

DON P ARCHIVE

Big Book Workshop

1999 | Part 4 | Reading edition

FORMAT	DURATION	RECORDING ID
Transcript PDF	01:18:05	DP-1999-RICHMOND_04

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Transcript

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I know how to do that. Getting called many things, but not snack late anymore. I came to believe in the power of God because I saw it walking around in three men, Bruce and Phil and Roy. I came to believe that this could be useful for me by a little thought process. It was clear to me that these three men accepted me. Accepted me as I was where I was. It was just clear. And it hit me one day that if they could do that in as weak and as imperfect as they were and they really were, as I am and as you are, if they could accept me as it was where I was in this God thinking we're talking about, probably could too. It was the beginning of going down that path.

I came to trust Bruce. The things I'm telling you I could not have articulated now. I've learned to articulate. If he said it, I believed it was so and I tested it on my own self. I have since learned to be very, very careful because when you get someone like that, they will do exactly what you say. They will believe anything I say. I have to be very careful what I say. So sponsorship gives me an edge. It forces me to be in the truth.

It's a wonderful process we've got. When Bill was, I'm going to remember Bill Wilson awakened it spiritually while he was stoned drunk. At least that's how I read it. Ebby shows up and he sits there drinking gin with Ebby all afternoon. They talk for hours drinking gin to the point where immediately after the call, they take Bill to the hospital. They're going to DTs. In the midst of that, while Bill is drunk, despite the living example of my family, they remained in me some vestiges of my old prejudice.

I've got one of those egos. The word God still aroused a certain antipathy because I have all kinds of images attached to the word God. Bruce is suggesting that I forget everything I think I know about anything especially spiritual matters meant that. Whatever I believe about God, forget it. That ain't it. Take all the prejudice off the name. When the thought that was expressed that there might be a God first on me, this feeling was intensified. Amen, brother.

I do not like the idea that God already knows what's going on in my head because I'm already cooked. If that's the truth. I don't want to hang that close. There's a number of reasons. I also don't want to be like the people who tell me that's what's going on for them. I have this arrogant judgment about spiritual people. I was actually terrified. I believed enough and knew enough to know that if I completely surrendered, God had worked for me to do.

I already didn't want to job because I knew what it was. He put me on the corner of Colfax and Broadway on a hot day in a brown suit and brown hat hounding out watchtower magazines and asking strangers if you can save, brother. That's what the job was. I knew it. I knew anything but that. See, I'd seen the guy in the brown suit and the brown hat and the brown shoes doing that we used to make fun of him. And I didn't want that happening to me. And I told Bruce about that. And he laughed. He said, oh, let's talk about that.

Which is sponsor talk. If you get that from the sponsor, it does not mean let us talk about anything at all. It means you'll be quiet for a minute and we'll see if we can get past your thick head. Now, because he loved me, he did what would otherwise be really cruel. Truth without love is cruelty. And confrontation without a real answer

is brutality. So I don't do any of those things. But he loved me, genuinely. He was far more concerned with my life than my feelings. And he had a real answer for me.

So he went for it. He said, Don, do you suppose that the guy that's down there handing out watchtower today had breakfast where he wanted to? And I said, yeah, probably. And he said, well, you didn't. Do you suppose that that guy who's making a fool of himself down there asking people if they've been saved is wearing clothes that he picked out to do there? Yeah. He said, well, you're not. Do you suppose when he's all through humiliating himself and he gets to go home?

Well, I didn't. Because of his great love, he hand carried me into my new mind and laid its foundation. And the foundation of my life is simply this. Anything at all that God has in mind for me is better than anything at all that I will ever have in mind for me. And that is how I live and have been living for a long time. And I'm imperfect and I'm weak, but I do live like that. Now, having come to that conclusion, I made a big mistake. I went back and told him, OK, I'm ready to hand out watchtower now.

And he laughed at me again. He says, Oh, that's noble. But he's already got a guy down there doing that. He probably has something else in mind for you. He could have told me that before he went through all the agony. After me down to New York, one of his smart alley guys gave me three watchtowers the other day. And a little hand-scrawled note show up on Broadway, Son God. So Bill's fighting and he's drunk. And everybody says to him, why don't you choose your own conception of God?

A statement hit me hard. It melted the icy intellectual mountain. A new shadow I had lived in shivered many years. I stood in the sunlight at last. That sounds like a spruce awakening to me. And he's drunk. I need to remember you don't have to be sober for God to enter into your life. I don't want to put any conditions on anybody about when you awaken spiritually. You awaken spiritually when it happens. Not before, not after. When it happens and it's not up to me to decide when that's going to happen or how it's going to look.

I'd like to. But I know. And there's a key word here for me. And for all the other intellectuals in the room, it does not say concept. It says conception. And there's a very real difference between the two. A concept is boxed in, formulated, has nowhere to go. It's a set of rules. This is this, this, this, this. No place to go. That's part of my problem. I have a concept of God and there's no place, there's no movement.

I'm tied to it. I'm in bondage to my own image. I have created God in my own image and boxed in. A conception. Think about the word conception. This sperm meets the egg and there's conception. New life is born. There's all the world in the world, all the room to grow. That's conception. An idea is the same. I get a new conception. Now it can grow and discover itself. More better. I go for that. So for the intellectuals like me, I'm a word mechanic. Don't get trapped by the words. I did for a while.

Bill says it was only a matter of believing, being willing to believe in a power of better than myself. Nothing more would require it for me to make it. That's good. That's all it takes. So a willingness to believe there is such a thing, the pages that is. Do not let any prejudice on page 47. Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms. You deter you from asking yourself what they mean to you. That's been a real guide for me.

I constantly ask myself, what does that mean to me? Not what does it mean to you. What does it mean to me?

Because it has to be real to me. One of the things that I discovered about myself is that everything I ever heard was a lie. Not the people lied to me. I hear something that goes in past my filters. And it's your truth. It's not mine. I just pick the pieces that sound good, which makes it a lie. I've got to have my own experience as a truth. Which means I've got to forget what I think I know.

It's what I think I know is a warped version of what you think you know. It's been a lot of night in the coffeehouses building the fantasies. At the start, this is all we needed to convince spiritual growth to affect our first conscious relationship with God as we understood it. Afterward, we found ourselves accepting many things, which then seemed entirely out of our reach. That was growth, but if we wished to grow, we had to begin somewhere. So we used our own conception, however limited it was.

If they can accept me as I am where I am, perhaps they're God can too. It's a beginning. We needed to ask ourselves about one short question. Do I now believe or am I even willing to believe that there is a power greater than myself? But I even have to ask such a stupid question. I tell you how big my equal is, but I do. Do you? Are you in one to believe that there is a power greater than yourself? Very much. As soon as the man can say he does believe, or he's one to believe we emphatically share in his honest way.

Willingness is the key. The instant I'm willing, it has already happened. If at this moment I do not believe and are not willing to believe in the next moment I'm willing, I now believe. It's changed. It's wonderful. I don't have to do anything. Power is all in the willingness. Here are thousands of men and women over on page 50, worldly indeed. They flatly declare that since they've come to believe in a power greater than themselves.

To take a certain attitude toward that power and to do certain simple things, there's been a revolutionary change in the way of living and thinking. So there's a question implicit in that. Do I want a revolutionary change in my way of living and thinking? If I don't, why should I pursue this? If I do, they must pursue it. It's a question that has to be asked, do I want that? In the face of collapsing despair and the face of total failure of their human resources, they found a new power, peace, happiness, and a sense of direction flowed into them.

Is that a result I want? Power, peace, happiness, and a sense of direction. Yes, it is. Lack of power is my dilemma. There is no peace in my mind. I've become everybody I've ever met and they're all talking at once. Yeah. Committee, hell, we have a country here. Happiness, I wouldn't know what would happen. Jerry Lewis said the most profound thing I've ever heard about happiness. There is no such thing as happiness. You're just going to have to learn to be happy without it.

Huh? It makes sense to me. In a sense of direction, I am sick and tired of lying blind. I don't know where I'm going, but I'm not lost anymore, because I know where I am. And it doesn't matter where I'm going, because I'm not going anymore anyway. Whatever's next, that's where I'll be. That's just one for 2.30 in the morning when you can't sleep. So do we want that? Power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction? It's a result.

This happens soon after they wholeheartedly met a few simple requirements. Oh, we're back to that. Once confused and baffled by the seeming futility of existence, they show the underlying reasons why we're making heavy going of life. Leaving aside the drink question. Leaving aside the drink question. They tell while living what's so unsatisfactory. Now, who is they? They are the people in the stories in the back of this book.

The purpose of the stories have been until recently, to show how each person approached and had an effective relationship with God. Not to help you identify your alcoholism. That's a face-to-face deal with one of us. These stories must be important. Would you say that? We have published a volume called the Alcoholics Anonymous book. We didn't have any stories in it. Did you know that? Where were you when that happened?

I wasn't paying attention either. It's a little bit of a blue book called Alcoholics Anonymous that does not have these stories in it. And if I give that to somebody and they read this and go looking for all my goodness, I'm a hypocrite now. They're lying. They're not there. That's something to think about now, not at 2.30 in the morning. They show how the change came over to me. When many hundreds of people were able to say that the consciousness of the presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith.

And that's really all I can say too. It's the consciousness of God's presence. The whole idea of being hooked up bothers me. That assumes God's one place and I'm another. And I can plug and unplug. That distresses me. I don't do that. God is here now where I am, God is. That's all. I am more or less conscious of that depending on what's going on. But I can't afford to have to look out here anymore because God is not here.

Well, God is. But I find it here. This is my experience here. I can see it out here. While power peace happens in the sense of direction are really important, the human condition has an interesting factor in it that I have to learn to live with. There are really good times. There are really bad times. Most of life is made up of flat time. There isn't much going on at all. And that's the one I don't deal with. I deal with real happy.

I deal with real bad. But I don't know what to do with flat time. Well, this tells me what to do with it. Play. Have fun. Enjoy. Whatever he likes to enjoy, go enjoy it. I spend a good deal of my life talking about and working for and with God. I have a working relationship that is powerful. I really enjoy Hogan's heroes also. Yeah. Me too. And I collect Abbot and Costello movies. And when there's nothing to do, I put one on.

That's how I learned to think. Yeah. That ensure a lot of poems. Because of that, I was able to establish a relationship with my stepdaughter. And she was fairly young. Because I think like Abbot and Costello, which means I think like a stupid child. No. Don't. Anyway, she called one day. It says mom home. And I said, who's mom? She said, well, my mom. I said, well, who are you? Well, I'm Kelly. I said, I'm sorry. Kelly's not here.

No. She fell in love with me. She knew I could play. Okay. What do you do with the flaptime? Play an affron. It's what it says in this book back here. Each family should play as much as their circumstances warned. If newcomers can see no fun and happiness in what we do, they wouldn't want us to. Our fellowship is really important. Because that's where we play together. That's where the gang gets together. And I don't even like all the gang, but I can play with them.

As long as God is present, I can handle good times or bad times. And one of the hardest times for me is an alcoholic. And many of the hundreds that I've talked with are the reasonably good times. Ultra highs are cool. But just the plain old good times after I've conditioned myself to think they're already. I don't do too well with those sometimes. I keep thinking something's about to happen. I'm going to screw this up.

And it'll probably be me that starts it. It's just a vague sense that I have. Based on many years of truth. Okay.

All I've got to do is get out of that. Something isn't left to happen. Enjoy the hell out of it because nothing's going to last. You know, all passes. Enjoy it while it's here. Because it may not be here tomorrow. It'll change. Because I will change. I remember Jack Brown one time and we were picking his brain kind of like this.

And he said please listen closely. Because I will never be by this way again. And that struck me and I said wait a minute. We knew where he was going to be next week and we're going to be with him. And then it hit me when he really said. I will never be by this way again. And neither will you. If we get together next time we're all going to be different. So any business we have to transact with each other. This is the only time we can do it.

It's not life shaking. It's not life threatening. It's just this is it. Now as a principle to life that means I owe it to you. To tell you each time all the truth of who I am. And take from you all the truth that you are. Because we may never meet again either. I learned about death from two A friends, dear friends. When I came out of the penitentiary they tried to send me to Howard. Because Howard didn't have the same penitentiary in the same group.

And I was about a year and a half sober and Howard was about ten or eleven years sober. And they were sure we'd clicked. We didn't. It was not antagonism. We just didn't click. Kind of tentative around each other. But there was an old man named Red who was just an old bum. When he got here. And I adored Red. Red and I had sitting at the top for hours. I just loved him dearly. And as a result of some things Howard died.

Ferret anditis. Just ran out of no water. And I went to his funeral and I was torn up. And I didn't understand it because I didn't even like him that well. It just tore me up. When I figured well it's just the first time I've been able to break loose and cry good. That's all it is. That wasn't it. Two weeks later Red died. And I thought I really am nuts because it didn't hurt a bit. I didn't have any reaction to it. So I went and did some praying about that.

And it got clear. Howard's death disturbed me because we weren't through with each other. We hadn't done it. And now it's too late. With Red, Red had a knack of giving me everything Red was every time. And taking from me everything I was every time. There's nothing left to do. And so other than just kind of regretting that I would get to visit with Red anymore. There was no sense of law. I already had it all. And it changed my life.

I will try to do that with you each time too. Whatever happens here this week, you're getting it all. And you'll never be this way again. Thank God. As long as I'm conscious of where I am God is, it leaves you in for all of that. It means I don't have any expectations of you. What I expect out of everybody I meet is the very best that they are. And I truly expect that. I also assume that whatever you brought to the table today is your best.

And that's good enough for me. Who am I to judge anybody? On anything. And I still sometimes do. What do you think about the whole idea that the consciousness of the presence of God will become the most important effect of your life? So we're thinking about it. It'll come before a job, before a family, before any personal desire. It's sacrifice at the highest order. We tend to think because we're negative by nature. That sacrifice means kill something and give it to the gods.

You know how far we look at it. Sacrifice means I take my most precious possession. And offer it up to God. And what's my most precious? My life. If God's present, you know God enjoys playing too? I'm supposed to turn to God in all things. That's what this thing says. It's ten years sober before this happened. Walking this path,

rigorously. One night I'm getting ready to have sex with my wife. And it occurred to me, you haven't asked God if you go with you yet.

Because I'm in a long way, if you have doubt. Take God by the hand and say, if I go do this, will you go with me? That's a good way to check things. So I did. If I go do this, will you go with me? And I had that sense come over me as, oh yeah. If I can't take God into that, then I'll not be doing it. Whatever I'm going to do, that's what the sense of God's presence is right here. I'm going to be part of this deal. I got to get rid of a lot of old ideas, or I can't do that.

And that's why our inventory process helps with the methods to get rid of that. Talks about the things that block us are fixed ideas. I'd say it's a brilliant word. When you fix something, you attach it so it won't come loose. Fixatives are things that fix things through other things so they don't come loose. I can get fixed ideas about AA and about the big book can have. God help me whether I wanted or not. I went through a period of a while back where I was, that was a Nazi.

I want a big book. I'm sure I was a big book Nazi. If you weren't doing it exactly the way it says here, you weren't doing it right. Not too much arrogance in that. Ten or eleven years sober. If you ten or eleven years sober and you're not doing that, you're missing a good trip. But then you know it all. And particularly about this written inventory, it had to be just really precise. So God sent me buddy and buddy can't write.

Well, I'm a little waffle. I flew out to Buddy's place in Palm Springs and said, Buddy, you talk alright. And I found out Buddy was insane. He could not organize any of his thoughts enough. In three days we got a half of age inventory written. Because Buddy's off to Mars and then off to Saturday and I'm dragging you back and you're a bit of trouble. And I learned to lighten up a little bit. Six years before Buddy wrote a good inventory.

But he stayed sober that whole six years. Doing his best to help other alcoholics and whining a lot. I took on the job. Go ahead and whine Buddy. I'm telling wild stories. I used to think he was kidding me. The stories would tell me. Tell I met the people. He was telling me about that. I mean, no more. Wild, man. I love him dearly. I went on a trust-up call with him, a multi-millionaire builder out of California. I went on a trust-up call with him, two another multi-millionaire up on the hill.

Who couldn't seem to get sober because he hadn't lost anything. Tough, tough cases. And I'll just let Bud do the number. Because he does wonderfully. If you can stand F every third word. Bud's fun. After about an hour it was clear we weren't getting anywhere. Bud just stood up and says, well my friend it's clear to me you're going to die. And he turned around and walked on you. A brilliant move. He didn't do it as a ploy. He really saw that.

The guy was right behind you. What do you mean? What do you mean? What do you mean? Bud sponsored him. The guy is still sober. He told him the truth. The thing I love most about Bud is that there is not a dishonest born in his body. Whatever is showing up, that's who he really is. And he's a joy. I'd have missed him if I was state rigid. I figured this isn't worth doing. And so long away God helps us when we want it or not.

And really nice way. I met Bud on a cruise, a sober sinner's cruise. He was standing at the side of the ship and I told him my wife, that guy's getting ready to jump. I could just see it. So I kind of eased up on him. You don't want to move too fast when people are ready to jump off a ship. And just start visiting with him. Sure

enough. He was getting ready to jump. He was down at his last million and a half and things just weren't right.

You know. He said the only reason he hadn't jumped is that he didn't want the sharks to get the body. Like who cares? So we eased him off and played ping pong for a while. Mental hospitals know that. There's not much in any mental hospital, but there's always a ping pong table. Cuckoo's love, ping pong. So I'm easing Buddy down a little bit playing ping pong. And then we eased off and got into the pool where the water was warm.

That's the second thing you always find in a mental hospital. Hot baths. And he and I spent the whole day doing mental hospital shit. See, I miss those kind of things if I stay rigid. If I don't let God guide me. I'm the only one on a whole ship that saw he was getting ready to jump, or I'm at least the only one who cared. And I want to stay that sensitive. And I don't know how to stop somebody from committing suicide, except to get into their life a little bit and say, would you rather play ping pong for a minute?

Jump later, but man, I need somebody to play with me. She can't play ping pong. Got it? That's some fun. Fixed ideas. I just don't want any. Fixed ideas. I just don't want any. And for those who are not new and who have long-term sobriety, be careful with fixed ideas that come out of this book and out of our fellowship and they'll hamper you too. They hamper me sometimes. They can get in the way. Principles never change, but my application of principles can get me in trouble.

So we had to ask ourselves why we shouldn't apply to our human problems in the same readiness to change our point of view. I'm on page 52 now. The last of the bill's depressive statements. She's got to bring us down to the bottom one more time. We were having trouble with our personal relationships. We couldn't control our emotional natures. We were a prey to misery and depression. We couldn't make a living. We had a feeling of uselessness.

We were full of fear. We were unhappy and we couldn't seem to be a real help to other people. Whoa, there it is again. It was not a basic solution to these bedevilements. It's more important than whether we could see in Israel's winter flight. Of course it was. There are among us those who must have some vision of the future in order to have the hope to go on. Well, there it is. Turn that over. What will it be like when these are gone?

Oh, I won't have any trouble in my personal relationships. And I don't have. Partly because I have enemies now and I cherish them. If you're living in human condition, you're going to piss somebody off just because you showed up. It's just the way it is. You can't please everybody. And I sometimes have to judge my effectiveness. The only judgment I have is the quality of my enemies. I have some really high quality enemies.

I can do them a job. But I won't have trouble with my human relationships because they will all be appropriate. There are people who like me no matter what I do. There are people who don't like me no matter what I do. There are several million people that don't even know my name. Don't give a damn if I ever show up. That's sanity. My emotional nature will be brought back into control. I will laugh at the right place and cry at the right place and be still at the right place.

I do not control my emotional nature. It is now appropriate. One of the difficulties I had for my whole life and if I try to think about it today is still difficult. Most everything feels the same. If I start to figure out am I grieving or am I unhappy or am I touched? I'm lost. I'm just feeling it. What a glorious feeling that is. I don't

know what's going on. I'm just crying like a baby. I get truly stunned when little kids do something right.

They win. It just tears me up. I watch my seven-year-old grandson playing soccer. And bless his heart, his mother was drinking and using cocaine. His real mother's. My daughter's stepson. And he has some anomalies. Heads a little off, ears a little off. He sometimes gets a little freaky and he's clumsy. God love him. And watching him play soccer just breaks my heart. Because he falls down a lot. And when he kicks at the ball, it's here and he's kicking here.

He falls on his butt. One day he got that ball dead off. Right into the goal. No longer afraid of misery and depression. You know, a prey is. That's that little monster student's best to get to the next bush before. Evil gets it and eats it. I'm no longer a prey to anything like that, particularly misery and depression. Depression comes on sometimes. When the hepatitis took me down, that was really depressing. It comes with the territory.

What I've had to learn here is that since God is present, I don't have to be depressed about being depressed. That's the only time I get in trouble anyway. I've made a prayer from that. Dear God, please don't let me get screwed up about being screwed up. Don't let me be depressed about being depressed. It's a great prayer. Separate things into their proper place. You know what you do when you're really depressed? I know what I do.

Go to bed. You see all the medication. If it's really, really bad, I pull covers on my head. I'm able to make a living now. I'm never going to be rich, because I don't care that much about money. It's a sad thing, but I just don't. I didn't marry a rich woman, because I'm not stupid. I found out just the other day she has two retirement plans. I can have fun in a couple years. I'm self-supporting by my own contributions and have been for years.

I've worked so long, and I'm a former thief. I've worked so long, I'm able to draw Social Security benefits. I've been paying my taxes for a long time. In fact, I just had some fun with that. I found out that they'll pay me my entire Social Security benefit and still allow me to make \$20,000 this year. So I resigned and gave myself \$1,000 a year raise. Because the company will pay me the \$20,000 and I'll stay around part-time.

And that means I have to really watch the number of hours I work. It's terrible. Very careful not to make too much money. You must screw up my benefits. They're mine, dammit. So, this is a crazy planet, I'm telling you. Give yourself a raise by quitting. Had a feeling of uselessness. I will become useful. And for me, that's the most important benefit of this way of life. I died Christmas 967 because I had become completely useless.

No human being can live in that state. I am now useful. On any day of my life, for the rest of my life, I can be useful because I'm willing and able to touch one other alcoholic and let them know if you're alcoholic, you don't have to die this way. And I can do that right to my deathbed because my friend John did. John Adams was a great joy. And he ended up with a bad cancer. Didn't want any of the treatment I needed it was time to go.

Went home. Why should he die in a hospital? Went home and in his dying process, which was about a two month period. The neighbors, the top of the neighbors, they were just amazed at the number of people who came to cheer John up. They had no idea. These are the people John sponsored. He was 12 stopping and working with people, literally up to the moment that he died. One of them was with him. And he was beating him in the head with a big love.

So I have an example that I can be useful to the very moment I go. And if I can do that, I can stay here. No

longer full of fear. I mean, I don't get frightened now, man. There's a pretty scary planet out here. There's some shit going on that makes me nervous. So I go to bed at 7.30 at night. Oh, dude. If you know my wife, you knew why. We get up at 5 in the morning to go to work. I can get more work done between 5 or 9 and the rest of them can all day.

And then I get to go home at 2. No longer full of fear. Would that be a nice thing to have? Yeah. When I'm frightened, it's appropriate. It's time to pay close attention. God gave me an instinct that says, the bears are on the loose. I need to pay attention to the rest of the time. What do I want to be afraid for? No longer unhappy. It does not mean that I'm supremely happy. All the time means I'm not unhappy. God, please don't let me get unhappy about God being happy.

It's a great prayer. And I'm able to be of real help to other people. That comes with time. That's a blessing. I can only put it this way. By God's grace, I know people that are 8 generations from me. Because we do it the way this thing said. Bill's vision was not only could he help somebody, they in turn might help steal others. And that's the vision. If we do this right, people who come here 50 years from now, when we're gone, get the same shot we got.

There's integrity all the way down the line. And it's really a joy to see that there's some real help to some people that I've never met. It's simply because we stay close to the big look. The truth is the thing. That's great. One of your great, great, great, great grandchildren comes up and tells you how much you've changed my life. That's bullshit, but I love it. Is that what you want? Because that's what's there. It's what I hear it for us.

What a nice thing. Yeah, I'll take some of that. What do I have to do? Well, we saw that solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the spirit of the universe. I can believe in God and die. I can trust in God and still die. But if I rely upon God, then I get to live a full life. I truly expect to get answers when I ask for them. That's our deal. You run my life. I'll ask the questions on what I'm supposed to do and who I'm supposed to be.

And you answer them for me. That's the deal. So I expect it. The Bible warns against repetitious prayer. I'm a child when I'm hungry. And so I tell mom I'm hungry and she's cooking dinner. When I come back in and tug again, I'm hungry. I know I'm fixing it. I'm hungry. I know I'm fixing it. I'm hungry. She has to stop fixing it and put me somewhere so I don't get hurt. I delay the whole day in process. I've asked once, I expect an answer.

And I'm going to get on about the business of it. And the answer will show up. It may be a day or a week. It may be a matter. I don't know. But I'll get an answer. It usually comes from the source. I don't even think about it. You had that experience. It just comes right in on the wings of the dove. Our ideas do not work what the God idea did. On page 53 is a departure point. When we became alcoholics crushed by our self-imposed crisis, we could neither postpone the revenge.

We had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or is nothing. God either is or isn't. What's our choice to be? And I must make that choice. Whichever choice I make, the battle will be over. If God is everything, what's there to worry about? If God is nothing, what's there to worry about? No matter which choice you make, which God make a choice, it says. Let's take a break and think about that one.

Push on. So we've been promised or we've been told, and accepted, the lack of power is our dilemma. I've

lost the power of choice of the drink. And for me, just about everything else. There must be a power of greater than myself, obviously. Because I can't do this myself and you can't do it. There either is or isn't. And despite my immense arrogance, I cannot say there isn't. A casual look around in my most idiotic state that says I didn't do all this.

There must be. So if I'm willing to say, there is, God is. I have to say that without knowing what that means, by the way. I don't even know what all is. There is an existence of power greater than myself. I can also see it walking around in the people that are first began to, we're proclaiming this, couldn't deny it. So if that's true, where am I going to look? I've been looking out here. My whole MO for 34 years was take it from out here and put it in here so I get to feel better.

I've always got temporary relief. Anywhere from a day to a month to a year, temporary. So this isn't it, I know it. From out here in it, I've tried it, that isn't it. Even my death was from out here in it and it didn't work either. Deep down in every man, woman and child is a fundamental idea of God. Oh, no frightening. Last time I looked deep within myself, I killed it. I took a look at what was there and could not live with it.

Of course I hadn't looked far enough. I was only looking at me. So where am I going to look? Deep within. Are they going to show me how to do that? I presume so. They've told me they'll show me precisely how to do that and how to look within. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp or by worship of other things, but in some form or other it's there. Do you believe that? Now over the years, like I said on the word mechanic, obscured.

I get vague hints that it is there. I've always believed it, but it's obscured. By calamity. Now the truth is, your calamity is probably my entertainment. That's true. Most comedy is based on somebody falling on their ass. As long as it isn't me, it's funny. Calamity is a personal deal. For some people, I don't want to hang nails in calamity. For others, it's falling off a mountain before it becomes a calamity, otherwise it's just kind of an incident.

So, my view of the world is going to need to be looked at. It's skewed somehow. My prejudice is particularly getting away. Prejudice, that's what that means. I make a determination about who you are without hardly any information at all. Your skin color is dark. You must be able to dance. What a stupid thing that is. That's benign. We didn't know what we do. Hers is also perfect. She's dark and you are. Can you dance?

I will prejudge things like that. Anytime I hear all of any particular type of anything does this, I know it's a lie today. There is no way to generalize all of anybody. So, that will obscure. And that's one of the calamities. That's pomp. Pomp are the robes I wear so that it's clear to everyone around, but I am just a little better than you. My favorite ego role has been and still is pompous ass. If you want to know the truth about who I am left alone, I'm a pompous ass.

I keep him alive so he can recognize his friends when they come by. By worship of other things. Sometimes worship and obsession look almost the same. I have worshiped money. Money was God. Whatever it is I'm going to put my faith in is my God. It is my power. It's all God is, it's power. Well, that's not all God is, but God is power. Money, prestige was a big one. Much, much power in prestige. That's the perceived impression that I am something.

If I can get you to believe that I can pull something off, I have power over you. As long as you still need

whatever you think I can pull off. And I encourage that. It's one of the tricks that I use along the way. There's a time in every little boy's life when he worships sex. That's where the power is. He feels it coming on him. It's genetic, ladies. We don't have any choice. I have a mandate from God. My job on this planet is to impregnate anything that stands still long enough.

Good job. First time he hit me it scared me. So I asked my best friend about it. He said, yeah, that's it. Me too. Now I know that isn't right, but that's what it feels like so I get confused. I've talked to enough women to know that at about the same time, your job is to make sure that happens. Just to perpetuate the race. And it's not thought out. God help us we were thought that way. So for a time there's worship of that.

That becomes everything I do from getting a car to everything else is designed to put two blondes in the back seat. Two. Never one. I'm going to do something. I'm going to do the whole job. It sounds funny, but it is funny because that's what we grew up with. Which series about this? We read books about it. We talk about it incessantly. We want to know better ways to do it. Build whole relationships. How silly. When those genes are running in a young man, no wonder a young marriage has seldom worked.

His job is to impregnate everything. And so he's committed here to this lady. And his immediate fear is, oh my goodness. What if the right one comes by? Or what if somebody else comes by and is my job? No wonder they fail. We don't have any comprehension and we don't tell them about it. In our sex inventory, all we're inventorying is conduct. To take a look at selfishness, self-centeredness, inconsiderate behavior, to examine all that kind of thing.

And it takes a little while. God gave us these powers. They're not to be despised nor used ridiculously or loosely. When we go into a sex inventory, I don't know whether God wants you to be a monk or a whore. I have no idea. We won't find out until we get into it. Same with me. I don't know who I am when I get here. I listen to everybody. You got to understand something. As you can probably tell, I love women. I hold you in a very high regard.

I live in a matriarchy. I wouldn't change it for the world. I absolutely adore women. As I should. Hold a very high regard and respect them. But like an idiot, I learned most everything I knew about women. From men. Who don't know shit about women? It wasn't until I got sober and got smart. Now what I know about women, I learn from women. So I get along pretty good. I learned about men. From young boys. Who don't know anything about men either.

I need to find the source here. Integrity. Intuition. Which this book talks about. Learning from within. I need to find out who I am. Not who the generality is. And in going through that, I made an interesting discovery about my own sex activity. There really are things that are almost as interesting to me. That I'd rather be doing sometimes. It is not to be all on end all. If God made anything feel better, he kept it for himself.

But feeling good isn't what it's about all the time anyway. I found out that I am a family man. Through prayer and through our process. One woman at a time, that's plenty. In fact, I finally found out what my sexual preference was. Her name is Jackie and I married her. And that ends that. That's simple. The right one isn't coming by. The right one's already there. Because I found out who I am. I don't know who you are.

We'll find that out. Through all this examination. I'm going on a little because that's America's big hang up. Either too much, not enough, wrong kind. Bill describes it beautiful. We haven't changed any. We don't want to shit. But it's a great power source and we tend to worship it. I've got to stop doing that. We'll stand between me and God if I worship it. So we'll examine it. What are some of the other things you worshiped along the way?

I've made altars to worship you. You're handy. Glamour. Looking good. Can you expand on that a little bit? Yeah. And you get that by what? Going to a concert where they are? Oh, I don't want to do that. Right. Yeah, more better. I'll just fantasize about it. Yeah. Yeah, that's a form of worship. Well, Carl, it's your turn. What have you worshiped along the way? You're talking about all these things are people who have power.

That's what we're really talking about. Whatever the dress may look like. These are people that have the power. They are movers and shakers when they want something they get it. I want the power. Because I don't have any. And I know it. I can see with a pen to tell. Can I try? Didn't work? Well, bad choice. Faith in a power greater than ourselves in the miraculous demonstrations that power in human lives or facts as old as man himself.

My attitude about God when I got here was really simple. He had created the heaven and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh. And for me he was still resting. That was kind of a... There was nothing real. Nothing going on. It was all ancient stuff. I had to change some ideas and some of them... Oh, a bunch of us were talking one time with a spiritual guide. One of the guys who was still angry said, look, if God so almighty powerful, why don't he stop war?

And the answer was, well, he didn't start it. How about these babies born with Down Syndrome? What a tragedy. No. Sorry. You haven't met Christopher yet. Yeah, you know Christopher. Down Texas, yeah. He's changed hundreds and hundreds of lives this young man. Got more love in his little finger than I'll ever hope to have. He's just a pure expression of God. Goofy as hell. Well, I gave a talk down in Texas one time and here's this.

He's 24 at this time. Big Hulk of a kid. With about a four or five year old mind. Comes running down the aisle after I got off the podium and threw a big bear hug on me. He said, I so proud of you. I need to change my viewpoints and my judgments. What I see as a tragedy or what I'm worshiping is probably different than yours. And I need to open up to that. So we finally saw the faith in some kind of God as a part of our make up.

Whether it be money or sex or cars or power or glamor or whatever it is. We had faith in it. We believed that that would bring us what we wanted. And there was the attitude of God that had to change most of all. What's he going to do for me? That must change. The spiritual life is based on what can I do for the self-interested life. What is he going to do for me? Boy, got to go. He's already done everything possible for me that can ever be done.

That's the truth. He even left the knowledge of himself deep within me. So if I ran into trouble I could check it out. And ask for direction and care. It's there. What more is he going to do for me? Sometimes we had to search fearlessly but he was there. He was as much a fact as we were. We found the great reality deep down within us. And the last analysis, there's only there that he may be found. It was so with us. And I'm one of us.

I can tell you bluntly that's where I found it. And I did it this way. Does that sound interesting to anybody?

Would you like to have that close to contact? There's a relationship I can work with. I don't get up and pray in the morning. I pray. And then when it's time I get up. Prayer is an activity that I hate to say prayer because you have your own view of it. I begin my conversation with God the minute I'm conscious.

And it's a conversation. Good morning. I don't move until I have that sense that where I am God is. There's a conversation going on. Don't move. It may take a second or two. It sometimes takes 10 minutes. Sometimes I get so into the conversation. I don't even want to go get up. I go back to sleep. Or I'll just lay there. I'm talking about a benefit of sobriety. To be able to lay still for 10 or 15 minutes without a radio or a TV or anything else going on.

Just to lay there and be still. I'm not taking a chance on getting up on my own. Without first checking to make sure that my power source is available to me. By checking in. Don't elaborate on that. There'll be a different thing for everybody. But it's a comfort to me. Some mornings it's a good morning sir because that's how I feel about it. I don't think God cares what I call him as long as I do. What do I call him a bully?

I've got to call him a God damn bully. I was really pissed. He had me doing things. Of course I'd ask what would you have me do. This is old. Well John didn't show up. You can do his job. Bob didn't show up. You can do his job. By the way, here's your job. I'm busy or hell. And I'm not feeling too good. I got my own problems to take care of. The phone keeps ringing. What's my turn? What's my turn? Where's mine? God damn bully.

And it was almost like a chuckle. It ran through me as I realized he was talking to me. I'm the bully. I told him one morning I've had enough. I'm taking a day off. It wasn't can I. This is what it's going to be. I've been on a road for nearly four years and worn out. I'm taking a day off. When the phone started to ring. And I hadn't gotten to that place in my life where I can just let it ring. I answered it and rang and rang and rang and finally I said, okay, you win.

Whatever you have in mind is fine with me. And the phone quit ringing and I got the day off. That's kind of my relationship with God, if you will. It doesn't make any sense or not. We can only clear the ground a bit if our testimony helps sweep away prejudice. It enables you to think honestly and encourages you to serve yourself. diligently within yourself. Then if you wish you could join us on the broad highway. There's the good news. You don't have to go anywhere.

What you're looking for, you're looking with, it's already all there. Which is a little frightening. As I say, the last time I looked there, it didn't look too cool. That's where it is. You don't have to go anywhere. You don't have to read any more books. You don't even have to do anything. Give in to the idea. God is or isn't. You discover how to relate, how to develop this relationship. Relationships indicate communication, don't they?

Almost all relationships began at the same point. Whether it's business or personal or whatever. They began at this point. Dustin, it begins with an acknowledgement of the presence of whatever you're going to relate with. Good morning. High. Hey. It begins with acknowledgement. It isn't that interesting. Most prayers begin with the same acknowledgement. God. All I got to do is acknowledge the presence and then we can begin the conversation.

Until I acknowledge the presence, I can't begin a conversation. I had one kid, he'd been sponsored through

the steps, one of these intellectuals. God, I love him. Oh, Shelby. He's a bossing right now. He's got one of those minds that... He looked at the computer and programmed it. Hmm. What's that? And he did the steps the same way and he came to me absolutely out of his mind. He was dying. He was doing 10 steps every day, praying rigorously.

He was doing, doing, doing everything possible. He was making it even nuts. He was examining every possible motive and every thought. Did you ever get caught in that? I don't know why I did that. It must be this. It must be this. So I said, I'll sponsor you on one condition, Shelby. The first thing you've got to do, stop praying. You've been talking, if you stop praying, you're going to die. And I said, well, tell me.

You've been telling me about God. Tell me some more about God. And he described this really scary thing here. And I said, is that what you want showing up, Shelby? He said, no. He went and quit calling his name. Okay. Stop praying. The second thing I want you to do is stop writing inventory. He said, Shelby, what do you like to do? He likes to go to movies and eat ice cream. I said, go have an ice cream cone, lighten up, Shelby, first of all.

Go have an ice cream cone, go to a movie, and go get laid, will you? But we did get down to, let's stop praying to this, because that's what we'll show up. He went through two weeks of lightening up a little bit. Went to some movies and had some ice cream. I don't know about the other. I just said that to shake him up. He called him two weeks and he said, I'm truly feeling much better. But I need to pray to something.

I need to pray. And we began working on finding something he could pray to. Now he's in his evangelistic stage. He went down to Birmingham, Alabama to sit them straight. Got him all fixed up. He's fine in Birmingham now. Moved on the Boston. He's so wonderfully arrogant. I just love him. We put him in with a bunch of big book people in Boston and they're not doing it right. They're his grandfathers for God's sake. They're not doing it quite.

He's wonderful. He's got to deal. He was worshiping process. And it was standing in his way of a relationship with God. He was using the steps to manage his own life. And it wasn't working. He was worshiping Shelby. In that mind. And we'll all do that. It's part of the deal. First time through if you don't get arrogant and get evangelistic. I wonder what we missed. And I don't worry about you. You will get yours. I'm not talking about the opposite of me.

Is she doing that? She should. Carl is freaking out. She doesn't want to get like that. Oh, it only. Hey, you can get through that today. Or you can drag it on for a couple of years. After a couple of years you're dangerous. But you can do it all the day. Once you get to that place, just take the salvation out of your detox. It doesn't matter to save as many as you can. Better have that. So after I had waited for that flash of lightning, it didn't come when I'd gone back and bitched with my sponsor.

And he said to be glad you didn't have a flash of light, dummy. It nearly killed you all your life. And we examined some of those. And then he spent a good deal of time with me. Just sharing. Just sharing. The gentleness of his discovery of God. He said, God knows in your present shape you probably couldn't stand one more big shock anyway. And he would probably come to you gently. And he described how he had come to him gently.

This was the killer. And it took a long time to get some things passed then. And that has been my experience. It's always been a gentling experience. But I said to him, look, how do I make this real? I've been to the first day before the first day of creation in my head. I've taken the trips. How do I make this real? God has to be present when I go to work in the morning. Not just when I'm in church. How do I make this real?

He said, Don, God will disclose himself to you as you disclose yourself to you. The big book on page 57 says it a different way. When we drew near to him, he disclosed himself to us. And I drawn near to him by going back into the mess and clearing it away. And that's what I did.