

WESTBORO BIG BOOK STUDY GROUP

All Saints Anglican Church

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.

347 Richmond Road (near Churchill)

Session07b.doc

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Bill's Story

(Tape 2 - 00:52:46.9)

Big Book p.3, par. 2, line 2 "My judgment and ideas were followed by many to the tune of paper millions. The great boom of the late twenties was seething and swelling. Drink was taking an important and exhilarating part in my life. There was loud talk in the jazz places uptown. Everyone spent in thousands and chattered in millions. Scoffers could scoff and be damned. I made a host of fair-weather friends."

J & C And here's Bill now back in New York City on top of the heap. He's making money for himself and a lot of other people. He's drinking also but drinking is not a problem right now it's a very exciting thing and Bill is really, really, really becoming a success at what he wanted to be. We also know though that **if he's alcoholic his drinking is going to get worse because it is a progressive thing.** Let's see where he goes now from the top of the heap. He said,

Big Book p.3, par. 3 "My drinking assumed more serious proportions, continuing all day and almost every night. The remonstrances of my friends terminated in a row and I became a lone wolf."

J & C How many of us have done the same thing. People began to say Bill, you're drinking too much. Bill, you're costing us money. Bill, why don't you cut back? Bill, why don't you quit? **And once again rather than even consider that Bill said, to hell with them I don't need them. He begins to operate on his own now.** I have no problem identifying with Bill Wilson.

Big Book p.3, par. 3, line 4 "There were many unhappy scenes in our sumptuous apartment. There had been no real infidelity, for loyalty to my wife, helped at times by extreme drunkenness, kept me out of those scrapes."

J & C Now I've always believed about everything Bill wrote, but I'm not sure about that. You see we have a book in A.A. called, As Bill Sees It, and in AlAnon they have a book called, As Lois Remembers. A whole lot different. They're not exactly the same either. Let's go over to page 4, 1st paragraph. Now here's old' Bill he's making lots of money, he's doing well, he's got lots of willpower, lots of hope for the future, hardworking, optimistic, a self made man. On page 4 it says,

Big Book p.4, par. 1 "Abruptly in October 1929 hell broke loose on the New York stock exchange. After one of those days of inferno, I wobbled from a hotel bar to a brokerage office. It was eight o'clock five hours after the market closed. The ticker still clattered. I was staring at an inch of the tape which bore the inscription XYZ-32. It had been 52 that morning. I was finished and so were many friends. The papers reported men jumping to death from the towers of High Finance. That disgusted me. I would not jump. I went back to the bar."

J & C Bill had a solution to that didn't he.

Big Book p.4, par. , line 11 "My friends had dropped several million since ten o'clock so what? Tomorrow was another day. As I drank, the old fierce determination to win came back."

J & C How many of us have done the same thing. Just come out of the jailhouse, the divorce court, the hospital, or wherever, low, sad, depressed? Stop off in the bar have a couple of drinks and as the alcohol courses through our veins we say, we'll show them. By God they're not going to treat us that way. And we're off and we're running again, **that old fierce determination to be somebody to show them.**

Big Book p.4, par. 2 "Next morning I telephoned a friend in Montreal. He had plenty of money left and thought I had better go to Canada."

J & C Now Bill was a drunk, he wasn't stupid; he knew where the money was so he went to Canada.

Big Book p.4, par. 2, line 3 "By the following spring we were living in our accustomed style. I felt like Napoleon returning from Elba. No St. Helena for me! But drinking caught up with me again and my generous friend had to let me go. This time we stayed broke."

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J & C Now we see our **drinking progressing** to the point where we can no longer even hold a job.

Big Book p.4, par.3 “We went to live with my wife's parents. I found a job; then lost it as the result of a brawl with a taxi driver. Mercifully, no one could guess that I was to have no real employment for five years, or hardly draw a sober breath. My wife began to work in a department store, coming home exhausted to find me drunk. I became an unwelcome hanger-on at brokerage places.”

J & C Where he used to be the fair-haired boy, where he used to make lots of money for lots of people, he goes in there now and they say, Bill, we'd rather you didn't come in here today. You're about half drunk and you don't look good and your smelling bad, you're embarrassing us in front of our customers, please move right on down the street. Certainly, **certainly we can see the progression of alcoholism. We've gone from excitement to now then we've gone to the point where it controls us completely,** no longer hold a job, **nobody wants us around anymore.** It starts to get worse,

Big Book p.5, par.1 “Liquor ceased to be a luxury; it became a necessity.

J & C Now we're drinking for an entirely different reason. **We're drinking now because we absolutely have to drink in order to live. No fun left anymore, no excitement, drinking in order to be able to live.**”

Big Book p.5, par. 1, line 2 “Bathtub” gin, two bottles a day, and often three, got to be routine. Sometimes a small deal would net a few hundred dollars, and I would pay my bills at the bars and delicatessens. This went on endlessly, and I began to waken very early in the morning shaking violently. A tumbler full of gin followed by half a dozen bottles of beer would be required if I were to eat any breakfast. Nevertheless, I still thought I could control the situation, and there were periods of sobriety which renewed my wife's hope.”

J & C Remember last night Dr. Silkworth said **we really cannot differentiate the true from the false. To us what we're doing is normal.** We see that Bill's life is going to hell in a hand basket already. Bill can't see that. He thinks that he **can still control the situation.** Let's see where he goes on control. Things were real bad in Bill's life but it says,

Big Book p.5, par. 2-3 “Gradually things got worse. The house was taken over by the mortgage holder, my mother-in-law died, my wife and father-in-law became ill. Then I got a promising business opportunity. Stocks were at the low point of 1932, and I had somehow formed a group to buy. I was to share generously in the profits. Then I went on a prodigious bender, and that chance vanished.”

J & C This is a story within itself. The people that had the money knew how good Bill was at putting these deals together. And they came to Bill and said Bill we've got a proposition for you. We've got an opportunity to not only to make money for us, but to make money for you. And if you can stay sober we'd like for you to handle this thing. And Bill said, don't you worry about that drinking, he said, I'm through with that drinking, you'll not have to worry about that. And he worked for a matter of months putting this deal together and a few days before it was to be successfully completely, one night they're all sitting around in the hotel room talking about this and somebody passes around a bottle of Applejack. This was during the days of prohibition. It came to Bill, and he said, no thank you, I'm not drinking anymore. After a while it came back to him, and the guy next to him said, Bill, you don't understand what this is. He said, this is the finest Applejack in the world, it is called Jersey Lightening, you better have a drink. Bill's mind said, hmm I've never tasted any Jersey Lightening. No more thought than that he reached out, grabbed the bottle, took a drink, triggered the allergy, couldn't sober up and blew the whole deal. Now the importance in it lies with the next statement. He said,

Big Book p.5, par. 4 “I woke up. This had to be stopped. I saw I could not take so much as one drink. I was through forever. Before then, I had written lots of sweet promises, but my wife happily observed that this time I meant business. And so I did.”

J & C For the first time Bill could differentiate the truth from the false. For the first time he could truly see what alcohol was doing to him. **And he did just like all the rest of us, he trotted out his willpower and he said, sick him will.** We're through with that drinking, we'll never drink as long as we live. Now they try to tell us we are weak willed people, don't you believe that, we are strong

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willed people. Weak willed people do not become alcoholics; first time they vomit they quit drinking. An alcoholic knows there's got to be some way to drink without puking, we damn near kill ourselves you know, we got lots of willpower. You see Bill doesn't know what we learned last night. **Anytime there's a battle going on between the willpower and the obsession of the mind, the obsession of the mind is stronger than willpower and it always wins**, that's how strong it is. Let's see what happened to him on willpower. He said,

Big Book p.5, par. 5 *"Shortly afterward I came home drunk. There had been no fight. Where had been my high resolve? I simply didn't know. It hadn't even come to mind. Someone had pushed a drink my way, and I had taken it. Was I crazy?"*

J & C You see if his willpower's not working then he begins to question his sanity. Am I crazy is that it?

Big Book p.5, par. 5, line 5 *"I began to wonder, for such an appalling lack of perspective seemed near being just that. Renewing my resolve, I tried again. Some time passed, and confidence began to be replaced by cocksureness. I could laugh at the gin mills. Now I had what it takes! One day I walked into a cafe to telephone. In no time I was beating on the bar asking myself how it happened. As the whisky rose to my head I told myself I would manage better next time, but I might as well get good and drunk then. And I did."*

J & C Anybody in here identify with Bill Wilson? He said

Big Book p.6, par. 1 *"The remorse, horror and hopelessness of the next morning are unforgettable"*

J & C Can you guys hear him from the back? Can you hear back there okay? Okay. My voice is a little low here this morning. Okay where am I. Laughlin, Nevada. I got a wonderful memory it's just short.

Big Book p.6, par. 1 *"The remorse, horror and hopelessness of the next morning are unforgettable. The courage to do battle was not there. My brain raced uncontrollably and there was a terrible sense of impending calamity. I hardly dared cross the street, lest I collapse and be run down by an early morning truck, for it was scarcely daylight. An all night place supplied me with a dozen glasses of ale. My writhing nerves were stilled at last. A morning paper told me the market had gone to hell again. Well, so had I. The market would recover, but I wouldn't. That was a hard thought. Should I kill myself? No not now. Then a mental fog settled down. Gin would fix that. So two bottles, and oblivion."*

J & C See Bill questioned, **he used his willpower and that didn't work, he begin to question his sanity and that didn't work, and then he began to contemplate suicide**, and then he was drinking for the sickest effect of all total oblivion. And that's where we find Bill at this time. He said,

Big Book p.6, par. 2 *"The mind and body are marvelous mechanisms, for mine endured this agony two more years. Sometimes I stole from my wife's slender purse when the morning terror and madness were on me. Again I swayed dizzily before an open window, or the medicine cabinet where there was poison, cursing myself for a weakling. There were flights from city to country and back, as my wife and I sought escape. Then came the night when the physical and mental torture was so hellish I feared I would burst through my window, sash and all. Somehow I managed to drag my mattress to a lower floor, lest I suddenly leap. A doctor came with a heavy sedative. Next day found me drinking both gin and sedative. This combination soon landed me on the rocks. People feared for my sanity. So did I. I could eat little or nothing when drinking, and I was forty pounds under weight."*

J & C Here we find Bill drinking for oblivion, not eating very often. I can identify with Bill. He's dying of malnutrition, and I can identify with Bill because when I was drinking those last years of my drinking occasionally I'd eat a bologna sandwich cause I knew you were supposed to eat something rather than just drink and that's what Bill was doing at this time, dying of malnutrition.

(Tape 2 - 01:03.59.0)

11 minutes