guide us back to our mind where we can choose the content of Atonement through forgiveness, and identify with Christ in Spirit. The body and world are not separate from the purpose we choose for them in the mind.

Realizing there is no hope for love, peace and happiness in the world we made, we are ready to turn within and ask for another way.

Every situation we are in, every special relationship we are in can be used to transform our purpose through forgiveness of our brothers.

We are condemned as one, and we are forgiven as one. You make of the world and your brothers what you believe will lead to your salvation.

Our entire existence is based on the belief that we took our existence from God, and our gain was His loss. And we project this notion of the separation of a winner and a loser onto the world of special relationships we made.

We do not want peace, love and salvation because it means the end of our special separate existence. We would rather live in fear, pain, conflict and war than give up our illusory existence as special separate ego-bodies.

The holy relationship is the reflection of the oneness of Heaven on earth. And in the Holy Spirit's justice we see that nobody loses and everyone gains, which is also a reflection of Heaven's oneness on earth.

The Course uses the symbols, metaphors, anthropomorphic terms, and language of duality to teach the truth of our non-dual reality of oneness. The non-dual truth is that there is no one separate from us, so whom are we to forgive? And the non-dual truth is that there is no separation from God which means there is no sin; so there is no need of forgiving what never happened. When you have realized the non-dual truth, there is no need of studying this Course. The Course uses dual symbols, metaphors and anthropomorphic language to facilitate the non-dual understanding that there is one truth, that is God.

The Course teaches us the what, where and how of awakening from the dualistic nightmare of egoic separation to the non-dualistic truth of our oneness with God.

We facilitate the realization of the non-dual truth in the dualistic world by recognizing that we share with our brothers the same insanity of separation; we share the same need to awaken from insanity; and we share the same Identity with Christ in our awakened state.

Our unholy relationships are made holy through forgiveness and Atonement when we offer our relationships to the Holy Spirit, rather than to the ego. We are not to cherish the body of the person with whom we are in relationship, but cherish the Spirit of Christ in ourselves and all our brothers.

While we cannot understand a non-dual reality, we can learn and understand how to forgive ourselves and our brothers in a dual world. God's love is one, unconditional, all inclusive and excludes no one.

In the world, we have one purpose or one function: Accepting the Atonement for ourselves through forgiveness of ourselves and all our brothers. When we offer all our special relationships to the Holy Spirit they serve His purpose of forgiveness and Atonement, and are transformed into the holy relationship.

The special function assigned to all of us is the same: Healing our special relationships through forgiveness with the help of the Holy Spirit.
Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

- By turning them over to the Holy Spirit, our special relationships are transformed into the holy relationship; and become a classroom for forgiveness and healing rather than a battleground of sin, guilt and conflict.

- Even in the original instant we chose to believe we were separate from God, the Holy Spirit, forgiveness and the Atonement were still with us ensuring our return to God's love and oneness.

- We are to be aware of the ego's inclination to hold onto specialness, sin, guilt and fear; and we are to continue to turn to the Holy Spirit for healing, forgiveness and Atonement. The Holy Spirit helps us fulfill our function by transforming all specialness to holiness. In holiness everyone wins and no one loses; this is the test of true perception and the dawning of the real world in our experience.

- By exercising our power to choose the Holy Spirit as our guide rather than the ego, the Holy Spirit's power is applied to healing and forgiving our special relationships in our dream. As the decision maker, we have the power to determine our teacher in our dream.

- The rock on which salvation rests is the Son of God as the decision maker and observer above the battleground of the ego.

- The justice of the Holy Spirit is the undoing of separate interests; everyone wins, no one loses.

- All behavior in the world is either an expression of love or a call for love. Sin calls for correction, not punishment. Your sin is my sin. Your forgiveness is my forgiveness. Your healing is my healing. We are healed as one, or not at all.

*End Chapter Twenty-Five*
CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX
THE TRANSITION

Main Themes: The real world is the borderland beyond the dream world we made, yet before the gates of Heaven. The "transition" is from the dream world we made to the real world and on to Heaven. The Course's formula simply put is this: "We see the face of Christ in our brother and we remember God." In the section "For They Have Come" we see this articulated wonderfully.

Introduction: The style of the writing continues to soar to new heights here and through the remainder of the Text in terms of the beauty of the form and the profundity of the content. A lot of the writing is in blank verse, iambic pentameter, the writing style of Shakespeare.

There are several passages in this chapter that provide a summary of the teachings of the Course and its purpose.

The oneness of Heaven cannot be taught; therefore the Course teaches us to recognize the blocks to the realization of Heaven's oneness in our awareness, and how to undo the blocks.

The purpose of the Course is to help us distinguish between the ego's thought system of separation, and the Holy Spirit's thought system of oneness so we can make the enlightened choice.

There is no order of difficulty in miracles because there is only one error: the belief we have separated from God's love and wholeness. And there is one correction: the Atonement principle which states that the separation from God never happened. When you understand this first miracle principle, you have understood the underlying principle of the whole Course. We can learn the underlying principle in the school of our special relationships (love and hate) through forgiveness and the Atonement.

All miracles are the same. All sickness is the same. All healing is the same. There is no order of difficulty in miracles or in healing. The realization that the separation from God never happened is the Atonement, the miracle, and the healing of sickness. Sickness is caused by the belief in separation in the mind. The mind's error is healed; not the body. The mind is the cause; the body an effect.

The holy instant is a central theme in the Holy Spirit's thought system. The holy instant teaches us that linear time is illusory because it is based on the belief in original sin which never happened. Linear time is the ego's projection of past sin; present guilt; and future fear. The holy instant reveals there is no order of difficulty in miracles because the separation from God (original sin) never happened. The realization and acceptance of the Atonement is healing.

And now we move to the Atonement principle. The purpose of the ego's thought system is to maintain that the separation from God happened and is real. The purpose of the Holy Spirit's thought system is to show that separation from God is illusory and we are one with God, always have been and always will be one with Him.

We can forget and temporarily lose awareness of our oneness with God, but we can not change our eternal oneness with Him.

We have the love of God because we are the love of God. Having and being are one in truth. Creation is not of this world. Creation is a function of Spirit which extends itself, but never leaves itself. The body and world are made by the ego mind; not created by God. God is oneness, and knows only oneness. There is no separation in God; no separate body or world were created or known by God. God creates and knows only perfect oneness. To know God is to be God.

In seeking our specialness separate from God, the treasure we find is loneliness, isolation, insecurity and fear. There is no treasure apart from our Identity with the wholeness of God.

As Christ, the one Son of God, we are an idea in the Mind of God. Ideas leave not there source. We never left God; we will always be one with Him in Spirit. We have the power to believe and experience that we did separate from God, but believing we are separate does not make it true.
• We are free to believe we are separate from God and deceive ourselves, but not Him.

• The Holy Spirit is our Friend and Guide Who helps us choose the Atonement through our holy relationship with Him instead of separation in our special relationships.

• To dissuade us from getting back to the decision making part of our mind and choosing the Holy Spirit as our true Friend and guide, the ego's strategy is to keep us identified with the body, and distracted by the world of special relationships. The ego warns us not to go back to the mind, for the mind is the battleground of the original sin, and God is waiting to strike us dead. Rather than face the source of sin, guilt and fear in the mind, the ego hides it by making a world of bodies and projecting the sin and guilt onto the world. The ego's fear is that we will get back to our mind, realize our mistaken belief in separation and choose the Holy Spirit's Atonement which means the end of the ego.

• The ego made the world of bodies as a depository for sin, guilt and fear. But ideas leave not their source, so we still feel the effects of sin and guilt, but now we do not remember their true cause as it is hidden from our awareness.

• Sin is the belief that separation from God is real. Making a separate body and identifying with it gives form to the belief in separation from God. Seeing our body as separate from God and separate from our brothers is the symbol of sin as it represents the wish and the belief in separation in the mind.

• The ego sees itself as a victim in an unjust world because sinful, evil, hateful people do vicious things to "me" or groups with whom I identify, and so the sinful, evil people must be brought to the ego's justice which is punishment.

• My attack on you is justified because I am innocent and you are guilty. Your attack on me is not justified because I attacked you merely in self defense, and you are the guilty one, not me!

• To maintain its innocence and its special separate existence, the ego needs a villain to blame, hate, attack and punish. This applies to us as individuals, social groups, political groups, religious groups, and nation states; we need someone or some group onto whom we can project our unconscious self disdain, sin and guilt. If this Course does not make you feel uncomfortable you are probably not reading it. It is crucial to look within at our own unconscious guilt and shame whose root lies in the belief in our original, sinful separation from God. By bringing our dark, unconscious guilt to the light of awareness, it can be healed. If it is left in the dark it will continue to fester, you will continue to suffer, but you will not know why; so you will blame the "villains, betrayers and evil doers;" all characters in the dream world you made. Is it time for you to wake up from this self-made nightmare?

• The ego made the entire world to fulfill our temptation to perceive ourselves as unfairly treated. The Holy Spirit's purpose for the world and our relationships is Atonement through forgiveness.

• Sickness is of the mind; symptoms appear to be of the body. Healing is of the sickness of the belief in separation in the mind, not the body.

• The world is your own mind. Your body is your own mind. There is no separate body or world apart from your mind's ideas of them. When the ideas of a body and world are gone, the body and world are gone. When the idea of a sick body is gone, the sick body is gone.

• The world of separation and sin we made and live in is a reflection of the original sin of separation within our mind. The original sin of separation from God is an illusion, as is the world of sin and separation we made. When we realize the sin of separation from God and the world is illusory, the ego dissolves along with the world we made. And what remains is the real world, the reflection of Heaven in the healed mind.

• The ego makes linear space-time through the projection of sin, guilt and fear onto the world of bodies. Sin is the past. Guilt is the present. Fear is the future. The world of sinful, guilty, fearful bodies makes the ego's time and space.

• The holy instant collapses time and space by forgiving sin, guilt, fear and the world of bodies.

• Our real fear is not of tomorrow's crucifixion, but of today's redemption. The present cause of fear is sin.
The ego is happy to be redeemed *tomorrow*, but not today!

- Here and now in the holy instant there is no sin, no guilt, no fear, no time, no space, no ego and no world. Here and now there is only our eternal Identity as Christ in Spirit, the one Son of God.

- And now we turn to the important theme of purpose. Specifically we will look at the purpose we choose to give our relationships: To forgive and awaken from the dream; or to attack and keep us asleep in the dream.

- We give the world meaning through the purpose we choose for it. When we choose the Holy Spirit as our teacher, we see the world as a classroom in which we learn forgiveness as a means to awakening to the truth of our Identity as Christ. When we choose the ego as our teacher, we see the world as a prison and a battleground where we live in fear, conflict and hate; and we remain identified with the body, asleep in our nightmare of separation.

- Forgiveness, salvation, the Atonement and the miracle are all illusions that facilitate awakening from the original illusion, which is separation from God. All choices are illusory. The choice to take the Holy Spirit as our teacher rather than the ego also facilitates our awakening from the original illusion.

- The ego's linear time is the projection of sin, guilt and fear, and begins in the original instant we chose to believe in separation from God. That original instant is now. Linear time is always being made now. In the holy instant, sin, guilt and fear are healed, and linear time collapses into the eternal now.

- The entire universe of time and space is a projection of your own mind, born in the original instant, now, that you believed you separated from the infinite, eternal, wholeness of God. The entire universe of time and space is undone in the holy instant, now, as you realize you never separated from the love and wholeness of God.

- We die each time we choose to identify with the ego. We are born again each time we choose the Holy Spirit.

- There is no order of difficulty in miracles. There is one problem: the belief in separation from God; and one solution: the realization of the Atonement. All problems in your dream world have one cause and one solution. If the one cause is not resolved, your problems will recur in a new form.

- The entire world of suffering, sickness, pain and death is born in the original instant (now) that we believe we separated from God's eternal life; yet the separation from God never happened.

- Our function in the world is forgiveness, and forgiveness is for everyone with no exceptions. To hold back forgiveness for even one person is to hold yourself back in darkness. We are all forgiven together or not at all; the Sonship is one. We are crucified as one and redeemed as one.

- When we choose to take the Holy Spirit as our teacher, we choose Heaven for ourselves and our brothers. When we choose the ego as our teacher, we choose hell for ourselves and our brothers.

- Forgiveness is asking Jesus or the Holy Spirit to help us bring the problem of sin and guilt that we have projected onto our brothers back into our mind where it can be healed. The relationship between two people in the world *cannot* be healed because sin, guilt, sickness and discord are in the mind, not in the relationship between two people in the world.

- It is crucial to fully understand the source of your pain and suffering, so you can understand the source of healing: in your mind. That is the meaning of "In crucifixion is redemption laid" in this chapter.

- The real world is the reflection of the love of God in the right mind of the Son.

- The real world is the state of awakening from the nightmare of separate existence and identification with a body in the dream world.

- The culmination of the process of forgiveness ushers in the real world.

*End Chapter Twenty-Six*
CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN
THE HEALING OF THE DREAM

Main Theme: Awakening from the secret dream and the world's dream.

Introduction: This chapter is a powerful, poignant and beautifully written overview of the Course. It describes the right mind, the wrong mind, and the purpose that the body and world serve the ego and the Holy Spirit. The core of the wrong mind is the belief in the unholy trinity of sin, guilt and fear which is referred to as the ego's "secret dream." The secret dream is the ego's story of separation from God, which evokes guilt, and fear of punishment. The ego tells us that God is angry and will punish us so we better hide. The ego makes a body and a world of bodies in which we can hide from God and blame everyone else for our sin and guilt. The projection of the body and world is referred to as the "world's dream."

Through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, the Course teaches us that the source of all our problems in the body and the world is in our secret dream in which we believe we separated from God. The ego's strategy is to keep us distracted by the world's dream so we will not get back to the real source of our problems which is the secret dream of separation in the mind. When we get back to the decision making part of our mind we can choose the Holy Spirit and wake up from the world's dream and the secret dream which means the dissolution of the ego, and the realization of our true Identity as Christ.

• The original instant of belief in separation from God is the birthplace of the ego's secret dream and the source of the world's dream. We must return to the original instant of the secret dream and realize we never separated from God's wholeness to resolve all our problems of separation in the world's dream. The "hero" of the world's dream is the body.

• I attack you because you attacked me. I am innocent, you are guilty. My attack is justified, yours is not. So says the ego.

• If the world you made is real, separation from God is real, sin is real, guilt is real, fear is real, death is real and the ego is real. Without separation from God — sin, guilt, fear, death and the ego do not exist. This is why you love sin, guilt, fear, attack, sacrifice and death; without them, you, as you believe yourself to be, are dead.

• We made the body weak, vulnerable and completely at the mercy of events beyond its control to prove we are innocent victims of a sinful, guilty world of others who should be punished instead of us. Sickness, vulnerability, suffering and death prove we have our own special separate existence apart from God and the world.

• Everything in the world you made serves the purpose for which you made it: to prove your special separate existence is real, and to blame someone else for it.

• We cannot resolve our suffering because we have projected its cause onto others: germs, viruses, our family, friends, intimate others, society, culture, governments, religions, God and evil doers around the world — the world's dream. To resolve our suffering we must go back to our minds and wake up from the original secret dream — the belief in separation from God. We must understand cause and effect to be free of suffering.

• To suffer and play the role of victim you must remain ignorant of the true cause of suffering, and project the cause onto everyone and everything outside of your own mind.

• The purpose of the world I made is to prove the avenger is outside of me, and I am innocent.

• There is no salvation for you in the world you made to prevent your salvation. To the ego, salvation is death. The miracle facilitates a shift in identity from the character in the dream to the dreamer of the dream, and ultimately to our true Identity as Christ in Spirit.

• The ego's wrong minded function is to maintain its special separate existence at another's expense and God's. The ego has split its function from God's and everyone else's, making the world a battleground of opposing purposes.

• We love all the evil doers in the world because we made them to prove our relative innocence.
Notes on Chapter Twenty-Seven – The Healing of the Dream

Sin is illusory. True forgiveness sees no sin and no sinner. The ego's forgiveness sees sin and sinners as real; and the innocent, holy ego forgives the guilty, selfish sinners!

There are two ways the ego attempts to prove sin is real; one is to seek revenge and punish it; the other is to believe sin is real and to forgive it. The Holy Spirit sees sin is illusory and forgives the illusion.

The ego's goal is to make sin, guilt, fear, the world and itself appear real. Every question it asks is based on the false premise that the ego and its world are real. The ego is not really interested in truth, but in maintaining the lie of its special separate existence along with the world it made.

Between complete identification with the ego, and the complete undoing of the ego is the gentle step of forgiveness. Forgiveness is the process of ego dissolution.

The ego's terror is of its own dissolution. Forgiveness offers a gentle step the ego can accept without fear of total annihilation. The ego's purpose for its special relationships is gently shifted from being depositories of sin and guilt, to facilitating acceptance of the Atonement through forgiveness.

It is crucial to allow the Holy Spirit to complete its function of forgiveness in all of your special relationships, and in every nook and cranny of your mind. Without complete forgiveness you will continue to suffer. Many people hear the statement, "The world is an illusion, God is the only reality," and do not take the step of allowing the Holy Spirit to complete its process of helping them to forgive all of their illusions of sin and guilt; and then they wonder why they are still suffering. Citing metaphysical truths is not proof of understanding. Proof rests in the experience of perfect peace, unconditional love, and the absence of suffering.

Forgiveness is in your mind, not in the world. Forgiveness has nothing to do with the behavior of the body in the world. Forgiveness, salvation, the Atonement, the miracle, and Self Knowledge all refer to a state of mind; the realization of oneness in the mind; the realization that separation from God never happened; the realization that the body and world are projections of mind and are not separate from your mind —they have nothing to do with the actions or behaviors of the body in the world.

To fully benefit from forgiveness you cannot say, "I forgive but will never forget." True forgiveness says, "You have not sinned, you are eternally innocent."

A healed mind does not perceive a body as broken regardless of the appearance of symptoms. Healing is of the mind's perception, not the physical body. Your invulnerability is proof of your brother's innocence. Innocence is for everyone or no one. There can be no exceptions. To condemn one of your brothers is to condemn yourself and the whole Sonship. To proclaim the innocence of one is to proclaim the innocence of all. Innocence or guilt applies to all or none.

Suffering is a choice we make to prove our special separate existence; until we choose again for peace and wholeness with the help of the Holy Spirit through healing in the holy instant.

Peace, love, salvation and wholeness are in your mind, not in the world. You made the world to maintain your separate existence in suffering, conflict, hate and fear; this is why you cannot find love and peace in the world you made. The Holy Spirit helps lead us out of the world we made, back to the truth of our Identity as Christ in Heaven. The ego keeps us buried in our self-made hell; until we choose again.

The extension of forgiveness and the Atonement are functions of the Holy Spirit. Our function is not to save the world, but only to accept the Atonement and forgiveness for ourselves with the help of Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

The one lesson to learn is that there is no order of difficulty in miracles. There is one problem; the belief in separation. And there is one solution; the separation from God's love never happened.

Our purpose in the world is to ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help each time we become aware of thoughts of anger, guilt, blame or conflict in our special love and hate relationships. Sharing forgiveness, the Atonement and healing through us is the function of the Holy Spirit, not us. The Course Workbook is a great help in learning to apply in our daily lives the principles we are learning in the Text.
The miracle is an illusion that returns the power of the dream character back to the dreamer and allows us to observe the thought system of the ego from outside the dream so we can awaken from the nightmare of separation that never happened.

Problems appear to be many, but they are one. There is one problem, and one solution.

Resurrection is in the mind because crucifixion is in the mind. The world is healed in my mind because the unhealed world exists only in my mind. When my mind is healed, the world is healed. The world is my mind.

The way the ego set up the problem in the world's dream is to say that sin is real, but it is not in me, it is in the world; and sin is resolved through punishment or attack. The Holy Spirit leads us back to the secret dream in the mind in which we believe we committed the original sin by separating from God. True escape is in awakening to the secret dream of original sin.

The truth is not in the world we made. Truth is known in the realization of the Atonement through forgiveness of the world of illusions.

Salvation is in your own mind. Bondage is in your own mind.

Our problem is not what is happening in the world, but the eyes through which we interpret what is happening in the world. Seeing through the eyes of the ego, the world is a dangerous, frightful battleground. From above the battleground, looking with the vision of the Holy Spirit, the world is a passing show, a harmless comedy.

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. There is no hierarchy of illusions.

We are crucified together. We are resurrected together.

End Chapter Twenty-Seven
CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT
THE UNDOING OF FEAR

Main Theme: Cause and effect.

Introduction: Cause and effect are inextricably intertwined. If there is a cause there must be an effect; and if there is an effect there must be a cause. In the Course, the corollary idea is "ideas leave not their source," which means effects leave not their cause; the world and the mind are one.

If demonstrated that a thing is not a cause, then it does not exist. To prove a thing is not a cause demonstrates that it has no effects. This rule applies to the ego and the Holy Spirit.

In Heaven, God is the Cause and Christ is His effect. Cause and effect are one; ideas leave not their source; effects leave not their cause; therefore, Father and Son are one. The Atonement principle is the reflection of Their oneness, as the Atonement principle states that the separation from God never happened.

In the ego's thought system ideas do leave their source, effects do leave their cause, and the Son has left the Father. And the Son, having separated from his Creator, believes he is a separate ego, and that he has created himself. By separating cause from effect, the ego denies God is a cause and therefore God does not exist. The ego uses that argument to attest to its own separate existence, and that the ego is its own cause, and the Son of God is the ego's effect.

In the ego's wrong mind, the belief in separation from God is the cause; the effect is the world, the body, pain, suffering, and death. More simply, the split mind is the cause, the world is the effect. Or again, the ego's secret dream of separation from God being a sin demanding punishment is the cause in the mind; the world's dream that we are bodies living in a physical universe is the effect.

The ego seeks to prove the separation from God is a real cause by demonstrating the body and world are real effects. If the world is real, its cause (separation from God) in the mind must be real. If the separation from God is real, God cannot be real.

The true Cause and Effect is the inseparable unity of Father and Son. If the Cause and Effect relationship between God and Christ is true, then the ego's cause and effect relationship between the belief in separation (cause) and the world (effect) cannot be true. If the ego's cause and effect theory is true, then the Cause and Effect relationship of God and Christ in Heaven would be an illusion. The ego uses the body (effect) as its proof that the separation from God is a real cause.

Once the ego establishes that the separation from God is a real cause, and the body and world are real effects, it reverses its own cause and effect theory. Once the ego is identified with the body in the world, it forgets that the mind is the cause of the body; it then appears that the world has caused the separate ego-body-self; which makes the ego-body-self the effect of the world.

The Holy Spirit facilitates the correction of the ego's reversal of cause and effect through forgiveness. By demonstrating to our brothers that their perceived sin against us has had no effect, their sin is not a cause and therefore does not exist. This is true forgiveness.

The ego seeks to prove sin is real by demonstrating to our brothers their sin against us has had an effect; "Look at me brother, it is by your hands that I die." Because sin had an effect it is a real cause.

God and His Creation are an eternal oneness, the one reality, prior to the split mind's illusion of separation and fragmentation. This is the Cause and Effect relationship as it exists in Heaven.

All of our suffering is caused by the belief that we have separated from God's eternal love, peace and innocence, and we feel we will never get it back. We fear going back Home to God because we believe He is angry at us for leaving Him. Yet the separation never happened; the Effect never left its Cause. The Son never left His Father.

The "gap" referred to in this chapter represents the belief there is a separation between God and His Son.

Once we believe we are separate from God, we become the dreamer of the dream. And in our dream of the world we have become a victim of the world's
dream, as if the world is dreaming us. This is the reversal of cause and effect in our dream; first in the secret dream of separation from God, then in the world's dream.

In our dream of the world, we make ourselves the innocent victim of a separate world. In our secret dream, we make ourselves the innocent victim of a separate God. Our dream of the world is a projection of our secret dream. We wake up from the world's dream by waking up to our secret dream; by realizing the original sin of separation from God never happened. The original Cause never left His Effect. The Father never left His Son.

The ego uses the memory of past abuses and hurts to prove it is an innocent victim of a separate world, and to claim all the ego's attacks are merely defenses against a sinful, vicious world.

Memory is used by the ego to reinforce the belief in separation by recalling past hurts; the Holy Spirit uses memory to recall our true Identity as Christ by remembering our oneness with God. The purpose of memory is given by the teacher we have chosen, as memory is neutral in itself. Memories of the past have no meaning, value or purpose apart from those we assign to them in the present. Purpose is assigned by the teacher we choose; the ego or the Holy Spirit; suffering or healing.

The purpose the ego assigns to the body is as proof that separation and suffering are real.

The body and the world are effects not a cause. The mind determines meaning, value and purpose. The body follows orders given by the mind. The body and world have no meaning in themselves. We want the world that proves the ego and body are real, and God is not.

To understand the whole theory of the Course you must detach from your identity with the body and rise above the battleground of the body and world, and look back down upon it. Sickness is not of the body or world at all. Sickness is in the mind and based on the decision to be separate. It takes two to separate. The Atonement principle is true because God does not believe in the separation which means it never happened. It is imperative to the ego that God sees the separation and that He reacts to it. The entire Bible rests on the insane idea that God saw the original sin as real and reacted to it. From the beginning in Genesis to the end in Revelations, God responds to sin which means sin is real.

It takes two to have sin; it takes two to have separation. The Atonement heals because it says there is no separation; God knows there is no split of Cause and Effect. Only the ego believes in separation, and desperately strives to prove it is separate by getting someone else to witness to it. That is why the ego needs special love and hate relationships because we each witness to the reality of the other's sin of separation, and of suffering and happiness, of pain and pleasure. It takes two to witness to separation and sickness. It only takes one for Atonement and healing. Sickness and healing, separation and Atonement are of the mind, and have nothing to do with the body, the world, or behavior of the body in the world. The body is neither sick nor healthy. The mind is the dreamer of sickness and health.

The body and world are projections of the mind's belief in separation from the wholeness of God.

The ego's final step is reached once it has separated from God, projected the body and world from the mind, and then reversed cause and effect making itself a victim of a separate world. It is there at the ego's final step that the miracle begins. The miracle corrects the ego's mistaken reversal of cause and effect by returning the cause back to its true source in the mind, and then showing that the world is also an illusory effect.

The miracle undoes the ego's mistaken belief in the sin of separation and guilt, thereby undoing the blocks to the truth of our Identity with the wholeness of God. The miracle facilitates our awakening from the nightmare of separation. The miracle does not create the real world or the truth of our Identity with Christ, but removes the obstacles to our experience of the real world and our awareness of the love of God.

The Holy Spirit is the present memory of our Identity as God's one Son.

Memories of the past have no power apart from the power we give them in the present.
By returning to the holy instant more and more throughout your day, you are able to rise above the battleground you call your body and world, and realize the truth of your eternal Self; that is the miracle and the purpose of this Course.

Forgiveness of our brothers facilitates the memory of our Identity with God coming back to our awareness by showing us the face of Christ in our brother.

Your world is the outward picture of your inward wish.

The mind is the cause; the world is the effect.

The body is irrelevant in healing. Healing is of the belief in separation in the mind. The ego will continue to look to the body for proof of healing or sickness which keeps us asleep in our nightmare. The miracle facilitates the shift from body identification to identification with the observer and dreamer in the mind of the Son, above the illusory battleground where sickness or health of the body are both seen to be illusory.

The statement "not to give support to someone's dream of sickness and death" in this chapter does not mean you do not seek medical treatment for the body. The statement refers to the belief in the sin of separation and sickness in the mind. To cite metaphysical principles as a reason to avoid medical treatment for the body is a mistake because it makes the body important, again missing the purpose of the teachings of the Course. This Course has nothing to do with the body, except to take us beyond it. To avoid treatment for the body is to deal in the realm of effect. This is a Course in cause and not effect.

With our brothers we share the same illusory identity as separate egos, and we share the same real Identity as God's one Son.

Forgiveness facilitates the healing of the broken fragments of the Sonship. With the help of the Holy Spirit, forgiveness is our function in the world of broken pieces.

The Sonship is the whole, infinite, eternal, universal Being. Nothing exists apart from the Sonship of universal spirit.

Our problem is not in the illusory world, but in the belief that separation, the body and world are real.

God's promise is unity. The ego's promise is separation.

End Chapter Twenty-Eight
CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE
THE AWAKENING

Main Theme: The idols of specialness as substitutes for God's love. And awakening from the dream of separation.

We start by looking at the Atonement principle.

This is the Atonement principle: God is constant. Love is constant. Truth is constant, and truth is whole. There is no compromise at all in God. It is impossible for even a tiny mad idea to arise in the mind of perfect wholeness and oneness. God's oneness and wholeness are represented in the perfect non-dual thought system of the Course. God in His perfection has nothing at all to do with the world. Heaven and the world represent two mutually exclusive states. Imperfection has no place in God's perfection. Fear and hate have no place in God's love. Separation has no place in non-duality.

The tiny mad idea that separation from God is possible does not change God's perfect oneness. The world of change "passes by" the eyes of God unnoticed and unseen. It is crucial to understand that God has absolutely nothing to do with the world. The ego needs to somehow involve God in the world, as God's acknowledgment verifies the existence of the ego and its world. If God gives reality to the illusory world, He is as insane as we are. If God is insane, to whom can we turn for salvation? And that is why the ego tries to involve God in the world; to keep us identified with the body, imprisoned in the world with no way back to the love, wholeness and sanity of the true God.

The ego's uses idols as substitutes for God's love and wholeness.

The ego's supreme idol is the body. The body is not life, but a symbol of the ego's desire for separate existence. Life is infinite, eternal, universal spirit; life is not limited to a body. God is eternal life. By choosing to believe we are separate from God's eternal life, we have chosen to identify with the symbol of death.

Before the beginning we are whole and complete as God's one Son in Heaven; but that was not good enough, we wanted more than everything. And here we find ourselves in the world we made trying to find everything in nothing.

The path from the hell we made to our true Home in Heaven is the path of Atonement through forgiveness.

Being identified as an ego in a separate body, every day is a life and death battle with others in the world, and ultimately with God. Believing we are separate from God, we have made our lives a living hell; until we choose again. We have made ourselves a prisoner, locked behind the bars of the body, at the mercy of a vicious and brutal jail keeper we call the world.

The separate body and world are nothing. Believing the body and world are something, we suffer. It is that simple; and it is our choice.

We prefer our dreams of idols (special love and hate relationships) because in the presence of God's love we believe we would disappear.

There is no love between two people; there is no peace between two countries; there is no salvation in the world of bodies that was made to solidify and guarantee we all remain separate, fearful and in conflict. We were born in the thought of separation and conflict with God, and the world is a perfect projection of our separation and conflict. There is no love, no peace, no happiness, and no salvation in the world. There is no love in hate. There is no joy in suffering. There is no Truth in illusion. There is no Heaven in hell.

The mind is the cause of separation. The body and world are effects. To heal the belief in separation and return to wholeness and love, we must let go of the illusory effects and get back to the real cause in the mind. Wholeness, love, peace and joy are of the mind; not the world of special relationships.

Our fear of finding the wholeness and love of God is that we will lose ourselves. What is this self we fear we will lose?

The ego uses the death of the body as proof the separation from God is real, but the body was never
alive. God's life is eternal life and the only life. There is no life apart from God. The original death was in the belief in separation from God which is the original sin. God's Son never died and never sinned. You are God's Son. You were never born and will never die.

The world's dream is made to veil the mind's secret dream of separation from God. The idols of the world are the body and our special relationships, and were made to veil the idol in our mind which is the special separate ego.

You do not want salvation because you believe you are dissolved by love and peace. You love fear and conflict because without them you die. You will do anything to remain in hell.

It is crucial to be fully aware of and understand the purpose your special love and hate relationships serve.

Being one with everything as Christ in God was not enough for us; we wanted more than everything. And so we made a world of nothing, and wonder why we suffer.

The shift in the purpose we give to our relationships in the world helps us make the shift from the ego's dreams of idols to the forgiving dreams of the Holy Spirit.

The original change was from unity to separation in the secret dream of the ego's original separation from God. The Holy Spirit changes the nightmare of the ego to the happy dreams of forgiveness which facilitate our awakening from the dream completely. When given to the Holy Spirit, the body becomes the vehicle through which we learn to forgive.

Perceptions are interpretations. As we are awakening from the dream, our perception changes, not necessarily the characters or behaviors in the dream. The purpose we assign to characters in our dream determines our perception of them. The characters remain the same, our purpose for them changes, and thus our perception and experience of them changes. With the Holy Spirit as our teacher the purpose of our whole world of special relationships is to serve as a classroom to learn forgiveness and acceptance of the Atonement. The Holy Spirit does not know or help the illusory dream figure in your dream world.

The Holy Spirit helps you as the Son of God, the decision maker, the dreamer of the dream, to wake up from your nightmare and realize the truth of your Identity as Christ, the one Son of God.

Do not ask the Holy Spirit, or Jesus or God to help you as the dream figure; the ego-body. God knows nothing of dreams. It is the ego that tries desperately to bring God into its nightmare of suffering and ask Him to heal its illusory problems of the body in the world. If God were to come into your nightmare He would be a deluded dreamer just like you, and you would have no way out of your deluded dreams. Be thankful God is sane and offers you a way out of your insanity with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The ego's purpose for its world of special relationships is to maintain its special separate existence. When we choose the Holy Spirit as our Guide, the purpose of our idols is to facilitate the Atonement through forgiveness. When we choose to identify with the ego, we choose death. When we choose to identify with the Holy Spirit, we choose eternal life.

Everything in the world has one of two purposes; the ego's purpose is to keep us imprisoned in a body and sentenced to death; the Holy Spirit's purpose is to awaken us from the world's dream and to eternal life.

When our purpose in the world is to learn to forgive and awaken from the dream, we become happy learners, and our nightmares become happy dreams.

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. There is no hierarchy of illusions. There is no reality in dreams.

As you wake up to the real world your perception of the body changes or disappears; not the physical body. Now you see your brother's body through the vision of the Holy Spirit's innocence; where before you saw him through the ego's eyes of sin and guilt.

You cannot survive without conflict and fear; this is why you pretend to forgive your brothers, but refuse to forgive completely. Your brother's innocence means your guilt and your death.

The ego's world and linear time are the projection of sin, guilt and fear. Sin is the past. Guilt is the present. Fear is the future. As sin is forgiven, guilt and fear
are dissolved; and the world and linear time are collapsed into the timeless holy instant of the real world.

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The world is one loud, raucous shriek whose purpose is to drown out the still small Voice of the Holy Spirit who speaks softly of forgiveness and the Atonement.

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All power to choose Heaven or hell is in the mind of the Son as the decision maker. When we choose the Holy Spirit, the Son realizes his Identity as Christ, God's one Son, and remembers His Home in Heaven. When we choose to identify with the ego, the Son becomes the son of the ego, and is imprisoned in his self-made hell, forgetting his true Home in Heaven.

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Our toys are our beliefs in separation, sin, guilt, fear, judgment, hate, conflict, special relationships, the body and the entire world we made.

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Forgiveness of our brother allows us to see the face of Christ in him and remember our shared Identity with God.

End Chapter Twenty-Nine
CHAPTER THIRTY
THE NEW BEGINNING

Main Theme: The original "beginning" of the ego is the instant we believe in the original separation from God. The "new beginning" is the holy instant in which we realize our mistake and choose to identify with the Holy Spirit instead of the ego. An important theme in this chapter and throughout the Course is the power of our mind to choose.

Introduction: We begin again by looking at the Atonement. The Atonement principle is the Holy Spirit's Answer to the ego's separation principle.

• When we choose to identify with our special ego-self, we are choosing against our true Self.
• Choosing to identify with the ego has no affect on reality, but does affect our experience of ourselves as we lose awareness of God's love.
• Nothing exists separate from God. God knows nothing of an ego separate from Him because nothing separate from Him exists. God is perfect, eternal oneness.
• Our Identity as Christ is eternally unchanged, regardless of our experience of ourselves as separate egos.
• Idols are anything we use to attempt to take the place of God's love and wholeness, and reinforce our separate special existence. In the original separation we chose to be a tiny little fragment of the infinite wholeness of God's Kingdom.
• Our temptation is to identify with the special separate ego rather than the Holy Spirit. As we turn to the Holy Spirit, the purpose of the world shifts from specialness to forgiveness which facilitates the Atonement.
• Forgiveness and Atonement are the symbols we each can understand. We can only get home together. Forgiveness and Atonement are in the mind, and have nothing to do with behavior or communication between people in the world.
• The ego's purpose of the world is to form special relationships with people who can meet our needs, fulfill our desires and keep us identified with and attached to the body. The Holy Spirit's purpose of the world is to use our special relationships as a classroom to learn forgiveness and to facilitate the acceptance of the Atonement for ourselves so we will remember our true Identity as Christ in Spirit, the one Son of God.

The section in this chapter entitled "Rules for Decision" is a practical guide that is given to facilitate our choice for the Holy Spirit rather than the ego in our daily lives. Once we realize our mistake of choosing to identify with the ego, we have made the "new beginning" in our lives, and the rules for decision help us continue on the path back Home with the Holy Spirit as our teacher.

• There are seven rules for decision that are all really only one; throughout the day we actively choose to be guided by the Holy Spirit rather than the ego.
• Our first mistake is that generally we determine what our problem is and then ask God for help in resolving it. "Please help me get a job; cure my cancer; or find a partner."
• Once we choose for the Holy Spirit, the purpose of our special relationships shifts to forgiveness and Atonement; from blame, conflict, specialness and separation.
• As we see our brothers with the vision of the Holy Spirit's forgiveness, we begin to see ourselves with the vision of the Holy Spirit's forgiveness. As our brother's are forgiven we realize the reality of our oneness through forgiveness of the illusion of separation.
• The ego tells us we can be complete by joining with other egos outside of ourselves. The Holy Spirit tells us we can be complete by remembering our oneness with God within ourselves (in our mind).
• With the help of the Holy Spirit we observe the ego in action, and learn to choose forgiveness instead of blame and guilt.
• True forgiveness sees no sin and no separation at all.
Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

* There is no sin, not even one, that cannot be forgiven; otherwise forgiveness is not complete, and you hold yourself condemned, apart from the love of God, outside the wholeness of Heaven.

* There is no order of difficulty in miracles. There is no hierarchy of illusions. There is no power greater than omnipotence.

Forgiveness is the reflection in the world of the love of God in Heaven. Forgiveness is all inclusive.

* The reality of our identity as the Son of God is unchanged by our belief in separation, sin, guilt and our mistaken identity with an ego in a body. The miracle reminds us of the truth of who we are as Christ.

The real world is the state of mind that realizes the body and world are illusory projections of mind whose only purpose is forgiveness and Atonement which lead us beyond the world to the oneness of Heaven.

The "ancient hate" is the original sin of belief in separation.

**End Chapter Thirty**
CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE
THE FINAL VISION

Main Theme: This final chapter brings together all the major themes of the Course. The predominant theme is of our choosing to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and identify with Him.

Introduction: At the end of the Text are the words, "The journey closes, ending at the place where it began." The journey began in the one insane moment when we believed we separated from God and joined with the ego. In Chapter Thirty we saw that the New Beginning is when we realize our mistake in identifying with the ego and we choose again for the Holy Spirit instead. The journey begins and ends in the mind of the Son of God as the decision maker. It begins when we choose to identify with the ego, and culminates in the making of the body and world. Through the miracle we return to the decision making part of our mind and choose irrevocably for the Holy Spirit.

We start again by looking at the Atonement principle which states that we are never separate from the love of God; we are eternally His one Son in Spirit — Christ.

The ego's strategy is to keep us identified with the body and distracted by the world so we will not get back to the decision making part of our mind where we will choose for the Holy Spirit which means the end of the ego. That is the ego's terror. The first part of the ego's strategy is the secret dream of separation from God in the mind. The secret dream of separation is the original sin which evokes guilt and fear of God's revenge. The second part of the ego's strategy is the world's dream in which it makes the body and world, and then projects its sin and guilt onto others in the world in order to maintain its separate existence and its face of innocence; and that is the purpose of the world you made.

In our eyes the special separate self we made is a glorious, innocent victim of a sinful, guilty world.

The first face is the face of innocence. I am an innocent victim of a sinful world. Behind the face of innocence is its true face which is its true purpose; to make somebody else the guilty sinner deserving punishment, not me.

We love playing the victim because it proves we are innocent and the world is sinful and guilty. As a victim we maintain our special selfish murderous self, and blame everybody else for it.

Our original sin was the murder of God so we could have our own special separate existence apart from Him. We denied and buried the sin and guilt by making a world and projecting it onto everybody else so we could maintain our claim to innocence, and walk the world with the face of an innocent victim.

Our two faces are concepts of ourselves in the mind: one of innocence, the other of hidden sin and guilt.

Defending your ego-self is never ending, exhausting and fruitless; no wonder we get anxious and depressed; until we choose again.
Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

- You made the face of innocence to cover your face of sin and guilt. You made your world of special relationships to defend against the wholeness of God's love in Heaven.

- And now we turn to the heart of this chapter which is the power of our mind to learn and choose. Learning is really the unlearning of what the ego taught us about who we are. Who we are as Christ is not learned, but remembered when we unlearn who we are not.

- We love evil doers in the world, because without them we would have to face the evil within ourselves, and realize it does not exist. Without evil, sin and guilt, the ego is killed dead on the spot. We would rather kill the evil doers in the world, than have our special separate ego-self be dissolved. We will not kill all the evil doers in the world, because we put them in the world so we can "live." We made the world as a projection of the evil we believe is in us. Without evil you will be melted in the eternal love of God.

- Forgiveness of your brother forgives the sin in you, and dissolves the ego-self which cannot live without evil, sin and guilt. That is why you would rather kill the evil doers than forgive them. Without an evil enemy, you are dead. Evil doers are your savior and your salvation; and you love to hate them so!

- You do not want to learn what this Course is teaching because you will have to face your hidden belief in sin and guilt which are based on the illusion of separation from God. The separation from God never happened which means your special separate identity never happened. "You," the special separate ego-self, do not exist; why would you learn a Course that strips off the veil of your special, illusory self? Learning the ego's complex and distorted thought system was a tremendous accomplishment of a powerful mind. Your mind made the world and the whole universe. This Course is not too difficult for you to learn. You will learn exactly what you want to learn.

- The reason you are not learning what this Course teaches (in this form or another) is that you do not want to learn it.

- The "You" who is your Self as the Son of God, the decision maker or the dreamer who makes your ego-self, the body and the world, is the "You" to whom the whole Course is addressed; the "You" who chooses the ego or the Holy Spirit.

- It is the Son of God as the decision maker who chooses between the ego's guilt and the Holy Spirit's innocence. Your world arises out of the choice you make: the illusory world of separation, sin and guilt; or the real world of wholeness, forgiveness and innocence.

- Your world is your state of mind. In the state of forgiveness and innocence, your world is the real world. In the state of sin and guilt, your world is the illusory world.

- Everyone in the world is either expressing love or calling for love. Expressions of hate are really expressions of the fear of loss of the special separate ego-self, which is ultimately a desperate call for the wholeness and love of God. Some people express fear in socially acceptable ways; others in socially unacceptable ways. But all of us are either expressing love or calling for love.

- The temptation is to believe the ego's story that peace, love and happiness are to be gained through maintaining our separate existence.

- All roads to love and peace in the world lead to death. For love and peace we must go to the source of the world which is our own mind; where we can choose again.

- The purpose of the world is to learn there is no separate world apart from the mind.

- Our choices in the world are between hell and hell. Heaven is only found through forgiveness and acceptance of the Atonement in the mind.

- Salvation undoes the identification with the ego and body, and facilitates the realization of our true Identity as Christ in Spirit.

- Forgiveness facilitates salvation as it undoes the projection of sin and guilt, and leads us back to the decision making part of our mind where we can choose for the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. God
does not do anything. Jesus does not do anything. The Holy Spirit does not do anything. They are symbols that represent love, wholeness, eternal life and truth in our mind so we can choose for Them rather than the ego.

Every time you choose the selfishness of the ego and suffer, it is an opportunity to choose again for the Holy Spirit, wholeness, forgiveness and healing. This is how we practice and benefit from this Course.

Awakening from the ego's nightmare happens over time; otherwise the fear of loss of identity, the "death" of your ego-self, would be too great to bear. Our nightmares first turn to the happy dreams of forgiveness as the ego-self is unlearned.

The learning and unlearning of the conceptual ego-self is a process that happens over time. The truth of who you are cannot be learned, as you are eternally one with God, but can be blocked from your awareness by the conceptual ego-self. Salvation is from the conceptual ego-self you made.

The fundamental concept from which the whole universe arises is: "I am a separate individual self apart from God and apart from the world." That is the concept that must be unlearned so the truth of who we are can reveal Itself to a free and open mind.

The "ancient learning" is the belief in the original separation from God. By unlearning this original, ancient idea, we are born again to the truth of our Identity with Christ in Spirit. Forgiveness facilitates the unlearning of the ancient learning of separation. As we hear in our brothers either an expression of love or a call for love, we see the face of Christ in him, and remember our Identity with God.

As one brother is forgiven with the vision of Christ, the whole Sonship is forgiven along with you. Forgiveness of one is forgiveness of all with absolutely no exceptions. If even one is guilty, all are guilty including you.

End Chapter Thirty-One