

WESTBORO BIG BOOK STUDY TAPE GROUP

All Saints Anglican Church

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.

347 Richmond Road (near Churchill)

Session 18.doc

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Step 3 - How It Works

(Tape 4 - 00:51:49.6)

Big Book p. 60, par 3 *"Being convinced, we were at Step 3"*

we haven't took Step 3 yet we were just there

Big Book p. 60, par , cont. *"which is that we decided to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood Him. Just what do we mean by that, and just what do we do?"*

Well that's a very good question now isn't it? What does Step 3 mean? Well, **we're going to make a decision**, that's part of it. To do what? To turn our will, and what is our will? Our will is our thinking, and our life is our actions. We're going to make a decision to turn our will and our life over to the care and direction, is what the Step used to say, to God, as we understand him.

Our will is our thinking
Our life is our actions

We're going to make a decision to let God direct our thinking and direct our life in Step 3. We haven't done that yet, but we're getting willing to do that.

I've always heard a lot of people say one of the most misunderstood steps in the Big Book is Step 4, and I'll agree with that. But I don't think Step 4 is any more misunderstood than Step 3 is. I hear people today say, I've been in AA about 5 years, my life's still all screwed up and I don't understand why cause I turned it over to God three years ago when I took Step 3. Now

We don't turn anything over to God in Step 3.
We make a decision to do something in Step 3,
and the decision itself implies we're going to take some further action to carry it out.

Now one of the greatest examples I can think of is probably 4,5,6 years ago now Barbara and I made a decision to come to Los Angeles, California to visit some of our relatives. But we didn't do anything to carry that decision out, and sure enough we didn't get to Los Angeles that year either. Second year in a row we made a decision to come to Los Angeles and visit our relatives. Again we didn't do anything to carry that out and we didn't get to California either. Third year in a row we made that decision. Only this time it was a little different. This time I took the car down and had it serviced. Barbara packed the clothes and a little food, and we got in our car and we drove from our home to Tulsa, Oklahoma. Then we drove to Oklahoma City. Then we drove to Amarillo, Texas. Then we drove to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Then we drove to Flagstaff, Arizona. Then we drove to Barstow, California. Then we drove to San Bernardino, and then we drove to Los Angeles. And by golly one day we ended up visiting our relatives in Los Angeles. Not because we made a decision, but because we took the action necessary to carry out that decision.

Now what is it we're **deciding** to do?

Well, we are making a decision to turn **our will** over to the care and direction of God as we understood him.

What is our will? Well, our will is nothing more than our thinking apparatus. Our will is nothing more than our mind. Our will is nothing more than this thing up here that tells us what to do, and what not to do.

A good example of the word will, tying it together with mind. Let's say that some of us are beginning to approach the end of our lives, which a few of us in here are. And we've gathered up a few material things and we've become concerned about what's going to happen to them when we pass on. We'll go down and sit down with an attorney and we'll tell that attorney what we want done with those things. I want this to be my spouse's, this to go to my daughter, I want this to be my sons, and etc. Now that attorney will take my thinking coming from my mind that day, write it down in legal terms on a piece of paper. I'll sign it, the attorney will sign it and we'll put it in a safe. Now a year or two or three later, sure enough I kick the bucket. If my family's like most of them they're going to call the undertaker and say come and get him, get him ready and let's get him out to that cemetery about as soon as we can. A

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couple of days later they all gather out at the cemetery, they have me suspended over a hole in the ground, they're all standing around that hole. Somebody says a few words and gives a little prayer. And I hope it's somebody from AA that does it. And when the ceremony's over they start dropping me down in that hole. If my families like the rest of them they're not going to wait until I get to the bottom of the hole. As soon as I start down they jump in the car and they head for that attorney's office. And that attorney gets out that piece of paper and reads to them what my thinking was two or three years prior to that time when I was sitting there in that office. We know they call that piece of paper a will. It's not by accident.

Will, thinking, mind are all synonymous.

I'm making a decision to turn my **thinking apparatus** over to the care and direction of God as I understand him. What else am I deciding to turn over? Well I'm deciding to turn my **life** over to the care and direction of God as I understand him. And what is my life? My life is nothing more than my actions. What I am right now as of this moment is a sum accumulated total of all the actions that I've taken throughout my entire lifetime has made me what I am today.

All action is born in thought

You can say that again please. All action is born in thought. Sometimes we react to a situation so fast we think that we do it automatically but we don't. I can't even reach out and pick up this cup of water unless my mind tells my body to do so. So if all action is born in thought then it stands to reason my **life is going to be determined by how I think.**

If my thinking is okay, chances are my actions will be okay, chances are my life's going to be okay too.

If my thinking is lousy, chances are my actions I take will be lousy and chances are I'm going to have a fouled up life too.

When I got to this stage of the program I went to my sponsor and I said I don't think I'm going to be able to take Step 3. And he said Why? And I said because if I turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understand him, I have no idea what he would have me be. And he may want me to be a missionary, and he may send me to China, and I sure as hell don't want to go there. And he just laughed and he said let's look at it this way, at least it wouldn't be in the hands of an idiot would it? He said let's look back through your lifetime. He said you've always been a selfish, self-centered, self-willed human being. You've always done what you wanted to do whenever you wanted to do it and to hell with the rest of them. Is that right? We'll you know it is. He said the end result of that is that you almost destroyed your life and just as importantly, you've almost destroyed the lives of those around you that care for you. He said just think,

If God could direct your thinking it might become better.

If you're thinking becomes better, then your actions and your life's going to become better.

And just as importantly, the lives of those around you that care for would probably become better too.

Left on your own resources, you're always going to do the same things you've always done.

You're going to remain restless, irritable and discontented.

You're going to stay filled with shame, fear, guilt and remorse.

Sooner or later under those conditions, you're going to go back to drinking again.

If you don't find some way to be sober and have a little piece of mind, serenity and happiness,

you'll never have any long lasting sobriety and

you can't do that on self will.

And he made it clear to me in such a manner that I was able to make the decision to turn my will, which is my thinking apparatus, and my life, which is my actions, over to the care of God as I understood him. Absolutely amazing what has taken place since that time. Joe?

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Remember last night in the area of the Foreword to the First Edition they said that “precisely, specifically, with clear-cut directions”. You know Bill wrote down those precise, specific, clear-cut directions in the original “How It Works”, but they forced some changes on him. And when these changes came out, what we see in the book now, those are the changes that we’re make so a little continuity of the book kinda got mixed up here. Bill’s precise, specific, clear-cut directions were altered a little bit but later on he puts them back in the book.

By the way, as far as we know, we’re the only species on earth that’s ever faced with this decision. It seems as though all the other species on earth don’t have self-will. Whatever they do, at any given time, is always done on God’s time at God’s direction. It seems as though we human beings are the only species that God gave this thing called self-will to. Therefore you see very few of the other species here on earth in trouble. I’ve never seen a tree hit a car yet.

The one thing wrong with self-will is everybody’s got one, that’s one of the things wrong with it.

So our book says and he gives us these little instructions now and there going to come short and sweet and we have to be prepared to see them. And he says,

Big Book, p. 62, par 3 "The first"

he’s going to tell us what to do first.

Big Book, p. 62, par 3 "The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis we are almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though our motives are good. Most people try to live by self-propulsion. Each person is like an actor who wants to run the whole show; is forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in his own way. If his arrangements would only stay put, if only people would do as he wished, the show would be great. Everybody, including himself, would be pleased. Life would be wonderful."

Wouldn’t that be nice if everybody would mind? They won’t mind me they just won’t do it, because they have self-will. My will for my wife and my children is one thing. Their will and their life is another. They have self-will and their thoughts are different from mine. Sometimes and most of the times they are in conflict. They just won’t mind me. I know they’d be a lot better off if they would, but they won’t. Now some twelve or thirteen years after Bill wrote the Big Book, and after many, many years experience with some of the great teachers and minds in the world, and after many, many years of experience with us alcoholics, Bill was forced to write the Twelve and Twelve. And he was really trying to push the Traditions on the fellowship. He was hard selling the Traditions to the fellowship and they weren’t buying a lot of it, but they needed the Traditions and he knew that. So he decided to write the Traditions and he thought well I’ll put some short stories or short essays about the Steps in with the Traditions and maybe if they will read the Steps they will eventually read the Traditions. So he wrote the Twelve and Twelve for us. The Twelve and Twelve again is just the short essays, short stories about the Steps. It doesn’t tell you how to work the Steps it is the short stories about the Steps

The only piece of literature in A.A. that tells you how to work the Steps, is the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

But in the area of the 4th Step, in the Twelve and Twelve there is some of the best information the world’s ever seen on self-will and what makes people tick. It’s called, “The Basic Instincts of Life”. And I always suggest to people that I sponsor that they go to the Twelve and Twelve, read the first three or four pages about the Basic Instincts of Life, get a working knowledge about the words that you see in there, and then look them up in the dictionary because they’re very important words, and then we’re going to use them a little later on in the third column when we get ready to do the 4th Step inventory. So I needed a working knowledge of that information, and Bill in his usual manner wrote some of the best information about the basic instincts of life. Very, very important information

(Tape 4 - 01:04.40.0)

13 minutes