

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 to our life in recovery each day, to enlarge our spiritual life and let God expand our spiritual awakening.

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.

The Twelve Steps are unchanging, *constant spiritual principles* that we apply to our lives to experience 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 Nine. “**Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**” (p. 59)

I now have eight unchanging spiritual principles to use to seek God’s care:

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

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

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

Step Four. *Moral inventory.* “A searching and fearless moral inventory of myself.”

Step Five. *Admit.* “Admit the exact nature of my wrongs.”

Step Six. *Ready.* “Ask God to help me be willing to ‘let go’ of my ‘objectionable things’.”

Step Seven. *Humbly asked Him.* “Humbly asked Him ...”

Step Eight. *Persons we had harmed ... willing to make amends.* “Become responsible.”

The Spiritual Principle of Step Nine.

In Step Nine, I use the spiritual principle to **make direct amends to those I have harmed**. I am **accountable** for my wrongs, making amends and restitution, where possible.

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The Spiritual Principle of Step Nine: “... made direct amends to those I have harmed ...”

“... when we took inventory ... we subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal.” (p. 76)

“We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight.” (p. 67)

“... we let [God] demonstrate, through us, what He can do.” (p. 68)

“We must be willing to make amends where we have done harm ...” (p. 69)

“If we are sorry for what we have done, and have the honest desire to let God take us to better things, we believe we will be forgiven and will have learned our lesson. If we are not sorry, and our conduct continues to harm others, we are quite sure to drink.” (p. 70)

My “willingness preparation” for the direct amends process starts in Step Four, when I am willing to carefully follow the “clear-cut directions” given to me in our text book.

In my recovery, I often skip suggestions like these on pages 67-70! Why do I do this? *I think I know what’s good for me? I don’t need this much help? They brought it on themselves? Is it my pride and fear—AGAIN! I am unwilling to take **responsibility** for the wrongs I have done and become **accountable** to amend the harms I have done to others.*

“Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris that has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves.”

Very simply, this is what I will do in each and every direct Ninth Step amends I make:

“... go out to our fellows ...” Face to face is best.

“... attempt to ...” Do the best I can to **be accountable** for my wrongs.

“... sweep away the debris ...” Be **accountable** for amending my part.

Categories of People to whom we owe Amends:

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

“... we are trying to put our own lives in order.”

“The man we hated.” pp. 77-78

“Under no condition do we criticize or argue. His faults are not discussed.”

“Most alcoholics owe money.” p. 78

“We must lose our fear of creditors ...”

“Criminal offense.” pp. 78-79

“... we ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing.”

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

“... place the outcome in God’s hands ...”

“We have domestic troubles.” pp. 80-82

“... admit our fault ... God willing, it shall not be repeated.”

“At home.” pp. 82-83

“... a man is unthinking when he says that sobriety is enough.”

Step Nine Prayer. “If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes.”

I use this prayer as I seek God’s help to become willing during my Step Eight work.

Now, I use this same prayer right up to the doorstep of each direct amend I make in Step Nine. God wants to help. I need God’s caring help. I think I’ll let God help me here!

Step Nine Promise(s). “If we are painstaking about this phase of our development ...”

Next Time: The Spiritual Principle of Step Ten—“Continued to take personal inventory”.