

## **“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. Here, 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 and apply this principle..

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

So, too, are the unchanging *spiritual principles* of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Twelve Steps are unchanging 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 Three.** “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”

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

Steps One and Two equip me with new information about me, my illness of alcoholism and my need for a spiritual solution for my illness of alcoholism. I become *willing, honest and open-minded* enough to “admit” and “come to believe” this new information. My spiritual principle of Step One, ***I can’t do this alone-I am not in charge***, and my spiritual principle of Step Two, ***I need spiritual help to live a sober, sane life-I am not alone***, convince me to seek the **care** of a Power greater than myself, the God of my understanding.

In Step Three, I am willing, honest and open-minded enough to decide to learn how to stop living a life of “self-will run riot” and to decide to learn how to seek God’s **care** of my will and my life.

My spiritual principle in Step Three is ***I need to make a decision to seek God’s care.***

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**The Spiritual Principle of Step Three: “I need to make a decision to seek God’s care.”**

“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.”

Chapter Four, “WE AGNOSTICS”, closes with this sentence: “When we drew near to Him, He disclosed Himself to us.” (p. 57) My recovery program is summarized in that one sentence. I am “working my program” *today* to “draw near to” the God of my understanding *today* so that God can “disclose Himself” to me and **care** for me *today*.

I begin to “draw near to God” when I stop running away from God and “stop doubting the power of God” (p. 52) in Steps One and Two.

*Now in Step Three I am willing to make the single most important decision in my life, after my decision to not take the first drink today. I honestly decide to be spiritually pro-active. I decide to make the open-minded choice to learn how “to live on a spiritual basis”. (p. 44)*

**“Made a decision ...”**

“Being convinced, *we were at Step Three*, which is that we **decided** to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood Him. Just what do we mean by that, and just what do we do?” (p. 60)

“The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success.” “

The explanation of this requirement (more convincing!) continues on pages 61 and 62.

“This is the how and why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn’t work. Next, we **decided** that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director.” (p. 62)

**“... to turn our will and our lives over to ...”**

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

“... we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt.” “

“... the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn’t think so. Above everything, we must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us!. God makes that possible.” “

My **will** are my choices, my decision-making process. My **life** is the sum of all the consequences of all the decisions I make, including the decisions I make in response to other people, situations and circumstances. In Step Three, I decide to learn how to seek God’s **care** in making decisions, in setting the priorities that govern my choices. I also decide to learn how to trust God’s **care** with the consequences of my decisions and choices.

**“... the care of God as we understood Him.”**

“God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents.” (p. 62)

“We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed.” (p. 63)

God’s care will always be what is good for me and protect me from what can harm me.

God’s care will always help me help others and prevent me from harming others.

God’s care will not always be comfortable or agreeable to me.

God’s care will not always be understandable to me.

God’s care will not always be on my timetable.

***My spiritual principle in Step Three is that I decide to seek God’s care—  
God’s care based on God’s Love, God’s Power and God’s Way of life. (See “Prayer”, p. 63)***

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**The Prayer of Step Three.**

“God, I offer myself to Thee, to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt.  
Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties,  
that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love,  
and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!” (p. 63)

**The Promises of Step Three.**

“When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed.  
We had a new Employer.  
Being all powerful, He provided what we needed,  
if we kept close to Him and performed His work well.  
Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves,  
our little plans and designs.  
More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life.  
As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind,  
as we discovered we could face life successfully,  
as we became conscious of His presence,  
we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter.  
We were reborn.” (p. 63)

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**The Spiritual Principles of Steps One, Two and Three:**

**Step One. *I can’t do this alone—I am not in charge.***

**Step Two. *I need spiritual help to live a sober, sane life—I am not alone.***

**Step Three. *I need to make a decision to seek God’s care.***

Using the spiritual principles of Steps One, Two and Three do not eliminate my self-will.

Using the spiritual principles of Steps One, Two and Three do not diminish my self-will.

Using the spiritual principles of Steps One, Two and Three enable me *to decide to learn*  
*how* to seek and accept the **care** of God’s will to guide, limit and re-direct my  
self-will.

Note:

In Steps Four through Nine, we will learn how to implement our decision we make in  
Step Three. We will build our foundation for spiritual living by learning to apply six more  
unchanging spiritual principles in our enlarging and ever-changing spiritual awakening:

Step Four. “Searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

Step Five. “Admitted ... nature of our wrongs.”

Step Six. “... ready to have God remove ... defects of character.”

Step Seven. “Humbly asked Him ... to have all of me, good and bad.”

Step Eight. “... persons we had harmed ... willing to make amends.”

Step Nine. “Made direct amends ...”

***Next Time: The Spiritual Principle of Step Four— “searching and fearless moral inventory  
of ourselves.”***