

How it Works

Joe McQ. & Charlie P. · session 6 of 9

Where is God? Page 55 and finding Him within

00:00

Charlie 00:00

And I think we get here just as confused about where God is as we were ever confused about anything else. As a kid growing up, somewhere I got a picture in my mind. Now, I don't know whether I dreamed it or saw it, but in my mind, when I was thinking about God, he was a tall elderly gentleman, stood on a cloud up in the sky, long flowing white robes on, long white hair, golden halo around his head, and sun rays shooting out of that halo, and a big stick in his right hand. Now, I don't know whether I saw that or whether I dreamed it. But one of the reasons I thought God was there is because every time the minister talked about God, he always pointed up there. So I knew he had to be up there somewhere. But then, what really confused me, I noticed every time the minister wanted to talk to God, he always looked down here. He points up, hell, no wonder we get confused as kids about where God is. And I looked and I looked and I looked and I never could find God because I never did know where He was. And it took the big book Alcoholics Anonymous to tell me just exactly where I'm going to find him. Page 55.

The three wise men and the crown of life hidden within

01:20

Joe 01:20

You know, many years ago, I was working for, not working, but I was involved in a halfway house in Tulsa, and I was heavily involved, and there was this young man there who'd asked me to be his sponsor. And he said, Well, what do you think I ought to do? I said, Well, it'd be probably a good idea if you had a job, you know, to start somewhere here. And he said, Well, easy for you to say, I don't have any car, and I can't get back and forth with no money. Can't even ride the bus. And I said, Well, I'll take you around and help you find a job. And if you find a job, I'll take you back and forth till you can get a couple of paychecks, and then you can buy a car or do whatever you need to do. He said, Fine. So I'm taking him back and forth to work, and one morning he told me a story that really helped me a lot. And he said, and this is the way the story goes: he said, There were three wise men of the East, he said, and they took from man the crown of life, the thing that would make us the happiest, and took it away from him. And they

said, Well, now we took it away from him. What are we going to do with it? So, well, one of the guys said, I'll tell you what we'll do: we'll take it to the highest, highest crevice on the face of the earth and the highest, highest mountain, and we'll hide it up there, and he'll never be able to find it. The other two said, Yeah, but you know how they are. They'll hunt and they'll search and they'll eventually find it. The third of them said, I'll tell you what, we'll take it to the deepest, deepest crevice of the deepest ocean and hide it there. And they'll never think about looking for it there. He said, Yeah, but you know how they are. They'll hunt and they'll search and they'll eventually find it. The third one says, I'll tell you what we'll do, we'll hide it within himself. And he'll never think about looking for it there. Page 55, first paragraph. Said, actually, we were fooling ourselves. For deep down in every man, woman, and child is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a power greater than ourselves, a miraculous demonstrations of the power in human lives are facts as old as man himself. We finally saw that faith in some kind of a God was a part of our make-up, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but he was there. He was as much a fact as we were. We found the great reality deep down within us. In the last analysis, it is only there that he may be found. It was so with us. See, we can only clear the ground a bit. If our testimony helps sweep away prejudice, enables you to think honestly, encourages you to search diligently within yourself, then if you wish, you can join us on the broad highway. Now, with this attitude, you cannot fail. The consciousness of your belief is sure to come to you. A God of your own understanding is sure to come to you with an open mind.

Charlie's own personal God and being ready to decide

03:51

Charlie 03:51

It seems as though all human beings are born with some basic knowledge deep down inside themselves, probably lying at a subconscious level. And that basic knowledge seems to be able to tell us what we should do and what we shouldn't do. Seems to be able to tell us how we should live and how we shouldn't live. And I'm sure a lot of people would like to refer to that as just plain old common sense. I think others might want to call it innate intelligence. Some might want to call it the conscience. And others might want to call it the soul. And I don't think it really makes any difference what we call it, as long as we recognize the fact that it's there. And if you're anything like I am, as far back as I can remember, I've always been aware of that knowledge. There used to be times I would be getting ready to do something, and some voice somewhere from within me would say, Charlie, I don't believe you ought to be doing this. And I wouldn't pay a bit of attention to it, I'd go right ahead and do it, and I'd just get in one

hell of a mess. And that same little voice would say, See, I told you not to do it in the first place. Now, if that's true, and if that's God, then what that means to me today, if God dwells within me, then I've got my own personal God. I don't worry anymore about whether He's the God of the Baptist Church or not. I don't worry whether he's the God of the Catholic Church, the Hebrew religion, or anybody else's God. If he dwells within me, then he's my own personal God, and he and I can come together in very simple, very understandable terms. This is one of the greatest pieces of information that I have ever learned: I can have my own God, and He dwells within me, and my knowledge comes from him, and through him I'll be able to find that power. Now then, am I ready to make a decision? You betcha. When he was the God of justice, when he was hellfire and brimstone, I wasn't ready to make that decision. But throughout this chapter, my concept of God has changed entirely, and I'm beginning to believe he just might be a kind and a loving God. And just maybe He'll start doing some good things for me, not hellfire and brimstone. And now I'm ready to make a decision. And I don't think it's by accident that the very next chapter is entitled

Bill's problem: writing steps that offend no one

06:31

Joe 06:31

How It Works. You know, back on page 45, he said the main object of this book was to enable me to find a power greater than myself, which would solve my problem. And Bill's going to sit down here now and he's going to write some of the best spiritual information the world's ever seen, a little formula called the proposals, he called them, the 12 steps about calling synonymous. And I can just see Bill there with it with a problem that he has. You know, we've got Protestants in AA, and we've got Catholics in AA, and we've got Jewish people in AA, we've got a sprinkling of Muslims in AA, we got some Buddhists coming to NAA at that time, and how are you going to write a set of steps or proposals that's not going to offend some of these people? Quite a chore for a guy like Bill or anybody, to tell you the truth. The Oxford groups were coming from first-century Christianity, they had those four absolutes, and they were really, really strong. They wouldn't give you any slack at all. They were more interested in the letter of the law rather than the spirit of the law. Bill was interested in the spirit of these things rather than the letter of them. That's why it's a spiritual program. So Bill had one gigantic problem here: try to write these steps in such a manner that it wouldn't offend anybody, and he accomplished that through the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Charlie 07:48

These four absolutes that the Oxford group had said you were to practice absolute love, absolute purity, absolute honesty, absolute unselfishness. And these alcoholics were having a hell of a time being absolute anything except drunks, you know. And they said, Bill, we need to get rid of that kind of stuff. Also, they had made their own little steps, six of them, which came from the Oxford Group tenants. And Bill could see loopholes in these steps that the alcoholic mind was slipping through. And he knew that they were going to have to have more strength. And he knew they were going to have to be expanded. But he didn't know how far. And in trying to satisfy that bunch, in trying to satisfy the people from all different religions, and in trying to satisfy those who didn't want God in here, Bill had a terrible time with it. By that time, AA had really divided into, you might say, three factions. In Akron, where Dr. Bob was, they didn't have any problem with God. Dr. Bob was a highly religious man. He used the Bible. He insisted everybody he worked with use it too. God was no problem there. But the New York City people were an entirely different breed of cat. They really didn't want anything to do with God if they could avoid it. They would have preferred a book dealing with the mind rather than spirituality, period. There was finally a third faction that had said, well, let's talk about God, but let's not talk about Him too much. Let's come down somewhere in the middle of this thing. So, Bill's trying to satisfy them all. And he said he t triedried and and He tried and he tried to get started on chapter five. This is going to be the directions on how to recover. And he said, I simply could not do it. And he said, one night while in bed, leaning against the pillow behind his back, leaning against the headboard, pad and pencil in hand, trying to start chapter five. He said, I finally just gave up. And he said, I put down the pad and the pencil and said, I prayed and asked God for help and direction. And he said, I meditated for maybe 10 or 15 minutes. And he said, then after a while, I reached over and picked up the pad and pencil. And he said, it felt as if the pencil had a mind of its own as it raced across the pages. In less than 30 minutes, he had written How It Works. One of the greatest pieces of spiritual information the world has ever seen. After he had written it, he went back and numbered these proposals, and he found out there were 12. He didn't set out to write 12. He went back and numbered them and, there were 12 of them there. Now, almost immediately after having done that, somebody knocked on the door. One of the guys in a New York City group had one of his sponsees with him. They knew that Bill stayed up late working on the book anyhow, so they had come by to see Bill on the way home. Bill could hardly wait to show this to this old, older member, look, look, look at the new twelve steps. And the older member said, What in the hell is this? Said, Jesus said, We only had ten commandments, and now you've got twelve. And he said, six has been sufficient

for everything up till now. And he said, I don't like it at all. And the fight was on. And they fought and they fought. Lois finally came in and gave them a cup of coffee and settled them down. Then Bill presented this how it works to the other members, and that's when the crap really hit the fan. Because they began to say to Bill, this sounds too much like the Oxford Group Absolutes. You're going to have to get some of that stuff out of there. And they said, Bill, you're trying to give directions to people, and you don't have the right to tell anybody what they have to do. And build this, and build that, and build this, and build that. And they almost destroyed not only the book project, but the little fellowship in its entirety. Now, Joe's going to read how it works from the original manuscript, which most of you have probably heard before. And if he reads through there, I think you'll be able to see the differences between what Bill wrote that night, and what the fellowship forced him to change in order to have what we have today. Let's go through it for just a moment and see the differences.

How It Works from the original manuscript

11:00

Joe 12:37

Can you imagine what kind of fights you would have if you left here today, went back to your group, and you had 12 sets when you left, but now you had 24. Be a little fighting going on, wouldn't there? That's what Bill was up to. And this is how it works: the original manuscript. He said, Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our directions. Not

Charlie 12:56

our suggestions, our directions.

Joe 12:59

Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program. Usually, men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault. They seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a way of life which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those too who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest. Our stories disclose in a general way, what we used to be like, what happened, and what we're like now. Now, if you've decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any lengths to get it, then you are ready to follow directions. That's some of these, you may balk. You may think you can find an easier, softer way. We doubt if you can. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas, and the result was nil until we let

go absolutely. Remember that you are dealing with alcohol, cunning, baffling, powerful. Without help, it is too much for you. But there is one who has all power. That one is God. You must find Him now. Half measures will avail you nothing. You stand at the turning point. Throw yourself under his protection care with complete abandon. Now we think you can take it. Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as your program of recovery. One, admitted that we were powerless over alcohol and that our lives had become unmanageable. Two, came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. Three, made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care and direction of God as we understood Him.

Charlie 14:56

Over to the care and direction of God as we understood Him. Remember that. We'll refer to it later on.

The original Twelve Steps read aloud

15:01

Joe 15:01

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. Admitted to God and to ourselves and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. We're entirely willing that God remove all these defects of character. 7. Humbly, on our knees, ask Him to remove our shortcomings, holding nothing back. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make complete amends to them all. 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it. 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. 12. Having had a spiritual experience, As a result of this course of action, we tried to carry this message to others, especially alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all of our affairs. Now, you may exclaim, what an order. I can't go through with it. Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We're not saints. The point is that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we've set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection. Now, our description of the alcoholic.

Charlie 16:28

That's the doctor's opinion, the old story, some of it in chapter 2 and 3. The

Joe 16:33

chapter 2, the agnostic, chapter 4, and our personal adventures before and after, Bill's story and those in the back of the book, have been designed to sell you three pertinent ideas. Well, Bill was a salesman, you know. A, that you are alcoholic and cannot manage your own life. Step one. B, that probably no human power can relieve your alcoholism. Step 2. See that God can and will. The rest of step 2. Now, if you're not convinced on these vital issues, you ought to reread the book to this point or else just throw it away. Go ahead. So you can see that Bill didn't, his intention was not just a set of suggestions, he was going to give real directions on how to work the steps and when to work the steps, and going to give us specifically, clear-cut directions on how to do that, and he was very adamant about it. But the crap hit the fan, and they asked him and they made him through the argument to make some changes in this original how it works. And so, today's how it works that we have in the book or the and the changes that was forced upon Bill. You know, and Bill said that he would compromise with him in this area, but he asked, he made a deal with him. And I can imagine through all the argument that they had up to this point, back and forth of this program, the kind of arguments they had. They were almost ready to disband and ruin the little fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous at that time. So Bill made a little compromise. He said, from now on, I'll make these changes, but from now on, I will complete the rest of this book, or else you can do it. Well, they didn't want to complete the rest of the book. They wanted Bill continued to do that. So they agreed to let Bill continue to write the rest of the book without much interference on their part.

Directions vs. suggestions: the fight and the compromise

18:18

Charlie 18:18

You've got no more seal, Bill. When he wrote this and gave it to them, and they began to fight and argue over it. They began to tell him he's going to have to change it. Remember, Bill's stubborn and bullheaded, just like the rest of us. And he said, No, I'm not going to change this. And they said, Well, Bill, you are. Don't you remember? It's not your book, it's our book. That's the deal we made to begin with. He said, That doesn't make any difference. He said, I'm not going to change this part of the book. And they said, well, you are going to change it. And he said, what you guys don't realize is these aren't my words anyhow. He said, these are God's words. They came after prayer and meditation. And they said, We don't give a damn whose words they are. It's our book, and you're going to change it. And finally, finally, Bill realized that if he didn't compromise, they would destroy this project and maybe the whole fellowship. And there was a non-alcoholic psychiatrist around in those days, and he made some suggestions. He said, Why don't you change it from directions to suggestions? You'll still get your meeting across, and probably more people would accept it. And he said, Well, you're

saying, you, you, you. He said, don't do that. Don't tell them what they have to do. Change that to we. Say this is what we had to do. And you'll get your message across, and more people would probably accept it. And he said, Where you're saying must, must, change that to ought, ought, and it will be more acceptable. Now, Bill very, very reluctantly made those changes. Now, today we don't know if they hadn't made the changes, if they'd left it like it was originally, maybe instead of two million worldwide, we might have ten million. But also, if they hadn't made the changes, instead of 2 million worldwide, we might only have 10,000. Who knows? Nobody knows. We just know this is the history behind this particular part of the book. Bill was cunning, baffling, and powerful also. Because he said, Okay, I'm going to compromise with you, but you're going to have to compromise with me. And they said, Well, what do you want? He said, I'm tired. I've fought with you all, I'm going to fight. He said, If you want me to finish the book, then you give me the authority to do so. And if you don't want to give me the authority, then you finish the book. Well, they didn't want to give him that authority, but they didn't want to finish the book either. So they very reluctantly agreed to that. Now, what Bill knew that they didn't know is two pages later he's going to put directions and you and must right back in the book. He's had it in the book all the way up to how it works. They jerked it out, and then he puts it back, and that ruins some of the continuity of the book. But now that we see what happened, it makes more sense. The other thing that is so apparent is when he says back here about the three pertinent ideas, if I can find it again, I don't trust my memory that good anymore. Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after have been designed to sell you three pertinent ideas. He's talking about the doctor's opinion in the first four chapters and the stories in the back of the book. And if we've been sold on those three pertinent ideas, A, that we're alcoholic and cannot manage our own life, then we're through with step one. If we've come to believe that no human power can relieve our alcoholism and that God can and will, then we're through with step two. Now, the very next statement says: if you are convinced, you are now at step three. You see, the fallacy in trying to start somebody in chapter five is it starts with step three. And it's hard to start with step three unless you've got one and two behind you. People come to us today and they say, Well, how do you work steps one and two? And our answer is, you don't. They are not working steps. There's no action involved here. These are conclusions of the mind that we draw based upon information presented to us in the doctor's opinion in the first four chapters. I've always been powerless over alcohol, and my life has been unmanageable because of that. I just did not know that, nor did I know why, until I read the doctor's opinion in the first four chapters. There's always been a power greater than I am, could restore me to sanity. I just did not believe that he would, nor did I understand the insanity until I read the doctor's opinion in the first four chapters. Now, if I can say to myself today, you bet you, I'm powerless over alcohol, my life

is unmanageable, I'm through with step one. If I can say to myself today, I have come to believe there's a power greater than I am can restore me to sanity, I'm through with step two, and now then I'm ready to look at step three. Now I might make a decision.

Steps One and Two as conclusions, not action steps

22:00

Step Three: deciding versus doing; will and life defined

23:32

Joe 23:32

Being convinced, we were at step three. We haven't took step three yet, we were just there, which is that we decided to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood Him. Well, just what do we mean by that, and just what do we do? Well, that's a very good question, isn't it? What does step three mean? Well, we're going to make a decision, that's part of it, to do what? To turn our will, and what is our will? Our will is our thinking, and our life is our actions. We're going to carry, make a decision to turn our will and our life over the care and direction, is what the step used to say to God as we understand Him. Our will is our thinking, our life is our actions, and we're going to make a decision to let God direct our thinking and direct our life. In step three, haven't done that yet, but we're getting willing to do that.

Charlie 24:17

I've always heard a lot of people say one of the most misunderstood steps in the big book is step four, and I'll agree with that. But I don't think step four is any more misunderstood than step three is. I hear people today say, I've been in AA about five years. My life's still all screwed up, and I don't understand why, because I turned it over to God three years ago when I took step three. No, we don't turn anything over to God in step three. We make a decision to do something in step three. And the decision itself implies we're going to have to take some further action to carry it out. You know, one of the greatest examples I can think of is probably four, five, six years ago now, Barbara and I made a decision to come to Los Angeles, California, and visit some of our relatives. But we didn't do anything to carry that decision out. And sure enough, we didn't get to Los Angeles that year either. Second year in a row, we made a decision to come to Los Angeles and visit our relatives. Again, we didn't do anything to carry it out, and we didn't get to California either. Third year in a row, we made that decision. Only this time it was a little different. This time I took the car down and had it serviced. Barbara packed the clothes and a little food, and we got in our car and we drove from our home to Tulsa, Oklahoma. Then we drove to Oklahoma City. Then we drove to Amarilla, Texas. Then we drove to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Then we drove to Flagstaff, Arizona. Then we drove to Barstow,

California. Then we drove to San Bernardino, and then we drove to Los Angeles. And by golly, one day we ended up visiting our relatives in Los Angeles. Not because we made a decision, but because we took the action necessary to carry out that decision. Now, what is it we're deciding to do? Well, we're making a decision to turn our will over to the care and direction of God as we understood Him. What is our will? Well, our will is nothing more than our thinking apparatus. Our will is nothing more than our mind. Our will is nothing more than this thing up here that tells us what to do and what not to do. You know, a good example of the word will, tying it together with mind. And let's say that some of us are beginning to approach the end of our lives, which a few of us in here are, and we've gathered up a few material things and will become concerned with what's going to happen to them when we pass on. We'll go down and sit down with an attorney. And we'll tell that attorney what we want done with these things. I want this to be my spouses, this is to go to my daughter, I want this to be my son, and etc. Now, that attorney will take my thinking coming from my mind that day, write it down in legal terms on a piece of paper. I'll sign it, the attorney will sign it, and we'll put it in a safe. Now, a year or two or three later, sure enough, I kick the bucket. And if my family's like most of them, they're going to call the undertaker and say, Come and get him, get him ready, and let's get him out that cemetery about as soon as we can. And a couple of days later, they all gather out at the cemetery. They have me suspended over a hole in the ground. They're all standing around that hole. Somebody says a few words and gives a little prayer, and I hope it's somebody from AA that does it. And when the ceremony is over, they start dropping me down in that hole. Now, if my family's like the rest of them, they're not even going to wait until I get to the bottom of the hole. As soon as I start down, they jump in the car and they head for that attorney's office. And that attorney gets out that piece of paper and reads to them what my thinking was two or three years prior to that time when I was sitting there in that office. We know they call that piece of paper a will. It's not by accident. Will, thinking, mind are all synonymous. I'm making a decision to turn my thinking apparatus over to the care and direction of God as I understand Him. Now, what else am I deciding to turn over? Well, I'm deciding to turn my life over to the care and direction of God as I understand Him. And what is my life? Well, my life is nothing more than my actions. What I am right now, as of this moment, is the sum accumulative total of all the actions that I've taken throughout my entire lifetime has made me what I am today. All action is born in thought. Say that again, please. All action is born in thought. Sometimes we react to a situation so fast we think we do it automatically, but we don't. I can't even reach out and pick up this cup of water unless my mind tells my body to do so. So if all action is born in thought, then it stands to reason my life is going to be determined by how I think. If my thinking is okay, chances are my actions will be okay. Chances are my life's going to be okay too. If my thinking is lousy, chances are the actions that I take will be lousy, and chances are

I'm going to have a fouled-up life, too. Now, when I got to this stage of the program, I went to my sponsor and I said, I don't think I'm going to be able to take step three. And he said, why? And I said, because if I turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understand him, I have no idea of what he would have me be. And he may want me to be a missionary. And he may send me to China. And I sure as hell don't want to go there. And he just laughed. He said, Well, let's look at it this way. He said, At least it wouldn't be in the hands of an He said, let's look back through your lifetime. He said, you've always been a selfish, self-centered, self-willed human being. You've always done what you wanted to do whenever you wanted to do it, and to hell with the rest of them. Is that right? And I said, Well, you know it is. He said, The end result of that is that you almost destroyed your life. And he said, just as importantly, you've almost destroyed the lives of those around you that care for you. He said, just think: if God could direct your thinking, it might become better. And he said, if your thinking becomes better, then your actions and your life's going to become better. And he said, just as importantly, the lives of those around you that care for you would probably become better too. But he said, Charlie, left on your own resources. You're always going to do the same things you've always done. You're going to remain restless, irritable, and discontented. You're going to stay filled with shame, fear, guilt, and remorse. And he said, sooner or later, under those conditions, you're going to go back to drinking again. He said, if you don't find some way to be sober and have a little peace of mind, serenity, and happiness, you'll never have any long-lasting sobriety. And he said, You can't do that on self-will. And he got it through to me in such a manner that I was able to make the decision to turn my will, which is my thinking apparatus, and my life, which is my actions, over to the care of God as I understood Him. Absolutely amazing what has taken place since that time, Joe.

Joe 32:25

You know, remember last night in the area of the forward to the first edition, they said that precisely, specifically with clear-cut directions. And, you know, Bill wrote down those precise, specific, clear-cut directions on the original how it works, but they forced some changes on him. And when these changes come out, and what we see in the book now, those are the changes that were made. So, a little continuity of the book kind of got mixed up here. Bill's precise, specifically, and clear cut directions were altered a little bit, but later on he puts them back in the book, as we see.

Charlie 32:57

So right here By the way, as far as we know, we're the only species on earth that's ever faced with this decision. It seems as though all the other species on earth don't have self-will. That whatever they do at any given time is always done on God's time at God's direction. It seems as

though we human beings are the only species that God gave this thing called self-will to. Therefore, you see very few of the other species here on earth in trouble. I've never seen a tree hit a car

Joe 33:32

yet. And one thing wrong with self-will is everybody's got one. That's one of the things wrong with it. So the book says, and he gives us these little instructions here now. They're going to come short and sweet. We'll have to be prepared to see them. And he says, The first, see, he's going to tell us what to do first. The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis, we are almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though our motives are good. Most people try to live by self-propulsion. Each person is like an actor who wants to run the whole show, is forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery, and the rest of the players in his own way. If his arrangements would only stay put, if only people would do as he wished, the show would be great. Everybody, including himself, would be pleased. Life would be wonderful. Wouldn't be that nice if everybody would mind? They won't mind me. They just won't do it because they have self-will. My will for my wife and my children is one thing, their will and their life is another. They have a self-will, and their thoughts are different from mine. Sometimes, and most of the times are in conflict, and they just won't mind me. I know they'd be a lot better off if they would, but they won't. Now, some 12 or 13 years after Bill wrote the big book, and after many, many years' experience with some of the great teachers and minds in the world, and after many, many years with experience with us alcoholics, Bill was forced to write the 12 and 12. And he was really trying to push the traditions on the fellowship. He was hard selling the traditions to the fellowship, and they weren't buying a lot of it. But they knew the traditions, and he knew that. So he decided to write the traditions. And he thought, well, I'll put some short stories or short essays about the steps in with the traditions. And maybe if they will read the steps, they'll eventually read the traditions. So he wrote the Twelve and Twelve for us. And the 12 and 12, again, is just a short essays, short stories about the steps. And it doesn't tell you how to work the steps. It is the short stories about the steps. The only piece of literature in AA that tells you how to work the steps is a big book of Alcoholics Anonymous. But in the area of the fourth step, in the 12 and 12, there was some of the best information the world's ever seen on about self-will and what makes people tick. And it's called the basic instincts of life. And I always suggest that people that I d that I sponsor that they go to the 12 and 12, read the first three or four pages about the basic instincts of life, get a working knowledge about the words that you see in there. And then look them up in the dictionary because they're very important words. We're going to use them a little later on in the third column when we get ready to do the four-step inventory. So I needed a working knowledge of that information. And Bill, in his usual

manner, wrote some of the best information about the basic instincts of life and very, very important information.

The Twelve and Twelve and the three basic instincts of life

35:00

Charlie 36:25

I think we have to face the fact that in 1937, 38, and 39, when Bill was writing the big book. He was not a spiritual giant. He was not a great student of human nature. Bill was a night school lawyer, a New York City stock speculator. Yet he was able to write one of the most spiritual books the world has ever seen, dealing with human nature. surely, God took a hand in the writing of the big book and used Bill's hand to write the book. But by 1950 and 51 and 52, Bill knew a lot more about spirituality, a lot more about human nature, a lot more about we alcoholics than he did back in the 30s. Studied with some of the greatest minds in the world for a period of years. And I think he felt that he had some new information that he could give us that would make it easier for us to work the steps according to the Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous. Basically, that's what he says in the 12 and 12. That the big book has always been the basic text and always will be. You simply cannot work the program out of the twelve and twelve. I see lots of people try it, but they can't do it because there's no directions on how to work the steps. And I think that's why a lot of people love it. They can get in it and dance around and philosophize and they never have to do anything except talk. But there's some information in there that is absolutely invaluable. That if we can see it and understand it and accept it, it makes the working of the steps out of the big book so much simpler and so much easier. And these three basic instincts of life that Joe's talking about, he taught me in step four in the 12 and 12 more about what makes me tick and what makes me do the things I do and act the way I act. He taught me there more in two or three pages than I had learned in some 40 years of living at that time. Let's look at him for just a moment. I think it'll make it a lot easier to be able to see why we need to make our decision in three. Plus, it sets us up really with information for step four. Now, in your handout sheets, you've got a little picture in here about the middle in there somewhere. I think it's page 7 and 8 in your handout material, which says the basic instincts of life which create self. And he said, all human beings are born with three basic instincts of life. They are God-given, they're absolutely necessary for survival of the human race, therefore they are a good thing. The first thing he talked about is the social instinct. And he said, All human beings are born with a desire to be liked, to be accepted, to be respected by other people. He said, All human beings are born with a desire to come together in groups with other people. And said, if we didn't have those desires and cared nothing for each other, that the world would go into complete anarchy, dog-eat-dog situation would reign,

and eventually, under those conditions, the human race would fail to survive. Now, he used several terms under the social instinct. He uses the term companionship. And that's nothing more than wanting to belong or to be accepted. So many of us grew up on the outside of the crowd, looking in, wanting to be, and knew we could not be. He uses the term prestige. That's wanting to be recognized or to be accepted as the leader of the group. And the world needs leaders. You know, I guess somebody back in the old caveman days, had to say, John, get behind that tree with your spear, with your spear. Jack, you get over there with your club. And Mary Joe and I'll run this sucker through here, and we'll have something. Somebody got to do that. Most people will take one of two directions. Either let me be a part of or let me be the leader of. In either case, it's based upon what other people think of us: self-esteem. Self-esteem is what we think of ourselves. And that's usually high or low based upon what other people think of us or what we think other people think of us. If they seem to like us and accept us, we feel pretty good toward ourselves. If it feels like they reject us and they don't want us, then we feel pretty lousy toward ourselves. Pride. And I'm glad I got into the habit of going to the dictionary. I always thought pride was something you ought to have. All I ever wanted to be as a young boy growing up, I wanted to grow up to be a man who walked tall with pride and just a little bit sideways, like John Wayne does. Until I looked it up in the dictionary, and it says pride is an excessive and unjustified opinion of oneself. We either think too well of ourselves or too little of ourselves, and in either case, it's not the truth. Personal relationships is our relations with other human beings and the world around us. Ambitions are the plans for the future to be liked, to be accepted, and so on and so forth. All human beings have these things. Now, if I want to be liked, and accepted, and respected by the world and the people in it, the first thing I've got to do is decide: well, what do they want from me? Society teaches us those things as we grow up. It'll vary in different parts of the world. One part of the world, perhaps, is a good education. Another part of the world is to be a large landowner. Another part of the world is to have a large family, any number of things, based upon where we live in the world. And as we grow up, and they teach us these things, and we ourselves set goals for ourselves as to what we want to become in the future. And if we're going to reach the goals that we set for ourselves, we're going to have to work at it. You can't just be a bum and set on your duff and be successful, and people like you and accept you. If it's a good education, you're going to have to work at it, whatever it might be. By the same token, we're going to have to make some sacrifices. There are some things that I would really like to do as a human being that are very pleasurable and very exciting, but if you catch me at it, you're not going to like me at all. And I don't think you and I would do the work necessary to reach the goal, nor make the sacrifices necessary, unless we get a reward for doing so. And the great reward, Bill said it in his story when he said, I had arrived. God, how many of us have done it? We've set that goal and we just literally worked our tails off

for years. And the day we reach the goal, and they pat us on the back, and they say, Ah, Joe, you're a fine fellow, you're a good man. You're doing great. There's a feeling comes over us, which is one of those indescribably wonderful feelings. great feeling. Don't think wrong with it. Seems to be just a temporary feeling. No sooner do we reach the goal, we get the praise, we get the recognition, we get the prestige from it, and we look around, we say, Well, is this all there is to it? And we set another goal. and we we work work and we strive and we strive and we sacrifice and we reach the new goal and we get the praise and recognition, feels great, doesn't last long, and we set another goal. It seems to create within we human beings an insatiable desire for more and more power, more and more recognition, and we're not getting it fast enough, and they're not giving it to us the way we think they ought to. So, what do we do about it? Well, we start taking shortcuts, we start doing a little lying, a little conning, a little manipulating, a little stepping onto other people's toes and climbing on their backs. And the instant we do so, we create pain and suffering for others. They, in turn, retaliate against us and create pain and suffering for us. Plain that a life run on self-will could hardly ever be a success. Under those conditions, we'll always be in collision with people, places, and things. Second basic instinct he talked about is the security instinct. Now, I know in AA we try to live one day at a time, but I also noticed about everybody in this room has got an insurance policy. The purpose of the insurance policy is to protect ourselves in the future. Bill said all human beings are born with the desire to be secure in the future. He said, If we didn't have that desire, we wouldn't provide the food, the clothing, the shelter, the things that we need to survive, and next winter we would just simply freeze to death, or the next drought season we would starve to death. So, this desire that we have to be secure in the future is a God-given thing, and it is necessary for our survival. Now, once again, if you're going to be secure in the future, you have to decide, well, what is it that I need in order to be secure? Society usually teaches us those things as we grow up, and it varies in different parts of the world. One part of the world you only need \$4. Another part of the world you need \$4,000. Another part of the world, maybe you need \$4 million. Another part of the world you need 198 coconuts, whatever it is that they use to measure trade and barter with. Based upon what we're taught, we set goals for ourselves and we begin to work at it. Now, if you're going to be secure in the future, you can't just sit on your duff and be a bum. You're going to have to work. You're going to have to make some money. You're going to have to invest it. At the same time, you've got to sacrifice. Hell, we can't blow it all today and be secure tomorrow. And I don't think you and I would do the work necessary to reach the goal or make the sacrifices necessary if we didn't get a reward for it. Once again, the great reward is that great feeling that comes at the moment of successful completion of the goal. How many of us have done it? We set the goal for the new dress, for the new shoes, for the new suit, for the new drapes, for the new couch, for the new home, for the new car, for the new

piece of property, for the new business, and and we we work work and we strive and we strive. And the day that sucker is paid for and nobody can take it away from us, what a great, great feeling that is. Hell, back when I was a kid, hardly anybody owned their own homes. Once in a great while, somebody would buy a home and they would sacrifice everything they had to pay that sucker off. And the day they paid it off, the feeling was so great, they would call in the neighbors, and we would have a great party and celebrate it by burning the mortgage. How great that was. Only thing wrong with it, it's just a temporary feeling. No sooner got the sucker paid off, and I looked around, and his house is bigger than mine. Yeah, and he's got a Cadillac, and I'm driving a Chevrolet. And he's got a Brooks Brothers suit, and I bought mine at Kmart's. And that causes us to set another goal. And we work, and we work, and we strive, and we strive. We reach the new goal.. Feels good Doesn't last long. We set another. It seems to create an insatiable desire for more and more and more and more. And we're not getting it fast enough. They're not giving it to us like we think they should. So, what do we do? We take shortcuts. We lie. We cheat. We con, we manipulate. And the instant we do, we hurt other people. They retaliate against us, creating pain and suffering for us. Plainly the life run on self-will can hardly ever be a success. Third basic instinct he talks about is the sex instinct. He said, All human beings are born with a desire to have sex. Now, it may get turned off by bad teachings or bad happenings, but he said, All human beings are born with a desire to have sex because if we don't have sex, we can't reproduce ourselves. And if we don't reproduce ourselves, sooner or later, the human race is going to fail to survive. So, just like the other two, if you're going to reproduce yourself through the sexual act, you're going to have to work at it. Hell, you can do more work in three minutes of sex if you can last that long than you will do all day digging a ditch. Don't you older fellas remember how it used to be when we got through with it? My God, you just fall over sideways, the sweat's just pouring up you, you hardly get your breath, you feel like you've died, gone to heaven, come back two or three times. Gets excited, doesn't he? And I don't think you and I would do that kind of work if we didn't get a reward for doing so. And the great reward is that great feeling we get both physically and emotionally at the moment of successful completion of the sex act, one of the greatest rewards that a human being can experience. But also, just like the other two, it seems to be just a temporary feeling. Hell, you no sooner get through with doing it than you get to thinking about doing it again. And it's such a pleasurable and exciting thing. The next thing you know, you get to thinking about doing it in different ways. Then you get to thinking about doing it in different positions. Then you get to thinking about doing it with different people. Next thing you know, we're doing it at the wrong time in the wrong way with the wrong people, and the instant we do so, we create pain and suffering for others. They, in turn, retaliate against us, which creates pain and suffering for us. Yeah, it's plain that a life run on self-will can hardly ever be a success. The fulfillment of these

things are so pleasurable that all human beings from time to time will overdo in one or more of these areas and create pain and suffering for others. If you'll notice on that little chart, there's a circle called self. That's where self-will comes from, from these three basic instincts of life. You also notice coming out of the self-circle, there's one called wrongs, which is another word we need to look at. Somewhere we got the idea that wrongs meant a list of dirty, filthy, nasty items. But if you go to the dictionary and look it up, you'll find several definitions of it. One definition of the word wrong is incorrect judgment of other people. A little later on, we're going to find out that's exactly what a resentment is. Another definition of the word wrong is incorrect believing. A little later on, we're going to find out that's what most of our fears are. Another definition of the word wrong are the harms and the hurts that we do to other people. Now, it's easy to spot a selfish, self-centered human being, one who's running on self-will, not running on God's will. A selfish, self-centered human being has always matter than hell. Damn him. Damn her. By God, I'll show them. They're not going to treat me that way. bloody, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. The selfie, selfcentered-c human being is always scared to death. Can't depend on God. Can't depend on other people. And if we're an alcoholic reaching the end of the road, we can't depend on ourselves any longer, and we're running absolutely scared to death all the time. Selfie, self-centered human beings, in order to fulfill the basic instincts of life, are always overdoing and creating harms and hurts for others. Then we've got to be scared to death of what they're going to do when they catch us. And even if they don't catch us, if God dwells within each of us, we know the difference between right and wrong and guilt and remorse associated with those things begin to eat us up. Now, a person whose mind is filled with resentment, a person whose mind is filled with fear, a person whose mind is filled with guilt and remorse does not feel good. And eventually, searching for a way to feel better, we begin to think about the sense of ease and comfort that comes at once by taking a couple of drinks. Next thing you know, we believe we can drink and we end up drunk all over again. So at the very least, we're going to have to do something about this selfish, self-centered human being. And it seems the way the only way you can do anything about that is through God's help because God made self-will. And only God has the power to overcome that. The very least we're going to have to do something about these resentments and these fears and these guilt and remorse in order to find the peace of mind, serenity, and happiness for good long-term sobriety. You know, if every human being in the world today could fulfill these three basic instincts at the level that God intends, there would be no conflict on earth today. But all human beings have self-will. All human beings, from time to time, will overdo in one or more areas, creating conflict for others and for themselves. I never knew that. I just knew I was always in trouble. I just knew I was always madder than hell. I just knew I was always scared to death. I knew guilt and remorse was eating me up, but I didn't know where it came from. See, they gave me the

rules, but they never taught me how to play the game. AACE taught me how to play the game. And now that I know how to play the game, I don't break the rules any more, and I don't hurt other people, and I'm not scared to death, and I'm not filled with guilt and remorse. This is the greatest information I have ever seen about what makes me tick and what causes me to do the things that I do, Joe?

Page 62: selfishness as the root of our troubles

54:08

Joe 54:08

Page 62, it said, Whatever our protestations are, most of us are concerned with ourselves, our resentments, and our self-pity. And it's not that I thought too well of myself or I thought too little of myself, is that I thought of myself only. That was my problem. So it said, selfishness and self-centeredness, that we think is the root of our troubles. And we're driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, self-pity. We step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt us seemingly without provocation. But we invariably find that at some time in the past, we have made decisions based on self, which later put us in a position to be hurt. You know, alcoholism, I, self, and me. See, if you don't have a God in your life, and I didn't, there's only one thing left to live by, and that's the satisfaction of these basic instincts of life. And I tried to live my life based upon those satisfaction of those basic instincts. And I overdid in many, many of those areas. So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is the extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us, and God makes that possible. Can't heal a sick mind with a sick mind. Only God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of His getting rid of Himself without His aid. Many of us have had moral and philosophical Well, this is the how and the why of it. See, he told us how it works. Then he told us why it won't work because of selfishness and self-centeredness. And now he's going to tell us how it really works. Well, this is the how and why of it. He tells us what to do first. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work.

Charlie 56:08

Everything I read leads me to believe this is a God-directed world. Now, if it is a God-directed world, and those of us who have been self-directed, and those of us who tried to direct everything and everybody around us, we've been trying to do God's job for Him. We're not God, we've just been playing it being God. The book says we're going to have to quit doing that if we want any peace of mind, serenity, and happiness in the future. I think one of the great mistakes I see today in AA is people trying to force themselves to be better. And self-will cannot

overcome self-will. Only God can overcome self-will. So if we want any peace of mind, serenity, and happiness, it looks like we're going to have to turn to God and let Him be the director, let Him do His job, which is direction.

God as director, the keystone, and the Third Step prayer

57:05

Joe 57:05

Next direction. Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our director. Not our

Charlie 57:12

suggestor, our director. He's got his word back now. From here on, it'll be directions. He said, He is the principal, and

Joe 57:20

we are His agents. He is the father, and we are his children. He said, Most good ideas are simple. And this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we would pass to freedom. And what is that idea, this concept? That he is the principal and we are his agents. He's the father and we're his children. He's the boss. I work for him. Now, when I first got into this area of the third step, I used God like you would an errand boy. I said, God, please help me to stay sober. And by the way, while you're ready to help him get my wife back, which one? The second one. I didn't want that first one back. That first one didn't drink. She was mean and ugly. I like the one that

Charlie 58:01

drank.

Joe 58:04

Where was I, Charlie? God get me a job. Oh, yeah, God get me a job. And by the way, pick up a little extra money for me. I need some money. I used God like He would an errand boy, send him out like that. And after I got sober, I got to reading in that other book, that other big, big book. And in front of that book, there's a story about this said he worked for six days and then he rested. Now, to my knowledge, he didn't have to go back to work anymore. So it looked like it's going to be work being done around here. It's going to be me doing the work. He said, he's the principal. We're the agents. He's the father. We're the children, he's the boss, I'm the employer. Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant hearts which wished we passed the freedom.

Charlie 58:48

Now he's referring again to that wonderfully effective spiritual structure. Step 1, willingness was the foundation. Step 2, believing was the cornerstone. Now he tells us what we're building: a triumphant arch through which we're going to pass to freedom. And he said the keystone of that arch is a simple little idea that we're going to let God be the director. You know, in the old, old days when they built arches, the stones were all stacked loosely without mortar, and they began to lean together. And there was a center stone up here called the keystone. And if it was cut right, it would support the entire arch, but if it wasn't, it would slip out and the arch would collapse. What a keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we're going to pass to freedom is this simple little idea that we're going to let God be the director. Now, for most of us, that's the first time we've ever had that idea. Or if we once had it as children, we lost it somewhere. And instead of letting God be the director, we were the director, because we told God what we wanted. God, do this, God, do that, God, give me this, God, give me that. God, if you do that for me, I'll do that for you. And not only did we direct God, we directed everybody around us. Well, we're going to quit doing that. We're going to let God be the boss from this day on. Now, that is a radical idea for people like us. This is the decision that we're making.

Joe 60:18

Page 63 it says: Now, when sincerely took such a position, the one just described, all sorts of remarkable things followed. Since we had a new employer, being all-powerful, he provided what we needed if we kept close to him and performed his work well. See, he's not going to do my work well, I'm going to do his work well. Established on such a footing, we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more, we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. See, I was always a taker, and takers are losers in life. Contributors are those that win, I've noticed. And see, as we felt new power flow in, and as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, we became conscious of his presence. We began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow, or the hereafter. We were reborn. You know, they used to come over to my house on Monday night from that little church about two blocks from my house, and these guys wanted to talk to me about being reborn. And you know what I did for them? I'm drinking. Man, this is Monday night football. You know, and they want to talk to me about reborn about 8 o'clock to be knocking on. And I'd run them off. I said, You guys get out of here. It's Monday night football. And I'm going to talk to you. Get. And that's the way I did with those guys. And I didn't understand this reborn then at all. And I got to reading in that other book after I got sober. And there's a story in there. This guy's name was Nicodemus. And Nicodemus was about like me, just dumber than stump. And he asked that guy, he said, What do you mean by being reborn? Do you mean I've got to go back into my

mother's womb? See how dumb he was? And he looked at him and he shook his head and said, Well, Nicodemus, don't you know you can't do that? Didn't you go to the university? Aren't you educated? You can't do that. He said, When I'm talking to you about being reborn, I'm talking about the renewing of your mind. Old ideas cast aside, new ones accepted. Reborn in my mind. I understood that then. And now I'm ready to do business. I'm ready to do the third step. And I knew what they did on Sunday morning at that little church up there about 11 o'clock. And I couldn't wait till I got there. And they basically asked people to come down there and do the third-step prayers. What they do. So I waited till next Sunday. I got there about three or four minutes till 11. Well, I didn't get there too early. I might hear something that would help me. So I got there about three or four minutes till 11, and sure enough, they asked people to do that. And I came down there, and I did the book said we were now at step three. It said, Many of us said to our makers, we understood him. God, I offered myself to you to build with with me me and to do as you will. Take away my difficulties that victory over them may bear witness, that I would bear witness to those that I would help of your power, your love, and your way of life. May I do your will always. He said, We thought well before taking this tech, making sure that we were ready, that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to him. And I don't know what exactly happened that particular morning, but I do know this. From that Sunday morning until this moment, my life hasn't been the same? It's as if I'd been walking on the dark side of the street all those years, and all of a sudden I'm on the sunny side of the street. And I don't know what happened, except, I do know that my life has changed. Thank

Taking Step Three with another person

63:36

Charlie 63:36

God. We thought well before taking this step, making sure we were ready, that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him. I think the word utterly means completely, wholeheartedly, all the way, the entire ball of wax. I hope you don't make the mistake I did. The first time I took step three, I got on my knees, which I very seldom did in those days. And I said, God, I offer myself to thee to build with me and do with me as thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage yourself that I may better do that will. Take away my difficulties, so on, so on, so forth. And as I finished it up, I said, Now, this applies to my alcohol. Don't fool with my sex life. Stay out of my money, I can handle that too. God probably said,, water and order I can't go through with it. I said, You take the alcohol and I'll take care of the rest. Well, today I realize the fallacy, and that is, as far as I know, God doesn't even drink. He doesn't want the alcohol, he wants me. And he wants all of me. Just think: if God could direct my thinking in all areas, it might even become better in my sex life. It might even become better in my money areas. It might even become better in all

areas. And if my thinking becomes better in all areas, then surely my life will become better in all areas too. I think we need to realize this is really the decision we're making to turn our entire will and our entire life over to the care and direction of God as we understand Him. We found it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person, such as our wife, best friend, or spiritual advisor. You know, back in the beginning, there was never any question about this. The new person was expected to take this step in the company of other human beings. The first step in the Oxford Group tenets was surrender. And when the new person got ready to surrender, they would take them upstairs in Dr. Bob's house. Three or four of the older members, they would all get down on their knees. The new person would make his surrender. Then, after he was through, the older members would vote on how well he surrendered. If he didn't do it good enough, he'd probably have to do it again later on. I think there's a valid reason behind this. You know, I'm told that we alcoholics are born to live in three dimensions. We're born to live with God and ourselves and our fellow human beings. And if we are praying with other human beings for the first time, we're beginning to fit ourselves back together in all three dimensions the way God intended in the first place. We alcoholics are the funniest people in the world. You know, we'll let our family see us on our knees in the bathroom, hugging the porcelain bowl, puking our guts up morning after morning after morning. We come to AA and we try to straighten out our lives, and we're ashamed and embarrassed and let people see us pray. Isn't that something? Praying in the company of other human beings is always better. Anybody I work with that I sponsor, I require that they take step three with me for two reasons. Number one, if they take it with me, I know they have taken it. That's the only way I know for sure. But the real reason is, every time we do it together, it means more to me. And it has more strength and more power for myself. I think it's a great idea. Let's take about a 15-minute break and we're going to jump right into step four. See you in a little bit, okay?