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STEP THREE

Faith

A guide to the Third Step, with Scripture and prayer



Work this step with Jimmy or Sarah.

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If you are in danger, call or text 988, or call 911. If you have been drinking heavily and stopped, and you are shaking, sweating, confused, seeing things, or have had a seizure, go to the ER today.

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STEP THREE

Faith

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

ROMANS 12:1 (ESV)

Where you are

You've taken two steps already. Before you start Step Three, look back at them for a minute. If you picked up this guide in the middle of things, this page is for you too.

Step One. You admitted you were powerless over alcohol, and that your life had become unmanageable. Your body can't handle it, and your mind keeps going back to it anyway. You can't fix this on your own power.

Step Two. You came to believe that a Power greater than yourself could restore you to sanity. Maybe it started as only a crack of willingness. That was enough to get you here.

Those two steps were about seeing and believing. Step Three is the first time you *do* something about it. You make a decision.

Haven't done Steps One and Two? Go back first. Step Three only makes sense once you're sure you can't run your own life on your own power, and willing to believe God can. Without that, this step is a nice idea you have no reason to act on. Talk to your sponsor about where to pick up.

Check where you stand

The book doesn't ask you to make this decision on a hunch. It sums up the first chapters in three plain ideas, and asks if you're convinced:

> "Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas: (a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives. (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism. (c) That God could and would if sought."
>
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 60

Then it says what follows:

> "Being convinced, we were at step three, which is that we decided to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood Him."
>
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 60

Ask yourself honestly:

- Am I convinced I can't manage my own life, not just my drinking?
- Have I stopped hoping some person, plan or program will fix me without God?
- Do I believe God could and would help, if I sought Him?

If you hesitate on any of these, that's not failure. It's information. Talk to your sponsor before you go on, and reread the pages you need.

What Step Three is

> "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."
>
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 59

Read it slowly. Every part of it matters.

Made a decision. Not a feeling. Not a mood that comes over you in church. A decision, like signing your name. You can make it on a day you feel nothing at all.

To turn our will. Your will is your thinking: what you want, what you plan, what you decide. You're handing that over.

And our lives. Your life is your actions: what you actually do all day. Not just the drinking. Your money, your marriage, your work, your kids, your future.

Over to the care of God. Care, not punishment. You aren't turning yourself in. You're coming home to a Father who wants good for you.

As we understood Him. The book leaves the door wide open so anyone can walk in. For us, the God we turn to is the Father who made Himself known in Jesus Christ. You don't have to understand Him fully. Nobody does. You only have to be willing to let Him lead.

A decision, not the whole trip

Deciding to take a trip isn't the trip. You can decide to drive to the coast and still be sitting in your driveway a year later. The decision matters. But it only counts if you get in the car.

Step Three is the decision. Steps Four through Twelve are the trip. That's why the book doesn't stop after the Third Step prayer. It goes right on to page 64 and tells you to start your inventory.

What this step is not

What Step Three is, and what it isn't

It is not becoming perfect, or feeling holy, or understanding everything about God. It is not giving up your brain or your personality. It is not a one-time event you never think about again.

It is deciding, on purpose, that God gets to run your life instead of you, and then acting like you meant it. Starting today, and again tomorrow.

Why it's the hinge

Every step after this one is a way of carrying out this decision. The inventory, the confession, the amends, the daily prayer: all of it is you letting God do what you just told Him He could do. If this decision is real, the rest of the steps have something to stand on. If it isn't, they turn into a self-improvement project, and you've already tried that.

Your reading for this step

Read these in your own copies, in this order. Page numbers for *Alcoholics Anonymous* are from the fourth edition.

Alcoholics Anonymous

- **Pages 58–63.** "How It Works," from the opening paragraph through the Third Step prayer. Read it out loud.
- **Page 64.** The first paragraph of Step Four, so you see where the decision leads.
- **Pages 13–14.** Bill offers himself to God in a hospital bed.
- **Pages 85 and 87–88.** Carrying God's will into the day; "Thy will be done."
- **Then *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, pages 34–41.** The chapter on Step Three. Read it slowly.

Scripture (ESV)

- Romans 12:1–2 · Joshua 24:15 · Proverbs 3:5–6
- Luke 9:23–24 · Galatians 2:20 · John 8:34–36
- Luke 22:42 · Philippians 2:9–11 · Matthew 11:28–30

Listen, if you like: Joe and Charlie, Session 8, "How It Works—Step Three" (about 7 minutes), free in the SoberHub app. Steps & Scripture is not affiliated with SoberHub.

What the book says

Step Three takes up about five pages in *Alcoholics Anonymous*. They are some of the most important pages in the book. Read them in your own copy, and then look at what they say here.

Any length (p. 58)

"How It Works" opens with a question about how badly you want this:

> "If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it—then you are ready to take certain steps."
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 58

Notice the word *decided*. Before you ever get to Step Three, the book is asking for a decision. It also warns about something every one of us tried:

> "At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not."
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 58

And it tells you what the old ideas are worth if you won't let go of them: "the result was nil until we let go absolutely" (p. 58).

Half measures (pp. 58–59)

Then the book names the problem and the answer in a few short lines:

> "Remember that we deal with alcohol—cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power—That One is God. May you find Him now!"
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, PP. 58–59

> "Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon."
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 59

Complete abandon. Not careful, not partial, not "I'll give God the drinking and keep the rest." That's the spirit of this step.

Just what do we do? (p. 60)

After listing the steps, the book stops and asks the question you're probably asking:

> "Just what do we mean by that, and just what do we do?"
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 60

Its first answer isn't a technique. It's a conviction:

> "The first requirement was that we be convinced that any life run on self-will could hardly be a success. On that basis we are almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though our motives are good."
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 60

Even though our motives are good. That's worth thinking about. Self-will isn't only the selfish stuff. It's also the times you were trying to help, trying to fix, trying to make everyone happy, and it still blew up.

The actor who wants to run the show (pp. 60–62)

This is the heart of the chapter. The book paints a picture:

> "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 wishes, the show would be great."
>
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, PP. 60–61

Sound familiar? The book is fair to him. It says "our actor may sometimes be quite virtuous" (p. 61). He can be kind, patient and generous. He can also be mean and dishonest. Most of us were both, depending on the day.

But the show never goes the way he wants (pp. 61–62). So he tries harder. He gets more demanding, or more charming. It still doesn't work. He decides other people are mostly to blame, and he gets angry and sorry for himself. The book asks whether he's really a self-seeker even when he's being nice, and whether, even at his best, he's making confusion instead of peace.

Then it names the problem:

> "Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles."
>
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 62

Read the paragraph around that line in your own copy. The book says most of the people who hurt us were hitting back at something we started, often long before. That's hard to hear. It's also good news. If the trouble comes from inside you, then God can do something about it. This isn't about harm done to you as a child, or abuse. Those weren't your fault.

Self-will run riot (p. 62)

> "So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so."
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 62

Most of us didn't think so. We thought we were the victim of a bad job, a bad marriage, a bad childhood, bad luck. Some of that was real. But the book is asking you to look at the part that was you. And it doesn't soften what's at stake:

> "Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible."
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 62

The book also admits that good intentions weren't enough. We had convictions galore and couldn't live up to them. Trying harder didn't shrink our self-centeredness. Its answer is short: "We had to have God's help" (p. 62).

Quit playing God (p. 62)

Here's the turn:

> "First of all we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal, we are His agent. He is the Father, and we are His children."
>
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 62

The actor doesn't leave the stage. He just stops trying to direct. You still show up, still work, still love your family, still make choices. But you take direction now, instead of giving it to everyone around you.

The book calls this simple idea "the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom" (p. 62).

A new Employer (p. 63)

> "When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well."
>
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 63

Look at what follows. People who made this decision got less interested in their own plans, and more interested in what they could give. They felt peace. In the book's words, "we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow, or the hereafter. We were reborn" (p. 63).

That's not a promise that life gets easy. It's a promise that you won't be carrying it alone.

The bondage of self (p. 63)

The Third Step prayer asks God for one thing above everything else:

> "Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will."
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 63

Bondage is a strong word. It means slavery. The book is saying that self, the endless me, me, me, was the master you were really serving. The bottle was just how you paid it. You don't break that chain by trying harder to think about yourself less. You ask God to set you free, so you can do His will instead of yours.

How to take the step (p. 63)

The book gives clear, practical direction:

> "We thought well before taking this step making sure we were ready; that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him."
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 63

> "We found it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person, such as our wife, best friend, or spiritual adviser. But it is better to meet God alone than with one who might misunderstand."
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 63

> "The wording was, of course, quite optional so long as we expressed the idea, voicing it without reservation."
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 63

So: be sure you mean it. Say it out loud. Say it with someone who understands, if you can. And don't worry about getting the words exactly right. God hears the heart.

Straight to page 64

Here's what most people miss. The book says the decision is "only a beginning" (p. 63). Then, without a break, it goes on:

> "Though our decision 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."
>
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 64

At once. Not after a month of thinking it over. The way you prove the decision is by starting Step Four.

Bill did it first (pp. 13–14)

Before there was a program, there was a man in a hospital bed making this same decision:

> "There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as He would."
>
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 13

His friend had told him it "meant destruction of self-centeredness" (p. 14). And Bill wrote what he had to do: "I must turn in all things to the Father of Lights who presides over us all" (p. 14). *In all things*. Not just the drinking.

Every day after (pp. 85, 87–88)

You make the decision once, and then you renew it every morning. Later in the book:

> "Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities."
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 85

And through the day, the book says we "constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show" (pp. 87–88). That's Step Three, lived one day at a time.

What the 12&12 adds

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions gives Step Three a full chapter, on **pages 34–41**. It's practical and encouraging, especially if this step scares you. Read it in your own copy. Here is what to look for as you read. These are our notes, not the book's words.

Page 34: A locked door and one key. The chapter pictures Step Three as a door that looks shut tight. The key is willingness. Once you turn it even a little, the door starts to give. It also points out that the first two steps only asked you to accept something. This one asks you to act.

Page 34: Faith alone isn't enough. You can believe in God and still keep Him at arm's length. The chapter says this step is the first real attempt to let Him in. It also says the smallest start is enough, and that when self-will pushes the door closed again, willingness opens it again.

Page 35: You've already started. If you've been going to meetings and doing what's suggested about drinking, you've already handed over part of your will. The chapter asks the obvious next question: why stop there?

Pages 35–36: The fear of disappearing. A lot of us worry that if we hand our lives to God, there'll be nothing left of us. The chapter answers that the more we rely on God, the freer we become. It compares this to how we rely on the electricity in our homes without a second thought, and are better off for it.

Page 37: Running your own mind. The chapter notices that we'll gladly depend on things around the house, but we insist on being the only boss of our own thoughts and choices. It asks a

blunt question: how has that worked out? Then it looks at the wider world, full of people and groups who are sure they're right, and sees the same self-will tearing things apart.

Pages 37–38: Lucky to be broken. The chapter says alcoholics are fortunate in a strange way. We were crushed by our own self-will badly enough to look for something better. It also admits that some kinds of dependence really are unhealthy, and explains why relying on God is not one of them.

Page 39: More than a drinking problem. Once you're sober, you find out you have plenty of other problems: guilt, money, anger, a family in pieces. Willpower can't fix those either. The chapter says a sponsor will point out that life can still be unmanageable when you're dry, and that the rest of the steps are the answer.

Pages 40–41: The right use of the will. Here's the surprise. Your will isn't useless. Only you can become willing, and only you can make the decision. The trouble was never having a will. It was aiming it at your problems instead of lining it up with God. The chapter ends with a short prayer for times of upset or indecision, on page 41. Read it in your own copy.

Read the chapter with a pen nearby, but write in a notebook, not this guide. Mark anything that sounds like you and bring it to your sponsor.

What Scripture says

The Bible doesn't use the words "Step Three." But it has a lot to say about choosing who you'll serve, giving yourself to God, and being set free from yourself. Read these slowly, out loud if you can.

Present yourself

The verse on the opening page of this guide is the heart of this step:

> *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*
>
> ROMANS 12:1–2 (ESV)

Paul doesn't say *feel* like a living sacrifice. He says *present* yourself. It's an act of the will, the same as Step Three. And look at what comes next: you're *transformed*, by God, as your mind is renewed. You decide. He does the changing.

Choose this day

> *"And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*
>
> JOSHUA 24:15 (ESV)

Joshua put it in front of the whole nation: decide. Not someday. *This day*. Nobody can make this decision for you, not your sponsor, not your pastor, not your family. But you can make it today.

Trust, and don't lean on your own understanding

> *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*
>
> PROVERBS 3:5–6 (ESV)

Your own understanding got you here. It's not that your mind is worthless. It's that it can't be in charge. *In all your ways* is the "and our lives" part of Step Three. Not some of your ways. All of them.

Deny yourself

> *And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."*
>
> LUKE 9:23–24 (ESV)

Jesus doesn't offer a better version of self-will. He offers a cross. That sounds like loss, and it is. But read the second verse again. The life you were trying so hard to save was the one you were losing. Let it go, and you find it.

It is no longer I who live

> *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*
>
> GALATIANS 2:20 (ESV)

This is the bondage of self, broken. Paul isn't saying he disappeared. He's saying the old self, the actor running the show, was put to death with Christ. What's left is a life lived by faith in the One *who loved me and gave himself for me*. That's what you're turning your will over to: love, not a boss.

The Son sets you free

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

JOHN 8:34–36 (ESV)

You know what slavery feels like. You did things you swore you wouldn't, over and over. Jesus says plainly that the one who sins is a slave. Then He says the best news you'll hear all week: *if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.* Not a little freer. Free.

Not my will

...saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

LUKE 22:42 (ESV)

This is the Third Step prayer on the lips of Jesus, the night before the cross. He didn't want what was coming. He said so. And then He said *not my will.* If the Son of God prayed that way, you can too. You don't have to feel ready. You can tell God the truth about how you feel, and still hand it over.

Jesus is Lord

> *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
>
> PHILIPPIANS 2:9–11 (ESV)

The book says "God was going to be our Director" (p. 62). For a Christian, that Director has a name. Jesus is Lord, not just Savior. Lord means He gets the final say: over your drinking, yes, and over your money, your mouth, your marriage and your plans. Step Three is where you say so, and mean it.

Come to me

> *"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*
>
> MATTHEW 11:28–30 (ESV)

Some people are afraid that turning their life over to God means one more heavy load. Jesus says the opposite. You've been carrying the heavy one. His yoke is easy. His burden is light. *The care of God* looks like this: rest for your soul.

How to work Step Three

Here is a plain way to work this step. Your sponsor may suggest something different. Go with your sponsor.

1. Read pages 58–63 out loud

Read the whole thing, from "Rarely have we seen a person fail" through the Third Step prayer. Out loud, if you can, and with your sponsor if you can. Stop at the actor and ask yourself where you're him.

2. Look at where you're running the show

Think through the areas of your life: family, work, money, health, faith, friendships, the future. In which ones are you still the director? Where are you arranging the lights and the other players? Be honest. Write it in a notebook if that helps, and talk it over with your sponsor.

3. Name what you're afraid of

Most of us hold back on this step because of fear. *What will God ask me to do? What will I lose? What if I hand it over and nothing changes?* Say the fears out loud. Fear doesn't disqualify you. It just needs to be named, so it stops making the decision for you.

4. Make the decision

Pick a time and a place. Don't wait until you feel ready. The book says to think it over and make sure you mean it. Then decide.

5. Pray the Third Step prayer, out loud, with someone

The book suggests taking this step with an understanding person: your sponsor, your pastor, a trusted friend in the program, or your spouse if they understand. Kneel if you want to. Pray the prayer from page 63, or say it in your own words. Mean every word.

If there's no one who would understand, pray it alone with God. That counts.

6. Start Step Four right away

This is the part that proves the decision. The book goes straight from page 63 to page 64. Read pages 64–71 this week and start your resentment list. Don't wait for a better time. Self-will is patient, and it will take the wheel back if you give it a month.

7. Renew it every morning

Pray the Third Step prayer each morning, or just *Thy will be done*. When you catch yourself trying to direct the show during the day, stop and hand it back. You'll do that a lot at first. That's normal. That's the step working.

The actor and the Director

Keep this page handy. When you catch yourself directing again, don't beat yourself up. Say a short prayer, hand it back, and do the next right thing.

Signs you're running the show (pp. 60–62)

- You're upset because people won't do what you want.
- You're trying harder and harder, and it keeps getting worse.
- You're sure it's mostly someone else's fault.
- You're angry, or you feel sorry for yourself.
- You've made a plan, and God is in it as your helper.
- You're afraid of what happens if you let go.

What it looks like to let God direct (pp. 62–63)

- You ask before you act: *What would You have me do?*
- You do the next right thing and leave the outcome to God.
- You let other people make their own choices.
- You look for what you can give, not what you can get.
- You keep your part clean, even when theirs isn't.
- You call someone instead of handling it alone.
- You say *Thy will be done*, and mean it, many times a day (p. 88).

Questions to think about

These aren't for writing in this guide. Think them over, pray about them, write in a notebook if that helps, and talk them through with your sponsor. Jimmy and Sarah ask some of the same questions in the app.

1. Read the actor passage (pp. 60–62). Where in your life are you trying to run the whole show?
2. How has running it on your own worked out?
3. When have your good motives still ended in a collision with someone?
4. What scares you about turning it over?
5. What does "the care of God" mean to you? Care, not punishment.
6. Is there a part of your life you're planning to keep for yourself? What is it, and why?
7. What does it mean to you that Jesus is Lord, not only Savior?
8. Who will you take this step with?
9. Are you ready to make this decision today?
10. What will you do tomorrow morning to act on this decision?

Suggestions for this week

Pick one at a time. You don't need to do all of them.

- Read pages 58–63 of *Alcoholics Anonymous* out loud.
- Pray the Third Step prayer (p. 63) with your sponsor or another understanding person.
- Start Step Four the same week. The book goes straight from page 63 to page 64.
- Every morning: pray the Third Step prayer, or simply *Thy will be done*.
- Read Step Three in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (pp. 34–41) in your own copy.
- Memorize the heart of Luke 22:42: *not my will, but yours, be done*.
- Each night, notice one moment when you tried to direct the show, and one moment when you let God.
- Ask two people at a meeting how they took their Third Step.
- Go to church this Sunday. If you don't have a church, try one.

When it's hard

Almost everyone gets stuck somewhere on this step. Here's what that usually looks like, and what to do.

"I'll turn it over when I feel ready."

You may never feel ready. This is a decision, not a feeling. Romans 12:1 says *present* yourself. Nobody waits to feel like a living sacrifice. Decide, then let the feelings catch up.

"I gave God the drinking. Isn't that enough?"

The step says your will *and your life*. If you've kept your money, your relationships, or your anger for yourself, that's where the next drink is waiting. Ask yourself what you're holding back, and tell your sponsor.

"I'm afraid of what God will make me do."

That's the actor talking, afraid of losing control of the show. Look at what the book says happened to people who took this step: peace, less fear, a new life (p. 63). Look at Matthew 11:28–30 again. God isn't looking for a reason to hurt you. He's the One who came to carry the weight.

"I did it, and I don't feel any different."

Some people feel a big change right away. Many don't. The book says the effect is "sometimes a very great one" (p. 63). Sometimes. Either way, the decision counts. Act on it by starting Step Four, and the change tends to show up in what you do, not in how you feel.

“I keep taking it back.”

Everybody does. You’ll make the decision in the morning and be running the show by lunch. That doesn’t undo the step. It just means you renew it, the same way you’d make up after an argument with someone you love. Hand it back, and keep going.

“I’ll start Step Four once I’ve got this one down.”

You won’t get this one down by waiting. The book goes straight to page 64 because the inventory is how the decision becomes real. Start the resentment list this week, even if it’s just three names.

If you want to drink, call someone before you do anything else. Your sponsor, someone from a meeting, your pastor. Get to a meeting today. If you are in danger, call or text 988, or call 911.

The Third Step prayer

Pray it each morning. Keep this page where you'll see it.

> "God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!"
>
> ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 63

Say it slowly, and stop at each line.

I offer myself to Thee. All of you, not the parts you're proud of.

To build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. He's the Director. You're the one being built.

Relieve me of the bondage of self. Ask to be set free from the endless me.

That victory over them may bear witness to those I would help. What God does in you is for someone else too.

May I do Thy will always! Then get up and start Step Four.

A prayer for this step

You can also pray in your own words. Here is one way:

Lord Jesus, I've been running my own life, and You've seen how that's gone. I can't fix it, and I'm tired of trying.

Today I decide to give You my will and my life. Not just the drinking. My thoughts, my plans, my family, my work, my money, my future. You are Lord. I'm not.

Set me free from myself. When I start directing the show again today, stop me, and show me the next right thing. Give me the courage to start my inventory, and the honesty to see my own part.

Thank You that You care for me. Thank You for this day sober. Not my will, but Yours, be done. Amen.

Ready for Step Four?

Before you call this step done, talk these over with your sponsor:

- Have you made the decision and prayed it out loud, ideally with another person?
- Did you hand over your whole life, not just the drinking?
- Are you renewing the decision each morning?
- Are you catching yourself when you start running the show again?
- Are you ready to start your written inventory this week?

You don't have to feel different to move on. You need to have decided honestly, and to be ready to act.

What's next

Step Four is a written inventory: resentments, fears, sex conduct and other harms, with your own part in each. The book moves you there at once. Read pages 64–71 this week and start your resentment list.

Steps Four and Five are done with a human sponsor. Jimmy and Sarah can explain the step and keep you moving, but you write your inventory with a human sponsor and read it to a person. No human sponsor yet? Ask someone at a meeting this week.

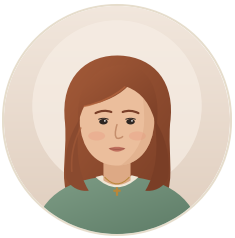
KEEP GOING

Talk it over with Jimmy or Sarah

Steps & Scripture is a Christian Twelve Step app for iPhone and Android. Your sponsor, Jimmy for men or Sarah for women, is an AI who knows *Alcoholics Anonymous* and the Bible. Your sponsor walks the steps with you, one conversation at a time, and keeps pointing you to meetings, a human sponsor, your church, and the phone.



Jimmy



Sarah

Download on the App Store

Get it on Google Play

Free to download. First month free, no card. For adults 18 and older. Jimmy and Sarah are AI. They are not people, and they say so.

IF TODAY IS A BAD DAY

Get help now

If you are in danger or thinking about hurting yourself: call or text **988**, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, or call **911**.

Withdrawal can kill. If you have been drinking heavily and stopped, and you are shaking, sweating, confused, seeing things, or have had a seizure, go to the ER today. If you drink heavily every day, talk to a doctor before you stop.

If you want to drink

- Call someone before you pick up. Your sponsor, someone from a meeting, your pastor.
- Get to a meeting today, early, and stay late.
- Ask: am I hungry, angry, lonely or tired? Deal with that first.
- Play the tape forward. Walk past the first drink to tonight, tomorrow morning, and who you'll have to tell.
- Pray. Even "God, help me" counts.

The SAMHSA National Helpline is free and open 24/7: 1-800-662-4357.

THE PROGRAM

The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. **Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.**
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

1939 wording (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 59).