

**“We Admitted We Were Powerless” ... Over More Than Alcohol!**  
An Alcoholics Anonymous “Big Book” Twelve Step Study Workshop  
“Threads of Recovery” on Zoom at noon CDT from July 7 to September 29, 2025  
Facilitator: Bill H., St. Louis, Mo.  
(All page numbers cited are from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, unless otherwise noted.)

***We encounter a new “Powerless Spiritual Opportunity” in each of the Twelve Steps!***

**Introduction.**

I have always been defiant and too self-reliant. I did not trust God, or anyone else. My “purpose”: *get my way*. My “code”: *don’t get caught*. I lived life and made choices “*in control*”.

*The last thing I ever wanted was to feel helpless or hopeless—much less powerless!*

I was first attracted to the fun and good humor of the AA Fellowship. Then my sponsor guided me through the *Twelve Step spiritual recovery program in the AA Big Book*.

The first words in the Twelve Steps are “We admitted we were powerless ...” (p. 59) I didn’t like that at all! But I grudgingly admitted that I was powerless when it came to alcohol.

*I am powerless over more than alcohol*. Each of the Twelve Steps guides us to *admit*, *accept* and *benefit* from being powerless over other elements of our lives, in us and outside us.

Admitting and accepting natural human limitations of powerlessness leads us to continue to seek help from a Power greater than ourselves. *We are not helpless or hopeless. We simply have “less power” than we need to deal with life’s challenges on our power alone.*

***“Powerlessness” is an opportunity to benefit from spiritual help—to enlarge our spiritual life, ensure our sobriety and enrich our life with purpose, meaning and hope each day.***

**Step Seven: “Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.”** (p. 59)

“When ready, we say something like this: **My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad.**” (p. 76)

“... spiritual values had to come first ...” (AA 12x12, p. 71)

*In Steps One through Six, I develop willingness for the “spiritual value” of asking for, and receiving, help from God, including “letting go” of my known “objectionable” things.*

*In Step Seven, I develop the spiritual value of trusting God with “all of me, good and bad”, known and unknown. I am willing to let God define “good”, not me or others.*

***“I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.”*** (p. 76)

*I ask—and keep asking—for the removal of my defects of character, the parts of me God no longer wants me to have. God acts in His time. I keep asking—acting in prayer.*

***“Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen .”*** (p. 76)

“... humility... out from ourselves toward others and toward God.” (AA 12x12, p. 76)

*In Step Six, I ask God for willingness to “let go” of my **known** “objectionable things”.*

*In Step Seven, I am willing to admit and accept that I am powerless to select or remove the **unknown** things in me which only God knows “stands in the way of my usefulness” to God and other people. I trust God to act in His time to remove my “shortcomings”.*

**Steps One through Six begin my “recovery of participation” in my spiritual awakening. With my Step Seven prayer, I begin to live in my recovery, growing my spiritual life. My “Powerless Spiritual Opportunity” in Step Seven is trusting God with the unknown.**

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**Step Seven:** “Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.” (p. 59)

**My “Powerless Spiritual Opportunity” in Step Seven is trusting God with the unknown, with the strength to live God’s Way, not “my way”—free from my “bondage of self”.  
God’s Strength enables me to seek and receive God’s will in the midst of uncertainty.**

**Observations: My “Powerless Spiritual Opportunity” of Trusting God with Uncertainty.**

1. I ask for the “care of God” in Step Three; for God’s help with angers, resentments, fears, and inconsideration in Step Four; to admit the “exact nature” of my wrongs in Step Five; for willingness to “let go” of my “objectionable” things in Step Six. In these six steps, I learn the “spiritual value” of asking for, and receiving, help from God with “known things”.
2. The “spiritual values” process changes in Step Seven. *I now begin to trust God with things not known to me.* In other words, *I start trusting God with unknown things, with uncertainty:*
  - \* do I even want to be useful to God and other people? God knows!
  - \* what in me is blocking me from being useful to God and other people? God knows!
  - \* how will people treat me when I make amends? God knows!
  - \* how will I feel after making amends? God knows!
  - \* will I “continue” in Step Ten; “seek” in Step Eleven; “try” in Step Twelve? God knows!
3. I am changing spiritually—from resenting God in Step Four to trusting God in Step Seven!
4. I have been preparing for Step Seven—to trust God with uncertainty—in previous steps:
  - “... they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false.” (p. xxviii)
  - “... God had done for him what he could not do for himself.” (p. 11)
  - “... [God] ... accomplish ... for us which we could never do by ourselves.” (p. 25)
  - “... God can remove ...” (p. 71)
  - “... discover the obstacles in our path ...” (p. 72)
  - “... these are about to be cast out.” “
  - “... hung on to some of the worst items in stock.” (p. 73)
  - “... we ask [God] if we have omitted anything ...” (p. 75)
5. God’s “Strength” gets me out of God’s Way so I can live God’s Way, not my way.  
God’s Way is not what I want God to do for me.  
God’s Way is God’s idea of what God wants to do for me, and with me.
6. God’s “Strength”:
  - \* is the source of my hope, picking up where my power, my “strength”, leaves off;
  - \* gives me the ability to discern the difference between God’s idea of “good” and “bad”;
  - \* helps me stop doing the next “wrong thing”; helps me try to do the next “right thing”;
  - \* enables my choices, each day, to be humble, grateful, forgiving, loving and tolerant;
  - \* grants me serenity, courage, wisdom and peace of mind as I enlarge my spiritual life.

**Next Time, Step Eight: I am powerless over my *unwillingness* to make direct amends.**

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### **A POWERLESSNESS PRAYER**

God, I thank You and AA for helping me admit that I am powerless over more than just alcohol.

God, I thank You and AA for disclosing to me that I am powerless over my “bondage of self”.

God, I thank You and AA for guiding me to work Steps Four through Six to learn the “spiritual value” of asking for, and receiving, Your help as I become willing to learn to live without my angers, resentments, fears and inconsiderate treatment of others. I am powerless to “let go” of my “objectionable things”, my defects of character, until I ask for, and receive, Your help.

God, I thank You and AA for disclosing to me in Step Seven that I am powerless to remove my “shortcomings” with my power alone. Thank You for guiding me to seek and receive Your Strength to gain freedom from my “bondage of self” by trusting You with the unknown and the uncertain things in my life “as I go out from here to do Your bidding”.

Amen.