

(A QUICK NOTE - there are several versions of these prayers that float around. You may have been given a copy by your sponsor at sometime. Some versions claim to be "from the BIG BOOK". The problem is some are written in the Big Book/"Alcoholics Anonymous" or in the "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions", and others are only inspired by or derived from what is in these books. To avoid confusion, what is in the Big Book (BB) or Twelve & Twelve (12&12), I'll put quote marks around, the others I'll either give page numbers from which the inspiration may have come, or quote that page first.)

SERENITY PRAYER (long version)

God, grant me the Serenity
to accept the things I cannot change
Courage to change the things I can, and the
Wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.
Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it.
Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with Him forever in the next.
Amen

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PRAYERS OF THE STEPS

1ST STEP

God, Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind, Spirit of Nature or Spirit of the Universe my name is _____, And I'm a real alcoholic ... and I need your help today. (pg.. 10-2, 46, & Chp. 3 BB)

2nd STEP

God, I'm standing at the turning point right now. Give me your protection and care as I abandon myself to you and give up my old ways and my old ideas just for today. AMEN (p. 59 BB)

3rd STEP

"God, I offer myself to Thee-to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!" (p. 63 BB) God, Take my will and my life. Guide me in my recovery. Show me how to live. AMEN (the step on p. 59 BB)

4th STEP

WHEN IN DOUBT

"I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me. Never was I to pray for myself, except as my requests bore on my usefulness to others. Then only might I expect to receive. But that would be in great measure." (p.13)

WHEN I AM DISTURBED BY THE CONDUCT (SYMPTOMS) OF OTHERS

"This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done." (p. 67 BB)

God help me to show this person the same tolerance, pity and patience that I would Cheerfully grant a sick friend. This is a sick person, how can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done. (see above and p. 141 of 12&12)

WHEN I AM AFRAID

"We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be." (p. 68 BB)

God, relieve me of this fear and direct my attention to what you would have me be. AMEN (see above)

WHEN I AM AWARE OF MY OWN DEFECTS AND SEEKING GOD'S HELP TO CHANGE

"We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them. . . we ask God what we should do about each specific matter." (p. 69 BB)

God mold my ideals in this particular area of my life and help me to live up to them. What should I do in each specific matter? Guide me God and give me strength to do right. AMEN (see above)

5th STEP

God I thank you from the bottom of my heart that I know you better. Help me become aware of anything I have omitted discussing with another person. Help me to do what is necessary to walk a free man at last. AMEN (p. 75 BB)

6th STEP

God help me become willing to let go of all the things to which I still cling. Help me to be ready to let You remove all of these defects, that Your will and purpose may take their place. AMEN (p. 76 BB)

7th STEP

"I humbly offered myself to God, as I then I understood Him, to do with me as He would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction. I admitted for the first time that of myself I was nothing; that without Him I was lost. I ruthlessly faced my sins and became willing to have my new-found Friend take them away, root and branch." (p. 13)

"My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen." (p. 76 BB)

8th STEP

"We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes." (p. 76 BB)

God help me to become willing to sweep away the debris of self will and self reliant living. Thy will be done for this person as well as for me. AMEN (see above)

9th STEP

God give me the strength and direction to do the right thing no matter what the consequences may be. Help me to consider others and not harm them in any way. Help me to consult with others before I take any actions that would cause me to be sorry. Help me to not repeat such behaviors. Show me the way of Patience, Tolerance, Kindliness, and Love and help me live the spiritual life. AMEN (p. 78-80 BB)

10th STEP

God remove the Selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear that has cropped up in my life right now. Help me to discuss this with someone immediately and make amends quickly if I have harmed anyone. Help me to cease fight anything and anyone. Show me where I may be helpful to someone else. Help me react sanely; not cocky or afraid. How can I best serve You - Your will, not mine be done. AMEN (p. 84-5 BB)

"How can I best serve Thee-Thy will (not mine) be done." (p. 85 BB)

11th STEP

"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.' " (p. 87-8 BB)

God, I'm agitated and doubtful right now. Help me to stop and remember that I've made a decision to let You be my God. Give me the right thoughts and actions. God save me from fear, anger, worry, self-pity or foolish decisions that Your will not mine be done. AMEN (see above)

(Prayer of St Francis of Assisi) - "Lord, make me a channel of thy peace - that where there is hatred, I may bring love - that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness - that where there is discord, I may bring harmony - that where there is error, I may bring truth - that where there is doubt, I may bring faith - that where there is despair, I may bring hope - that where there are shadows, I may bring light - that where there is sadness, I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted - to understand, than to be understood - to love, than to be loved. For it is by self-forgetting that one finds. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen." (p. 99 12&12)

SUGGESTIONS ABOUT PRAYER AND MEDITATION FROM BB:

- (1) Make no requests in prayer for yourself only.
- (2) Never prayer for your own selfish ends.
- (3) Select and memorize a few set prayers that emphasize the principles of the Steps.
- (4) Ask a priest, minister or rabbi about helpful books and prayers that emphasize the principles of the Steps.
- (5) Be quick to see where religious people are right.
- (6) Make use of what religious people have to offer. (p. 87 BB)

NIGHT PRAYER

God forgive me where I have been resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid today. Help me to not keep anything to myself but to discuss it all openly with another person - show me where I owe an apology and help me make it. Help me to be kind and loving to all people. Use me in the mainstream of life God. Remove worry, remorse or morbid (sick) reflections that I may be of usefulness to others. AMEN (p. 86 BB)

MORNING PRAYER

God direct my thinking today so that it be divorced of self pity, dishonesty, self-will, self-seeking and fear. God inspire my thinking, decisions and intuitions. Help me to relax and take it easy. Free me from doubt and indecision. Guide me through this day and show me my next step. God give me what I need to take care of any problems. I ask all these things that I may be of maximum service to you and my fellow man in the name of the Steps I pray. AMEN (p. 86 BB)

(The following are 2 pamphlets that I have seen passed around for many years.)

AA MORNINGS

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.

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, an intuitive thought or a decision. we relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while.

What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it.

We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will, and 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. You can easily see why.

If circumstances warrant, we ask our wives or friends to join us in morning meditation. If we belong to a religious denomination which requires a definite morning devotion, we attend to that also. If not members of religious bodies, we sometimes select and memorize a few set prayers which emphasize the principles we have been discussing. There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one's priest, minister, or rabbi. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.

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." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves.

It works - it really does.

We alcoholics are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined. But this is not all. There is action and more action. "Faith without works is dead."

(from "Alcoholics Anonymous pg. 86-88)

(ANOTHER QUICK NOTE- sometime between the 10th printing in 1971 and the 29th printing in 1985, the "12 & 12" was retypeset so the page numbers are no longer the same. My copy of this pamphlet has page numbers coinciding with the 10th printing. That kinda indicates how long it has been floating around the fellowship. I include both sets of page numbers here for the sake of accuracy.)

AA NIGHTS

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? 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. (from "Alcoholics Anonymous pg. 86)

EXCERPTS FROM 12 & 12

And when we turn away from meditation and prayer, we likewise deprive our minds, our emotions, and our intuitions of vitally needed support. (p. 97 in 29th printing/ p. 100 in 10th printing) One of its first fruits is emotional balance. With it we can broaden and deepen the channel between ourselves and God as we understand Him. (p. 101-2 / 104) But its object is always the same: to improve our conscious contact with God, with His grace, wisdom, and love. (p. 101 / 104) As the day goes on, we can pause where situations must be met and decisions made, and renew the simple request: "Thy will, not mine, be done." If at these points our emotional disturbance happens to be great, we will more surely keep our balance, provided we remember, and repeat to ourselves, a particular prayer or phrase that has appealed to us in our reading or meditation. Just saying it over and over will often enable us to clear a channel choked up with anger, fear, frustration, or misunderstanding, and permit us to return to the surest help of all - our search for God's will, not our own, in the moment of stress. (p. 102-3 / 105)

In A.A. we have found that the actual good results of prayer are beyond question. They are matters of knowledge and experience. All those who have persisted have found strength not ordinarily their own. They have found wisdom beyond their usual capability. And they have increasingly found a peace of mind which can stand firm in the face of difficult circumstances . . . We discover that we do receive guidance for our lives to just about the extent that we stop making demands upon God to give it to us on order and on our terms. (p. 107 / p. 104) . . . Any experienced A.A. will tell how his affairs have taken remarkable and unexpected turns for the better as he tried to improve his conscious contact with God...new lessons for living were learned, new resources of courage were uncovered, and that finally, inescapably, the conviction came that God does "move in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." (p. 104-5 / 107)

SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE OUR CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD, PRAYING ONLY FOR HIS WILL AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT.
HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING ... WE TRIED TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

THE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS

Lord, make me a channel of thy peace,
that where there is hatred, I may bring love;
that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness;
that where there is discord, I may bring harmony;
that where there is error, I may bring truth;
that where there is doubt, I may bring faith;
that where there is despair, I may bring hope;
that where there are shadows, I may bring light;
that where there is sadness, I may bring joy.
Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort
than to be comforted;
to understand, than to be understood;
to love, than to be loved.
For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.
It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life

Christian C.