

**"WE CLAIM SPIRITUAL PROGRESS RATHER THAN SPIRITUAL PERFECTION."**

A Big Book Twelve Step Study of our "Happy, Joyous and Free" Journey of Recovery,  
April 3 through June 26, 2023.

Facilitator: Bill H., St. Louis, Mo.

**HOPE for Spiritual Help. "... as we became conscious of His presence ..."**

Step One. April 3. "(a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives."

Step Two. April 10. "(b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism."

Step Three. April 17. "(c) That God could and would if He were sought."

**RELATIONSHIP with the Spirit. "... walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe."**

Step Four. April 24. "First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up ..."

Step Five. May 1. "... a new relationship with our Creator ..."

**FAITH in God as we understand Him. "... God is doing for us what we could not do ..."**

Step Six. May 8. "... we ask God to help us be willing."

Step Seven. May 15. "I am now willing that you should have all of me ..."

Step Eight. May 22. "... a list of all persons ... to whom we are willing to make amends."

Step Nine. May 29. "If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes."

**LIFE in God's Care. "See to it that your relationship with Him is right ..."**

Step Ten. June 5. "We have entered the world of the Spirit."

Step Eleven. June 12. "So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined."

Step Twelve. June 19. "... walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress."

**“WE CLAIM SPIRITUAL PROGRESS RATHER THAN SPIRITUAL PERFECTION.”**

A Big Book Twelve Step Study of our “Happy, Joyous and Free” Journey of Recovery,

April 3 through June 26, 2023. Facilitator: Bill H., St. Louis, Mo.

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

“We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.” (p. xiii)

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps ...” (p. 60)

“We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.” (p. 60)

“We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free.” (p. 133)

*How do I get from “seemingly hopeless” to a “spiritual awakening” filled with “spiritual progress”—a life where I can be “happy, joyous and free”?*

My journey of spiritual awakening begins as a faint **HOPE for spiritual help** that grows in Steps One, Two and Three as I begin to move away from “the gates of insanity and death” of my hopelessness. (“... conscious of His presence...”, p. 63)

My spiritual journey continues as I learn to grow in **RELATIONSHIP with the Spirit** in Steps Four and Five. (“... walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.”, p. 75)

I grow spiritually in Steps Six through Nine as my **FAITH in God as I understand God** strengthens. (“... God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.”, p. 84)

I remain on my spiritual journey as I learn to live **LIFE in God’s care** each day with Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve. (“... See to it that your relationship with Him is right ...”, p. 164)

*In this Twelve Step “Big Book” study workshop, we consider the essential contribution each step makes in our “Happy, Joyous and Free” journey of recovery and spiritual progress.*

**HOPE for Spiritual Help. “... as we became conscious of His presence ...”**

**Step One.** “(a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.” (p. 60)

**“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.”** (p. 59)

I was “seemingly hopeless” when I arrived at my first meeting of AA. I had a drinking problem. I thought AA was going to help me learn to drink and not have problems!

It took me three months in AA to get the message that “it’s the first drink”. My recovery in AA began when I became willing to “stop starting” to drink in the first place.

AA treats more than my drinking problem. AA treats my “seemingly hopeless state of mind and body” from the very beginning. When I begin to live each day without a drink, my head clears. I am willing, honest and open-minded enough to learn from the Big Book, my sponsor and other sober members of AA who continue to seek spiritual progress.

I learn about Step One. I am powerless over alcohol. My life is unmanageable by me because of my *delusion of not being powerless* over alcohol. My spiritual awakening begins.

**“WE CLAIM SPIRITUAL PROGRESS RATHER THAN SPIRITUAL PERFECTION.”**

A Big Book Twelve Step Study of our “Happy, Joyous and Free” Journey of Recovery,

April 3 through June 26, 2023. Facilitator: Bill H., St. Louis, Mo.

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

**HOPE for Spiritual Help. “... as we became conscious of His presence ...”**

**Step One.** “(a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.” (p. 60)

**“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol ...”** (p. 59)

“Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol ... it is injurious ... they are restless, irritable and discontented ... sense of ease and comfort ... phenomenon of craving develops ...” (pp. xxviii-xxix)

“... they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving.” (p. xxx)

“He had lost everything worthwhile in life ... only living ... to drink ... believed that for him there was no hope.” (p. xxxi)

“The patient had made his own diagnosis, and deciding his situation hopeless, had hidden in a deserted barn determined to die.” “

“... lose all control of his liquor consumption, once he starts to drink.” (p. 21)

“He wished ... to regain self-control ... doctor’s judgement ... utterly hopeless.” (p. 26)

“The idea ... he will control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession ...” (p. 30)

“The persistence of this illusion is astonishing ... gates of insanity or death.” “

“The delusion that [he will control and enjoy his drinking] has to be smashed.” “

*My powerlessness over my “alcoholic allergy” is not a character defect. It is simply a fact of my physical body chemistry. My **delusion** that I do not have this allergy, and my **illusion** that I can control it through self-knowledge and self-will, are character defects.*

**“... that our lives had become unmanageable.”** (p. 59)

“... main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind ...” (p. 23)

“... inability to control his drinking ... methods we have tried ...” (p. 31)

*Examples of failed control producing unmanageable lives:*

Retiree. pp. 32-33

Young people. pp. 33-34

Jim. pp. 35-37

“Jay” pp. 37-39

Fred. pp. 39-43

“... readiness to change our point of view ... these bedevilmings ...” (p. 52)

“Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.” (p. 58)

*I admit my powerlessness over alcohol. I admit that my obsession with alcoholic living is not sane and makes my life unmanageable. I am not “happy, joyous and free”.*

*In desperation, I let go of my **delusion** of control. I yearn for a new hope—a hope that some help, some “power”, exists that can help me learn to make sane choices. I am “unable to imagine life either with alcohol or without it”. (p. 152). My “ideas, emotions, and attitudes” begin to change. Unknown to me, I have stopped running from “[God’s] presence”.*

**Next Time: Step Two.** “That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.”