

**HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD, MYSELF AND OTHERS**

**An AA “Big Book” Step and Tradition Study**

**July 5 through October 4, 2021**

(All page cites from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, except as noted)

(Note that *spiritual principles* are noted in italics throughout the text)

**Establish a Healthy Relationship with Ourselves and Others, including God—Steps Seven, Eight and Nine.**

**Part 1, August 2: Steps Seven and Eight, pp. 76-78.**

AA guided me to establish a healthy relationship with the God of my understanding in Steps One, Two and Three. I was moved from my selfishly-motivated denial and defiance of my need for help as I *accepted* my powerlessness and the unmanageability of my life. I began to stop doubting that a Power greater than me could, and would, help me. I decided to try to *trust* God. I offered myself to God in Step Three, asking God to “relieve me of the bondage of self”.

God and AA guided me to establish a new, healthy relationship with myself in Steps Four, Five and Six. I became *honest* about myself as my shortcomings were disclosed to me in Steps Four and Five. I saw my need for God’s help to *restrain* my selfish, irresponsible and inconsiderate behavior. I began to feel *forgiven* and *forgivable* as I asked God to “save me from being angry” so that I could try to *forgive* those who had wronged me. I *accepted* my objectionable things in Step Six; I *trusted* God to grant me the willingness to let go of my known objectionable things that I *accepted* were blocking me from continuing to seek God’s spiritual help for my spiritual malady, “self-will run riot”— a “God-insufficiency” in my life.

I have been reminded again and again that “our liquor was but a symptom” (p. 64); that “selfishness—self-centeredness . . . is the root of our troubles”; that “the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn’t think so”; that “above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us!” (p. 62)

I have decided to *accept* and *trust* that “God makes that possible.” (p. 62)

I have come to believe that “neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God’s help.” (p. 62) I have begun to see that “when the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.” (p. 64) I have seen in my five-question review preceding Step Six that I am better off not lying but telling the truth; better off admitting and taking responsibility for my part in my troubles; better off without using partial truths; much better off asking God for help each step of the way.

**STEP SEVEN.**

Establishing my new, healthy relationship with God and myself in the first Six Steps has brought me to the “**When ready**” opening of Step Seven on p. 76. I am about to experience a fundamental change in my motive for my thoughts and actions. My motive of selfishness is going to be replaced with a motive of service to God and other people. I will benefit from my use of two more spiritual principles—*responsibility* and *consideration*.

I began moving away from selfishness as my primary motive during my Step Four inventories:

“God save me from being angry. Thy will be done.” (p. 67)

“We asked Him to remove our fear, and direct our attention to what He would have us be.” (p. 68)

“We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them.” (p. 69)

Now, in Step Seven, I am going to continue the shift in my motive away from selfishness when I tell God “**I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad.**” (p. 76)

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#### STEP SEVEN (con’t).

**“My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad.”** (p. 76)  
*“Humility tells me I am what I am. Pride tells me I am what I ain’t!”* Terry L.

In both my Step Three prayer and my Step Seven prayer I “offer myself” to God, to try to *trust* God with the leadership role in my life. My progress from Step Three to Step Seven is that I have now *honestly accepted* my shortcomings. I humbly see how much help I need to *restrain* my character defects; to accept and *forgive* others for their character defects.

My Step Seven prayer continues: **“I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.”** These are no longer just my objectionable things—they are God’s “objectionable things”! What made mine objectionable were that I saw they were blocking me from the help I needed to rein in my selfishness, to free me from my “bondage of self”.

What makes something in me objectionable to God? Anything in me that “stands in the way of my usefulness” to God and others! God, not me, will now be guiding my motives, my priorities and my purpose in life. God, it seems, would like for me to learn how to have healthy, unselfish relationships with other people—healthy and unselfish on God’s terms, not mine!

I have gone from certainty, the known part, of my objectionable things, to uncertainty, the unknown part, of God’s objectionable things about me. Thus, the Step Seven prayer closes with **“Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.”**

#### STEP EIGHT.

“Now we need more action, without which we find that ‘Faith without works is dead’. Let’s look at *Steps Eight and Nine*.” (p. 76)

I am going to find that the “work” here involves me changing the way I relate to other people—to stop my unhealthy relationship behavior and learn healthy relationship behavior.

“We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory. We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal. Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves.” (p. 76). The “debris” is in me—separating me from God, myself and others.

I discover two more spiritual principles, *responsibility* and *consideration*, to add to those I have used so far as I begin to learn how to have a healthy relationship with others:

- Acceptance:* “Where had [I] been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened?” (p. 67)  
*Trust:* “Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding.” (p. 76)  
*Honesty:* “... debris ... accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will ...” (p. 76)  
*Restraint:* “His faults are not discussed. We stick to our own.” (p. 78)  
*Forgiveness:* “We go to him in a helpful and forgiving spirit ...” (p. 77)  
*Responsibility:* “... we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol—[ism].” (p. 76)  
*Consideration:* “Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue.” (p. 77)

“Probably there are still some misgivings. As we look over the list of business acquaintances and friends we have hurt, we may feel diffident about going to some of them on a spiritual basis. Let us be reassured.” (p. 76)

**“If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask [God] until it comes.”** (p. 76)

**Next Time: “Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.”** (p. 77)