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# A BETTER WAY

## “What Should I Do for Him, Your Holy Son?”

### How We Can Truly Forgive Others and Set Ourselves Free

by Greg Mackie

As every Course student knows, forgiveness is the central teaching of the Course, the royal road from the hell of our suffering to the Heaven of God’s Love. Yet Course-based forgiveness can be difficult to understand and practice. Why must our own freedom come from forgiving *other people*? What does forgiving

other people really require of us? And how can we find the strength to do the things required of us to forgive other people, especially when they’ve done *that*? (Fill in whatever horrible “that” comes to mind.)

I have found powerful answers to these questions in the “Forgiveness” chapter of the Course supplement *The Song of Prayer: Prayer, Forgiveness, and Healing*. Patricia and I did a class for our group in Xalapa that drew heavily from this section, and ever since I’ve been totally smitten with it. In fact, I came up with a practice which for me summarizes everything this chapter says about Course-based forgiveness:

*To end all my suffering and remember God’s Love, I must forgive my brothers.*

*To forgive my brothers, I must see past their behaviors and behold the holy Sons of God they really are.*

*To behold the holy Sons of God they really are, I must ask for God’s help.*

*“What should I do for him, Your holy Son?”*

In this article, I want to draw out the teaching implicit in each of these lines and share what it means to me. For me, this teaching both clarifies what Course-based forgiveness is really all about, and gives me what I need to really use it in my daily life. I’m seeing in a fresh new way that Course-based forgiveness truly is a practical and effective way — in fact, the *only* way — to free myself and my brothers from the ravages of the human condition and restore us all to the beloved community of God. I’m feeling a new sense of hope, and my wish is that what I share here will do the same for you.

### **To end all my suffering and remember God’s Love, I must forgive my brothers**

We all yearn to be free of the suffering that weighs us down more and more as the years go by. Those of us who believe in God yearn to rest in the eternal embrace of His Love. Yet how can these deepest yearnings of our hearts be satisfied? Throughout its pages, the Course gives us a surprising answer: “Forgiveness, truly given, is the way in which your only hope of freedom lies” (S-2.I.6:1).

This is an answer I don’t think any of us would have arrived at on our own. Surely freedom must come from a wide variety of things, right? There’s prayer and meditation and physical disciplines and all sorts of other spiritual practices aimed at setting us free from the bondage of life on earth. Forgiveness is a kind gesture, to be sure, but is it really our *only* hope of freedom?

Yes, says the Course, it is. Moreover, it’s not simply a matter of forgiving ourselves, which today’s “me first” spiritual climate might initially lead us to conclude. No, we actually need to forgive *others*, for as this chapter of *The Song of*

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*A Course in Miracles* is a spiritual path. Its purpose is to train us to work miracles—to accept and extend to others the shifts in perception that awaken us to God. It consists of three volumes, which signify the three aspects of its program:

- ◆ Text : Through studying the teaching, the Course's thought system first enters our minds.
- ◆ Workbook for Students: Through doing the practice, the Course's thought system penetrates more and more deeply into our minds.
- ◆ Manual for Teachers: Through extending our healed perception to others, the Course's thought system receives its final reinforcement and becomes the only thing in our minds.

The Course's message is that the source of our suffering is not the world's mistreatment of us, but rather our egocentric attack on the world. This attack convinces us that we have defiled our nature beyond repair, that we are irredeemably guilty. Yet the Course says true reality cannot be defiled; it is a realm of pure, changeless, unified spirit. This realization allows us to forgive the world's apparent mistreatment of us by recognizing that it did not actually occur. And as we see this forgiveness come forth from us—see that we are capable of something genuinely loving and egoless—we gradually realize that we never defiled ourselves. Thus we awaken to the untouched innocence of our true nature.

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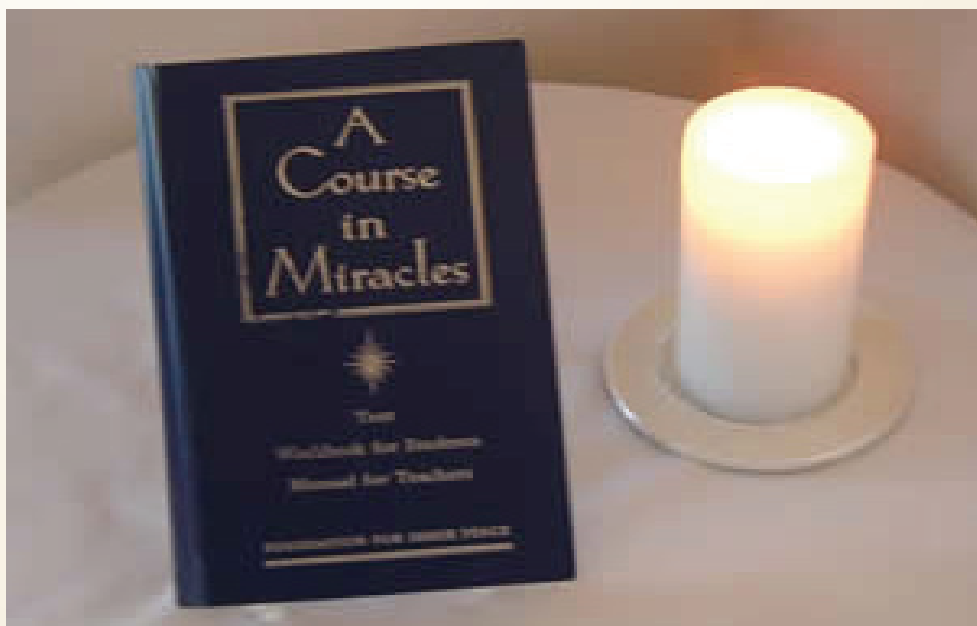
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*Prayer* reminds us again and again, forgiving others is *how* we forgive ourselves. We are told this unequivocally in an unforgettable line that I think every Course student should memorize: “Only in someone else can you forgive yourself, for you have called him guilty of your sins, and in him must your innocence now be found” (S-2.I.4:6).

What is the logic here? According to the Course, all of our suffering comes from our own guilt stemming from our attacks on God and our brothers: “guilt is...the sole cause of pain in any form” (T-30.V.2:4). But what we’ve done is project our own guilt onto others. We now see our guilt in them — in our eyes, *they* are the guilty ones, *they* are the attackers, *they* are the cause of our pain. This is how we usually think, is it not? In our minds, someone else is virtually always to blame for our problems; someone else is guilty of making our lives miserable.

So, now that we’ve placed our own guilt in a different “location,” so to speak, to forgive ourselves we have to direct our forgiveness to that same “location”: we have to forgive our brothers. As our passage above says, we’ve put our guilt in our brother, so “in him must your innocence now be found.” And once our innocence has been found in our brother, the guilt that was the sole cause of our pain is gone. We are free of suffering, free to remember God’s Love once again.

This makes such profound sense to me. As I look at my own life, I can see how quickly and easily I project my “sins” onto other people, how quick I am to blame others for the pain in my life. True, I can be very critical of myself as well, but if I’m honest with myself, I can see just how much resentment I feel for how the world has (supposedly) treated me. It’s not a pretty picture. It is a form of ongoing attack on my brothers, and how can I ever be truly free of pain when I’m dishing it out so much? Moreover, how can I find God when I’m so hard on His Sons? “Can you remember Him and hate what He created? You will hate his Father if you hate the Son He loves” (S-2.I.3:8-9).

The good news, though, is that I have also felt the indescribable joy of truly forgiving others. I have felt the immense weight lifted off my shoulders, the renewed sense of innocence and goodness welling up in me when I have really let go of my resentments and offered true, forgiving love to those I thought had hurt me. To me, there is no better feeling in the world. It feels like a miracle. And thank God, this experience is available to all of us.

My brief tastes of what true forgiveness brings have made it very plausible to me that forgiving my brothers completely would free me (and all of us) from suffering and bring the Love of God streaming into my soul once again. So when *The Song of Prayer* says, “God calls on you to save His Son from death by offering Christ’s Love to him” (S-2.I.8:3), this is a call I dearly want to answer.

## **To forgive my brothers, I must see past their behaviors and behold the holy Sons of God they really are**

So, forgiveness of our brothers is the answer to all that ails us. But *how* do we forgive? According to this chapter of *The Song of Prayer*, we don’t have a clue. On the contrary, we are so confused about what forgiveness really means that we have twisted it into just another form of attack aimed at keeping true forgiveness away from us:

No gift of Heaven has been more misunderstood than has forgiveness. It has, in fact, become a scourge; a curse where it was meant to bless, a cruel mockery of grace, a parody upon the holy peace of God....What was meant to heal is used to hurt because forgiveness is not wanted. (S-2.I.1:1-2, 5)

This leads directly into the chapter’s account of “forgiveness-to-destroy,” the forms of false forgiveness that we wield as “a twisted knife that would destroy the holy Son [God] loves” (S-2.I.2:6). All of these forms are ways we separate from others by focusing on their “bad” behavior, pretending to forgive them while retaining our conviction that they have truly sinned and are therefore unworthy of our or God’s Love.

The chapter uses vivid language to take us on a grim tour of the various forms of forgiveness-to-destroy. We need this tour, because we need to see clearly the error (not sin!) of our “forgiving” ways before we will be willing to open our minds to true forgiveness: “You must learn alternatives for choice, or you will not be able to attain your freedom” (S-2.I.10:3). As Jesus says earlier in the chapter, “Forgiveness-to-destroy must be unveiled in all its treachery, and then let go forever and forever” (S-2.I.9:5). Here, then, are some of the forms forgiveness-to-destroy can take.

### *The saint*

Here, we take an attitude that says, “I’m better than you, and I know it.” From our superior stance, we graciously “forgive” the pathetic evildoer like a saintly priest granting absolution to a groveling criminal:

In this group, first, there are the forms in which a “better” person deigns to stoop to save a “baser” one from what he truly is. Forgiveness here rests on an attitude of gracious lordliness so far from love that arrogance could never be dislodged. Who can forgive and yet despise? And who can tell another he is

steeped in sin, and yet perceive him as the Son of God? Who makes a slave to teach what freedom is? There is no union here, but only grief. This is not really mercy. This is death. (S-2.II.2:1-8)

### *The fellow sinner*

Here, we go completely the other way, though with the same results: Instead of being the saint forgiving the groveling criminal, we join him in the dirt. We “forgive” because we are just as sinful as the other — maybe even *more* sinful:

Another form, still very like the first if it is understood, does not appear in quite such blatant arrogance. The one who would forgive the other does not claim to be the better. Now he says instead that here is one whose sinfulness he shares, since both have been unworthy and deserve the retribution of the wrath of God. This can appear to be a humble thought, and may indeed induce a rivalry in sinfulness and guilt. It is not love for God’s creation and the holiness that is His gift forever. Can His Son condemn himself and still remember Him? (S-2.II.3:1-6)

### *The martyr*

This one is really another version of the saint, but with the added feature of long-suffering. Here, we “forgive” by graciously taking the abuse of the other instead of fighting back:

This goal [of separating the Father and the Son] is also sought by those who seek the role of martyr at another’s hand. Here must the aim be clearly seen, for this may pass as meekness and as charity instead of cruelty. Is it not kind to be accepting of another’s spite, and not respond except with silence and a gentle smile? Behold, how good are you who bear with patience and with saintliness the anger and the hurt another gives, and do not show the bitter pain you feel.

Forgiveness-to-destroy will often hide behind a cloak like this. It shows the face of suffering and pain, in silent proof of guilt and of the ravages of sin....Is this love? Or is it rather treachery to one who needs salvation from the pain of guilt? (S-2.II.4:2-5:1-2, 5-6)

### *The bargainer*

Here, we “forgive” in exchange for some form of compensation from the other person. If he’ll just pay us back (with interest) for all the damage he’s caused us, we’ll call it good — for now:

Forgiveness-to-destroy can also take the form of bargaining and compromise. “I will forgive you if you meet my needs, for in your slavery is my release.” Say this to anyone and you are slave....Have mercy on yourself who bargains thus. God gives and does not ask for recompense. There is no giving but to give like Him. All else is mockery. For who would try to strike a bargain with the Son of God, and thank his Father for his holiness? (S-2.II.6:1-3, 6-10)

As I said above, what all these forms of forgiveness-to-destroy have in common is that they all continue to regard the “forgiven” person as a sinner. The first says, “You’re a sinner, but I’ll overlook it because I’m so much better than you.” The second says, “You’re a sinner, but I’ll overlook it because I’m a sinner too.” The third says, “You’re a sinner, but I’ll overlook it by kindly taking your abuse.” The fourth says, “You’re a sinner, but I’ll overlook it if you pay me back for what you’ve done to me.”

And what is it that leads us to regard this person as a “sinner” (whether we use that particular word or not)? It’s his behavior, the things he’s done with his body to attack us, right? It’s because he did...*that*. Of course, he may well have actually done that physically — he may well have made the error of attacking us. But the problem is that we see the error as *real*. All of these forms of forgiveness-to-destroy say: “Your behavior did real harm to me. That makes you a sinner, and don’t you forget it.” Our “forgiveness,” then, is really damnation in forgiveness’ name. Or as a passage above so poignantly puts it, “This is death.”

What, then, is true forgiveness? What does *The Song of Prayer* call “Forgiveness-for-Salvation”? It is to dismiss this entire picture, to look completely past the other person’s misbehaving body — indeed, to look past his body entirely — and behold the holy, innocent, loving Son of God he really is in truth. As this chapter puts it: “*Do not see error*: Do not make it real. Select the loving and forgive the sin by choosing in its place the face of Christ” (S-2.I.3:3-6). Even as we still see the error with our physical eyes, we recognize that it is not real, for at the same time the eyes of Christ in us are gazing rapturously on the radiant Christ that is the other person’s true Identity.

All of this makes profound sense to me too. Yes, the Course's rationale for forgiveness — that bodies aren't real, that I'm truly invulnerable and so can't really be hurt, that the other person didn't gain anything from his attack on me, that therefore his inherent innocence and worth are undamaged by his errors, that therefore the same must be true of me — stretches my mind, to say the least. But it seems to me that this is the *only* possible rationale for true forgiveness. As long as I'm seeing misbehaving bodies as reality, I just don't see how I can really forgive. I will never find the freedom forgiveness promises me, for I will be a slave to whatever those misbehaving bodies do:

It always seems to be another who is evil, and in his sin you are the injured one. How could freedom be possible if this were so? You would be slave to everyone, for what he does entails your fate, your feelings, your despair or hope, your misery or joy. You have no freedom unless he gives it to you. And being evil, he can only give of what he is. (S-2.I.5:2-6)

This seems incontrovertible to me: As long as my mental state is determined by what other people's bodies are doing — especially when what they're doing looks so "evil" — I'm sunk. Right now, I'm living in Mexico, where thousands of people are being oppressed, kidnapped, tortured, and killed every day. Patricia told me the other day about certain older men who take Viagra so they can rape prepubescent girls. How could I or anyone else possibly forgive things like this if what these bodies are doing were real? Some people try, but they struggle, and I don't see how they could succeed. If this were real, it would be a reality too horrible to overlook.

So, while I don't know with certainty if the radical things the Course says about ultimate reality are true, it seems clear to me that they *must* be true for forgiveness to be possible. And if it's true that forgiveness is the only way to freedom, then I need to open my mind to these ideas. Since I want to be free of suffering and feel God's Love in my heart, what have I got to lose?

### **To behold the holy Sons of God they really are, I must ask for God's help**

So, forgiveness requires us to look completely beyond other people's behaviors to a nonphysical reality that we can only see through these mysterious eyes of Christ in us. Sounds daunting, does it not? The world around us with all those misbehaving bodies just looks so *real*. How can we actually look past those bodies and all the crazy things they do? How can we actually *see* the face of Christ in all our brothers?

This chapter of *The Song of Prayer* has a succinct answer: We can't — at least, not by ourselves. Again and again, it hammers home the point that to truly forgive, we need to ask for God's help (and the help of His Agents like the Holy Spirit and Christ) and let Them work *through* us. It's not just a good idea to get help — true forgiveness is literally impossible without it. Here is a selection of passages that underscore this point:

Ask, then, [Christ's] help, and ask Him how to learn forgiveness as His vision lets it be. You are in need of what He gives, and your salvation rests on learning this of Him. (S-2.I.7:1-2)

You child of God, the gifts of God are yours, not by your plans but by His holy Will. His Voice will teach you what forgiveness is, and how to give it as He wills it be. Do not, then, seek to understand what is beyond you yet, but let it be a way to draw you up to where the eyes of Christ become the sight you choose. Give up all else, for there *is* nothing else. When someone calls for help in any form, He is the One to answer for you. All that you need do is to step back and not to interfere. Forgiveness-for-Salvation is His task, and it is He Who will respond for you. (S-2.III.2:1-7)

Do you but listen. For [Christ] will be heard by anyone who calls upon His Name, and places his forgiveness in His hands....Listen and learn, and do not judge. It is to God you turn to hear what you should do. His answer will be clear as morning, nor is His forgiveness what you think it is. (S-2.III.6:5-6, 9-10)

Now can [Christ] make your footsteps sure, your words sincere; not with your own sincerity, but with His Own. Let Him take charge of how you would forgive, and each occasion then will be to you another step to Heaven and to peace. (S-2.III.3:3-4)

These passages and others like them practically beg us to let go of our own attempts to forgive — which inevitably turn into forgiveness-to-destroy — and let God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit do the job for us. It is Their task, not ours. To practice Forgiveness-for-Salvation, we must get ourselves out of the way and let Heaven lead the way.

This more than makes sense to me — it seems to inevitably follow from the recognition that forgiveness entails

looking past people's behaviors and seeing the holy Son of God in them. In and of myself, I simply can't do this. My physical eyes are always going to see bodies misbehaving. Those bodies are everywhere I look. Faced with a constant barrage of "evidence" for the sinfulness of our brothers, I'll never be able to see anything else on my own. All of us who are firmly entrenched in the battleground desperately need the vision of Helpers who are *above* the battleground. Fortunately, these Helpers are available and eager to help. All we need to do is realize that we can't forgive on our own and ask for the help we need to forgive truly.

This is what I want to do. I am weary of failed attempts to forgive on my own. I've made many such attempts, and have felt the frustration of locking myself up in the prison house of forgiveness-to-destroy. The promise that real help is totally available to me gives me hope that there really is a way out of suffering and into God's loving embrace. I want to do a *lot* of asking.

### **“What should I do for him, Your holy Son?”**

To me, this is the punch line for the whole chapter: Now that we have recognized our need for Someone above the battleground to help us forgive, we ask God (and Christ) for Their help with these words. Here is the full paragraph:

“What should I do for him, Your holy Son?” should be the only thing you ever ask when help is needed and forgiveness sought. The form the seeking takes you need not judge. And let it not be you who sets the form in which forgiveness comes to save God's Son. The light of Christ in him is his release, and it is this that answers to his call. Forgive him as the Christ decides you should, and be His eyes through which you look on him, and speak for Him as well. He knows the need; the question and the answer. He will say exactly what to do, in words that you can understand and you can also use. Do not confuse His function with your own. He is the Answer. You the one who hears. (S-2.III.5:1-10)

Notice that we are to ask for help both in how to *see* the person we are forgiving (“be [Christ's] eyes through which you look on him”) and how to *behave* toward that person (“[Christ] will say exactly what to do”). We judge neither the form of our brother's call for forgiveness (his “bad” behavior) nor the form of our response to his call (our forgiving behavior). Our own judgment is completely out of the picture. “He is the Answer. You the one who hears.”

We've already discussed the vision needed to truly forgive. But how would Christ have us express that forgiveness behaviorally? This was a major focus of our presentation in Xalapa. The most important thing to remember, I believe, is that *each situation is different, and there is no formula*. We don't want to fall into the trap of saying, “Course-based forgiveness means I must do \_\_\_\_\_.” Each situation calls for a different response, and we need to be open to the guidance that is trying to come through us. It may not be what we expect at all.

Given that each situation is different and there is no formula, what are some specific ways we might be guided to express our forgiveness behaviorally? We might be guided to express it through kind words and actions, as Helen and Bill were so often guided to do. We might be guided to say “I forgive you” directly, if a person is sorry and is asking for forgiveness.

In situations where a person continues to engage in harmful behaviors toward us, we might be guided to “turn the other cheek” in some way, to practice the kind of radical defenselessness that Jesus did in the “extreme example” (T-6.I.2:1) of his crucifixion. (This would be different than the “martyr” version of forgiveness-to-destroy above, because in this latter case, rather than showing our pain to prove the other's guilt, we would be showing our invulnerability to prove his innocence.) Or we might be guided to respond to that harmful behavior by taking firm and loving action that benefits everyone involved. Or we might be guided to respond with some creative combination of these two extremes: I think of the nonviolent activists like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., who radically laid down their defenses *as* a firm and loving response to injustice.

The important thing that I get out of this chapter, though, is that my response *must* be guided. It must come from my Helpers, not from me. Of course, my ability to hear guidance is far from perfect; just like everyone else, I will make many mistakes along the way, and this is just part of the journey. But I need to be continually reaching heavenward for the help I need.

Fortunately, this chapter assures all of us that this help is ever available and we *can* reach it. “[Christ] will say exactly what to do, in words that you can understand and you can also use.” I don't know about you, but I find these happy and hopeful words indeed.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, I'd like to suggest that you give my little practice a try, especially if there is a particular person in your

life whom you are struggling to forgive. (If you're using it to forgive a particular person, you can change the words like "brothers" and "Sons of God" to the person's name, and adjust the pronouns accordingly.) Here is the practice again:

*To end all my suffering and remember God's Love, I must forgive my brothers.  
To forgive my brothers, I must see past their behaviors and behold the holy Sons of God they really are.  
To behold the holy Sons of God they really are, I must ask for God's help.  
"What should I do for him, Your holy Son?"*

For full impact, I find it helpful to concentrate on the inexorable logic of these lines and let that logic talk me into asking for the help I need:

First line: I'm feeling miserable right now. I really want to end my suffering and remember God's Love. Well, to do this, it makes sense that I need to forgive my brothers, especially this one I'm struggling to forgive, because right now it is my *unforgiveness* that is making me miserable. Why not, then, try to forgive? What have I got to lose?

Second line: To really forgive, surely I'm going to need to look beyond these awful behaviors I'm seeing, because without doing that I just don't see how I can see real innocence in this person. His innocence simply *must* stem from a holiness in him that transcends his behaviors. Somehow, I have to see this person as a holy Son of God.

Third line: Looking beyond those awful behaviors and seeing this person as a holy Son of God feels like such a Herculean task. Surely I can't do it on my own. God knows I've tried. Clearly, to do this, I need the help of Someone Who can see a much bigger picture than I can: I need *God's* help. I'm sunk without it, but the Course promises that His help is always available if I ask.

Fourth line: I am now ready, willing, and able to ask God for the help I need to forgive this person. "What should I do for him, Your holy Son?"

As I said at the beginning, I'm truly smitten with the material from this chapter of *The Song of Prayer*. I've been using this practice for a while now, and while I don't think I'll be up for sainthood any time soon, it is making a real difference in my life. It is making Course-based forgiveness more practical and effective than ever before. Perhaps we really *can* free ourselves from our suffering and join together in the Love of God the Course says we never left. My heart is filled with hope that the promise we are given at the end of this glorious chapter will indeed be fulfilled:

[Christ] will not leave you comfortless, nor fail to send His angels down to answer you in His Own Name. He stands beside the door to which forgiveness is the only key. Give it to Him to use instead of you, and you will see the door swing silently open upon the shining face of Christ. Behold your brother there beyond the door; the Son of God as He created him. (S-2.III.7:5-8)



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## I'm Gonna Make This Place Your Home

A friend and I were talking recently about how certain aspects of our personalities have been evident in us since we were really little. She told me about a picture of herself at age four or so in which everything in her face said, even then, “I take this place very seriously, and it needs a lot of work.” What immediately came into my mind is that my lifelong caption would be almost the direct opposite of hers. Because what I have always wanted to say to the world — what I have long wondered about, in some form or another — is this:

“What’s everybody so worked up about?”

What strikes me now as I think about this is that, for both of us, those statements about our take on the world can serve as a foundation for better understanding our special function. She’s called to get people stirred up and fix this place. I only want them to settle down and know they are okay here. Both are important, but only one is right for me.

A few years back we dedicated a whole month to exploring the special function here in the Circle Course Community. Robert came up with a questionnaire to help us get a clearer picture of what it is we are meant to give to the world — what is the content of our function? One of the questions that stuck with me asked, “What kind of people do you take under your wing?” Another was this: “What sort of essential gift do you find yourself wanting to give to people? In other words, what sort of mental or emotional state do you want to bring them to? Consider especially the people whose pain your heart naturally goes out to.”

My answers to those questions surprised me by how specific they were. I saw really clearly that all through my life there were people I had “taken under my wing” in my relationships — people I loved, who were hurting. And I saw that the mental or emotional state I wanted to help bring people to was one of calm productivity. That is, I wanted them to know they were okay, so they could and would do their jobs.

Since reading Robert’s *Signs* book and, with his help, learning to recognize and honor that form of guidance in my life, I’ve been brought to an increasingly specific understanding of my healing function in the world. Over the past four years, the signs show me on a journey of wanting to honor what is most precious in another person, wanting to establish a safe home for him or her from which he or she can reclaim that precious thing, and express it. A place that says: Be calm. Be safe. Know that you have gifts that the world needs. Know that you won’t be happy until you give them.

I thought that safe home was a place, and in a way, it is. But it isn’t a physical space. It wasn’t in Syracuse, where I come from. And it isn’t in Sedona, where I’ve come to. It is in my relationships: Two by two. You and me. Me and you. It’s most obvious to me in my relationships with my Course teachers and those I mentor in their work with the Course. But I’ve really come to see that every relationship is another opportunity to bless and heal. Every relationship is an opportunity to give what is mine to give; to give what I want for myself and for all of us. Every relationship can establish a safe harbor. A place that says: “You’re good and loved and well and whole. So rest awhile and remember that. And then go do your healing work.”

I’m blessed to also know now the specific form that function will take for me: I’ve just begun a master’s program in mental health counseling, toward the eventual goal of practicing and teaching Course-based psychotherapy and helping others find their special function. And I can’t begin to say how that changes everything — everything that went before and everything that lies ahead is all contained in knowing what my function is and knowing I have reclaimed it.

I’m on board with God’s plan now. I know that plan has a very specific part set aside with my name on it. And that awareness shines a sure and quiet light on everything I see, within and without.

The words I’ve used as a title here come from the song sung by Philip Phillips when he won the *American Idol* title in May. The lyrics talk about a shared journey, and the peace that comes from knowing we have each other to travel with and help along the way. For me, those words feel like a special function anthem: the gentle blessing of our promise to each brother; the sacred promise of our blessing for each other.



E-mail your comments to the author at: [amy@circleofa.org](mailto:amy@circleofa.org)

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## CIRCLE MAILBOX

*The following is a response to Robert's article in A Better Way #116, "The Loneliness is Gone': Thoughts on Inviting a Closer Relationship with Jesus."*

I say this in a most endearingly way — “You Bastard.” Your article has set in motion a series of collapsing walls I had built up around me for many a year.

I have long said to many that Jesus and the Buddha are my two heroes in life. Little did I know how I subconsciously have held Jesus at arms length. Not because of the theme of your article but rather because of my having to rely on him for anything. You see, I have long rejected that I was born in sin, but after picking up a copy of ACIM a few years ago I came to believe that all my illnesses, pains, and problems are because I choose to experience them. So, I am somehow defective. But no matter what I do I cannot shake my maladies, my irritations, my anger, until this morning.

As I read your article I became aware that I have rejected Jesus because he got through this mess and I have been unable to awaken to my reality as he did. I am somehow defective, akin to being born into sin. And as we hear a little kid say, “I can do it,” this is what I have been doing all along. I can do it without anybody's help — just like Jesus! I am not defective. I was not born in sin and I will prove it to you; only to continue to fail because it has always been about me and there is no way out of this mess alone.

As I was returning home this morning from a supply run (we own a small convenience store in a small NE Nebraska town) I experienced a miracle as I was driving (which was a bit scary as it was so impactful I was worried about losing control). I was asking Jesus how do I give myself to him and let go of this thing I think I am.

What came to me was the realization that I will just have to trust him completely and let go trying do “do it myself.” But as I thought about doing just that a memory popped into my head about how I resented people that had done just that. These people were Christians that gave themselves to Christ because they were born in sin and I resented what they were doing because I did not believe we are born in sin. So I have long stood my ground because how could I give myself over to Jesus if I resented people who do?! I actually felt the lifting of this error in thinking, something I have never felt for as long as I have been a Course student. This was a true miracle.

Thank you Robert. You have truly been a teacher of God through this article.

— Hal Seeley