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A BETTER WAY

This Is a Course for Miracle Workers: Please Clock In

by Greg Mackie

Why did Jesus dictate *A Course in Miracles*? What was his purpose? The Course can be seen as primarily a compendium of fascinating metaphysical ideas, or perhaps a helpful tool for shifting our own perception so we'll feel happier about our lives.

But for a long time, we at the Circle have believed that Jesus' central purpose for the Course is right there in its title. He gave us "a course in miracles," a course that would train us to become *miracle workers*: people who extend miracles of true perception to others in thought, word, and deed.

As I've reread the first two chapters of the Text during our 2006 Text reading program, this purpose has left a deeper impression on me than ever before. It is especially evident in the Urtext, Bill's original typescript of the Course. I'm now seeing the Course as essentially a vocational training manual. I'm being trained for the job of miracle worker, a co-worker in Jesus' "Great Crusade" to heal lack of love *with* love. This job is full-time; I am expected to be on the clock twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The job sounds daunting, but in truth it offers such immense benefits that it is far more rewarding than anything else I could do. I will not find peace until I commit fully to this job and help all of my brothers find salvation.

In this article, I'd like to share some highlights from this early material on the job of miracle worker. (All quotations without references below are from the Urtext.) This material has had a major impact on how I see the Course and my own life's purpose. I feel simultaneously uneasy about its challenge to my current life and excited about its promise of a more fulfilling life. I hope you will find this material as thought-provoking as I have.

Jesus is training us for the job of miracle worker in his "Great Crusade" to heal lack of love *with* love

As I mentioned, Jesus' purpose for the Course is right there in the book's title. The purpose of any course *in* something is to train you to *do* that thing. It is no different here. Our job is the same one Jesus gave to his disciples two thousand years ago:

The Disciples were officially and specifically told to heal others, as Physicians of the Lord. They were also told to heal themselves, and were promised that I would never leave them or forsake them. Atonement is the natural profession of the Children of God, because they have professed Me.

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WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT SAYS

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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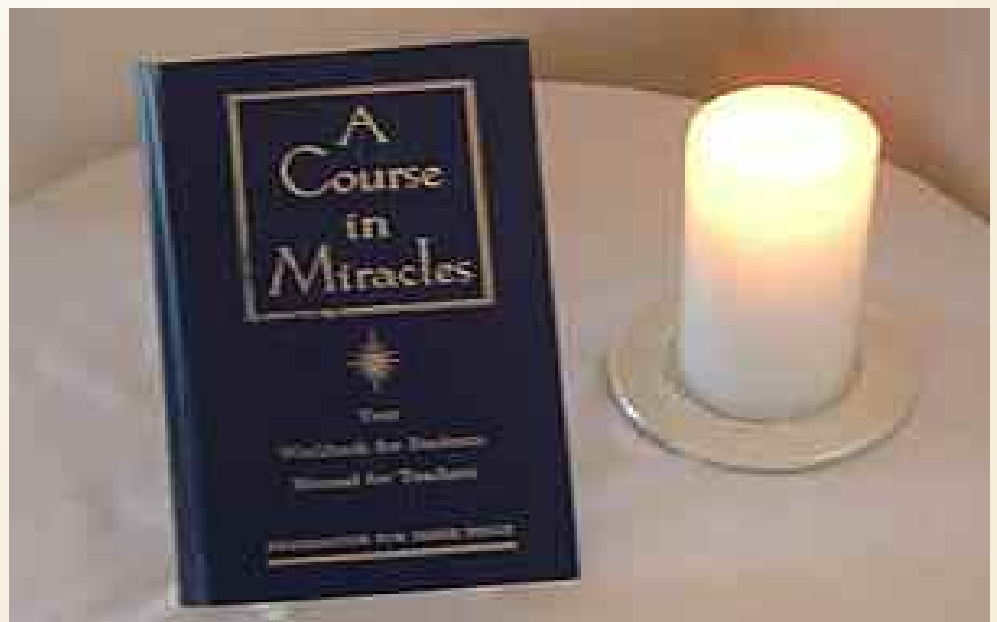
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We too are to be “Physicians of the Lord” practicing “the natural profession of the Children of God.” Whatever the outer form of our work in the world, our true inner vocation is to be miracle workers under Jesus’ direction, who heal others and in so doing heal ourselves. Jesus promises that he will be with us every step of the way, and if we dedicate ourselves to this job, “You will see miracles thru your hands thru me.” There is really no other function that will make us happy; in his words, our “souls cannot rest until everyone has found salvation.”

Given the importance of this job, Jesus dearly wants us to start work as soon as we can. Later in the Course, he speaks of “how urgent it is to fulfill” (T-5.VII.4:4) our part in the plan for salvation. He calls us to “unite with me under the holy banner of [the Holy Spirit’s] teaching” (T-13.VIII.8:2), to join the “Great Crusade” to undo lack of love:

Having been restored to your original state, you naturally become part of the Atonement yourself. You now share *my* inability to tolerate the lack of love in yourself and in everyone else, and *must* join the *Great Crusade* to correct it. The slogan for this Crusade is “Listen, Learn, and *Do*.”

This means Listen to My Voice, Learn to undo the error, and *do* something to correct it.

The first two are not enough. The real members of *my* party are *active* workers.

(Urtext version of T-1.III.1:5-6)

This is strong language: it reminds me of Martin Luther King, Jr. passionately calling upon the people to join his crusade to overcome hatred with love. Once we are trained, we are to listen as Jesus gives us our part in the overall campaign, learn what we need to learn to carry out that part, and then *actively* carry it out. Of course, this “Great Crusade” language doesn’t mean we should become pushy zealots. The Course always counsels gentleness, not force. I think the point is simply that we are taking part in a disciplined, active movement to “bless the world with miracles” (W-pII.353.Heading). We are to become card-carrying members of the Jesus Party.

Our job description

This early material says a great deal about the nature of our miracle-working job. Here are some aspects that stand out for me.

This job is not a burden but a joy, because it releases the miracle drive—it is more satisfying than sex

Let’s start with the benefits. That whole “Great Crusade” thing might sound like a real drag, especially for those who have never had any inclination to join a movement. But Jesus is clear that the job of miracle working is not some sacrifice we make for the sake of others, but something that benefits us just as much: “The miracle will always bless *you*” (T-1.III.8:2). As anyone who has studied the Course knows, giving is receiving. The blessings we give others through our miracles come right back to us.

The Urtext material describes another benefit that sounds incredibly appealing to me. Accepting the job of working miracles will release the *miracle-drive*:

Tension is the result of a building-up of unexpressed miracle-impulses. This can be truly abated only by releasing the miracle-drive, which has been blocked. Converting it to sexual libido merely produces further blocking.

Wow! Did you know you have a miracle drive? That’s sure news to me. While many of us have a genuine desire to help others, it usually doesn’t feel like a “drive.” Our desire to help usually feels pretty weak compared to our drives for things like food and sex and even nonphysical things like career goals, drives that never seem to leave us alone. It seems that the thwarting of these drives is what causes our tension. That’s why miracle working seems so daunting: it seems that expressing our noble but weak desire to help others means constantly fighting against our baser drives. No wonder it can feel like a sacrifice.

But notice how Jesus turns the tables here with regard to one of the strongest drives we seem to have: the sex drive. In the Urtext material, Jesus says the sex drive is a distorted version of the miracle drive; the ego converts the miracle drive into the sex drive to keep itself in business. But while indulging the sex drive seems to relieve tension, in fact it actually *increases* tension by blocking the miracle drive behind it. At best, sex can produce a temporary sense of relaxation, but the true effect of indulging inappropriate sexual impulses is depletion. The cure for this depletion and the way to true peace is to let that miracle drive loose in its pure form:

The miracle, on the other hand, is an *energizer*. It always strengthens, and never depletes. It *does* induce peace, and by establishing tranquillity (not relaxation) it enables both giver and receiver to enter into a state of Grace.

The bottom line: miracle working is more satisfying than sex. Perhaps it's not such a drag after all.

We are to devote every moment to this job—we are never off the clock

Jesus tells us, “Each day should be devoted to miracles” (T-1.I.15:1). He encourages us to “begin each day with the prayer ‘Help me to perform whatever miracles you want of me today.’” He counsels us to be prepared for miracles to come through us at any moment, to “‘hold yourself ready’ . . . so you will *always* be ready, willing, and able” to do them. Most startling of all, he implies that we need to hold on to our miracle-readiness even while we sleep, when he says that the mind “never sleeps. Every instant it is creating, and *always* as you will” (Urtext version of T-2.VI.9:6-7). (How do we hold on to miracle-readiness while sleeping? The Course instructs us to give our sleep to the Holy Spirit—see T-8.IX.4.) Clearly, in this job we are meant to be on the clock 24/7. Taking time off to visit our favorite ego vacation spots is just not part of the benefits package. That's just as well, since the ego's vacation spots are really hell. Visiting hell can hardly be called a benefit.

The first step in this job is to use mental vigilance to keep ourselves in a state of miracle-mindedness

In order to hold ourselves ready for Jesus to work through us, we need to train our minds to think miraculously:

Human beings are not used to miraculous thinking, but they *can* be *trained* to think that way.

All miracle-workers *have* to be trained that way. I have to be able to count on them. This means that I cannot allow them to leave their mind unguarded, or they will not be able to help me. Miracle-working entails a full realization of the power of thought, and real avoidance of miscreation.

(Urtext version of T-2.VII.1:9-2:2)

In other words, we need to be mentally vigilant, both *against* thoughts that hamper our miracle working and *for* thoughts that enable it.

What kinds of thoughts are we supposed to be vigilant against? In general, any thoughts of the ego, thoughts rooted in wrong-mindedness. But more specifically, Jesus stresses that in order to work miracles, we need to make sure our minds are free of *fear*. “Miracles need freedom from fear” (Urtext version of T-1.I.26:1). Fear keeps miracles from coming through us. Moreover, if we attempt to do miracles while we are afraid, whatever miracles *do* come through us will likely be distorted by the ego into evidence of how special we are (see T-2.V.2). For this reason, “As long as your sense of vulnerability persists, you should not attempt to perform miracles” (T-2.V.2:6).

Another miracle-blocker we need to watch out for is *doubt*. In the following passage, Jesus compares our doubt to the doubt Peter had when he was walking on the water with Jesus. If we doubt our ability to work miracles, then like Peter, we're sunk:

[Miracles] cannot be performed in the spirit of doubt. Remember my own question [to Peter], before you ask yours. “Oh ye of little faith, wherefore didst thou *doubt*?” (minor spelling and punctuation corrections by me)

What kinds of thoughts are we supposed to be vigilant for? Thoughts of the spirit, thoughts rooted in right-mindedness. We are to keep ourselves in a state in which we look upon all we encounter with true perception, with the eyes of forgiveness:

I have already said that miracles are expressions of miracle-mindedness, and miracle-mindedness means right-mindedness. . . . It is essential. . . . that the miracle worker be in his right mind, however briefly, or he will be unable to re-establish right-mindedness in someone else. (T-2.V.3:1, 5)

Miracles are natural expressions of total forgiveness. (Urtext version of T-1.I.21:1)

This mental vigilance against wrong-mindedness and for right-mindedness places us in a state of *miracle-mindedness* or *miracle-readiness*. In this state, we radiate unconditional, impersonal love, “impersonal” in the sense that it is not limited to any specific person. Love simply flows from us indiscriminately, as light shines forth from the sun; “this mind goes out to everyone, even without the awareness of the miracle worker himself” (T-1.III.7:2). We are now ready for the next step.

The second step in this job is to let Jesus send specific miracles through us to specific miracle receivers

Impersonal miracle-mindedness sets the table for personal miracle-doing. Jesus takes our miraculous state of mind that radiates love to everyone everywhere, and channels it into specific miracles for specific people. The plan for salvation is a spiritual version of the classic activist bumper sticker “Think globally, act locally.”

We should not decide by ourselves what specific miracles to perform because we can't see the bigger picture.

Indiscriminate miracle working on our part can do more harm than good, both to us and to the miracle receiver. Instead, Jesus says, “Ask me which miracles you should perform” (T-1.III.4:3). Later he says:

The action aspect of the miracle should be controlled by me because of my complete awareness of the whole plan. The impersonal nature of miracle-mindedness ensures your grace, but only I am in a position to know where [specific miracles] can be bestowed. (T-1.III.8:4-5)

Placing Jesus in charge of our miracle working “spares [us] from exhaustion” and keeps us from burning ourselves out with indiscriminate miracle working (the fate of Edgar Cayce, according to the Urtext). It also keeps us from giving a “straight and undiluted miracle” to someone who is too afraid to accept such a radical challenge to his thought system. Jesus *can* see the bigger picture, so we should let him call the shots.

Notice the reference to the “action aspect of the miracle.” Throughout this early material, it is crystal clear that the extension of miracles is, in Jesus’ words, an “interpersonal *action*,” the *behavioral* extension of true perception from miracle workers to miracle receivers. Many Course students believe that you just heal your own mind, and then everyone else is healed automatically without you doing anything. This does indeed happen when we are in the state of miracle-mindedness. But this material shows that simply letting healing emanate from your mind automatically is not enough; a clear distinction is made “between ‘miracle-mindedness’ as a *state*, and ‘miracle-doing’ as its expression.” Miracle-mindedness as a state is meant to be expressed as miracle-doing directed by Jesus. As he says in a passage I quoted earlier, “The real members of *my* party are *active* workers.”

Doing this job sets in motion a chain of miracles, a very strong chain of Atonement

Once we extend a miracle to someone under Jesus’ direction, our job in that instance is done. But the miracle’s job has only just begun; like the Energizer bunny, it keeps going and going and going. “A miracle is never lost. It touches many people you may not even know” (Urtext version of T-1.I.45:1-2). As Jesus says later:

Christ-controlled miracles are selective only in that they are directed toward those who can use them for *themselves*. Since this makes it inevitable that they will extend them to others, a very strong chain of Atonement is welded. (Urtext version of T-1.III.9:1-2)

This is another reason Jesus should be in charge of our miracle working. He is in charge of the whole plan, so he knows who is ready for a miracle. He knows which people are ready to “pay it forward” (to quote a recent movie) by passing the miracle on to others. He knows all the links in the chain. Or, to use another metaphor, he knows which domino to push in order to start the chain reaction that will cause all of them to fall. Working that one miracle for Joe or Sue thus has far greater effects than we will ever know. Our action locally has huge effects globally.

The power of this job is potentially limitless; we can literally heal the sick, raise the dead, and move mountains

Right now, we may feel like junior trainees starting in the miracle working mailroom, without much power to have any significant effect on things. But Jesus assures us that our potential power as miracle workers is literally limitless. Again and again, he reminds us of just how powerful our minds really are and just what an unfettered miracle drive can really do:

The mind is a very powerful creator, and it never loses its creative force. (Urtext version of T-2.VI.9:5)

It is hard to recognize that thought and belief combine into a power surge that can literally move mountains. (T-2.VI.9:8)

Miracles enable you to heal the sick and raise the dead because you made sickness and death yourself, and can therefore abolish both. (T-1.I.24:1)

You can do *anything* I ask. I have asked you to perform miracles, and have made it *very* clear that these are *natural, corrective, healing, and universal*. There is nothing good they cannot do. (Urtext version of T-2.II.1:1-3)

Elsewhere, Jesus speaks of conditions that must be met “before it is safe to let miracle workers loose in this world.” I get this image of Spider-Man’s Uncle Ben gravely telling him, “With great power comes great responsibility.” Someday we will

unleash so much miracle-working power that we'll need to consult with Jesus constantly to make sure this mighty force is channeled properly. Of course, most of don't feel quite that powerful right now. I find myself saying to Jesus with a laugh, "Don't worry. I think it's safe to let me loose." Even so, I am filled with awe when I contemplate how much power Jesus says we all truly have at our disposal.

Please clock in

As I mentioned at the beginning, contemplating this job brings me a mix of uneasiness and excitement. On the one hand, the idea of being a miracle worker on the clock 24/7 sounds like quite a heavy load—my ego tells me Jesus is running a sweatshop that should be shut down immediately. But on the other hand, the idea of dedicating myself heart and soul to the holy purpose of saving the world sounds like such a beautiful vocation. There is a real yearning in me to do this. I sense deep down that nothing else will really make me happy; to paraphrase an earlier quote, my soul cannot rest until everyone has found salvation.

In light of this, I'm trying to do what I can to get this miracle worker job going. I'm trying to see my entire day as an opportunity to roll up my sleeves and work some miracles. (Ironically, just as I was writing this, I got a phone call from a friend who needed help.) I'm beginning each day with the prayer "Help me to perform whatever miracles you want of me today." I'm reminding myself as I go through my daily rounds that my real goal is not to check everything off my personal "to do" list, but to hold myself ready in miracle-mindedness so Jesus can send miracles through me to others. I'm trying to model my life on his, since he is the ultimate miracle worker and my teacher. As I read the Course, I'm trying to read everything in light of this question: How can what I'm reading help me become a more effective miracle worker? I'm even trying to give my mind to the Holy Spirit as I go to sleep, so miracle-mindedness can flow from me while my body rests. The results so far have been promising. While I'm still very much a beginner at this, I can honestly say that I'm experiencing more peace, a deeper sense of purpose, and greater effectiveness in being truly helpful to others.

Jesus has asked us to perform miracles. He has assured us that we can do anything he asks, once we have the proper training. He has promised us limitless benefits. Why not do what he asks? Why not take this course for miracle workers and get vocational training for a job we'll love like no other? Please clock in!



E-mail your comments to the author at: greg@circleofa.org

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The Doorway to Reality

by Allen Watson

This article is a commentary on the first two paragraphs of T-29.IV, "Dream Roles." All references are from that section unless otherwise indicated.

Paragraph 1

When Jesus asks us, "Do you believe that truth can be but some illusions?" (1:1), he is really asking us to consider how we desire to hold on to certain of our dreams and make them come true. We do this constantly, and quite unconsciously, with all kinds of things in this world, but most especially with our special relationships.

Perhaps we have arrived at the point where we can see that most of this world is illusory. Perhaps we have understood that the "sins" we imagined we saw in our brothers and sisters are actually the projection of our own minds. And yet we still hold on to certain of our illusions, illusions we think of as "positive" ones. Whether we realize it or not, all of us have searched—and most of us are still searching—for something in this world, something we believe we need, something that will complete us and make us happy. As it says quite clearly in section VII of this chapter, "Seek Not Outside Yourself," the very fact that we are here in this world proves that we do seek for something outside ourselves. Seeking is why we came here:

No one who comes here but must still have hope, some lingering illusion, or some dream that there is something outside of himself that will bring happiness and peace to him. If everything is in him this cannot be so. And

therefore by his coming, he denies the truth about himself, and seeks for something more than everything, as if a part of it were separated off and found where all the rest of it is not. This is the purpose he bestows upon the body; that it seek for what he lacks, and give him what would make himself complete. (T-29.VII.2:1-4)

When we are engaged in the search to make our dreams come true, looking for something outside ourselves that will really complete us, we inevitably end up projecting our expectations onto the people we relate to. This is the topic of discussion in this section, “Dream Roles.” We are not talking about projecting *guilt* here, at least not initially. We are talking about projecting onto other people a certain role we expect them to play in our lives, a role we think we need to make us happy. “If you will do X or become Y, then I can be happy.” The roles we assign to people in our dreams prevent us from seeing them as they really are.

Illusions are dreams for the very reason that “they are not true” (1:2). You cannot make dreams come true. Being false is what makes them dreams.

Their equal lack of truth becomes the basis for the miracle, which means that you have understood that dreams are dreams, and that escape depends, not on the dream, but only on awaking. Could it be that some dreams are kept, and others wakened from? The choice is not between which dreams to keep, but only if you want to live in dreams or to awaken from them. (1:3-5)

“Dreams are dreams”: That’s the lesson. We can’t hold on to some dreams and let the others go; the choice isn’t between good and bad dreams, the choice is between dreaming and waking up. If we want to wake up, we have to be prepared to let go of what we think of as “positive” dreams as well as the frightening ones. We can’t be delivered from our pain while still holding on to our earthly pleasures. Speaking of bodily pain and pleasure, the Course teaches that “It is impossible to seek for pleasure through the body and not find pain” (T-19.IV(B).12:1). “While you believe that it can give you pleasure, you will also believe that it can bring you pain” (T-19.IV(A).17:11). Pain and pleasure are equally unreal. Both serve a single purpose: to make the illusion of the body seem real (T-27.VI.1:4, 7).

What is true of the body can be applied to everything in this world. We made the entire world to lend reality to the illusion of separation. It is a mistake to think that the world’s pleasures are any more real or more desirable than the world’s pains:

There is a tendency to think the world can offer consolation and escape from problems that its purpose is to keep. Why should this be? Because it is a place where choice among illusions seems to be the only choice. (T-31.IV.1:1-3)

When we believe that something in this world offers us consolation and hope, we are mistaken. We have been deceived into thinking there is a choice between illusions, and that one illusion is better than another. The Course advises us:

Learn now, without despair, there is no hope of answer in the world. But do not judge the lesson that is but begun with this. Seek not another signpost in the world that seems to point to still another road. No longer look for hope where there is none. (T-31.IV.4:3-6)

“Dreams are dreams.” What we are being asked to learn is a very, very hard lesson. We are being asked to give up our dreams, to give up all hope of finding consolation and hope in this world. We are being asked to give up, not just our illusions of despair, but our illusions of hope as well. The choice isn’t between which illusions we want to keep. The choice is, “Do I want to go on dreaming, or wake up?”

Thus it is the miracle does not select some dreams to leave untouched by its beneficence. You cannot dream some dreams and wake from some, for you are either sleeping or awake. And dreaming goes with only one of these. (1:6-8)

This course attempts to teach no more than that the power of decision cannot lie in choosing different forms of what is still the same illusion and the same mistake. (T-31.IV.8:3)

You can’t select which of your dreams you want the miracle to heal, and which you want to keep. You have to give up your dreams of pleasure if you want to be rid of your dreams of pain. You can’t wake from some dreams and go on dreaming others; you are either asleep or awake.

What are we talking about here? What are the dreams we would like the miracle to leave untouched? I can tell you what one was for me, and perhaps that will help you see the dreams you are still holding on to. There was a point in my life when I was in a wonderful relationship with a woman I loved. We were not married, and she kept saying she didn’t think we were supposed to marry. I know now that she was right, but then I wanted to get married, very much. I felt that being married to

her would make me supremely happy. One day, the Holy Spirit confronted me with that awful question: “Do you prefer that you be right or happy?” Did you ever realize that question comes in the context of a discussion, not about getting the better of an argument, but about seeking for happiness outside yourself?

Seek not outside yourself. For all your pain comes simply from a futile search for what you want, insisting where it must be found. What if it is not there? Do you prefer that you be right or happy? (T-29.VII.1:6–9)

I was vainly searching for my happiness in that relationship, insisting that my happiness must lie in having the relationship in the form I wanted: marriage. And Jesus said to me, “What if it is not there? Do you prefer that you be right or happy?”

And I found myself saying, very clearly, “I want to be *right*.” I did not want him to let the miracle apply to that particular dream. I did not want to give up my hope of marrying her. It took me years to give it up. I went through untold pain, and why? Because I insisted that I *knew* what would make me happy, because I cast that woman in a certain role in my life, and she didn’t want to play the role. I didn’t want to let go of my decision about the role she was supposed to play in my happiness. I learned the hard way that if you hold on to your dreams of pleasure, you buy pain as part of the package.

Paragraph 2

The dreams you think you like would hold you back as much as those in which the fear is seen. For every dream is but a dream of fear, no matter what the form it seems to take. (2:1-2)

We’re talking about the dreams we think we like. My example was of a dream that was never fulfilled, but since the Course views all our experience in this world as a dream, this obviously must include dreams that are fulfilled as well. Suppose my friend had honored my desire to marry, and that we had married. And that it seemed to work. That fulfilled dream, Jesus is saying, would have held me back just as much as another version of the dream, one in which, perhaps, I was filled with fear over losing her because she had an affair.

Take another example. Suppose you are seriously sick, so that you experience fear about what will happen to you. That is only a dream. But so is perfect bodily health—only a dream. “[God’s teachers] recognize that to behold a dream figure as sick and separate is no more real than to regard it as healthy and beautiful” (M-12.6:9). Both are dreams. Both can hold you back in spiritual growth. Neither one is what you are looking for. It does not matter whether you dream of a need that is not fulfilled, or of a need that is fulfilled. Both are dreams that you have a need—that you lack something—and *that* is what will hurt you. It fosters the belief that you need *something* in this world.

Each thing you value here is but a chain that binds you to the world, and it will serve no other end but this. (W-pI.128.2:1)

When you strive for anything in this world in the belief that it will bring you peace, you are belittling yourself and blinding yourself to glory. (T-15.III.1:6)

We may wish that the Course did not discomfort us by pointing out the rottenness at the core of our dreams. Jesus seems to be raining on our parade, doesn’t he? He is telling us that it makes no difference whether the dream is something you don’t like or something you like. All dreams are made of fear, and nothing but fear (2:5-6; 3:3). Hold on to a dream and you hold on to your fear. Fear is the ego’s purpose, whatever the form the dream takes.

It seems like a cruel message. Yet in reality the message is a kind one. What sort of friend would Jesus be if he let us continue to believe in our dreams when he knows they are all rotten at the core?

The miracle were treacherous indeed if it allowed you still to be afraid because you did not recognize the fear. You would not then be willing to awake, for which the miracle prepares the way. (2:7-8)

A miracle prepares the way for waking. A miracle *disillusions* us. It shows us that what we believed in was just an illusion. When what you believe in isn’t real, being disillusioned is a *good thing*. If the miracle addressed only our painful dreams it would be treacherous. It would be allowing us to remain in fear simply because we did not recognize the fear in its disguised form, as a dream we think we like. We would not be *willing* to abandon our dream and wake up. Letting go of our dreams is how we escape from fear, pain, and death. As it says in 1:3, “you have understood that dreams are dreams, and that escape depends, not on the dream, but only on awaking.” To recognize that *all* dreams are just dreams is the doorway to awakening to reality.



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Thine Is the Kingdom

An Excerpt from Reading and Commentary for T-5.VI, “Time and Eternity”

by Robert Perry

The following is an excerpt from a Text reading and commentary that was created as part of our 2006 Text study program. The numbered material is the Text passage being commented on. The material in this color (dark red) is from the Urtext, Bill's original typescript of the Course. The material in this color (blue) is my commentary.

T-5.VI.3. ¹Remember the Kingdom always, and remember that you who are part of the Kingdom cannot be lost. ²The Mind that was in me *is* in you, for God creates with perfect fairness. ³Let the Holy Spirit remind you always of His fairness, and let me teach you how to share it with your brothers. ⁴How else can the chance to claim it for yourself be given you? ⁵[Ur: What you do not understand is that] The two voices speak for different interpretations of the same thing simultaneously; or almost simultaneously, for the ego always speaks first. ⁶Alternate interpretations were unnecessary until the first one was [Ur: has been] made [Ur: and speaking itself was unnecessary before the ego was made].

3:1-4. These lines are urging us to not fall asleep on the way to the Kingdom. Remember the goal always. Remember that we belong in the Kingdom and can never be lost to it. We will make it. After all, Jesus made it, and we have the same Mind in us (the Holy Spirit) that brought him to the end of the race. This is a race, however, in which we have to bring our brothers with us, rather than making them eat our dust. We need to tell them all that the Holy Spirit is in them, for that will strengthen His presence in us, and His Presence is the power that draws us to the end.

3:5-6. The line “the ego always speaks first” (3:5) is usually taken to mean that when you ask for guidance, the ego will be the first voice you hear. What it actually means is that when you interpret anything, the ego will interpret it first, and then the Holy Spirit will reinterpret it, correcting the ego's interpretation. We'll see how this works in detail in the following paragraphs.

T-5.VI.4. ¹The ego speaks in judgment, and the Holy Spirit reverses its decision [Ur: decisions], much as a higher court [Ur: the Supreme court] has the power to reverse a lower court's decisions in [Ur: about the laws of] this world. ²The ego's decisions are always wrong, because they are based on the error [Ur: on a complete fallacy which] they were made to uphold. ³Nothing the ego perceives is interpreted correctly. ⁴Not only does the ego cite Scripture for its purpose, but it even interprets Scripture as a witness for itself. ⁵The Bible is a fearful thing in the ego's judgment [Ur: to the ego]. ⁶Perceiving it as frightening, it interprets it fearfully. ⁷Being afraid [Ur: Having made you afraid], you do not appeal to the Higher Court because you believe its judgment would also be against you.

This paragraph continues the theme of the ego speaking first. What it means is that the ego immediately renders its judgments on things, judgments that are always designed to uphold the ego and fuel its fear. It judges people. It judges situation. It judges the Bible. It even judges you.

The court metaphor here is really a great one. Our job is to not rest with the ego's verdict, for this judge is always wrong. We must appeal the verdict. If we do, our case will be immediately heard by the Supreme Court (the Holy Spirit), and this court will always overturn the lower court's (the ego's) verdict. Our problem is that we don't appeal the ego's decisions. The lower court judge has been telling us lies about the Supreme Court and has convinced us that its decision will be against us.

T-5.VI.5. ¹There are many examples of [Ur: We need site {sic} only a few examples to see] how the ego's interpretations are misleading [Ur: have misled you. A favorite ego quotation is “As ye sow, so shall ye reap.” Another is “Vengeance is mine sayeth the Lord.” Still another is “I will visit the sins of the fathers unto the third and the fourth generation.” And also, “The wicked shall perish.” There are many others, but if you will let the Holy Spirit reinterpret these in its own light, they will suffice.], but a few will suffice to show how the Holy Spirit can reinterpret them in His Own Light.

Now Jesus is going to show us the principles he has been talking about in action. He's going to show us how the ego speaks first and how the Holy Spirit reverses its verdict in the specific case of Bible interpretation.

T-5.VI.6. ¹“As ye sow, so shall ye reap” He interprets to mean what you consider worth cultivating you will cultivate in yourself. ²Your judgment of what is worthy makes [Ur: does make] it worthy for you.

“As ye sow, so shall ye reap” is a farming metaphor that is normally interpreted to mean that if you sow sin, you will reap punishment. If you sow seeds of evil in the world, guess what harvest you’ll end up reaping? That’s not how the Holy Spirit sees it, however. He sees it as a *psychological* principle about farming in your mind. It says that whatever you consider worth cultivating in the field of your mind, you will. If you sow thoughts of the ego there, you will reap its painful effects. If you sow thoughts of the Holy Spirit, you will reap His joyous effects. Thus, rather than being about God paying you back, this verse is about *you* deciding what crop you want to plant in the field of your mind.

T-5.VI.7. ¹“Vengeance is mine, sayeth the Lord” is easily reinterpreted [Ur: explained] if you remember that ideas increase only by being shared. ²The statement emphasizes that vengeance cannot be shared. ³Give it therefore to the Holy Spirit, Who will undo it in you because it does not belong in your mind, which is part of God.

“Vengeance is Mine” is usually understood to mean that we shouldn’t take vengeance into our own hands, but rather leave it to God. The Holy Spirit, of course, agrees with the first part, but takes the second part one step further: Don’t leave the act of vengeance to God to carry out for you; rather, give the *idea* of vengeance “to the Holy Spirit, Who will undo it in you” (7:3). Vengeance is one of those ideas that can’t be shared. Who will share with you the notion “You deserve my wrath”? If it could be shared, God would share it with us. But because it can’t, He says “It is Mine alone,” and asks us to give it to Him to be cleansed from our holy minds.

T-5.VI.8. ¹“I will visit the sins of the fathers unto the third and fourth generation,” as interpreted by the ego, is particularly vicious. ²It becomes merely an attempt to guarantee the ego’s own survival [Ur: beyond itself]. ³To the Holy Spirit, the statement means that in later generations He can still reinterpret what former generations had misunderstood, and thus release the thoughts from the ability to produce fear [Ur: Actually, all it really means is that the Holy Spirit in later generations retains the power to interpret *correctly* what former generations have thought, and thus release *their* thoughts from the ability to produce fear *anywhere* in the Sonship].

The ego interprets this passage to mean that the sins of one lifetime keep calling down punishment in generation after generation, thus giving the ego that committed those sins a kind of perverse immortality (guaranteeing the ego’s own survival “beyond itself”). The Holy Spirit interprets this passage in almost the opposite way. Here, the sins are not so much evil deeds as *mistaken beliefs*. And instead of those sins calling down God’s punishment on future generations, they call down the Holy Spirit’s reinterpretation, which can release future generations from the fear-producing effects of those sins.

T-5.VI.9. ¹“The wicked shall perish” becomes a statement of Atonement [Ur: is merely a statement of fact], if the word “perish” is [Ur: properly understood.] understood as “be undone.” ²Every loveless thought must be undone, a word the ego cannot even understand [the latter half of the sentence was composed by the editors]. ³To the ego, to be undone means to be destroyed [Ur: Even the word “undone” is fearful to the ego, which interprets “I am undone” as “I am destroyed.”]. ⁴The ego will not be destroyed because it is part of your thought, but because it is uncreative and therefore unsharing, it will be reinterpreted [Ur: entirely] to release you from fear. ⁵The part of your mind that you have given to the ego will merely return to the Kingdom, where your whole mind belongs. [Ur: The ego is a form of *arrest*, but *arrest* is merely *delay*. It does *not* involve the concept of *police* at all, although the ego welcomes that interpretation.] ⁶You can delay the completion of the Kingdom, but you cannot introduce the concept of fear [Ur: *assault*] into it.

Rather than “God shall destroy wicked souls,” Jesus interprets this verse to mean, “The Holy Spirit will undo your wicked thoughts, particularly your wicked ego.” The ego sees being undone as being destroyed, but in fact it will not be destroyed, but merely “reinterpreted entirely.” This will free your mind to return to the Kingdom and resume its function of creating. The ego has arrested your mind, held it back from the Kingdom. The ego, as usual, sees this as your mind being under arrest for breaking God’s law. But that is not how the Kingdom works.

We have now looked at all four examples of how the ego interprets certain biblical passages and how the Holy Spirit reinterprets them. Now we can see exactly what the Course means by “the ego always speaks first.” The ego jumped in and interpreted every single passage fearfully. And in each case it saw the fear coming from the same source: God’s punishment for our sins. The ego’s judgment of things in the world is, at heart, a hidden judgment of *us*. It sees us as surrounded by danger as an implicit statement that we deserve danger, given how sinful we are.

In each case, the Holy Spirit then reinterpreted the biblical passage as being about what we might call “mental house-cleaning,” about the importance of what we let into our minds, and about the Holy Spirit’s ability to release us from what we *shouldn’t* have let into our minds. Rather than punishing us for our misdeeds, the Divine is pictured as *releasing* us from our *misthoughts*. What a difference!

All of this is not to say that the Holy Spirit’s interpretation is what the biblical writers really intended. I think what they meant was closer to the ego’s interpretation. But that doesn’t matter. Whatever the original intent of a symbol was, the Holy Spirit can see it as a container of His truth.

10. ¹You need not fear the Higher Court will condemn you [Ur: **The Higher Court will not condemn you.**]. ²It will merely dismiss the case against you. ³There can be no case against a child of God, and every witness to guilt in God’s creations is bearing false witness to God Himself. ⁴Appeal everything you believe gladly to God’s Own Higher Court, because it speaks for Him and therefore speaks truly. ⁵It will dismiss the case against you, however carefully you have built it up. ⁶The case may be fool-proof, but it is not God-proof. ⁷The Holy Spirit [Ur: **The voice for God**] will not hear it [Ur: **at all**], because He can only witness truly. ⁸His verdict will always be “thine is the Kingdom,” because He was given to you to remind you of what you are.

Now we see the real heart of the Holy Spirit’s reinterpretation. The Holy Spirit is here to reverse the ego’s judgment of you. He is here to reinterpret *you*.

Application: Picture yourself being led, with feet and hands in shackles, into a courtroom, God’s Own Higher Court. As you are seated, you remember that you have already been convicted by a lower court of crimes against humanity and God. You, however, have appealed this conviction to God’s Higher Court. This is your appeal.

In front of you stands the prosecuting attorney, the lawyer in the case against you. To your astonishment, the lawyer looks exactly like you. You realize that the lawyer is you, in a sense—the false you. It is your ego, the part of your mind that is bent on tossing you in jail and throwing away the key.

In his/her hands, the lawyer holds the case against you. He approaches the bench. Behind the bench is the judge, but the judge is simply a large radiant light. You realize that this is the Holy Spirit appearing in a form you can understand. You might see the form of Jesus in this light.

The prosecuting attorney—your ego—begins his/her case, holding the case against you in the air, declaring it fool-proof, and placing it in front of the Judge.

Out of the radiant light that is the judge, you hear a voice. Hear it sounding however you think God’s Voice would sound. He speaks directly to you:

“This case may be fool-proof, but it is not God-proof.
Every witness to your guilt is bearing false witness against Me.
Although you have built this case up very carefully, I will not hear it.
I am dismissing the case against you.
My verdict is:

“THINE IS THE KINGDOM.”

You hear Him say, “This court is adjourned.” The case against you vanishes, as you hear a single pounding of the gavel.



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CIRCLE NEWS

MITZI'S FAREWELL PARTY

On Saturday, January 28, we had a wonderful farewell party for Mitzi Condit, who recently retired from the Circle after years of working in our office. The party was a potluck attended by about twenty-five people. Robert gave Mitzi a farewell gift from the Circle. It was a beautiful crystal sculpture (pictured here with her) engraved with words from the Course that express how all of us feel about her: "I thank the Father for your loveliness" (T-13.X.13:6). Robert gave a moving speech at the presentation—there wasn't a dry eye in the house. Thank you, Mitzi, for your gracious presence and dedicated service to the Circle.



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WELCOME TO LINDA TRAMMELL



We are blessed with a new addition to our office staff, Linda Trammell. She has been studying the Course since 1990, and came to Sedona three years ago. For her, the beauty of the Course is that it "makes your relationships work" by bringing them into an honest, caring place. She has enjoyed her job at the Circle so far, especially the variety of tasks—"a little bit of everything"—and the opportunity to connect with all the Course students who call our office from all over the world. When she's not working, Linda enjoys mountain biking, hiking, and dancing. In her short time in the office, we've come to greatly appreciate her warmth, her dedication, and her laughter. Welcome aboard, Linda!

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ACIM CONFERENCE 2007: "AN OPPORTUNITY TO GLADDEN YOURSELF"

The Community Miracles Center in San Francisco will join nine co-sponsoring organizations to host an ACIM conference on February 23-25, 2007. The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Golden Gateway in San Francisco, and will feature a number of presenters, including Robert Perry, Rev. Tony Ponticello, Jon Mundy, and many more. For more information, go to the page for this event on the Community Miracles Center website (www.miracles-course.org/Miracles5_2007.html). You can also call for information: 415-621-2556 or toll-free 1-888-621-2556.

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INTERACTIVE FORUM AREA OPENS FOR CIRCLE MEMBERS

We are pleased to announce the launch of our interactive forum area for members of the Circle's "Friends" program. This forum area is one of the new benefits we are making available to our members. It allows members to post questions, messages, inspirations, and stories they wish to share with the Circle staff and with each other, and to respond to messages posted there by others. We hope this will help foster a strong sense of community for us all.

There are areas for the discussion of Course interpretation, the application of the Course to current events, sharing personal stories of our journey with the Course, comparison of the Course with other spiritual paths or philosophies, and so on. If you are a member, you have received a message with your username and password, so log in soon and start taking part.

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BECOME A MEMBER

Our "Friends" membership program offers many benefits, including participation in the above interactive forums; a 20% discount on books, audio products, and events; and a free guided meditation CD by Robert Perry entitled *Meditations for Resting in God*. More information about signing up for this program is available on our website at the following URL: www.circleofa.org/membership.html.