

**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.

**Caution:** a choice that seems so awful that I would never make it doesn’t mean that I don’t still have that choice. Even with “our new attitude toward liquor”, we still have the choice.

*My spiritual awakening is not what I can do, but what God can do when I choose to ask Him.*

These four choices *initiate*, *inform* and *inspire* my relationship with God. These four choices help me become a spiritual, God-centered person. I am not merely trying to do something. *I am trying to receive something—a healthy 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.

**Step Three: “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”** (p. 59)

*Decide to seek God’s Care with Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility.*

**Humility Choice:** *I decide to humbly “move out from [myself]” and seek God’s care.*

“... be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success.” (p. 60)

“Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles.” (p. 62)

“Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity ...” “

“So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making.” (See p. 30) “

“... alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot ... doesn’t think so.” “

“Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness ... on our own power.” “

“God ... I offer myself ... build with me and do with me as Thou wilt.” (p. 63)

*I humbly decide to seek God’s “care”—to risk believing God can do what AA says God can do.*

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*Decide to seek God’s Care with Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility, con’t.*

**Gratitude Choice:** *I decide to be grateful that “God could and would if He were sought”.*

“... must be rid of this selfishness ... or it kills us! God makes that possible.” (p. 62)

“... no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid.” (See p. 44) “

“... reduce our self-centeredness ... we had to have God’s help.” “

“... we enjoyed peace of mind ...” (p. 63)

“... we became conscious of His presence ...” “

“... we began to lose our fear ...” “

*I decide in gratitude to have faith that God’s care of me will be better for me than mine alone.*

**Forgiveness Choice:** *I decide to seek forgiveness for trying to run my life on self-will alone.*

“... if only people would do as he wished.” (p. 61)

“He decides to exert himself more.” “

“... he is sure that other people are more to blame.” (See p. 50) “

“... we have made decisions based on self ... placed us in a position to be hurt.” “

“When we sincerely took such a position ...” (“we had to quit playing God.”) (p. 63)

“... we became less and less interested in ourselves.” “

*I decide that God’s “care” of me may include forgiveness for my “self-will run riot” obsession.*

**Responsibility Choice:** *I make the responsible decision to seek spiritual help for my powerlessness and unmanageability. .*

“First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn’t work.” (See pp. 52-53)) (p. 62)

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

“We had a new Employer.” (p. 63)

“... if we kept close to Him and performed His work well.” “

“... we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life.” “

“Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will.” (p. 63)

*I decide that I am responsible to learn how to “turn [my] will and [my] life over to the “care” of God as [I] understand God.”*

**Step Three: “God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with my as Thou wilt.**

**Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always.”**

**Next Time, Step Four: “My Choices of Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility in my Personal Inventory work.”**