

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*.

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

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

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

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

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

Having spiritual hope **in** God is 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 Six: “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”

(p. 59)

How did we come to be “were entirely ready”?

Suffering in my delusion of control; admit I’m powerless, unmanageable; seek spiritual help.

How do we become willing “to have God remove”?

In Steps One through Five, I admit what in me needs to change; that I can’t change on my own.

How do we know which “defects of character”?

The angers, resentments, fears and multiple examples of inconsiderate ideas, attitudes and emotions that I can no longer deny are unhealthy for me and/or hurtful to others.

*We will discover our real purpose in Steps Eight and Nine—“to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.” (p. 77) We are becoming “fit” in Steps One through Six. I am ready to put more hope **in** God because I cannot “fit myself to be” by myself alone!*

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Step Six: “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.” (p. 59)

“If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at *Step Six*.” (p. 76)

Answer what? See the five questions at the end of Step Five on page 75:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---------|
| - if we have omitted anything? | <i>Have I omitted prayer?</i> | |
| - is our work solid so far? | <i>Have I told the truth?</i> | |
| - are the stones properly in place? | <i>Have I lied?</i> | |
| - have we skimmed on the cement ...? | <i>Have I told partial truth?</i> | |
| - have we tried to make mortar without sand?” | <i>Have I admitted my motives?</i> | (p. 75) |

I pause and answer these five questions in the one-hour “quiet time” following Step Five.

One hour! Then our book takes us immediately into Step Six:

“We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable.” (p. 76)

“... unwilling to admit that he cannot take a drink.” (p. xxx)

“It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself.” (p. 12)

“Most of us have been unwilling to admit we were real alcoholics.” (See p. 21) (p. 30)

“... express even a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves ...” (p. 46)

“... is willing to believe ... he is on his way.” (See Appendix II, p. 568) (p. 47)

“Circumstances made him willing to believe.” (p. 57)

“... willing to grow along spiritual lines ... turn our will and our life over to God ..” (p. 60)

“... admitted our wrongs ... willing to set these matters straight.” (p. 67)

“... we do as we think [God] would have us, and humbly rely on [God] ...” (p. 68)

“... willing to grow ... willing to make amends where we have done harm ...” (p. 69)

“... let God take us to better things ... willing to straighten out the past ...” (p. 70)

“... unwilling to be honest ...” (p. 73)

*I realize that I have been “becoming willing” to put my hope **in** God since Step One!*

“Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can he now take them all—every one?” (p. 76)

*They are finally “objectionable things” to me—after years of being “objectionable” to everyone else in my life! I decide to put my hope **in** God to remove them.*

I put my hope **IN** God to “fit me” to learn how to live without my “objectionable things”.

“If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.” (p. 76)

*I put my hope **in** God. I ask God for the willingness to “let go” of my anger; to “let go” of my fears; to “let go” of my self-centered obsessions to “get my way” at others’ expense; to stop treating others with inconsideration. I put my hope **in** God to become spiritually “fit”.*

Observations: Hope **IN God in Step Six to “let go” of “objectionable” character defects.**

1. Steps One through Five convince me I am powerless over my “self”, not just alcohol.
2. Step Six is my “willingness opportunity” to put my hope **in** God to change me.
3. When I resist or deny this “willingness opportunity, I put my hope in me, not **in** God.
4. I grieve my loss of control. My hope **in** God illuminates that my control was an illusion.
5. My acceptance of my defects of character, my “objectionable things”, grows in Step Six.
6. When willing, my hope **in** God’s Power, God’s Love and God’s Way of life grow in Step Six.
7. My hope **in** God in Step Six is for the willingness to be changed, to become spiritually “fit”.

Next time, Step Seven: Hope **IN God to remove our defects of character.**