

Humility - Gratitude - Forgiveness - Responsibility:
Four of the Choices We Make in our Twelve Step Recovery.

A Big Book Study of Spiritual Recovery from Alcoholism
in a Twelve-Step Workshop, from July 1 through September 30, 2024.

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

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

Introduction to the Study.

This study of the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Step recovery program discloses that four of our vital spiritual *choices*, *Humility*, *Gratitude*, *Forgiveness* and *Responsibility*, are an implicit or explicit part of each of the Twelve Steps. I see these as “spiritual choices”, because they seem impossible for self-centered people like me without daily help from a Higher Power.

My choices of Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility enable me to let go of old selfish ideas, old selfish habits and old selfish motives. I become able and willing to seek God’s will instead of my will, beginning with not taking the first drink, one day at a time.

I believe that in the spiritual recovery context each of these is a choice—decisions made not always with complete willingness, or even awareness, but choices nevertheless.

In these choices, I cooperate with God in my spiritual awakening. I let God do what only God can do. My spiritual awakening is what God can do with me when I choose to seek God’s care and ask for God’s help to initiate, inform and inspire my relationship with God and others:

The humility choice: I need help. I am modest, not prideful or ashamed. I accept myself as I am. I seek God’s will, not my own. I desire to “move out from [myself] toward others and toward God.” (AA 12x12, p. 76)

The gratitude choice: I am thankful God gives me awareness, acceptance and action.

I am thankful God removes from me denial, delusion and illusion.

The forgiveness choice: I decide to ask God to help me stop hurting myself and others.

I decide to set aside resentments, fears, blame and revenge.

The responsibility choice: I decide to ask God to help me respond to situations in a trustworthy manner that helps others as well as myself. I am answerable for my choices.

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Step Five: “Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.” (“Illuminating” Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness, Responsibility) (p. 59)
We “set aside” what we think we know about our fellows so God can help us know ourselves.

Our Humility Choices in Step Five.

“We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him.” (The bridge connecting Step Four with Step Five) (p. 71)

“We have been trying to get ... a new relationship with our Creator ...” (p. 72)

“We have admitted certain defects ... what the trouble is ... [our] weak items ...” “

“... learned enough of humility ... in the sense we find it necessary ...” (p. 73)

“We have a written inventory and are prepared for a long talk.” (p. 75)

“We pocket our pride ...” “

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Our Gratitude Choices in Step Five.

“The best reason first: If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking.” (p. 72)

“... in the sense we find it necessary ...” (p. 73)

“... we talk to the right person.” (p. 74)

“Most people approached in this way will be glad to help ...” (p. 75)

“Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted.” “
(See Step Five Promises, p. 75)

“We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better.” “

Our Forgiveness Choices in Step Five.

“... find a person quick to see and understand our problem.” (p. 74)

“... a close-mouthed, understanding friend ... understand, yet be unaffected.” “

“... fully understand and approve what we are driving at ...” “

“We can look the world in the eye ... be alone at perfect peace and ease.” (p. 75)
(See Step Five Promises, p. 75)

Our Responsibility Choices in Step Five.

“Now these are about to be cast out. This requires action on our part, which,
when completed, will mean that we have admitted to God, to ourselves, and to
another human being, the exact nature of our defects.” (p. 72)

“This is perhaps difficult—especially discussing our defects with another person.” “

“We must be entirely honest with somebody ...” (p. 73)

“When we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time.” (p. 75)

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

“... be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing what we have done.” “

“... on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.” (p. 75)

**Next Time, Step Six: The Willingness to “Let Go” Choices of Humility, Gratitude,
Forgiveness and Responsibility.**