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Alcoholics Anonymous . . . experience the history . . .

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. . . lest we forget!

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Lets Ask Bill W.

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What about the alcoholic who says that he cannot possibly believe in God?

Answer

A great many of them come to A.A. and they say that they are trapped. By this they mean that we have convinced them that they are fatally ill, yet they cannot accept a belief in God and His grace as a means of recovery. Happily this does not prove to be an impossible dilemma at all. We simply suggest that the newcomers take an easy stance and an open mind; that he proceeds to practice those parts of the Twelve Steps that anyone's common sense would readily recommend. He can certainly admit that he is an alcoholic; that he ought to make a moral inventory; that he ought to discuss his defects with another person; that he should make restitution for harms done; and that he can be helpful to other alcoholics.

We emphasize the 'open mind,' that at least he should admit that there might be a 'Higher Power.' He can certainly admit that he is not God, nor is mankind in general. If he wishes he could place his own dependence upon his own A.A. group. That group is certainly a "Higher Power," so far as recovery from alcoholism is concerned. If these reasonable conditions are met, he then finds himself released from the compulsion to drink; he discovers that his motivations have been changed far out of proportion to anything that could have been achieved by a simple association with us or by any practice of a little more honesty, humility, tolerance, and helpfulness. Little by little he becomes aware that a "Higher Power" is indeed at work. In a matter of months, or at least in a year or two, he is talking freely about God as he understands Him. He has received the gift of God's grace - and he knows it. (N.C.C.A., Blue Book, Vol.12, 1960)

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