

# A COURSE IN MIRACLES

## STUDY GROUP

### WITH RAJ

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

Well you would think after our talk last week, that the week that followed should have been . . . well, let's just say better than the weeks before. But I'm going to ask how many of you have experienced increased concern, discouragement, vulnerability?

You know, no matter where you are on the globe there are events occurring which seem not to be generated by love but rather by selfishness and greed and materialism – let's just put it that way. And all of it seems to be for the benefit of a few, at the expense of the many of which most all of you are members of. And as a result, you end up being taken advantage of and you feel it! And you know it's not right! But you're not in charge, so what can you do about it? And so you are used for the benefit of others against your will. And you know what? That's called, "being a hostage."

Now, we're going to talk about the nature of being a hostage and most of it ties in with what we discussed last time.

On a very large scale, I would wager to say that most of you felt hopeful, anticipatory, looking forward to the turn of the century – the coming of the new millennium. It bode of newness, goodness, perhaps even the Second Coming, even though the flip-side of that

was that it would be the beginning of Armageddon. And so there were two conflicting concepts being applied to the new century.

Now, I did not appear on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000. And so one would think the Second Coming and all that it implied wasn't going to happen, and the reason for the anticipation and the positive outlook had no further justification.

Now not everyone is governed by this *belief system*. But most everyone on the globe is aware of the idea of the Second Coming, whether it's a part of their religious training or not. And so even if you didn't put much stock in it like others at the turn of the century, you found a shift occurred in which, I'm going to say, materialism and greed and selfishness and self-centeredness sort of took the front seat.

It's not that it was ever not there, but it just wasn't hiding itself well anymore. And as a result, it stood out where it could be observed and recognized. And it has become increasingly recognizable between the turn of the century and now. And in practically all ways, conditions of life around your globe have become difficult, tension producing, poverty inducing, and even for those who have been diligent seekers of truth – diligent students – there has been discouragement that has grown and the idea that what we're observing is part of Armageddon (the last days) is not being challenged as significantly.

You know, things aren't just difficult . . . they are, for lack of better words, *evil*. And I mean that in the sense that they reflect conscious calculated attempts to take advantage and to harm or to leave depleted anyone who gets in the way. And of course, in terms of selfishness, *everything else* gets in the way of the one who is selfish.

And so everyone else is fair game to be taken advantage of on purpose. That is cruel. That is evil. That meets the definition of sin.

Now, who likes being a hostage? Nobody. The Jews in the concentration camps found themselves to be in a situation where they were taken advantage of, and cruelty was consciously expressed and acted out. Now, none of you are in that extreme position. But I will tell you, that the Answer is the same.

Now the *Course* speaks of being *hostage to the ego or host to God*. And of course the answer to being hostage to the ego is to find a way to become the host to God. But in order to do that, you've got to find out what it is that attracts you to the state of being a hostage, and causes you to *commit* yourself to it *obsessively* without challenging it. And here's the reason:

The behavior of a hostage is based in fear. And of course the response to that is self-protection. Fear is an emotion. And the emotion of fear gathers to it the emotions of jealousy and hate. And emotions are, for lack of better words, a rich texture of . . . well again, I'm going to have to use the word, *evil* . . . it's a rich texture of elements that are always debilitating and destructive to the one employing them. They are *designed* to function that way. And they are designed to hook you and addict you to *attending to them*.

Emotions are different from Love. And you have to be willing to recognize that they are destructive and *only destructive* before you can find yourself able to abandon the hit of the emotions, so that you can shift your attention to the Father and become host to the Father. You see?

Love is not addictive. Love is not *passionate* like emotions are. Love doesn't energize you to *action* – personal action, self-satisfying action, self-increasing actions. Love is gentle. Love is a Gift. Love is *attention given*, so that that which is the object of Love receives something. You see? There's an entire difference. And what makes it difficult to shift, even if you intellectually know that there's a desirable thing called "shifting" from being the hostage to the ego to the host for God, the difficulty lies in the fact that shifting to the Act of Love is not dynamic and therefore, does not seem capable of *protecting you*, which is the mindset the hostage is in.

Now, we've discussed in the last few weeks the fact – in fact for the last few years – that there are only two vantage points: The Father's Perspective and the ego's perspective. There are only two voices: The Voice for Truth and the voice for fear. The solution is always simple. It's a choice between two things – one of which isn't even Real.

Again, the difficulty lies in the fact that shifting from self-protection – self-centered self-protection – to an outgoing embrace of love feels like the abandonment of armor of protection and therefore, it doesn't feel intelligent.

You have to come to the point of recognizing that your ability to understand the difference between selfish self-protection and inclusive extension of love – of attentive caring – is the Answer. And then act on the basis of that understanding, not on the basis of what you're feeling.

This is very important.

Now, threat seems to be all around everyone, everywhere. Threat of the loss of this, the loss of that, the loss of your peace, the loss of your life, the loss of your comfortable living, and it would seem that those who are in charge could care less. And yet you know that that is wrong.

Now, how do you look at your world, no matter where you are in it and not be governed by what you see? Well, by remembering that you have available to you two vantage points, and the one that is discouraging you, it is not the Father's Will for you to have. It's not your Birthright. It's not your inheritance and therefore it's not the actuality of You at all.

The *Course* begins by saying, "*Nothing real can be threatened and nothing unreal exists.*" Well, when you feel threatened, it does feel to you as though something exists that can be threatened. And to say that that doesn't exist doesn't make sense. And yet *it's the only way out of the illusion.*

Now, when you find yourself feeling like a hostage, even when you can point at the one who is holding you hostage, or the situation, or the political system that is holding you hostage, you must realize that you've been distracted to something "out there" being the cause of your incarceration – your being jailed and held until some benefit can be obtained before you can be released.

The one thing that's been forgotten is, that you're not paying attention to the role or the part you're playing, because anyone who's holding you hostage is one *you've given permission to hold you hostage*. You've said that their attack on you, their threats against you, their intent to prove you invalid and to cause you harm has a chance of working, when what they're saying are lies.

*Why . . . why are you doing that?* It doesn't matter what they're doing. *Why are you agreeing with them?* Why are you telling yourself that you must be afraid? Well, I'll tell you, you're listening to *your* ego, you're being host to *your* ego, which is making you hostage to it and to your fear . . . and you're forgetting to be host to God.

It's really that simple . . . it really is that simple.

This does not mean that those who are consciously trying to take advantage of you do not need to be corrected, or that all you need to do is to emancipate yourself from the dance you played into with them, giving them power they didn't have and blinding yourself to the capacity you have [if you choose to be host to God] to find the steps that undo the hostage situation and cause the attempts to hold you hostage to cease. You need the clarity that comes from outside the dance you've played with those who are holding you hostage. You need to step outside the box.

How many of you have had an experience of . . . oh, let's say, ongoing distress in your family? And the energy and atmosphere in your home for days or weeks or perhaps months has been strained and stressed and exhausting? And you'll get up, and you'll look out the window, and you'll see your neighbors chatting with each other, or planting some new flowers in their flowerbed, completely unaware of the serious distress that you're experiencing . . . and appearing to be insensitive and causing you further distress.

And yet, think about it, if you wanted to take steps to correct the situation you're in, you might choose to call a physician, or a psychologist, or a psychiatrist . . . and you would certainly want to speak to one who didn't agree with you. You would want to speak with someone who was not *sensitive* to your problem, so sensitive and empathetic that it disturbed them enough that they couldn't help you.

No, you want someone who is not fooled by what's fooling you, who can clearly express the steps out of the dance you're playing. You see?

Now, a few weeks ago we discussed the starting point: that the starting point is that God . . . not the hostage taker . . . the starting point is not the hostage taker, it isn't his motives, it isn't his evil acts, no . . . the starting point is that God—Spirit, is All-in-all and there is no other might nor Mind.

In other words, the starting point is like the neighbor who's planting flowers, oblivious to your need, not caring about it, *but* perhaps having the perspective it takes to help you out of the mess.

The Father is the starting point. And the Father is the only might *and* Mind. And so, when you find yourself feeling overwhelmed by the negative events that are going on and you feel like screaming out, and you feel like taking hold of the reins and changing the situation, and talking up the bad points and making sure everyone knows what's wrong, without seeking the answer, you know that you've not taken the essential step of making yourself the host for God. *That's the problem!*

Making yourself the host for God makes the Father's Perspective available to you to bring into play, to be the expression of in the world that changes the world through love, not more hate, not just another form of manipulative ego or evil. You see?

At some point in the past I used the illustration of the coliseums in Rome, where the gladiators came out and fought the lions. Well, some big deal to be a gladiator huh? Great sounding title! But it meant that you were a criminal, or someone judged to have been a criminal, who is held in cells beneath the coliseum until the next day when the lions would be released and they would be out in the center of the coliseum. And if they were fortunate enough to be one who killed the lion instead of being killed they could keep their gladiator title. But of course, there weren't many gladiators.

Now, what you need to remember is that outside the coliseum, two or three blocks away, people were eating in restaurants and conducting business. They didn't care what was going on in the coliseum. Those

in the coliseum – not the observers, but the ones being observed – had complex social structures. They had status amongst themselves and they worked their handlers to move themselves into better positions and so on. And it was a life-style.

They did a dance with their captors, not realizing that the answer was not to constantly be the winner, but to walk out of the coliseum and go down a couple of blocks where they could have dinner and enjoy the company of others, giving not a single thought to the social and political structure of what went on inside the coliseum. They could go out where nobody *cared* what went on in the coliseum, where nobody cared what they went through and what their social behaviors involved and their fears. You see?

The answer to being a hostage – and you could even be a hostage, you think, to your body – the answer to being a hostage is to abandon the hostage mentality, to abandon the fear that makes a hostage a really good hostage, and as unreasonable as it seems at the moment, shifting the attitude and becoming a host to God. It's the *only way out!* It is simple!

Now, I want you to remember that ideas generate fear, but emotions are the engine. So when you find the rich texture of emotions that cause you to remain committed to the unintelligent acts of hostagehood, you must make a switch. You must engage in the two-step, the holy instant. You must abandon the richness of the texture of the engine of emotions and be willing to shift into the gentle, non-coercive but infinitely blessing *action* of Love, by asking of the Father, "Tell me the truth about everything. I want to gather my information from You."

That's how you become host to God. And that's how the Father comes back into His Wholeness . . . when His prodigal Son or Daughter returns to Him, acknowledges Him, and acknowledges His or Her divinity and unity is restored.

There is much to be corrected in the world. What part do you play in it? You play your part by not condemning and convicting the ones who are misleading, selfish, cruel, but rather by giving expression to the way things divinely work, to what the truth is, not as an argument

against, but as an amplified sharing of what really means something . . . a sharing of the good news, where the good news isn't used as a battering ram to change the misguided ones who do indeed need to learn.

Value the truth that is revealed to you when you engage in the holy instant and join with the Father . . . becoming host to God.

It's important to understand that the Father never intended for you to be estranged from Him. And therefore, His love for you and His wish for you to come Home stands at this very moment unchanged. And so there is a promise present in the Father's intent to be there for you the moment you begin to shift your attention to Him with the intent of becoming host to Him. And it's not something you have to accomplish all by yourself.

There is nothing hopeless going on. There's *infinite* opportunity for truth to be more clearly seen, and there's infinite opportunity for each one of you to find ways to express the truth that are so attractive that they can't easily be denied by those who have forgotten.

*This is very important.* It's important not to overlook the simplicity. It's important not to forget what the starting point is. And it's important for every single one of you to engage in this every day. Because every day the need for true real clarity that blesses all mankind becomes more needed.

I love you all. And I invite you to give your attention to the Father so that you might love each other more consistently and more broadly, more inclusively. That *will* change the world! No one is stuck!

Okay.



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