

**“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 Eight.** “Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.”

(p. 59)

“Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.”

“Now we need more action ... faith without works is dead ... we have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends.” (p. 76)

“We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free ... we made our own misery. God didn’t do it ... cheerfully capitalize [trouble] ... [God’s] omnipotence.” (p. 133)

**“We subjected ourselves to a drastic self appraisal.”** (p. 76)

Steps One and Two begin my “drastic self-appraisal”. I admit I am powerless over alcohol and need help from a Higher Power to make sane choices. In Step Three I decide to seek that Power. In Steps Four through Seven, I learn what is blocking me from that Power.

Now, in Step Eight, with God’s help, I take responsibility for the wrongs I did and the harms I caused to others. I become willing to make these amends. I gain freedom from my “bondage of self” of my guilt, regret, remorse and shame. I receive more of God’s Power.

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

**Step Eight.** “Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.” (p. 59)

“If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes.” (p. 76)

Step Eight follows on the heels of Steps Six and Seven as another very powerful *willingness prayer step* that also includes the *action of writing*.

Step Eight is an application of my Step Seven prayer: “Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding.”

*God, I pray for the strength to be willing to make a “fearless and thorough” Step Eight list.*

***My relationship with God strengthens when I admit what I cannot do on my own!***

“We have a list of all persons we have harmed ...” (p. 76)

Many of the names on my Step Eight amends list come from my Step Four inventory lists—people, institutions and organizations I resented, feared and treated with inconsideration. I may still feel harmed, afraid, mis-treated and misunderstood by them. Since Step Four, I have asked God to free me from these feelings of anger, fear and resentment:

“We ask God to help us ...” (p. 67)

“God save me from being angry.” “

“... God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each ...” “

“We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves.” (p. 68)

“... humbly rely on [God] ... enable us to match calamity with serenity.” “

“We ask [God] to remove our fear and direct our attention to what [God] would have us be.” “

“... we ask God what we should do about each specific matter.” (p. 69)

“... pray for the right ideal ... guidance ... sanity ... strength ...”. (p. 70)

*It is essential for me to continue to pray for God’s strength, God’s Power, to set aside my negative feelings toward others so that I can include their names in my Step Eight list and honestly take responsibility for my wrong and harmful actions in these relationships.*

“... and to whom we are willing to make amends.” (p. 76)

I write a list of names of every person, organization or institution I ever wronged and harmed. Next to each name I write “I was wrong when I ...” and complete the sentence.

*When I ask God for the willingness to forgive them for the harm they did to me, my resentments and fears no longer block me from receiving God’s help to write their name on my Step Eight list and become willing to take responsibility for the harm I did to them.*

“If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes.” (p. 76)

I pray individually for each name on my Step Eight list until my willingness comes.

I ask God for the willingness to take responsibility for the wrong I did and the harm I caused, setting aside my memories and feelings about what I perceive they did to me.

*My willingness grows to make my amends to each one I harmed. My guilt, regret, remorse and shame about my old behavior continue to “melt away”. I am no longer “hopeless”. I realize I am letting my spiritual awakening enable my spiritual progress. I am more **happy** in my day-to-day life. I experience **joy** (an inner peace). I become more **free** from my bondage of self.*

**Next Time: Step Nine.** “Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”