

A COURSE IN MIRACLES

STUDY GROUP

WITH RAJ

April 30th 2011

THIS IS A ROUGH TRANSCRIPT.
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Good evening. And welcome to everyone who's joining us on the Internet.

Well, last week we talked about the joy of Easter and the fact that every single moment provides the opportunity for the experience of resurrection. And therefore, every moment holds the promise of joy as well as the experience of joy and it awaits everyone's willingness to stand in receipt of it.

Tonight we're going to discuss some of the ways in which the experience of it is kept at a distance. And we're beginning a new section entitled:

SHADOWS OF THE PAST¹

To forgive is merely to remember only the LOVING thoughts you gave in the past, and those that were given you. All the rest must be forgotten. Forgiveness is a selective remembering, . .

. . . easy thing to do. You might think, "Oh, just selective remembering . . ." but there's a key here, there's an element that is absolutely essential. And as it happens, it's part and parcel of the two-step—of the holy instant.

Forgiveness is a selective remembering, based not on YOUR selection.

In other words, resurrection will not occur as a result of your consciously choosing to remember this, that, or the other thing, whether you might pick correctly or not. It's selective remembering that happens as a result of your saying, "Father, what is the truth here? Holy Spirit, what is the truth here? Father, share with me Your Perspective that It might illuminate my perception with what is Real instead of what I have believed it is." You see?

You don't know the difference between what is Real of what you're seeing and what is distortion that you've introduced into the picture. And so therefore, you simply can't rely upon yourself to make the decision between truth and illusion.

Forgiveness is a selective remembering, based not on YOUR selection. For the shadow figures you would make immortal are "enemies" of reality.

... *shadow figures* ... and again what is this section?

SHADOWS OF THE PAST

... *shadow figures* ...

... the shadow figures you would make immortal are "enemies" of reality.

Well, what are shadow figures? They are the definitions, the meanings that you have imagined and superimposed upon your Brothers and Sisters as well as all of Creation, concepts and beliefs *about* your Brothers and Sisters that you have superimposed upon them.

Be willing to forgive the Son of God for what he did NOT do.

The Son of God, the Daughter of God did not do what you imagined he or she did.

The shadow figures are the witnesses you bring with you to demonstrate he did what he did NOT. Because you brought them, you will hear them.

... you will listen to yourself.

And you who kept them by your OWN selection do not understand how they came into your minds, and what their purpose is.

So let's talk about this for a minute. Where did these shadow figures come from and what is their purpose? Well, to answer that question we have to go back to the beginning, don't we. We have to go back to that point where you said, "Father, I'd rather see it my way. Father, I'd rather determine what this is. Father, I want a divorce." And then you joined with another Son or Daughter of God in that intent and together you fantasized your reality you

made up, you created out of imagination the meanings for everything God had already Created. It's that simple.

But, the moment you did that, the moment you separated from God and said, "I'm going to stand here in my own right and I'm going to use my God-given intelligence and my God-given capacity to be, to determine everything for myself. I'm going to make myself out of my capacity to be intelligence, as God created me to be." You see?

But when that happened . . . the big surprise was that . . . as we've discussed before, two elements came into the picture: Fear and guilt. Fear was your innate sanity—it was the feeling that is like the alarm on a truck that rings when the truck is backing up saying that there is danger of some sort, be alert, don't proceed unconsciously. You see? And so the fear was the discomfort you felt from trying to do something you can't do.

You were trying to be independent. You can't do that. You can't succeed at doing it. But as long as you insist upon trying, the discomfort, the dissonance will be there. You call it fear. And then, it occasions guilt. You see? Because you're attempting to do something you can't do but you believe you can and in that belief, you are wrong. And so you're engaging in actively being wrong. You see?

Well, there is a God. There is truth. And so you're not going to be able to try to do the impossible without this feedback. You're simply not.

Now, existence for you is made up of two fundamental things: Fear and guilt. You're still experiencing the only Creation there is: The Kingdom of Heaven, but now you're experiencing It through fear and guilt. It *colors* everything as you begin to define everything on your own.

And so your definitions embody whatever degree of fear or guilt is being experienced at the time that the meanings are being given. Because there is fear, you know there is danger. Where is the danger? Why it's in Creation itself. It's in the only thing you have available to you to have a concept about, to create a definition of, to create a shadow figure about.

And so, as many of you may have heard, there's a phrase that, "life is a terminal illness. Enjoy it while it lasts." You see? So, eternal life has now been given a demeaning meaning . . . *demeaning meaning. It isn't life eternal*, it isn't the constant experience of Easter, if I may put it that way, it is a terminal illness.

Now, everything has scary aspects to it. Everything you see is polarized. It therefore is conflicted but somehow maintaining a tenuous balance so that

everything doesn't disappear into chaos. And of course, the reason it doesn't disappear into chaos is not because the conflict is balanced, but because it's the Kingdom of Heaven and it's the evidence of God and it can't disappear into oblivion. You see?

But nevertheless, the fear is there and it colors everything you're experiencing.

Now, your Brothers and Sisters are like you and they are part of the danger even though you've joined with them in your independence. You have a interdependent independence because you cannot separate from the Father without a mutual agreement to be at odds with the Father. And so you have an agreement to be independent. And you each confirm the others' independence even though the confirmation states absolutely that you're dependent and you are depending upon each other to help maintain this distance from God—this unconsciousness of your holy relationship with God and with each other. You see?

So these shadow figures are the meanings that you apply to the Kingdom of Heaven and that you started applying the moment you got your divorce—the moment you said, “Father, I'd rather do it my way.” You see?

These shadow figures have to be given up. You have to stop applying them to the moment you're in. Because as long as you keep applying them, you're not available to what's actually happening in this moment you're in. The Kingdom of Heaven remains unavailable to you because of your conscious intent to ignore It in favor of holding onto your shadow figures—you're holding on to the ones that make sense to you. You see?

They . . .

. . . the shadow figures . . .

. . . represent the evil that you THINK was done to you.

You see? The simple fact is, you're the one who said, “Father, I'd rather see it my way” and that very intent, acted upon, brought the experience of fear and guilt into your experience. It's nobody else's fault. But because everything has become polarized by fear and guilt in your mind, you assign the evilness to the things “out there . . .” your Brother, your Sister . . . and then you hold them to that. And because they're in the same boat because they agreed to do this with you, they're likely to believe you. And they're likely to feel threatened by you and the stance you're taking relative to them. And so now you have to work out an uneasy truce together . . . and that's life.

But it's not real life. It's you and your Brothers all responding to and acting in relationship to shadow figures—pictures you're each entertaining about each other that are false—because you can't see the truth about each other when you've said, "Father, I'd rather define it my way." The only way you can see it is through fear. It's really very simple.

The problem is that seeing things this way and being this way for quite some time, it has become excessively meaningful to you because it promises you the potential of becoming a fully realized independent identity. Hard to give up that kind of stuff.

They . . .

. . . the shadow figures . . .

. . . represent the evil that you THINK was done to you. You bring them with you only that you may return evil for evil, hoping that their witness will enable you to think guiltily of another and NOT harm yourself.

You see? As long as they can be guilty, as long as you can identify them as the guilty ones responsible for your lack of ease—your fear—it saves you from having to look at the fact that you made a decision to try to see things by yourself . . . something you cannot do and that the attempt is what has caused your whole experience to seem to be at odds with you or potentially at odds with you. You see? As long as you can point out there, you will overlook what really caused it. And you will deprive yourself of discovering the holy instant, which is the place where you abandon that stance. The easy, simple two-step that allows you to step back out of this false experience, this treacherous false experience of Creation—the Kingdom of Heaven—and return unto your right Mind.

Now, something else I need to point out to you is, that always the projection, the claim that something else or someone else is guilty of your discomfort, comes with emotion. One never, in utter peace, says, "This pain I'm experiencing was caused by Joe. Who was your pain caused by?" No one ever sits casually, unemotionally talking about pain and the cause of pain . . . right? Certainly it doesn't happen because there's no power in it. There's no power by which to bring about change, meaning the reduction of pain.

You're simply unable to be dispassionate about fear and pain and guilt. You all enjoy feeling your emotions. And they are what perpetuate your remaining in the human condition—the orphanage.

I'm going to read this again:

They . . .

. . . the shadow images . . .

. . . represent the evil that you THINK was done to you. You bring them with you only that you may return evil for evil, . .

. . . there's where you get balance and edge and reinforce your power . . .

. . . that you may return evil for evil, hoping that their witness will enable you to think guiltily of another and NOT harm yourself. They speak so clearly for the separation that no-one not obsessed with KEEPING separation could hear them.

What that means is they speak so clearly for your independence from the Father, your separating from the Father, "but Father, I'd rather do it my way, I'm going to be Your Son, I'm going to be Your Daughter and use the skills and capacities You have embodied in me to copy You and be a good representative or offspring that You can be proud of. But in order to do that I'm going to forget that You are my Father and whether You're going to be proud of me or not, and I'm going to embark on this adventure . . ."

So . . .

They speak so clearly for the separation that no-one not obsessed with KEEPING separation could hear them.

There's just no way that you could make sense out of the attempt to bring order where there is disorder by not handling the cause. Only someone obsessed with something unobtainable like independent selfhood could hear that there's a possibility of becoming independent by not recognizing what is causing the discomfort, the fear, the polarization and the *challenge* that causes you to see life as a "terminal disease."

So, do you see that what I'm talking about right now which is a pretty miserable state of affairs, is a perspective, is a way of experiencing being that's happening right along side an experience of Being that we talked about last week that had to do with a World that was eager to have you recognize for what It is, that everything around you is geared toward the happy reunion in you of your Mind and the true perception of everything it's experiencing. You see?

These two things are going on apparently side by side. One is fabulous, meaning of a fable, and the other is Real. And it's really simple to slip from one to the other. It's really simple to slip back Home. But it doesn't happen

because you're likely to find as you give more attention to what I'm saying and what the *Course* is teaching, that the hooker, the thing that gets you . . . that gets you involved in an activity that keeps you from Waking up is emotion, your emotions, and the satisfaction you get from the attempt to get control over someone or something that you have determined is the reason you're not happy, is the reason you're not well.

They . . .

. . . the shadow figures . . .

. . . offer you the "reasons" why you should enter into unholy alliances which support the ego's goals, and make your relationships the witness to its power.

“Well, if I can get so-in-so to agree with me, if I can get someone to acquiesce to what I want and what will make me feel really good, it's worth trying for. And I will find ways to sucker him in . . . I will provide enough goodies, enough benefits to him to get him to decide to go along with me and do the thing that I want even though he's sacrificing his integrity.”

You see? That's the way it works.

They offer you . . .

. . . the shadow figures . . .

. . . offer you the “reasons” why you should enter into unholy alliances which support the ego's goals, and make your relationships the witness to its power. It is these shadow figures. . .

. . . your definitions, keep that in mind . . .

It is these shadow figures which would make the EGO holy in your sight, . .

. . . “By dammit, that's true! And I'm fightin' for my ego and I'm gonna build my ego up and I'm gonna do my damndest to get everybody to agree with me that it's the greatest or perhaps, just absolutely great. And that's my goal in life.”

It is these shadow figures which would make the EGO holy . . .

. . . in other words, worthwhile—the thing to claim and hold onto relentlessly without ever giving it up . . .

... which would make the EGO holy ...

... in your sight

... and teach you what you do to keep IT safe is really love.

Let me read it again:

It is these shadow figures which would make the EGO holy in your sight, and teach you what you do to keep IT safe is really love.

It's bullshit. And it's a good time to use that word because we're sort of talking in holy words even though we're talking about the unpleasantness of denying your holiness. But you know what? To convince your Brothers or Sisters that for them to sacrifice their integrity to help you for the sake of getting a few benefits, to teach them that *that* is love and to believe that that's love because after all if they will acquiesce to you, you will truly be able to help them, you see? But if you have caused them to sacrifice their integrity, it can't be love. And to be very frank with you, it has to be evil. It has to be evil in the sense that practiced, it would cause people to find justification to sacrifice themselves. That's an excellent definition of evil.

Continuing:

The shadow figures ...

... all these meanings and definitions you're employing instead of having a connection with what everything really is, they ...

... ALWAYS speak for vengeance, and all relationships into which they enter are totally insane.

These seem to be very strong words. But they're simply true

The shadow figures ALWAYS speak for vengeance, ..

... and you say, "Vengeance doesn't go through my mind at any time during the day. I'm not a vengeful person, therefore this sentence doesn't relate to me." But let me ask you this: If you are the holy Son or Daughter of God, but you think that you're just a creature, an organism on the face of your planet that came out of some physical process, then this idea, concept, or belief that you are holding about yourself and according to which you are governing yourself, constitutes an absolute denial of your Sonship—your holy Sonship or

Daughtership. It blinds you to Who your Source is. It blinds you to your holiness. It causes you to be unconscious of it.

Isn't that vengeful? Isn't that awful? Isn't that an assessment that is made of you that causes you to sacrifice or be unable to be conscious of your divinity? That is absolutely vengeful. And when you apply that perspective to your Brothers and Sisters or your world and you say, "It's not the Kingdom of Heaven, it's a material world and universe," I'm sorry, you are denying It's holiness. It is a vengeful thing.

Now vengeance is usually something that happens as a result of something else. And indeed, there is something that has happened that has caused you to look at your world with vengeance, with a perspective, a meaning, a definition that is the antithesis of what it actually is. And that which has caused you to do that is the act you engaged in initially of separating from the Father. Vengeance is the perfect word.

Now do you have to get all upset about it? Do you have to get ultra critical about yourself? Do you have to say, "Boy, I must be a worse bastard than I ever thought I was." No! It just means that you need to have this kind of clarity . . . you need to see with this kind of clarity. You need to be able to look and say, "As long as I'm not doing the two-step and asking the Father what is the truth here, what is the real meaning of this leaf, what is the real meaning of this Brother or Sister, what is the real meaning of the moon" and so on . . . if you're not asking that, you are engaging in a refusal to experience It for what it really Is. That is an act of vengeance.

Now, once you're clear about that and at the same time you know that there is an answer to it called the two-step or the holy instant, you've got the means to step away from that experience, you have the means of abandoning the vengeance. The clarity is helpful even though the words express a truth that could seem to be a judgment upon you. Don't get sidetracked. See it for what it is, so that you might more easily say, "In this moment . . . this moment . . . this moment . . . Father what's the truth here . . . Holy Spirit what's the truth here . . . Father what's the real meaning of this . . . and the real meaning of this?" You see? That's all.

The shadow figures ALWAYS speak for vengeance, and all relationships into which they enter are totally insane.

Well why would we say they're insane? Well, you know what? We talked awhile ago about the fact that a special relationship is a relationship you have with something without ever asking the Father, what is the truth here. You see?

In other words, a special relationship is a relationship you have without the Father's Perspective, without the clear, true understanding and experience of Who this one is that you're having a relationship with, or what this thing truly Is that you're having a relationship with. A special relationship is a relationship you're having all by yourself and providing all of the meanings that are being employed to make sense out of what's happening.

And so, neither you nor your Brother are relating with anything real at all. You're bouncing off your own images that you're projecting onto each other. That's insane. Because you think you're having a relationship and yet, you're never connecting with the ones you truly Are.

Without exception, these relationships have, as their PURPOSE, the exclusion of the truth about the other, and of YOURSELF. This is why you see in BOTH what is not there, and make of both the slaves of vengeance.

You bring each other into a state of bondage because you engage each other in a vigorous involvement based upon false perceptions you're having of each other. You see?

This is why you see in BOTH what is not there, and make of both the slaves of vengeance. And why whatever reminds you of your past grievances, no matter how distorted the associations by which you arrive at the remembrance may be, attracts you, and seems to you to go by the name of love.

You see? You refer to these relationships as love/hate relationships. And love/hate relationships can be looked at as though they're all some form of love (screwed up mentality).

And finally, why all such relationships become the attempt at union through the BODY, for ONLY bodies can be seen as means for vengeance. That bodies are central to all unholy relationships is evident. Your OWN experience has taught you this. But what you do not realize are ALL the reasons which go to make the relationship unholy. For unholiness seeks to REINFORCE itself, as holiness does, by gathering to itself what it perceives as like itself.

Now, the reason that bodies can be seen as the means of vengeance is because when you said, "Father, I'd rather see things myself, I'd rather define them myself," where you had before that, experienced Creation as embraced by your mind, that all of Creation was going on within the Mind that you Are—the conscious awareness of being that you Are, once you got the divorce, all of a sudden, . . . surprise, . . . surprise you lost the infinite perspective which is one of

the reasons that fear entered into the picture. Because all of a sudden you were tiny, and you were identified with what you call your body even though prior to that, all of Creation was You including what you now call your body. But it also included the trees and the planets and infinity that you do not remember at this moment.

So, once you got your independence, once you thought you got your independence and suddenly found yourself identified with a specific form out of all of Creation, you identified that form as you. And the you that the body was, was this independent mind that's trying to make something out of itself. Well, what is the "it" that's making something out of itself? This body. This thing that has a head and legs and arms and a brain, a capacity to think that's purely physical. I mean really, since when could meat think? You know, it's nonsensical.

Now, the bodies became the means of dealing with grievances. And you all know that. After all what about the emotions that you feel when you get angry or when you're fighting for a right or you're trying to get justice. They're all associated with sensations, aren't they?

That bodies are central to all unholy relationships is evident. Your OWN experience has taught you this. But what you do not realize are ALL the reasons which go to make the relationship unholy. For unholiness seeks to REINFORCE itself, as holiness does, by gathering to itself what it perceives as like itself.

In the unholy relationship, . .

. . . listen to this . . .

. . . it is not the body of the OTHER with which union is attempted, but the bodies of those who are not THERE.

What do you suppose that means? It means the bodies of those whom you have conceived as . . . well, let's say . . . black . . . and maybe not fit to be a president. There you go.

In the unholy relationship, it is not the body of the OTHER with which union is attempted, but the bodies of those who are not THERE.

You have a concept about someone. And the concept is that they're a body just like you are. And some of those bodies . . . and of course, you're really not talking about the body itself of the holy Son of God or holy Daughter of God . . . you're talking about the body of the concept of a person that you have in your mind. And your concept of, let's say, a black person is such that they really

don't have the status or the stature or the *meaning* that it really takes to be a president . . . or to ride on the bus in the front. You see what I'm saying?

In the unholy relationship, it is not the body of the OTHER with which union is attempted, but the bodies of those who are not THERE.

The bodies of those that each of you have conceptualized and put in a category, whether they're an aunt or an uncle, a brother or a sister, or a cousin, or a neighbor whom you have developed very definite opinions and concepts about. And if you see them, you don't see them—the holy Son or Daughter of God—you see your concept of them and the very act of seeing them infuriates you.

It is insane. So again I'm going to read this:

In the unholy relationship, it is not the body of the OTHER with which union is attempted, but the bodies of those who are not THERE. Even the body of the other, already a severely limited perception of him, is not the central focus as it is, or in entirety. What can be used for fantasies of vengeance, and what can be most readily associated with those on whom vengeance is REALLY sought, are centered on and separated OFF, as being the only parts of value.

“Well, he was my friend but he did something and now he's not my friend. He did something that I can't tolerate. When *people of that sort do those things* I separate myself from them, because I have dignity and self-respect.”

There was no connection there with an individual—the holy Son or Daughter of God. There wasn't even a connection with whoever that individual believes *he is*. You had a monolog. You had a private experience that you fooled yourself into believing was about your Brother. And yet you just spun around in your own private fantasy, which has to inevitably leave your Brother or Sister at a complete loss because no connection with them has been made. And you've arrived at the point where the two-step is called for. You've arrived at the point where the holy instant has to be practiced.

Every step taken in the making, the maintaining . . .

. . . in other words, the creation, the making . . . the making of your fantasy, the making of your definition or meaning that you're applying to someone else.

Every step taken in the making, the maintaining and the breaking off of the unholy relationship is a move toward further fragmentation and unreality.

How can you tell? Well, does doing that cause you to be any closer to saying, “Father, what’s the truth here?” Does any of that put you closer to a moment where you can have an “Ah-ha!” experience and realize the truth? No. And because it’s engaged in with feeling, it inevitably moves the unholy relationship towards further fragmentation and unreality.

The shadow figures enter more and more, and the one in whom they seem to be DECREASES in importance.

As the shadow figures are more and more employed, the experience of who that other one truly Is fades further in the distance—becomes less and less meaningful or valuable.

That means that the employment of these shadow figures is the significant means you employ to avoid Resurrection, to avoid the experience of your Easter. It’s the means you use to avoid the brightness and the joy of the Real world and the resurrection and the Awakening.

So be willing to look at yourselves soberly, as we’ve been discussing, so that you might see just *exactly* how what you’re doing doesn’t serve you. Because in that clarity it will cause you to find it to be very reasonable to dare to practice the holy instant, to dare to engage in the two-step and to do it often, often, often!

We talked about the fact that resurrection means actual change. And it means that you’re going to experience an actual change, whereby you let go of the shadow images, whereby you let go of the memories that don’t serve your Awakening, where you willingly let go of everything that doesn’t express love or doesn’t show forth the love that you have expressed during your lifetime, so that the truly loving things that you have done and the truly loving things that have been done to you, stand alone, giving you an undistorted clear experience of Reality, which, because it is unconflicted allows for a spontaneous expansion of that clarity, beyond just the things you did that were loving and things that were done to you that were loving, so that all of Creation becomes embraced in that clarity of love.

Now I promise you—and I will keep saying this over and over—that Awakening will be spontaneous. You cannot work it. You cannot make it happen.

And that's the good news. Don't think that because you can't make it happen, it will never happen for you. Indeed, the minute you stop trying to make it happen, the minute you begin to genuinely say, "Father, what is the truth here?" And the minute you stop being discouraged because all the times that you've said it haven't caused you to experience it yet, it will spontaneously happen.

Everything about you and everything about Reality stands in enthusiastic and exuberant support of your recognizing the truth and is attentive to you constantly . . . daily . . . nightly, whether you're awake or asleep . . . to facilitate the truth registering with you. *Know this!*

During this coming week I'm going to ask you to be particularly attentive to the rising up of emotion in you as a means of getting control of a situation, so that you might squelch it instantly. Because remember, when you are doing that you are identified as a body, a body that isn't recognized to be part of Creation but just you in all of your importance. And because the sense of self that is identifying itself that way is an orphan, a self-declared orphan, it's perspective is false and it's colored by fear and guilt. And therefore, everything it engages in is an act of vengeance, which will hurt you by keeping you ignorant of what you would discover if you practiced the holy instant. That's the simple clarity.

I love you all. And I look forward to being with you next week.

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All rights reserved
PO Box 1490 / Kingston, WA 98346-1490 / USA
Phone: 360-638-0530 Fax: 360-881-0071
Website: <http://www.nwffacim.org>
E-Mail: paul@nwffacim.org