

## **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.

*The hope we seek is spiritual—what we place our hope in—before whatever we hope for.*

I learn to first place my hope **in** God, a spiritual “Power greater than ourselves”. Then, what I hope **for** in worldly, material outcomes is always 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—which was filled with their hope.

When we share our experience, strength and hope with one another, our “experience” has already happened. Our “strength” is happening right here and now. Our “hope” is both in the present *and* a promise of still more positive spiritual experience and strength yet to come.

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

“Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path.” (p. 58)

“We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.” (p. 60)

### **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.

Our hope **in** God begins when we hear others share *their* joy in living sober, spiritual lives. Our hope **in** God grows as we believe that *our* pain and suffering might be reduced. Step by step, we become less hopeless. Our hope **in** God grows even more in our recovery promises.

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 and enables us to continue to seek “[God’s] will (not mine) be done” in all of what 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.

**Hope:** “Abandon yourself to God as you understand God ... Road of Happy Destiny.” (p. 164)

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**Step One: “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.”** (p. 59)

“... who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.” (p. xiii)

**Our “bottom”: “seemingly hopeless” before we look for hope from outside ourselves:**

“... an alcoholic of a type I had come to regard as hopeless.” (p. xxv)

“He ... believed that for him there was no hope.” (p. xxxi)

“The patient ... deciding his situation hopeless ...”

“The remorse, horror and hopelessness of the next morning are unforgettable.” (p. 6)

“Certainly I was interested. I had to be, for I was hopeless.” (p. 10)

“... thousands of men and women who were once just as hopeless as Bill.” (p. 17)

**Hopelessness in the face of the *physical allergy* of alcoholism:**

“... action of alcohol ... an allergy ... phenomenon of craving ...” (p. xxviii)

“... restless, irritable and discontented ... ease ... comfort ... craving ...” (pp. xxviii-xxix)

“... they took a drink ... a craving beyond their mental control” (pp. xxix-xxx)

“... they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving.” (p. xxx)

“... real alcoholic ... lose all control of his liquor consumption, once he starts ...” (p. 21)

**Hopelessness in the face of the *mental obsession* of alcoholism to control:**

“... I still thought I could control the situation ...” (p. 5)

“Therefore, the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind ...” (p. 23)

“... insanely trivial excuse for taking the first drink.” (p. 37)

“Once more: The alcoholic has no effective mental defense against the first drink.  
Except in a few rare cases ... defense must come from a Higher Power.” (p. 43)

**Hopelessness in the face of the *unmanageability* of life in alcoholism:**

“... the alcoholic illness ... brings misunderstanding, fierce resentment, financial insecurity, disgusted friends and employers, warped lives of blameless children, sad wives and parents ...” (p. 18)

“We were having trouble with personal relationships ... these bedevilments ...” (p. 52)

**Hope in the *choice* of spiritual recovery from alcoholism:**

“Simple, but not easy; a price had to be paid. It meant destruction of self-centeredness. I must turn in all things to the Father of Light ...” (p. 14)

“... go on to the bitter end ... [or] to accept spiritual help.” (p. 25)

“To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis ...” (p. 44)

“... hoping against hope that we were not true alcoholics. But after a while we had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life—or else.” (p. 44)

*Our hope in God is the “spiritual basis” that enables physical, mental and emotional sobriety.  
Hope in God, our “spiritual basis”—the “beacon” that lights the path of our spiritual awakening.*

**Next Time, Step Two: We come to hope *IN* a Power greater than ourselves *FOR* “Sanity”.**