

“GOD WILL CONSTANTLY DISCLOSE MORE TO YOU AND TO US”

**A Big Book Study of What God Discloses to Us in Each of the Twelve Steps.
A Spiritual Awakening of Limitation, leading to Opportunity, resulting in Liberation.
A “Threads of Recovery” Workshop—October 3 through December 26, 2022**

(Page cites from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, unless otherwise noted.)

“We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us.”

(p. 164)

To me, this is one of the most powerful humility statements in Alcoholics Anonymous. I am content with “we realize we know only a little”. I don’t have to know everything to live a sober, safe, secure and serene life. God discloses to me everything I need to know for today, so that my “relationship with [God] is right”. (p. 164)

I am more than just alcoholic. I am, first of all, human. I have all of the normal human characteristics—ideas, attitudes and emotions—hopes and dreams—joys and fears—excitement and sadness—gains and loss. As an alcoholic, I have at least one very strong human characteristic—extreme self-will. God has given alcoholics the Twelve Steps to use as a set of spiritual guidelines to align our self-will with God’s will, so that our relationship with God can be “right”. To be “right”, my relationship with God needs to be on God’s terms, not mine.

When I decide to learn to apply the Twelve Steps in my life, I am deciding to do more than not drink. I am deciding to learn how to use my God-given self-will in line with God’s will for me and others. This process begins with my willingness to accept what God is **disclosing** to me throughout all of the Twelve Steps, so that I can be in “right relationship” with God.

God discloses things to me in at least three ways: circumstances in my life; other peoples’ experience; and inspiration. My first recovery “disclosure” was my “gift of desperation” born of my own circumstances that led me to AA. As I grow in recovery, more of God’s disclosures to me are in the form of inspiration.

One “thread of recovery” in AA is the process of disclosure: “Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now.” (p. 58)

The Twelve Steps include disclosures about my limitations, my spiritual opportunities and my spiritual liberation from my “bondage of self”. In this study, we look at one disclosure in each step which leads to other disclosures in subsequent steps—as we enlarge [our] spiritual life and “see to it that [our] relationship with [God] is right”. (p. 164)

*The **disclosures** in Steps Seven through Twelve contain **opportunities** in my spiritual awakening for **liberation** from my bondage of self.*

Step Nine: “Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”

*God discloses my **accountability** to me in Step Nine. My spiritual **opportunity** is to use my reliance on God’s strength from Step Seven coupled with my Step Eight willingness to take responsibility for the harms I have caused others to be **accountable** to make direct amends and restitution in Step Nine. I experience **liberation** from my fear of being **accountable**.*

*There is a difference between “being **accountable**” and “not getting caught”!*

“I was to *right* all such matters to the utmost of my ability.” (italics mine) (p. 13)

“Belief in the power of God, plus enough willingness, honesty and humility ...” “

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**The Disclosure of “Accountability” in Step Nine—Spiritual Opportunity and Liberation
from the Bondage of Self.**

“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 ask God in Step Six for the *willingness* to “let go” of my objectionable things.
I *humbly* ask God in Step Seven for the willingness to “let God” remove those things from me that stand in my way of being useful to God and others.

I ask God in Step Eight for the willingness to take *responsibility* for the wrongs I have done to others and the consequential harms I have caused them.

“Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past ... if we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes.” (p. 76)

As my healthy relationship with God grows, I can be in healthy relationships with others.

In Step Eight, I asked God for the willingness to take responsibility for myself.
I am responsible. It is no longer somebody else’s fault that I did what I did.

*Now, in Step Nine, I ask God for the willingness to be **accountable to** others.
I take my new-found responsibility from Step Eight and apply it in direct personal amends and restitution to those persons I have harmed, to whom I am now **accountable**.*

Being “Accountable” to People I Harmed—characteristics of healthy direct amends:

“Business acquaintances and friends.” (pp. 76-77)

“... sincere desire to set right the wrong ... demonstration of good will ...” (p. 77)

“The man we hated.” (pp. 77-78)

“Under no condition do we criticize ... sweep off our side of the street ...” (p. 77)

“Most alcoholics owe money.” (p. 78)

“We do not dodge our creditors ... lose our fear of creditors ...” “

“Committed a criminal offense.” (pp. 78-79)

“... we ask that we be given strength and direction ... we are willing.” (p. 79)

“Other people are involved.” (pp. 79-80)

“... not ... needlessly sacrifice others to save himself ...” (p. 79)

“Domestic troubles.” (pp. 80-82)

“... we should admit our fault ... God willing, it shall not be repeated.” (p. 81)

“At home.” (pp. 82-83)

“We feel a man is unthinking when he says sobriety is enough.” (p. 82)

“... long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead.” (p. 83)

Spiritual Opportunity: *Rely on God’s strength for willingness* (Steps 6 - 9)

Liberation from my “bondage of self”: *Responsible for my actions.* (Step 8)

Accountable to others for harms done. (Step 9)

***“Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to
God and the people about us.”***

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Observations on “GOD’S DISCLOSURES” in Steps One through Nine.

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

The first nine steps **disclose** to me my “real purpose”—to not drink ... and to live a sober, God-centered life in service to God, *as understand God*, and others.

*This sentence is in the present tense—as true for me today as it was when I was new. God **discloses** to me during these first nine steps how to become spiritually “fit”:*

- in Step One, the *limitation* of my **delusion** that I am in control of alcohol or my life. I accept the terrifying truth of this *limitation*, opening me to see my *spiritual opportunity*;
- in Step Two, the *limitation of my lack of sufficient power*. I develop hope from the experience of others in my *spiritual opportunity* of a **Power** greater than me that can help;
- in Step Three, the *limitation* of my will and my need to decide to seek **God’s care**. I see the *spiritual opportunity* present in the Step Three promises (p. 63, “... God provided ...”);
- in Step Four, the *limitation* of **“the flaws in [my] make-up”** blocking me from seeking and receiving God’s care. I see the *spiritual opportunity* in knowing what is blocking me from the help I need from the God *of my understanding*;
- in Step Five, the *limitation* of the **“obstacles in [my] path”** which more deeply block me from receiving the guidance and direction I need from God’s care. I feel my growing *spiritual opportunity* in the expression of the Step Five promises (p. 75, “...we are delighted ...”);
- in Step Six, the *limitation* of my **“objectionable things”** which underly the “obstacles in my path” and drive the “flaws in my make-up”. I seek to reduce these *limitations* of mine in my *spiritual opportunity* to ask God for the willingness to “let go” of them;

<i>MOTIVE ... leads to ...</i>	<i>CHOICE ... leads to ...</i>	<i>ACTION ... leads to ...</i>	<i>CONSEQUENCE.</i>
<i>(Lust)</i>	<i>(Cheat).</i>	<i>(Affair)</i>	<i>(Caught)</i>
Objectionable Thing.	Obstacle in my Path.	Flaw in my Make-up.	Guilt, Regret, Remorse.

- in Step Seven, I have the *spiritual opportunity* to fully rely on God’s **Strength** to “let God” remove whatever blocks me from being useful to God and others, for *liberation* from self;
- in Step Eight, I have the *spiritual opportunity* to take **responsibility** for the harms I caused to others. I use God’s strength in Step Eight to become willing to admit the harms I caused others, receiving *liberation from my bondage of self* of guilt, regret and remorse;
- in Step Nine, I have the *spiritual opportunity* to accept my **accountability** to others to make amends and restitution for the harms I have done them. I experience *liberation* from my fear of being **accountable**. I seek God’s strength to grow in my healthy relationship with God and others, as is made clear in the Step Nine promises (pp. 83-84 “... we will be amazed ...”).

Next Time: The disclosure of “Love and Tolerance” in Step Ten.