

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 CDT 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 and Spiritual Progress.

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 Ten: “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”

(p. 59)

“And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even alcohol.”

(p. 84)

So far, we have claimed these promises as some of our proof of our spiritual progress:

in Step One, we “became less interested in ourselves”;

in Step Two, we “felt new power flow in”;

in Step Three, we “had a new Employer”;

in Step Four, we began “withholding nothing”;

in Step Five, we withheld nothing to “begin to have a spiritual experience”;

In Step Six, we “lose interest in selfish things”;

in Step Seven, God’s “strength” gave us “a new freedom and a new happiness”;

in Step Eight, we take responsibility for our wrongs so “we will not regret the past”;

in Step Nine, we experience that “fear of people ... will leave us”.

These promises, proof of my spiritual progress, “materialize” in my life when I decide to be willing to “work for them” in my first nine steps. In Step Ten, I face more decisions, more work: will I feel complacent or cocky at my progress so far, deciding to “rest on [my] laurels”; will I decide to “continue to set right any new mistakes” as I live one day at a time; will I decide to continue to live and grow in “the world of the Spirit?”

“... Step Ten ... suggests we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along. We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past.”

(p. 84)

“Suggests” is used here as in “when you jump from the plane we *suggest* you use your parachute *if you want to survive*”!

“... continue to take personal inventory...” keeps me spiritually centered on God’s will and keeps me safe from drifting back into a life of “self-will run riot”.

“... continue to set right any new mistakes ...” keeps me free of guilt, regret, remorse, shame, fear and pride.”

Will I decide to develop the habit of working Step Ten all day every day to claim my promise of “ceased fighting anything or anyone”—especially myself—as proof of my spiritual progress?

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“And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even alcohol.”

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We start “working” Step Ten “as we cleaned up the past”. So, we start working Step Ten *during* Steps Eight and Nine, if not before. We don’t have experience making direct amends Step Nine, but we can begin developing the daily habit of paying attention, all day every day, to our own selfish, self-centered thoughts and actions.

We cease fighting to get our way (selfishness); cease fighting the truth (dishonesty); cease fighting our need to forgive (resentments); cease fighting God’s care (fear):

“Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear.” (p. 84)

See p. 52 and pp. 60-62 for the *dangers of selfishness*;

See p. 21, p. 23 and p. 58 for the *dangers of dishonesty*;

See p. 64 and p. 66 for the dangers of *resentments*;

See p. 68, p. 73 and p. 76 for the *dangers of fear*.

By “watching” for these four character defects throughout my day, I will avoid many others.

I wish to live free of my “bondage of self”, to “cease fighting” my own self-will. I decide to develop the habit of on-going, daily personal inventory. I “continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear” ... especially when I don’t need to continue to watch!

“When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them.” (p. 84)

I *cease fighting* “when”—and stop pretending that it says “if”;

“we ask God” grows my relationship with God every time I ask, even when I don’t want to ask, or think I don’t need to ask;

“at once” means as they crop up throughout the day, not waiting until evening;

“to remove them” means I stop fighting the idea that I don’t need God’s help.

“We discuss them with someone immediately ...” (p. 84)

I *cease fighting* the idea that I don’t need help to see my part in things.

“... and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone.” (p. 84)

I *cease fighting* the idea that I don’t need to discuss my on-going personal inventory with someone else helps me see my need for amends.

“Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help.” (p. 84)

I *cease fighting* the idea that at least thinking of someone I can help won’t help save me from being so self-absorbed with myself.

“Love and tolerance of others is our code.”

“... sanity will have returned.” (Step Two promise fulfilled)

“What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.” (Step Three promise fulfilled)

“How can I best serve [God] ... the proper use of the will.” (Our “real purpose”, p. 77)

I develop the habit of working Step Ten throughout each day. I claim my promise of “ceased fighting anything or anyone”—especially myself—as proof of my spiritual progress?

Next Time, Step Eleven: “... thinking ... on the plane of inspiration.”