

WEEK FIVE: CHAPTER THREE - MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM

Bill said, "Even though I've told them of the need for spirituality, they still are not going to want it. They probably have the same aversions to spirituality and religion as I had. I should explain to them a little more about the disease of alcoholism in order to convince them of the need for the vital spiritual experience."

In this chapter, "More About Alcoholism", Bill shows us why we are going to need to have a spiritual awakening if we are going to exist. In this chapter he talks about one thing and one thing only, **the insanity of alcoholism**.

READ: Page 30, paragraph 1 → page 30, paragraph 2

Many of us in A.A. have been very confused about this word 'insanity'. Others of us said, "I don't have any trouble with the word insanity because I remember all the crazy stupid things I did while drinking!" Those crazy stupid things we did while we were drinking are not caused by insanity, they are caused by alcohol. Alcohol is a sedative drug, which lowers our inhibitions and allows us to do stupid, crazy things.

Insanity deals with the inability to see the truth. It has nothing to do with being crazy. If you are a crazy person that means you lost most of your brains. Insanity is entirely different than crazy. It deals with the ability to see the truth about a subject or not see it. In the dictionary, the word sane means, "a whole mind." If you are sane, your mind is whole and you can see the truth. If you are insane, your mind is less than whole. At certain times you can't see the truth about something. It does not mean you are all gone, it just means that you are not quite all here. And when it comes to alcohol, at times we are not quite all here.

We seem to be unable to see the truth. We believe a lie about alcohol. If you believe a lie, your mind is less than whole and you have a degree of insanity. That's all we're referring to when we talk about illusion and delusion. They all mean believing a lie.

The rest of this chapter is devoted to examples, which show us the "believing of a lie" and shows us the state of the mind just prior to taking the first drink. Now remember that just prior to taking the first drink, the mind is stone cold sober. Let's look at the mind, alcohol free, just prior to the first drink.

READ: Page 30, paragraph 3 → page 33, paragraph 1

It takes some of us many times of trying it one more time to come to the realization that:

"Once an Alcoholic, Always an Alcoholic"

READ: Page 33, paragraph 2 → READ AFTER: page 37, paragraph 1

How can such lack of proportion or the ability to think straight be called anything other than plain insanity? This kind of thinking about alcohol has been a characteristic in every single one of us.

READ: Page 37, paragraph 2 → page 42, top paragraph

Can you see that in those strange mental blank spots (insanity), that willpower and self-knowledge will not keep you from taking that first drink?

READ: Page 42, paragraph 2 → page 43, bottom of page

Now Bill has convinced me in this chapter that if I don't have that vital spiritual awakening there is no way I will stay sober because my insanity will always lead me back to thinking I can take that first drink.

Now we are faced with the idea that we are going to need a vital spiritual experience. Having come from a religion that taught me hellfire and brimstone, well, this put me in a terrible spot. Thank God, Bill came from the same place. Knowing a spiritual awakening is vital to our recovery, he wrote for us another chapter, "We Agnostics."

I think "Chapter Four – We Agnostics" is the greatest piece of spiritual information I have ever read. A.A. gives me two things, 1) It gives me the concept of "God as I understand Him", and 2) Chapter Four gives me a new understanding of God. It is in Chapter Four that my God changed from hellfire and brimstone to a kind and loving God. Chapter Four lets me make that leap from what God used to be, to a God of my understanding that I can use in my life to have that vital spiritual experience.

I'm going to have to make a decision soon. I am at the "turning point". I will have to decide to continue drinking till I die or live on a spiritual basis. Based on my own knowledge I cannot make that decision. Thank God for Chapter Four!

BIG BOOK WORKSHOP HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

*****NOTE:** It is suggested that the homework be done soon after the workshop meeting and then reviewed with your sponsor before the next workshop meeting.

- 1) Read Chapter Four "We Agnostics" in *The Big Book* (1st time) – USE HIGHLIGHTER! (Just read and highlight the 1st time you read through the chapter.)
- 2) Read Chapter Four "We Agnostics" in *The Big Book* (2nd time). Answer the "Work Assignment Questions" below when you read the chapter the 2nd time.
- 3) By now you should have completed writing most of your memories about why you are powerless over alcohol and why your life is unmanageable. If you are having difficulty with these problems, discuss this with your sponsor.

WORK ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS "WE AGNOSTICS"

*Always answer in
complete sentences
and write an example !!!*

PAGE 44

1. Does a spiritual experience seem impossible? Do you feel as though you are an atheist? Are you an agnostic?
2. Have you had to face the fact that you must find a spiritual basis of life or else?

PAGE 45

1. Would a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life be sufficient to overcome your alcoholism?
2. Is lack of power your dilemma?
3. Do you believe the main object of this book is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself that will solve your problem?

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1. When God is mentioned, do you have honest doubt and prejudice?
2. Have you been able to lay aside prejudice and express a willingness to believe in a power greater than yourself?
3. Do you believe your own conception, however inadequate, is sufficient to make an approach and to effect a contact with God? (provided you take other simple steps)
4. Do you believe the realm of the spirit is broad, roomy, and all-inclusive?

WORK ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS (Continued) "WE AGNOSTICS"

*Always answer in
complete sentences
and write an example !!!*

PAGE 47

1. Do you believe this is all you need to commence spiritual growth and to effect your first conscious relationship with God (first half of the Second Step)?
2. Do you now believe or are you even willing to believe, that there is a power greater than yourself? Do you believe that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built?
3. Do you believe you cannot make use of spiritual principles unless you accept many things on faith which seem difficult to believe? Do you believe there is a process from simple belief to faith?

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1. Have you found yourself handicapped by obstinacy, sensitivity, and unreasonable prejudice, and has even casual reference to spiritual things made you bristle with antagonism? Do you believe this thinking has to be abandoned?
2. Faced with alcoholic destruction (Step One), have you become as open minded on spiritual matters as you tried to be on other questions? In this respect was alcohol a great persuader? Did it finally beat you into a state of reasonableness?

PAGE 49

1. In the past, have you chosen to believe that your human intelligence was the last word; the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end of all? Was that vain of you?

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1. Have you ever given the spiritual side of life a fair hearing?
2. Do you believe you need to gain access to and believe in a Power greater than yourself? Do you believe that this Power, in your case, can accomplish the miraculous, the humanly impossible?
3. Do you believe you will have to whole-heartedly meet a few simple requirements to have a revolutionary change in your way of living and thinking?

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1. Leaving aside the drink question, do you see the underlying reasons why you were making "heavy-going" of life (lack of Power)?

WORK ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS (Continued) "WE AGNOSTICS"

Always answer in complete sentences and write an example !!!

1. In the realm of the spirit, has your mind been fettered by superstition, tradition and all sorts of fixed ideas?

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1. Do you need to ask yourself why you should apply to your human problems (the unmanageability of your Life) the same readiness to change your point of view?
2. Did you stop doubting the power of God when you saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon God?
3. In the past, have you stuck to the idea that self-sufficiency will solve your problem?

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1. Do you believe it is more sane and logical to believe than not to believe?
2. Faced with the First Step and crushed by a self-imposed crisis that you cannot postpone or evade, do you believe you have to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing? That God either is or He isn't? What is your choice to be (second half of Step Two)?
3. Having arrived at this point, are you squarely confronted with the question of faith? Can you duck the issue? Have you already walked far over the bridge of reason toward the desired shore of faith?
4. Have you been faithful to the God of reason in one way or another? If so, have you discovered that faith has been involved all the time?

PAGE 54

1. Can you still say the whole thing is nothing; created out of nothing; meaning nothing?
2. Have you seen that reason isn't everything?

PAGE 55

1. Have you been fooling yourself? Do you believe, deep down within every man, woman and child is the fundamental idea of God?
2. Have you seen that faith in some type of God is a part of your make-up, just as much as the feeling you have for a friend?

3. Do you believe He is as much a fact as you are? Do you believe you will find the Great Reality deep down within? Do you believe in the last analysis, it is ONLY there (deep down within) that God can be found?
4. Has the testimony of these people helped to sweep away prejudice? Enabled you to think honestly? Encouraged you to search diligently within yourself? Do you believe with this attitude you cannot fail and that the consciousness of your belief is sure to come to you?

Do you believe as you draw near to God, that He will disclose Himself to you?