

Prayers of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

Part 3 of 4

(Pages 76 -88)

Prayer:

"Yet it is our great hope that all those who have as yet found no answer may begin to find one in the pages of this book and will presently join us on the high road to a new freedom." (page xxi)

"I earnestly advise every alcoholic to read this book through and through, and though perhaps he came to scoff, he may remain to pray."

William d. Silkworth, M.D.

Reader:

Forward to Second Edition page xx

"Alcoholics Anonymous is not a religious organization. Neither does A.A. take any particular medical point of view, though we cooperate widely with the men of medicine as well as with the men of religion."

"Alcohol being no respecter of persons, we are an accurate cross section of America, and in distant lands, the same democratic evening-up process is now going on. By personal religious affiliations, we include Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Hindus, and a sprinkling of Muslims and Buddhists."

Introduction:

Recap:

Last week, week 2, we covered pages 44 through 76, Chapter: We Agnostics, addressing our prejudice, obstacles, in our perception, against a spiritual solution. Then we see in Chapter 5, this spiritual program of action, "How it Works". Our directions...which includes a higher volume of prayer. Why? We need the strength, courage and Power to carry us through the actions. Actions we never thought of taking or as a solution to ALL our problems. 16 instances of asking, praying in "How It Works". Now we are going to pick up where we left off last week with Steps 8 & 9 in "Into Action" on page 76.

Into Action

Step 8 & 9

Page 76: "if we haven't the will to do this, **we ask** until it comes. (context)

Page 79: Step 9 “**We ask** that **we be given strength and direction** to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be.”

Page 80: “If we have obtained permission, have consulted with others, **asked** God to help and the drastic step is indicated we must not shrink.”

Page 80: “He saw that he had **to place** the outcome in God’s hands or he would soon start drinking again, and all would be lost anyway.”

Page 81: “We are sorry for what we have done, and **God willing**, it shall not be repeated.”

Page 82: “Each might **pray** about it, having the other one’s happiness uppermost in mind.”

Page 83: “So we clean house with the family, **asking** each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.” (4th step prayer page 67)

The Spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it.

Step 10

Page 84: “Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear. When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them.”

Page 85: “Everyday is a day when we must carry the vision of God’s will into all of our activities. “much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him who has all knowledge and power.

Step 11 (Bill said this was most under-utilized step.)

Page 85: “Step 11 suggests prayer and meditation.”

Page 86: “After making our review we ask God’s forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.”

Page 86: “Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.

Page 86: “Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision.”

Page 87: “We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We **ask** especially for freedom from self-will, and are careful to make no **request** for ourselves only. We may **ask** for ourselves however, if others will be helped. We are careful never to pray for our own selfish ends.”

Page 87: “As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action.”

Page 87: “we sometimes select and memorize a few set prayers which emphasize the principles we have been discussing.” (Which Principles?)

Page 87-88: “We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day, **“Thy will be done.”**”

“So we let God **discipline** us in the simple way we have just outlined.”

How is prayer discipline? Making a habit of talking to your HP, asking for those things just outlined.

We are going to wrap up with the 11th Step Prayer from the 12 x 12, The St. Francis of Assisi prayer.

1st, a bit of history of the prayer itself. Historians agree St. Francis didn't write this prayer, so how did it become attributed to him?

1920's, a French Franciscan priest printed the prayer on the back of Holy Cards an image of St. Francis of Assisi and called it the “Prayer for Peace”.

Most likely due to this, and it's wide circulation during WWI and WWII, it began to be attributed to St. Francis. Historical context. war

The first publication of the prayer was in 1912, in France, in a spiritual magazine called “La Clochette” or Little Bell. Original name: “A beautiful prayer to say during Mass.”

It is not an official prayer of the Franciscan Order. Church historians have noted that the phrasing of the prayer is too self-oriented, and no mention of Jesus or God. The focus of “self” was not in line with St. Francis. His close companion, Giles of Assisi (1190-1262) has written almost verbatim the second part of the prayer. (see The Golden Sayings of Blessed Giles of Assisi)

READER:

Prayer of St. Francis (Prayer for Peace)

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace!

That where there is hatred, I may bring love.

That where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness.

That where there is discord, I may bring harmony.

That where there is error, I may bring truth.

That where there is doubt, I may bring faith.

That where there is despair, I may bring hope.

That where there are shadows, I may bring light.

That where there is sadness, I may bring joy.

Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort, than to be comforted.

To understand, than to be understood.

To love, than to be loved.

For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.

It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.

It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life.

—Saint Francis of Assisi—

Take each sentence (stanza, verse) and ask yourself what that looks like in your life.

1. Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace -

*(Who we are asking, what we are asking for. Prayer of Petition, Intercession. Can you picture yourself as an "Instrument of Peace"? What does that look like in your life? Let's contrast that with a reading from Step 3 - **READ: page 61 2nd paragraph***

2. that where there is hatred, I may bring love –

*Why? If I see or feel hatred, that my attitude, my actions are love. We see in Steps 4-10 how this brings about a change in our "Disease of Perception", going back to the 4th Step prayer, isn't this what we are about? **Page 83:** "asking each morning that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love."*

3. that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness -

Same here, as above.

4. that where there is discord, I may bring harmony –

5. that where there is error, I may bring truth –

6. that where there is doubt, I may bring faith – (Steps 2 & 3)

7. that where there is despair, I may bring hope –

Our program for alcoholics, Alcoholics Anonymous. Our work.

8. that where there are shadows, I may bring light –

What are we doing with sponsees? Our own inventories?

9. that where there is sadness, I may bring joy.

10. Lord, Grant that I may seek rather to comfort than be comforted – (moving out of self)

11. To understand, than to be understood – (Examples)

12. To love, than to be loved.

13. For it is by self-forgetting that one finds. Page 82: "Each might pray about it, having the other one's happiness uppermost in mind."

14. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. (4-9)

15. It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. (Our Step 1. Dying to our old way of life,)

16. Amen. (So be it)

Somehow this prayer incorporates all of our program. What a service prayer.

"We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better."

Next week will be dedicated to our 12th Step in the remaining chapters