

“IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS”
AN AA “BIG BOOK” STUDY OF SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES IN CHAPTERS 8 - 11

The Four-part Study of Chapters 8 - 11 in Alcoholics Anonymous.

I spent very little time in these chapters in my early recovery. I had “contempt prior to investigation for at least six reasons:

1. I was not the wife, or “spouse” of an alcoholic;
2. I was not a family member living with an drinking or newly-sober alcoholic;
3. We had an EAP program at work—alcoholics in the workplace were not my problem;
4. “A Vision for You” just seemed to repeat everything already said in the first 88 pages;
5. Trying to read these chapters made me feel uncomfortable;
6. Most people I knew in AA criticized these chapters and didn’t read them, either.

Today I believe these four chapters are just as important to me as any of the other chapters in Alcoholics Anonymous. *These chapters are important because they contain vital information for me about how to become spiritually healthy in all my relationships.*

Bill W., Dr. Bob S., and Hank P. intended Alcoholics Anonymous to include information for non-alcoholics—spouses, family members, friends and business associates— about the illness of alcoholism and the spiritual program they had been given to deal with the illness. Hank P. and Bill W. had a working outline for the book by June 1938. The Outline included:

- “Chapter Twenty-One. Dealing with wives, relative and friends, *showing them how they may help.*”—became “TO WIVES” and “THE FAMILY AFTERWARD”.
- “Chapter Twenty-Two. Herein employers will be given the *new view of alcoholism ... specific suggestions will be made ... in the best interest of all ... handle the myriad situations which are so baffling* to him at present.”—became “TO EMPLOYERS”.
- “Chapters Twenty-Three and Twenty-Four. The *sufferer must be willing to recover ... learned more from our failures* than our successes ... how our *simple common denominator* works in the every day world.”—became “A VISION FOR YOU”.

(Italics mine)

In this Big Book study, we examine Chapters 8 -11 to discover the spiritual principles we can apply in all of our relationships. We will do this with three goals in mind:

1. **Read** what the words say. We will not add to, or take away from, what the words say;
2. **Understand** what the words mean, in the context in which they are written;
3. Try to **apply** these spiritual principles “in all our affairs”, all our relationships, today.

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“IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS”. Spiritual Principles in Chapter Nine, “The Family Afterward”

An outline of Chapter Nine “The Family Afterward” might look something like this:

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| I. Introduction. “The entire family is ... ill.” | p. 122 |
| II. “Obstacles” a family will meet. | pp. 123-130 |
| III. Changes a family can make. | pp. 130-134 |
| IV. Conclusion. | p. 135 |

Spiritual Principles for use in all relationships.

“All members of the family should meet upon the common ground of tolerance, understanding and love.”

(p. 122)

These are the most important spiritual principles for all my relationships.

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“IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS”. Spiritual Principles in Chapter Nine, “The Family Afterward”.

Spiritual Principles for use in all relationships. (Cont'd)

“... in God’s hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have ...” (p. 124)
Sharing my experiences can often be a spiritual benefit to others.

“... praise his progress ... where there is tolerance, love, and spiritual understanding.” (p. 127)
These principles help me see the “good” in everyone.

“... material well-being always followed spiritual progress; it never preceded.” “
My application of spiritual principles is necessary in each part of my life.

“... show unselfishness and love ...” “
“... talks ... without heated argument, self-pity, self-justification or resentful criticism.” “
The value of my use of these principles “in all my affairs” is incalculable.

“Giving, rather than getting, will become the guiding principle.” (p. 128)
This is always an important spiritual feature in all my relationships.

“... God has accomplished the miracle where they failed.” “
I don’t do “miracles”. God does—in all my relationships, when I let Him.

“... spiritual life which does not include his family obligations ... not so spiritual ...”. (p. 129)
I try to remember to apply this principle daily with every family member.

“... sense of purpose ... consciousness of the power of God in our lives ...” (p. 130)
When I am intentional about this, my day goes better, no matter who I am with.

“... adopts a sane spiritual program.” “
“Sane spiritual program” perhaps means others are as important to God as I am.

“We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others.” (p. 132)
God’s gift to me of spiritual recovery means I am responsible to help others.

“... when trouble comes, cheerfully capitalize it as an opportunity to demonstrate [God’s] omnipotence.” (p. 133)
My spiritual recovery, and sobriety, always points to God’s power, not mine.

“... though God has wrought miracles among us ... never belittle a good doctor ...” “
Trusting and using good medical care is a spiritual principle—get help!

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| “First Things First.” | Trust God. | Prayer. | |
| “Live and Let Live.” | Clean House. | Transparency. | |
| “Easy Does It.” | Help Others. | Service. | (p. 135) |

God uses our relationships to transform us from what we were to what God would have us be, so that we can do what God would have us do.