

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—from whomever or whatever!

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 lessens our pain. We learn to seek more “spiritual gain”. We live with less self-inflicted pain.

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

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. *When I decide to have spiritual hope **in** God, I experience gratitude at all times—even to have grateful hope **in** God during times of adversity and loss.*

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

Step Eleven: “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.”

“We ... sought the same escape with all the desperation of drowning men.” (p. 28)

“But He has come to all who have honestly sought Him.” (p. 57)

“That God could and would if He were sought.” (p. 60)

*Hope **in** God is both motive and promise for me to **seek** God’s help. Hope **in** God was my motive when my recovery began from a “seemingly hopeless state of mind and body”. Hope **in** God has also become my promise as I improve my conscious contact with God.*

*In Step Eleven I increase my hope **in** God as I continue to seek to improve my conscious contact with God. My meditations and prayers in Step Eleven combine with my “watch for” work in Step Ten to grow my hope **in** God as I live my life in “the world of the Spirit” each day.*

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Step Eleven: “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we *understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.” (p. 59)

“... sense the flow of His Spirit into us ... God-conscious ... vital sixth sense. But we must go further and that means more action.” (p. 85)
“*Step Eleven* suggests prayer and meditation.”

*I learn how to put **more hope in** God throughout each day when I am willing to trust the “suggestions” in Alcoholics Anonymous that guide me in meditation and prayer, pp. 86-88:*
“When we retire at night, we constructively review our day.” (p. 86)
*This “guided meditation” each evening helps me review my day with hope **in** God for an honest inventory of my successes—seeking forgiveness for my shortcomings.*

“On awakening, let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead.” (p. 86)
*I put my hope **in** God in this morning meditation to guide my thinking with God’s will, divorcing my thinking from “self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.”*

“In thinking about our day, we may face indecision. We ask God for inspiration , an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don’t struggle.” (p. 86)
*I put my hope **in** God to grant me patience and inspiration in God’s time!*

“We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be ... freedom from self-will ...” (See Step 10) (p. 87)
*I put my hope **in** God to keep my self-will in check, to continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear—to not do the next “wrong thing” so I can try to do the next “right thing” on God’s terms and in God’s time, not mine.*

“If circumstance warrant, we ask our wives or friends to join us in morning meditation.” “
*I put my hope **in** God to seek the spiritual support of friends or a family member.*

“As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask [God] for the right or action ... we are no longer running the show ... Thy will be done.” (pp. 87-88)
*I put my hope **in** God for God-centered—“pausing”—conduct of my life each day.*

Observations on Application of “Hope IN God” in Step Eleven.

1. I am in “conscious contact” with God when I hope **in** God enough to ask God for help.
2. I hope **in** God to help me not use my will to ignore or oppose God’s will each day.
3. I put my hope in God who cares about me with a Power, a Love and a Way of life for me.
4. My hope **in** God reduces my resistance to God and increases my trust *in* God.
5. My hope **in** God does not always help me avoid trouble. It helps me stop looking for trouble!
6. My hope **in** God leads me to be willing to *continue* to *seek*—and wait for God to *disclose*.
7. My hope **in** God gives me the desire to have God-centered motives, not self-seeking ones.
8. My hope **in** God, a certainty to me, gives me safety and security in the face of uncertainty.
9. **My hope IN God IS the answer. “Thy will be done.”** (p. 88)

Next Time, Step Twelve: Hope IN God to become Fit to be of Maximum Service to Others.