

## **“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

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 Eleven.** “**Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**” (p. 59)

“Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us ... we have become God-conscious ... begun to develop this vital sixth sense. But we must go further and that means more action.

*Step Eleven* suggests prayer and meditation.” (p. 85)

**“Am I willing to spend time each day in “active” meditation and “active” prayer?**

**Am I willing to seek God’s will for me physically, mentally, morally and spiritually?**

**“... and inquire what corrective measures should be taken[?]”** (p. 86)

*I end my day with a meditative review of my daily Step Ten “continue to watch for ...”*

“When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves that should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse, or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review, we ask God’s forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.” (p. 86)

*I am grateful for my daily spiritual progress as well as my setbacks. I seek, and feel, forgiven.*

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### **“WHAT WAS THE QUESTION?”**

**“... and inquire what corrective measures should be taken[?]”** (p. 86)

**Am I willing to spend time each day in “active” meditation and “active” prayer?**

*I begin my day in a meditative request of God to direct my thinking and divorce my thinking from self-seeking motives. I begin my day in relationship—“conscious contact”—with God.*

“On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives ... our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.” (p. 86)

*In Step Ten, I ask for God’s help throughout my day with my feelings, thoughts and actions.*

*In Step Eleven, I begin my day asking for God’s help, seeking God’s help, with my motives!*

*I continue my meditative request, asking God for help with uncertainty and indecision.*

“In thinking about our day we may face indecision ... here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don’t struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while ... inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind ... we come to rely upon it.” (pp. 86-87)

*God-consciousness grows into God-inspired guidance, reassurance and serenity!*

*I include specific prayers with my beginning-of-my-day meditative requests.*

“... conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need ... for freedom from self-will ... ask for ourselves, however, if others will be helped ... never ... selfish ends.” (p. 87)

*I am not seeking spiritual perfection, but balance between my needs and service to others.*

*I become comfortable learning to mediate and pray with others.*

“... we ask our [spouses] or friends to join us in morning meditation ... morning [religious] devotion ... select and memorize a few set prayers which emphasize the principles we have been discussing ... make use of what [religious people] have to offer.” (p. 87)

*I enlarge my spiritual life by learning from others, not by fearing and criticizing differences.*

*I practice Step Eleven mediation and prayer all through my day, blending it with Step Ten.*

“As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask [God] for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day ‘Thy will be done’.” (See p. 84) (pp. 87-88)

*Each time I ask God for help, I access God’s Power in every other motive, feeling, thought and action that I take. I do my part to enlarge my spiritual life every time I ask God for help.*

**Do I desire to enlarge my spiritual life as I seek the Step Eleven promises?**

“We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity ...” (p. 88)

*I seek God’s will for me so that I can learn God’s lessons for me and serve others.*

**“It works—it really does!”** (p. 88)

**Next Time: Step Twelve, “... I must get along without liquor, but how can I?”**

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### **A Step Eleven Prayer**

God, I thank You for this opportunity I have today to continue to enlarge my spiritual life as I seek to grow my “conscious contact” relationship with You through prayer and meditation.

God, please grant me the *willingness* to begin each day with a meditative request that You direct my thinking and divorce my thinking from motives of self-seeking and self-pity.

God, please grant me the *honesty* to continually ask for Your help throughout my day when I encounter uncertainty and indecision.

God, please grant me the *open-mindedness* to pause when I am agitated or doubtful and ask You for the right thought or action, as I seek the “right” on Your terms, not mine.

God, help me remember that my number-one priority in my motives, feelings, thoughts, words and deeds is simply to seek to receive knowledge and Power from You to do Your will.

God, I thank you once again for the opportunity I have today to enlarge my spiritual life as I seek to grow in my “conscious contact” relationship with You through prayer and meditation.

Amen.