

For it is by self-forgetting that one finds...

**STEP 11**

**Discussion points as we read:**

1. Arguments against needing prayer:
  - a. Why do bad things happen to good people & other unnecessary questions. (p97)
  - b. There is no objective proof that prayer works, but are you willing to try it, and gain subjective proof?
2. How do you meditate... (p99/100)
  - a. Today compared with when you first got sober?
  - b. How have your meditations evolved?
3. Talk about Self-Forgetting (p101)
4. Has your meditation practice ever become stagnant? How did you deal with that? (p101)
5. Where have you looked beyond the Big Book and the 12+12 to practice Step 11? (p101)
6. Share your experience on how meditation is practical (p102)
7. How do your practices of prayer and meditation intersect and interweave? (p102)
8. Do you treat prayer as though talking to Santa Claus, or have you? (p102)
9. How has your prayer life evolved over time? (p102)
10. Talk about: Prayer without giving God directions, how to turn that around. (p102)
11. Share your experiences with having the "channel choked up with anger, fear, frustration, or misunderstanding" (p103)
12. Why can it be dangerous to sobriety to bring specific requests to God in prayer? (p103)
13. How is it selfish to pray for another person to be made healthy, or other fundamentally good acts? What defects are involved? (p104)
14. Talk about: how acceptance comes as a result of unselfish prayer (p104)
15. Share your experience with periods of time:
  - a. When you felt cut off from your ability to pray
  - b. Where you prayed only by great exertion
  - c. Where you refuse to pray

**Aspiration** A hope or ambition of achieving something (p101)

**Bracing** Fresh and invigorating (p98)

**Conscious** deliberate and intentional (p96)

**Discord** Disagreement between people (p99)

**Havoc** Great confusion or disorder (p104)

**Obstinately** Stubbornly refusing to change one's opinion (p97)

**Reveled** Get great pleasure from (p100)

**Ruefully** In a way that expresses sorrow or regret (p100)

**Slight** Insult (someone) (p96)

**Strenuously** With great effort and determination (p96)

## Step 11 // Twelve and Twelve Notes

### **"11<sup>th</sup> Step Prayer" History, p99**

Generally referred to as the "Peace Prayer" or the "Prayer of St. Francis", this was not actually written by St. Francis (who died in 1226). It first appeared in 1912 in a small French spiritual magazine and was published as authored by an anonymous source. It was originally titled "A beautiful prayer to say during mass" and was possibly written by the French priest Father Esther Bouquerel, who published the magazine.

Source: [www.franciscan-archive.org](http://www.franciscan-archive.org)

### **"Conscious Contact", p101**

Conscious means "Sharing knowledge"... knowledge is what goes on in my mind. Contact means "A union or junction of bodies"....my body is my physical existence. So Step Eleven seemed to suggest that I keep my mind and my body close to my Creator. I wasn't certain what that meant, but it sounded like a good idea. While at the drawing board, a memory came back to me. Whenever my mother would babysit my young children, she would sit them on her lap and read books to them. The usually squirmy, noisy kids would become very quiet while perched in her lap. To them, there was something magical about her physical presence and the knowledge she wanted to give them through the books. Here was a very personal example of sharing body and mind. Today, if I can maintain this much closeness to my Higher Power in body and mind, maybe I can stay sober one more day.

Source: [twelvedrawings.com](http://twelvedrawings.com)

### **"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform" p105**

From a poem by William Cowper (1731–1800), whose first stanza reads, "God moves in a mysterious way / His wonders to perform; / He plants His footsteps in the sea / And rides upon the storm." Source: [wikipedia](http://wikipedia)

### **Origins of "Quiet Time"**

In suggesting prayer and meditation as the primary practices for "conscious contact" with a Higher Power, Bill was influenced by the morning "quiet time" practiced by members of the Oxford Group, a movement dedicated to rediscovering the principles of early Christianity. Bill had probably read *How to Listen to God*, an Oxford pamphlet that listed basic conditions for quiet time: "To be quiet and still. To listen. To be honest about every thought that comes. To test the thoughts to be sure that they come from God. To obey."

Bill echoed this openness to spiritual direction in his instructions for prayer and meditation on pages 85-88 of the Big Book. Admitting that it "would be easy to be vague" about these subjects, Bill tried to boil down his knowledge of spiritual practice into a short list of "definite and valuable suggestions" relating to Step Eleven. These he organized under three basic headings: what to do first thing in the morning, what to do throughout the day, and what to do at night before going to sleep.

source: [Hazelden.com](http://Hazelden.com)

## Step 11 in the Big Book: p85-88

**Page 85:** It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. "How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will.

Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. To some extent we have become God-conscious. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense. But we must go further and that means more action. Step Eleven suggests prayer and meditation. We shouldn't be shy on this matter of prayer. Better men [**Page 86:**] than we are using it constantly. It works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it. It would be easy to be vague about this matter. Yet, we believe we can make some definite and valuable suggestions.

When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.

In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a

## Step 11 // Twelve and Twelve Notes

decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while.

**Page 87:** What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. 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.

We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will, and are careful to make no request for ourselves only. We may ask for ourselves, however, if others will be helped. We are careful never to pray for our own selfish ends. Many of us have wasted a lot of time doing that and it doesn't work. You can easily see why.

If circumstances warrant, we ask our wives or friends to join us in morning meditation. If we belong to a religious denomination which requires a definite morning devotion, we attend to that also. If not members of religious bodies, we sometimes select and memorize a few set prayers which emphasize the principles we have been discussing. There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one's priest, minister, or rabbi. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.

As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer **[Page 88:]** 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. We become much more efficient. 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.

It works—it really does. We alcoholics are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.

But this is not all. There is action and more action. "Faith without works is dead." The next chapter is entirely devoted to Step Twelve. **[End Chapter 6 "Into Action"]**