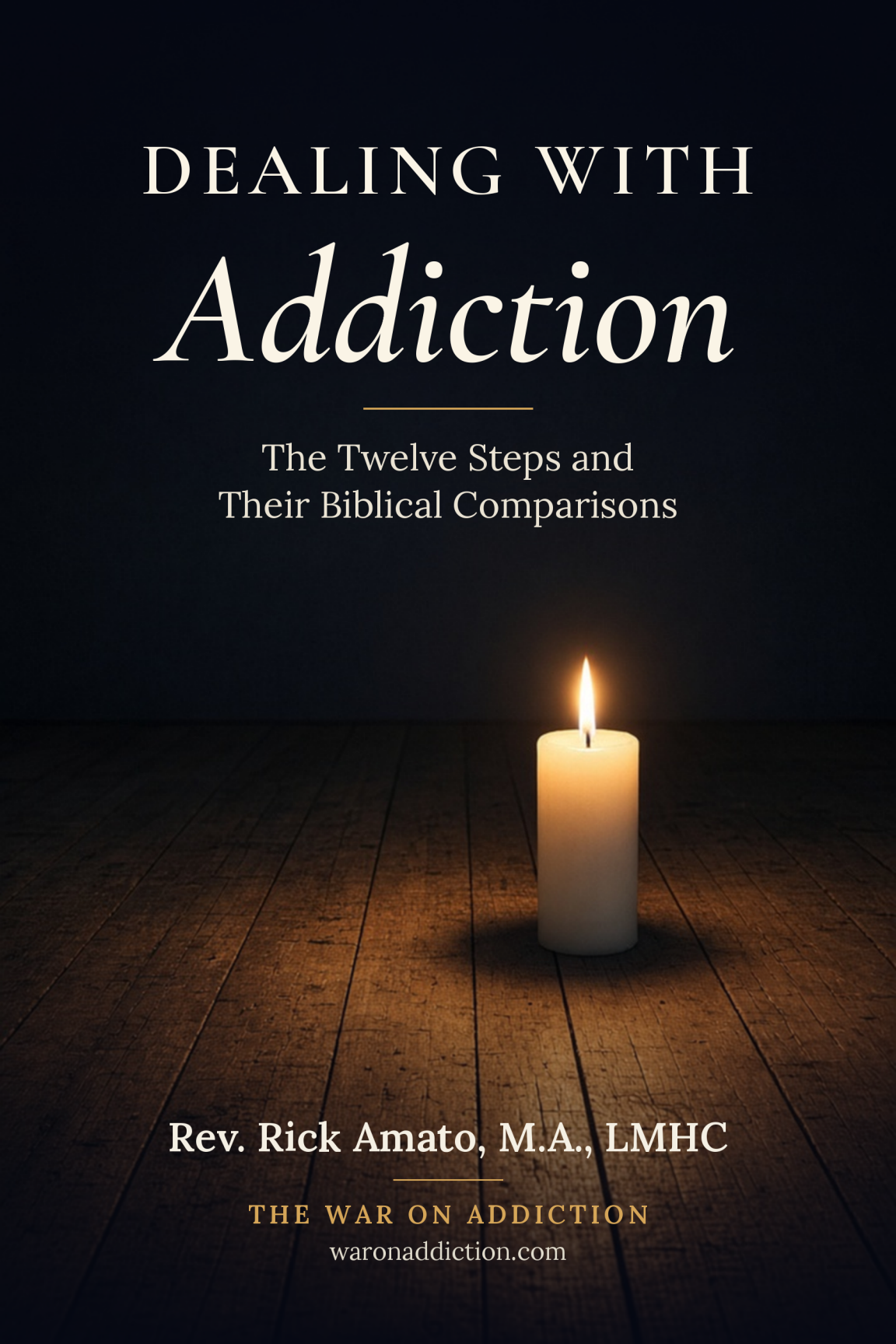
DEALING WITH *Addiction*

The Twelve Steps and
Their Biblical Comparisons



Rev. Rick Amato, M.A., LMHC

THE WAR ON ADDICTION
waronaddiction.com

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A Note to Those Who Love Someone with an Addiction



Rick and Susan Amato

Dear Friend,

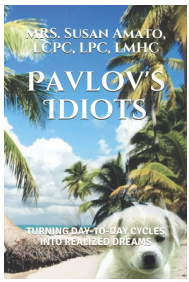
If you are reading this, there is a good chance you downloaded it for someone else. Maybe it is your son or daughter, your husband or wife, your parent, or a dear friend. Maybe you are hoping that if you can just get these pages into their hands, something will finally change.

I want you to know that I see you. My work is with people just like you, the ones who love addicts and alcoholics. Over the years I have sat with many who have tried everything: covering for their loved one, making excuses, rescuing, pleading, and waiting up through long nights. Much of that comes from a heart full of love. Some of it, though, can keep the person we love from feeling the weight of their own choices.

Here is a hard truth I say gently: most addicts do not seek help until they are forced to. You cannot want recovery more than they do, and you cannot love them into it. Please give them this book. Pray for them. But please also hear this: you need help and healing too.

Loving someone with an addiction changes us. Worry, fear, anger, and exhaustion can quietly take over our lives. That is what we call codependency, and you do not have to carry it alone. The same Twelve Steps in these pages, and the same word Rick talks about, "We," are for you as well.

I work with the women, and my husband, Rick, works with the men. I wrote a book called *Pavlov's Idiots: Turning Day to Day Cycles into Realized Dreams*. It is about the script every human has, the messages we learned as children that we keep repeating over and over. It has been especially helpful for women who love addicts and alcoholics, because so often that script is what keeps us stuck in the cycle. You can find it on Amazon at amazon.com/dp/B08YHZX7D3.



There is hope for your loved one, and there is hope for you.

With love and understanding,

Susan Amato, LCPC, LPC, LMHC
Founder, Dream Believe Institute

Dear Friend,

The title of this booklet is "Dealing with Addiction." There is a very specific reason for titling it this way. There is a reason we did not call it "Defeating Addiction" or "Victory Over Addiction." The simple fact of my experience in this earthly dimension is that addiction is an incurable brain disease. It may be treated and enter into remission. With the proper continued treatment and program it may, on a daily basis, stay in remission for the rest of one's life. The key to this hope is the word "Program."

In this book I have borrowed heavily from the only proven program that begins to deal with this awful disease. This time-proven beginning is also known as *"The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous."*

The spiritual principles promoted by these steps have been proven effective in the treatment and care of those of us who suffer from this horrible illness. Generation after generation can testify that the practice of these principles helped them when nothing else could.

These 12 spiritual principles have also been the subject of a great deal of scientific research in the last forty years. Through amazing advances in the neurosciences we now know that the human brain itself actually changes for the better when these principles are discussed and adhered to. It is now safe to say the Twelve Steps are clinically proven to be an effective treatment for addiction and addiction-related illnesses. This is true in my personal experience also.

I have spent years of my life battling this disease in my own mind and body. I have labored for many years now to help other addicts. We have expended great portions of our own resources to bring the simple truths found in this booklet to all of my fellow addicts who are still suffering. This booklet is the result of *"One starving beggar telling other starving beggars where he found some bread."* If you want to be free from

addiction, read every sentence of this book. Then get in a small group of people who practice the Twelve Steps.

Please remember that this booklet is only the beginning of your journey. There are many more good things available for you if you will only walk the path that is being set before you today. It never gets easy but it does get **better!**

The most important word in the Twelve Steps is the first word. It's really the only word you need to know to stop the pain and begin the healing process. It is the word ***"We."*** Please know that I and many like me are here for you. The points of contact on the back of this booklet can put you in touch with us. Just contact us and we will help you in any way we can on your journey because we are …

Your fellow travelers,

Rev. Rick Amato, M.A., LMHC
Founder, ***The War on Addiction***

Before You Begin

Addiction is a developmentally acquired brain disease. It is incurable. It can be treated, but it can never be cured.

Once you're a pickle, you can never be a cucumber again. But you can be happy, joyous, and free.

The end of addiction is always the same: jails, institutions, and death.

But there is a solution. It is the Twelve Steps, worked in your life. The steps are not worked just one time. They are a way of life, practiced daily in fellowship with other alcoholics and addicts who have recovered.

The opposite of addiction and alcoholism is not just abstinence. It's connection.

STEP ONE: *"ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ADDICTION – THAT OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE."*

Admission of personal powerlessness is the firm bedrock upon which your spiritual awakening will be built. Nothing really positive can start in your life until you first accept that you have a devastating weakness.

What's more, you need to further acknowledge the terrible consequences that have come into your life because of this weakness. Until this point of humility reaches your life, you're never going to be able to take a step forward towards real happiness.

In the life of Jesus Christ, we have the ultimate example of powerlessness in His death on the Cross. In the book of Matthew, chapter 27, verse 46, Jesus Christ uttered the words, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* By uttering these words, He became the symbol, through His Cross, of the beginning of every man's spiritual journey.

As He lay in His tomb with His feet pointing straight up, He showed us all of the position we must come to God with. This is our only true beginning.

Furthermore, it is not enough merely to acknowledge that we are powerless over alcohol. Notice Step One says, *"Our lives had become unmanageable."* Many people will admit that they cannot manage alcohol after repeated attempts to stop using drugs or another addictive behavior or substance. People can often finally admit that they were powerless against their substance of choice.

However, the beginning of your spiritual awakening will be that you admit that you not only have the inability to manage your drug or addiction of choice but it is your *very life* that is unmanageable.

This day you are challenged to admit defeat. You have your self-confidence renounced and you are told that as it relates to your addiction, it's the worst thing you have going for you.

You are a victim of a brain disease that's so bizarre and powerful, no amount of self-control, willpower, or self-confidence can deliver you. You also will not make it on your own.

This is why the first word of Step One is actually the key to the following Twelve Steps and your total recovery. It is the word, *"WE."* As you begin your journey, you will find out that ever since Noah got off the ark and began crushing grapes, humans have had problems with addiction. As you continue your journey towards sobriety and serenity, seeking a spiritual renewal, you will find out that there are many of us just like you.

Some of us are more desperate than others. Some of us have greater consequences in the visible world. Many of us have not survived and have already gone into the eternal dimension without preparation.

You should know, however, that there is a great number of the *"we"* who together have come to the same conclusion you must come to today. We have admitted that our lives are unmanageable. We have admitted that we are powerless against our addiction.

The history of our addiction stories is variant and different. Many of us have stories that others find hard to believe but all of us can relate at some point or another. There is one thing that all of us have in common. We all hit bottom. In the end our addiction became our best friend. It taught us that not only was it unmanageable in our hands, but no amount of willpower or self-control could be mustered to manage our lives.

Unless you have hit bottom, Step One will be nothing to you but a slap in your face. You will only see this as an insult to your strength. For those of us who are practicing the Twelve Steps and becoming spiritual

people, we not only can admit that we have hit bottom, but together can find a higher power.

The hope is that as you have sacrificed your time and energy in trying to serve your addiction you will now surrender it to become open-minded and willing to listen. The hope is that you become as open-minded and willing to listen as a dying person is, a person who has no hope, a person who is up against a ruthless and merciless master determined only to destroy them. This person is ready to admit that they are powerless against their addiction and their life is unmanageable. When this occurs, for the first time, we are ready to hear the voice of our God, whatever we understand Him to be, a power greater than us who alone can help us return to, or find for the first time, a normal life. In this sense, our addiction becomes our best friend, because it brings us back to the ultimate path to sanity.

STEP TWO: *"CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY."*

Instantly when you hear this, you may face a serious question in your mind. Being brought to a position where you see yourself as helpless and your life unmanageable, you now are requested to believe in a higher power. This is difficult because you either won't believe in God, can't believe in God, or believe in God but don't believe He can really help. This is indeed a serious question, but again it is your best friend.

If you are a person to whom the idea of a higher power is totally insulting to you, much less having already admitted that alcohol or your addiction has brought you to your knees, you cannot believe that this powerful being that you are, this human god you wish to become, could actually admit that there is a power higher than you.

The Bible says in the Old Testament book of Psalms, chapter 14, verse 1, *"The fool has said in his heart there is no God,"* and so it is, if you can face for the first time the absolute insanity of a faithless and unspiritual life you will be finding the beginning of the end of your old life and start to emerge into a new one.

For you, you only need to take it easy. The path you are asked to walk on is much broader than you realize and you will find that you will not only get through this but with plenty of space to spare.

You are not asked to believe in any specific god or any specific thing in order to practice the Twelve Steps. They are only suggestions.

The only thing you are asked to do at this point is keep an open mind and see that gently and gradually you must be opened to believe that a power greater than yourself could restore you to sanity. Step Two only asks you to stop fighting and practice the rest of the Twelve Steps as

enthusiastically as you practiced destroying your life through your addiction.

My opinion is not only is there a higher power but He cares very deeply for each of His creatures and longs, through their faith, to make Himself known to them, through Jesus of Nazareth.

However, if you don't care for the higher power I've suggested, you will be sure to discover one that suits you if you will only look and listen.

Many people just like you have begun by making AA steps or AA groups themselves a higher power. Others have found a church, Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant, a source of inspiration and faith. There is a very large group of people who have solved their problem of alcohol or other addictions by having faith in systems of belief that I am unfamiliar with.

The bottom line is that you will be relieved of your alcohol and addiction obsession when you come to believe that a higher power can restore you to sanity.

An important part of this is the phrase, *"came to believe."* Do not expect this faith to be born overnight. Do not even see it as your responsibility to birth it. If there is a God it is His responsibility to come to you. You must only be willing, willing to come to believe. There are others who once had faith, a strong one, but somewhere lost it. They have become lazy or indifferent in their faith. Perhaps this is because they are bitter or disillusioned by some tragedy that happened to them. These people can still find a faith that works.

Although the Twelve Steps are harder to work for those who have lost or rejected their faith than those who have never had any faith at all, they can still work. For those of us who have found houses of worship disappointing and ministers and leaders sometimes abusive, we also sometimes find that our independence is often a path back to a relapse

to our addiction. This leads to deep confusion. Sometimes it makes us believe we are lost to the comfort of believing anything at all. Some people can't even find a small amount of faith once they have believed and then lost that faith.

My own experience is that my overconfidence, as I was young, and the religious training I experienced gave me some values but also led me to be disillusioned. In addition to this, the prosperity that came into my life also sabotaged me. My extreme competitiveness and will to win also proved to be an empty experience.

It was through the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous that I have begun to rediscover the process of *"coming to believe."* Life is a journey, not a destination. I have found this to be true and so can you. It is enough to let yourself come to believe instead of demanding of yourself that you have all of the answers figured out.

It is a wonderful experience to have the burden and responsibility of your spiritual awakening and sobriety placed on a power greater than you. In this sense, we lose the compulsion to try to understand everything that happens to us and explain every event of our lives. Instead, we are able on the journey of life to allow God to come to us in any form He may choose. We instead begin to see every circumstance, person and event as a higher power coming to us, not only to restore us to sanity but to lead us in the higher ways of human consciousness and prepare us for a greater usefulness in this life and a more powerful existence in the next.

There is a final problem and that is the people who do not understand that our intellectual abilities can only take us so far. There is a great need for humility to join with our intellectual abilities in order for us to go to the next step in our spiritual awakening. When we place a humble mind and open heart before our intellectual knowledge, we are able to join the powers of emotion and intellect together to fully evolve into the human consciousness we were created to understand.

We are not human beings having spiritual experiences; we are spiritual beings having a human experience. When we begin to believe this, we receive the gift of faith, faith that works. This is the greatest gift a human can receive.

At this point, often a defiant attitude rises up in our hearts. We become angry because we didn't get enough of what we wanted and demanded or we had some major catastrophe or disaster happen to us that has left us believing that faith is a lie, there is no God and if there is, He has deserted us.

Perhaps it was a rejection from a relationship or abuse in one we thought we wanted. It also could be a death of a parent or spouse or some terrible illness that has left us believing that God has done us dirty.

I often tell people you have three choices: 1. There is no God (this is illogical). 2. There is a God, but He is a malignant deity or a sick person (this is intolerable). 3. There is a God whose main workings in this life are actually preparing us for another state of consciousness beyond this life in which we will not remember, nor care to discuss if we did, the present sufferings of this world. At this point our defiance disappears. At this point we learn the meaning of reliance instead of defiance.

In my life I have been forced to begin to calmly accept some impossible situations that I am in. I am trying to learn to neither run from them nor recriminate or bring vengeance upon those who cause them. A simple acquiescence or acceptance is the key to believing. It is the key to coming to believe. Faith is never a place we arrive at but a continual growing awareness and acceptance of our ultimate meaning in the journey itself.

Many well-meaning alcoholics and addicts who come to this place turn back because they feel they can't have a huge amount of faith. To this

the answer I give is that faith has to do with quality not quantity. Sometimes I thought I was really humble when I was really proud. The truth is once we find the fact that we are mentally ill, that we have a brain disease and are blinded by a world that doesn't know the difference between social drinking and proper use of medicine and alcoholism and drug abuse, we come to the place where we understand that soundness of mind and sanity is not something we are capable of ourselves.

However, the *"we"* all join together in Step Two whether we are atheists, agnostics or confused former believers and that is true humility. True humility gives us an open mind that leads us to have, for the first time in our lives, some form or fashion of faith. Each time we meet and join together, we express this faith that our higher power, God as we understand Him, will restore us to sanity if we line ourselves up on the path with Him.

As the admission of powerlessness is the first key to a spiritual awakening, so faith is the key to our restoration. Of all I wish for you in life, I wish you this gift. *"But without faith, no one can please God. We must believe that God is real and that He rewards everyone who searches for Him"* (Hebrews 11:6).

STEP THREE: *"MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM."*

Sometimes Step Three seems like walking down a hall full of doors and running into a brick wall. This brick wall is actually the single door to which all of the other doors swing open. There is only one way through the wall and that is the way to a faith that works.

So far in the first two steps we looked back. We saw that we were powerless over our addiction and that we needed some sort of faith. These two steps only called on us to accept things.

From here on out the Twelve Steps become extremely different. From here on out, the Twelve Steps don't require acceptance; they require work. They remind us of the words of Jesus' brother James who in the book of James, chapter 2, verse 14 said, *"My friends, what good is it to say you have faith when you don't do anything to show that you really do have faith? Can that kind of faith save you?"* What this means is that only action from here on out can eliminate the self-will that has stopped God or your higher power from coming into your life. Faith is good but faith alone can't save you. You have to let God step in. Step Three is your first attempt to do this.

It is easy for you to look at this step and say that it is difficult. This is not true. This step is not difficult. It is impossible. What you need to see is that this step is only required to be a beginning, even if it's the smallest one you've ever made. That's all you need. This step is to pick up the key of willingness and put it in the lock to the prison doors of your life. Even though this may sound mystical, it really isn't. It's really very simple.

No doubt you're already willing to throw down your own self-will and pick up the idea that you need a faith life in order to go on from here. As you can see very clearly, you've already begun to wake up spiritually.

However, it's easy at this point to say, *"Yes, I need a higher power to deal with my alcoholism or addiction, but I'm still independent. I'm not disappearing. I'm still me."* The fact is, you will never be more *"you"* than you are when you are willing to depend on your higher power. You were created in God's image to know Him and reflect His love and glory. The key to your spiritual awakening's continuance is to accept your dependence on Him as your actual, natural state.

Just like you use modern technology every day with no thought of how you use it but absolute dependence on it, so silently and surely you must learn to exchange your energy for God's energy. Your dependence on Him is actually independence and your surrender to Him is in truth your freedom.

We who are addicts and alcoholics can really consider ourselves very lucky. We are lucky because our disease has brought us to the end of our self-will. We've suffered enough to finally be driven to change. As for me, when I got to the place that God was all I had left, that's when I realized that God is all there is. When I admitted defeat, I found the beginning of a faith and made a decision to turn my will and my life over to a higher power.

Dependence does not always mean damage to the person. This is a spiritual principle that teaches us that the willing person can continually surrender his will and his life to a power greater than himself.

Often problems far greater than our alcohol and bitterness, far stronger than our addictions, still overpower us and lead us to envy or hatred. Often we are so financially poor that we panic when we think that we can no longer use drugs or alcohol to kill the pain. The truth is

that for the first time, you must depend on somebody or something else.

That somebody or something else is your higher power and you can find that through a small group of people who are committed to working the Twelve Steps along with you. In this way, by meeting with others working the Twelve Steps, we make a conscious decision to turn the control of our will over to a higher power.

As we learn the other steps of the Alcoholics Anonymous program and practice them, we find success. This is especially true when Step Three is given a conscious, willful test.

This means that many of our problems cannot be solved, like our alcoholism, alone. I know in my own life, I have constantly striven like Hercules to try to fix problems that I have suffered with for many years. I have raged, screamed and done all in my power to try to stop the suffering.

I know from experience that all by myself I can do nothing. I now know that none of us are as strong as all of us. I must have a continual fellowship of others who, with me, are exerting sustained personal effort to submit our wills and lives to God's.

I can honestly say that this is the first time in my life I have ever used my will properly. It's a delightful experience indeed. The problem with those of us who are addicts and alcoholics is we have always misused our willpower. We try to attack our problems with our willpower instead of bringing our wills into agreement with God's intentions for allowing the problems to come to us.

The seed to your greatest power is hidden in the heart of your worst problem. This means that the continual pain and suffering in our life is an attempt by the spiritual world to teach us something. Only when we surrender the use of our will to fight against the problem and instead

bring it into alignment with God's will do we begin to practice Step Three.

I find a prayer very useful when I am emotionally disturbed or extremely hurt by a circumstance or relationship. I recommend this prayer highly as a simple way to practice Step Three: ***"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Thy will not mine be done. Amen."***

STEP FOUR: *"MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES."*

When God created you, He made you a unique individual. There is no one with the same cornea in his eye, just like yours. There is no one with fingerprints just like yours. However, there is one thing that all of us have, and that is the basic human instincts.

These basic human instincts can be categorized as sexual desire, material and emotional security and companionship. These instincts are God-given and are necessary and right, according to Alcoholics Anonymous.

God, as we understand Him, has a plan for us. This plan is that these instincts would serve humanity well. The problem is, when these instincts are not energized by God, as we understand Him, but are misdirected, they become as destructive as they were meant to be constructive.

Step Four is an attempt to examine how others and we ourselves have experienced pain through the improper channeling of these God-given instincts. Without this fearless moral inventory, though a spiritual awakening can begin, it cannot be completed.

The important principle of a fearless moral inventory is that we look at how we have hurt others or ourselves and try to find the underlying cause of the addiction that fueled these incidents.

This is not a pleasant thing to do. As a matter of fact, when you begin Step Four, you can expect severe reactions. It may come in the form of nightmares or physical symptoms such as heart palpitations, sweating, the feeling of blacking out or maybe just a "blue mood" or depression. You may also experience guilt and hatred for yourself, and you may want to give up. This is not what Step Four is intended to do.

Step Four is intended to help you ask yourself exactly when and how and in what exact instances did your destructive, negative use of your God-given instincts damage other people and yourself. What people were hurt? How badly were they hurt? The one word that I would give you, as you try to practice Step Four, is thoroughness. This should be the key, according to Alcoholics Anonymous. I would write out these questions and the answers to them. It will help you to focus and be true. It will be proof that you really are trying to grow spiritually and defeat this terrible disease of addiction.

Don't be afraid. Step Four is here to help. Be afraid of those defects deep down inside of you, under the thick cover of darkness. These are the enemy. They are what have tricked and trapped you into this miserable lifestyle that we know as a life of addiction. They must come out.

You ask, *"How thorough should I be?"* The answer, *"How well do you want to get?"* The more thorough you are in Step Four, the better served you will be when it comes to your sobriety. Do it now.

STEP FIVE: *"ADMITTED TO GOD, TO OURSELVES, AND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS."*

Step Five, the step of confession, is no doubt the most powerful tool for healing known to mankind.

Scientists studying human brain cells and brain waves have determined that when similarly traumatized people confess their problems to each other, "rapha" waves are released in the brain, which cause healing. You may think this amazing, scientific discovery astonishing. The truth is, it is nothing new. In the New Testament, in the book of James, chapter 5, verse 16, it says, *"Confess your faults one to another and you will be healed."* Confession is the most powerful tool for healing.

However, most of us are extremely fearful and reluctant to do this. Most of us just want to simply admit that our addiction messed up our lives, and now we want to get better. The truth is, after you have used the flashlight of Step Four on your life, you need now more than ever to get rid of all the "demons" that torment you inside. You're going to have to talk to someone.

This practice of confessing one's faults to each other is ancient, proven and the greatest need you have in your life right now. The benefits will be tremendous as you will no longer feel alone, and you will get powerful insights and knowledge of your own personality. This step will also help you to see that you can be forgiven and that true humility, which marks all spiritual pilgrims, will become yours. There may be someone in your life, a religious professional, or someone else that you could confide in. However, you must be prudent in so doing. Try to find someone who is experienced, someone who has overcome alcoholism or addiction. According to modern science, someone who has suffered similar problems to you is the best person that you can talk to.

This person could be a sponsor to you or a mentor, but if it is someone you could only tell some of your story to, well, then do it. You may use more than one person. You may tell one person part of the story and another person the rest. The most important thing is that you be willing to tell everything accurately to somebody. Chances are you are going to be very happy when you explain what your mission is to a person.

If you are complete in your disclosure, your joy will be full also. All of the hatred and pain of all of the years will disappear and serenity will enter your heart. Once the pain ends, the healing tranquility will begin and as the Scripture says, *"(If you) humble yourself in the sight of God, He will lift you up"* (James 4:10). You may have an amazing spiritual experience and become conscious of God, as you never have been before. Prepare yourself for a full and meaningful sobriety by taking Step Five.

STEP SIX: *"WERE ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD REMOVE ALL THESE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER."*

This step is at the halfway point of the Twelve Steps and it is what distinguishes spiritual giants from spiritual infants. Most people do not understand that Step Six is actually an attitude that one begins to work on consciously taking.

This attitude is that from now on we shall be content in our lives if we continue to improve. The words, *"entirely ready,"* mean that we are going to begin to strive to be the very best we can in the art of learning about our character defects. It means that we understand that we are not perfect, and we are still going to make mistakes, but we are going to make a beginning and keep trying.

This step can also be of great advantage in every area of our life. It is fulfilling the words of Jesus who said, *"Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect"* (Matthew 5:48). It is setting your eyes on your higher power and walking in that direction.

It doesn't mean that you will walk straight or perfect, it just means that every day you will ask yourself the question, *"Am I ready for God to remove my defects of character today?"* What this means is that you will never again say, *"This I will never give up!"* You may say, *"This I cannot give up yet."* But you will never say, *"Never."*

You cannot postpone dealing with your problems indefinitely. You will only fool yourself. We must come to grips with our character defects and take action towards removing them as quickly as we can. Delay is dangerous. Rebellion may be fatal. This step is the point at which we abandon any limited attempts towards reform, we move straight towards God, as we understand Him, and His will for us becomes our delight.

STEP SEVEN: *"HUMBLY ASKED HIM TO REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS."*

What is humility? How does a person practice it? Humility is that power which brought Christ from heaven and which He brought with Him to place in the hearts of men, if you are a believer in Christ. If not, you can rest assured that without some degree of humility, you will never stay sober. Whether you find it in Christianity or in your own heart, I can assure you that I have found what all other alcoholics have found: unless you can get more humility than that which you need just to stay sober, you will never be truly happy in life. You'll never be useful, and you'll never be able to thrive.

So what is the basic ingredient of humility? I believe it is the desire to seek and do God's will. That's what is missing in our lives. That's the attitude of the truly spiritually awakened.

Each day of your life you wake up, and you make a choice. *"Whose will will I do today, mine or God's?"* Humility is not only a necessity, but it is the beginning. It is the avenue to true freedom of the human spirit, and it is something that you have to work for, something that you must desire just to have it for itself, and something that will take you a long, long time to develop. You did not get totally self-centered all at once, and you are not going to become humble all at once.

After you have looked at your character defects and have become willing to have them removed, you will begin to understand what humility is.

No doubt, by now, you are beginning to experience a little bit of happiness as you are letting go of the more destructive things in your life. Now, you must see that humility is not something that is forced upon you because of the trouble you may or may not have, but you

must see humility as the water that nourishes your serenity and spirituality. It is the sea of tranquility in your life.

This humility is most importantly a change in your attitude towards God. For those of us who have recovered, whether we had been believers or unbelievers, we pass through the stage where we saw that God was just someone who would help when you were in trouble. God is to be placed first. His help is constant. You don't need life to beat you into seeing that. You can voluntarily reach out for humility, as well as gain it through the blows that life deals to you.

A great change will take place when you see humility as something you want instead of something you need. If you really want to be at peace with yourself and fellow human beings, then rest assured that the grace of God can alone do for you what you cannot do for yourself. For too long, we have made unreasonable demands upon ourselves, upon others and upon God.

Step Seven is a change in your attitude. Now humility is your guide. You are stepping out from yourself towards others and towards God. You are now willing to let God change your other shortcomings just as He changed your addiction. Just as you admitted you were powerless over alcohol and came to believe that a power greater than yourself could restore you to sanity, that same degree of humility is now going to have the same result respecting any other problem you could possibly have.

I am a believer in Christ Jesus and I often pray this prayer to God, ***"Oh Father in heaven, out of your great goodness, take from me, whether it's from my own evil nature or an evil spirit, every form, fashion and degree of pride. Out of your great mercy, give me in my heart the deepest depths of humility, which would make me capable to possess, in my soul, <u>Your</u> light, Your love and Your truth. Amen."***

Be careful when you pray this prayer, because the Scripture teaches in the book of James, chapter 4, verse 10, *"We should humble ourselves in the sight of God,"* and that means that we should look for ways to humble ourselves, instead of waiting for life to humble us.

STEP EIGHT: *"MADE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WE HAD HARMED, AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL."*

We have looked back in the previous steps and discovered our mistakes in the past. Now, as we've come to understand ourselves better, we want to try in the next two steps to have a good relationship with other humans. The purpose of this step is to see how many people you have hurt through your addictive and negative behavior and in what kind of ways you have hurt them. Sometimes this may seem very painful and meaningless, but as you do this step, the pain will be replaced by the pleasure of a new life.

Most of us discover that it takes some discipline to actually write down the people that we have harmed, but once we begin writing we find that we are not writing because these people are better than us or because these people are not as sick as we are. We are writing for ourselves. Since we plan to ask forgiveness for ourselves from all of these people, we just forgive them all also.

When Jesus taught us to pray He said, *"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"* (Matthew 6:12). He also said, *"Whatever you do to the least of my brothers you have done to me"* (Matthew 25:40). The truth is, since we have admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the things we have done wrong, it's not a major step to realize that all of these people are God manifestations in their own right, and we should go to them too.

Sometimes we can make no restitution to people, because they have either passed from this life or, in trying to make restitution or confession, we could make problems worse than they are now. The important thing about Step Eight is that you be sensitive to your higher power as He leads you to examine your relationships and how you have harmed other people.

By harm, we mean causing physical, mental, emotional or spiritual damage to people. You carefully survey all of your human relations and decide exactly what personality traits in you injured or disturbed someone else. Then, as you walk back through your life as far as your memory will reach, you make a list of all of the people who have to some extent or other been affected. You ponder and weigh each incident carefully, admitting the things you have done and forgiving the wrongs done to you, whether they were real or you imagined them. Don't be extreme. Don't exaggerate. Take a long, quiet, objective view. This is the beginning of the end of your isolationism from your fellow humans and from your God.

STEP NINE: *"MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHEREVER POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS."*

In the previous step we discussed this issue and now we will discuss it at length. There are several classes of those who we should make amends to. Some should be dealt with as soon as you are sure that you can stay sober. Some you should only make partial restitution with, because to make total restitution would do more harm than good. In other cases, you should wait to make restitution. Finally, there are some you will never be able to make direct, personal contact with at all. You will never be able to see them or talk to them again as long as things remain the way they are.

We begin Step Nine often with our families. Our families usually are happy to see this. It's wise at this time just to make a general confession and not to drag up old, painful memories. We should take our time and not find peace of mind at the expense of others.

It is often good to next go to work. As soon as we are sure that our addiction is no longer in control of us, we can find an atmosphere of praise from people who are happy to see that we are sincerely trying to make a change. In our business affairs we can pay, or promise to pay, whatever money we owe.

The important thing is that we continue this process all the way through to the end and don't stop when we get to the more humiliating and dreaded meetings. I found in my own recovery, that as I prayed to Jesus Christ (who is my higher power) I asked Him to guide me and even now pray for His leadership to those with whom I need to make amends. I found that God was able to give me opportunities to right serious wrongs far beyond my wildest dreams. The important thing is that your heart be open and that you not evade the issue. The only exception in making amends is where your disclosure would

cause actual harm to someone else. While we pray for the opportunity to present itself, there comes a point when we want to go straight to the person concerned and to put the entire thing out on the table. If this is the case, then you should be gentle, honest and loving.

Once again, if a full revelation would seriously harm the one to whom we are making amends, or equally important, other people, we cannot practice Step Nine with these people. In the event of marital unfaithfulness or financial impropriety, great caution should be used. We should not be so self-righteous about making amends that we don't consider the families, people, homes or businesses that will be affected.

Sometimes you can't be sure what you should do. In this case, you should talk to your sponsor, spiritual advisor or God, asking for help and guidance. At this point, patience is needed until the right thing to do becomes clear. There is no set answer for these kinds of questions. The most important thing is that you be willing to make amends as fast as you can and to as many people as you can as God opens the doors for you to do it.

Step Nine is the willingness to assume full responsibility for everything that you have done and accept your part in the good of other humans also. This is what Step Nine is all about.

STEP TEN: *"CONTINUED TO TAKE PERSONAL INVENTORY AND WHEN WE WERE WRONG PROMPTLY ADMITTED IT."*

Step Ten is the beginning of the maintenance of your new way of life. In Step Ten, we seek to maintain an emotional balance by making self-searching a regular habit.

By continuing to take a personal inventory and promptly admitting our mistakes, we grow. When you get drunk or use the substance of your choice to become intoxicated, often you have a terrific hangover the next day. There is another kind of hangover, which Alcoholics Anonymous calls "the emotional hangover." This hangover is the result of yesterday's negative emotions – anger, fear, jealousy, etc. If we want to have serenity today and tomorrow, we have to eliminate these hangovers.

Some take an inventory of themselves at any time of the day whenever they find themselves feeling confused. Others take one at the end of the day, and praise themselves for things they did well and analyze the things they handled poorly. There are some of us (this is my own personal favorite) who would like to take an occasional retreat from the outside world for a day or two where we can quiet down for some undisturbed time for self-overhaul and meditation. There are some people that would think that this is a waste of time or something very heavy and depressing to do. This is only because some of us have never developed a habit of accurate self-appraisal. Once we do, we find that it is one of the most interesting and profitable things that we can do. The minutes, hours or days spent doing this become some of the most precious times of our lives.

The most important principle this develops in our lives is the truth that whenever we are disturbed emotionally, no matter what the cause,

there is something wrong with us. We cannot control what people do to *us*. We can only control how we react to what they do to us.

I don't know another more resentful group than those of us who are alcoholics or addicts. It doesn't matter if our resentments are right or wrong. As far as we see it, our anger is always right. Jealousy, envy, self-pity, hurt pride – they can all do the same thing: they keep us mixed up emotionally our entire lives.

When these kinds of things happen, if we take a quick check, we can calm ourselves down. If we take this quick check at a time deliberately set aside for that purpose, we will find ourselves doing a lot better.

The first priority in this step is to learn self-restraint. We try to learn not to write or say things that will hurt, confuse or inflame our relationships. We also try not to quietly sulk or pout. These are traps of bitterness, pride and revenge that we need to step back and think about each day as we live our lives and exercise self-restraint again and again until it just becomes second nature to us.

One of the lessons most important in my own personal recovery is that problems are not the only things that have called for self-restraint. Success also has been as intoxicating a drink as I have ever had. Sometimes when temporary good fortune comes our way, we dream of even greater success over our world and the people in it. We are blinded, and we play what Alcoholics Anonymous calls "The Big Cheese," and people end up being alienated from our lives because they are nauseated or hurt by our actions.

One of the great insurance policies against this has been to remember that I am only alive and sober today by the grace of God. Anything good that has happened to me is God's success, not mine. All I am or ever will be is a grateful recovering addict.

Lastly, it is most important to see that all people, including us, are to one degree or another as emotionally ill and wrong as we are. That's

how we learn what Jesus meant when He said, *"Love your neighbor as yourself"* (Matthew 22:39). It becomes obvious that it's silly to become bitter at people who are just like us, suffering from the pains of growth caused by spiritual evolution in this life.

This kind of a change in our thinking will take a lot of time in our lives. If you are like me you have to admit that you have only loved a few people and those that you have loved you have often been possessive or controlling of. You will also learn that in order for you to spiritually continue your growth you cannot hate anyone at all, ever, not even for a second.

When we fail in these areas, and we will, we can promptly admit it to ourselves and to the people in our lives also, if that will help them. Courtesy, kindness, justice and love, according to Alcoholics Anonymous, are the main focuses. I believe this is what Jesus Christ meant when He taught us to pray, *"Not my will but Thine be done"* (Luke 22:42). Once again, as we practice Step Ten, we can ask ourselves the simple question, *"Am I doing unto others as I would have them to do to me today?"* As we continually practice Step Ten and grow spiritually, at the end of each day when we do our inventory of the day's events, we learn that it is not only important what we have done but why we have done it.

As we look at all of the good things we have done in a day, we ask ourselves what our true motive was behind it. Sometimes the things will not seem so good.

In addition to this, as we look at the bad things that have happened, we also examine our motives and find out that we really meant to do what was right, but somehow ended up doing what was wrong. The important thing is that we recognize one of our worst enemies, which is rationalization. We do not justify conduct that is really wrong. We must never imagine that we had good motives when we didn't. We must identify and deal with the bad motives.

Learning daily to spot, admit and correct our flaws of character is the essence of Step Ten. As we search our hearts, with neither fear nor favor, we thank God for all of the blessings that we have received and sleep in good conscience. This examination of our motives is the step towards permanent serenity and sobriety that will lead the path for the rest of our wonderful lives.

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."*

Prayer and meditation are our principal means of conscious contact with God, according to Alcoholics Anonymous.

Most alcoholics and addicts I have ever known are extremely busy people. Most of them have never really seriously thought about meditation and prayer as something they absolutely had to do in their lives. There are others who don't believe in these things at all. Those of us, including myself, who were once like this, can sympathize with those who believe that. Many of us still have something deep inside, which refuses to believe in God, much less pray to Him.

However, those of us who have learned the extreme profitability of prayer would no more accept life without it than we would life without breathing air or eating food. There is a connection between examining your true motives and meditation and prayer. Either one of these things can have a great benefit, but if you put the two together, you get a solid rock to stand on for the rest of your life.

I cannot tell you how many prayers of mine have been answered and often when I'm feeling blue or discouraged, I can comfort myself with no other thought than the fact that I know for sure that my higher power, who is Jesus Christ, has answered my prayers. I can point to specific times and dates when this has happened, and it is comforting to know that no matter what, His presence is with me. This presence is greater than any drug or alcohol experience could ever possibly be. In fact, they're not worthy to be compared.

The history of the people who will testify to the same experience in meditation and prayer that I just did, across the many centuries, is of course vast. All of the world's libraries and places of worship are proof of this. For those who come into the Twelve Step program who already have some form of prayer and meditation, they should be devoted as never before. But, for those who don't even know how to begin or don't have one, we should immediately begin to pray. One of the great prayers that I have learned to pray is as follows, ***"Lord, make me a channel of your peace, that where there is hatred, I may bring love, that where there is wrong, I may bring a spirit of forgiveness, that where there is discord, I may bring harmony, that where there is error, I may bring truth, that where there is doubt, I may bring faith, that where there is despair, I may bring hope, that where there are shadows, I may bring light, that where there is sadness, I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted, to understand than to be understood, to love than to be loved, for it is by self-forgetting that one finds, it is by forgiving that one is forgiven, and it is by dying that one awakens to eternal life. Amen."*** If you're just getting started, read this prayer many times, and read it slowly.

As for meditation, no one can build a building or a house without a blueprint, and this is what meditation does for us. Meditation is constructive imagination, and anything personal in your life, as far as your growth is concerned, is the same way. It helps you envision your spiritual objective before trying to move to it. It's a simple device of thinking about holy words and positive thoughts or prayers such as the one I just shared. Combined with prayer, it's the most powerful force on earth.

Prayer is the art form of making contact with God. It is the way that we make our requests known to God. We open our channels the best way we can and speak to God as our friend.

We should avoid the temptation to ask God to solve problems a specific way that we think He should. Again, we are trying to control things. When we make specific requests we should add to them, *"If it is your will, Lord."* My prayer each day to God is that He will give me the wisdom to know His will and the power to do it.

Sometimes, as we meet a situation where a decision has to be made or confusion is apparent, we can stop and pray, *"Lord, not my will but yours be done."* It is at this time that the things we have meditated on will come to the forefront of our minds. That's the purpose of meditation and prayer together. We will know instinctively what to do, because we have prepared ourselves spiritually for these situations.

One of the important things about prayer and meditation is that through it we can learn never to think about God's will for other people or that we know what it is. Even though sometimes we have the best of intentions, it is impossible that you could know God's will for another person. What we ought to pray is that God's will, whatever it is, be done for others as well as ourselves.

I cannot stress this next point enough: God has answered my prayers. Again and again and again, He has heard my cry and helped me. Almost any person experienced in the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous will tell you how his life was miraculously turned around for the good the more that person tried to improve their conscious contact with God. No matter what kinds of suffering you go through, there is always a sense that, as one wise old man once said, *"God moves in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform."* This should be good news for you, especially if you don't believe in God or prayer. Sometimes it is very difficult to pray. There are other times when we are feeling so terrible or rebellious that we don't want to pray. In those cases, start praying again as soon as you can, knowing that it's going to be good for you.

I think that the greatest reward of meditation and prayer is the feeling of connection that I get to God and all of His other spiritual creatures on the earth. Once you begin to see love and truth in this life and focus on the eternal things that really matter, it helps you to make sense of all of the suffering and pain that is all around you. Living a life of prayer and meditation is like lighting a candle in a dark room. Even though the darkness may be all around you, the candle still lights brightly a path for your feet to walk down. Without this candle, you will surely stumble and fall.

STEP TWELVE: *"HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO ALCOHOLICS, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS."*

The reason you have this book in your hand is because of the Twelve Steps. As a grateful, recovering addict and alcoholic, I have done the very best I can to pass on the spiritual principles contained in these Twelve Steps which have kept me sober and serene another day today. The joy of living is giving.

Step Twelve says that *"spiritual awakening"* came as a result of practicing these steps. Many people wonder what a spiritual awakening is.

I often tell people that we are not human beings having spiritual experiences; rather, we are spiritual beings having human experiences. Most people live their lives never becoming aware of this fact. Their spirituality is either avoided at all costs or ignored.

When a person has a spiritual awakening it means that they are now able to live life in a vital way they could not before without help. A spiritual awakening is the gift of a higher level of consciousness and existence. It is to be guided supernaturally along a path. It is to be transformed, because a power greater than oneself has become the source of strength in one's life.

New levels of truth, unselfishness, serenity and most of all, love, which you or I may have thought ourselves incapable of possessing, now become the core of our being. We receive this as a free gift and the Twelve Steps make us ready to receive it.

Let's consider what we tried to do through the Twelve Steps. In Step One, we admitted personal powerlessness. This is the bedrock of our

spiritual awakening. We cannot get rid of the addiction or the alcoholism until we first admit that we were powerless over it. In Step Two, we saw that since we could not restore ourselves to sanity, some higher power had to do it if we were to survive.

In Step Three, we turned our will and lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him. For the time being, those people who are atheists or agnostics must discover that their small group or Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole will do as a higher power.

Beginning with Step Four, we began to search out those things inside of us, which brought us to the bottom, which finally made us look up. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory. In Step Five, we decided that the inventory wasn't enough. We knew we had to repair our broken relationships so we would no longer live alone in isolation with all of our conflicts. We honestly confided these things to God and another human being.

Step Six is a very difficult one for many of us, because we don't want God to take all of our defects of character, because we love them. But, we knew that we had to have a basic change in our lives, so we decided that, even though we couldn't yet give up all of our flaws in character, we would stop being stubborn and rebellious and at least be willing to do so. We said, *"Maybe I can't do it today, but I will stop saying* ***never****."*

Then, in Step Seven, we humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings in His own time and own way. Day by day we allowed Him to do so.

In Step Eight, we continued to clean up our house, because we saw that we had to make peace with the people and situations in our world, and we became willing to make all of these things right.

In Step Nine, we made amends to all of those people, except when to do so would injure them.

By this time, it's Step Ten. We finally began to get a way to live our daily life. We started to realize that as we continued to take daily, personal inventory, and when we were wrong admitted it promptly, we could perpetuate a readiness to receive spiritual awareness in our lives.

In Step Eleven, we saw that our higher power had restored us to sanity and enabled us to live with some peace of mind and serenity. If a higher power had done these things, then that higher power was worth better knowing. We began to believe that we could have direct, personal, conscious contact with God, as we understood Him. We found that the tools of prayer and meditation opened the channel so that the river of God's power and direction could help us walk with Him.

So, doing these things brings a spiritual awakening in our lives. Step Twelve is the continual practice of passing this spiritual awakening on to other people. There is no greater satisfaction or joy than helping another person become free from addiction or alcoholism. To see someone go from darkness to light, from destruction to life, is the greatest privilege in the whole world. There are so many opportunities, even if you can't speak or talk publicly, to help others. There is a great need for people who will be willing to do the unseen and unpopular tasks. Perhaps it's only arranging chairs or tables. Perhaps it's simply picking someone up and taking him or her to a small group meeting. Perhaps it's just giving advice. It doesn't matter. As long as the motive of our heart is to pass our spiritual awakening on to someone else, we are practicing Step Twelve.

There is one part of Step Twelve that presents a question, and that is, *"We practiced these principles in all our affairs."* The question that comes to mind is, *"Can we actually carry this spirit of consciousness into everything that we do? Can we carry this spiritual awakening everywhere we go?"* The answer is absolutely, *"Yes!"* For, *"With God, all things are*

possible" (Matthew 19:26). All of us fall short in this achievement, and none of us practice these Twelve Steps continually. There is a time when we might become bored or disappointed when the initial stages of our recovery and awakening wear off. Alcoholics Anonymous refers to this stage where everything feels warm and fuzzy as, *"the pink cloud stage."* When this feeling wears off, we can become puzzled and discouraged.

Sometimes we suddenly have a very difficult challenge to face, in our family, job or finances, and we must claim the resources to meet these needs. The question is, can we face, with the help of God, as we understand Him, the pressure, pain, problems and horrors of life that we could never have faced without our addiction or alcoholism? The answer is, we can, if we are willing to receive the grace of God, which can sustain us. Our problems are the same as everyone else's. As addicts and alcoholics practicing the Twelve Steps and attempting to practice the spiritual principles in all of our affairs, we have a greater challenge. Our answer is in growing more and more spiritually. Thus, the seed to your greatest power is hidden in the heart of your worst problem. Because of your addiction or alcoholism, the only means that you can use to improve your chances for really happy and useful living is a continuous, spiritual awakening.

If we go on growing and continue our spiritual awakening and learn the very hard lessons that life sometimes wants to teach us, we make spiritual progress. As we make this progress and practice these principles in all of our affairs, we see through all of the lies that once blinded us.

We discover that the best possible source of stability is God Himself. We find that depending on Him for everything, including justice, forgiveness and love, is the only answer. It is when we come to the place that God is all we have left that we realize God is all there really is.

When we came to the end of ourselves, and no one was left to care for us, when our own selfishness had driven everyone away from us, and our isolation was complete, when we hit bottom, we looked up, and there was God. Now, as we practice the principles of these Twelve Steps in all of our affairs, we learn right relationships with people, and we don't have to be alone anymore. We find that these principles work in our homes, our families, our marriages and our businesses – if we practice them.

All of our basic instincts can be fulfilled, and fulfilled perfectly, as we learn to practice a new way. Instead of distorting our drives, we restore them to their true purpose and direction. We may now devote ourselves in service to our family, our friends, our businesses and our communities. We can lead, by our example, not by proud and selfish desires for fame and self-importance. Step Twelve is that we gladly serve, meet our obligations, accept our troubles and join in a common effort for God's love to exist in all human beings. We are no longer isolated and alone in our self-constructed jails. We are now free.

With each passing day of our lives, we learn the true meaning of Alcoholics Anonymous's simple prayer, *"God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference."*

A special note from Rick Amato:

I have written this special section, borrowing heavily from the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, published by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

TWELVE STEPS AND THEIR BIBLICAL COMPARISONS

1. We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable.

I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. (Romans 7:18)

1. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. (Philippians 2:13)

1. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. (Romans 12:1)

1. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD. (Lamentations 3:40)

1. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. (James 5:16)

1. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (James 4:10)

1. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (I John 1:9)

1. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Do to <u>others</u> as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:31)

1. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)

1. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! (I Corinthians 10:12)

1. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will <u>for us and the power to carry that out.</u>

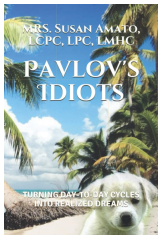
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. (Colossians 3:16)

1. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)

What's Next

If you or someone you love is suffering from addiction, read *Pavlov's Idiots: Turning Day to Day Cycles into Realized Dreams* by Susan Amato, LCPC, LPC, LMHC. It's available now on Amazon at amazon.com/dp/B08YHZX7D3.



Contact Us

Email: dreambelieveinstitute@gmail.com
Website: dreambelieveinstitute.com

Help Is Available

If you are in crisis or thinking about suicide, call or text **988**, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (supported by SAMHSA), any time, day or night. You can also chat at 988lifeline.org.

For help with addiction, call 1-855-SET-FREE.