

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 9

(Tape 7 - 00:23:43.4)

J& C Ok. After we've got the list, we're willing, over on page 77 we begin to look at Step 9. Now Step 9 is a definite three-part step. The first part tells us the kind of amends to make.

We made direct amends wherever possible

Direct amends is probably eyeball to eyeball, face to face, one on one. So he tells us the kind of amends to make. **direct amends**
Then he tells us when to make them **wherever possible**

Then he tells us when not to make them

except when to do so would injure them or others.

Now for the next three or four pages he handles each one of these things paragraph by paragraph.
Page 77, that paragraph down in the middle of the page

Big Book p. 77, par. 2 "We don't use this as an excuse for shying away from the subject of God. When it will serve any good purpose, we are willing to announce our convictions with tact and common sense."

J& C The direct amends starts right here with the words

Big Book p. 77, par. 2, cont. "The question of how to approach the man we hated will arise."

J& C Let's look at this one. I think in the are of the 9th step, especially since were going to go out and make amends for the harms done. I think especially we need to talk to our sponsors and listen to our sponsors in this area to get some information about how we are going to go about making these amends. Cause we can go out in our zeal to make amends and can cause a whole lot more harms than we ever intended or had ever done prior to that just trying to make amends. So check with your sponsor in this area. Lay out how you are going to it and what you propose to do and see what he says. Very, very important.

Big Book p. 77, par. 2, cont. "The question of how to approach the man we hated will arise. It may be he has done us more harm than we have done him and, though we may have acquired a better attitude toward him, we are still not too keen about admitting our faults. Nevertheless, with a person we dislike, we take the bit in our teeth. It is harder to go to an enemy than to a friend, but we find it much more beneficial to us. We go to him in a helpful and forgiving spirit, confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret.

Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue. Simply we tell him that we will never get over drinking until we have done our utmost to straighten out the past. We are there to sweep off our side of the street, realizing that nothing worth while can be accomplished until we do so, never trying to tell him what he should do. His faults are not discussed. We stick to our own. If our manner is calm, frank, and open, we will be gratified with the result.

In nine cases out of ten the unexpected happens. Sometimes the man we are calling upon admits his own fault, so feuds of years' standing melt away in an hour. Rarely do we fail to make satisfactory progress. Our former enemies sometimes praise what we are doing and wish us well. Occasionally, they will offer assistance. It should not matter, however, if someone does throw us out of his office. We have made our demonstration, done our part. It's water over the dam."

J& C And ever time I read that I think about my cousin Gary. And I was in the area of making amends at this time and I was in this restaurant one day. I had never been in that restaurant before or since and I looked up and Gary was at the door waiting to be seated and I motioned him over. Now he came over very reluctantly. Cause Gary and I had been fighting and fussing, physically and verbally abusing each other all our lives. So he came over very reluctantly. He wasn't quite sure what I might do. And I asked him to sit down and he did reluctantly. And I looked at him and I said "Gary I've found out I'm an alcoholic and I'm a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and I'm trying to straighten out my life and I'm trying to make amends for the harms I've done people. And I've harmed you a whole lot over these years and I want to ask you if you will forgive me for that." And he kind of relaxed like that and he said, "Well you know Joe I want to know if you will forgive me the things I've done to you?" That whole deal went away just like that.

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And that's a wonderful thing. But the best part about it is that Gary comes to Alcoholics Anonymous from time to time even now. Well he's making progress. He used to be a daily drinker and now he's a periodic drinker. So he's making progress. But he comes to the group that I attend and we'll sit down and we'll visit back and forth a little bit as much as he will allow me to. But had that not happened that many years ago Gary would never have come to Alcoholics Anonymous. Maybe someday he'll get sober. I hope so.

Eyeball to eyeball.

Face to face.

One on one.

I think we've got to remember now the purpose of making the amends is not to get you to like me. I hope you will when I'm through. But the purpose is to get rid of my fear, my guilt and my remorse. If I write you a letter I'm not quite sure how you accepted it. I'm still a little concerned about what you are going to say and do the next time I run into you. I'm not sure I've done my utmost. If I call you on the telephone I've got the same situation. But if I go to you wherever you are, your office, your home or wherever it might be, and we sit down, eyeball to eyeball, face to face, one on one, when I've made my amends I'm through with it. I'll never have to worry about it again. You've done the worst you're going to do to me, right there, and I in turn have done my utmost. No doubt that's the best way to do it.

Another kind of amend is an equal restitution or equal amounts. You know we tended to hurt a lot of people in the material area also. Some of them we stole from them and never did give them their money back. Some of them we ran up bills that we never did pay. We wrote hot cheques that we never did pick up. We tore up automobiles that we never did fix. We've hurt a lot of people in a lot of ways in the material world. What are we going to do about that. It really wouldn't do much good for me to come to you and say "Look, you and I both know that I stole \$1200 from you when I was drinking. And I'm sorry about it. Would you forgive me?" You're probably going to say, "I'm sorry about it too. Where's my \$1200?" Equal restitution. Bill handles that in the next paragraph.

Big Book p. 78, par. 2 "Most alcoholics owe money. "

J&C Now that's probably the understatement of the year right there.

Big Book p. 78, par. 2 cont. "We do not dodge our creditors. Telling them what we are trying to do, we make no bones about our drinking; they usually know it anyway, whether we think so or not. Nor are we afraid of disclosing our alcoholism on the theory it may cause financial harm. Approached in this way, the most ruthless creditor will sometimes surprise us. Arranging the best deal we can we let these people know we are sorry. Our drinking has made us slow to pay. We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to drink if we are afraid to face them."

J&C I think what he's saying to me is this. That if I owe you money for any reason I need to come to you and say, "Look, I know I owe you the \$1200 and you know it too. And I'm trying to get my life straightened out. I'm sorry I can't pay you that amount of money today. But what I'd like to do is start paying you \$5/week or \$10/week." Whatever I can live with. And I start paying you that \$5 or \$10/week or 20 or whatever we've decided on. And as the weeks go by, some morning I wake up and I say "Hey that suckers paid off." I don't have to worry about that one anymore. The fear and guilt and remorse is gone. I go to the next one. And I say, "Now you and I both know that I owe you a couple thousand dollars. Can't pay you today. But I'd like to start paying you about \$20/week." And I start paying you \$20/week and some morning I wake up and that sucker's paid off too. And then I go to the next one. And then the next and then the next one and someday I'll wake up and by golly they're all paid off. And the fear and the guilt and remorse is gone. I feel good back here in the back of my head now after that guilt and remorse and fear is gone.

Now a guy came to me one time and we were discussing this. And he said "Charlie if I try to pay them so much a week, do you know how old I would be before I got them paid off?" You'd be the same age that you would be if you didn't pay them off. It don't make any difference. I've lived long enough to know that time is going to pass. I wish I could stop it but I can't. And as time passes I can use it for a worthwhile purpose, do something about these things, or I can keep putting it off and putting it off and putting it off and 5 years or 10 years or 15 years from now still be in the same situation and maybe drunk in the meantime.

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We had a good friend that used to live in Tulsa but moved out here to California, he's gone now, he's dead. Name was Dan. When Dan was 29 years sober he said, "Charlie, I paid the last one of them last week." I said "Dan how do you feel". He said, "I feel about 8 foot tall". Now Dan was little bitty fellow about 5'1". He said "This is the first time in my life that I can ever remember that I don't owe somebody something for what I've stolen in the past". He said "I feel pretty good about old Dan". Dan owed a lot of money. When he was drinking he was in the oil business down in Texas. And he hooked them and he hooked them big. Took him 29 years to pay them. But by golly he got it done. I'll tell you what a good con artist Dan was. When he was still drinking in Texas his wife Sara, who later became a beautiful member of Al-Anon, she took him to the state insane asylum in Big Spring, Texas to have him committed for alcoholic insanity. The head psychiatrist interviewed Sara, then he interviewed Dan and after a while Dan left and Sara was locked up. Truth. She stayed there for a year. She learned how to live better electrically and all that goody, goody stuff in there. Dan was a real con artist. Joe.

You know Dan did pay back a lot of money. It's not alot of money out here in California but in Oklahoma it's a lot of money. Hell of a lot of money. You guys have got plenty of money out here. We all know that. But Dan paid them all back and I spent many, many days playing bridge with Dan and Sara and he and my wife and they were teaching us the program alot and sharing with us and they paid a lot of money back. Now you'd of that that the kind of money he paid back would have kept him broke but it didn't. He prospered in other ways. He wasn't rich when he died but he had a very comfortable living throughout all those years and he prospered as a result of doing the right thing with his debts.

And again I hear some of you saying, I can hear awful good. Well Charlie that stuffs probably all right for \$1200 or \$2000 or maybe \$10,000 but what if it's a half a million? What if it's a million? What if it's 2 million? Can we pay that back? I don't know why not, we're smart enough to steal it we're probably smart enough to pay it back if we are willing to do so. You know I think we forget from step 3 on that God is with us. And if we are willing to do these things Gods going to make it possible to do so just like he did for Dan. Dan didn't die a rich man but Dan died a very comfortable man. God saw that Dan had the means to be able to pay these people back. The willingness is what it takes to do this. And it really works for people like us.

On page 79 about the middle of the page it talks about where other people are involved. And we need to really, really consider this now. Sometimes in our zeal to be forgiven for the things we've done in the past we make amends where we end up hurting the one we owe amends to even more. Or possibly hurt somebody else. And if we do that then sooner or later we're going to have to go back and make amends for that too. So we have to be very, very careful where other people are involved. Over on page 80

There we have an example on page 80 where he went to the people involved and got their permission to make the amend before he made it in order to be sure that everything was going to be OK.

Bottom of page 80 he starts talking about domestic troubles.

Page 81 he talks about sex outside of marriage. What are we going to do about those kinds of things? Very carefully he handles just about every conceivable situation that could come up. With the people I work with usually we can find that answer to their amends as to whether they should make them or they shouldn't and how to make it here in the big book. Covers just about all situations. The key thing I think and Joe said it a while ago is get somebody else's advice. I've seen too many people jump into these amends too fast. And not only hurt other people but end up destroying a family, destroying a relationship with another human being completely. You know I think that we should go to our sponsors, get their help, get their advice before we even start making these amends. Especially where it involves maybe hurting other people.

Big Book p. 83, par. 3 "There may be some wrongs we can never fully right. "

J&C You know some of these people are already dead and buried. Some of them to make the amends would hurt them or others. We can't do that.

Big Book p. 83, par. 3 cont. "We don't worry about them if we can honestly say to ourselves that we would right them if we could. Some people cannot be seen - we sent them an honest letter. And there may be a valid reason for postponement in some cases.

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But we don't delay if it can be avoided. We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping. As God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone."

J& C The one mistake I see us making is we got somebody and try to make our amends and they don't accept it. They didn't always accept mine. Some of them said "Charlie we didn't like you when you were drinking, not too damn crazy about you now, we'd just as soon you get out of here and leave us alone." And when that happens to us it just crushes us. And we tend to want to go back and go back and go back and literally beg those people to forgive us. We don't need to do that. If they don't accept it there's nothing we can do about that. About all we can do is stand in readiness to make it at a later date if the opportunity comes up. But we certainly do not have to crawl before anyone. We are Gods people too.

(Tape 7 - 00:39:13.0)

16 minutes