

A Course in Miracles:
A Hope-filled Spirituality

Excerpts from two Workshops held at the
Foundation for A Course in Miracles
Temecula CA

Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D.

Part IX
"Entering God's Presence" (cont.)

This next passage talks about this process:

(T-11.IV.4:5-6) The beginning phases of this reversal are often quite painful [the shift from the wrong to the right mind], for as blame is withdrawn from without, there is a strong tendency to harbor it within. It is difficult at first to realize that this is exactly the same thing, for there is no distinction between within and without.

This is another line that contains everything in this course, the metaphysics as well as the practical application. There is no difference between within and without. If there is no difference between within and without, the very words are irrelevant and meaningless. The word *within* has meaning only when there is a without. An inside is the opposite of an outside. Otherwise, what does inner mean? And if there is no inner, then what does *outside* mean? We have to remember this is a non-dualistic system; there is no within and without.

The central Course principle that explains or describes that is *ideas leave not their source*. The thought of separation, the idea of separation, has never left its source in the mind, which means projection does not work. The fundamental lie of the ego is that we can get rid of what we do not want by putting it outside ourselves. God has not forgotten, and God will get us in the mind, so we get rid of the inner world we do not like by projecting it out and making an outer world. But if *ideas leave not their source*, there is no outer world. There is no without; therefore, there is no within. There is only the mind.

One of Helen's lovely poems called "Awake in Stillness" begins with the line, "Peace cover you, within without the same." We cannot have outer peace if there is not inner peace, and if there is inner peace, there must be outer peace, which is why there will never be peace in this world, because people are always seeking to forge a peace that is external. Since the world runs on the ego principle of *one or the other*, in any kind of peace treaty or peace agreement there will always be a winner and a loser. The loser, of course, just waits until he gets the strength, and then he will become the winner and someone else the loser. That is why every successful revolution contains the seeds for the next revolution, and nothing ever changes. People are afraid of inner peace.

Remember, "The memory of God comes to the quiet mind" (T-23.I.1:1). So the way to *not* have a quiet mind is to not have a quiet world, which is why our world is anything but quiet. It is always in a state of war, whether we are at war with other governments, other races, other religions, or other species like microorganisms. We are always at war. We have all of the personal wars we are always fighting within our families, with our friends and business colleagues, etc.

Again, everything is purposive. We first blame ourselves, we attack ourselves, and then we magically think we can get rid of the guilt by projecting it onto someone else.

(T-11.IV.5:1-2) If your brothers are part of you and you blame them for your deprivation, you are blaming yourself. And you cannot blame yourself without blaming them.

"You cannot blame yourself without blaming them" because *projection makes perception*. Whatever we make real for ourselves in our minds, we will project, and because we project it, we will perceive it out there. We perceive our own "secret sins and hidden hates" and our guilt. We make it all real and then say it is intolerable and we must get rid of it. We project it and now think someone else is the bad one, the sinner. As a thought in the mind, I say I am not the one who separated from God, someone else did it. Then *voilà* I am born, and now I realize it was my parents who separated me from God. I did not want to leave my kingdom of heaven in my mother's womb. Someone, something pushed me out, and then they made a big deal about it. No one paid attention to the fact that I was crying, that I did not want to go.

We can see how physical life begins that way. We came into existence, not because of a decision our mind made, but because of a sperm and an egg. All the biological brilliance of scientists going back decades explains sperm, eggs, zygotes, and then we are off and running. Clearly, that is why we are here; that is why we were born. But if *ideas leave not their source*, nothing is happening biologically, because there is no biological. There is only psychological. There is nothing of the body to study and understand. There is only a mind and how it functions. There are no biological, physiological, neurological problems. There is only a psychological problem: the mind's having chosen the wrong teacher. There is only one solution: the mind's choosing the right teacher. That's it! Very simple. Then finally:

(T-11.IV.5:3) That is why blame must be undone, not seen elsewhere.

These simple declarative sentences say everything. Where we see the blame is in the world of bodies. People read this course and unfortunately get it all wrong. They think it is about the healing of relationships. Well, the Course says that, but it doesn't mean that. Jesus does not always speak the truth [laughter], not in form anyway. We should understand his content. He always speaks the truth, but not on the level of form. He just tells us, "blame must be undone, not seen elsewhere," not seen in some other body. The problem is not in my relationship with

you. My relationship with you doesn't have to be healed. I don't have a relationship with you. There is no "without." The relationship that has to be healed is my mind's relationship with my ego. That's the problem.

The Course is written the way it is because we think we are bodies, and so bodies are in relationship to other bodies. Since that is where our minds' attention is focused, that is where the Course begins, only so that we can learn that *projection makes perception*. My rotten relationship with you is a projection of my rotten relationship with me. I chose the wrong thought in my mind to identify with, i.e., the ego. Now this does not mean that it is not helpful to talk things out with another person, but in the end, if you are really doing it right, you will realize there is nothing to talk about with the other person. The other person is not my problem. No matter what you have done or have not done, you are not my problem. I am my problem, but the "I" is not the figure that has a name and is encased in a body. The person who is the problem is my mind that has chosen the wrong teacher. That is where blame is undone.

The problem is not guilt. Guilt says I sinned; sin says I separated. Well, I did not separate, therefore there is no sin and no guilt. How could guilt be a problem? The problem is not in the guilt. *The problem is in my mind's decision to believe in guilt*. There is a big, big difference. Thus, I don't fight against my guilt. I don't fight against the guilt I projected onto you. I use the guilt I projected onto you to get back to the guilt that I decided for in my mind, so that I can choose differently. This distinction is absolutely crucial. "That is why blame must be undone, not seen elsewhere."

Skipping a sentence:

(T-11.IV.5:5) Self-blame is therefore ego identification, and as much an ego defense as blaming others.

"Self-blame," which is guilt, "is therefore ego identification," which means that is the problem. The mind's identification with the ego is the problem. Very clear. Here it is in black and white. Why do we choose guilt when it is so painful? The reason is that guilt says we separated, and if we separated, we are no longer in God's Presence. It also says that what we have done is so unconscionable that even if we believed we undid our guilt, God would still not take us back. This reveals to us the prominence of guilt as a defense. It's a defense, just as anger, sickness, depression, and everything else here is a defense. Guilt says we can never be in God's Presence because we separated from Him, and not only that, we do not deserve to be in His Presence.

I always like to remind people that if you think I or the Course made this all up, just read the story of Adam and Eve in the third chapter of Genesis. That is *the* Western myth. Chapter 3 is absolutely brilliant. The writers were masters. It is brilliant in depicting the rise of the ego

thought system with the exact same concepts we find in this course, culminating in the ultimate punishment. As if it is not bad enough that Adam and Eve would be punished for their sin through suffering and dying, they were also kicked out of the garden, banished from the kingdom, with God putting angels with flaming spears to keep them from getting back in. That is the ultimate banishment.

Why is that *the* Western myth? Why is the entire Bible from Chapter 3 in Genesis on derived from that myth? According to the Christian stories, Jesus would not have been sent into this world were it not for sin. Everything in the Bible is rooted in that third chapter. That is why I plead with students of the Course not to think for even one minute that the Course is an extension of the Bible, a "third testament." It has absolutely nothing to do with the Bible except in its language, but not in its teachings. In the Bible, sin is made so real that God Himself responds to it in a heavy-handed way, which obviously makes it real. It seems as if He has a soft spot in His heart. He feels a little sorry for some of His people, but not for all of the people. Then He sends Jesus to redeem the world from Adam's sin. St. Paul, the architect of Christian theology, talks about Adam's sin.

That is the thought system that underlies all people in this world, whether they believe in God or not. It is the idea that we have done something totally unconscionable. Guilt is what roots us in that, which is why guilt is *the* ego defense from which everything else emerges. But it is a defense, which means we choose it to protect ourselves from what we fear. What we fear as individual egos, individual entities, special, unique selves is remembering that this is all a dream and we made it all up, because at that point we would clearly disappear into the Presence beyond the veil and the world would be gone—not just the world as we know it, but the entire world would be gone. The world is "the delusional system of those made mad by guilt" (T-13.I.2:2). Take away the guilt and there is no world. If there is no world, the "I" that I think I am, ensconced in this body, would cease to exist. Therefore, I protect the world and myself by all kinds of defenses, which are all derived ultimately from guilt. Guilt, though, is a decision, just as attack, sickness, and depression are decisions.

It is essential for us, then, to realize the purpose guilt serves. It is an ego defense. That is what self-blame is. Attack is an ego defense. Later in the text there is the very important section called "The Two Pictures," where Jesus says that "all defenses *do* what they would defend" (T-17.IV.7:1). The purpose of a defense is to protect us from what we are afraid of. The very fact that we have a defense is saying there is something we are afraid of. Consequently, every time we choose a defense and then identify with it, we are choosing to identify with its purpose, which is to escape from fear, which tells us there is something we should be afraid of.