

A COURSE IN MIRACLES

STUDY GROUP

WITH RAJ

June 12th 2011

THIS IS A ROUGH TRANSCRIPT.
THIS COPY IS NOT IN ITS FINAL FORM
AND WILL BE UPDATED

Good evening. And welcome to everyone who's joining us on the Internet.

You know, before every study group, before any occasion where Paul and I sit together like this, during the quiet time, Paul says a prayer which I have shared with you before and I'm not going to share the whole thing now. But the very last part of it says, “. . . *and may Thy Word enrich the affections of all mankind and govern them.*”

Now, you might question whether I'm abiding by that or fulfilling that prayer, when I speak the way I spoke last week . . . when I speak the way I speak on many occasions where it is direct and terse and honest and motivating. Because after all, last week I was saying if you take a clear look at your life without glossing it over with positive thinking, you will find that your life isn't happy. And I encouraged you to be very honest with yourselves about that, to be very honest about the fact that after, let's say, generations of people studying my words, the Bible, other holy books, there is still sin, sickness and death . . . right?

It would seem that no matter how much positive thinking is used, no matter how much my words are used and brought to life in your lives, except for the occasional miracle—healing, correction—there's still sin, sickness and death occurring. They still seem to be the “law” of being, don't they? . . . I mean, everyone is governed by them. You just can't escape sin, sickness and death.

Well now, why would it be important to give your attention—your sincere, honest attention—to that kind of thing? How on earth could that constitute your affections being enriched by my word—by God's Word, by the Holy

Spirit's Word . . . *“and may Thy Word enrich the affections of all mankind and govern them.”*

Now I just finished saying that sin, sickness and death seemed to be the bottom line laws that govern man, didn't I? Well, they certainly aren't enriching the affections are they?

But you know what? Sin, sickness and death happen in a context. They happen in an arena. But I'm going to say they happen in a mind-set. They happen in a context of independence, a context of independence hoped for, independence worked for, and independence which you have been falsely promised you can achieve.

In other words, sin sickness and death seem to occur and seem to govern you when you have adopted an independent stance in which there is a promise your being able to become, like Pinocchio, a real boy . . . a successful actually independent entity.

I'm going to ask you, with all of what we have read since the beginning, and with all of the discussion that we've had about special relationships, how many of you, off the top of your head, would identify a special relationship as a defense?

How many of you, if I had said, “What is a special relationship?” would have had as the top-most answer in your mind, a defense? It is. What is it a defense against? It's a defense against a conscious awareness of God. And it is a defense against a conscious experience of your Birthright and your existence as the direct expression of God. It's a defense against your having clear, honest, realistic, self-appreciation, self-assessment and true self-identification.

Being a defense against that, it causes you to experience amnesia and not remember who you Are and not know who you Are and leaves you in the unenviable position of having to create a sense of identity out of nothing. The only thing is, that this act of creating a sense of self-identity out of nothing was a result of a conscious act that at some point, you took. It was an initial act of separation from God, from your Source and therefore from your conscious connection with your Source and we've talked about this endlessly.

How did you do it? How did you get this divorce—this separation from God?

Well, you didn't just do it by saying “Father, I'd rather see it my way. Father, I would rather do it my way. Father, I would rather determine what this is and what that is.” That wasn't the only thing you did. You did that, but you did it

with someone else. In so many words, you took the hand of another Son or Daughter of God and you, together, made a vow to see things *your way* through the establishment of mutual agreements.

Now keep that in mind. Because as we read in the book, it says:

You have but little difficulty now in realizing that the thought system which the special relationship protects . . .

. . . there it is, *protects*, defends against. Listen: Defends.

You have but little difficulty now in realizing that the thought system which the special relationship protects is but a system of delusions. You recognize, at least in general terms, that the ego is insane.

We've talked about it . . . and talked about it . . . and talked about it. And intellectually, you're being able to grasp and see that the ego is insane—that your ego is insane. You're able to look at that with some courage because we have been talking about how to be released from it so that looking at it doesn't convict you but allows you to see more clearly what you *don't want to experience* and which therefore, justifies your doing what it takes to abandon it—to release yourself from it.

So . . .

You recognize, at least in general terms, that the ego is insane. Yet the special relationship still seems to you somehow to be "different."

In other words, not insane.

. . . the special relationship still seems to you somehow to be "different." Yet we have looked at it far closer . . .

. . . especially in the last few weeks . . .

. . . we have looked at it far closer than at many other aspects the ego's thought system which you have been more willing to let go. While this one remains, you will NOT let the others go. For this one is NOT different. Retain this one, and you HAVE retained the whole.

Now, you all really need this special relationship to be different. Why? Because it—you—taking the hand of another Son or Daughter of God and vowing together to see everything the way you choose to see it, to define it the way you choose to define it, to be the authorizer of definitions, meanings,

mutual agreements, literally as to how the earth turns, how the world goes around, how society functions. I mean, it's all inclusive isn't it, all starting from this holding of hands and taking a vow together to ignore your Father, to ignore the meanings invoked, we'll say, in the act of Creation and being in every way independent. That's what makes it different.

You may have special relationships with things . . . with your artwork . . . with trees . . . with land . . . with animal husbandry . . . with any number of things you may have special relationships.

And again: What is a special relationship?

A special relationship is a relationship you have with anything where God is absent, where you have the relationship without ever having the faintest inkling of awareness that there's something holy about this that you're having a relationship with.

And what's holy about it is its Source. And its Source means that it—the thing you're having a relationship with—is divine, is flawless, is perfect, is imbued with Love. And part of its function is to embrace you and everything else with the Love that it is. And I could go on and on and we've done this before.

The point is, that a special relationship with something is one in which none of that is experienced by you and there's not even the faintest curiosity about what might be there more than the definitions you have given it or those with whom you have mutual agreements have given them. You see?

Now, that kind of a special relationship with things is different from special relationships you have with individuals. Why? Because things don't agree back with you, they don't join in a mutual agreement as to your misunderstanding and misinterpretation of what it is. You see? So these things can't reinforce your confidence in your imaginations.

That's what makes special relationships with other individuals special. Because you can both nurture and feed each others' delusions. And you can both punish each other if you neglect to feed those delusions.

So you can seem to experience a great amount of control—authority. But more than anything else, the thing that makes a special relationship *special*, is that the special relationship absolutely keeps you unconscious of God, absolutely keeps you unconscious of your holiness, absolutely keeps you from experiencing your omnipotence—and I mean that in the sense of being inviolable, unchangeable from what God has created you As, unchangeable and therefore ever safe, therefore, ever without the experience of fear or

anxiety, concern. In other words, in a state of perfect peace out of which arises spontaneously, infinite joy.

Yet it is these very aspects of special relationship that make it so unholy, make it so unhealthy. And so this thing that seems very special to you and very important to you, deludes you in the most malicious of ways. And so you cannot afford to look at it with any kind of friendliness or tolerance else you will remain bound to it, bound by it and unconscious of who you Are, therefore, insane.

Now I spent quite a bit of time last week being very strict in focusing your attention on the fact that things aren't getting any better!

But you say, "They're going to get better. After all, look at all the progress that has been made here and there . . . it's going to get better."

Oh, yes, I know . . . that's the promise and *that's the lie*. Now, take a look at it.

The defense that a special relationship is, is a defense against your Knowing who you Are. And it's not just a defense against knowing who you Are, it is a defense which gives you a different definition than what you Are . . . dangerous . . . important for you *not to be deluded by* . . . important for you to become free of.

Now . . .

. . . the special relationship still seems to you somehow to be "different."

It's not. I've made it very clear that it isn't. You see, the promise that things will get better keep you looking at the fact that *things haven't gotten better over great periods of time*. They say, "Don't pay any attention to the facts, don't pay any attention to the obvious, pay attention to the fact that you have a capacity—somewhere in you, you have a capacity to think and be creatively and create new circumstances." And so, these promises, these agreements that you have between each other keep you emboldened to persist in doing what you can't do. And it keeps you from looking at the effects—the long standing effects of special relationships—which are that sin, sickness and death still occur . . . occur . . . occur . . . over and over, changelessly. You see?

Because you won't look at the facts! You won't look at the positive thinking. You want to look at the creativity that you have. You want to look at the lie.

Now mind you, that which says you are an entity who can through its own efforts and the agreements and support of others, become real in your own right. That's a lie . . . that's a lie.

But do you know what defends that lie by causing you to not look clearly at it so that you just simply say, "Well, that's an undesirable thing which, through the use of creative thinking and logic, we can work our way out of." You see?

So a lie covers up a lie. That's the nature of a special relationship.

. . . the special relationship still seems to you somehow to be "different." Yet we have looked at it far closer than at many other aspects of the ego's thought system which you have been more willing to let go. While this one remains, you will NOT let the others go. For this one is NOT different. Retain this one, and you HAVE retained the whole.

If you retain the special relationship, which constitutes your unconsciousness of who you Are and your unconsciousness of your Source, then any other defenses you have will be held in place too. Hold on to this one and refrain from rejoining with your Father and therefore your sanity.

It will mean that what you thought you let go of, you're still ignorant, you're still unconscious. Nothing has really been let go. You see?

Again, very black and white. Very simple. Don't be afraid to look at it.

It is essential to realize that all defenses DO what they would DEFEND.

If they defend a lie, they defend with a lie. "Oh, you can make yourself into something real. You can lift yourself up by your bootstraps. It's the nature of life to expand itself. It's the nature of life to develop itself." You see?

"After all look, it started out as a single-celled creature. And then multiple cells, and then organisms and then apes and then man . . . oh, look, it's the nature of life to develop . . . to progress . . . to make itself better. That's what life does."

Well you can go on believing that for another ten million years. You won't Wake up, you won't come back into your right Mind. That isn't the way it works. And we're undoing that which traps you in that kind of a thought system, in that kind of a belief system.

It is essential to realize that all defenses DO what they would DEFEND. The underlying basis for their effectiveness is that they OFFER what they defend.

See? They defended the lie, they offer lies to defend the lie. You all do know about that.

What I want for you to believe and what I want for you to understand is that it's not natural for you to understand about lying and using a lie as a defense of a lie. I want you to come into a much more natural experience of what you Are on the basis of your divinity. Because you know what . . . you and I . . . you and all of the Brotherhood that are Awake can't enjoy the camaraderie of our Brotherhood until you finally take the leap, bring forth the effort, the discipline, the stick-to-itiveness and actually behave differently, actually engage in the two-step.

The underlying basis for their effectiveness . . .

. . . the effectiveness of defenses . . .

. . . is that they OFFER what they defend. What they defend is placed IN them for safe-keeping, and as they operate, they BRING it to you. Every defense operates by giving gifts, and the gift is ALWAYS a miniature of the thought system the defense protects, set in a golden frame.

Now mind you, we started out tonight by talking about the fact that a special relationship is a defense . . . right? You look at a special relationship, if you look at it on its own, it's miserable. If you're willing to be honest about looking at it and seeing it for what it actually is, you will recognize that it's not an enjoyable experience, right? It's not a pleasurable experience because it's not the truth about you. It's an artificial and false rendition of you which if you somehow believe it, will make you miserable. . . will make you feel. . . arrrggh . . . not comfortable in your own skin. And then everything you do will arise out of that feeling of uncomfortableness in your skin and needing somehow to find a way to get control of things so that you can feel comfortable in your skin again.

Except that you'll never feel comfortable in your skin by finding a way to manipulate and control things. You will only find it by abandoning, oh wow, the intent to forget who you Are, ignore who you Are, ignore your Father, ignore the absolute divinity and perfection of your Being and all Being. That's the only way that you will find yourself once again feeling comfortable in your own skin, in your own Being, in your own presence.

This special relationship that you're in with others and with everything, is what is held in the frame. The picture itself is unpleasant. The frame however, is constituted of all of the false promises and false hopes and mutual agreements that you all will support each other and bolster each other up in your misery to help you forget your misery and have some positive attitude and some positive feeling and energy with which to take on each day as each day arises. And so this miserable picture is embraced by lies—other falsehoods. But, what? They involve involvements with others, so you're not lonely . . . even though you're lonely . . . even though you know you're alone.

You have involvements with others. And the involvements feel good and they nurture and they satisfy you and they make you feel comfortable and so you pursue those. And these relationships become more and more complex until this frame around this miserable picture is so full of hope and so full of stories of "success" that you don't have to look at the picture anymore and you don't have to provide an honest assessment of what the picture is saying.

You see? That's how it works.

So you become so-o-o-o-o preoccupied with the wonder of the mutual agreements and structures surrounding this miserable picture, that that begins to be what you determine life from and your happiness from. And you're lost. You see, if you're not even seeing the picture for what it is, if you've forgotten that you're actually miserable, in the state of misery, you're really insane, you're really not grasping things truly.

And there's call for correction. And correction is available. And if I was not here to tell you that correction is available, it would serve no purpose whatsoever to say, "Look at the picture, forget the frame. Look at the picture and see that it's nothing but miserable." And then seeing that clearly and not being distracted by all of the fantasized means of overcoming the miserable, the misery, you can say, "Wait a minute, there must be another way to look *at this*." And the other way to look at *this* is not to ignore it and become preoccupied with the frame in all of its incredible complexities. You see?

Another way to look at this is to look at it and feel the misery of the disconnectedness while someone is saying to you, "The only reason you're experiencing misery from this picture is because of a disconnection that actually never occurred. You never actually became disconnected from your Source, from your Father. You therefore, are at this very moment the full Offspring of God, absolutely divine, embodying absolute perfection, which it's your Birthright to be experiencing fully at this very moment.

So ignore the frame, see the misery, acknowledge that the misery can be abandoned by your choosing to join with the Holy Spirit or with the Christ

Consciousness, or with God. And let us in and join with us in mutual endeavor, which you let us determine because we know what brings correction to the miserable picture. It's that simple.

Now many of you have probably read this portion of the *Course* that talks about the pictures and the frames and have not understood it at all.

I'm going to read now and in light of what I've said, see if it makes sense:

Every defense operates by giving gifts, and the gift is ALWAYS a miniature of the thought system the defense protects, set in a golden frame. The frame is very elaborate, all set with jewels, and deeply carved . . .

. . . no chintzy frame, this frame . . .

. . . deeply carved and polished.

Wasn't pressed out with a mold. No, hand made . . .

. . . deeply carved and polished. Its purpose is to be of value IN ITSELF, . .

. . . this frame . . .

. . . and to divert your attention from what it encloses. But the frame WITHOUT the picture, you cannot have.

You see? And actually the ultimate goal of being a real individual in your own right is for the picture frame to become the thing, no longer with the picture in it of misery that shows a holy Son or Daughter of God or holy Sons and Daughters of God in misery.

But the frame WITHOUT the picture, you cannot have.

You can never get rid of the picture. Why? Because the picture is where the lie is that needs to be corrected. It's not in the frame. It's not in the mutual agreements. You don't need to get better mutual agreements. You don't need to get better social welfare laws. You see?

But the frame WITHOUT the picture, you cannot have.

But listen to this:

Defenses operate to make you think you CAN.

There's the false promise. There's the carrot hanging in front of your nose. You see?

Defenses operate to make you think you CAN.

... that you can do what you can't do. Now:

The special relationship has the most imposing and deceptive frame of all the defenses the ego uses. Its thought system is offered here, surrounded by a frame so heavy and so elaborate that the picture is almost obliterated by its imposing structure. Into the frame ...

... mutual agreements, imaginations ...

... are woven all sorts of fanciful and fragmented illusions of ...

... what? ..

... love, set with dreams of sacrifice and self-aggrandizement, ..

... you see, it's not fragmented with illusions of pain and sorrow and suffering is it? No. It's ... into it ...

... are woven all sorts of fanciful and fragmented illusions of love, .

.

... and hope and charity and kindness and all sorts of good things that allow manipulation to occur smoothly. Right?

Into the frame are woven all sorts of fanciful and fragmented illusions of love, set with dreams of sacrifice and self-aggrandizement, and interlaced with gilded threads of self-destruction. The glitter of blood shines like rubies, ..

You see? Come on, don't wonder what this is about. Don't play naive. How many have shed blood for the sake of freedom. Don't tell me that you don't honor blood as glittering like rubies with great meaning.

The glitter of blood shines like rubies, and the tears are faceted like diamonds and gleam in the dim light in which the offering is made.

Tears of what seem to be genuine repentance or tears of recognition that something was done that was wrong, tears that express the fact that the person shedding the tears has abandoned a false front and is experiencing

humility. These are “faceted like diamonds,” they’re grandly and greatly appreciated . . .

. . . and gleam in the dim light in which the offering is made.

Now why treat these things with disrespect or without full honor? The reason is that shedding blood for the sake of freedom doesn’t constitute Waking up to what Real freedom is. And it becomes possible to dedicate ones self to the shedding of blood because it does seem to bring about some needed change. And to be so dedicated to that that father and son and grandson and great-grandson, all one after the other, follow in the footsteps of the military, because the family honors the dedication of those willing to shed blood for the sake of freedom and the better life for others.

What I’m here to do is to set everyone’s mind in a new direction where instead of father and son and grandson and great-grandson all following in a pattern of respect for the glitter of blood, that the son or the grandson says, “Wait a minute, there has to be a different way of looking at this. There has to be a way to breaking the repetition of sin, sickness and death . . . sin, sickness and death, life, death . . . there has to be a way to break that pattern. And I’m going to do that. I’m going to attend to that instead of going off to war like my father and my grandfather and my great-grandfather. And I’m going to do this in spite of the fact that the wives and mothers and the rest of the family also feel the patriotic duty and the devotion to God and country, such that my taking this step is going to distress them.” You see what I’m saying?

I’m not saying this with any disrespect. But I know that what I’m saying is going to be a difficult thing to swallow. But we’ve got to get past the frame that glorifies and honors a misperception of what the picture in the frame is actually stating. And what it’s actually stating is, that sin, sickness and death are inevitable. Sin, sickness and death are inevitable. Sin, sickness and death are in operation at this moment. Sin, sickness and death are unavoidable, misery...misery...misery...misery...misery. You see what I’m saying?

This is what this means. This is what this story here about the two pictures and the frames is all about. I’m bringing it home in practical terms so that it’s not, you know, so descriptive of something that you don’t understand.

This is the key:

Look at the PICTURE. Do not let the frame distract you. This gift . . .

. . . the picture, remember, is the gift.

This gift is given you for your damnation, . .

. . . it's not given to make you happy. *It's not given to make you happy.* I'm not being mean to make you face this. It's the only way I can get you to have your affections be enriched. Because the only way your affections can be enriched is if you stop having a picture which the frame is distracting you from, where you're never doing the two-step, where you're never saying, "Wait a minute. Father, what is the truth here? Father, I want to experience Your perspective. And even though I doubt that if I ask You for it You will give it to me because I'm not even truly positive there is a God. I am going to do something different from what my great-great-grandfather and my great-grandfather and my father and my uncles did. Obviously what they did hasn't decreased sin, sickness and death."

Look at the PICTURE.

That's the key. The damned picture, the miserable picture. I know, you'd rather go sit down and meditate and have a pretty thought, have a positive thought. But hey, if you're having the positive thought all by yourself, the damn miserable picture's still there in the middle of that huge frame because God never entered the picture . . . God never *entered*. You see?

Never were the words said, "Father, what is the truth here? Father, I'm going to break my isolation from You. I'm going to abandon this so-called authority and independence that I thought was my Birthright and I'm going to join and I'm going to give *deference* to You and what You have to say. I'm going to dare to be crazy enough to do this to see whether it really *does make a difference*, having abandon what my ancestors devoted themselves to."

Look at the PICTURE. Do not let the frame distract you. This gift is given you for your damnation, and if you take it you will believe that you ARE damned.

It's okay to look at this and acknowledge it. Why? Because it's not the end of the world, it's the beginning of your capacity to abandon that picture together with the frame and have a new experience.

You CANNOT have the frame without the picture. What you value is the FRAME, for there you see no conflict.

That's because all of the mutual agreements and all of the intellectual structures that had gone into making this "hand carved frame," give you hope, make life seem worthwhile. They spell out for you exactly how success will be achieved even though nobodies achieved it. And you say, "Well, you know, everybody wanted to fly and it wasn't until the Wright brothers actually accomplished it that it happened. But it did happen . . . it did happen. And so anything we set our mind to can happen. And it may not happen today but it

will be a result of the effort that will allow it to be accomplished.” See, that’s all part of the frame. That’s what makes the frame important.

What you value is the FRAME, for there you see no conflict.

You see the way out of conflict. You see? And that’s part of the details of the frame. And the frame lies just like the picture does.

Yet the frame is only the wrapping for the gift of conflict.

Isn’t this a miserable conversation we’re having together? It’s not really. It’s about misery, and it’s about being able to abandon it. It’s about being able to be honest enough as you observe, that you cannot be fooled into confusion and the adoption of lies as though they’re truth.

[Yet] the frame is only the wrapping for the gift of conflict. The frame is NOT the gift. [Repeats] The frame is NOT the gift. Be not deceived by the most superficial aspects of this thought system, for these aspects enclose the whole, complete in EVERY aspect.

So even in the frame the slightest little apparently positive hopeful facet is lying and binds you to the misery and awfulness of the picture just as much as the things that are less lovely but still constitute some apparently sound basis for hope.

Death lies in this glittering gift. Let not your gaze dwell on the hypnotic gleaming of the frame.

What does that mean?

Let not your gaze dwell on the hypnotic gleaming of . . .

. . . all of the mutual agreements that you have come to together, or that others came to and handed down to you as part of your education, part of your valuable education, part of the education that lifts you above the rest in a position to be able to help govern well and successfully. See?

Let not your gaze dwell on the hypnotic gleaming of the frame. Look at the PICTURE, . .

That will always snap you back.

Look at the PICTURE, . .

Be willing to do what we talked about last week. Be willing to look at the world and see that sin, sickness and death still operate and still apparently

govern. And they need to stop. And the way they stop is by withdrawing your attention from the frame, looking at the picture and saying, “Wait a minute, things aren’t getting better. What we’re doing isn’t improving anything. Something else is called for. And you know what? I wouldn’t even be looking at the frame and thinking to look at the picture only and to ignore the frame if an answer weren’t already provided pointing my attention in this direction. And so I am going to pay attention to what is leading me to a *new way of seeing . . . a new way of devoting my attention.*”

[Raj didn’t read this] . . . and realize that DEATH is offered you.

That is why the holy instant is so important in the defense of truth. The truth itself NEEDS no defense, but you DO need defense against your own acceptance of the gift of death. When you who are truth accept an idea so dangerous TO truth, you threaten truth with destruction.

Of course, it can’t really be destroyed but never the less a threat is engaged in.

And your defense must now be undertaken, . .

. . . your defense, not the defense of some concept, not the defense of some illusory thing called a unholy relationship—a special relationship—but the defense of a holy Son or Daughter of God defending that holiness.

And your defense must now be undertaken, to keep truth WHOLE. The power of Heaven, the Love of God, the tears of Christ and the joy of His eternal Spirit are marshalled to defend you from your own attack. For you attack Them, . .

. . . what do you attack?

The power of Heaven, the Love of God, the tears of Christ and the joy of His eternal Spirit . . .

For you attack Them, being PART of Them, and They must save you, for They love Themselves.

Listen to this last sentence:

For you attack Them, being PART of Them, and They must save you, for They love Themselves.

You see? They will not agree with you in your attack of them. They will not agree with them in your misunderstanding of them that would cause you to value something else more. And they will not join with you in dishonoring

you as you are, by being attracted to something that keeps you unconscious of your Self your divine holiness.

Now these are the things that come into play in the holy instant. And these are the things that come into play in terms of illuminating the holy instant to you and bringing your attention to them.

Now I know you would like to move on, where perhaps there are some beautiful things to consider. But I invite you to keep your gaze on the picture.

Practice the holy instant as often as you wish this week. But don't do it to the exclusion of taking a look at the picture—the gruesome miserable picture. The picture that shows you that there is so much of God's Love still to be seen by all of mankind. And you know it because there's so much evidence of misery still around, still so much evidence of injustice around, still so much presence of impatience in you with those around you who aren't expressing as much intelligence as they're capable of. Impatience in you that makes it difficult for you to be willing to stand with Love with your Brother or Sister or mother or father or daughter or son and walk them through their learning with compassion, with patience while at the same time disallowing for any abuse to be practiced on you.

I love you all. And these are important things that we are talking about. These are important aspects of the threshold that I know you certainly are hoping you're going to move over. It's what you had hoped for. You just might not have thought these were some of the aspects of it. But I promise you they are. And you will not be at a loss for taking a look at them, considering them and being patient with yourself in the process.

I look forward to being with you next week.

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