

## WEEK #18: Chapter 6 — INTO ACTION (*Step Eleven*)

**READ: Page 85, paragraph 1 → READ AFTER: Page 86, paragraph 1**

If we have taken Steps Four through Nine and **continued to take the same action in Step Ten over and over again**, we should have now removed the things that block us off from God and our fellow man. Now we should be able to receive God's will and to tap that unsuspected inner resource of the Spirit. **That's what the previous Steps are about... to get us to Step Eleven.** Once we work Step Eleven, then we have it and we carry this to another person. So Step Eleven is the pinnacle. (According to the Webster's Dictionary, pinnacle is "summit"; "the highest point") **Now that we have worked these other Steps, we can tap this unsuspected inner resource of the Spirit with the simple program of prayer and meditation.**

When I got to this section of the Book, I was amazed at what Bill wrote, because he was not a spiritual giant at this point. Bill was only three years sober. He had been around people of the Oxford Group and Dr. Bob's wife, Ann, would read to him from the Bible. Now here he was faced with the task of writing something on prayer and meditation. He didn't have that experience and he was writing to a group of people who were spiritually bankrupt. I am really glad and thank God he did not have a great spiritual life, because most people, who are founded in theology and in spiritual education, talk over the heads of people who are spiritually bankrupt.

**Bill lays out a simple daily plan that anybody can adopt and apply to their lives.** Anybody that will take this plan in Step Eleven from *The Big Book* and apply it **will teach themselves a personal life of prayer and meditation on an individual basis.** Anyone who can use this outline and apply it on a daily basis, regardless of whether or not you are spiritually bankrupt, you can tap into the unsuspected inner resources of the Spirit. You will be able to see God's direction and develop this sixth sense of direction in a personal way on a daily basis.

**We see now that this thing we do at night is in Step Eleven, not in Step Ten.**

**REFER TO THE DAILY INVENTORY HANDOUT – See pages 115 - 116**

These sheets in the handout are suggested formats for a daily inventory, so that when we go to bed at night, we can review what we've been through that day.

The first sample: (p.115)

- On the left-hand side of the sheet: **Personality Characteristics of a Self-Willed person.**
- On the right-hand side of the sheet: **Personality Characteristics of a God-Willed person.**

The second sample: (p. 116) is taken from the A.A. Grapevine Volume 3 of June, 1946

- On the left-hand side of the sheet: **Liabilities – "Watch For..."**
- On the right-hand side of the sheet: **Assets – "Strive For..."**

**These character defects are nothing new.** We have talked about them throughout *The Big Book*, such as **Selfishness, Self-Seeking, Frightened, Dishonesty and Inconsiderate.** Then we went into the *Twelve and Twelve*, and made a more detailed list which really are offshoots based on those five from *The Big Book*. It only takes a couple of minutes at night to run down this list and see which side of the sheet we are on, or have been on that day. Invariably, we will find ourselves partially on one side and partially on the other side. I've never yet found myself completely on either side altogether. I vary back and forth from day to day, but, it gives me another opportunity to **stop and look and see what I need to continue to take to God.**

Then after I've done the review, I can ask God again to remove those things and give me the strength and the Power to do the opposite. It's almost impossible to do this and stay the way you are. Almost all of the real successful people I've ever met usually tell me that one of the reasons for their success is this ability to stop and inventory themselves from time to time.

Through doing this, we can very definitely continue our growth on a daily basis. I find it takes less time and energy to do this every evening than it does to wait until I get really, really sick and *then* try to dig myself out from under that mess I'm in. This daily inventory keeps me on a daily basis realizing the things I need to do in order to continue to grow.

**READ: Page 86, paragraph 2**

**When we get up in the morning, we clear the day.** I remember as a new person I had to go to a meeting at 6:00 o'clock in the morning and meet my sponsor. One morning I went down and he said: "Why don't you get your life together in the morning?" I said: "What are you talking about?" He said: "You're just like a damn goose. You just get up in the morning and squawk and crap and say, "Here I come, mean old world." And this is true. We humans, what do we do in the morning? We get up in the morning, begin a day, and we have to go take a shower probably, then you comb your hair, women have to put their faces on and men have to shave and take care of all that stuff. Then we get down to that important stuff, what we're going to wear, shoes, belt, underwear and this takes a lot of time. Maybe we eat and then we run out the door to the car and off we go for the day...right? Beat the Day!

I wonder what we have done about our lives... our mind... our mind ***IS*** our lives. I often wonder if we humans could spend as much time on our minds as we do on our clothes, what our lives would be like. Our minds run the whole show. It takes time... it takes that quiet time in the morning to get our lives... our minds together. ***THIS IS the beginning of a great day.*** *The Book* says, "Our Thought-Life will be placed on a much higher plane."

We have great minds! I've never seen a dumb alcoholic, but then I ask myself, is my life as good as my mind? NO! I have a better mind than my life, because it seems like there's something always blocking me from the real quality I could be. So to stop in the morning and have that quiet time, then I find that my thinking gets better. *When my thought-life gets better, then my thinking is cleared of wrong motives.*

Now we can see if we did that each morning... every morning... in just a short period of time, it would completely change our lives. This is a very good and definitely valuable suggestion. The thing that makes this really effective is to use both of these suggestions together each day not just a morning meditation or just a night meditation, we need to do both.

**READ: Page 86, paragraph 3 → page 87, end of paragraph**

Throughout each day we have to face indecision. We have to begin to realize that we are humans, and being humans we have character flaws. We are on the face of this earth for only a short period of time, when we think about it in the expanse of God's universe we are not that significant. During the time that we are on the face of this earth, we experience some things and we learn some things. We don't know it all and we're going to face things each day that we don't know how to handle. I think one of the greatest gifts this program has given me is the ability to say, "Hell, I don't know, I just don't know." That is a very hard thing for a self-centered person to do! Each

day when a problem comes up I turn it through the computer in my head looking for the answer, and it doesn't take it long to kick it back out and say: "I don't have an answer to or for that!" Then frustration starts. People in A.A. say, relax, take it easy and realize it isn't in your computer. Turn it over to God's computer because God knows all.

God has a covenant with me; He will allow me to struggle on the basis of self-knowledge or I can let go and plug into this Ultimate Source of Information; His master computer, which is found within each and every one of us. When I relax and take it easy and say "I don't know", then my computer is free to operate on other things that day. When I have that problem I can't seem to do anything else. But, *now* I can listen to other people and I know that God uses other people to speak to me and they may have the answers. We have this ability, know that we have come this far, and we can receive these answers from other people, and from deep down within ourselves where our God lives with His master computer.

Our book says, "What used to be a hunch..." We all have hunches, but they come when they want to, seemingly, but by practicing this definite and valuable suggestion, the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. If we practice this, it will be something we can use at all times to receive answers in our lives. Now, today, I can rely on this source of information. I can receive answers for problems in my life through the application of this very good, definite, and valuable suggestion. **This one suggestion will change your life, but, you have to practice and practice.**

**READ: Page 87, paragraph 1 → page 88, end of Chapter Six**

Page 87, paragraph 1 deals with prayer. Bill had a way of doing things differently and Step Eleven says prayer and meditation, but of course Bill wrote in the Book about meditation first and then prayer.

Here we are going to begin to work on an effective prayer life. He gives us a very good, definite and valuable suggestion. Step Eleven says, "We pray..." and there's a word in there that we say real fast – "We pray **only**"... "**ONLY** for God's will and the power to carry that out". It takes time for us to effectively develop praying just like that. That's what we need in our lives as alcoholics who have lost their way in life, through our undisciplined lives. **What we really need is God's direction in our lives and the Power to carry that out.** That's all that we really need. So we pray only for that. It's very difficult to do that. It's very difficult to fashion that type of healthy prayer life. It takes time and work.

Now we are going to talk about our personal life and a personal communication with God... God, as we understand Him, to deal with our specific lives and our specific problems. So we have to fashion a prayer to fit God as we understand Him and say our needs as we see them with God. And surely as alcoholics, who have lost direction, the only thing we need to pray for is: **"God's Direction in our lives and the Power to carry that out"**.

Anyone, who will use the valuable suggestions that Bill has laid out for us here, should be able to develop a specific prayer life to focus on our specific needs and our specific problems on an individual basis and we will see that God's Direction in our life will grow and God's Will, will become very clear.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Read the Chapter "Working with Others". This entire chapter is devoted to twelve-Step work, because "Faith without works is dead". Be ready to discuss what you will be doing to be of service to God and your fellow man in a twelve-Step manner.

**An invitation to a GREAT Eleventh Step experiment**  
**"We alcoholics are undisciplined."**  
*The Big Book, page 88*

Read pages 86 through 88 every day for 30 consecutive days

**Morning**

- In the first hour of your day, read from page 86:  
 "On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead..." to the END of p 88.
- Put a / line through "today" below.

**Evening**

- Before going to bed, read the paragraph on page 86:  
 "When we retire at night ... what corrective measures should be taken"
- Put a \ line through "today" below to make an X.

In passing on what has been so freely given to us, we PROMISE that if you will simply read this material for 30 consecutive days, your life will change. It will HAVE TO BE on a more spiritual basis.

**The "catch": If you miss a day, you got to start over! (An axiom to "EASY WON'T do it"!)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

**Feel better? Want to try doing it again?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

## **Morning Meditation**

*“God please direct my thinking today and keep my thinking clear of dishonest or self-seeking motives. Lord, please keep me divorced from self-pity and help me employ my mental faculties, that my thought-life might be placed on a higher plane; the plane of inspiration.”*

### **Now, I am ready to do the first two items:**

1. I think about the 24 hours ahead – Here I meditate about what I would like to be and I think about what God wants me to be.
2. Consider my plans for the day – Here I think about what God wants me to do and how I am to live His will. I come up with my vision for what God's will is for me today. I already have a list of amends from last night's 10th Step. I plan to start out my day with this list of amends and I ask myself, what else would God want me to do today?

In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take; here we ask God for inspiration.

### **This is the prayer I say...**

*“God please give me inspiration. Help me have an intuitive thought or a decision about this problem I face. Help me Lord, not to struggle, instead, help me to relax and take it easy.”*  
(From the thoughts on page 86)

### **Finally, Bill gives us a prayer to end our period of meditation with. He writes:**

*We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer...*

### **This is the prayer I say:**

*“God, please show me all through this day, what my next step is to be. Give me the strength, faith and courage I need to take care of the problems in my life today. I ask especially Lord, that you free me from self-will and fear.”*

### **Bill then gives us some things to watch out for while considering the previous prayer:**

We are careful to **make no request for ourselves** only. We may ask for ourselves, however, if others will be helped. We are careful **never to pray for our own selfish ends**. Many of us have wasted a lot of time doing that and **it doesn't work**.

### **Now, we are supposed to go out and live our day, doing God's will for us. What are we to do, when things start to go wrong for us? Bill writes:**

As we go through the day we pause when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day, *“Thy will be done.”*

### **In the form of a prayer, it could look like this:**

*“God, please give me an intuitive thought or decision to help me with this problem. Help me know what I should do and keep me mindful, that you are running the show. Free me from my bondage of self. Thy will be done always. Amen”*

## 11th Step Evening Review

"When We Retire at Night, We Constructively Review Our Day...  
 Were we Resentful, Selfish, Dishonest, or Afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once?  
 Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life?"

"After making our review, we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken." (Big Book P.86)

### ***Were We Operating on Self-Will or God's Will?***

<b>PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF:</b>	
<b>SELF-WILL</b>	<b>GOD'S WILL</b>
Selfish and Self-Seeking	Interest in Others
Dishonesty	Honesty
Frightened	Courage
Inconsiderate	Consideration
Pride	Humility, Seek God's Will
Greed	Giving or Sharing
Lust	What We Can Do for Others
Anger	Calmness
Envy	Gratitude
Sloth	Take Action
Gluttony	Moderation
Impatience	Patience
intolerance	Tolerance
Resentment	Forgiveness
Hate	Love, Concern for Others
Harmful Acts	Good Deeds
Self-Pity	Self-Forgetfulness
Self Justification	Humility, Seek God's Will
Self Importance	Modesty
Self Condemnation	Self-Forgiveness
Suspicion	Trust
Doubt	Faith
<b>ACTION PLAN:</b>	

## EVENING REVIEW -- DAILY INVENTORY

- "When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we selfish, dishonest or afraid?" (Last column Step 4 process)
- "Do we owe an apology?" (Step 8 list and Step 9.) We add, "Do we need to make any DIRECT AMENDS?"
- "Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once?" (Step 5 and SPONSORSHIP)
- "Were we kind and loving towards all?" ("God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one." p67)
- "What could we have done better?" (We suggest EVERYTHING! Our job is to "grow in understanding and effectiveness." p84)
- "Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time?" ("...we became less and less interested in our little plans and designs." p63)
- "Were we thinking of what we could do fo others, of what we could pack into the stream of life?" (move from "taker" to "giver".)
- "But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others."
- "After making our review, we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken."

LIABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	ASSET
Self Pity																																Self Forgetfulness
Self Justification																																Humility
Self Importance																																Modesty
Self Condemnation																																Self Valuation
Dishonesty																																Honesty
Impatience																																Patience
Hate																																LOVE
Resentment																																Forgiveness
False Pride																																Simplicity
Jealousy																																Trust
Envy																																Generosity
Laziness																																Activity
Procrastination																																Promptness
Insincerity																																Honesty, Sincerity
Negative Thinking																																Positive Thinking
Criticizing																																Look for the GOOD
Vulgar, Immoral, Trashy Thinking																																Spiritual CLEAR Thinking

Another useful tool: put a "+" or "-" on each line for each day. This is for you! Nobody is keeping score, so just go for it!