

## **The Promises of the Twelve Steps: Our Proof of Spiritual Progress.**

An Alcoholics Anonymous “Big Book” Twelve-Step Study Workshop-  
“Threads of Recovery” on Zoom at noon CST from January 6 through March 31, 2025.

Facilitator: Bill H., St. Louis, MO

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

### **Study Overview.**

This study of the Twelve Steps covers each Step as presented in Alcoholics Anonymous. We begin with a “look back” from the promises on p. 63 to the very beginning of the book to see the proof of our Spiritual Progress in Steps One, Two and Three.

We then discover on pp. 63 to 75 how our Spiritual Progress continues up to the proof of the Promises on p. 75 with Steps Four and Five.

We will discover on pp. 75 to 84 how our Spiritual Progress proceeds even further up to the proof of the Promises on pp. 83-84 with Steps Six, Seven, Eight and Nine.

We will further discover on pp. 84 to 164 how our Spiritual Progress grows even more with the proof of the Promises of Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve.

We will conclude the series on March 31 with a “Thread of Recovery” of Prayers and Promises that illuminate and disclose the Proof of our Spiritual Progress in our recovery.

### **Step Four: “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”** (p. 59)

Proof of my spiritual progress continues in Step Four. I claim the promises of the first three steps plus the promises of Step Four. One of these Step Four Promises appears in the Big Book following Step Five: “... **withholding nothing, we are delighted.**” (p. 75)

*“Withholding nothing” in Steps Four and Five is my first application of my Step Three responsibility to “offer myself” to the care of my “new Employer”, God as I understand God. To “offer myself”, I ask God to help me become honest about myself in Step Four:*

*“... course of vigorous action ... personal housecleaning ... strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us ... a fact-finding and a fact-facing process ... we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure ... self ... had defeated us ...”* (pp. 63-64)

*(See p. 35 in Alcoholics Anonymous: “... failed to enlarge his spiritual life.”)*

*My problem is defined for me in the preparation for Step Three:*

*“... extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn’t think so.”* (p. 62)

*I claim the promises of my “new Employer”, God. I enlarge my spiritual life by asking God to help me “face the facts” about me in my Step Four inventory. “Withholding nothing”, I let go of self-delusion about those things in me blocking me from God’s help. **To my surprise, I become “delighted” with my new experience of self-honesty!***

*“Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations.” (Self keeps me from enlarging my spiritual life.)* (p. 64)

*“Resentment is the ‘number one’ offender.”* (p. 64)

*Pages 64-67 direct us through our “withholding nothing” resentment inventory.*

*“[Fear] was an evil and corroding thread ... existence was shot through with it.”* (p. 67)

*Pages 67-68 direct us through our “withholding nothing” fear inventory.*

*“Now about sex. Many of us needed an overhauling there.”* (p. 68)

*Pages 68-70 direct us through our “withholding nothing” sexual conduct inventory.*

*Proof of my spiritual progress in the promise of “being delighted” at self-honesty is my willingness to let God help me “withhold nothing” in my Step Four inventory. On my own, without God’s help, I will omit vital information about me that will block me from God’s help!*

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**Step Four: “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”** (p. 59)  
**“... withholding nothing, we are delighted.”** (p. 75)

**“Resentment is the ‘number one’ offender ... we set them on paper.”** (p. 64)

“... people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry.” (Column One) (p. 65)

“We asked ourselves why we were angry.” (Column Two) “

“... opposite each name our injuries ...” (Column Three) “

“To conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got.” (p. 66)

“... resentment is infinitely grave ... fatal ... shut ourselves off from ... Spirit ... die.” “

*On my own, I can not wish away my resentments any more than I could wish away alcohol!*

“We asked God to help us ... God save me from being angry.” (*Forgiveness begins.*) (p. 67)

“We avoid retaliation or argument ... God will show us how ...” “

“Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dis-honest, self-seeking and frightened ...

we admitted our wrongs honestly ...” (Column Four of Resentment inventory) (p. 67)

*With God’s help, I write a “searching and fearless” resentment inventory, withholding nothing.*

*The promise of “we are delighted” at “withholding nothing” is proof of my spiritual progress.*

**“[Fear] was an evil and corroding thread ... existence was shot through with it.”** (p. 67)

“We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper ...” (Column One) (p. 68)

“We asked ourselves why we had them.” (Column Two) “

“Wasn’t it because self-reliance failed us?” (Column Three) “

*On my own, I will always fear “people, places and things” that I cannot control by myself!*

“... a better way ... trusting and relying upon God ... rather than our finite selves.” (p. 68)

“We ask [God] to remove our fear and ... what [God] would have us be.” (*Trust grows*) “

*With God’s help, I write a “searching and fearless” fear inventory, withholding nothing.*

*The promise of “we are delighted” at “withholding nothing” is proof of my spiritual progress.*

**“Now about sex. Many of us needed an overhauling there.”** (p. 68)

“Whom had we hurt?” (Column One) (p. 69)

“Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate?” (Column Two) “

“... each relation ... was it selfish or not?” (Column Three) “

“What should we have done instead?” (Column Four) “

*On my own, I will always excuse my inconsiderate conduct because of what “they” did!*

“We ask God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them.” (*Consideration begins*) “

“In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter.” “

“Counsel with other people is often desirable, but we let God be the final judge.” (pp. 69-70)

“... honest desire to let God take us to better things ... we will be forgiven.” (p. 70)

*With God’s help, I write a “searching and fearless” sex inventory, withholding nothing.*

*The promise of “we are delighted” at “withholding nothing” is proof of my spiritual progress.*

**“We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him.”**

(p. 71)

**Next Time, Step Five: “... we begin to have a spiritual experience.”**