

# A COURSE IN MIRACLES

## STUDY GROUP

### WITH RAJ

September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006

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THIS IS A ROUGH TRANSCRIPT.  
THIS COPY IS NOT IN ITS FINAL FORM  
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PAUL: This is me, Paul. The idea has been expressed on line that there are those who feel sorry for me when Raj uses me as an example and feels that it's not really in good taste for Raj to do that. I want to let you know especially tonight when I know I'm going to be the example, [chuckle] that I'm very happy. It doesn't bother me a bit.

Everything that Raj is teaching and everything we're reading about in the *Course*, can very easily be left in lofty terms that aren't totally relevant. And in every case when he uses me as an example, [chuckle] he's making it relevant. And if that makes it easier for someone else to relate to it, I am more than happy for him to do it. It has never bothered me. So, I just needed to make that clear.

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

I am indeed going to start with a story that began some time ago when Paul, for righteous reasons—very good wholesome righteous reasons—committed himself to being involved in this work that we're doing together. He feels that it's very important to him. He also feels that it's just simply important and its worth sharing. And so he has devoted himself to it.

But as time has gone by, his devotion to it has caused him to restrict his attention so it has become smaller and smaller. And in many ways he has become like a hermit, or like someone in a monastery, apart from everything,

staying in that place where his mind is undisturbed, and he can attend to me—attend to whatever he and I are to do together.

Because of this, it has become more and more difficult for him to actually get anything done, which has frustrated him even further. It has seemed that life itself has been very demanding—you know, irrelevant things like paying bills, and doing the bookkeeping and things that have nothing to do with enlightenment, nothing to do with transformation of the mind . . . how about just going to the post office, and going grocery shopping, you know . . . family involvements. He had begun to feel as though no one respected what he was doing as much as it needed to be respected.

And yet, he did not grasp that he was binding himself unnecessarily. And when he would come to me and, how shall I put it, in spite of the fact that he was angry at the situation, he would, in a friendly fashion, enquire of me how the situation could be changed so that he could accomplish the things that needed to be accomplished. Meaning, the things he had decided needed to be accomplished, like proofing the transcripts so that people could have them and enjoy them. And there was demand for them.

In his mind he had become very complex and very tight and very frustrated and very angry. So, last Friday morning, the day before last week's Gathering, while Susan was taking her shower, I talked with her. And I told her that it was not only important, it was necessary for she and Paul to leave and go to Disneyland.

Now Paul has Goosebumps. He is having a personal reaction because now everybody knows that last Saturday there was no Gathering because he was playing. He was not attending to business.

And so when she got out of the shower, she said, and she was being gentle [chuckle] with him, she said, "I really don't know what to make of this. Raj has just told me that we are to leave immediately, like that day, for Disneyland and not come back until the following Tuesday." Not just over the weekend, but three days.

Well, Paul had his immediate opinions about it which he didn't voice. But he knew now that nobody even in his own household really understood the importance of the work that he is involved in and that doing something frivolous at the last moment before a meeting, was more important. And this fueled his already existing frustration. After all, at this point, there are three transcripts not available on the website which he was intent upon getting done because it was a right thing to do—an important right thing to do.

And of course, the last few meetings that we've had, have dealt with the orphan mentality and the fact that the way you get your meaning is by doing things well--doing important things well. You see. You think I'm just talking to you, but I'm talking to Paul too.

Now, Paul found a place in himself that recognized—kind Paul—that Sue was tired and she really did need a break. And that was the only way he, himself, could justify this. She says, “Ask Raj yourself and let's find out whether I was hearing correctly or not.”

Well, of course, that's a really loaded question for Paul. If the answer is “no,” then he's saying she heard incorrectly. If the answer was “yes” it meant that I didn't value what he valued, which was to be dutifully there for the meeting Saturday night, and that Friday and Friday night to get those transcripts finished and uploaded onto the website. And to be able to be accountable with good favor.

Well, I told him that she heard me correctly. You see, [chuckling] he was not happy with that answer. But, as a pretty talented orphan, he decided to be as flexible as he could be, and to do his best to feign willingness, even with a certain lilt to his step. Okay? But as the day went by, tickets were purchased and packing began, he noticed a discomfort in his hip. Felt sort of like a pinched nerve or something. It went from his hip-bone around into the groin. But it wasn't disabling, it was just bothersome. He figured out for himself, that it must've been from something he had lifted in the process of packing. No big deal.

And so, he let everyone know there would be no Gathering and proceeded to get everything ready to go, along with Sue. And Saturday morning very early at 4 o'clock they left to catch the plane.

Now, I'm not going to go into every detail of the trip. But the point was that he went with a grudge which he hid. And he tried to make the best of a situation that did not fit with his sense of what was meaningful and important. He knew he, in terms of being a responsible orphan, was already behind in things that appropriately needed to be done. And to take this time out, oh, and by the time it finished, it turned out to be five days gone. Five days of what he interpreted to be, irrelevant, meaningless activity. He felt disrespected, dishonored and misunderstood.

Now, I will tie this in with what we're going to be reading tonight. We were talking last week about, and the week before, about how the ego uses time. How the orphan mindset uses time. That it uses the past, which is flawed, to justify a future in which, remember that word? “expiation” can occur—the atoning for one's mistakes, the doing of penances or holy activities to offset.

Well, Paul saw that his past, and what he perceived to be his willingness to disrespect what he should be respecting, because everybody else was disrespecting it, and they had needs too, that he would then have a future in which to pay for it.

As the days went by, the discomfort in his hip became more severe. And he was able to cover it up very well until the fourth day. And on the fourth day when he had to have help to put on his socks and his pants, and it was obvious [chuckling] that there was a need, and he got to the park and had to rent a cart to ride in because it was too uncomfortable to walk, he still didn't make any connection between the grudge he was carrying, his conviction in the rightness of his perspective, he didn't see the connection between that and the physical problem that he was having.

Now, all of you do this in one way or another. You have your pet project or you have your life work. Or you have something relative to your job that you must do well on because it is going to be the turning point for the rest of your career. And so, the rest of your career depends upon what you're going to do at this immediate point. And you become fixated on it and anything that doesn't have anything to do with that is irrelevant and is an intrusion and is an expression of lack of respect for what you know you have to do. Even though the intrusions that are coming in are saying, "Sweetheart, you're neglecting the family—hey, you can't do it this way because everyone around you is suffering. You're short-tempered. You are curt and you are actually unkind and you cannot do this. You must find a way to be able to express love."

And you say, "Everybody is simply going to have to understand what I'm going through and let me get past this point and then I'll be able to be relaxed again."

You see. You all do this. You all get your mind set. You get your mind set on something and everything else must take second position. Now, with this in mind, let's go into the *Book*.

We ended up last week—last meeting—illustrating the fact, that as an orphan, as one who is self-originated, self-created, your one purpose is to prove your validity. You see, those who are orphans have fathers and mothers who give them validity. Those who are not orphans have mothers and fathers who give them validity.

But orphans have no connection to anything, and so they cannot gather the validity of their existence from anything, and so they must create it out of whole cloth. And because they are trying to successfully be something they

cannot be—none of you can successfully be an independent orphan—everything you do is bound to fail. And so life is a struggle. And as we’ve talked about, you’ve taken on the challenge of that struggle. But at some point the truth will out—the truth will become clear that you cannot be an orphan, that you cannot be what you’re trying to be.

And so, what does the orphan mindset do? What does the ego do? It says, “Okay, if I am bound to fail ultimately, I am going to interpret that ending on my terms.” That ending being the death of the ego. That event of death is going to be used as the proof that what happened before it was life—was real.

And so, although death isn’t looked forward to, and no-one is significantly challenging it in the way that will demonstrate its nothingness, it is accepted. And so part of the ethic of the ego’s infrastructure, is to embrace death as an ultimate proof that life had been successfully established and lived.

Now, we read last time . . .

*Even the past life which death might indicate could only have been futile if it must come to this, . . .<sup>1</sup>*

I mean, what’s the point of living a life that must end in death in order for its actuality to be validated? . . .

*Even the past life which death might indicate could only have been futile if it must come to this, and NEEDS this to prove that it was. You question Heaven, but you do not question THIS.*

You don’t. You know the saying, “Only two things are for sure: death and taxes.” No-one actually stands up and says, “I don’t intend to die, because I am beginning to understand that death is an illusory experience that we put ourselves through, that we don’t have to put ourselves through, and I’m getting off the wheel of history. This life I am living now, is the life when I’m going to get off the wheel of history.”

*You could heal and be healed if you DID question it. And even though you know not Heaven, might it not be more desirable than death? You have been as selective in your questioning as in your perception.*

You see. And I want to tie this in with Paul. He has been as selective in his questioning as in his perception. Because he wants me, when he comes and enquires of me, he enquires in the context of my changing the circumstances so that he can do something he feels righteously that he should be doing. When that isn’t what he should be doing, and the way he’s feeling obligated to it, is not the way he should be feeling.

The next sentence says . . .

*An open mind is more honest than this.*

When you go to your Guide or you go to the Holy Spirit, and you ask a question, and you ask the question in a way that requires the answer to fit your pre-existing values, you're not going to hear an answer because your mind isn't open.

And Paul couldn't hear the answers. And while he was on the trip, he would go out on the balcony every morning when he got up. And he would implore me to explain to him how all of this nonsense, all of this stimulation that he found everyone else basking in. And of course he had very negative opinions about it, I mean it was almost as though they were unable to exist without this artificial stimulation of new experiences and new things to see and bright colors and things that had nothing to do with teleportation, had nothing to do with physical healing as his hip [chuckle] gets more and more uncomfortable.

See, he didn't realize that what he was choosing to do was disabling him in his denial of what confronted him because it didn't fit his current value system.

*An open mind is more honest than this.*

Now . . .

*The ego . . .*

. . . the orphan mentality . . .

*. . . has a very strange notion of time, and it is with this notion that your questioning might well begin. The ego invests heavily in the past, and in the end believes that the past is the ONLY aspect of time that is meaningful.*

All of Paul's thoughts were out of the past—commitments he had made long ago, circumstances that made it impossible for him to fulfill those commitments, the fact that things that should have been done weren't done and were still waiting for him to do while he did irrelevant things. All of these past memories, issues and experiences were what he was valuing. It was impossible for him to be present in the moment at Disneyland.

*The ego invests heavily in the past, and in the end believes that the past is the ONLY aspect of time that is meaningful. You will remember that we said its emphasis on guilt enables it to ensure its continuity by making the future LIKE the past, and . . .*

... what? . . .

*... thus avoiding the present.*

If you want to imagine time correctly, it is a line that comes from the ancient past up to the present moment, and you see that present moment as a transition point in the line to what will come, the future. But the fact is, what the ego sees as a transition point, is a gap in the line. The past is memory and the future is imagination. And there's a gap between the two. They are not connected. And that gap, if that's where you will bring your attention, is where your escape from time can occur.

*You will remember that we said its emphasis on guilt . . .*

... the ego's . . .

*... enables it to ensure its continuity by making the future LIKE the past and thus avoiding the present. By the notion of PAYING for the past in the future the past becomes the DETERMINER of the future, making them continuous WITHOUT an intervening present.*

You see, [chuckling] five days, Paul was never in California. [laughing] He was in the past forecasting the future, and letting the past color the present. So that everyone around him who was tickled to death and happy and laughing and enjoying themselves, were all insane. Misunderstanding what was meaningful and distracting themselves from what was meaningful by silly stimulation.

He saw himself. He saw his mind-set. And, all the time he was being there having to observe these people being insane, he was feeling the weight of the future beating him down, putting him further behind, putting him at further disadvantage and ultimately, demonstrating to him his powerlessness. It was very insulting.

*By the notion of PAYING for the past in the future the past becomes the DETERMINER of the future, making them continuous WITHOUT an intervening present. For the ego uses the present ONLY as a brief transition to the future, in which it brings the past TO the future by interpreting the present in PAST terms.*

*NOW has no meaning to the ego. The present merely reminds it of past hurts, . .*

“Yeah, can’t you so-and-so’s see that what you’re having so much fun at and what you insisted on dragging me along with you to experience is like rubbing salt in the wound—just making the problem worse? Don’t you understand me at all? Don’t you understand what this work is that Raj and I are doing?”

That’s what the ego says.

*The present merely reminds it of past hurts, and it reacts to the present as if it WERE the past. The ego cannot tolerate RELEASE from the past, . .*

. . . why not? Because it must have the past in order to secure a future for itself in which you can pay for what you’ve done wrong and improve yourself, refine your soul, bring yourself closer to God. Which really means, be an orphan who manages, let’s say, to get up to the top floor of the orphanage with the best view. [sigh]

*The ego cannot tolerate RELEASE from the past, and although the past is no more, the ego tries to preserve its image by responding AS IF it were present. Thus it dictates reactions to those you meet now from a PAST reference point, obscuring their present reality.*

You remember last time we were talking about someone going to a party and meeting somebody and the upshot of it was, that that person reminded them of another person they knew. In other words, the impression they got from this person was like the impression they got from another person. The impression was something they got and had nothing to do with either of these individuals. And so connection never occurred.

*. . . it dictates reactions to those you meet now from a PAST reference point, obscuring their present reality.*

Paul’s mindset dictated his reactions to those around him—the stupid ones who ought to know what’s important but obviously didn’t, and that included his wife, Susan. And that’s exactly how malicious the ego can be when its will is violated, because Paul, in his right Mind, knows that Susan is his partner. She is part of the team that he and she constitute. And he knows that her entire motivation is one that is in support of this work and of his relationship with me and [chuckle] most of all, she looks forward to his experiencing the real benefit of our collaboration . . . which can be better stated, our friendship.

*In effect, if you follow the ego’s dictates, you will react to your brothers as though they were someone ELSE, and this will surely prevent you from perceiving them as they ARE.*

Paul goes to Disneyland every day and not only having negative thoughts about those close to him, but noticing how people tend to be led around by very subtle controls. Noticing how well designed [chuckling]—you can hear how silly this is—noticing how well designed and laid out the park is so that people can be moved with the greatest ease. See. So that people can be moved with the greatest ease. Rather than so that people can move where they wish to go with the greatest of ease. It is designed so that people can most easily do what they feel invited to do by the circumstances and their desires.

But Paul interpreted it as control, and that these people were all like sheep being herded from one land to another.

The orphan mindset is delusional. And that's what it's important to understand. And it is also mesmerizing. It is like getting caught in an eddy in a stream or a river. Like a leaf getting caught in an eddy off to the side where the current flows in a circular motion and the leaf is trapped there away from the movement of the stream.

The mindsets you employ and the values you employ can become mesmerizing. Another word you might find more palatable is, obsessive. And the answer isn't for the details of the obsession to be altered, but for the inclination to be obsessive, to be abandoned. And Paul was caught in an eddy. He was mesmerized. So that he saw everything in very stark and negative terms. Because why? Because his important and valuable work was being honored less than the wild stimulation provided by Disneyland.

Now, you all can laugh, but your own obsessions are just as silly.

Let's continue . . .

*In effect, if you follow the ego's dictates, you will react to your brothers as though they were someone ELSE, . .*

. . . [chuckling] the jerks you think they are . . .

*. . . and this will surely prevent you from perceiving them as they ARE. And you will receive messages from them out of your OWN past because, by making it real in the present, you are forbidding yourself to LET IT GO.*

Oh boy, Paul held on to it and held on to it, tighter and tighter, until his leg wouldn't move and he had to ride in an elderly person's cart.

*You thus deny yourself the message of release that every brother offers you NOW.*

Meaning, in the gap between the past and the present, the past and the future. Yes, there was wonderful stimulation constantly provided at Disneyland. That, if allowed to register, would have served to let Paul slip off the line of time and become unbound to what he had become fixated on. Which was the whole reason I insisted that they go.

*The shadowy figures from the past . . .*

. . . these are memories, these are impressions that you're giving preference to rather than the experience of actual contact with a Brother.

*The shadowy figures from the past are precisely what you must ESCAPE.*

In other words, it isn't the reconfiguration of the shadowy figures from the past that needs to occur, it is escape from them that must occur.

*For they are not real, and have no hold over you unless you bring them WITH you.*

And can you see what Paul took with him to Disneyland? He took the past. He took a whole way of thinking and he took it with him into an environment that tried to suck his attention away from his obsession. And he held onto it for righteous reasons.

He cannot use my presence or his willingness to be connected with me. And no-one else can either. And he also cannot hold his connection with the Holy Spirit—that which is nothing more than his right Mind—as a proof of his value, of his meaningfulness, or of his excellent position as a spiritualizing orphan, an image. It isn't something to capitalize on because that's just an impression as well.

*The shadowy figures from the past are precisely what you must ESCAPE.*

You know, the impression about so-and-so that is like the impression you got from her tonight. That's a shadowy figure from the past that colors your experience in the present and completely cuts you off from what's really happening tonight.

*The shadowy figures from the past . . .*

. . . and I'm reading this over and over because it's a significant sentence.

*The shadowy figures from the past are precisely what you must ESCAPE. For they are not real, and have no hold over you unless you bring them WITH you. They carry the spots of pain in your minds, directing you to attack in the present in retaliation for a past that is no more.*

And talk about attack. Paul was smooth at it and not too cutting, but in all righteousness, he let it be known that what everyone was engaged in, wasn't in his opinion, really valuable and therefore he couldn't let himself fully embrace it. And the words that came out of his mouth were not nice.

*They carry the spots of pain in your minds, directing you to attack in the present in retaliation for a past that is no more. And this decision is one of FUTURE pain.*

This decision sets into motion the continuation of the past. It is therefore a decision of future pain.

*Unless you learn that past pain is delusional, you are choosing a future of illusions and losing the endless opportunities . . .*

. . . that Disneyland provides which you could find for release in the present.

It actually says . . .

*Unless you learn that past pain is delusional, you are choosing a future of illusions and losing the endless opportunities which you could find for release in the present.*

Doesn't have to be Disneyland. You can be caught up in a sense of loss or of failed purpose, and go out and work in your garden and find in the garden, endless opportunities for release in the present. Everything is stimulating if you don't mind your uptight red-ass attitude being unsettled, unrutted, kicked out!

You are confronted at every moment, whether it's Disneyland or whether it's your garden, by the Kingdom of Heaven. If you don't think that reality is stimulating, then you have some wonderful discoveries to make.

Being Awake does not mean experiencing a mind so full of peace, [whispering] that there's no movement—that nothing happens that might distract you from the quiet. Doesn't that sort of sound like the experience you'll have in that box six feet under?

That's not life. That's not Reality and that's not the nature or the experience of a holy Mind—a whole Mind.

*The ego would PRESERVE your nightmares, . .*

You see, it's so easy to say, "Well what in the hell is an ego anyway? The Course talks about the ego . . . the ego . . . the ego . . . the ego." The ego's nothing more than your bad habits that you employ and won't let go of. Just like Paul was. And it would preserve your nightmares, reestablish daily, momentarily, everything that happens.

All of the intricate creativity and artwork of all the rides and grounds at Disneyland, are just tantalizing tidbits of nonsense that, like the fire draws the moth into the flame, draw you into your forgetfulness of what's important. Paul defined what was important to him as a holy work. Others might define it as a turning point in their career. Others might define it as obtaining emancipation as a woman.

*The ego would PRESERVE your nightmares, and PREVENT you from awakening and understanding that they ARE past.*

Every morning Paul could have gone out on that balcony and looked around and let the present jar him out of the mesmerizing eddy of his thoughts that he was caught by. You see, it isn't the circumstances with the transcripts or the demands of daily life that needs to be gotten away from, it's this insane use of the mind by becoming preoccupied and fixated and obsessed upon a way of looking at things that doesn't represent the facts, but which are so compellingly obvious to you in your distorted frame of reference, that you believe it.

Now . . .

*Would you RECOGNIZE a holy encounter if you are merely perceiving it as a meeting with your own past?*

See, that doesn't mean that you would perceive it, you'd say, "Oh, this is a meeting from my past." That isn't what it means. If you are merely perceiving something going on in the present, from a prior reference point, if you meet a new person who reminds you of a person you used to know, you're meeting with your own past, not with the individual in front of you.

So . . .

*Would you RECOGNIZE a holy encounter if you are merely perceiving it as a meeting with your own past? For you are meeting no-one, and the SHARING of salvation, which MAKES the encounter holy, is excluded from your sight.*

The last thing Paul wanted to do during those five days was share Salvation. [laughter] He wanted to nurse his wounds and let everybody know how insensitive they were.

*The Holy Spirit teaches that you always meet YOURSELF, and the encounter is holy because YOU are. The ego teaches that you always encounter your past, and because your dreams WERE not holy . . .*

. . . were, past tense . . .

*. . . not holy the future CANNOT be, and the present is without meaning. It is evident that the Holy Spirit's perception of time is the exact opposite of the ego's.*

Oh, yeah, The Holy Spirit, yeah—that which is nothing but your right Mind.

I want to introduce something here. The Course talks about the Voice for Truth and the voice for fear. Right?

Well, I'm going to tell you something. The Voice for Truth is the Holy Spirit, right?—nothing more than you're right Mind. Well, the Voice for Truth and the voice for fear are both *your* voice, you know, speaking out of both sides of your mouth. You give voice to one teacher or the other. Without you to give voice to it, neither teacher would be manifest.

When you give voice, as Paul did for those five days, to the voice for fear, you are speaking from a state of inner delusion. You are speaking from a mind-set that cannot get out of itself and insists upon magnifying itself. It is a form of insanity. It is an experience of mesmerism—of being mesmerized.

But when you make a point of becoming still and listening for the Holy Spirit, or me, or your Guide, and you hear and you give voice to that, you are giving voice to that which is nothing more is your right Mind. And that which you truly Are blossoms, blooms, begins to come forth and fill you with a new experience of yourself which, if it is entertained, if it is allowed to remain, will slowly and even rapidly, cause your frame of mind, your perspective to shift so that to entertain the voice for fear and give it voice will become less and less attractive to you.

And that's the way you step off the wheel of history. That's the way you slip through the little gap between the past and the future.

*It is evident that the Holy Spirit's perception of time is the exact opposite of the ego's. The reason is equally clear, for they perceive the goal of time as diametrically opposed.*

*The Holy Spirit . . .*

. . . your right Mind . . .

*. . . interprets time's purpose as rendering the need for it unnecessary.*

Paul could not have been miserable if he did not value time. Because the past had put him in a bad position that would cause his future to be more and more problematic. And that was his justification for not being present in the now, no matter what the stimulation was in the now.

The stimulation could have been when he was standing out on the balcony—a bird dropping falling and hitting the ground from a bird up in the pine tree—that could've been the point of stimulation that brought his attention into the Now and cleared his head. Because it wasn't the subject matter of his attention. It was, I'm going to say it this way, the timeliness of his perception. Was his perception really in the Now, uncolored by the past and uncolored by his projections of the future? You see? It doesn't matter what the subject matter is.

*The Holy Spirit interprets time's purpose as rendering the need for it unnecessary. Thus does He regard the function of time as temporary, serving only his teaching function, which is temporary by definition.*

The teaching function of your right Mind, is to bring you back into your right Mind. Well, that isn't going to take eternity. It isn't going to take forever. It is going to happen. And so, the time it takes means that the function is a temporary function. And when you finally yield into the moment, into the Now, and let your attention be there without the coloration of your memory or your anticipative imagination, you will wake up.

*HIS emphasis . . .*

. . . the Holy Spirit's . . .

*. . . is therefore . . .*

. . . listen to this . . .

*. . . on the only aspect of time which CAN extend to the infinite, for NOW is the closest approximation of eternity which this world offers.*

Why? Because it is as though the little gap between the line of the past and the line of the future, the little gap is sitting in the middle of eternity. It is happening now. It's the only thing that's present. And if the line that constitutes the past, and the line that constitutes the future were snuffed out, what would happen to the little gap? Well, the little gap only appeared to have size because of how close the line of the past and the line of the future were together. You drop them out and now that little space can't be identified between endlessness—eternity.

So . . .

*HIS emphasis is therefore on the only aspect of time which CAN extend to the infinite, for NOW is the closest approximation of eternity which this world offers. It is in the REALITY of now, without past OR future, that the beginning of the appreciation of eternity lies. For only now is HERE, and IT presents the opportunities . . .*

. . . Oh, dear, that awful thing called stimulation . . .

*. . . IT presents the opportunities for the holy encounters in which salvation can be found.*

You see, you take your weekends like Paul took his vacation. You take it with a grievance. You know, your life at work is stressful. But you get two days off. And you get a little relief where you can do a few things you would like to do. But the next week is gonna come and it's going to be like last week.

And you don't realize that last week was nothing more than a week of impressions you had about last week, and thoughts you had about those impressions. And what you're anticipating for next week, is built upon the impressions, not the actual experience with reality, but the impressions of reality which you took in the week before that you expect to happen. And so you set the stage. And you value this. You think you have to do it.

And like Paul discovered after the fact, he didn't have to do it and you don't have to do it. You don't have to get caught in an obsessive pattern of insane thinking. And thinking isn't even really a good word for what's happening. An obsessive, unintelligent discordant movement of disconnected, unreasonable thoughts which you think are totally reasonable. And because you believe them, when they are all impressions, and not an experience of reality at all, you need a means of escape. From what? Not the job, but from the fact that you are operating on the basis of impressions that you gather for whatever righteous reasons you've come up with, and which you use to refuse to experience the moment you're in—the Real moment. That is what you need freedom from. And that's where healing occurs.

*The ego, on the other hand, regards the function of time as one of extending itself IN PLACE of eternity, for, like the Holy Spirit, the ego interprets the goal of time as its own. The continuity of past and future, under ITS direction, . .*

. . . sound like control to you?

*The continuity of past and future, under ITS direction, . .*

. . . and doesn't it sound like Paul was trying to be in control the whole time everyone else was letting themselves be stimulated out of their gourd with good stuff that was irrelevant.

*The continuity of past and future, under ITS direction, . .*

. . . the ego's direction . . .

*. . . is the only purpose the ego perceives in time, and it closes over the present so that no . . .*

. . . what?

*. . . gap in its OWN continuity can occur. ITS continuity, then, . .*

. . . the continuity of insane thinking, insane preoccupation with that which distracts you from reality . . .

*. . . would KEEP you in time, . .*

. . . so that someday you do ride around in an old people's cart!

*ITS continuity . . .*

. . . which you maintain, there's no ego apart from you inflicting itself on you, you're maintaining it. It's a habit, it's the orphan mentality.

*ITS continuity, then, . .*

. . . if you reinforce it . . .

*. . . would KEEP you in time, while the Holy Spirit would release you FROM it. It is HIS interpretation . . .*

. . . the Holy Spirit's . . .

*. . . of the means of salvation which you must learn to accept, if you would share His goal of salvation for you.*

*You, too, will interpret the function of time as you interpret yours.*

As you interpret your function.

Well, hopefully Paul won't get caught up again in the righteous function of relaying the truth to the world that he and I together are sharing. He will be active in that function, but not as a righteous function, not as something that he must do in a way that impresses everyone else so that they will honor the truth that's being shared. I mean, to not be . . . or to cancel a meeting twenty-four hours before it happens for no good reason at all, except to jump on a plane and go to Disneyland, is not something that deserves much respect, is it?

And of course, he's not really interested in making a good impression. And he really isn't. But you know what? The ego gets in the other way around as I've mentioned before. He doesn't want to make a bad impression. And it's the same hook either way. Someone who's caught up in making a good impression is caught in the eddy just as much as the person who doesn't want to make a bad impression.

When being the Christ, giving voice to the Voice for Truth, isn't about looking good or looking bad, it's just about being in the now. It's about being in the gap. And while any of you are being in the gap, you help to pull others into it and make it easier for them to find it. And to value it more than what their history is telling them they are bound to experience in the future in which they must either defend themselves against, or use to undo the faults that they've engaged in, in the past.

*If you accept your function in the world of time as healing, you will emphasize ONLY the aspect of time in which healing can occur.*

Well, you think Paul was interested in healing [chuckling] anybody? No, they were all inflicting the irrelevant upon him. He wanted to protect himself. Do something to make his future not as bad as it was going to be if he continued to let himself be in this place—this activity that had no Meaning to it at all.

*If you accept your function in the world of time as healing, you will emphasize ONLY the aspect of time in which healing can occur. For healing CANNOT be accomplished in the past, and MUST be accomplished in the present to release the FUTURE. This interpretation ties the future to the PRESENT, . .*

. . . and I'm adding, instead of the past . . .

*. . . and extends the present rather than the past. But if you interpret your function as destruction, you will lose sight of the present and hold on to the past to ENSURE a destructive future. And time WILL be as you interpret it, for of itself it is NOTHING.*

When you find yourself beginning to feel incensed at others' lack of appreciation for what you value, and when you begin to see yourself as put upon by people or by circumstances, where what you value is constantly foiled, you may know that you have gotten caught in an eddy of, well, I'm going to call them, morbid thoughts swirling around a central point of attention that you are bringing to it and which you insist upon magnifying, which will ensure that you will be even more obsessively committed to it and it's the whole miasma of confusion that feels like intelligence that isn't real and that you don't have to honor and that you can escape by watching a bird-dropping fall, or watering a plant, or noticing a bloom, or daring to genuinely feel happy when everything from your memory says, "you have no choice but to be miserable. You have no reasonable choice but to feel miserable."

It's a lie. It's a mesmeric lie. It's a self-perpetuating confusion that will exist only as long as you give your attention to it and will vanish the moment you bring your attention into the little gap between memory and imagination—the past and the future.

[Addresses audience] I love you. I love you and I love everyone watching. This is not an advertisement: Get into the gap!

And I look forward to being with you next week.

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*A Course In Miracles (reference pages)*  
Chapter 12 – Section – HEALING AND TIME  
<sup>1</sup> Sparkly Book – p.288, Last Full Par. / JCIM – p.121, 3<sup>rd</sup> Par. from Bottom  
Chapter 13 – SECTION – THE FUNCTION OF TIME  
First Edition – p. 229, 1<sup>st</sup> Full Par. / Second Edition – p. 245, Par. 4

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