

POWERLESSNESS ... "THE ESSENTIALS" ... RELATIONSHIPS ... FELLOWSHIPS
A "BIG BOOK" STUDY OF FOUR "THREADS OF RECOVERY"

October 11 through December 27, 2021

(Page cites from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, except as noted.)

RELATIONSHIPS - PART 1. "WITH GOD". Chapter 4, "We Agnostics", and more.

In our discussions of Powerlessness, we found that we were powerless over alcohol in three ways: a *physical allergy*, the *idea of a drink* and the *inability to stop drinking once we start*. The main object of our text Alcoholics Anonymous "is to enable [us] to find a Power greater than [ourselves] which will solve our problem." (p. 45) "Our liquor was but a symptom." (p. 64) "Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles." (p. 62)

In our discussions of the "Three Essentials", we found that we accept and deal with our powerlessness, and treat our "self-will run riot", with the spiritual awakening of our recovery. Our recovery is based on the three essentials of *willingness*, *honesty* and *open-mindedness*.

Step Five presents the healthy and helpful order of our three types of relationships: *God*, *myself* and *others*. Today, and for our next two sessions, we will examine the importance of letting our recovery turn each of these three **relationships** into healthy, helpful ones.

My relationship with God is the most important in my life. I need a healthy, helpful relationship with God so that I can have healthy, helpful relationships with myself and others.

Today, I seek to grow my healthy, helpful relationship with God. I am a better person when I try to put God first in my life. I am willing, honest and open-minded with myself today about my need for God to help me accept and deal with my powerlessness over alcohol, as well as the many people, places and things in my life over which I am powerless. *A healthy relationship with God enables me to be helpful to others*. So, let's consider how the Big Book answers three questions regarding my healthy, helpful relationship with God:

1. Why is my healthy, helpful relationship with God important today?
2. How is my healthy, helpful relationship with God made possible today?
3. What is the benefit of my healthy, helpful relationship with God today?

1. Why is my healthy, helpful relationship with God important today?

"... suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer." (p. 44)

"To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face."

"... we must find a spiritual basis of life—or else."

"Our human resources, as marshaled by the will, were not sufficient ..." (p. 45)

"Lack of power, that was our dilemma."

"... find a Power greater than [ourselves] which will solve [our] problem."

"... was not a basic solution of these bedevilments more important ..." (p. 52)

"Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did."

"Remember that we deal with alcohol—cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is one who has all power—that One is God." (pp. 58-59)

"... the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. **Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible.**" (p. 62)

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2. How is my healthy, helpful relationship with God made possible today?

"... as soon as we were able to lay aside prejudice (i.e., pre-judging) and express even a *willingness* to believe in a Power greater than ourselves, we commenced to get results, even though it was impossible for any of us to fully define or comprehend that Power, which is God." (p. 46)

"... we discovered we did not need to consider another's conception of God." "

"We found that God does not make too hard terms with those who seek Him." "

"Do I now believe, or am I even *willing* to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?" (p. 47)

"Faced with alcoholic destruction (*honesty*), we soon became as *open minded* on spiritual matters as we had tried to be on other questions." (p. 48)

"When many hundreds of people are able to say that the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith." (p. 51)

"When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did." (p. 52)

"... we had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing. God either is, or He isn't. What was our choice to be?" (p. 53)

"God, I offer myself to [You] ... relieve me of the bondage of self ..." (p. 63)

"... let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable ... remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows." (p. 76)

"... we ask God to direct our thinking ..." (p. 86)

"So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined." (p. 88)

.....
Seven Observations on a Healthy, Helpful Relationship with God as I understand Him.

"When we drew near to Him He disclosed Himself to us." (p. 57)

I have a responsibility in my relationship with God. I must become willing to exercise some initiative in this relationship. I can't simply sit in meetings waiting for God to come into me through osmosis. I take the risk in faith based on what I see in the lives of others who have "thoroughly followed our path." (the Twelve Steps)

"Why don't you choose your own conception of God?" (p. 12)

My "conception" of God is my idea of God. I will not always be able to understand, explain or predict God's motives, God's actions, God's timing or God's consequences. I will never understand everything about God.

"God as we understood Him" does not mean always feeling comfortable with God, or not being angry with God, or tired and afraid of waiting for God to answer or act.

Today, I believe in and trust completely God's nature and God's character.

As John C. told me in 1981, "There is a God ... and you're not it!"

I trust that God really does want what is best for me and others, in the long run. Leaders lead—followers follow. God is my "leader". I trust God's leadership in my life.

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"His defense must come from a Higher Power." (p. 43)

My Higher Power, God, is here to defend me not just from my insane idea that I can take the first drink and not have problems. God's will guiding my life is also my "defense", my path of relief, other than alcohol, from "restless, irritable and discontented"—and my release from my "bondage of self", my restoration of sanity.

"... they found that a new power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction flowed into them ... the consciousness of the Presence of God ..." (pp. 50-51)

My healthy, helpful relationship with God is based on trusting God's nature and God's character, not on being able to understand or explain what and when God does what God does. God's nature and character are to love me, forgive me and care for me with "power, peace, happiness and a sense of direction" for my life.

"We found the Great Reality deep down within us." (p. 55)

As I work the Twelve Steps to the best of my ability, I indeed find that the "Great Reality" inside me, my spirit, somehow is connected to and in harmony with God *as I understand God*. **I trust God and my connection with God today 100%.** I continue to try each day with my Step Ten work to keep this connection un-broken and intact. I seek to grow this connection each day with my Step Eleven work. I try to share the power of this connection, my spiritual awakening, with alcoholics and others every day.

"God, I offer myself to [You] ..." (p. 63)

"God, save me from being angry." (The beginning of forgiveness) (p. 67)

"We ask [God] to remove our fear ..." (God-reliance, not self-reliance) (p. 68)

"We ask God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them." (Consideration) (p. 69)

"Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us." (Moving from self-centered to God-centered living) (p. 77)

3. What is the benefit of my healthy, helpful relationship with God today?

"God had restored his sanity." (regarding the insanity of the first drink) (p. 57)

"Even so has God restored us all to our right minds." "

"Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well." (See "Promises", p. 63) (p. 63)

"... we are delighted." (See "Promises", p. 75) (p. 75)

"... a new freedom and a new happiness." (See "Promises", pp. 83-84) (p. 83)

"... '[God's] will (not mine) be done' ... the proper use of the will." (p. 85)

"We are then in much less danger ..." (See "Promises", p. 88) (p. 88)

"The only condition is that he trust in God and clean house." (p. 98)

"... remember that your real reliance is always upon [God]." (p. 164)

"See to it that your relationship with [God] is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us." (p. 164)

Next Time: RELATIONSHIPS - Part 2. "With Ourselves": "How it Works", "Into Action".