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The HOLY ENCOUNTER



NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2021

A Miracle Distribution Center Publication

...when you meet anyone, remember
it is a holy encounter.



Tuning to the Truth

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

Remember the days of car radios when you had to dial in the station? Depending on what might be blocking your signal, whether it be location, atmospheric conditions, or how you were holding your mouth, you might get good reception or a lot of static. Well, I had one of those cars. I remember once, when I was driving with my



husband Paul, and I tuned into a station with a lot of static. Now, Paul is a musician with almost perfect pitch, so he does not like static; he wants to hear the clear beauty

of the sound. I, on the other hand, was not as refined because I liked the station. He asked me how I could listen to a station with all that static. Since the station was a favorite and it never came in very well, I just tolerated it. I had gotten so used to the static; I didn't even notice it anymore.

"The ego depends solely on your willingness to tolerate it." (T-9.VIII.6)

Beverly is the co-founder and president of MDC, one of the longest-running organizations based on *A Course in Miracles*. As a student, lecturer and author on the Course since 1977, her streamed weekly commentaries on Course principles have become an inspirational study and spiritual family for many around the world. View her free weekly livestream meetings at miraclecenter.org

It hit me that this story is really a metaphor for life. We have gotten so used to the "static" of life: the fear, anger, frustration, judgments, feelings of worthlessness, depression, etc., that we don't even think there can be another way. We lament about all the disasters taking place and who is and is not responsible for them. We chew on this side of the problem and then that side of the problem, but like a useless piece of gristle, it needs to be spit out and not tolerated any longer.

"You who identify with your ego cannot believe God loves you." (T-4.III.4)

We put up with the pain, suffering, and problems of life because we don't think we deserve anything better. We don't realize that

there is another station clearly transmitting an alternative to our pathetic opinion. It is time we tune into the truth. We have made a mistake about who we are. *A Course in Miracles* would tell

each of us that we are God's holy child, we are the light of the world, we are the Kingdom of Heaven, but we have let a belief in darkness enter our minds, and so we need to be reminded of Who we are.

Like the story of the prodigal son, we feel we have left our Father's home for what we

"Since the station was a favorite and it never came in very well, I just tolerated it. I had gotten so used to the static, I didn't even notice it anymore."

Let's Keep it Going!

Your responses to our 2021 fundraising appeal began arriving last month. As always, we at the Center are grateful not just for your support during this annual appeal, but for those of you who generously and loyally support MDC's work all year long.

Our monthly **Holy Helpers**, along with all our consistent donors, keep the Center functioning year-round, serving Course students and reaching out around the globe. While we do our utmost to see that each donation is gratefully acknowledged, it's important for us to remind you just how essential you and your support are to MDC's mission. With that in mind, our recent letter included a **vinyl static cling** which features a poignant quotation from *A Course in Miracles*. We hope you have already affixed the removable cling to a

This holy instant would I give to You. Be You in charge. For I would follow You, certain that Your direction gives me peace.

A Course in Miracles
miraclecenter.org

mirror or window in your home and have been comforted by its message.

If you have yet to respond to this year's appeal, please consider joining the ranks of those who

keep MDC's doors open and the Course's teachings going out into the world. You may use the return envelope you received

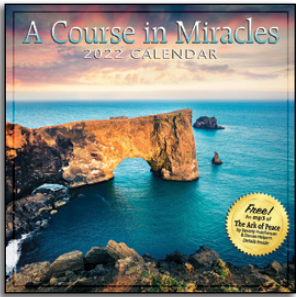
with this year's fundraiser, the envelope bound inside every issue of **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**, or the donation link at miraclecenter.org. We are deeply grateful for your support.

Continued on page 3

What's Happening...with the Course and the Center

For more information go to
miraclecenter.org or call 714-632-9005

● **Looking forward to a Miraculous New Year!** Our 2022 *A Course in Miracles* Wall Calendar is now available to give and receive as the perfect holiday gift! Featuring stunning



full color photos along with inspiring quotes from the Ark of Peace, this calendar is sure to keep the Course's

message of peace and healing forefront in your mind all year long. It's a meaningful gift you can give to all your family and friends – and the more calendars you purchase, the lower the price! See back cover.

● **You say it's your birthday?** Then we hope you will do as Steve Calhoun did and create a Facebook Birthday Fundraiser to help support our work. In a matter of a few clicks, Steve was able to post the following message: "For my birthday this year, I'm asking for donations to Miracle Distribution Center. I've chosen this nonprofit because their mission means a lot to me, and I hope you'll consider contributing as a way to celebrate with me." As a result, many of his friends stepped up to

make his wish come true! To create your own, just go to www.facebook.com/fundraisers and select us as your nonprofit.

● **Free Holiday ACIM e-Cards** - Share a thought from the Course electronically with friends and family this holiday season! We have come up with a variety of beautiful, full color e-cards with poignant Course quotes for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's, so check them out. It's easy and FREE on our website!



● **Supporting the future of the Center!** It is with great appreciation that we acknowledge a recent gift from the estate of Elsie Shrawder, a long-time supporter of our Center as a **Holy Helper**. Ms. Shrawder made the loving decision to include a bequest to MDC in her will. She felt strongly about the importance of continuing the work of the Center to share the message of *A Course in Miracles* into the future. Now that she has gently laid down her body, we still feel her mighty spirit. We thank her loving spirit for placing her trust in us. For information on including the Center in your

estate plan please visit our Legacy page under "About" in the menu bar on our website or call us. Thank you!

● **On-demand ACIM Seminars** - Continue your studies of the Course at your convenience, and in your own home, with these on-demand Seminars! We currently have three seminars on the principles of *A Course in Miracles* with Beverly McNeff for immediate viewing. Each seminar is six hours long, each having a unique focus. **Above the Battle Ground: Finding Peace in Turbulent Times**. Showing how re-focusing our minds on truth helps us to go beyond the illusion.

Getting God's Guidance offers the Course's look

at how we can experience God's Will for us, and the **Fundamentals of Forgiveness** shares the Course's approach to its chosen path for our awakening. Beverly has a unique ability to cut through the complexity of the Course and put it in terms that will inspire your mind and touch your heart. See page 15 for more details.



● **"I rest in God."** (W-109) This lesson reminds us that in challenging times, we can rest assured that God is always there to help and support us. As we step back and allow His peace to embrace our hearts and minds, we will experience a strength that has miraculous power to achieve the healing we are entitled to. We invite you to join us in this truth through the **Miracle Prayer Ministry** daily at 4:30pm (Pacific Time). Just stop for a moment and affirm this awareness for yourself, your loved ones, and all those who walk the world with you. It doesn't take more than a moment to give the gift of release by proclaiming the truth. The gift you give is the gift you will receive! Thoughts for:

November: God goes with me wherever I go. (Lesson 41)

December: I rest in God. (Lesson 109)



A Holiday Blessing

from Your Friends at Miracle Distribution Center

"Each little gift you offer to your brother lights up the world." (T-22.VI.9)

It all begins with you! Please join with us as together we nurture and extend the light of love that is within us this holiday season. Remember, that "light" is the translation of this world into Heaven.

"I am the light of the world. That is my only function. That is why I am here." (W-61)

"If there is light in the soul,
There will be beauty in the person;
If there is beauty in the person,
There will be harmony in the home;
If there is harmony in the home,
There will be order in the nation;
If there is order in the nation,
There will be peace in the world."

Chinese proverb



thought the world could offer us. Now the world and all its problems seem very real to us, and we find it hard to believe that our loving Father would accept us back after we have forsaken Him for the world. And yet, like the prodigal son, when we come Home to our Father (when we turn to Him), He welcomes us with open arms. For to God, we have never forsaken Him or left Him — we were always with Him.

When our son Jeffrey was about three years old, he went through the stage where he would wander away from us. At that age, kids are exerting their will and often go in the direction they want, even if the parent says no. One time Paul let Jeffrey wander away in hopes of teaching him a lesson. Instead of immediately going after him, Paul watched from a distance. When Jeff thought he was all alone, he began to cry. Paul quickly appeared to comfort him. Even though Paul told Jeffrey he was always watching him, and Paul was with him now, Jeff continued to cry. It took Jeffrey a while to finally be comforted.

We think we have wandered away from God's love and care. Yet we have never left God's awareness. The moment we are willing to identify with the truth of who we are, we will know ourselves again and feel the unity and joy that brings. Just as Jeffrey was still afraid and crying after he was found, so do we often feel lost in this world even though God is holding us. We need to remove the barriers that we have built up against His love and presence in our lives.

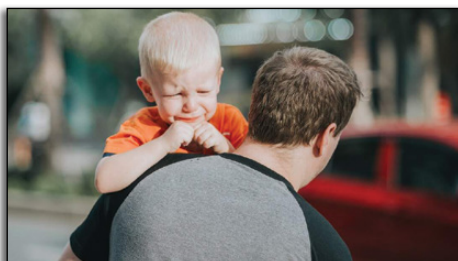
"What you believe is true for you. In this sense the separation has occurred, and to deny it is merely to use denial inappropriately. However, to concentrate on error is only a further error. The initial corrective procedure is to recognize temporarily that there is a problem, but only as an indication that immediate correction is needed." (T-2.VII.5)

The Course tells us that the ego is nothing more than a mistaken thought. It is a thought

that we could be separate from God, from His safety and love. But even though this thought is nothing, we have made its nothingness seem quite real. The world with all its devastation and beauty, our bodies with all their strengths and frailties, and our relationships with all their challenges and opportunities are all reflections of the thought of separation, of our ego.

It would make no sense to deny this world or its effects on us, since we still believe in their reality, and *A Course in Miracles* does not ask us to do this. Instead, it asks us to

look directly at every event, situation, or person who



causes us pain and tune into the truth instead of the illusion.

The Course tells us, "The best defense, as always, is not to attack another's position, but rather to protect the truth." (T-3.1.2) We will never escape from our suffering by denying that we think we are these physical bodies or by ignoring the things of the world. But, by focusing on the truth in every situation, we will be placing our attention on love, which

is our Source and the only thing that can transcend this illusory world.

"But, by focusing on the truth in every situation, we will be placing our attention on love, which is our Source and the only thing that can transcend this illusory world."

When Jeff was just learning to walk, he would pull himself up by grabbing the leg of our black lacquer piano.

He would move all around that big piece of furniture leaving little handprints all over the place. Before Jeffrey came into our lives, I never would have tolerated a smudge or mark on our beautiful piano. But with him,



I didn't see the handprints as something that took away from the beauty of the piano, but rather as what really made the piano beautiful. Those little marks reminded me of love. Oh, I cleaned the piano, but now I did it in gratitude for the life of the one who made those marks.

Perhaps there are people or situations in your life that have made an unpleasant mark. You will never heal those situations by denying them or attacking them, but only by transforming them in love. The key to healing is where we place our focus — what we are tuning in to. Unless we embrace this truth of who we are and who they are, we will continue the world of pain and suffering.

"The ego's opposite in every way, we call a miracle." (C-2.5)

We no longer need to be satisfied with the "static" that the world offers us. It is time for us to live the life God intended. We were created to be heirs to the kingdom,

and we need to accept that inheritance. The world and its myriad problems cannot change the truth of who we are or the love that God has for us. We need to start looking at these problems and see through them with God's Help to see the answer. This is the miracle God wants us to experience.

A Course in Miracles tells us that whatever the distress in our lives or the world, it is a call for help. No matter whether we think the deed was done maliciously, purposefully, or accidentally, the answer is always the same. "The only judgment involved is the Holy Spirit's one division into two categories; one of love, and the other the call for love." (T-14.X.7) The Course goes on to say that we are too bound to our perceptions to recognize love or a call for love and therefore we do not really respond to what a person or a situation is really offering us. But we can, with God's Help, allow a miracle to shift our perception to see the gift of every person and situation in which we find ourselves.

I am reminded of a story about when Jeff was just learning to speak; he would talk all the time! When we would drive around in the car, he would be busily looking out the windows taking in and commenting on each



Recognizing Spirit

Healing the Fearful Mind during Challenging Times

PART 1

by Lee Jampolsky, Ph.D.

Uncertain times of loss and change can increase fear and stress but can also lead to love, empathy, and purpose. The difference depends on where we direct our thinking. In the next two articles (i.e., this and the following issue of **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**), I offer thirty daily contemplations along with supporting quotes from *A Course in Miracles*. In this issue, I provide the first fifteen. Consider taking a few minutes each hour to contemplate and apply these to your life.

Day One: In today's world, there is far more finger-pointing going on than responsibility and empowered action. There is no single "right" response in grief or shock, no clear or easy answers when we are fearful. We only hear practical solutions born from love by finding the quiet and calm voice within us and seeing our part in healing.

"In quietness are all things answered, and is every problem quietly resolved. In conflict there can be no answer and no resolution, for its purpose is to make no resolution possible, and to ensure no answer will be plain." (T-27.IV.1)

Day Two: I look around the small community where I live and the world and see those suffering from the trauma that has become part of daily living. Yet, in all of this, I find opportunity beyond despair, because I firmly believe that all of us can take steps to move beyond our suffering and toward great healing and change. Why? Because tragedy can open us up to the experience of our common humanity with others. When we are in such a space, significant shifts in how we perceive others can occur.

"His plan for your awaking is as perfect as yours is fallible. You know not what you do, but He Who knows is with you. His gentleness is yours, and all the love you share with God He holds in trust for you. He would teach you nothing except how to be happy." (T-14.V.2:5)

Day Three: We have come to a point in history where we are desperately searching, whether we're aware of it or not, for solutions to an accumulation of personal and global

pain. The following years can be a wake-up call and a reminder of who we are and beliefs that need undoing. So much of our suffering can be overcome by changing how we think about ourselves and each other, moving from a reality based upon fear and separation to one of love and interconnection.

"What am I?"

...What you think you are is a belief to be undone. But what you really are must be revealed to you."
(W-91.6:5)



"There is but one problem, one truly lethal world condition, one cause of many of our personal and global tragedies: lack of love"

Day Four: If we are to have true peace, if our children are to live in safety and security, if our planet is to survive, we must – amid our pain or busy lives – begin to address the gaping wound that hatred, dualistic thought, and violence have created.

"Whatever the sickness, there is but one remedy. You will be made whole as you make whole, for to perceive in sickness the appeal for health is to recognize in hatred the call for love." (T-12.II.3:2)

Day Five: There is but one problem, one truly lethal world condition, one cause of many of our personal and global tragedies: lack of love. To move beyond misunderstanding and viewing our small world as composed of

separate interests, the path is to remove the obstacles to the awareness of love. This is as true in our personal lives as it is on the world stage and is a problematic belief system to confront because it ultimately means that we must look at the lies we have told ourselves.

"Whatever lies you may believe are of no concern to the miracle, which can heal any of them with equal ease. It makes no distinctions among misperceptions... In reality you are perfectly unaffected by all expressions of lack of love." (T-2.I.5)

Day Six: Seldom do we know when tragedy will come, be it a pandemic or attack, and no amount of preparation can make the world a "crisis-free" place. The key to maintaining

peace of mind in such an unpredictable world is not giving our strength – our ability to love – over to fear. Finding opportunities to love no matter what life brings us is the doorway to freedom

and empowerment.

"Strengths turned to weakness are tragedy indeed. Yet what is not given to the Holy Spirit must be given to weakness, for what is withheld from love is given to fear, and will be fearful in consequence." (M-25.4:8)

Day Seven: Overfocus on what you believe the complexity of the problem is may prevent you from seeing the real problem and solution. Our primary task is not looking to the tragedy itself for solutions or purpose but rather to see the real problem – perceiving separation – and let this set the course for our response to what is happening. Here we have a choice and can discover a purpose that makes us better individuals and brings us closer to one another.

"All this complexity is but a desperate attempt not to recognize the problem, and

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therefore not to let it be resolved. If you could recognize that your only problem is separation, no matter what form it takes, you could accept the answer because you would see its relevance. Perceiving the underlying constancy in all the problems that seem to confront you, you would understand that you have the means to solve them all." (W-79.6)

Day Eight: The human experience is not pain-free, but through our anguish, no matter how great it is, we can learn to be more compassionate and aware, in order to become healthier as individuals and as a society. Unfortunately, holding onto grievances about the past prevents us from creating compassionate awareness and blocks healing.

"You who were created by love like itself can hold no grievances and know your Self. To hold a grievance is to forget who you are." (W-68.1)

Day Nine: I believe there is more depth to my spiritual life and happiness because of the obstacles I have been presented. Each has been my teacher in growing in my capacity to love. I don't, of course, wish for tragedy for anyone, but I am grateful and in awe for our capacity to love even in the worst of times. Love never abandons us.

"The universe of love does not stop because you do not see it, nor have your closed eyes lost the ability to see." (T-11.1.5:10)

Day Ten: Nobody is the same during or after trauma, including the pandemic. Whether we grow in love and compassion or shrink in fear and anger depends on the choices we make next.

"Be not afraid of blessing, for the One Who blesses you loves all the world, and leaves nothing within the world that could be feared. But if you shrink from blessing, will the world indeed seem fearful, for you have withheld its peace and comfort..." (T-27.V.4:5)

Day Eleven: For all of us, the pandemic involves loss and change, for some lifelong. The challenge is to decide if you want change to make you better or bitter. Your decision is what will create the quality of your future. To become better is to find the peace of God. To become bitter is to succumb to fear.

"You will not find peace except the peace of God. Accept this fact, and save yourself the agony of yet more bitter disappointments, bleak despair, and sense of icy hopelessness and doubt. Seek you no further. There is

nothing else for you to find except the peace of God, unless you seek for misery and pain." (W-200.1:2)

Day Twelve: If we feed the flames of our anger, blame, and despair, we will never fully overcome and heal from the challenges before us. Because we often don't recognize the relationship between anger and fear, we can become confused and lost in what feels like very justified anger and blame. Taking responsibility for our healing and experience is not an easy road but an important one.

"The relationship of anger to attack is obvious, but the relationship of anger to fear is not always so apparent. Anger always involves projection of separation, which must ultimately be accepted as one's own responsibility, rather than being blamed on others." (T-6.in.1)

Day Thirteen: Worry about the future and guilt about the past prevent healing and effective responses. Prayer, contemplation, and meditation in the present moment are how we transform our fear and upset into compassionate action, thus accelerating healing.

"Prayer is a way of asking for something. It is the medium of miracles. But the only meaningful prayer is for forgiveness, because those who have been forgiven have everything. Once forgiveness has been accepted, prayer in the usual sense becomes utterly meaningless. The prayer for forgiveness is nothing more than a request that you may be able to recognize what you already have." (T-3.V.6)

Day Fourteen: It is possible to go through life believing that all situations – both good and bad – hold within them opportunities to become more compassionate and loving people.

"Have you really considered how many opportunities you have had to gladden yourself, and how many of them you have refused? There is no limit to the power of a Son of God, but he can limit the expression of his power as much as he chooses." (T-4.IV.8)

Day Fifteen: Many people, during our current challenges, find themselves unconsciously waiting for the next piece of bad news. They feel increasingly cynical and that there is little they can do. We can always do something to step into our peace of mind and away from fear and cynicism. Say to yourself, "Whatever I may experience today, whatever turns my life may take, may my heart be touched in some way that allows the awareness of the love of God to enter." Then,

observe your mind throughout the day for thoughts that lead elsewhere.

"Watch your mind carefully for any beliefs that hinder its accomplishment, and step away from them." (T-4.IV.8:5) ❖

We invite you to become a

Holy Helper



For over 40 years, **Miracle Distribution Center** has been an oasis of support and guidance for students of *A Course in Miracles*. Our life-affirming outreach, however, would not be possible without our **Holy Helpers**, our core group of donors whose support provides the Center with a constant



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If you have any questions please contact us at:
800-359-ACIM (2246) or
miraclecenter.org



Change Your Mind Change Your Life

“Listening” Our Way Home

by Diane Cirincione-Jampolsky, Ph.D.

The ways and means of “listening” on this earth plain are countless. Over the course of a lifetime, we adopt a collection of ways and means by which we “listen” in order to survive, to strive, to pursue, to succeed. Information deemed crucial flows into our awareness and permeates our consciousness daily from our parents, siblings, families, teachers, religious figures, politicians, partners, spouses, kids, in-laws, media outlets, and society in general. This is how we generally communicate to and from others... sharing information, feelings, and experiences, while receiving their input in return.

The way we “listen” described above is generally seen as necessary to live in the physical world. That being said, is there also another way and source for our listening? As Bill Thetford so eloquently stated to Helen Schucman, “*There must be another way of looking at the world.*” I try to remember that there is always another way of looking at the world if I am willing to find it. If that is so, then there must be another way of “listening in the world” over and far above what we experience day in and out.

During the last four decades of working in over 60 countries with the messages of *A Course in Miracles* and Attitudinal Healing, people often asked Jerry and me how we were able to do what we did. What were “the techniques” we used to make our lives work so seamlessly and conflict free? Our answer was always simple and the same. **We listen well!** Instead of asking the question, “Should we do this ... or should we do that?” like our egos were all too ready to do, we asked instead as the Course suggests, “What is it I need to know?”

Clearly, the staff of the Foundation for Inner Peace, guided by the original founders Judith Skutch Whitson and Robert Skutch, and currently the two new co-presidents,

Tamara Morgan and Dr. Robert Rosenthal, practice “listening” to determine the answers to all questions that arise for them as the officially designated publishers of *A Course in Miracles*. I remain deeply inspired by their unwavering consistency in this practice as it always serves as a reminder to me to do the same.

“Listening” has been front and center for me this past week. I briefly share here four experiences that brought the absolute power of listening in to transform incidents, first perceived as negative, into what they truly were...



and peace over conflict.

1. While driving at the speed limit down a two-way, single lane road last week, an aggressive driver in a high-powered sports car pulled up close behind my car and beeped his horn for me to go faster. When I did not do so out of courtesy to my elderly passenger, he accelerated at high speed and quickly passed me on the right side in the bike lane. It startled me and frightened and angered my passenger who immediately began to verbally berate the driver. My seemingly eternal question: “Is there another way of looking at this road rage situation?” came to mind. I “listened” for the answer.

opportunities to exercise my Free Will and to “choose once again” love over fear

“Information deemed crucial flows into our awareness and permeates our consciousness daily from our parents, siblings, families, teachers, religious figures, politicians, partners, spouses, kids, in-laws, media outlets, and society in general.”

I then said to my passenger that I was choosing to see this road rage differently and asked if she was interested in hearing my thoughts. She said she was, and so this is what I shared. “That driver is responsible for all of his actions. I am responsible for all my reactions. I do not choose to proliferate negative, angry feelings about him in me because then it will stay with me. I choose, instead, to bless him and surround him and all that is going on inside his consciousness in Light so he may find his own highest good and create safety for himself and those around him.” What followed was a return to peace inside of each of us and inside of our car.

2. My family has a lovely cottage on a long, quiet, and mostly empty beach out on the eastern end of Long Island, New York. A few days ago, my nephew, Kevin, shared

the following experience he had about listening, learning, and changing consciousness. He wrote:

“Yesterday, when I was running Kenzie (a big, Golden Lab) on the beach, as we were approaching a father and son, Kenzie was out in front of me. The boy was standing in the water and the

father immediately took a defensive stance. I thought ‘oh here’s another *%#&* saying that you can’t let your dog run around on the beach!’ As we got closer, I could see that he was serious about it, and I ran to attach the leash and we managed to keep Kenzie away from the boy. Then, the father was actually apologetic and said that his son was autistic and terrified of dogs! I apologized, feeling a bit remorseful as I walked away. When I came back, I felt guided to talk with the dad. He

told me that the boy had always loved the ocean and used to be a champion disabled swimmer. Now he just loves to stand in and flop around in the water and they, literally, rent a house on the beach for that purpose! I could feel this man's love for his disabled son. I have always felt that the people that we meet are our teachers and especially so for disabled persons. I took away this lesson, 'Don't be quick to judge people. See them instead as your teacher.'

3. Since Jerry traveled to the Afterlife late December, I have had a sharp pain along my left side that has rendered me immobile at times and unable to get out of bed without a struggle and with a need to hold on to furniture in order not to fall. During many days I was unable to walk without assistance. Doctors could not explain what it was except to possibly attribute it to a curving of my spine. I did practically everything to try to ameliorate the 24/7 pain, but to no avail.

Then, last Thursday night as I laid down on my back to sleep, I simply said, "What is it I need to know?" The following night as I laid down to sleep in the same way as I have been doing for months, I simply repeated, "What is it I need to know?" What I heard inside my head was a clear voice which stated simply, "Remove your pillow." I immediately protested in a loud voice, "I LOVE my pillow. I don't want to remove it." I then heard in an even softer voice, "Remove your pillow." I begrudgingly did so, all the while grumbling that I was only going to do this once. When I awoke in the morning I sat up in bed, stood up, and walked to the bathroom in a perfectly normal way. All I could say as I walked was, "Oh My God!!!" Eighty percent of the pain was gone.

4. In August, my niece and Goddaughter, Kirsten, encouraged me more than once to have a session of Rosen Bodywork and energy healing with a gifted woman she had experienced in Berkeley, just across San Francisco Bay from me. I finally asked what it was I needed to know and got guidance to make an appointment. The date came around and just five days after the pillow

incident, I traveled to meet with her.

I began the session quietly asking what it was I needed to know. It was all meaningful, but one portion clearly stood out. When I shared with Miriam about the ongoing pain I had with my left side,

"For 40 years, whenever Jerry and I did any of our work in the world whether standing or sitting, he always stood on my left side. Energetically, my right side 'held' the public and my left side held Jerry's energy as he held mine."



Jerry and Diane at MDC's 1988 conference appearing in African dress from their trip.

she asked me to consider what it represented to me. What came to me was shocking. I immediately saw a sharp, curved sickle slashing down my left side between my heart and my hip, literally carving out a deep,

crescent moon and leaving a gaping hole seemingly impossible to fill. I sat somewhat dumbfounded and then slowly understood what I was experiencing. For 40 years, whenever Jerry and I did any of our work in the world whether standing or sitting, he always stood on my left side. Energetically, my right side "held" the public and my left side held Jerry's energy as he held mine. In this force field of joined, pure willingness to serve, this joined consciousness, we were able to build the trusted field of just listening to all we were to think, say, and do. The perceived "hole" in my energy field manifested in the deep pain in my side and when she did hands on energy work with me near the end of the session, the pain departed completely.

Another heretofore unknown level of grief was also released in the two days following. Today, my left side no longer feels lacking and my heart is lighter, even though it is clearly fuller.

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Miracle Musings...

The Now of Giving Thanks

by Paul McNeff

"Give thanks in every circumstance, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

"I thank my Father for His gifts to me." (Lesson 123)

It was August 1988. "Dad," the voice of my 13-year-old daughter living with her mother 400 miles away from me at the time, frantically echoed in my ear on the other end of the telephone line. "Jesus is coming and I'm afraid I will be taken, and you will be left behind."

For those of you who are not Bible students, the event my daughter was so fearfully referencing was what Christians call the Second Coming of Christ. Also termed



the Rapture, it is an event in time when all true believers feel they will bodily be "taken up" to live with Jesus in heaven. Those who are not saved will be left behind to endure the tortures of hell on earth.

In my former church community, of which my daughter was still a part, it had been a well-known fact that I had "fallen away" from my former Christian beliefs and had most likely, by their definition, lost my salvation as a result. Therefore, my eternal destination was in serious doubt, especially now with the imminent return of Christ knocking at our doorstep.

"What are you talking about?" I asked, try-

ing to keep my voice calm, as to not further excite her.

"Well, Doug and Gwen told me that the Second Coming of Jesus had been predicted by our pastor and it's going to happen in three weeks, on September 13th," my daughter explained.

I didn't quite know how to answer her, but after silently asking within, I went on to say, "Honey, you know there have been hundreds of times throughout history that self-proclaimed prophets have predicted Jesus' Second Coming. The important thing is that you live your life as if Jesus was with you now. Jesus comes to us every day."

Gradually she took comfort from my counsel. After we ended our conversation, I hastened to call my fear-mongering friends to give them a piece of my mind. Something to the affect, "Don't you ever scare my

daughter again with such ill-founded nonsense."

Eventually, the appointed day of Jesus' Second Coming came and went. No one was taken, and no one was left behind.

We humans have a great emotional need to mark on our calen-

dars special days for all types of celebrations — religious and otherwise. One such fast approaching event is Thanksgiving. The fourth Thursday of every November has become one of the most traveled holidays of all, when families come together under the noble intention of giving thanks. This is a good endeavor, to give thanks. But, does it have to happen on just one day of the year, or can it too, be as the Second Coming of Jesus, something we

celebrate every day? Not just the past or in the future, but in the now.

To me, thankfulness works the same as love, the measure we give is reciprocal to the measure we receive. Doris Day famously said, "Gratitude is riches. Complaint is poverty." The more we give thanks, the more we receive thanks. Truly giving thanks is not contingent on receiving it back from others.

Taking the idea of thankfulness one step further, Voltaire expounded, "Appreciation is a wonderful thing: It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well."

A *Course in Miracle* has a lot to say about giving thanks. Workbook Lesson 123 states, "Today let us be thankful." It doesn't say, I'll wait until I inherit a million dollars, or until my soulmate arrives at my doorstep. Then, I'll be thankful. This lesson says, "Today, let us be thankful." As it continues...

"We have come to gentler pathways and to smoother roads. There is no thought of turning back, and no implacable resistance to the truth. A bit of wavering remains, some small objections and a little hesitance, but you can well be grateful for your gains, which are far greater than you realize." (W-123.1)

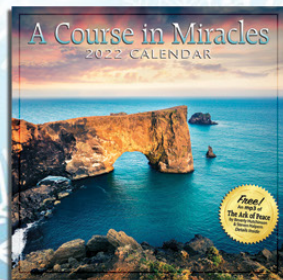
We can't turn back from the harsh things that may come our way. When they happen, they happen. When I was let go of my dream job as music director at a TV mega-church, I didn't view it as a gentler pathway or smoother road. And, I had not-so-small objections and a lot of resistance to the loss of this job. But, as I processed through it, asking a power within me for help in expressing thanks, I was then able to shift my perception and focus on the good which came from my life crisis.

"A day devoted now to gratitude will add the benefit of some insight into the real extent of all the gains which you have made; the gifts you have received. Be glad today,

Continued on page 14

Paul McNeff is married to MDC's founder and has been a student of the Course since 1986. He is a professional singer and conductor and holds a master's degree in vocal performance. In 1997, along with Beverly, he founded *KidSingers*, an inner-city, afterschool children's chorus. The program has won many awards and been featured on *Good Morning America*. Learn more at: kidsingers.org

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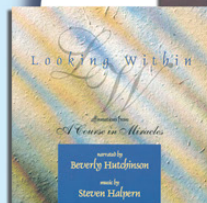
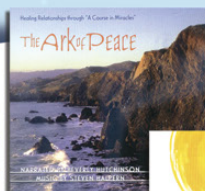
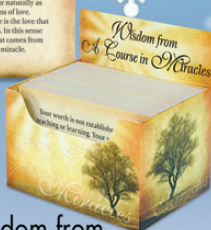
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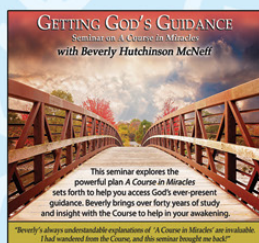
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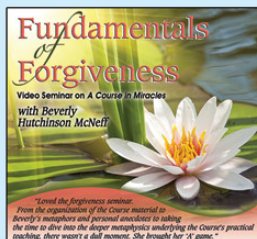
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The Infancy of Salvation

by Joseph Miller

"My birth in you is your awakening to grandeur. Welcome me not into a manger, but into the altar to holiness, where holiness abides in perfect peace." (T-15.III.9:5)

As a child I regarded the Christmas story historically, the birth of the most important person that could ever be, the God-Man whose Identity, even in the first hours of his birth, was revealed by wondrous signs. As a young adult with an appetite for literature I came to view the story as a mythic nativity narrative, fashioned by the collective unconscious, evolved layer by layer, one generation telling the next, and sharing similarities with nativity narratives from other cultures. Of course, these perspectives are not without truth. There was a historical Jesus and there is a fabulous universal mythos about him. But both of these, by themselves, only leave me looking backwards. They offer a Jesus that was. A *Course in Miracles* presents a perspective for a spiritual Christmas that is. The real "Christ Mass" is a rebirth in self-awareness here, today, now.

I was browsing the Wall of Innocence on MDC's website recently. You know the feature? Posted are photos of many Course students as children. It is quite something to behold: the joys, smiles, missing teeth, enthusiasm, vulnerability, and dependence. They are very sweet pictures to scroll through. But, in a mood of deeper consideration, they are much more than that. They are reminders of who we are, and of the changeless within each of us.

There is another talisman of innocence on my bookshelf, and I reach for it every week or so. I hold it for a minute just before scooting out the front door to work and allow

feelings of gentleness and love to saturate my being. It is a plaster impression of my daughter's hand when she was three years old. To quietly gaze at it, and run my fingertips over the surface, instantly takes me back thirty years to that gentle soul, and the immense privilege of being her daddy.

That pause is always a mini-Christmas, what the Course calls a holy instant. Have you ever noticed that all the named references to Christmas occur in chapter 15 which is titled

"The Holy Instant"?

That is because the holy instant is the infancy of your spiritual practice, the first step toward more sustained and developed efforts. You would not climb

"Posted are photos of many Course students as children. It is quite something to behold: the joys, smiles, missing teeth, enthusiasm, vulnerability, and dependence."

a mountain if you had never learnt to take a step. The ego uses time to compound illusion, multiply concerns, and push us toward the edge of overwhelmment. The holy instant is a learning device to demonstrate to ourselves that we may draw on the power of peace in any circumstance, because God's peace is the eternal truth within.

It is not surprising that tradition has scheduled Christmas near the winter solstice, for that symbolizes what St. John of the Cross called, "the dark night of the senses." If you would heed the still small Voice within you right now, you have to cut through the

cacophony. It requires the gentlest solicitation, just as you would show toward an infant. The "silent night" is a welcome darkness, where spiritual vision detects numinous light. The volume knob of worldly voices is dialed down, the dimmer switch of meretricious light is lowered, and within this cleared dimension, God's Word is born. The manger for your daily beast is transformed into an altar to the Christ in you.

The First Coming of Christ is not the nativity of a personal Jesus, but the far more ancient creation of the Universal Christ. The Second Coming is the perfection of Atonement far into the future, "the end of the ego's rule and the healing of the mind." (T-4.IV.10) Christmas comes between these two. It is a reflection in time of the First Coming, and an embryo of the Second. As one of Helen Schucman's poems puts it, "...[I]n the advent of God's Son / The light of resurrection is begun." Long before the universal restoration is complete, there must be the birth and gentle parenting of what the Course beautifully calls, "the infancy of salvation."

The infancy of salvation is carefully guarded by love, preserved from every thought that would attack it, and quietly made ready to fulfill the mighty task for which it was given you. "Your newborn purpose is nursed by angels, cherished by the Holy Spirit and protected by God Himself. It needs not your protection; it is yours. For it is deathless, and within it lies the end of death." (T-19.IV.C.9:4)

The truth about Christmas is God's birth through you. "For God would give Himself through you. He reaches from you to everyone and beyond everyone to His Son's creations, but without leaving you." (T-15.III.7:4) The mighty transformation was first completed in Jesus, and he guides us in the Way. He was the herald for the resurrection of the human mind. Our love for him is but a remembrance of our true purpose and destiny. Divine love conceives the infancy of salvation. Every conscious effort to remember



Joseph Miller is a writer, broadcaster and drapery tradesman. He has practiced the Course for twenty-five years, and participates in a weekly study group at Unity Church, Santa Barbara. He is also an associate of United Lodge of Theosophists. He lives in Goleta, CA, with his wife, Kim.

our “newborn purpose” is a baby step toward that universal Second Coming prophesied by all esoteric traditions.

But what about birth pains? Are we not seeing them everywhere: the pandemic, environmental break down, deterioration of trust, the weaponization of untruth, economic inequality, the crisis of homelessness, social unrest, and reckonings with racial injustice? I think it is fair to say that we are witnessing what was prophesied in Helen Schucman’s



“To quietly gaze at it and run my fingertips over the surface, instantly takes me back thirty years to that gentle soul, and immense privilege of being her daddy.”

notes 56 years ago. Early in the dictation, prior to really committing to her function, one day she refused to continue unless she were told what it was all for. The answer came:

“The world situation is worsening to an alarming degree. People all over the world are being called on to help, and are making their individual contributions as part of an overall prearranged plan. Part of the plan is taking down *A Course in Miracles*... Because of the acute emergency, however, the usual slow, evolutionary process is being by-passed in what might best be described as a ‘celestial speed-up.’”

I recall vividly the birth of my daughter, and the quickening pace of my wife’s contractions. It was a welcome, if intense, “speed-up,” for it meant deliverance was near. I choose to see our collective troubles in just this way. The Course is big on the undoing of error: we must dismantle our maladaptive ways if we would attain to right perception. Miracle principle 37 puts this in alchemical language: “A miracle is a correction intro-

duced into false thinking by me. It acts as a catalyst, breaking up erroneous perception and reorganizing it properly.” If this “breaking up” is so evident and pervasive now, so also are glimmers of “reorganization.” They are everywhere, these Christmas Stars – even if they don’t often get the headlines. They are dedicated to making altars out of mangers.

And you, dear fellow student of *A Course in Miracles*, are to be encouraged and thanked for accepting your function, for it is through your transformation that the Christ-light transforms the world, and in no other way.

Here at the altar lay all this aside
To let the door to Heaven open wide
And hear the angels sing of peace on earth,
For Christmas is the time of your rebirth.

The Holiness of Christmas,
Helen Schucman



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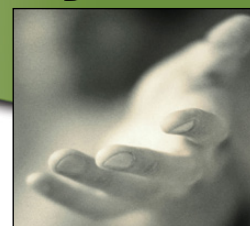
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Update: Prison Project

The Prison Project of Miracle Distribution Center sends *A Course in Miracles* and other Course-based items to those in prison. Through your generous donations, we have been able to supply many newly-started spiritual libraries in prisons. In some cases, we have been able to provide multiple copies of books so more inmates can read about the love that is their essence. These principles are truly making a difference and quenching a thirst for truth that those in prison have found no other place.



The following letter gives an indication of the importance of our Prison Project in many inmates’ lives. We are grateful that we are here to bring the truth and inspiration that *A Course Miracles* so beautifully offers.

Dear Friends at MDC,

For the last few years, your organization has been so gracious as to provide me with an *A Course in Miracles* wall calendar. I thank you so very much for this service. If possible, can you send me a calendar for next year?

As I am sure you are aware, other inmates and myself have such limited access and every little thing, like the providing a calendar and the support that you offer, make a big difference in our lives.

Thank you very much,

Forest Gill in Stafford Creek Corrections Center, WA



We are honored to be able to meet Forest’s request and each request that is sent to us because of your generous support of the Prison Project and the Center.

If you are aware of an inmate who would like to receive books related to the Course or **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER** magazine, let us know. Because of strict rules for sending items into prisons and secured facilities, please check with the institution before you request items to be sent.

Together we can experience healing by demonstrating healing through our willingness to be truly helpful to others. We invite your tax-deductible donations to support this project.

To read more click on “Prison Project” under “Services” at miraclecenter.org



It's Easier Than You Think

by Jacob Glass

Therefore, seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world.

(T-21.in.1:7)

I remember years ago reading a Joel S. Goldsmith book in which he took the Matthew 6:34 scripture, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." His contention was that it meant we are to take no "anxious" thought for the morrow. In other words, we should have no fear about the future which would cause us to try to strategize and control future events out of fear of ... everything. But obviously it's practically impossible to have NO thought at all about the future.

How would we make a flight reservation for a vacation, or respond to an invitation, or know when to plant a garden or a thousand other things we do?

I also remember reading the section from *A Course in Miracles* "I need do nothing" which came in response to Helen's taking drastic action to avert a perceived personal catastrophe which never came, and which was a huge waste of time and energy. It's a wonderful section of the Course even without the background story, but WITH the story it clarifies it even further and made it extremely helpful to me in my own life. Helen's story wasn't really about doing or not doing, but had much more to do with asking for Guidance and then trusting that she would be taken care of without having to terrify herself or manipulate everyone and everything around her. I saw this tendency many of us have of not simply worrying about what to do, but rather about FIXING things that we perceive as being broken, not right, not good enough, poorly handled, fearful, and so on. I cannot count the time I've wasted on "fixing" things

that were perfectly fine the way they were, or on being frustrated that my "fixing" only made things worse and more stressful.

I just went through this yet again, even though I know better. I think I may not be alone in this. The past year or two of upheaval in the world kept me even more in my habitual hermit-like seclusion than usual and so, like many



"In other words, we should have no fear about the future which would cause us to try to strategize and control future events out of fear of... everything."

people, I had a lot of time on my hands to start "fixing" things that really did not need any "help" from me at all. In fact, I spent countless hours and thousands of dollars educating myself online in things that made me feel more stupid and stressed out. I found that there is still a part of me that will not allow life to be as easy as it could be for me. Therefore,

I've changed the quote for myself to something more powerful in my own situations – I need fix nothing. I've resigned as a fixer.

"You MAKE it difficult because you insist there must be more you need do. You find it difficult to accept the idea that you need give so little, to receive so much. And it is VERY hard for you to realize it is NOT personally insulting that your contribution and Holy Spirit's are so extremely disproportionate." (T-18.IV.7:4) (Capitalization is mine)

A huge lesson in my life, which I've been sharing with my groups, is that it is easier

than we think it is to live a peaceful, joyous, prosperous, and fulfilled life. It is easier than we think to be truly helpful and to fulfill our FUNction. But we have to get out of the way and LET IT be easy. I know people hate that word. Spiritual

folks tend to like things to be hard, or as the Course says, to MAKE them hard. But, in my experience it is as simple and easy as I will allow it to be. Grace is a gift, not a reward. And in this Holy Season, what better gift can there be than to receive God's Grace? ❖

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Let no despair darken the joy of Christmas, for the time of Christ is meaningless apart from joy.
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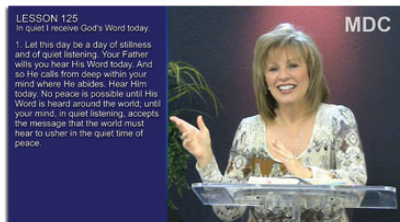


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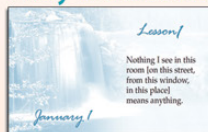


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An Angle on Angels

A few years back *Time* magazine ran a cover story on angels proclaiming, "69% of Americans believe that angels exist. What in heaven is going on?" The article went on to share the growing interest people had in these celestial beings and related experiences people said they had with them.

We thought our readers might be interested in what *A Course in Miracles* has to say about angels, so we did a computer search to find the nine places where angels are referred to in a context that describes the Course's approach to them. They follow...

"Your newborn purpose is nursed by angels, cherished by the Holy Spirit and protected by God Himself." (T-19.C.IV.9:4)

"Watch with me, angels, watch with me today. Let all God's holy Thoughts surround me, and be still with me while Heaven's Son is born." (W-303.1)

"My treasure house is full, and angels watch its open doors that not one gift is lost, and only more are added." (W-316.1:4)

"You do not walk alone. God's angels hover near and all about. His Love surrounds you, and of this be sure; that I will never leave you comfortless." (W-ep.6:6)



"Say His (God's) Name, and you invite the angels to surround the ground on which you stand, and sing to you as they spread out their wings to keep you safe, and shelter you from every worldly thought that would intrude upon your holiness." (W-183.2:2)

"This do the body's eyes behold (a symbol of fear, justified to attack) in one (your brother) whom Heaven cherishes, the angels love and God created perfect." (W-161.9)

"Angels light the way, so that all darkness vanishes, and you are standing in a light so bright and clear that you can understand all things you see." (W-131.13:2)

"He will not leave you comfortless, nor fail to send His angels down to answer you in His Own Name." (S-2.III.7:5)

"Around you angels hover lovingly, to keep away all darkened

thoughts of sin, and keep the light where it has entered in." (T-26. IX.7:1)

Although the Course's poetic and colorful description of angels gives them a form-like feel, it should never be forgotten that the Course emphasizes the content of our experiences and not the form. You can draw from the Course that angels really are the thoughts of God. In other words, the beautiful way the Course speaks of angels is another way of reminding us that God's love, help, and care for us is infinite and is with us forever.

thing that caught his eye. I would always try to comment on what he said and help him say the words. But one day his words were far better than mine. We drove by the scene of a terrible accident. The car was squashed up like an accordion. Not a word came out of Jeffrey's mouth as he looked, and I wasn't quite sure what to say but the obvious. Before I could say a word, Jeffrey put his little arms out towards the car and said, "Hug!" He saw the hurt and his instinct was so right.

"When a brother acts insanely, he is offering you an opportunity to bless him. His need is yours." (T-7.VII.2)

We need to look with the innocence of a child and that is what the Holy Spirit can help us do. The Holy Spirit's vision looks through the form of the problems in our lives straight to the truth. He lifts us out of our desire to sit and dwell on what we think was done to us so we might be healed. He sees every block to our peace as an extension of love or a call for love, and



"During these times, there is often more of a willingness to give moments of grace to ourselves and others."

therefore knows that the only answer is love. The Course reminds us that this way of seeing cannot be hard to do, since it is not we who do it – that is the Holy Spirit's job. Our job is to want it to be done.

We have that opportunity every moment, but especially when the holidays roll around. During these times, there is often more of a willingness to give moments of grace to ourselves and others. We seem to be more willing to allow the possibility of peace, love, and healing to replace our angry, fearful thinking. It all depends on us, however.

Where will we dwell? Will we remain in what we have become used to: the static thoughts of judgment and fear? Or will we recognize that we deserve more and tune into God's love to lead the way in all our actions?

I am hopeful. I read the newspaper and listen to the news, and when I allow God's love to lead the way, I am grateful that into each situation I encounter, I can offer a blessing. I have another chance to be a

The Now of Giving...

Continued from page 8

in loving thankfulness, your Father has not left you to yourself, nor let you wander in the dark alone. Be grateful He has saved you from the self you thought you made to take the place of Him and His creation. Give Him thanks today." (W-123.2)

I can see that I have spent a good portion of my life constructing the ego self I thought was "me." But, giving thanks, as described by the Course, assures us that this selfish self we made, the one that looks out for only number one, can be transformed by the Father (God) when we nurture the attitude of gratitude.

Early 20th century motivational author, Fred De Witt Van Amburgh, whose many books are

published as part of the public domain, said, "None is more impoverished than the one who has no gratitude. Gratitude is a currency that we can mint for ourselves and spend without fear of bankruptcy." Van Amburgh seems to be saying that true currency, that of a grateful attitude, can be cultivated now. It can be spent, but never lost. Unlike my bank account, which is almost depleted at the end of each month after I've paid all my bills, the concept of gratitude currency will keep on growing.

The Course builds to a crescendo in this lesson saying...

"Thanks be to you who heard, for you become the messenger who brings His Voice with you, and lets It echo round and round the world. Receive the thanks of God today, as you give thanks to Him. For He would offer you the thanks you give, since

miracle worker and bring the awareness of love to my mind by extending that as my gift to the world.

As the Course requests, "Let us be glad that we can walk the world, and find so many chances to perceive another situation where God's gift can once again be recognized as ours!" (T-31.VIII.9) If we can tune into this truth, this will truly be a holy season.

He receives your gifts in loving gratitude, and gives them back a thousand and a hundred thousand more than they were given. He will bless your gifts by sharing them with you. And so they grow in power and in strength, until they fill the world with gladness and with gratitude." (WB 123.6)

The thought of God returning thanks to



me, as I give him thanks, is simply mind-blowing. And the giving and the return on this investment are immediate. Gratitude is the state of mind

we can practice

now, every moment of every day.

"Receive His thanks and offer yours to Him.

...And you will realize

to Whom you offer thanks, and Whom He thanks as you are thanking Him." (W-123.7) This small amount of time given in gratitude "will be returned to you in terms of years for every second; power to save the world eons more quickly for your thanks to Him."

"Receive His thanks, and you will understand how lovingly He holds you in His Mind, how deep and limitless His care for you, how perfect is His gratitude to you." (W-123.8)

So, don't wait. Let's give thanks today for everything in our lives, however we may perceive it, so that we may know the care, security, and gratitude God has for us. And, when you get to Turkey Day this year, you will have already built up your gratitude currency to not only deposit in your spiritual bank account, but in others as well. That is something to celebrate now!

On-Demand Seminars to Deepen Your Understanding of *A Course in Miracles* with Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

Using the transformational principles of *A Course in Miracles*, each of these on-demand seminars provides six hours of viewing on different concepts in the Course. Combining lecture, multimedia presentations, and more, each seminar offers a doorway to the Course's path of healing our lives.

As a student of the Course since 1977, Beverly brings her knowledge and insight into each seminar. Known for her practical, humorous style, Beverly's explanations help students understand and apply the Course's healing truths.



Above the Battleground: *Finding Peace in Turbulent Times*

If you are ready to rise above the world of chaos and attain a state of peace where God is remembered, this seminar is for you. Appearances by special guests, and Course students from around the country will share the tools they have learned in rising above the daily battlegrounds we often find ourselves in. So, take your rightful place in the salvation of the world by making the commitment and joining us above the battleground!



"I have never had the Course concepts explained so well. Clearly, the Holy Spirit is on Beverly's shoulder."



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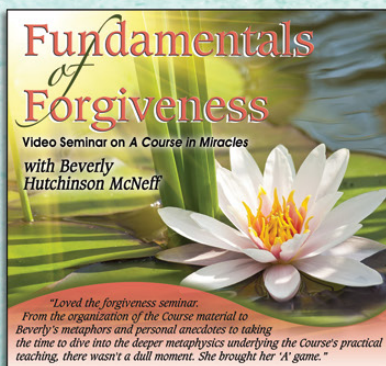
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"I love the way Beverly applies the principles of the Course to the matters at hand and helps us to see the relevance."

"Beverly's wisdom and honesty is a blessing. She has an amazing way of always bringing the focus back to the essential message of the Course."

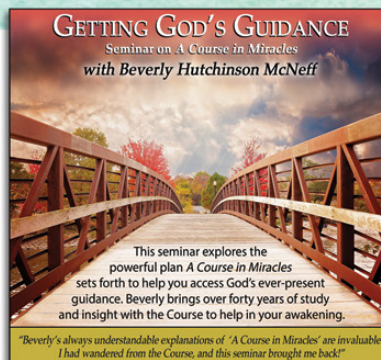


Fundamentals of Forgiveness

A Course in Miracles advises us it is now time to take our place in the Great Awakening. This seminar explores the Answer that God has given us through the power of forgiveness. For many, forgiveness seems almost impossible in this world and yet we are assured that forgiveness is not only possible, but it is the only way to heal this impossible world. As the Course tells us, "Forgiveness is the end of dreams, because it is a dream of waking." Let's wake up together!

Getting God's Guidance

We look and look outside of ourselves to find the purpose of our lives and the world, when the Course is offering us another plan. This seminar will explore practical ways to experience the guidance we are seeking. The Course tells us that God's Voice speaks to us all through the day, so let's accept its assurance and follow the plan it sets forth. Join us with an open heart and a willing spirit to experience the miracles you are entitled to.



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The HOLY ENCOUNTER

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2021

In This Issue...

- Tuning to the Truth
- Healing the Fearful Mind during Challenging Times
- "Listening" Our Way Home
- The Now of Giving Thanks
- The Infancy of Salvation
- It's Easier Than You Think
- An Angle on Angels... and so much more!

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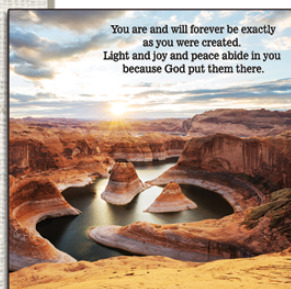
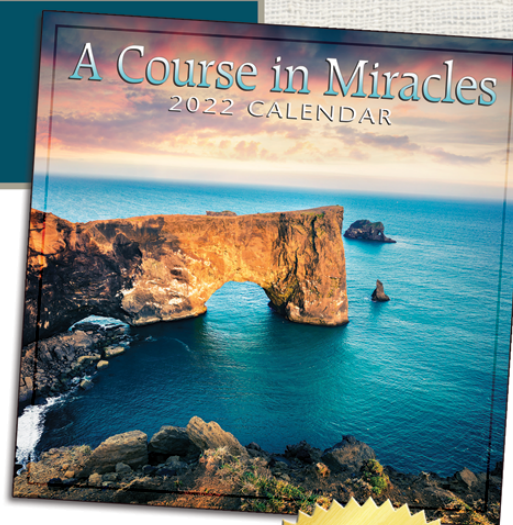
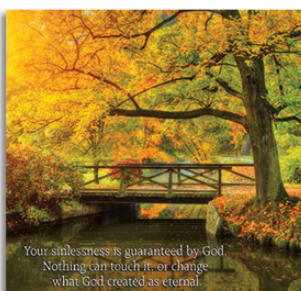
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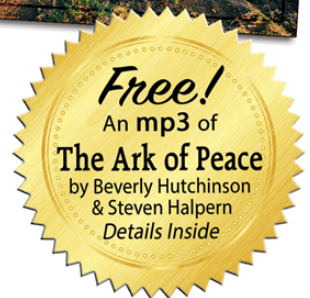
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