

WEEK #12: Chapter 5 — HOW IT WORKS (Step 4 - Fears)

The first symptoms of spiritual illness are resentments. We have taken our inventory of resentments. Many of us are holding on to resentments from the past. We are sitting around tables trying to analyze why they did *that* to us. It doesn't make any difference *why* they did it, they did it. Then we try to analyze why those resentments made us the way we are today, and it doesn't make any difference that we are the way we are. Why don't we get rid of the resentment, freeing our mind of it, releasing our mind, and letting God begin to direct our thinking?

Our Steps are to be used not to discuss all these problems, but to solve these problems. You and I can get rid of all our resentments, if we want to. If we can see in the fourth column what we need to change in ourselves, (our personality), then with God's help we can change those things. If I become less selfish, I'm not going to hurt as many people. If I'm more honest, I'm not going to be in hot water all the time. If I get a little more courage instead of fear, maybe I can quit doing some of those things I used to do. If I can consider other people, then surely my relationship with them is going to be better. If I have less conflict I'm going to have more peace of mind, serenity, and happiness, and I'm less likely to take a drink.

In the fourth column I have the exact nature of the wrong that I will be discussing with someone in Step Five. I have the defects of character that I'm going to become willing to get rid of in Step Six. I have those shortcomings that I'm going to ask God to take away in Step Seven. It doesn't matter if I call them a wrong, mistake, defect, or shortcoming; they are the things that cause my problems.

The second common manifestation of "self" is fear. Self-willed, self-centered people know of no God to depend upon and cannot depend on other people. If we are practicing alcoholics we can't depend on ourselves either, and we are riddled with fear.

READ: Page 67, paragraph 3 → page 68, paragraph 1

We're going to start looking at the second common manifestation of self, the second symptom of spiritual illness, the second thing that blocks us off from God's Will. I think we're going to find as we look at fears, some of the same things we found with resentments. First we're going to see how much fear really does dominate our thinking, and by dominating our thinking it controls our actions and controls our lives just like resentments did. I think we're going to find that a lot of our fears originate from something we ourselves have done in the past based upon our old selfish, self-centered, self-seeking character.

If fear dominates our thinking, then obviously God can't.

Fear will be just like resentments. We will not get rid of all fears because fear also serves a useful purpose in life. If we didn't have any fears, we probably couldn't exist at all. We wouldn't be able to walk across a crowded street without getting run over. If we didn't fear what others think then we probably couldn't hold this meeting. We'd probably start telling each other the truth and what we really think and the meeting might break up in a hurry under those conditions. Fear brings caution and it is useful. But when fear dominates us and causes us to do things that end up bothering other people or when fear causes us to rationalize our thinking and make excuses for not doing things we should do, then fear is really dominating our life.

If fear dominates our thinking, then obviously God doesn't.

DESCRIBE & DISCUSS INVENTORY PROCESS OF OUR FEARS

INSTRUCTION FIVE OF THE FOURTH STEP INVENTORY PROCESS

ANALYSIS OF FEAR

FEAR -- TOUCHES EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIVES

Webster's dictionary defines "fear" as the feeling of alarm or disquiet caused by the expectation of danger, pain, disaster, or the like. (Being found out, being known for what you know or think you are). It is said that the driving force in the life of most alcoholics is the self-centered fear that we will lose something we have or that we will not get something we need or want.

We use the same instructions to review our fear as we had to review our resentments except it's worded just a little bit differently, which was Bill's way of doing things. We made up a worksheet even though *The Big Book* does not show a worksheet for fear. We followed the same pattern that we had for resentments and used the same procedure to review our fears:

- **Column 1: What am I Fearful of?** List all of your fears. We fill this out the same way we did the resentments, from top to bottom. I think as we list our fears, we might be amazed at how many fears we really do have. We men like to be tough and macho and say, "Well, we don't have much fear." But we're not talking as much about physical fear as we are about the fears of the mind. I said, "I don't have much fear but I'll put them down like I'm supposed to". I began to list my fears and I was surprised to see I was filling out worksheet, after worksheet.
- **Column 2: Why Do I Have the Fear?** In column two, write a short description of each fear you have experienced. Now this is not an attempt to psychoanalyze ourselves. Some fears I'm supposed to have. I'm supposed to be afraid of the dark, because I don't have built in headlights and I can't see at night. That kind of fear brings caution. But if it prevents me from going outside at night, then it's an unreasonable fear and I probably need to do something about it. I'm supposed to be afraid of heights, I don't have wings and I can't fly. That fear brings caution. But if it keeps me from riding in an elevator, then it's going to rule and dominate my life entirely. In most fears I find that I have set something in motion to produce that fear. I have fears connected with many different things and most of them have a good root cause, and most of them stem from something I have set in motion.
- **Column 3: Which Part of Self Is Threatened?** ANALYSIS OF FEAR: We cannot have a fear unless one of our Basic Instincts of Life is threatened or involved. Refer to your BASIC INSTINCTS of LIFE HANDOUT (**workbook p.67**). Check off which part of "self" was affected. It is said that each of these fears set in motion chains of circumstances which brought about or caused us misfortunes. If you threaten my ambitions, you create fear. I think in filling out this sheet we're going to find out just how much fear drives us, how much it dominates and how it keeps us from doing the things we really should do. Many of us would like to go back to school to finish up an education and get a degree. But most of us won't do that. The reason we won't is that we're afraid to fail or afraid we can't compete or afraid of what people will think of us if we fail, or we will be embarrassed.

➤ **Column 4: What is the exact nature of my wrongs, faults, mistakes, defects, shortcomings?** Check off the box that pertains to your part in the fear, just like in the fourth column of the resentment inventory:

1) **Selfish & Self-Seeking**

2) **Dishonest**

3) **Inconsiderate**

4) **Frightened**

Fear *is* the wrong. That's what separates me from God. But what's the nature of the fear? I'll find the nature of it in practically every case; that is if I wasn't so selfish, so self-seeking, so dishonest, so frightened, or inconsiderate of other people, I wouldn't be putting myself in positions where I have to experience that fear. If I wouldn't be so greedy, I wouldn't be so afraid I'm not going to have enough money. If I wasn't dishonest, if I wouldn't steal and write bad checks and tell lies, then I wouldn't have to worry about what they are going to do with me when they catch me. If I wasn't so frightened in the first place, I wouldn't have to do those things I've been doing. If I was more considerate of other people I wouldn't be hurting them and experiencing fear.

If I don't find a way to change that old character out there in column 4, I'm going to have to live with this stuff for the rest of my life blocked off from God's Will and eventually go back to drinking. Fear does the same thing to me that resentments do, they effectively block me off from the *Sunlight of the Spirit*. You can use fear just as you can resentments to justify not doing things you should really go ahead and do. Most of my fears will disappear when we look at them and see what we have been doing. Those that don't disappear I can handle with prayer. With God's help I can change out of that fourth column and I will have less fear in the future.

STUDY AND PRAYER: When our fears have been listed and the above questions answered, the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* gives us the solution to fear in the second and third paragraphs appearing on page 68. We are also given a short prayer in which we ask ***"Him to remove our fears and direct our attention to what He would have us to be."*** This solution and prayer should be directed toward each fear.

There is no way to enter into communion with God about fear and at the same time continue to have that fear. Now this will remove fear - if we pray about that fear, ask God to remove the fear then at once we commence to outgrow that fear. We ask Him to remove all our fears and to direct our attention to what He would have us be instead. God will remove that fear - *IF WE ASK!* I think this is one of the greatest promises in this book, it says He will do so; and at once we commence to outgrow our fears.

ASSIGNMENT: Continue to read page 68, paragraph 4, to the end of Chapter 5, and be prepared to discuss any problems you may be having with your inventory so far.

Instructions for completing our "FEAR Inventory"

- 1) **Column 1:** When dealing with our fears, we put them down on paper. Complete column 1, from top to bottom. Do nothing on columns 2, 3, & 4 until column 1 is complete.
- 2) **Column 2:** I asked myself; "Why do I have this fear?" Complete column 2, from top to bottom. Do nothing on columns 3 or 4 until column 2 is complete.
- 3) **Column 3:** I ask myself: "Which part of self caused my fear?" "Was it my self-esteem, my security, my ambitions, my personal or sex relations that had been interfered with?" Complete each sub-column within column 3, going from left to right, starting with "companionship" and finishing with the "sexual ambitions". Do nothing on column 4 until column 3 is complete.
- 4) **Column 4:** Referring to our list again and putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes asking: "Where had we been selfish, self-seeking, dishonest, inconsiderate, and/or frightened?" We ask ourselves this question and complete each area of column 4.
- 5) On the far right side of your worksheet, the back of your worksheet, or on a separate sheet of paper, write down your faults as revealed by column 4; i.e. "What was MY PART in all this?", "Where did I set the ball rolling?" and/or "What should I have done differently?"
- 6) Reading from left to right; we now see:
 - **Column 1:** The Fear
 - **Column 2:** Why I have this fear
 - **Column 3:** The part of self that has caused this fear
 - **Column 4:** The exact nature of the defect within me, which allows this fear to surface and blocks me from God's Will.

LETTING GO

TO LET GO does not mean to stop caring,
it means I can't do it for someone else.

TO LET GO is not to cut myself off,
it's the realization that I can't control another.

TO LET GO is not to enable,
but to allow learning from natural consequences.

TO LET GO is to admit powerlessness,
which means the outcome is not in my hands.

TO LET GO is not to try to change or blame another,
I can only change myself.

TO LET GO is not to care for,
but to care about.

TO LET GO is not to fix,
but to be supportive.

TO LET GO is not to judge,
but to allow another to be a human being.

TO LET GO is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes,
but to allow others to affect their own destinies.

TO LET GO is not to be protective,
but to permit another to face reality.

TO LET GO is not to deny,
but to accept.

TO LET GO is not to nag, scold, or argue,
but to search out my own shortcomings and to correct them.

TO LET GO is not to adjust everything to my desires,
but to take each day as it comes.

TO LET GO is not to criticize or regulate anyone,
but to try to become what I dream I can be.

TO LET GO is not to regret the future,
but to grow and live for the future.

TO LET GO is to fear less **and live more!**

REVIEW OF FEARS

"SELF"

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3: Which Part of Self Was Affected?				COLUMN 4	Questions						
<p>THE FEAR:</p>	<p>WHY I HAVE THIS FEAR:</p>	<p>Social Instinct</p>	<p>Security Instinct</p>	<p>Personal Relationships</p>	<p>Sex Instinct</p>	<p>Hidden Sex Relations</p>	<p>Ambitions</p>	<p>Sexual</p>	<p>What is the exact nature of my wrongs, faults, mistakes, defects, shortcomings?</p>	<p>Emotional</p>	<p>Frightened</p>	<p>What was MY PART in all this? What did I do initially to get the ball rolling? How could I have done things differently?</p>	
				<p>Material</p>		<p>Acceptable Sex Relations</p>		<p>Security</p>		<p>Inconsiderate</p>			
			<p>Pride</p>	<p>Social</p>	<p>Dishonest</p>								
			<p>Self-Esteem</p>	<p>Self-Seeking & Selfish</p>									
		<p>Prestige</p>											
		<p>Companionship</p>											