

“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

The first questions in the book are about “*God*”, “*Why*” and then “*Alcoholic*”.

God is using questions in our book to “constantly disclose more to you and to us”.

Every question in the book is answered in the book. The questions and answers *guide us from what our life is like in our illness to what our life is like in 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?” Our Twelve Traditions, adopted at the first AA International Convention in Cleveland in 1950, answers this question, as we shall see as part of our Step Twelve discussion today.

.....
Step Twelve. “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

(p. 60)

“But this is not all. There is action and more action. ‘Faith without works is dead’.” (p. 88)

Chapter 7. Working With Others.

Am I willing to try to “carry this message to other alcoholics”?

“... nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking ...” (p. 89)

“... to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends ...” “

“To be helpful is our only aim.” “

“... one of a fellowship who, as part of their own recovery, try to help others ...” (p. 90)

“Tell him enough about your drinking habits, symptoms and experiences ...” (p. 91)

“... talk ... about the hopelessness of alcoholism, because you offer a solution.” (p. 92)

“*Tell him exactly what happened to you.* Stress the spiritual feature freely.” (p. 93)

“... *willing to believe in a Power greater than himself ... live by spiritual principles.*” “

“Outline the program of action ... tell him about the Fellowship ...” (p. 94)

“The only condition is that he trust in God and clean house.” (p. 98)

“Both ... must walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress.” (p. 100)

Chapter 8. To Wives.

Am I willing to try to “practice these principles” with my spouse?

“... no situation is too difficult and no unhappiness too great to be overcome.” (p. 104)

“... never be angry ... patience and good temper are most necessary.” (p. 111)

“... you want to be helpful rather than critical.” “

“... adopt a spiritual way of life ...” (p. 114)

“If God can solve ... alcoholism, He can solve your problems, too.” (p. 116)

“But it was a silly idea that we were too good to need God.” “

“Patience, tolerance, understanding and love are the watchwords.” (See p. 83) (p. 118)

“... place the problem, along with everything else, in God’s hands.” (p. 120)

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Chapter 9. The Family Afterward.

Am I willing to try to “practice these principles” with my family (and others)?

- “... meet upon the common ground of tolerance, understanding and love.” (p. 122)
- “... what he is trying to be, rather than for what he is trying to get.” (p. 123)
- “... forgave each other and drew closer together.” (p. 124)
- “... spirit of love and tolerance.” (See p. 84) (p. 125)
- “... tolerance, love, and spiritual understanding.” (p. 127)
- “... material well-being always followed spiritual progress; it never preceded.” “
- “... show unselfishness and love under his own roof.” “
- “... sense of purpose ... consciousness of the power of God in our lives.” (p. 130)
- “... if trouble comes, cheerfully capitalize it ... demonstrate {God} ...” (p. 133)

Chapter 10. To Employers.

Am I willing to try to “practice these principles” in the workplace?

- “Your understanding treatment of their cases will pay dividends.” (p. 141)
- “We all had to place recovery above everything ...” (p. 143)
- “... this book ... contains full suggestions ... may solve his problem.” (pp. 143-144)

Chapter 11. A Vision for You.

“We have shown how we got out from under. You say, ‘Yes, I’m willing ... **I know I must get along without liquor, but how can I? Have you a sufficient substitute?**’” (p. 152)

Chapter Eleven, “A Vision for You”, speaks to the newcomer and to all of us.

The AA Fellowship is first offered to the newcomer, even before the Twelve Steps:

“Yes, there is a substitute ... vastly more ... a fellowship in Alcoholics Anonymous.” (p. 152)

Then the “vision” is expanded to include the Step Twelve work with a newcomer.

“... you will know what it means to give of yourself that others may survive ...” (p. 153)

“In the chapter ‘Working With Others’ ... how we approach and aid others to health.” “

“Years ago, in 1935, one of our number made a journey ... sober but a few months ... perhaps he could handle, say, three drinks ... his sanity returned and he thanked

God ... our friend related his experience ... he has not had a drink since.” (pp. 153-156)

The rest of the “vision” chapter combines stories of working with other alcoholics, the growth of the fellowship and the spiritual principles that became the Twelve Traditions.

“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?” (pp. xviii-xix)

Our Twelve Traditions, adopted at the first AA International Convention in Cleveland in 1950, answer these questions. (See Appendix I, pp. 561-566)

We learn the risks and rewards of healthy relationships as we “try to practice these principles in all our affairs” in our meeting rooms and group conscience meetings.

Next Time: The Gifts of Answering “Yes” to our Spiritual Awakening.

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A Step Twelve Prayer

God, I thank You for the opportunity I have today to try to help another alcoholic join us on our path of sobriety and spiritual recovery.

God, please grant me the *willingness* to try to be helpful to any alcoholic who reaches out to me for help today.

God, please grant me the *honesty* to share my experience, strength and hope with another alcoholic today to aid You in Your desire to stir a spiritual awakening in them.

God, please grant me the *open-mindedness* to try continuing to seek Your help and care throughout each day so that I can try to practice the spiritual principles of our Twelve Steps in every relationship and with every person I am with today.

God, help me remember that every good thing in me and in my life comes from You. Help me remember that the more of Your gifts I am willing to share, the more I am able to receive.

God, I thank You once again for the opportunity I have today to try to help another alcoholic and to try to practice the spiritual principles of our Twelve Steps in all my affairs today.

Amen.

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