

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 Three: “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”

(p. 59)

The Promises on p. 63 which introduce us to, and induce us to take, the Step Three Prayer include this declaration:

“We had a new Employer.”

(p. 63)

When I fully claim the promise of my “new Employer”, the rest of the Step Three promises, and all the promises in the rest of the Steps, come true in my life. These promises are proof of my spiritual progress as I recover from the seeming hopelessness of alcoholism. The more fully I claim my promise of a “new Employer”, the more full my spiritual awakening.

In Step One we begin to “become less and less interested in ourselves”.

In Step Two we begin to feel “new power flow in”.

In Step Three, we are promised a “package of promises” when we decide to claim as our own this first one of the Step Three Promises: **“We had a new Employer”**.

There are some “clear-cut directions” we follow (see p. 29) in making this decision to need, to have, to seek and to claim a “new Employer”:

“(a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.

(b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.

(c) That God could and would if He were sought.”

(p. 60)

“The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success.” (More “convincing” on pp. 60-62 of “self-employed” failure!) (p. 60)

“... in collision ... wants to run the whole show ... if only people would do as he wished ... other people are more to blame ... self-seeker ... producer of confusion ... self-centered—ego-centric ... selfishness—self centeredness ... the root of our troubles ... self-will run riot, though he usually doesn’t think so.” (pp. 60-62)

I admit and accept the truth of the Step One and Step Two information in Alcoholics Anonymous about me. I am convinced that trying to run my life with my self-will alone is definitely not a success! I decide to “fire me” as my employer. I decide to go to work for my “new Employer”. I become willing to learn how to work for my “new Employer”—God.

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

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

So, I “fire” myself—I “quit playing God” (see p. 30). I abandon the illusion that I have enough power—that I “know it all”; I abandon the delusion that my life is not unmanageable; I abandon the obsession that I must control everything and everybody.

“Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director.” (p. 62)

I make this decision with doubt and uncertainty. When I decide to work for God as my “new Employer”, God does not give me all the information to know what working for God is going to mean. I am reassured and encouraged by the rest of the Step Three Promises:

“Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well.” (p 63)

My work going forward is to seek to stay close to God so that I can perform God’s work.

“Established on such a footing, we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs.” “

In Steps Four through Twelve, I will learn how to seek God and do God’s work, becoming less interested in myself as a promise of the proof in my work of spiritual progress.

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

In Steps Four through Twelve, I will become a “contributor”, a giver instead of a taker.

“As we felt now power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn.” “

I “fire myself”! Self-will and “reason” are no longer my higher power. “New power” flows in.

The Step Three Prayer. “God, I offer myself to [You]—to build with me and to do with me as [You will]. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do [Your] will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of [Your] Power, [Your] Love and [Your] Way of life. May I do [Your] will always.” (p. 63)

I realize that most of our Step Three prayer outlines God’s responsibilities. I have only two responsibilities in Step Three to fully claim the promise of God as my new Employer::

1. “Offer myself” to God.
2. Become willing to learn how to be able to “better do God’s will”.

I look forward in hope to Steps Four through Twelve, to learn to live in the promise of God’s Power, God’s Love and God’s Way in place of anger, resentments, fear and inconsideration.

I decide to go to work for my “new Employer”—God. I experience the promises of Steps One, Two and Three as proof of my spiritual progress. I trust God to relieve me of my bondage of self and to guide me to learn how to seek and to do God’s will in Steps Four through Twelve.

Next Time, Step Four: “... withholding nothing, we are delighted.”