

WEEK #11: Chapter 5 — HOW IT WORKS (Step 4)

READ: Page 66, paragraph 3 → page 66, paragraph 3

Now we see why we had to have a written inventory. If you only had a mental inventory, you would have already lost it. So we can turn back to this list and look at it again, for it holds the key to the future. We've been looking at the past according to resentments, but the past resentments are going to hold the key for the future, if we can see what to do with them. Before I looked at my resentments to see what people had done to me. Today I'm looking at my resentments to see what those resentments had done to me. If the resentment blocks me off from God's Will and causes me to get drunk, then I can't afford to have that. It doesn't make any difference whether it's a justified or an unjustified resentment; either one of them effectively blocks me off from God's Will.

“We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us. In that state, the wrongdoing of others, fancied or real, had power to actually kill.”

When I read that I thought, "My God, how dumb can I be?" All my life I've been proud of the fact that I stand on my own two feet. "Yes sir, I run my show. Nobody tells me what to do. I make my own decisions." But when I read that statement, I suddenly realized that other people have been telling me what to do all my life through my resentment toward them. When I'm resenting them, they have control of my thinking. If they control my thinking, they effectively control my decisions and my actions and my entire life. I always thought I controlled my thinking, my decisions, my actions and my entire life. I realize today that I never have. They've always controlled me through my resentments. Then I thought, "Man, I really am sick! Some of these people have been dead and buried for years and they've been reaching out from the grave and they've had me by the ying-yang as far back as I could remember." When I saw that I said, "The hell with that! I'm not going to let those people live in my head rent-free anymore!" I made a decision in Step Three to let God direct my thinking. Now if I let other people, dead or alive, direct my thinking, then obviously God isn't. I did not know that until I took this inventory.

Resentments come from self-will. God makes self-will and only God has the POWER to overcome self-will. Self cannot overcome self. But the instant I see what those resentments are doing to me, I'm just about willing to do anything to get rid of them rather than let them get me drunk.

READ: Page 66, paragraph 4 → page 67, paragraph 1

We write our resentments down on paper and analyze them. We have these three columns there and we read them across. We can learn a lot about them. We can analyze them. We can't analyze them when they're only in our minds. Only when we get them down on paper can we analyze them. This is sort of like a little computer. You have the first column down. If the name is down, you can extract the cause. Once we get the cause, we can trace the cause and find out which part of self it affects. Then for the first time we can get a pretty good picture of the truth of the resentment. Now when we do this, we're getting rid of about 95% of these resentments simply by listing and analyzing them. When you list and analyze the resentments, about 95% of them are going to look dumb. They appear stupid on paper. So we get rid of them. There will be some, however, that we will hold onto - especially those deep-seated resentments. Bill suggests that we use prayer on those. There is no way that you can enter into a relationship with God and the communion with God in prayer about the well-being of another individual and at the same time continue to resent him. One will remove the other.

In the program we tend to focus on the Third Step and Seventh Step Prayers and hardly anyone ever mentions the Fourth Step Prayer that appears on the top of page 67. If you have resentment and you're re-playing it over and over again, then you are cutting yourself off from God's Will working in your life. The Fourth Step Prayer is the prayer you should be praying. Also there's an example Bill uses in "Freedom from Bondage" on page 551 in *The Big Book*. It's a classic example of using prayer on resentments.

READ: Page 67, paragraph 2 → page 67, paragraph 2

It's so simple you may think it won't work. But if you follow these simple instructions and do what *The Big Book* says, I guarantee you that your resentments will be removed so God can direct your thinking in that area of your life. But it will do no good to get rid of them if I don't know how to keep them from coming back because the world is full of sick people and tomorrow they're going to do something to me; I'm sure of it. And if I'm not careful, I'll resent once again. And I can't have one. If I have one resentment, then almost immediately I'll have two, three, twenty, thirty, and I'm a basket case all over again. I've got one more thing to do before I'm through with resentments. We've got to get down to the cause of this thing. We've got to get rid of the real things within ourselves that started it all.

DESCRIBE & DISCUSS FOURTH INSTRUCTION OF INVENTORY PROCESS

FOURTH STEP INVENTORY PROCESS FOURTH INSTRUCTION OF THE INVENTORY PROCESS

THE BEGINNING OF GROWTH: As noted earlier, it is a spiritual axiom that when I am disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with me. Now that you have listed and understand the resentment and how it affected you, having stopped blaming or "putting out of your mind the wrongs others have done", you can now look for your own mistakes and learn from them. Take the following action:

1. For each person, institution or principle and for each event, ask yourself, **where have I been**.....
 - **SELFISH**: Caring unduly or supremely for one's self, regarding one's own comfort in disregard to that of others
 - **SELF-SEEKING**: Act or habit of seeking primarily one's own interest or happiness
 - **INCONSIDERATE**: Not adequately considerate; ill-advised, not regarding the rights or feelings of others; thoughtless
 - **DISHONEST**: Lacking honesty, willful perversion of the truth, stealing, cheating, or defrauding, lying by omission; (even people pleasing is living a lie)
 - **FRIGHTENED**: Fear excited by sudden danger; alarm. State of habit of fearing; anxious concern about losing something I already have or not getting something that I want

2. Answer the following questions for each item in column two in the space provided or on the back of your worksheet or on a separate piece of paper. This will help in sharing with your sponsor in Step Five.
 - **What was MY PART in all this?**
 - **What did I do initially to get the ball rolling?**
 - **How could I have done things differently?**

ASSIGNMENT: Continue to read page 67, paragraph 3. If you are having problems with your Fourth Step, please be sure to call someone in the group or the leader and share so you won't get stuck or discouraged.