

WESTBORO BIG BOOK STUDY GROUP

All Saints Anglican Church

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.

347 Richmond Road (near Churchill)

Session07a.doc

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Synopsis of Previous Session

The Dr.'s Opinion

The Disease Concept of Alcoholism. It is proven today, that acetone ingested into the human system and that remains there for an appreciable period of time, will produce an actual physical craving for more of the same. Discussed the progressive physical illness of alcoholism.

Bill's Story

(Tape 2 - 00:42.49.0)

J & C Last night we spent quite a bit of time talking about the problem, talking about

the physical allergy that ensures we can't safely drink,

talking about

the obsession of the mind that ensures that we can't keep from drinking

and the ultimate conclusion to that was

if you can't safely drink without getting drunk,
and if you can't keep from drinking,
then you've become absolutely powerless over alcohol

and most certainly our lives had become unmanageable if not at that time then we just keep on drinking and after a while they will be for sure. So this morning we're going to look at an example of a guy that had that problem. A good textbook never tells you anything anyhow but what it don't back it up with more information. And we're going to look at Bill's Story this morning and Bill's Story is a classic example of an alcoholic who had the allergy and who had the obsession of the mind. Now we got to remember back in the 1930's Bill learned very early on the value of sharing your story with another alcoholic, when he went to see Dr. Bob, and immediately Dr. Bob could see his problem also. They went to see Bill Dobson and they shared their stories with Bill Dobson. Bill Dobson could see his problem through their stories, and they learned very early on that it was necessary for one alcoholic to identify with another in order to be able to get their interest and get their attention. And when the Big Book was first published they knew they wouldn't be able to sit down with the first person out here in California and share their story one on one. So the Big Book had to be complete enough to do that. So they said we'll put Bill's Story in here at the very beginning, and another alcoholic in reading Bill's Story will be able to identify with Bill. And if we can identify with Bill and see his alcoholism, see him make a recovery from that condition, we can begin to believe and we can begin to hope that we're enough like Bill Wilson and if he could recover from that condition then just maybe we could too. Now a lot of you have said we have trouble identifying with Bill Wilson cause after all he was a night school lawyer and we were not, after all he was a New York City stock speculator and we were not, and a lot of the women say we can't identify with him because he's a man, and many people say well he was an older fellow and we couldn't identify there either. **But if we look for the way Bill thinks, and the way Bill acts and the way Bill drinks, if we're a real alcoholic there's not an alcoholic in this room that can't identify with Bill Wilson.**

So as we go through Bill's Story this morning we'll look for

1. identification,
- 2. the progression of alcoholism**
- 3** him drinking finally for the sickest reason of all, complete oblivion,

then well look and see how Bill recovered from alcoholism and if we've identified with him then we begin to believe that if he could do it just maybe we could it too...identification, the beginning of believe, the beginning of hope.

I too didn't think I could identify with Bill Wilson that I've seen pictures of and he was an old man I thought. Turned out **he was 43 years old when this book was written**, so a relatively young man. But as I began to study and read Bill's Story I began to see that he

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was a very optimist person, hardworking, had lots and lots of willpower. He was a self made man who became very successful in his own right. And through Bill's story we're going to see what he was like, then we're going to see how he learned that he was sick, and then we're going to see how he affected a recovery. So the total story of Alcoholics Anonymous is contained in Bill Wilson's story. So let's go to page one, Bill's Story. He said

Big Book p. 1, par. 1 "War fever ran high in the New England town to which we new, young officers from Plattsburg were assigned, and we were flattered when the first citizens took us to their homes, making us feel heroic. Here was love, applause, war; moments sublime with intervals hilarious"

J & C Anybody ever have any moment's sublime with intervals hilarious? I have. I love the way Bill writes.

Big Book p. 1, par. 1, line 6 "I was part of life at last, and in the midst of the excitement I discovered liquor. I forgot the strong warnings and the prejudices of my people concerning drink. In time we sailed for "Over There." I was very lonely and again turned to alcohol. "

We landed in England. I visited Winchester Cathedral. Much moved, I wandered outside. My attention was caught by a doggerel on an old tombstone:

"Here lies a Hampshire Grenadier
Who caught his death
Drinking cold small beer.
A good soldier is ne'er forgot
Whether he dieth by musket
Or by pot."

J & C Now when he says that about pot, he's not referring to this wacky weed. He's talking about a pot of beer, that's the way they used to drink it over in England at that time. He said

Big Book p. 1, par. 3 "Ominous warning which I failed to heed."

"Twenty-two, and a veteran of foreign wars, I went home at last. I fancied myself a leader, for had not the men of my battery given me a special token of appreciation? My talent for leadership, I imagined, could place me at the head of vast enterprises which I would manage with the utmost assurance. I took a night law course, and obtained employment as investigator for a surety company. The drive for success was on. I'd prove to the world I was important."

J & C I already identify with Bill Wilson. **That seems to be one of the main characteristics behind every alcoholic I've ever known. The great drive for success was on; I'll prove to the world that I'm important also.** It seems to be the driving force behind each one of us.

Big Book p.2, par 1, line 4 "My work took me about Wall Street and little by little I became interested in the market. Many people lost money but some became very rich. Why not I? I studied economics and business as well as law. Potential alcoholic that I was, I nearly failed my law course. At one of the finals I was too drunk to think or write. Though my drinking was not yet continuous, it disturbed my wife.

J & C I can identify with Bill.

Big Book p.2, par. 1, line 11 "We had long talks when I would still her forebodings by telling her that men of genius conceived their best projects when drunk;

J & C I have no trouble identifying with Bill Wilson.

Big Book p.2, par. 1, line 13 "that the most majestic constructions philosophic thought were so derived."

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J & C I can identify with Bill. Charlie said last night we make our living selling fast talk to slow thinking people, and Bill's trying to do some of that here, but we all know that Lois didn't buy that. He said

Big Book p.2, par. 2 "By the time I had completed the course, I knew the law was not for me. The inviting maelstrom of Wall Street had me in its grip. Business and financial leaders were my heroes. Out of this ally of drink and speculation, I commenced to forge the weapon that one day would turn in its flight like a boomerang and all but cut me to ribbons. Living modestly, my wife and I saved \$1,000. It went into certain securities, then cheap and rather unpopular. I rightly imagined that they would some day have a great rise. I failed to persuade my broker friends to send me out looking over factories and managements, but my wife and I decided to go anyway. I had developed a theory that most people lost money in stocks through ignorance of markets. I discovered many more reasons later on."

J & C Now Bill is referring to a time back in the 1920's when the stock market was on a roll. Just about everybody that dealt with stocks was making money. All you had to do was buy them and hold unto them, let them go up in price, sell them, take your profits, buy some more. Everything was done on about a 10% margin; everything was pure speculation. Bill really became one of the first investment counselors on Wall Street. He began to say look, sooner or later this bubble is going to burst. Sooner or later we're going to have to start making our decisions based on fact rather than speculation. He went to the people who had the money and he said I don't have the money to do this but if you guys would back me financially, I'll leave New York City and I'll start visiting these companies. And I'll look at the plants and I'll talk to the employees and I'll examine the books wherever I can and I'll write up reports and send them back in here and we'll start making our decisions whether to buy or not based on fact. And they said, no, Bill, we don't need that kind of information. We're making about all the money we want to make anyhow. And you know how we alcoholics are, if we get a good idea, stubborn as hell, we're going to carry it out one way or another. He said the hell with them, I don't need them anyhow, I'll just go do this on my own. He said,

Big Book p.2, par.3 "We gave up our positions and off we roared on a motorcycle, the sidecar stuffed with tent, blankets, a change of clothes, and three huge volumes of a financial reference service. Our friends thought a lunacy commission should be appointed. Perhaps they were right. I had had some success at speculation, so we had a little money, but we once worked on a farm for a month to avoid drawing on our small capital. That was the last honest manual labor on my part for many a day. We covered the whole eastern United States in a year. At the end of it, my reports to Wall Street procured me a position there and the use of a large expense account. The exercise of an option brought in more money, leaving us with a profit of several thousand dollars for that year."

J & C Bill and Lois, traveling on the motorcycle, living in the tent, went up and down the eastern seaboard of the United States and he wrote up reports on approximately 100 of the largest companies in the eastern states sending them to New York City. The guys that had the money saw them and say oh yeah man this is great information and immediately they put Bill on the payroll, gave him a large expense account, the exercise in option made a good profit, for the first time in his life he's got something. He came from a little town called East Dorset, Vermont, he had never had anything before in his life. Here's how he feels

Big Book p.3, par.2 "For the next few years fortune threw money and applause my way. I had arrived."

J & C God how many of us have done the same kind of things Bill did.

(Tape 2 - 00:52:46.9)

10 minutes