

“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.

LIFE in God’s Care. “See to it that your relationship with Him is right ...” (p. 164)

Step Ten. “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.” (p. 59)

“Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.” (p. 77)

In Steps One through Nine, I learn I need help from God; what in me blocks me from God’s help; to be willing to ask God to help me “let go” and “let God” remove from me what is blocking me from God’s help; to be willing, with God’s help, to take responsibility for the harms I’ve done to others and to be accountable to make my direct amends to others.

“They [promises] will always materialize if we work for them.” (p. 84)
(Also see Step Three promises, p. 63, and Step Five promises, p. 75.)

“We have entered the world of the Spirit.” (Part I) (p. 84)

Now, in Step Ten, I continue *throughout each day* to take my “personal inventory”. I continue each day to “set right any new mistakes” as I go along. *Step Ten guides me throughout each day to be more free from my former “seemingly hopeless state of mind and body” and better able to experience a “happy, joyous and free” day, each and every day.*

LIFE in God’s Care. “See to it that your relationship with Him is right ...” (p. 164)

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Step Ten. “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.” (p. 59)

“We have entered the world of the Spirit.” (Part I) (p. 84)

The “world of the Spirit” is described to me in the promises of Step Three, Step Five and Step Nine. I frequently review these promises on p. 63, p. 75 and pp. 83-84.

*Why must I keep working for them? Because my self-will re-asserts itself on it's own!
“... we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness ... or it kills us! God makes that possible.” (p. 62)
The promises vanish from my day when I fail to try to align my will with God's will!*

“See to it that your relationship with [God] is right ...” requires me to be responsible for my part in my relationship with God as I understand God:

“... to grow in understanding and effectiveness ... not an overnight matter ... continue for our lifetime.” (p. 84)

How do I “grow in understanding and effectiveness”?

“Continue to watch for”: (p. 84)

Selfishness; “... must be rid of this selfishness ... or it kills us. God makes that possible.” (p. 62)

Dishonesty; “We must be entirely honest ... if we expect to live long or happily in this world.” (pp. 73-74)

Resentment; “... resentment ... shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit ... insanity returns ... we drink again ... to die.” (p. 66)

Fear. “... why we had [fears] ... self-reliance failed us ... we ask [God] to remove our fear ... what [God] would have us be.” (p. 68)

“When these crop up”: (p. 84)

“... we ask God at once to remove them ...”

“... we discuss them with someone immediately ...”

“... [we] make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone ...”

“... we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help.”

My daily living in the “world of the Spirit” is filled with these limitations and benefits:

“Love and tolerance of others is our code.” (p. 84)

“Love” is wanting God's best for the other person ... like them or not!

“Tolerance” is being willing to accept them as they are and be forgiving.

“For by this time sanity will have returned.” (p. 84)

I am letting God help me make sane choices within my “hula-hoop” of limitations and opportunities.

“We are neither cocky or afraid ... as we keep in fit spiritual condition.” (p. 85)

Pride and fear no longer “mis-rule” my choices and consequences.

“We are not cured of alcoholism.” (p. 85)

I have a “daily reprieve” from the first drink AND from “self-will run riot”.

“It is the proper use of the will.” (p. 85)

“How can I best serve [God]—[God's] will, not mine, be done.”

I am not hopeless. Step Ten grows the promises in my life. I am more “happy, joyous and free”.

Next Time: Step Eleven. “Sought ... to improve our conscious contact with God ...”