



CIRCLE OF ATONEMENT

Dedicated to *A Course in Miracles*

What is God's Role in the Trials and Tragedies of the World (Part 2) ACIM Radio #9 Episode Guide

This conversation is a follow-up to [ACIM Radio #6](#). Based on the feedback received from that interview, there was some confusion around two seemingly conflicting ideas addressed:

1. How can we choose everything that happens to us, *and*
2. How can everything that happens be part of God's larger plan at the same time?

In this podcast, Circle founder Robert Perry and executive director Emily Bennington go deeper into this issue and much more on the topic of God's role in our lives.

You're invited to listen or watch by visiting www.circleofa.org/9 and follow along using the guide below.

1. The Course emphatically says everything that happens is what we chose. This is our dream, being dreamt from unconscious dynamics in our own minds, which is why circumstances can be so difficult.

Say only this, but mean it with no reservations, for here the power of salvation lies:

*I am responsible for what I see.
I chose the feelings I experience,
And I decided on the goal I would achieve.
And everything that seems to happen to me I asked for and received as I had asked.*

Deceive yourself no longer that you are helpless in the face of what is done to you. (T-21.II.2:2-6)

No one can grieve nor fear nor think him sick unless these are the outcomes that he wants. And no one dies without his own consent. Nothing occurs but represents your wish, and nothing is omitted that you choose. (W-152.1:3-5)

2. However, the Course *also* emphatically says that everything that happens is planned by the Holy Spirit for “your good.”

What could you not accept if you but knew that everything that happens, all events past, present, and to come, are gently planned by One Whose only purpose is your good? (W-135.19:1)

Changes are required in the *minds* of God’s teachers. This may or may not involve changes in the external situation. Remember that no one is where he is by accident, and chance plays no part in God’s plan. (M-9.1:1-3)

No one is sent by accident to anyone. Relationships are always purposeful. (P-3.III.6:2-3)

3. So the Course says both. The events of our lives are said to be caused by our (mostly mistaken) choices *and* planned by the Holy Spirit. How can both accounts be true at the same time? The Course doesn’t directly address that question, but does provide instructive examples.

- a.) In 1966, the Medical Center asked Bill to attend a conference on “Basic Principles of Rehabilitation as These Relate to the Teaching of Undergraduate Medical Students.” Bill did not want to go, but Jesus said, “I arranged for Bill to attend the Rehabilitation meeting for very good reasons, and I want him to know them so we can share our goal there.”

Jesus says that the reason Bill was “chosen to go” is that his ego fears broken bodies and weakened egos, “because it is afraid of its own weakness and the weakness of its chosen home.” He needed to see this reaction and replace it with an extension of egoless helpfulness, which would then help him. If he learned to wholeheartedly offer rehabilitation to others, he would find rehabilitation himself.

- b.) In the Manual for Teachers, Jesus says the world “is governed by a Power That is in [the teachers of God] but not of them” (M-4.I.1:5) and that as a result, “all things, events, encounters, and circumstances are helpful” (M-4.I.4:5). It then says that God’s teachers go through a period of undoing, in which “It seems as if things are being taken away” in order to put the teacher “in a position where he must” perceive “their lack of value” (quotes from M-4.I.3:3-4).

First, they must go through what might be called a “period of undoing.” This need not be painful, but it usually is so experienced. It seems as if things are being taken away, and it is rarely understood initially that their lack of value is merely being recognized. How can lack of value be perceived unless the perceiver is in a position where he must see things in a different light? He is not yet at a point at which he can make the shift entirely internally. And so the plan will sometimes call for changes in what seem to be external circumstances. These changes are always helpful. When the teacher of God has learned that much, he goes on to the second stage. (M-4.I.3:1-8)

4. In both of these examples, someone has fallen into a mistaken mindset that brings him suffering. A situation is thus designed that will lead him to face that mindset. He does not like this situation (the mindset being challenged reacts against it), but in fact it is designed *only* to help him. If he can accept its helpfulness, he will see that his own thinking has been the problem and will then make a new choice that will free him.

5. The Manual says that “the plan includes very specific contacts to be made for each teacher of God” (M-3.1:5). The plan brings them together because there is a potential for something holy to happen between them (M-3.1:7). And when that potential is gone (for now), the plan calls for them to separate (M-3.4:4).

There is no one from whom a teacher of God cannot learn, so there is no one whom he cannot teach. However, from a practical point of view, he cannot meet everyone, nor can everyone find him. Therefore, the plan includes very specific contacts to be made for each teacher of God. There are no accidents in salvation. Those who are to meet will meet, because together they have the potential for a holy relationship. They are ready for each other. (M-3.1:3-8)

The second level of teaching is a more sustained relationship, in which for a time two people enter into a fairly intense teaching-learning situation, and then appear to separate. As with the first level, these meetings are not accidental, nor is what appears to be the end of the relationship. Again, each has learned the most he can at the time. Yet all who meet will someday meet again, for it is the destiny of all relationships to become holy. (M-3.4:3-6)

6. All in all, we should think of the pain we experience as coming from the lessons we are trying to teach ourselves with our circumstances. And we should think of the lessons the Holy Spirit is trying to teach us as containing only release for us. For they come from God, who would not have us suffer, but “would have all tears be wiped away” (W-193.11:4).