

Life With God In Recovery

STEP TWELVE: WONDERFULLY AWAKE



Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

What is the spiritual awakening we come to experience as we walk with God in recovery? What is the message that we share? What is the life we seek to practice?

When we came into recovery we had a spiritual awakening. We realized that because of the sin in our lives we were separated from God. We were powerless over our addictions and our lives had become unmanageable. Up to this point in our lives, we probably never thought

much about God or consulted Him about the plans he had for us when we were created. We lived our lives as though God did not exist. As we came to believe that God, our Higher Power, could and would restore us to sanity, we sought after Him and turned our will and our lives over to His care. He received us and we became children of God.

Under our Heavenly Father's loving guidance, we looked at our lives and relationships, became aware of character defects and asked for His help to remove them. He forgave us for our rebellious ways and strengthened us to behave in new ways. We admitted that our uncovered defects had negatively impacted our relationships and, with God's help, began the process of making amends to those we had harmed. As we've walked with God, seeking to know and do His will, we have come to realize that He is the all-knowing Creator of all things who knew us before we were born, loves us, accompanies us, and guides us as we move forward in our life in recovery.

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the

heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. (Psalm 139:1-10 NLT)

The spiritual awakening pointed to by Step 12 is not a passive, static, or historical one-time event. It is an ongoing, unfolding life experience of God's mercy and grace which is new every morning. At the end of each day we reflect on God's faithfulness as we chose to seek Him throughout that day.

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. (Lamentations 3:22-26 NLT)

Only a spiritual awakening could bring us to the place where we believe this intimate relationship with the Living God is possible for us. Only a spiritual awakening could support us as we take the "leap of faith" into this amazing intimacy with the living God. This is the serenity and security we crave. This is what gives us rest, gives us comfort, gives us peace. This is the reality that affirms deeply within us that our future will be fine, and that circumstances with God's help, are just circumstances. This is what makes life real. This is the life experience we've

run all over the place to find and now have found it in the embrace of the Living God.

The founders of AA described it this way: *We discovered the best possible source of emotional stability to be God Himself. We found that dependence upon His perfect justice, forgiveness, and love was healthy, and that it would work where nothing else would. If we really depended upon God, we couldn't very well play God to our fellows nor would we feel the urge wholly to rely on human protection and care. (Twelve Steps and Twelve page 116)*

God says to each of us; ***Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.*** (Isaiah 41:10 NKJV)

Our belief in Jesus is foundational to our ongoing recovery, not only as the one who saved us out of our wreckage, but also as the one who knows the life-giving way forward. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to help us be doers of the Word and not hearers only, or as the AA slogan says, "Don't just talk the talk but walk the walk".

Jesus said, "I am the Road, also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me. Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or

ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly. (John 14:6-7, Matthew 11:28-30 MSG)

The founders of AA spoke about this: *When a man or a woman has a spiritual awakening, the most important meaning of it is that he has now become able to do, feel, and believe that which he could not do before on his unaided strength and resources alone. He has been granted a gift which amounts to a new state of consciousness and being. He has been set on a path which tells him he is really going somewhere, that life is not a dead end, not something to be endured or mastered. In a very real sense he has been transformed, because he has laid hold of a source of strength which, in one way or another, he had hitherto denied himself.* (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pages 106-107)

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to the Most High. It is good to proclaim your unfailing love in the morning, your faithfulness in the evening, You thrill me, Lord, with all you have done for me! I sing for joy because of what you have done (Psalm 92:1-2,4 NLT)

Only union with God, through Jesus, can satisfy the deep desire in us to belong. Only God living within us can make us alive. Being filled with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit can give us clarity and confidence to move forward on the path of life that is real and filled with meaning and purpose. This is the spiritual awakening we come to realize in Step Twelve, the message we seek to

carry to others, and the principle we strive to practice in all our affairs.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What was my life like before I encountered God's love through Jesus Christ?
2. What kind of a life has God given me today as compared to my life in addiction?
3. How has practicing the Twelve Steps taught me who God is and what it means to walk with God each day?
4. How does Jesus Christ empower me to live in a new way today?
5. What enables me to continually surrender all that I am to God's will and God's way

Heavenly Father, thank you for inviting me into this loving relationship with You. You truly are an awesome God and my desire is to get to know You more intimately. You knew me even before I was born and are familiar with all my ways. Thank You for rescuing me from the darkness of my addiction and bringing me to new life in You. As I begin to share the Good News of Your grace with others, I ask that You fill me with Your love so that I can love them as You love me. Lord, please help me to practice Your principles in everything I do and say. Amen