

HOPE: The “Beacon” that Lights the Path of our Spiritual Awakening.

An Alcoholics Anonymous “Big Book” Twelve Step Study Workshop
“Threads of Recovery” on Zoom at noon ct from October 6 to December 29, 2025
Facilitator: Bill H., St. Louis, MO.
(All page numbers cited are from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, unless otherwise cited)

Introduction.

In the “Big Book” Alcoholics Anonymous, the Forward to First Edition begins with this:

“We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. To show other alcoholics *precisely how we have recovered* is the main purpose of this book.” (p. xiii)

Our search for hope begins in the pain of our suffering, desperation and despair.

In our “seemingly hopeless state of mind and body”, there is still a tiny spark that does not want to give up on life; a tiny flame of our spirit that has not died—that has *hope*.

The *hope* we seek is transcendent, a vital part of our Twelve Step spiritual awakening.

We come to AA desperately hoping **for** any kind of help whatever—from whomever!

*We learn to first place our hope **in** God, a spiritual “Power greater than ourselves”. Then, what we hope **for** in worldly, material outcomes is centered **in** “[God’s] will (not mine) be done”.*

I experienced my need for spiritual hope before I realized it consciously.

I felt this need when I saw that I had only a “seemingly” hopeless state and mind and body. I heard others share their experience and strength—filled with their *spiritual* hope.

I “borrowed” their spiritual hope, because I was sick and tired of being sick and tired!

Spiritual hope never stops growing when we work, and pray in, each of the Twelve Steps.

*In the Twelve Steps, we discover that hope **in** a Power greater than ourselves, hope **in** God as we understand God, is the “beacon” that lights the path of our spiritual awakening.*

Spiritual hope **in** God, the “beacon” that lights the path of our spiritual awakening, replaces our “seemingly hopeless state of mind and body”. The “light” of our spiritual hope **in** God lightens our pain with promise in whatever we hope **for** in terms of worldly, material outcomes.

We learn to live with “spiritual gain”, so we can learn to live with less human pain.

Hope *IN* God is real. Hope *IN* God can be the main motivator in life—more so than pain.

We learn to have spiritual hope **in** God to experience gratitude at all times—and to have spiritual hope **in** God during times of adversity and loss. We learn to put our hope **in** God’s will for us, and others, ahead of whatever we hope **for** in terms of worldly, material outcomes.

Hope is not meant to be a source of expectation, guarantee, entitlement or complacency.

Step Two: “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” (“*Could* restore us” makes Step Two a “hope **in** God” statement) (p. 59)

Step One convinces us to stop putting our hope just in ourselves or other people:

“Simple but not easy ... It meant destruction of self-centeredness.” (p. 14)

Step One (“powerless” and “unmanageable”) convinces us to seek help outside ourselves:

“... a common solution ... a way out ... we can join in ... action.” (p. 21)

Step Two offers us the “way out” of our “seemingly hopeless state of mind and body”.

Step Two offers us a choice between hope in our powerless selves and hope *IN* God!

Every word in our book up to p. 63 informs and prepares us to choose to hope *IN* God.

HOPE: The “Beacon” that Lights the Path of our Spiritual Awakening.

An Alcoholics Anonymous “Big Book” Twelve Step Study Workshop
“Threads of Recovery” on Zoom at noon ct from October 6 to December 29, 2025
Facilitator: Bill H., St. Louis, MO.
(All page numbers cited are from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, unless otherwise cited)

Step Two: “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” (“*Could* restore us” makes Step Two a “hope in God” statement) (p. 59)

Our “hope in God choice” has been foreshadowed from the beginning of our text book:

- “... the necessity of belief in and dependence upon God.” (p. xvi)
- “... something more than human power is needed to produce ... change.” (p. xxix)
- “... God had done for him ... could not do for himself ... human will had failed.” (p. 11)
- “*It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself.*” (p. 12)
- “*There is a solution ... accept spiritual help.*” (p. 25)
- “... think they can do without spiritual help ... vital spiritual experience.” (p. 27)
- “All went well for a time, but he failed to enlarge his spiritual life.” (p. 35)
- “... important ... discovery that spiritual principles would solve all my problems.” (p. 42)
- “... no effective mental defense ... defense must come from a Higher Power.” (p. 43)

“Chapter 4, WE AGNOSTICS”, uses three “threads of recovery” to inform us so we “came to believe”, understood and considered the hope **in** God choice in our lives.

*The first “thread” is the consequence of choosing not to put our hope **in** God:*

- “... to continue as he is means disaster ... an alcoholic of the hopeless variety.” (p. 44)
- “To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis ...” “

- “... handicapped by obstinacy, sensitiveness, and unreasoning prejudice.” (p. 48)
- “We talked of intolerance, while we were intolerant ourselves.” (p. 50)
- “... change our point of view ... we were having trouble ... bedevilements ...” (p. 52)
- “... trouble and frustration. Business failure, insanity, fatal illness, suicide ...” (p. 56)

*The second “thread of recovery” in Chapter Four guiding us to choose to hope **in** God is the experience of other recovering alcoholics who have put their hope **in** God:*

- “Our experience shows that you need not be disconcerted.” (p. 44)
- “... this book ... main object ... enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem.” (See p. 62 for our “problem”—“self-will run riot”) (p. 45)
- “We know how he feels. We have shared his honest doubt and prejudice.” “
- “... express even a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves ...” (p. 46)
- “... spiritual terms ... what they mean to you ... conscious relation with God ...” (p. 47)
- “Faced with alcoholic destruction ... open minded on spiritual matters ...” (p. 48)
- “Every one of them ... access to, and believes in, a Power greater than himself.” (p. 50)
- “... consciousness ... Presence of God ... most important fact of their lives ...” (p. 51)

*The third “thread of recovery” in Chapter Four guiding us to choose to hope **in** God is the “logic” of human nature that concludes to put our hope **in** God:*

- “Logic is great ... power to reason ... faith is reasonable ... sane and logical ...” (p. 53)
- “God either is, or He isn’t. What was our choice to be?” “

*In Step Two, hope **in** God becomes the “beacon” that lights the path of our spiritual awakening.*

Next Time, Step Three: We *decide* to hope **IN God for relief from our bondage of self.**