

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. 568) 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 Seven.** “**Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.**” (p. 59)

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

The first six steps give me *humility* and *willingness* to *honestly* realize that I cannot let go, on my own, of “the obstacles in my path” that block my relationship with God and my spiritual growth. I need God’s help to “let go” of my “obstacles”, the “exact nature of my wrongs”. I desire an *open-minded* relationship with God that grows my spiritual awakening.

The spiritual principle of Step Six is to **ask God to help me be willing to “let go” of my objectionable things.** *This principle works when I persist in my prayer action to apply it!* The spiritual principles of all of the first six steps make it possible for me to practice the spiritual principle of Step Seven: “**Humbly asked Him ...**” (See “Humility”, 12x12, p. 72, p. 76)

*In Step Six, I am willing to “let go” so God can help me. In Step Seven, I become willing to “let God” use me to help* others—another powerful “turning point” in my spiritual awakening!

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**The Spiritual Principle of Step Seven: “Humbly asked Him ...”**

“Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.” (p. 59)

**“When ready ...”** (p. 76)

Two words—“when ready”. It is so easy to skip right over these two words.  
I’m impatient. I want to get on with it. Yet, here is another “pause. Why the pause here?  
*This pause saves me from being too hasty with my Step Six willingness prayer action!*

So I pause. Have I really tried to apply the spiritual principle of Step Six? Have I  
*honestly asked God to help me be willing to “let go” of each of my objectionable things?*

**“... we say something like this: My Creator, I am now willing ...”** (p. 76)

“I am now willing ...” The key word here is “now”. This “now willing” is a direct  
result of my Step Six prayer for willingness. I become more *open-minded* to God’s will.

**“... that you should have all of me, good and bad.”** (p. 76)

My willingness grows from Step Six to Step Seven. In Step Six, I ask God for the  
willingness to “let go” of my *known* list of objectionable things blocking my relationship  
with, and help from, God. Now, in Step Seven, I go further. I am now willing enough and  
honest enough to let God “have” all of me—the known and the unknown parts of me.

*My Step Three prayer is answered in Step Seven. I am willing for the God of my  
understanding to have all of me, good and bad. I am being relieved of my “bondage of self”.*

**“I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which  
stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.”** (p. 76)

In Step Six, I pray for the willingness to honestly “let go” of the “objectionable  
things” in me that block me from the help I need from God. *I let God help me in Step Six.*

In Step Seven, *I trust God to choose which of my “defects of character” to  
remove that stand in the way of my usefulness to God and others. I am open-minded  
enough to accept God’s “defects of character” list— so God can use me to help others.*

Thus, I am being spiritually equipped to live on God’s terms, as my “real purpose  
is to fit [myself] to be of maximum service to God and the people about [me].” (p. 77)

**“Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding.”** (p. 76)

More than ever, I need God’s strength! The first thing God wants me to do with  
my new-found willingness to let God use me to help others is to make my amends in  
Steps Eight and Nine, “to go out to [my] fellows and repair the damage done in the past  
... out of [my] effort to live on self-will ...” (p. 76)

Going forward, I need God’s strength to be *willing to let go of my desire to control  
the agenda of my spiritual awakening*. As I “go out” from Step Seven, I need God’s strength  
for me to let God guide my will (my choices) and my life (the consequences of my choices).

*I am now willing to let God help me. In doing so, I let God use me to help others!*

**Step Seven Prayer.** “Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding.”

**Step Seven Promise.** God helps me let go of me so God can use me to help others.

**Next Time: The Spiritual Principle of Step Eight—“Willing to make amends ...”**