

“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”—living a life where I can be “happy, joyous and free”?

My journey of spiritual awakening begins in Steps One, Two and Three as a faint **HOPE for spiritual help** that grows 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 in Steps Four and Five as I grow in **RELATIONSHIP with the Spirit**. (“... walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.” p. 75)

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

God enlarges my spiritual life each day with Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve as I learn to live **LIFE in God’s care**. (“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.

FAITH in GOD as I understand God. “... God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.”

Step Six. “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.” (p. 59)

“Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable?” (p. 76)

“[The book’s] main object is to enable you [to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem.” (p. 45)

“Selfishness—self-centeredness ... extreme example of self-will run riot ...” (p. 62)

In Steps One through Five, my spiritual awakening “journey of recovery” takes me from a **hope** for spiritual help to a **relationship** with the Spirit. I have become **conscious of God’s presence**. I feel that I am **walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe**.

In **Step Six**, I become willing, with God’s help, to let go of my “objectionable things”, the “exact nature” of my wrongs *that are blocking me from my relationship with God*. As I ask God for the willingness to “let go”, I receive the “care” of God that I prayed for in Step Three. **God does for me what I cannot do for myself. My faith in God grows and strengthens.**

FAITH in GOD as I understand God. “... God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.”

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Step Six. “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.” (p. 59)

“Returning home ... we ask:” (*Humility: less self-centered ... more God-centered!*) (p. 75)

“If we can answer to our satisfaction ...”: (p. 76)

Have I omitted anything?	Lied.
Is my work solid so far?	Honest.
Are the stones properly in place?	Nature of my wrongs.
Have I skimmed on the cement put in the foundation?	Told partial truth.
Have I tried to make mortar without sand?	Omitted the prayers.

“... we then look at Step Six.

We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable.” (p. 76)

... with a willingness he had never before been able to muster.” (p. xvi)

“... a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself.” (p. 12)

“... a humble willingness to have Him with me—and He came.” “

“... accept spiritual help ... were willing to make the effort ...” (pp. 25-26)

“... a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves ...” (p. 46)

“Faced with alcoholic destruction ... open minded on spiritual matters ...” (p. 48)

“Circumstances made him willing to believe.” (p. 57)

“... and are willing to go to any length to get it ...” (p. 58)

“The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines.” (p. 60)

“... we must be willing to grow toward it ... willing to make amends ...” (p. 69)

Willingness, honesty and open-mindedness are the essentials of recovery.” (p. 568)
For years, I underestimated how much willingness I needed to fully benefit from Step Six!

“Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable?” (p. 76)

In Step Three, I “offer myself” to God’s care for relief from my “bondage of self”. With Steps Four and Five, I learn the “exact nature of my wrongs,” my “objectionable things” that block me from God’s caring relationship, from God’s “Power ... Love ... and Way of life.” (See Step Three, p. 63)

I admit that my “objectionable things” are the motives, the “exact nature of my wrongs”, of my “self-will run riot”, my wrong “being” and “doing”. (See AA 12x12, p. 42)

This “misdirected instinct”, these unchecked desires of mine, are not filling my need for safety, security and self-esteem. The “objectionable” things that I will not “let go” are blocking my spiritual progress—blocking me from having a “happy, joyous and free” life.

“Can He now take them all—every one?” (p. 76)

The simple answer is, Yes, God can! God is certainly able! Once again, I find that only my own self-will is standing in the way of my spiritual progress.

The question is not “can God”? The question is I will I ask God to help be willing to “let go” so that God can?

FAITH in GOD as I understand God. “... God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.”

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Step Six. “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.” (p. 59)

“If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.” (p. 76)

My desire for spiritual progress, my desire to move away from the “gates of Insanity and death”, leads me to have **faith** that God will grant me *the willingness to let go of my “objectionable things”, the “exact nature of my wrongs”:*

insane desire to drink;

- “restore me to sanity” means I need God’s help to make sane choices, beginning with choosing to not take the first drink, each and every day;

selfish desire to want too much attention, too much credit, be annoying and sarcastic;

- a sane choice is to settle for the attention and credit God wants me to receive;

selfish desire to be inconsiderate of others;

- a sane choice is to remember other people have feelings and ideas different from mine—not “wrong”, merely different. A sane choice is to take their feelings and ideas into account, to learn to live comfortably with our differences;

dishonest desire to want more than God gives me today (lying/cheating/stealing):

- a sane choice is to be grateful for what God has already given me, instead of lying, cheating and stealing to get what God does want me to have.

resentful desire to judge others, refuse to forgive them, envy them, and be jealous;

- a sane choice is to ask God to help me treat others with “tolerance” ... “patience” ... “be helpful” ... “save me from being angry. Thy will be done.” (p. 67)

fearful desire to depend on my self-reliance rather than trust God with uncertainty.

- a sane choice is to ask God “to remove our fear and direct our attention to what [God] would have us be”. (p. 68)

In Step Six, God grants me willingness to “let go” of my wrong desires. God’s care in our relationship becomes more personal and powerful as I “let go” so “God can”.

A Step Six Prayer.

Dear God, help me be willing to let you help me with this “letting go” of my “objectionable things”. I cast all my concern, worry and doubt on you. Grant me your peace to remain steady and calm as I learn to live with fewer “wrong desires”.

Dear God, I know you care for me. Please help me be willing to trust you. Please grant me willingness to believe you can help me become willing to “let go”.

Dear God, please disclose to me your perfect will for me in this situation. Help me be spiritually strong and courageous. Help me not let my fearful emotions and prideful attitude block my willingness to receive your care and help. Amen.

Next Time: Step Seven. “Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.”