

## **“HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING ...!!!”**

A “Big Book” Twelve Step Study of ***SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES***,  
including the ***Prayers*** that embody them and the ***Promises*** that flow from their practice.

January 2 through March 27, 2023. Facilitator: Bill H., St. Louis, Mo.

(All quotes from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, unless otherwise stated.)

### **Introduction.**

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps ...” is the first part of Step Twelve. This is the most powerful promise to me in Alcoholics Anonymous.

“The principles we have set down are guides to [spiritual] progress.” (p. 60)

In this “Big Book” study, we consider the Twelve Steps themselves to be the *Spiritual Principles* that produce the *spiritual awakening* for each one of us. We go beyond the one-word lists of principles for each step. We discover in each step the *constant spiritual principle* to apply in our life in recovery each day, as we continue to enlarge our spiritual life.

A principle is an unchanging fact. Water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit at sea level. Water freezing at 32 degrees F. is an immutable principle—unchanging. I do not have to understand the science of thermodynamics to believe in and apply this principle.

Water freezing at 32 degrees F. at sea level is a principle that is part of a “change process”. Water changes from liquid form to solid form at 32 degrees F. at sea level.

So, too, are the unchanging, *constant spiritual principles* of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Twelve Steps are unchanging, *constant spiritual principles* that form the foundation of our spiritual awakening, our “change process”. *The spiritual principles don’t change. We change.*

Here are two descriptions of our “spiritual awakening change process”:

“... alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences ...  
in the nature of huge emotional displacements and rearrangements.”

(Dr. Jung, p. 27)

“The terms ‘spiritual experience’ and ‘spiritual awakening’ are used many times in this book which, upon careful reading, shows that the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism has manifested itself among us in many different forms.”

(A. A., p. 567)

“We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. *Willingness, honesty and open-mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.*” (p. 567) Willingness, honesty and open-mindedness are “essential” changes in our “ideas, emotions and attitudes” that enable and grow the spiritual principle of each step.

.....  
**Step Four.** “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

### **The Spiritual Principle of Step Four.**

The spiritual principles of Steps One and Two, ***I can’t do this alone—I am not in charge*** and ***I need spiritual help to live a sober, sane life—I am not alone***, lead me to the spiritual principle of Step Three, ***I need to make a decision to seek God’s care.***

“Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us.” (*willing, honest, open-minded*) (p. 64)

Otherwise, my self-will can stay in its delusion that thinks it is “self-employed”!

My first action in my “strenuous effort” is my Step Four personal inventory. I apply the spiritual principle of Step Four, ***a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself.***

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**The Spiritual Principle of Step Four: “A searching and fearless moral inventory of myself.”**

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.” (p. 59)

This step illustrates well the *unchanging* nature of a spiritual principle that is used in the *change* process of my spiritual awakening. I have made multiple Step Four “searching and fearless moral inventories” since I came into AA. No two inventories have been the same. Each one is different from the others. In each one of my Step Four inventories, something is different—something has changed. *Yet the spiritual principle of the inventory has not changed.*

**“... inventory of ourselves.”**

This *unchanging* part of my inventory is simple to understand. For my inventory to be effective in aiding my spiritual growth, it must always be about me, not other people:

“... he is sure other people are more to blame.” (p. 61)

“To conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got.” (p. 66)

**“... moral inventory ...”**

This *unchanging* part of my inventory is simple. Because it is “moral”, it is always about “right” and “wrong” behavior and the “goodness” (as God defines “good”) of my character:

“First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure.” (p. 64)

**“... a searching and fearless ...”**

This *unchanging* part of my inventory is to be “searching” and “fearless”. My motives and actions change. I am as *unchangingly* “willing, honest and open-minded” as I can be:

“Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles.” (p. 62)

“... alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot though he usually doesn’t think so.” “

“Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations.” (p. 64)

.....  
Each of the three inventories in Step Four has the *unchanging principle of asking God for help*:

**Resentments** ... shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit.” (p. 66)

“... the world and its people really dominated us.” “

“*God save me* from being angry.” (p. 67)

(Note: Column Four questions are on p. 67, completing the columns on p. 65)

**Fear** ... an evil and corroding thread ...” (p. 67)

“Wasn’t it because self-reliance failed us?” (p. 68)

“*We ask [God]* to remove our fear ... what [God] would have us be.” “

**Now about sex** ... where had we been selfish, dishonest, or **inconsiderate**?” (p. 69)

“Where were we at fault?” “

“*We ask God* to mold our ideals and help us live up to them.” “

“We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him.” (p. 71)

***My spiritual principle in Step Four is that I make a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself.***