

Welcome to the BIG BOOK STEP STUDY WORKSHOP

By Howard E.

Before embarking on this journey, we thought it might be of value to pose – and answer – a few questions.

First, "**Why** work (and study) the steps?" Why not "just don't drink and go to meetings"? Well, let's see how Bill Wilson might've responded to that inquiry: "...sobriety brought about by the admission of alcoholism and by attendance at a few meetings is very good indeed, but it is bound to be a far cry from permanent sobriety and a contented, useful life. That is just where the remaining Steps of the A.A. program come in. Nothing short of continuous action upon these as a way of life can bring the much-desired result." (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pgs. 39-40). And, "Unless each A.A. member follows to the best of his ability our suggested Twelve Steps to recovery, he almost certainly signs his own death warrant. His drunkenness and dissolution...result from his personal disobedience to **spiritual principles**" (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pg. 174). That "...the steps we took...are suggested as (the) program of recovery". (The Big Book, pg. 59). And again, in the Forward to the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (pg. 15), he says, "A.A.'s Twelve Steps are a group of **principles, spiritual** in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole."

So - what then, is the point of going to meetings? In Problems Other Than Alcohol (IP #35), Bill states that "Sobriety — freedom from alcohol — through the **teaching and practice** of the Twelve Steps is the sole purpose of an A.A. group." He further amplifies that point in As Bill Sees it (pg. 105) where he adds "Our chief responsibility to the newcomer is an adequate presentation of the program."

OK, that being the case, why not work out of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, instead of The Big Book? Well, in the Forward to the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, he explains the differences between those books: "The book "Alcoholics Anonymous" became the basic **text** of the Fellowship, and it still is. This present volume proposes to broaden and deepen the understanding of the Twelve Steps as first written in the earlier work."

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Well then, why this workshop-style approach? For an answer to that, we refer to *The Little Red Book : An Orthodox Interpretation of the Twelve Steps of the Alcoholics Anonymous Program* by Edward A. Webster, first published in 1946 - a book considered to be the very first step working supplement to the actual Big Book. In the Introduction, Webster says, "*For those who are willing to accept the AA program as a means of recovery from alcoholism, we recommend a **close study** of Alcoholics Anonymous. **Study it repeatedly.** Alcoholics Anonymous has all our answers". And, in *The Author's Notes*, he further states that "*Worthwhile results have followed the inauguration of weekly classes devoted to guidance of new members in their quest for a better understanding of the Twelve Steps as a way of life for recovery from alcoholism. These classes...have created a **solidarity of understanding within our fellowship**. They have brought a **closer adherence to the Big Book, better understanding and application of its philosophy, more effective sponsorship, and much higher ratio of sobriety among our members.**"**

So, having "cleared the ground a bit," let's begin our quest for the Spiritual Awakening as the result of these steps as promised in the first part of Step 12, and outlined in *The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*.....