

August 17<sup>th</sup>

10 am

Threads of Recovery

Topic: 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Step 12 x 12

**5<sup>th</sup> Step:** *“Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”*

Let's first take note that Bill is driving home throughout this chapter the incredible sense of Loneliness, separateness, apartness, isolation the Alcoholic feels in first few pages:

**Pg 55**

*“we cannot live alone...”*

*“the need to quit living by ourselves with those tormenting ghosts of yesterday...”*

**Pg 56**

*“ought not be shared with anyone.”*

*“These will remain our secret.”*

*“Not a soul must ever know.”*

*“We hope they'll go to the grave with us.”*

*“They will tell how they tried to carry the load alone;”*

**Pg 57**

*“we shall get rid of that terrible sense of isolation...”*

*“Almost without exception, alcoholics are tortured by loneliness.”*

*“There was always that mysterious barrier we could neither surmount or understand.”*

*“we were finally struck down and left in terrified loneliness.”*

*“isolation problem...”*

*“old pangs of anxious apartness.”*

**Now back to very first paragraph of Step 5 in 12 x 12:**

What are ALL the steps doing? *“they all deflate our egos.”* Page 55 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph

What have we learned so far? *“AA experience has taught us we cannot live alone with our pressing problems and the character defects which cause or aggravate them.”* Page 55 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph

## Obstacles:

### 1. Solitary self-appraisal:

1. *"So intense, though, is our fear and reluctance..."* Page 55 paragraph 3
2. *"...holding back..."* page 56 paragraph 2
3. *"solitary self-appraisal"* page 59 paragraph 3

Brings us to two (2) stated difficulties of "solitary self-appraisal:

*"the difficulties of trying to deal rightly with God by ourselves are twofold."* Page 59 bottom

- a. "Somehow, being alone with God doesn't seem as embarrassing as facing up to another person."
- b. "What comes to us alone may be garbled by our own rationalization and wishful thinking."

### 2. "Our next problem will be to discover the person in whom we are to confide." Page 60-61

"The real tests of the situation are your own willingness to confide and your full confidence in the one with whom you share your first accurate self-survey."

## Gifts of Step 5:

1. "What are we likely to receive from Step Five?" page 57 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph
  - a. "we shall get rid of that terrible sense of isolation we've always had."
  - b. "It is the beginning of true kinship with man and God." Page 57 last paragraph
  - c. "This vital Step was also the means by which we began to get the feeling that we could be forgiven, no matter what we had thought or done." Page 57-58
  - d. "we first felt truly able to forgive others, no matter how we felt they had wronged us." Page 58 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph
  - e. "...we inwardly **knew** we'd be able to receive forgiveness and give it too." Page 58 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph
  - f. "Another great dividend we may expect from confiding our defects to another human being is humility..." page 58 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph
  - g. "More realism and therefore more honesty about ourselves are the great gains we make under the influence of Step 5." Page 58 last paragraph
  - h. "your sense of relief will mount from minute to minute." Page 62
  - i. "The "damned-up emotions of years break out of their confinement, and miraculously vanish as soon as they are exposed." Page 62
  - j. "As the pain subsides, a healing tranquility takes its place." Page 62
  - k. "during this stage...he first actually felt the presence of God." Page 62
  - l. "often become conscious of God as they never were before" page 62
  - m. "This feeling of being at one with God and man, this emerging from isolation (How?) through the open and honest sharing of our terrible burden of guilt, brings us to a resting place (Step 6) where we may prepare ourselves for the following Steps toward a full and meaningful sobriety." Page 62

**Condition for above gifts of Step 5:** "Provided you hold back nothing."

## Step 6 “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”

“So Step 6... Is AA’s way of stating the best possible ATTITUDE one can take in order to make a beginning of this lifetime job.” Page 65 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph

“The key words “*entirely ready*” underline the fact that we want to aim at the very best we know or can learn.” Page 65

“*Were entirely ready...*” How? Past tense. Steps 1 – 5 have worked us into a state of honesty and willingness. Now we are asked to apply that to ALL our problems, not just Alcohol. From relieving our alcohol problem to **all** of our problems...an attitude of willingness to let go of our old selves. To trust God more. Deepen our decision, commitment in Step 3.

### The action/work of Step 6:

1. “any person capable of enough willingness and honesty to **try repeatedly** (action) Step 6 on all his faults...” page 63
2. “But in no case does He render us as white as snow and keep us that way without our cooperation. That is something **we are supposed to be willing to work toward ourselves.**” (action) Page 65
3. “He asks only that **we try** (action) as best we know how to **make progress** in the building of character.” Page 65
4. Identify character defects, (expands list) and become **willing to work** on their removal, “At the very least, we shall have to come to grips with some of our worst character defects and **take action** toward their removal as quickly as we can.” Page 69
5. “What we **must recognize** now is that we exult in some of our defects. We really love them.” Page 66 Action
6. “if we would gain any real advantage in the use of this step on problems other than alcohol, we shall **need to make a brand new venture** into open-mindedness.” Page 68
7. Remove “no, never” from your vocabulary.

**“So the difference between ‘the boys and the men’ is the difference between striving for a self-determined objective and the for the perfect objective which is of God.”** (a preface to Step 11, St. Francis Prayer is an Ideal of Character or “perfect objective of God”) We can only truly guess at what “the perfect objective of God” is, however we have centuries of spiritual values to guide us –

You are neither Hitler nor are you Mother Theresa

## **Step 7: “Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.”**

A simple prayer, a request to remove those things we have identified that are in the way of our relationship with God, ourselves and others.

*“The Seventh Step is where we make the change in our attitude which permits us, with humility as our guide, to move out from ourselves towards others and God.” Page 76*

*“The attainment of greater humility is the foundation principle of each of AA’s Twelve Steps.” Page 70 paragraph 2*

### **What is Humility?**

“The basic ingredient of all Humility, a desire to seek and do God’s will...” page 72

### **Character Building:**

“We never thought of making honesty, tolerance and the true love of man and God the daily basis of living.” Page 72

“At this stage of our progress we are under heavy pressure and coercion to do the right thing.” Page 74

“We are obliged to choose between the pains of trying and the certain penalties of failing to do so.” Page 74

### **Without Humility:**

“no alcoholic can stay sober at all.”

“they still haven’t much chance of becoming truly happy.”

“they cannot live to much useful purpose,”

“or in adversity, be able to summon the faith that can meet any emergency.

### **Reinforcement of Step 3:**

“Refusing to place God first, we deprived ourselves of His help.” Page 75

“Of myself I am nothing, the Father doeth the works”

### **Results:**

“We enjoyed moments in which there is something like real peace of mind.” Page 74

“humility...it now begins to mean the nourishing ingredient which can give us serenity.” Page 74

“Our eyes begin to open to the immense values which come straight out of painful ego-puncturing.”

“Everywhere we saw failure a misery transformed by humility into priceless assets.” Page 75

“The most profound result of all was the change in our attitude towards God.”

“Of myself I am nothing, the Father doeth the works” began to carry bright promise and meaning.”