

## STEP ELEVEN

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

Principle	Theme	Action	Defect	Result
Awareness of God/Spirituality	Learn & do God's will	Prayer and Meditation	Self-will	Faith, Freedom, Balance, Belonging

### PRAYER

*- God, keep me on the path to You. Guide my thoughts, actions, words and deeds so that I may continue to do Your will. Give me power to carry this out.*

**REWARD** - Promises below, including: Don't tire so easily because burn up less energy on self

### NOTES

- a) STEP SIMPLIFIED: *Ask God to show me how to live.*
- b) Pre-AA STEP: *I sought through lying, cheating and stealing to improve myself at the expense of others, seeking only to get drunk and stay drunk.*
- c) HOW TO WORK THE STEP: **BB page 86**, para. 2 lines 1-5 through **page 88**
- d) Step 11: "Get Closer to Higher Power"; hone God-consciousness, 6<sup>th</sup> sense
- e) The Process:
  - Review at night: nightly review of self-will vs. God's will in our life
  - On awakening:
    - Meditate: ask God to direct our lives; opens us to His direction that's always there
      - if indecision, turn it over; answer will come (from people or inspiration)
      - if beginner, start with analyzing Prayer of St. Francis
      - "individual adventure", work in progress
    - Conclude Meditations with prayer:
      - ask God rather than direct God; just do your part & leave outcome to God
      - no requests for self only (but OK if others will be helped),
      - when prayer is difficult or you rebel, resume as soon as can
  - Ask wives or friends to join; resume religious practice; select & memorize some prayers
  - Pray thru the day whenever agitated, saying "thy will be done"
- f) One of the BB miracles: Bill made prayer & meditation simple for the beginner, like him.

**REFERENCES:** - BB - Chapter 6 - Into Action p. 85 – 88

### PROMISES:

- *We can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. {BB, p. 86}*
- *Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives. {BB, p. 86}*
- *What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. {BB, p. 87}*
- *Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it. {BB, p. 87}*
- *We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy will be done." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. {BB, p. 87-88}*
- *We become much more efficient. {BB, p. 88}*
- *We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves. {BB, p. 88}*
- *It works. It really does. {BB, p. 88}*

## Step 11

*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.*

- a) *When we RETIRE at night, we review our day, we thank God and ask for forgiveness. When we awake we ask God to direct our thinking, when agitated or doubtful, we ask for the right thought or action.*  
{**BB, p. 86**}
- b) *As the body can fail its purpose for lack of nourishment, so can the soul, We all need the light of God's reality, the nourishment of His strength, and the atmosphere of His grace, To an amazing extent the facts of AA life confirm this ageless truth.*  
{**12 & 12, p. 97-98**}
- c) *There is a direct linkage among self-examination, meditation, and prayer. Taken separately, these practices can bring much relief and benefit. When they are logically related and interwoven, the result is an unshakable foundation for life.*  
{**12 & 12, p. 98**}
- d) *But first of all we want sunlight; nothing much can grow in the dark. Meditation is our Step out into the sun.*  
{**As Bill Sees It, p. 10**}
- e) *I believe it is a waste of time to compare or evaluate the different types of prayer. I have always compared prayer to clothing. We have different clothing for different occasions and different needs. You would not wear a bikini to the Arctic, nor would you wear a parka at the Equator. And so, there are times when the only kinds of prayer that we are capable of are the ones we have memorized. (Have you ever tried to meditate after major surgery; have you ever tried to pray at all with a toothache?) So, it is useless to say that reciting a litany or saying a memorized prayer is not as good as just sitting and thinking about being in the company of God. Sometimes one fulfills a need the other one can't. . . Too many people in our Fellowship kind of look down on and almost condemn the bargaining prayers they said when they were drinking. The prayers you said when you were drunk were the best you ever said; He answered them! You are in the Fellowship.*  
{**Father Joe Martin, ASHLEY**}
- f) *The other Steps can keep most of us sober and somehow functioning. But Step Eleven can keep us growing.*  
{**Language Of The Heart, p. 240**}
- g) *Anyone who can begin to use Step 11 effectively has had a spiritual awakening. He or she has "tapped that unsuspected inner resource" of strength [BB 569-570]*  
{**Steps We Took, p. 136**}
- h) *We want the ability, the faith, to say "I will go out" & face life without knowing what the results will be.*  
{**Steps We Took, p. 146**}
- i) *Prayer is talking to God -- meditation is listening to Him. Pray, go to church, read the bible, read the Big Book. Get to know the Word of God so that you will understand it when you meditate. Thy will, not mine, be done!!!!*  
{**Clarence Snyder 1944 - A.A. Sponsorship Pamphlet**}

## BB

1. Why Step 11? We have begun to develop the 6<sup>th</sup> sense, God-consciousness; here we hone that
2. The Process:
  - Review at night: Avoid remorse; Pray for forgiveness and corrective direction
  - On awakening:
    - “Meditate”: really directed thinking about the day
      - Pray for directed thinking and reprieve from self [3]
      - Consider plans for the day (“God gave us brains to use”)
      - If indecision, pray for inspiration, intuition (relax, don’t struggle, hunches will increase over time, will rely on them) {As Bill Sees It, pgs 55 & 204}
    - Conclude Meditations with prayer:
      - for guidance, freedom from self-will,
      - no requests for self only (but OK if others will be helped),
      - ask wives or friends to join in
      - Attend to religious morning devotions if applicable
      - Select & memorize some prayers
      - *Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.*
      - Pray thru the day whenever agitated, saying “thy will be done”
3. Promises, incl: Don’t tire so easily because burn up less energy on self

## 12x12

1. Common to downplay the need to spend time on this [1]
2. *almost the only scoffers at prayer are those who never tried it enough*
3. Meditation and prayer provides support needed by minds, emotions, and intuition
4. Direct link between self-exam, meditation, and prayer; self-exam necessary but not sufficient
5. **Meditation:** “constructive imagination”
  - Object:
    - *to improve our conscious contact with God & his grace/wisdom/love*
    - *helps to envision our spiritual objective before we try to move toward it*
  - Return to your religion’s practices
  - If don’t have, start with analyzing Prayer of St. Francis – fragment of meditation [2]
  - Consider words of Assisi prayer in quiet
  - follow with look at where we are now, and what might happen if we move toward this ideal
  - “Individual Adventure”, work in progress [1]
  - Result – emotional balance
6. **Prayer** – *raising of the heart & mind to God – and in this sense includes meditation*; Petition to God
  - Morning:
    - Ask to know his will and get power to do it
    - NOT meant for specific problem solutions or help for others; add “if it be thy will”
  - Renew thruout day when necessary – *Thy will, not mine, be done*
    - Pick an appealing prayer or phrase to repeat to selves at times of stress
    - If we remind selves of gist of Assisi “we are following the intent of step 11”
  - Specific Prayers:
    - For ourselves: avoid running life by specific prayers – illusion of God’s guidance = rationalization
    - For others: well intentioned, but presumptuous and conceited
  - Rewards:
    - Extra strength, wisdom, peace of mind
    - Receive guidance to extent we stop making demands
    - Unexpected good fortune
    - New lessons and resources out of grief
  - When prayer is difficult or you rebel, resume as soon as can
7. Reward of Meditation and Prayer: sense of belonging, less hostile world, feel all will be well

## The Steps We Took

1. The overall process of the Steps:

- 4-10: Remove things that block us from God (guilt & remorse; resentments; fear)
  - 3 & 11: pillars of the program; turn over our will & receive God's will, respectively
2. *Anyone who can begin to use Step 11 effectively has had a spiritual awakening. He or she has" tapped that unsuspected inner resource" of strength [from BB 569-570] (136)*
    - Practiced as a habit, the benefits will lead us from having to do it to wanting to do it
    - No set ritual way: knees, standing, showering, etc...all OK
    - You burn less energy; happiest when you adhere to God's purpose for you (& only he knows that)
  3. One of the BB miracles: Bill kept talking about prayer & meditation simple for the beginner, like him.
  4. Bill's daily exercises – some definite & valuable suggestions:
    - Night – nightly review of self-will vs. God's will in our life; just a few minutes
    - Morning – ask God to direct our lives; opens us to this direction that's always there; just a few minutes
    - Indecision – turn it over; the answer will come (from other people or from inside, IE hunches)
      - Life is short, we cannot know very much, so we need to rely on God
      - When we let go, we don't solve the problem but we free self for other things
    - Prayer – effective if you ask God rather than direct God; just do your part & leave outcome to God
      - If we let God direct, we are able to take care of most of things we used to pray for
      - Don't need to pray to get out of trouble
      - God's direction has sometimes seemed small, inadequate; sometimes we didn't see it
  5. Goal: *We want the ability, the faith, to say "I will go out" & face life without knowing what the results will be. (146)*

#### Divine Therapy and Addiction

1. Prayer: relationship with God moving from awkward to intimate with experience, eventually using intuition
2. Meditation:
  - Christian tradition – discursive, uses imagination & intellect
  - Eastern tradition – contemplation in Catholicism; resting in God's presence; deeper & beyond feeling
    - God's embrace; beyond conversation; spiritual marriage
    - Manifests in everyday life in acts of kindness to others
    - Needs to be practiced to become a skill
    - Helps to evolve unconscious presence of God to conscious
3. Appendix B: Centering Prayer
  - Sacred Word – used to enter or return to centering prayer
  - Sacred Word signifies intent to see contact with God
  - 20 minutes twice a day – really meditation, or contemplation above

#### Language of the Heart

[1]

See pg 239-242 of *Language*: when not experiencing full abundance from 12<sup>th</sup> step/etc... – chances better than even its due to misunderstanding or neglect of this step – prayer, meditation, and *God's guidance*.