

awaits me in Your plan.

Today let a song of thankfulness rise up within me. Increase my awareness that I am joining an eternal song, sung by every part of Your creation. Let me, as the psalmist said, “Sing unto the Lord a new song.” Let me recognize the rejoicing that is life itself, given by God, as all the world joins with us in the song.

There is no room in us for fear today, for we have welcomed love into our hearts. (2:4)

## What Is the Second Coming?

### **Part 10: W-pII.9.5:5–6**

The third thing we can do in the light of what the Second Coming is, is to become part of the Atonement ourselves, having received it.

Let us rejoice that we can do God’s Will, and join together in its holy light. Behold, the Son of God is one in us, and we can reach our Father’s Love through Him. (5:5–6)

God’s Will is Love. God’s Will for us is perfect happiness. God’s Will is never-ending extension of the radiance of His Being. We can “do” that because He created us to *be* that. We can reach our Father’s Love *through* His Son. It is our choice to join together in that oneness of the Son that is the fulfillment of God’s Will. Here, in our relationships within time, we are beginning the process that culminates in the Second Coming, the restoration of the single Identity of Christ. As we join in common purpose, to forgive and to be forgiven, to love and to be loved, we shorten the time until the Sonship is fully one in expression. As we give our relationships to the Holy Spirit, to be used only for His purpose, to be transformed into holy relationships through forgiveness, we are joining together in the fulfillment of God’s Will.

It is through one another that we reach God’s Love. It is in one another that we find God. “The whole reality of your relationship with Him lies in our relationship to one another” (T-17.IV.16:7).

## LESSON 310 • November 6

**“In fearlessness and love I spend today.”**

### Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** Today’s prayer is another of my absolute favorites. We all have a longing for a day that is not of this world, a day spent in quiet communion with God. This prayer captures and kindles that desire. It can be the springboard for a different kind of day. I recommend praying it repeatedly today. You may want to sit down every hour and go through it yet again. To pray these Workbook prayers, I find it helpful to lay out each sentence or phrase on a separate line, as I have done below. And then I will read a line, fix it in my mind, close my eyes, and say it to God with as much sincerity as I can, and then open my eyes and repeat this procedure with the next line.

*This day, my Father, would I spend with You,  
As You have chosen all my days should be.  
And what I will experience is not of time at all.  
The joy that comes to me is not of days nor hours,  
for it comes from Heaven to Your Son.  
This day will be Your sweet reminder to remember You,  
Your gracious calling to Your holy Son,  
the sign Your grace has come to me,  
and that it is Your Will I be set free today.*

### Commentary

All my days are meant to be spent with You, Father, in fearlessness and love (1:1). All of them. I seldom spend my day this way, but today, Father, I would do so. I open my heart to give this day to You. Let it be so, as You will. Let me know the joy that comes from Heaven, not from time (1:2–3). Let the interfering voice in my mind be still, and let me hear Heaven’s music (2:2). I ask not for ecstatic visions that transport me out of this world forever, but I do ask that today be something new, something higher, a foretaste of what is in store for me at the end of time.

Let this day be “Your sweet reminder to remember You” (1:4). Gift me with Your grace, Father. Let me experience something that will serve as a continuing reminder to turn my mind to You again and again.

Let this day be “Your gracious calling to Your holy Son” (1:4). Open my ears, and teach me to listen. Let me hear Your calling today. Let me feel the drawing power of Your eternal Love.

Let this day be “the sign Your grace has come to me, and that it is Your Will I be set free today” (1:4). May there be a fresh and poignant awareness of Your working in my life, Your touch upon me. May I see signs that my freedom is Your Will. May I find renewed confidence in the certainty of the outcome that

voice to speak the words of healing, of forgiveness, and of release. Most of all, let us give our willingness to join in the great crusade to correct the mad error of sin and guilt wherever we encounter it.

In other words, we are those who will bring Him back. He has never left, in reality; the return is a return to our consciousness, the return of the memory of our Identity. The work I do on myself is the most potent way to invite the Second Coming. The way in which I affirm my brothers' identity with me and with the Christ, through forgiveness, through true perception, is how the Second Coming comes.

Each of us has a vital part in this. "My part is essential to God's plan for salvation" (W-pI.100.Heading). The little shift that occurs in your mind as you practice the Course each day, the seemingly insignificant change of mind that lets you forgive the person who cuts you off in traffic or the friend or relative who acts unlovingly, each little act of kindness, each moment in which you choose to see a call for love rather than an attack, is contributing to the awakening of this Great Mind, the One Being that we are. It is not just *you* that is awakening, it is *the Christ*. He *is* coming again. He is coming again *in you*.

And as you let yourself be healed, you see all those around you, or who cross your mind, or whom you touch or those who seem to have no contact with you, healed along with you. Perhaps you will not recognize them all, nor realize how great your offering to all the world, when you let healing come to you. But you are never healed alone. And legions upon legions will receive the gift that you receive when you are healed. (W-pI.137.10:1-4)

Each time you practice, awareness is brought a little nearer at least; sometimes a thousand years or more are saved....

The Holy Spirit will be glad to take five minutes of each hour from your hands, and carry them around this aching world where pain and misery appear to rule. He will not overlook one open mind that will accept the healing gifts they bring, and He will lay them everywhere He knows they will be welcome. And they will increase in healing power each time someone accepts them as his thoughts, and uses them to heal.

Thus will each gift to Him be multiplied a thousandfold and tens of thousands more. And when it is returned to you, it will surpass in might the little gift you gave as much as does the radiance of the sun outshine the tiny gleam a firefly makes an uncertain moment and goes out. The steady brilliance of this light remains and leads you out of darkness, nor will you be able to forget the way again. (W-pI.97.3:2; 5:1-6:3)

That is what is happening today. Down through the centuries a few people have remembered. Their light has shone, and apparently, in many cases, gone out. But it has never really gone out. Each flash of light impacted every mind in the world, shifted it that little bit closer to truth, until today, in our lifetimes, we can see the beginnings of a "steady brilliance," a light that is too bright to ever again become obscured. We are seeing the snowball effect of enlightenment. The snowball has become far too big to be ignored. Victor Hugo said, "Nothing is so powerful as an idea whose time has come," and the time for this idea has come. It is here, and we are part of it.

do look within, often the first things I will see are these ugly, grungy things— “another will that is not true.” I will see them, but the good news is that they are not true. I did not succeed in making this other will real. All I succeeded in making were illusions. The ugliness is a smoke screen, a mask, a facade the ego has erected over the eternal innocence of my mind. If I will look at those thoughts with the Holy Spirit, I will find that they are not as terrible as I have feared. He will translate them into truth for me; He will help me see in them the call for love, the unconscious affirmation of the love which lies buried beneath them, the distorted reflection of the innocence I have never lost.

For instance, in the case I mentioned above, I was pushing my friend away, distancing myself from her. Why? Because I was afraid of losing her love. Because I felt terrified that she did not find me worthy of her time and company, and I was not going to give her the chance to prove my fears correct. I would withdraw before she could push me out. I would punish her for her (imagined) betrayal by taking myself away from her. I was mistaken, both in my own self-evaluation and in my assessment of her evaluation of me. And the Course was demonstrated to me so very clearly that night. She got angry at me. She got furious, and once got up to walk out of the restaurant, saying she would never want anything to do with me again because I was so massively in denial that she couldn't deal with it.

It wasn't until a miracle happened that the impasse was resolved. Suddenly my perception of her shifted. I saw her anger as what it actually was—a call for love. She was furious with me because I was withholding my love, and she was in pain over the thought of losing it. Her anger was no longer attack in my perception; it was a cry for help. It was her love for me, mistakenly trying to find what it wanted through anger and attack. And as I forgave her, I saw the same dynamic in myself. In that moment, I was no longer afraid to look within. I saw the twisted motives that had been running me. I saw my fear. I saw my icy distancing. And behind it all I discovered my love and my innocence, waiting to meet hers.

We need never fear to look within. All that is there is “my will as God created it, and as it is” (1:4). What I made, all those ugly ego thoughts, had no effects at all. There is no reason to fear them; they are meaningless. I can look at them, with the Holy Spirit beside me, and laugh; I can say, “How foolish! These thoughts do not mean anything.” Beneath that is the frightened mind, in pain over what it thinks it has done. And past that, far deeper, is the holiness of God, the memory of God. This beneficent mind, this kind and gentle mind, so spacious and open and magnanimous, so all-encompassing—this is my true Identity. This is Who I am.

## What Is the Second Coming?

### **Part 9: W-pII.9.5:1–4**

What are we to do about the Second Coming?

#### *1. Pray for it (5:1)*

Ask that it be soon. Desire it, yearn for it, be quietly impatient for its coming.

#### *2. Give ourselves to it wholly*

It needs your eyes and ears and hands and feet. It needs your voice. And most of all it needs your willingness. (5:2–4)

We are the means by which the Second Coming will happen. Let us give our eyes to see love everywhere, and give them no longer to find fault or to see guilt. Let us give our ears to hear only the Voice for God and to hear and answer every call for love around us. Let us give our hands to take the hands of those beside us and lead them home. Let us give our feet to go to those in need, and give our

## LESSON 309 • November 5

**“I will not fear to look within today.”**

### Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** The following exercise may help you apply the essence of today’s lesson.

First, get in touch with the part of you that feels you’re more or less always right, that you’re always justified, always doing your best, that the problem always lies in external forces putting too much pressure on you.

Then go the next level down. Try to get in touch with how much you mistrust your own will, how you wish it would naturally and consistently reach for the highest, the most loving, but how instead it often drags you down into the mud.

Now try to get in touch with how defiled you believe this wayward will of yours has made you. It has defined you in your eyes as a petty, self-centered, superficial, and ultimately self-destructive person. A medieval mystic spoke of the “foul, stinking lump” of self. Try to get in touch with that kind of self-loathing within you.

Then realize that all of the above is the voice of your ego, telling you who you are when it doesn’t even know. Accept that God’s Voice tells you otherwise. He tells you that you are His holy Son, forever and forever. Place your trust in His Voice, recognizing that He knows who you are even if you don’t. Let His view of you sink in. Let it draw you down to that deep place in your mind where God’s holiness dwells, and where His holiness is yours.

Spend the rest of the time in quiet meditation, abiding in that place of holiness, where you can look on yourself with love, not with fear.

### Commentary

I find that often I am very suspicious of my own motives. I am so aware that in the past I have done a masterful job of hiding my own thoughts and feelings from myself that even when I am not knowingly aware of anything being “off,” when my motives on the surface seem pure, I find myself wondering what lurks underneath the rock, and hesitating to look.

For example, I have, in the past, distanced myself from a close friend while convinced the whole time that she was distancing herself from me. It took three hours of intense argument—I can’t call it anything better than that—before I finally got in touch with my own fear and anger that was causing me to push her away. I denied vehemently that I was doing so; I claimed that I had been longing for more closeness and that she was not responding.

When you are conversant with the ego’s deceptions it seems hard to trust yourself. It always seems to me as if there might be something sneaky going on in my mind that somehow I have been hiding with denial and dissociation.

So, how can I not fear to look within? What ugly, grungy thing will I uncover this time, if I do?

“I fear to look within because I think I made another will that is not true, and made it real” (1:5). If I

## What Is the Second Coming?

### Part 8: W-pII.9.4:3-4

Everyone—past, present, and future—is “equally released from what he made” (4:2) in the Second Coming, which is “the willingness to let forgiveness rest upon all things without exception and without reserve” (1:3). The words “In this equality...” (4:3) refer to that equality of forgiveness, that equality of release from guilt and condemnation.

“In this equality is Christ restored as one Identity, in Which the Sons of God acknowledge that they all are one” (4:3). We may say we want oneness, but do we want the *means* for oneness? Forgiveness is the means that restores oneness. There is a section of the Text that talks about the fact that we pretend to want a certain goal, and yet we reject the means for reaching that goal. It says that if we hesitate over the means, it really proves we are afraid of the goal. We may say we want oneness, and yet hesitate to offer complete forgiveness; we may complain that total forgiveness is too difficult, too much to ask. The real problem, according to this passage, is that we are afraid of the oneness that forgiveness would bring:

To obtain the goal the Holy Spirit indeed asks little. He asks no more to give the means as well. The means are second to the goal. And when you hesitate, it is because the purpose frightens you, and not the means. Remember this, for otherwise you will make the error of believing the means are difficult. (T-20.VII.3:1-5)

Am I willing to acknowledge that I am one with “that person” in my life? If I have a problem with forgiveness it is not because forgiveness is too difficult; it is because I do not want the oneness it would bring.

Ask only, “Do I really wish to see him sinless?” And as you ask, forget not that his sinlessness is *your* escape from fear. (T-20.VII.9:2-3)

Each time I reach that willingness, the Second Coming grows closer.

“And God the Father smiles upon His Son, His one creation and His only joy” (4:4). When we are willing to see one another as sinless, and to recognize our oneness, God the Father once again sees His Son and smiles. We are His one creation and His only joy, and only as we lay down the barriers of “sin” and guilt, and forgive one another, is that oneness seen, and the Father’s joy expressed in and through us.

## LESSON 308 • November 4

**“This instant is the only time there is.”**

### Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

### Commentary

The Course’s way of looking at time goes counter to our normal way of thinking. Time is an illusion. It does not really flow from the past, through the present, to the future. All there is, is now. Past and future do not exist in reality, but only in our minds. One of the keys to reaching “past time to timelessness” (1:2) is in learning to experience now as the only time there is. This is one way of describing what the Course refers to as the “holy instant.” (The teaching underlying this short lesson can be found in reading “The Two Uses of Time” [T-15.I]. Read especially paragraphs 8 and 9 in regard to practicing the holy instant.)

“The only interval in which I can be saved from time is now” (1:4). Think about it. What other time have you ever experienced except now? You can’t be saved from time yesterday, and you never experience tomorrow. Right now is the only time you can have this experience of being saved from time; this experience of forgiveness. Forgiveness lets the past go and focuses on the present blessing. So right now, this instant, you can enter the holy instant. It can be any instant, and it can be this very instant if you will receive it. Just for this instant, forget the past. Respond to only now. Forget even five seconds ago, what somebody said, what you were feeling. Just be in the moment.

The Course advises us to practice this. I think it means practice in two senses of the word: first, that the holy instant is to be applied, or put into use. Second, the holy instant is to be rehearsed. We are even told to “practice the mechanics of the holy instant” (T-15.II.5:4). The author seems quite aware that we won’t get it right the first time, or perhaps not for a long time. So he advises us to practice the mechanics of it, to go through the motions, as it were, until one day our experience will catch up. In other words, rehearse it. The best instructions for rehearsing it are in Section I of Chapter 15, the ninth paragraph.

Taking a short time each morning and evening, at least, to think of this moment as all there is of time is a marvelous exercise. It produces a deep sense of peace when I let myself recognize that nothing can reach me here from the past; that I am absolved of any guilt I may feel about the past, along with my brothers and sisters. And nothing can reach me from the future, either. I can simply be in this instant, free of guilt, and free of fear. There is no past. There is no future. There is only now, and in this instant love is ever-present, here and now.

*Thanks for this instant, Father. It is now I am redeemed. This instant is the time You have appointed for Your Son’s release, and for salvation of the world in him. (2:1–3)*

*If I would have what only You can give, I must accept Your Will for me, and enter into peace where conflict is impossible, Your Son is one with You in being and in will, and nothing contradicts the holy truth that I remain as You created me. (1:5)*

In simple terms, God created me; I did not. What I am is not the result of my independent choice. I am as God created me. I have no choice in the matter. Total peace is impossible until I accept this as the truth, and let myself fall back into what is so, putting an end to my fight with reality. Let me end the war; let me surrender to my Self.

## What Is the Second Coming?

### **Part 7: W-pII.9.4:1–2**

“The Second Coming is the one event in time which time itself can not affect” (4:1). This is true because the Second Coming is merely the remembrance of what is eternal, and can never change. It is an “event in time,” that is, it still takes place within the context of time, although it brings an end to time itself. The Second Coming affects time, but time cannot affect it.

“For every one who ever came to die, or yet will come or who is present now, is equally released from what he made” (4:2). When we say that in the Second Coming *all minds* are “given to the hands of Christ” (3:2), the “all” has to include not only the people alive now, but those who lived before and those still yet to come. The Second Coming therefore, although it occurs within time, transcends time. It reaches back into the past to release those who lived before, as well as including those “alive” in bodies at the time. It is a trans-temporal event. No one is excluded. The Text says that miracles “undo the past in the present, and thus release the future” (T-1.I.13:3). The idea that we can literally “undo” the past is astounding, and very reassuring. We are told that the Holy Spirit can “undo all the consequences of [our] wrong decision if [we] will let Him” (T-5.VII.6:10). The Second Coming is the ultimate expression of that, in which everyone, even those in the past, are “released from what [they] made,” or freed from the illusions they set up.

I don’t know how this will happen. When the Course tells us that the Holy Spirit is not limited by time (see T-15.I.2:3–5), I can’t say that I understand how He can reach back in time and heal things that have already happened from our perspective. Yet the Course is quite clear that He can do so. In the Second Coming, every false perception from the beginning of time to the end of it will be healed. No condemnation, and no guilt, will remain in any mind, any where, any when.



## LESSON 307 • November 3

### “Conflicting wishes cannot be my will.”

#### Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** This exercise requires writing, so if you would like to do it, please get out paper and pen. Choose a situation in which you are feeling some degree of unloving feelings toward someone.

1. Put a #1 towards the upper left of your paper, as if starting a list. Label #1 “My will to attack.” Under this heading, list all the unloving things you feel an impulse to do in this situation. Be as honest and as uncensored as you can be.
2. After finishing that, put a #2 on the page, and label it “My will to love.” Under that heading, list all the loving things you want to do (either mentally or physically), the loving impulses that are somewhere inside you, perhaps obscured by your attacking impulses.
3. Then put a #3 below this, and label it “My feelings of conflict.” Under this list the feelings of conflict that are engendered by having both sets of impulses in you. Look back and forth between #1 and #2 and try to get a sense of how you feel about being so divided inside, about both love and attack contending within you.
4. Then put a #4 on the paper and label it “My separation from God.” Here, list the sense of conflict with or distance from God that arises in you from the inner conflict between #1 and #2.
5. Then write a #5 and label it “My feelings of peace.” Here, imagine that #2 is your only will, the only thing you truly want. #1 is not what you really want, because once you get it you don’t feel genuinely happy. You discover that you don’t want it as much as you thought. While imagining that #2 represents your one true will, feel the lack of inner conflict, the wholeness, and the peace with yourself implied in that idea. Note what feelings arise in you and write these under #5.

#### Commentary

“There is no other will for me to have” (1:2) except the Will of God. No other will exists. The idea that there could be something—the devil, myself, even a part of myself—that is opposed to God is the root idea of separation. Trying to “make another will” (1:3) is futile; nothing exists outside of God, the Ground of all being. Trying to make a will other than God’s is the source of pain (1:3); pain is the false witness to the attempt.

If no will but God’s exists, then “conflicting wishes cannot be my will.” The apparent experience of mental conflict I feel, the mental war between the Jekyll and Hyde within myself, must be an illusion and cannot be what I want. I must learn to accept that the desires in me that seem to be in conflict with my true Self are not real, and do not contain any truth about me. They do not mean I am depraved or hopeless. They mean nothing at all.

I have no alternative.

Course, says that listening only to the Voice for God was the last lesson he learned, and *that* only with “effort and great willingness” (T-5.II.3:9–11). We need not despair at this, and should not. The brief instants are all we need to guarantee that eventually, when we are fully prepared, we will make that final decision and choose at last not to draw back from Love. That end is sure. For now we can be content with the fact that we are healing, we are learning, we are nurturing our attraction to God, and that eventually it will carry us all the way home.

## What Is the Second Coming?

### **Part 6: W-pII.9.3:2**

The Second Coming is the time in which all minds are given to the hands of Christ, to be returned to spirit in the name of true creation and the Will of God.

*We are continuing from Part 4 the list of descriptions of the Second Coming:*

#### *6. The Second Coming is the giving of all minds to Christ (3:2)*

The Second Coming is a corporate event, in which every mind participates. One by one, in an accelerating profusion, minds enter the realm of true perception and perceive the real world, shown by forgiveness. Each newly restored mind draws all those around it to join in the circle of Atonement until every last fragment of mind has been rejoined to the whole (or more correctly, each fragment recognizes its place as part of the whole). “Salvation...restores to your awareness the wholeness of the fragments you perceive as broken off and separate” (M-19.4:1–2). The Second Coming is the culmination of this process.

## LESSON 306 • November 2

“The gift of Christ is all I seek today.”

### Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** Try to read the first paragraph of this lesson as if it were a diary entry of your own, as if it were a series of your own spontaneous thoughts. See if that doesn’t change your experience of this paragraph.

For an additional exercise, think of a series of situations in your life right now. With each one, note the main thing(s) you are currently seeking in that situation. Then say to yourself:

*The gift of Christ is all I seek in this situation.*

*The goal of [specify the goal you are currently seeking] is either secondary or irrelevant.*

### Commentary

Often these closing lessons of the Workbook tell me that I can enter the real world today.

Today I can forget the world I made. Today I can go past all fear, and be restored to love and holiness and peace. (1:2–3)

And it is true. If the “world so like to Heaven” (1:1) is truly real, then it exists now, and can be entered at any instant I am willing to do so.

Yet these lessons, to me and to many others, seem to be speaking from a vantage point that is beyond our current reach. Most of the time, I don’t feel that I am on the verge of reaching the end of the journey; do you? I may think that I would like to go past all fear, but that hasn’t been my general experience to date. Only, perhaps, in a few holy instants. So the lessons, perhaps, seem a little above my head. But really, they aren’t.

The lesson for today itself implies a less than exalted state; it says that the gift of Christ is all I “seek” today. If I am seeking it, I don’t possess it yet in full awareness. Strongly, then, the lesson reminds me that today I can forget the world; today I can go past all fear and be restored to love. It reminds me that, in the core of my being, this is what I want. Aware I am not there, I need to be reminded that the goal I seek is truly possible and not simply an idle dream.

More than that, though. One of the means for our salvation the Course propounds is the holy instant. The holy instant is, in simple terms, a brief interval in which I allow my mind to enter the real world, to reach to another state of mind (see T-27.IV.2:1–4) which is, in fact, my natural condition as God created me. I may still have too much fear to let go entirely, but I can come for a few minutes at least and, just for now, forget the world and go past my fear to experience a taste of Heaven’s peace, a glimpse of Heaven’s light. I can do this repeatedly during the day. Today, then, I really can forget the world and go past fear, even if just for a second or two.

I may not be able to sustain that state of mind. Yet I can taste it. I can bring back the vision of what I see there. The Course says that only in rare cases can this state be maintained; even Jesus, early in the

sanity, which is the Second Coming. This re-establishes the condition in which reality can again be recognized. The lessons are over. The Second Coming makes way for the Last Judgment (which is the subject of the next “What Is” section, starting with Lesson 311).

The Text has already discussed the Last Judgment at some length (see T-2.VIII and T-3.VI); we’ll touch on those passages with that next “What Is” section. This single sentence, however, gives a couple of interesting previews. The Last Judgment is called “one last summary” that is the capstone of all learning. To the Course, the Last Judgment is something the Sonship does, not God. Perhaps the best description of it is in a passage in which the phrase “Last Judgment” does not even occur. It comes in the section “The Forgiven World” (T-17.II), which speaks of how the real world will appear to us, and then talks of the last evaluation of the world that the united Sonship will undertake, guided by the Holy Spirit:

The real world is attained simply by complete forgiveness of the old, the world you see without forgiveness. The Great Transformer of perception will undertake with you the careful searching of the mind that made this world, and uncover to you the seeming reasons for your making it. In the light of the real reason that He brings, as you follow Him, He will show you that there is no reason here at all. Each spot His reason touches grows alive with beauty, and what seemed ugly in the darkness of your lack of reason is suddenly released to loveliness.  
(T-17.II.5:1-4)

This is the time when, at last, the nagging question we all ask—“Why did we make this world in the first place?”—will be fully answered, and we will see “there is no reason here at all.” Under His gentle tutelage, we will carefully search out “the seeming reasons for your making it.” We will at last be ready to look at that “terrible” moment of the original thought of separation. What seemed irredeemably ugly to us in our fear, will grow alive with beauty, and the loveliness of our united mind will be restored and released to our awareness. The primal guilt will finally be undone, and we will once again *know* our innocence.

The Last Judgment, which follows the Second Coming, will be one last, great summary lesson of forgiveness. This lesson will “extend beyond itself” for it will finally and decisively remove the last barrier of guilt, our collective guilt at having tried to usurp the throne of God. It will reach “up to God,” for it will completely restore the memory of God to our united mind. The way will be fully open for God to reach down and once again to gather us into His Arms, home at last.

There is something, Jesus is saying, that I think I will *lose* if I accept peace. What is it?

It is the ability to justify attack against my brothers; the reasonableness of finding guilt in them (see T-19.IV(B).1:1–2:3). I want to be able to place the blame somewhere else. If I simply accepted peace I would have to give up, forever, the idea that anyone else can be blamed for my unhappiness. I would have to give up all attack, and behind that is the fact that in order to give up attack, I need to give up guilt, I need to give up feeling separate and alone, I need to give up separation. I need to give up the belief in my own incompleteness, which is the foundation of my belief in my separate identity.

The peace of God “has come to save us from our judgment on ourselves” (2:3). I judge myself as sinful, as unworthy, as incomplete. That judgment is behind my need to hold on to attack as a defense mechanism, my need to have someone or something else to blame for the inadequacy I see in myself.

If I accept the peace of God as *unconditional* peace it feels to me as if I am giving up all hope of ever having things, and other people, the way I want them. It feels as if I am saying, “It is okay if you don’t love me and leave me alone. It is okay if you take my money. It is okay if you ignore me or mistreat me. None of this disturbs my peace.” *Unconditional* means it does not matter what the conditions are. And I don’t want that! I want the conditions the way I want them!

Unconditional peace! The very idea scares the living daylights out of my ego. Everyone is seeking peace; of course they are. But we want to achieve peace by adjusting the conditions according to our own idea of what will bring peace. Jesus is offering to give us peace regardless of the conditions. “Forget the conditions,” he is saying. “I can give you peace in *any* circumstance.” We *don’t want* unconditional peace; we want peace our own way. “Peace?” we ask. “What about the conditions?” We don’t want to hear that they don’t matter.

The truth of the matter is that our world reflects our mind. We see an unpeaceful world because our minds are not at peace. We think the world is the cause, and our peace—or lack of it—is the effect. Jesus is saying that our mind is the cause, and the world is the effect. He approaches us on the level of cause, not effect. He isn’t going to change the conditions to give us peace; he is going to give us peace, and *that* will change the conditions. The peace of God must come *first*. We have to get to the point of saying, “The peace of God is *all* I want.” We have to give up all other goals, goals related to conditions. Accept the peace, and the world projected from our mind will change accordingly—but that is not the goal. That is not the healing we seek; it is only the effect of the healing in our minds.

Father, help me today to accept the gift of peace, and not to judge it. Let me see behind my refusal of peace my judgment on myself as unworthy of it, and my desire to attack something outside myself and place the blame on it. In the eternal sanity of the Holy Spirit in my mind, I *do* want peace. Enable me today to identify with that part of my mind. Let me see the insanity of holding on to grievances against anyone or anything. Speak to me of my wholeness. Let me understand that what I see that contradicts peace is not real and does not matter. It is only my self-judgment (which is not real) projected on the world (which is not real). Heal my mind, my Father. “Peace to my mind. Let all my thoughts be still” (W-pII.221.Heading). I am home. I am loved. I am safe.

## What Is the Second Coming?

### Part 5: W-pII.9.3:1

The Second Coming ends the lessons that the Holy Spirit teaches, making way for the Last Judgment, in which learning ends in one last summary that will extend beyond itself, and reaches up to God.

The sequence the Course sees as ending the world, then, starts with our individual minds going through the process of perception correction, or forgiveness, until forgiveness has embraced the entire world. Each of us comes, more and more, to see the real world, until all minds have been restored to

## LESSON 305 • November 1

“There is a peace that Christ bestows on us.”

### Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

### Commentary

I find myself a little resistant to the lesson today. I judge it; it isn't “inspiring enough,” or it doesn't tell me anything new. It asserts this wonderful peace, “a peace so deep and quiet, undisturbable and wholly changeless, that the world contains no counterpart” (1:1). I'm not experiencing that this morning. I'm not fraught with anxiety or anything, but I have only a limited peace; it doesn't feel changeless; I think I could be disturbed. So I feel a bit frustrated. I know that aloneness, for instance, is there, gnawing away at the peace. It seems that it would not take much to upset the boat, and my peace would disappear. I think this is something most of us feel at times while reading the Course.

I recall one morning when I was doing a lesson, perhaps this very lesson, and all it took to “destroy” my seeming peace was to have someone walk through the room I was in—twice!

The lesson says that God's peace is a gift, “come to us to save us from our judgment on ourselves” (2:3). It offers a prayer: “Help us today...[to] judge it not” (2:2). How do we *judge* the peace of God?

I judge peace as *inappropriate* due to my circumstances. The peace of God is here, now, and part of my mind believes that, but I refuse to let myself accept it and *feel* it because my mind judges that peace would be inappropriate because of some external circumstance. “I can't be peaceful until *this* changes, until *that* changes, or until *this* happens.” It is an assertion of a belief that something other than the will of God exists, something which has power to take away my peace. God gives the peace; something else, something apparently more powerful, removes it. There *is* no other will, nothing more powerful than God, but my refusal of peace is asserting a belief that there is.

You see what you believe is there, and you believe it there because you want it there.  
(T-25.III.1:3)

The Course teaches that in reality I do not have peace because I don't *want* peace. The first obstacle to peace is my desire to get rid of it (T-19.IV(A))! That is the only reason. Since nothing really exists that can take away the peace of God, my insistence that there is such a thing is a delusion chosen to excuse my refusal of God's gift. “It isn't my fault!” I can cry. “This person, this circumstance, did it to me. I want Your peace but they took it away.” I am projecting my refusal of peace onto something else.

There is another way I judge God's peace. I judge it as weak and vulnerable, easily disturbed.

Why would I want to get rid of peace? Why would I refuse God's gift? In T-19.IV(A).2, the Text asks the same question:

Why would you want peace homeless? What do you think that it must dispossess to dwell with you? What seems to be the cost you are so unwilling to pay? (T-19.IV(A).2:1–3)

beauty. That value lies not in the things, but in you. We have learned to associate our experiences of love and joy with certain things and certain people. The association is wholly within our own mind. In the real world, everything is associated with that experience! “Nothing is there but shines, and shines forever” (T-13.VII.1:7).

We don’t really want more fall foliage, more good music, more trips to the mountains. We want God, we want the experience of Him that we have associated with those things. We want the feeling of wholeness, of well-being, of self-completion that we have falsely learned to associate with certain things in our lives. That is always what we really want, and the only thing we truly want.

On the way to fully understanding that, it becomes necessary to deny the reality of even the good things of life. As the phrase from earlier in the Workbook has it, “This is not a part of what I want” (W-pI.130.11:5). The fall foliage is not a part of what I want. This romantic special relationship is not a part of what I want. It is a breaking of the mental associations that we have made, undoing the linking of the experience of God to the physical context in which we had the experience. The physical did not give us that experience; it came about wholly in our mind.

I am not saying that while we are in the world we should deny ourselves these physical pleasures. What I am saying is that we can learn that the experiences of God we have had are not limited to those things! Everything and everyone offers us the same experience. By saying that certain things have the power to give us that experience, and others do not, we are forming a special relationship with those things, with those people.

Even as we settle back to listen to a good symphony, we can remind ourselves that what we are doing is a form of magic thought. The symphony has no power to give us the experience; it has no more power than anything else. It is our thoughts that give us the experience as we listen. What we experience is not limited to the music; it is something inherent in our being. “God is in everything I see because God is in my mind” (W-pI.30.Heading). We are the source of the beauty, not the physical thing we have chosen as a doorway to that experience of beauty. The beauty I think I see in the world is really something in my Self, “my state of mind, reflected outward” (1:4).

## **Seeing Beyond the Good Illusions**

### **Extra Thoughts on Lesson 304**

*This is an “extra” for Lesson 304, some thoughts I wrote some time ago when reading this lesson. They branch off from the lesson itself to comment on related portions of the Text. As with all my commentaries, some parts are purely my own opinion, reflections on the Course rather than an interpretation of it; if you do not agree with all I say, just disregard the parts you don’t like!*

### **“Let not my world obscure the sight of Christ.”**

“Perception is a mirror, not a fact” (1:3). We never see the truth, we always perceive symbols of the truth, and it is our mind that gives those symbols meaning. The signals reach our brain and a mental filter is applied, based on fear or based on love, and whatever is in my mind, that is what I perceive. This is why “what I look upon is my state of mind, reflected outward” (1:4).

The function of a teacher of God is just to go around reminding everyone, in every way possible, of who they really are. He reminds them of God, and of their Self as God created it. When his brother is deceived and operating from an illusion of himself, he does not attack the illusion or seek to change the behavior, but rather he acts in whatever way he can to deny his brother’s denial of his Self, and to remind him of who he really is.

Seeing the real world is not difficult. We already have the vision of Christ. The problem is, we obscure it, overlaying it with our own ego interpretations. We superimpose our filter of fear on perception and block out the vision of Christ, replacing it with our view of the world. To see the real world, what we need to do is to withdraw our support from the ego’s perceptions. We need to stop thinking that perception is a fact, and realize it is only the projection of our own thoughts. The world is not really the way we think it is.

This is why, in the Text, we are told this:

Sit quietly and look upon the world you see, and tell yourself: “The real world is not like this. It has no buildings and there are no streets where people walk alone and separate. There are no stores where people buy an endless list of things they do not need. It is not lit with artificial light, and night comes not upon it. There is no day that brightens and grows dim. There is no loss. Nothing is there but shines, and shines forever.

The world you see must be denied, for sight of it is costing you a different kind of vision. *You cannot see both worlds*, for each of them involves a different kind of seeing, and depends on what you cherish. The sight of one is possible because you have denied the other.  
(T-13.VII.1:1–2:3)

This is more than just a different way of looking at the physical world. It is looking beyond the physical world entirely. It is literally denying that the physical world exists at all! No buildings. No streets. No stores. No day. No night. This is pretty far-reaching denial!

The Course is saying that the entire physical world is like a vast hologram that we have superimposed over what is really there. We see the physical world because we have denied the real world. Therefore, to see the real world, we must deny the physical. “The sight of it is costing you a different kind of vision.”

A woman in our study group in New Jersey said she had trouble with the idea of not seeing the physical world. “There are wonderful things in it that I value: the fall foliage, the mountains, the music of Bach. I don’t want to lose those.”

I would say that, yes, indeed, you have to let those go as well, and deny their reality. The thing to see is that it is not the colored leaves you value, nor the sound of music. The real value is in the experience you have when you see or hear them, the sense of oneness, the peacefulness, the joy, the appreciation of



Today I want to tune in to my natural, God-given desire to bless the world. I want to draw upon that will to bless, which is always in me, and use it to transform my perception of the world around me. I want to see the world as a mirror reflecting the fact that “all my sins have been forgiven me” (1:6). I will see that when I see all the world as forgiven. “Let me forgive, and thus receive salvation for the world” (2:2). This is a gift given me by God that I can offer to His holy Son, of which every person I meet or even think of today is a part. As I forgive those around me, which is my mission today, they will be helped to once again find the memory of God, and of the Christ as their own Self (2:3).

## What Is the Second Coming?

### **Part 4: W-pII.9.2:3–4**

*We are continuing from Part 2 the list of descriptions of the Second Coming:*

#### *5. The recognition of perfect oneness*

The Second Coming is the recognition of our perfect oneness:

Forgiveness lights the Second Coming’s way, because it shines on everything as one. And thus is oneness recognized at last. (2:3–4)

With perfect forgiveness all barriers, all apparent reasons for separation, vanish, and our oneness can be “recognized at last.”

Every unforgiveness is a reason for separation, a justification for holding ourselves apart. Conversely, every reason for holding ourselves apart is an unforgiveness, a judgment against another. In order to prepare the way for the Second Coming of Christ, which is the recognition of oneness, forgiveness must first become complete. Many of us may remember the song from the musical *Godspell*, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord,” if we don’t remember it from the Bible as the message of John the Baptist prior to the commencement of Jesus’ ministry. Well, forgiveness is how we prepare the way of the Lord, in regard to the Second Coming of Christ. Forgiveness “lights the Second Coming’s way.” It removes the barriers to our awareness of oneness.

# Workbook Lesson Support Notes

## by Allen Watson

LESSON 304 • October 31

**“Let not my world obscure the sight of Christ.”**

### Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
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- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

### Commentary

“My world” is, of course, the world I made to support my ego; the illusory world of attack and separation. The sight of Christ, or the vision of Christ as it is mostly called in the Text, is a faculty that is native to all of us, part of our created Being. Christ’s vision shows us reality and oneness, not the fragmented chaos we usually see with our eyes. This sight is always available to us, but the world we made “can obscure [our] holy sight” (1:1). So today’s thought is a prayer, or a resolution, not to allow that to happen, not to let what our eyes show us prevent our seeing what the vision of Christ can show us all the time and any time—namely, the real world.

Perception is a mirror, not a fact. And what I look on is my state of mind, reflected outward.  
(1:3–4)

The same thought is repeated throughout the Course:

Perception can make whatever picture the mind desires to see. Remember this. (M-19.5:2–3)

The world you see is what you gave it, nothing more than that....It is the witness to your state of mind, the outside picture of an inward condition. (T-21.In.1:2, 5)

The world, then, is only showing us our own minds. Nothing more nor less than our own projections obscure the sight of Christ. Christ is the only reality, the creation of God, and without our superimposed projections this reality is all we would see. But we cannot use our perception to see it; instead, we must use the vision of Christ, a wholly separate faculty or sense (1:2). We need to let the sight of the world fade from our minds; this is why closing our eyes can be helpful at first, when what our eyes show us seems so solid and real.

What we see is determined by what we want to see. Therefore, we are given these words to say: “I would [i.e., I will to] bless the world by looking on it through the eyes of Christ” (1:5). Our perception can become true perception, which sees the world as a reflection of the truth instead of being a mirror of our projections, if truth is what we want to see. “When you want only love you will see nothing else” (T-12.VII.8:1).