

“WHAT WAS THE QUESTION?”

A Twelve-Step Study Guided by the Questions in Alcoholics Anonymous.

October 2 through December 25, 2023

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

(All page numbers from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, unless otherwise noted)

The first question that appears in Alcoholics Anonymous is on the second page of the Table of Contents. The question is “*Who am I to say there is no God?*” p. vi

The second and third questions in the book are also in the Table of Contents:

“*This drinker finally found the answer to her nagging question, Why?*” p. vii

“*Me an Alcoholic?*” p. viii

Were these first three questions in the book part of some “Grand Plan” to get our attention? Is it an accident that the first questions in the book should be about “*God*”, “*Why*” and then “*Alcoholic*”? Are these questions attractive or offensive to new readers of the book?

Is God using questions in our book to “constantly disclose more to you and to us”?

In this Big Book study of the Twelve Steps, we discover every question raised in the book is eventually answered in the book. As we ask and answer the questions, we find that *they guide us from what our life is like living in our problem, our illness, of alcoholism to what our life is like living in the solution of our spiritual awakening.*

The next questions appear on pp. xviii-xix in the “FOREWARD TO SECOND EDITION”:

“Could these large numbers of erstwhile erratic alcoholics successfully meet and work together? Would there be quarrels over membership, leadership, and money?

Would there be strivings for power and prestige? Would there be schisms that would split A.A. apart?”

The answer to these questions are our Twelve Traditions, adopted at the first AA International Convention in Cleveland in 1950. We will return to these questions later in this study.

.....
Step Two. “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

Step Two lead question: “***Why don’t you choose your own conception of God?***” (p. 12)

We encountered *near-hopelessness* in Step One:

“Should I kill myself?” (p. 6). “What’s the use anyhow?” (p. 24). “Such a man would be crazy, wouldn’t he?” (p. 38). “... victim of the delusion ...” (p. 61).

We begin to approach Step Two in *hope* by witnessing the experience of others:

“... the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith.” (p. 51)

This early *hope* for a way up and out of our alcoholism illness is the central idea of Step Two. This *hope* is worthy of our trust. This *hope* is worthy of our belief.

I began “came to believe” in Step One when the reality of my powerlessness sank in and the delusion that my life was not unmanageable began to dissolve.

I am willing to choose a new direction—to change from my obsession to live on self-will alone ... and find my “own conception of God”, a Power greater than myself.

“WHAT WAS THE QUESTION?”

A Twelve-Step Study Guided by the Questions in Alcoholics Anonymous.

October 2 through December 25, 2023

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

(All page numbers from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, unless otherwise noted)

Step Two. “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

Step Two lead question: **“Why don’t you choose your own conception of God?”** (p. 12)

“... restore us to sanity.”

“Where had been my high resolve?” ... “Was I crazy?” (p. 5)

“He had much knowledge about himself as an alcoholic. Yet all reasons for not drinking were easily pushed aside in favor of the foolish idea that he could take whiskey if only he mixed it with milk!” (pp. 36-37)

“... we call this plain insanity. How can such a lack of proportion, of the ability to think straight, be called anything else?” (p. 37)

“... insanely trivial excuse ... insane idea won out ... insanely insufficient ... a man would be crazy, wouldn’t he? ... strangely insane ... isn’t it true?” (pp. 37-38)

I had believed in me and my inexhaustible self-reliance since I was a child. I stopped trusting God, and most other people, as a teenager. I trusted alcohol as my friend and solution for over twenty-one years.

Step One informs me about my alcoholism illness of physical allergy and mental obsession, illusion and delusion. I become willing to admit my mental “lack of sanity” with alcohol, my continuing insane thinking that “this time would be different”.

Can I “come to believe” that I need help to “restore [me] to sanity”, at least with alcohol?

“Came to believe ...”

“He was inexplicably different. What had happened?” (p. 9)

“Would I have it?” (p. 12)

“What do I have to do?” (p. 20)

“What has become of the common sense and willpower ...” (p. 22)

“Is there no exception?” (p. 27)

“But where and how were we to find this Power?” (p. 45)

“Who, then, made all this?” (p. 46)

“... that a Power greater than ourselves could ...”

“Had this power originated in him?” (p. 11)

“Why don’t you choose your own conception of God?” (p. 12)

“... spiritual terms ... asking yourself what they mean to you[?]” (p. 47)

“... am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?” (p. 47)

“... we ... chose to believe that our human intelligence was the last word ...
Rather vain of us, wasn’t it?” (p. 49)

“God either is, or [God] isn’t. What was our choice to be?” (p. 53)

“Had we not variously worshipped people .. things ... ourselves?” (p. 54)

“Who are you to say there is no God?” (p. 56)

Next Time: Step Three, “But where and how were we to find this Power?”