

WESTBORO BIG BOOK STUDY TAPE GROUP

All Saints Anglican Church

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.

347 Richmond Road (near Churchill)

Session 14a.doc

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More About Alcoholism

(Tape 3 - 01:12:21.0)

Big Book p. 37, par. 4 "Our behavior is as absurd and incomprehensible with respect to the first drink as that of an individual with a passion, say, for jaywalking. He gets a thrill out of skipping in front of fast-moving vehicles."

J & C Now I don't understand this guy at all. But I can see him out here on the interstate, waiting for a truck or bus to come down through there. Jumps out in front of it, spins around two or three times. Sees how close it can come to him without actually hitting him. For some reason he gets a thrill out of it. Don't understand him but I can see him doing it.

Big Book p. 37, par. 4 cont. "He enjoys himself a few years in spite of friendly warnings."

J & C People say, "Hey Bill, you better quit doing that. You're going to get yourself hurt."

Big Book p. 37, par. 4 cont. "Up to this point you would label him as a foolish chap having queer ideas of fun. Luck then deserts him and he is slightly injured several times in succession."

J & C He's getting a little older now. He can't move as fast. They begin to hit him once in a while. Nothing serious, he just kind of bounces off of them.

Big Book p. 38 cont. "You would expect him, if he were normal, to cut it out. Presently he is hit again and this time has a fractured skull."

J & C Now he got hurt bad this time.

Big Book p. 38 cont. "Within a week after leaving the hospital a fast-moving trolley car breaks his arm."

J & C He gets hurt bad again. Now he sings our national anthem.

Big Book p. 38 cont. "He tells you he has decided to stop jaywalking for good,"

J & C He says "Man I'll never do that again as long as I live"

Big Book p. 38 cont. "but in a few weeks he breaks both legs. On through the years this conduct continues, accompanied by his continual promises to be careful or to keep off the streets altogether. Finally, he can no longer work,"

J & C He's just so beat up now he can't hold a job.

Big Book p. 38, par 1 cont. "his wife gets a divorce,"

J & C She's tired of supporting him, the kids and the hospital bills.

Big Book p. 38, par 1 cont. "he is held up to ridicule. He tries every known means to get the jaywalking idea out of his head."

J & C Not his body, his head.

Big Book p. 38, par 1 cont. "He shuts himself up in a treatment centre (an asylum), hoping to mend his ways. But the day he comes out he races in front of a fire engine, which breaks his back. Such a man would be crazy, wouldn't he? You may think our illustration is too ridiculous. But is it? We, who have been through the wringer, have to admit if we substituted alcoholism for jaywalking, the illustration would fit us exactly. However intelligent we may have been in other respects, where alcohol has been involved, we have been strangely insane. It's strong language--but isn't it true?"

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J & C Oh I think that's so appropriate today. You know, once again because of education many, many people are getting to us before they have to lose everything. Occasionally you see somebody come in here that's still married. And once in a while they come in and they've got a job. Believe it or not, I saw one come in about a month ago he still had an automobile. And we start talking to those people about insanity and they say "Man don't tell me I'm crazy. I haven't lost anything. I've got my job, I've got my blah blah". No, uh-uh. We're not talking about that at all. We're talking about one thing and one thing only.

Can we or can we not see the truth about alcohol. If we can we're sane, if we can't then we're insane.

Now the low bottom drunk like Jim, it's probably easier for him to see his insanity because he lost everything that he had period. A high bottom drunk who hasn't lost a lot of stuff, sometimes it's a little more difficult for them to see it. But I'll tell you, **whether you're low bottom or high bottom, if you get drunk, you're going to get drunk the same way. Believing something that is not true.**

Let's go to page, whatever the next one is, 39. My old pages are so tore up I can't read it anymore. Now we're going to look at a guy named Fred. Now Fred is the opposite of Jim. Fred is high bottom. Fred never lost anything. Jim didn't feel too good the day he got drunk. Fred is on top of the world the day he gets drunk, yet he got drunk the same way. He believed a lie. Let's look at Fred's lie.

Big Book p. 39, par 2 "Fred is partner in a well-known accounting firm. His income is good, he has a fine home, is happily married and the father of promising children of college age. He is so attractive a personality that he makes friends with everyone. If ever there was a successful businessman, it is Fred. To all appearance he is a stable, well-balanced individual. Yet, he is alcoholic. We first saw Fred about a year ago in a hospital where he had gone to recover from a bad case of jitters. It was his first experience of this kind, and he was much ashamed of it. Far from admitting he was an alcoholic, he told himself he came to the hospital to rest his nerves. "

J & C We see lots of nerve resters in AA today. Just like old Fred is.

Big Book p. 39, par 2 cont. "The doctor intimated strongly that he might be worse than he realized. For a few days he was depressed about his condition. He made up his mind to quit drinking altogether. It never occurred to him that perhaps he could not do so, in spite of his character and standing. Fred would not believe himself an alcoholic, "

J & C He would not take Step 1.

Big Book p. 39, par 2 cont. "much less accept a spiritual remedy for his problem. "

J & C If you can't take one, you can't take two.

Big Book p. 39, par 2 cont. "We told him what we knew about alcoholism. "

J & C They told him about Step 1 and Step 2.

Big Book p. 40 "He was interested and conceded that he had some of the symptoms, "

J & C He said, "I'm a little bit alcoholic." Borderline case.

Big Book p. 40 "but he was a long way from admitting that he could do nothing about it himself. He was positive that this humiliating experience, plus the knowledge he had acquired, would keep him sober the rest of his life. Self-knowledge would fix it. We heard no more of Fred for a while. One day we were told that he was back in the hospital. This time he was quite shaky. He soon indicated he was anxious to see us. The story he told is most instructive for here was a chap absolutely convinced he had to stop drinking, who had no excuse for drinking, who exhibited splendid judgement and determination in all his other concerns, yet was flat on his back nevertheless.

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Let him tell you about it: "I was much impressed with what you fellows said about alcoholism, but I frankly did not believe it would be possible for me to drink again. I somewhat appreciated your ideas about the subtle insanity which precedes the first drink, but I was confident it could not happen to me after what I had learned. I reasoned I was not so far advanced as most of you fellows, that I had been usually successful in licking my other personal problems, that I would therefore be successful where you men failed. I felt I had every right to be self-confident, that it would be only a matter of exercising my will power and keeping on guard. "In this frame of mind, I went about my business and for a time all was well. I had no trouble refusing drinks, and began to wonder if I had not been making too hard work of a simple matter. "

J & C We think Fred began to get drunk right here. He began to say "Ah this staying sober is easy. Nothing to this"

Big Book p. 40, par 3 cont. "One day I went to Washington to present some accounting evidence to a government bureau. I had been out of town before during this particular dry spell, so there was nothing new about that. Physically, I felt fine. Neither did I have any pressing problems or worries. My business came off well, I was pleased and knew my partners would be too. It was the end of a perfect day, not a cloud on the horizon."

J & C Everything is on top of the world for old Fred. He's doing great. Making lot's of money. Family's happy. Business associates happy. Everything's good in Fred's life.

Big Book p. 41, par 1 "I went to my hotel and leisurely dressed for dinner. As I crossed the threshold of the dining room, the thought came to mind it would be nice to have couple of cocktails (and go back to the hospital)"

J & C Now that's the truth isn't it. No way could he drink on the truth. His mind said

Big Book p. 41, par 1 cont. "it would be nice to have couple of cocktails with dinner. That was all. Nothing more. "

J & C Now based on the insane idea, he makes a decision, takes some action.

Big Book p. 41, par 1 cont. "I ordered a cocktail and my meal. Then I ordered another cocktail. "

J & C And we've got it inside ourselves now. The allergy takes over.

Big Book p. 41, par 1 cont. "After dinner I decided to take a walk. When I returned to the hotel it struck me a highball would be fine before going to bed, so I stepped into the bar and had one. I remember having several more that night and plenty next morning. I have a shadowy recollection of being in an airplane bound for New York, of finding a friendly taxicab driver at the landing field instead of my wife. The driver escorted me about for several days. I know little of where I went, or what I said and did. Then came the hospital with unbearable mental and physical suffering.

"As soon as I regained my ability to think, I went carefully over that evening in Washington. Not only had I been off guard, I had made no fight whatever against that first drink. This time I had not thought of the consequences at all. I had commenced to drink as carelessly as though the cocktails were ginger ale."

J & C Now is Fred's real problem the fact that he has a physical allergy to alcohol or that he has a form of insanity that tells him it's OK to have a couple of cocktails with dinner. **The real problem centres in the mind telling us we can drink, rather than in the body, that ensures we can't.** Page 43, last paragraph.

You know Bill had the idea that self-knowledge would fix it. Rowland had the idea that self-knowledge would fix it. Fred had the idea that self-knowledge would fix it. Bill is trying to show us here, they all had the obsession of the mind. He's trying to show us here through the illustrations, the man of 30, Jim, the jaywalker and Fred, to tell us one thing. The last paragraph says, Once more. You see he just went through all this to say

Big Book p. 43, par 3 "Once more: the alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the first drink. Except in a few rare cases, neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense must come from a Higher Power."

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J & C And that is the solution.

- You can't heal a sick mind with a sick mind.
- Self-knowledge won't get it.
- The more we try to think our way out it, the deeper into it we get.
- It must come from a Higher Power.
- Our defense must come from a Higher Power.

And you notice he didn't say "the practicing alcoholic" or "the drinking alcoholic". He just said the alcoholic. Now what that means to me today is that I have no effective mental defense against the first drink.

Left on my own resources, invariably I'm going to go right back to drinking again, without the aid of a power greater than human power.

(Tape 3 - 01:22:55.0)

10 minutes