

“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.

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

“Are these extravagant promises?” (p. 84)

Our book answers this question with our work and promises of Steps Three, Five and Nine:

“First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn’t work.” (p. 62)

“Next, we decided that ... God was going to be our Director.” “

“When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed.” (p. 63)

Review the Step Three Promises, p. 63.

Review the Step Three Prayer, p. 63.

“We have been trying to get a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator, and to discover the obstacles in our path ... [defects] are about to be cast out.” (p. 72)

“We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past.” (p. 75)

Review the Step Five Promises, p. 75.

Review the Step Six and Step Seven Prayers, p. 76.

“If we are painstaking about this phase of our development ...” (p. 83)

Review the Step Nine Prayer, p. 83.

Review the Step Nine Promises, pp. 83-84.

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

“The spiritual life is not a theory. *We have to live it.*” (p. 83)

“God would have us *be*” (p. 68), “... have us *do*” (p. 75), “... have us *serve*” (p. 77)

“As God’s people we stand on our feet; we don’t crawl before anyone.” (p. 83)

“Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

This thought brings us to *Step Ten.*” (p. 84)

“... continue ...”, “continue ...”, “... commenced ...”, “... continue ...”, “... continue ...”

Why “continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear”?

“Selfishness” - see p. 62, p. 64.

“Dishonesty” - see p. 30, p. 64, p. 73.

“Resentment” - see p. 64, p. 66.

“Fear” - see p. 68, p. 73, p. 80.

When these “crop up”, am I willing to:

ask God at once to remove them? “... things in ourselves ... blocking us.” (p. 64)

discuss them with someone immediately? “We must be entirely honest ...” (p. 73)

make amends quickly? “... persons ... harmed ...willing to make amends.” (p. 76)

resolutely turn my thoughts to someone I can help? “... our real purpose ...” (p. 77)

Am I willing to adopt “love and tolerance of others” as my [moral] code?

“... show them the same tolerance ...” (p. 66)

“We have begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward all ...” (p. 70)

“We go to him in a helpful and forgiving spirit ...” (p. 77)

“... our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.” (p. 83)

“And we have ceased fighting ...” (*New accountability—new consequences!*) (p. 84)

Will I “carry the vision of God’s will” into all my activities to keep “fit” spiritually?

“For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive ...” (pp. 14-15)

“We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.” (p. 85)

“How can I best serve Thee?

God’s will (not mine) be done.” (p. 85)

I do my part to enlarge my spiritual life when I ask God, and let God, help me.

Next Time: Step Eleven, “... inquire what corrective measures should be taken?”

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A STEP TEN PRAYER

God, I thank you for this opportunity I have today to continue to enlarge my spiritual life as I ask for your help and care.

God, please grant me the willingness to continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear this very day.

God, please grant me the honesty to ask you for help at once when my selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear crop up today.

God, please grant me the open-mindedness to discuss my selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear with another person immediately so that I can better see when I need to make amends.

God, help me remember that my real purpose is to fit myself to be of maximum service to you and the people you place in my life each day.

God, I thank you once again for the opportunity I have today to continue to enlarge my spiritual life as I ask for your help and care.

Amen.

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