

WESTBORO BIG BOOK STUDY TAPE GROUP

All Saints Anglican Church

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.

347 Richmond Road (near Churchill)

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Step 4: Chapter 5 - How It Works

(Tape 5 - 0:01:43.1)

J & C We've made our decision, we've uttered our prayers, and the book says

Big Book p. 63, par. 4, line 1 "Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision (Step 3) was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of the things in ourselves which had been blocking us (Step 4). Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions."

J & C We always like to stop here for just a moment and look at the time element between Step 3 and Step 4. We always hear people asking the question, "How long should you wait after you do Step 3 until you start on Step 4?" And we hear all kinds of answers. Sometimes they'll say 30 days, maybe 90 days, or maybe 6 months. We heard a professional in the field one time counseling people to wait a minimum of two years. And our question back to that person was, "How many people have you killed with that statement?"

We're trying to find a way to live where we not only can be sober, but we can have a little peace of mind, serenity and happiness. And everyday that we put off and procrastinate Step 4, is the day that we're still filled with resentments, a day that we're still filled with shame and fear and guilt and remorse. Another day that we don't feel good. And we really don't know how many days we can go without our mind beginning to think about taking a drink. And the next thing you know we've convinced our self that it's okay to drink, and we end up drunk all over again.

I don't know how many days I could go under those conditions, and frankly I'm not very interested in finding out. Our book tells us when we should take Step 4

Step 3 will have little permanent effect unless at once followed by this strenuous effort which is Step 4

and you know that does make sense doesn't it. Far back as I can remember, 4 has always followed immediately after three.

Now knowing that, and knowing we might get drunk if we don't get on with Step 4, why would we still tend to procrastinate?

I think one two or three reasons behind it. Number one is fear. Some of we older members tend to play King off of the Mountain with this Step. We tell the newcomer how tough it is. By God, just wait till you get to Step 4. Blah, blah, blah. We literally scare them to death. Let us be the first to say today that if we take Step 4 according to the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous there is nothing whatsoever to be afraid of. And I think we're all going to see that in just a little bit.

Knowing there's nothing to be afraid of, why would we still tend to procrastinate?

I think one of the greatest reasons is simply confusion. For years we could not see how to do Step 4 according to the Big Book. The reason we couldn't see it is the instructions are there but they are so simple that we alcoholics with our keen, intellectual, alcoholic minds looking for something more complicated, overlooked the simplicity of Step 4. So in our desperation, we read over in Step 5 something about sharing your entire life story, and we say that's what they want us to do in Step 4. Is write our life story so we can share it in Step 5. That's what I did in the beginning. My life story might not have been important to others but it must have been to me, there was 92 pages in it. I took it to another poor, suffering human being and asked him to read and he did. He said it's not very pretty is it? I said no it isn't. He said you'll never have to be that way again and he threw it in the waste paper basket. And I learned nothing from my life story to contribute to my alcoholism, certainly nothing new. Everything I wrote down I already knew it, so nothing knew came out of it. Today I realize that 95% of my life story really doesn't have anything to do with my alcoholism anyhow. The fact that I was born in 1929, I don't think it's got a thing to do with my alcoholism. It may have had something to do with some else's alcoholism but not mine. The fact that I graduated from High School at age 17, went immediately into the service, I don't think it has a thing to do with my alcoholism. The fact that I was married at age 21. I don't think that has anything to do with it. But I'll tell you what it did do, the 95% that had nothing to do with it, very effectively covered up the 5% that did. I learned nothing from my life story to contribute to my alcoholism. So in our desperation again, somebody in Minneapolis, Minnesota wrote a 4th Step

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Inventory guide. We took the Minneapolis guide and combined it with the Big Book and got more confused yet. Somebody in Dallas, Texas wrote a 4th Step Inventory guide. We took the Dallas guide, combined it with the Minneapolis guide, combined it with the Big Book and got more confused yet. Have no idea how many are floating around today. We saw one that had 20 pages in it. I guarantee if you wasn't crazy as hell as you took it, you would be when you were through with it. It was one of those. All the time the instructions have been here. We just never could see them before because we didn't understand how Bill writes.

I think today, if we can just sit back and relax, look at a few simple ideas; we're going to see how easy this thing really is. There are two things we've got to remember. First he loves to use comparisons, talking about one thing that we already know to teach us something new. Also he did not like to repeat himself using the same words over and over. So he would tell us something and then turn around and tell us again using different words the second time. And bearing those two thoughts in mind I think we can see how simple this thing really is. He starts out by saying

Big Book p. 64, par. 2, line 1 *"Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. This was Step 4."*

J & C Immediately he jumps into business

Big Book p. 64, par. 2, line 2 *"A business that takes no regular inventory usually goes broke."*

J & C I think his first comparison is this, if you had a business, I don't care what it is, selling ladies purses, watches, bicycles or whatever. if you did an inventory once in a while. And by the way, inventory is defined as a written list of items. If you didn't go in there and make a list of the things that are in there, you wouldn't know what was stolen that you didn't get paid for. If you didn't inventory once in a while, you wouldn't know what's been sold and you need to re-order to put new stock in its place. If you didn't inventory once in a while you wouldn't know what's become damaged. Nobody wants to buy it, it's sitting there taking up valuable floor space day after day after day. You're probably paying interest on borrowed money to put it in there in the first place. If you didn't inventory once in a while you wouldn't know what's become out of style. You need to put it on sale so you can get it out of the store to put something new in its place.

If you had a business and didn't inventory once in a while you probably would go broke, and I think we can all see that.

In our personal lives we have a business too. Greatest business in the world for us. It's the business of find a way to live where we can have a little peace of mind, serenity and happiness so we don't have to go back to drinking. If we don't inventory in our personal business, chances are we're not going to find what's damaged and unsalable in our heads that's going to cause us to go broke too. And going broke for us is simply going back to drink.

So whether we're dealing with a personal business or a business business, in either case, we would probably go broke without the inventory. Now then he's going to tell us how to take a business inventory

Big Book p. 64, par. 2, line 10 *"Taking a commercial"*

J & C He could have said "business again" couldn't he? But he'll use the word commercial which means the same thing.

Big Book p. 64, par. 2, line 10 *"Taking a commercial inventory"*

J & C Now Joe up here on the screen, and you also have it in your handout materials, we're going to have a little picture up here that's going to be called Inventory Comparison, I think it's Step 5 in your hand out sheet. On one side it says business, the other side says personal. We're going to take a few key words out of the Big Book and put it under business.

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STEP 4 INVENTORY COMPARISON

BUSINESS

PERSONAL

FACT-FINDING	<->	SEARCHING
FACT-FACING	<->	FEARLESS
TRUTH	<->	MORAL
STOCK-IN-TRADE	<->	OURSELVES

OBJECT:

DISCLOSE		FIND FLAWED
DAMAGED OR	<->	THINKING
UNSALEABLE		PROCESSES
GOODS		

GET RID OF		GET RID OF
THEM PROMPTLY	<->	THEM PROMPTLY
WITHOUT REGRET!		WITHOUT REGRET!

STOCK IN TRADE		1. RESENTMENT
THAT IS	<->	2. FEAR
DAMAGED		3. HARMS DONE TO OTHERS

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Big Book p. 64, par. 2, line 10 "Taking a commercial inventory is a fact finding. (put under Business) and a fact facing process (put under Business). It is an effort to discover the truth (put under Business) about the stock in trade (put under Business)."

J & C The stock in trade is what's in there to sell. The ladies purses, the men's watches, the bicycles, or whatever.

Big Book p. 64 par. 2, line 13 "One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, (put under business) to get rid of them promptly and without regret. (put under Business)."

J & C In other words, we're going to go in there and we're going to find the facts. When we find them, we're going to face the facts. We're looking for the truth about the stock in trade. We're trying to find the damaged and unsalable goods. The good items will not cause us to go broke. They resale everyday and we're making money off of them. The damaged and unsalable goods, they're the ones that's blocking the floor space and the shelf space and costing us money. When we finally find them, we're going to try to get rid of them promptly and without regret. We can't put anything new in their in their place until they're gone. We're trying to find the stock in trade that's damaged and get it out of there

Big Book p. 64, par. 2, line 15 "If the owner of the business is to be successful, he cannot fool himself about values."

J & C He's got to be honest. Once in a while he'll try to fool himself. He'll say the reason these ladies aren't buying these purses is they just don't understand what's good for them. He made the decision to buy them; he hates to admit he made a mistake. He may keep them in there longer than he should, and if it does it's going to cost him money every day.

Is there anybody in here that would have any problems with what he's told us about the business inventory?

That we're going to try to find the facts. That when we find them we're going to try to face them. We're looking for the truth about the stock in trade. We're looking for the damaged and unsalable goods. When we find them we're going to get rid of them promptly and without regret, always looking for the stock in trade that's damage. Anybody's got any problems there? Ok now watch it. He used a series of words that tells us how to take our personal inventory, it means basically the same thing.

Big Book p. 64, par. 3, line 1 "We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly"

J & C So now we go to Step 4 (Step 4 says that now we're under Personal on the right side of the sheet)

Step 4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

"Made a searching ..."

We're putting **searching across from fact-finding they mean the same thing.** To find the facts, to search out the facts.

"Made a searching and fearless"

We're putting **fearless across from fact-finding, they mean the same thing. To face the facts, to fearlessly look at them.**

"Made a searching and fearless moral..."

And that's where we got in trouble. We said oh damn, there's that list of dirty, filthy, nasty items. We don't want to look at them and we sure as hell don't want to show them to anyone else. Now I'm not sure what Bill Wilson knew, but I know one thing, this guy understood the English language. And I really believe that **if he wanted you and I to make a list of dirty, filth, nasty items, he would have said**

We made a searching and fearless amoral or immoral inventory

He didn't say that, he said **moral**. Bugged the hell out of us, until eventually we went back to the dictionary. Do you know what the word moral is defined as

Truth. Things as they really are. The right and wrong of any given situation. The truth about things.

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Truth and moral mean exactly the same thing

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of what...”

Of ourselves. We're the only stock in trade that we have in the business of staying sober. Nobody else can make us sober, and nobody else can make us drink.

Oh I'll agree they can make us thirty as hell once in a while, but they can't make us drink. **We decide whether we drink or not.** What part of us decides whether we drink or not? Is it our body or is it our mind?

The real problem of the alcoholic centers in the mind.

We're going to look inside our selves, in our minds, and we're going to **find those flawed thinking processes,** which is the damaged and unsalable goods, **that block us off from God.**

We made a decision to turn our will over to God, and **as long as our mind is filled with damaged unsalable goods then God can't direct our thinking**

We're going to have to find them. And after we once find them, we're going to have to get rid of them promptly and without regret.

When those flawed thinking processes leave our minds, then our mind is opened up for God's thinking to enter.

But it's only after they are gone that God can enter

(Tape 5 - 00:17:44.7)

16 minutes