

STEP ELEVEN: KNOWING AND CARRYING OUT GOD'S WILL



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 it out.

The purpose of prayer and meditation in the 12 Step program is to help us learn how to hear from God and to act according to His will. As we read and meditate on God's word as recorded in the Bible, we are purposefully communicating with God. We need to seek God daily and let Him teach us how to live life through the guidance the Bible is giving us. When we listen,

and obey God in this way, God will respond and reveal His will to us.

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. “For I know the plans I have for you”, says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. “In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me. I will be found by you”, says the Lord. “I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes”.
(Philippians 2:13, Jeremiah 29:11-14a NLT)

When we turn our will and our lives over to the care of God He begins to work immediately to help us change. The discipline of prayer and meditation is to help us hear from God so we can correctly interpret the events going on in our lives and in the world around us. God will respond personally to each of us by revealing His good and pleasing and perfect will for us. As we put into practice what God says, we learn to recognize His voice and His way of guiding us. We then learn through our relationship with God how to communicate with others.

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. (Jeremiah 33:3; James 1:5-6; NIV)

As we continue to pay attention to what God says, He will reveal more of His will for our lives. God has good plans for our day to day living and He's more than willing to make those plans known to us. He's promised us a life that is even better than we could imagine. This is the purpose of prayer and meditation -- to get to know the good things God has planned for our lives and then to shape our lives around His promises and plans. As we act on what God teaches, we become more and more conscious of how well His ways work in all our relationships.

Jesus said: ***But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! Ask me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come. If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.*** (John 15:7, Jeremiah 33:3, James 1:5-6, 1 John 5:14-15 NLT)

The prayer and meditation to which Step 11 invites us is more than just trying to figure out what God's plans are for us. Meditation and reading scripture reveal to us the nature of God and all the promises He has made. Underneath the "spiritual exercises" is God's desire to affirm the unfailing love He has for us. In our daily devotions, we are not seeking to simply learn

facts about God but rather to consciously get to know Him. As we become familiar with His character and ways, and make them the foundation for our daily living, we will become more and more aware of the presence of God in our lives.

But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. (Jude 20-21 NIV)

As we draw closer to God, we develop a consciousness of Him as a loving friend. This friend knew us before we were born, knows all about us, and cares deeply for us. The Holy Spirit, who has come to live within us, strengthens us to face the deepest, most confusing, most fearful, most painful, and most traumatized areas of our life. As we linger in God's loving presence our whole being -- body, mind and spirit-- is being renewed.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. The humble will see their God at work and be glad. Let all who seek God's help be encouraged. (John 16:13, Psalm 69:32 NLT)

Conscious contact with God is the best way to begin with, remain in, and end each day with. The foundation of our new life in recovery is the knowledge that we cannot manage life on our own and that we have come to believe that a

power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. As we surrender our will and our lives over to the power of God, we will surely find the life we seek. Step Eleven shows us how to find this life in a practical way each moment of our day. Whatever circumstances may arise, if we will consciously contact God and invite Him into the situation, He will give us the wisdom we need to thrive and not just survive in our daily environment.

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:8 NIV)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. How do I get to know what God's will is?
2. Do I prioritize prayer, meditation, and seeking God's will for my life?
3. Am I meditating and getting familiar with God's will and guidance as it is recorded in the Bible?
4. What am I doing with the knowledge, direction and guidance God has already spoken into my life?
5. How do I move from the point of knowing God's will to getting the power to carry it out?

Heavenly Father, thank you for inviting me into a loving relationship with You. I am forever grateful that you sought me and set me free from my destructive self-will and lifestyle. I choose to lay down my flawed

understanding of how life works and desire to know your good, pleasing and perfect way. I welcome the work of Your Holy Spirit in me as You reveal Your will for my life. I am grateful that you also give me the desire and power to carry it out. Help me to live humbly in Your divine purposes and to honour You in all my ways. Thank You for the consciousness of Your presence with me as I carry Your message to others. Amen