

## **“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 Twelve Step study, we discover every question raised in the book is answered in the book. We find the questions and answers *guide us from what our life is like living in our illness to what our life is like living in the solution of our spiritual awakening.*

Questions appear on pp. xviii-xix, “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?”

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

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

“If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at *Step Six.*” (p. 76)

Answer what?

We return to the bottom of p. 75.

“We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better. Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps.

Carefully reading the first five proposals:

... we ask if we have omitted anything?

*Have I lied?*

Is our work solid so far?

*Have I been honest?*

Are the stones properly in place?

*Have I disclosed my motives?*

Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation?

*Have I told partial truth?*

Have we tried to make mortar without sand?”

*Have I omitted the prayers?*

As I review my work in the first five steps, I see my need to learn to live without my character defects—to live without the handful of underlying motives, the “objectionable” parts of my selfish makeup. I am now ready to “look at Step Six”.

*I need to do more than merely “look at” Step Six. I must take this step deliberately and with patience. My delusions and illusions about myself must be replaced with honesty and humility.*

*I must do more than read the questions. I must pause and seriously answer them!*

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

“If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at *Step Six*. We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable.” (p. 76)

“... the physician began to pursue the spiritual remedy for his malady with a willingness he had never before been able to muster.” (p. xvi)

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

“... a humble willingness to have Him with me ...” “

“... expressed my entire willingness to approach these individuals ...” (p. 13)

“Belief in the power of God, plus enough willingness ...” “

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

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

“... say that he does believe, or is willing to believe ...” “

“... show a willingness to remedy your own defects ...” (p. 118)

“... willing to bring former mistakes ... out of their hiding places.” (p. 124)

“To duplicate what we have accomplished ... a matter of willingness ...” (p. 163)

“*Willingness, honesty and open-mindedness ... are indispensable.*” (p. 568)

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

Now my self-will pushes back harder than ever. Most of me admits I need to learn to live without these objectionable things but part of me insists I cannot live without them—just as I could not imagine living without alcohol!

I pause. I let the reality of my first five steps sink in. I do desire to learn to live without my dishonesty, my resentments, my cheating and stealing, my unrealistic fears, my use and abuse of other people.

*I want to learn to feel safe and be comfortable without having to be in control!*

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

This is not a question whether God is capable. This questions my willingness to learn to “let go” of these objectionable things so that God can take them from me! *Am I willing to learn to live in God’s care? Am I willing to “let go”, to learn to live without my “objectionables”—or not?*

Do I “still cling to something I will not **let go**”? (Bold letters mine) (p. 76)

Yes or no? If I say “I can’t let go of this”, or “I can’t live without that”, I *need to realize I am blocking my own spiritual awakening.*

Will I “ask God to help [me] be willing”? (p. 76)

Yes, I will. I ask God to help me learn to “let go” and *learn to live without each of the motives and behaviors on my “objectionables” list.*

**Next Time: Step Seven, “Are we now ready to let God remove from us ...?”**