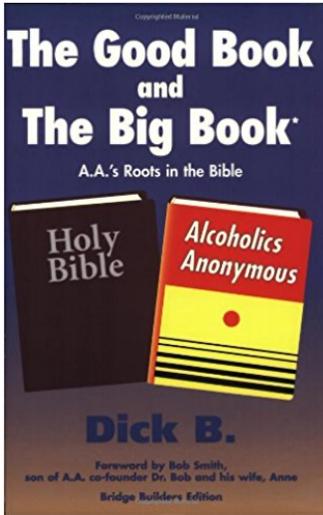


Biblical Roots of the 12 Steps

A **twelve-step program** is a set of guiding principles outlining a course of action for recovery from addiction, compulsion, or other behavioral problems.

Alcoholics Anonymous-AA, the first twelve-step fellowship, was founded in 1935 by Bill Wilson and Dr. Robert Holbrook Smith, known to AA members as "Bill W." and "Dr. Bob", in Akron, Ohio. (*Wikipedia*)



"... we were convinced that the answer to our problems was in the Good Book. To some of us older ones, the parts that we found absolutely essential were the Sermon on the Mount [Matthew 5, 6, and 7], the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, and the Book of James," (From Dr. Bob's last major address to AAs in 1948).

"Dr. Bob was always positive about his faith, Clarence [Clarence H. Snyder] said. If someone asked him a question about the program, his usual response was, 'What does it say in the Good Book?' Suppose he was asked, 'What's all this First Things First?' Dr. Bob would be ready with the appropriate quotation: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto.'" (DR. BOB and the Good Oldtimers, p. 144.)

"One Day at a Time": Dr. Bob pointed to the Sermon on the Mount, **Matthew 6:34** ("Take therefore no thought [be not anxious] for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof)

"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another being the exact nature of our wrongs": Initially, it came from **James 5:16** "Confess your faults one to another and pray for one another that ye may be healed." (Bill Wilson in First Edition of the Big Book, at page 23)

One of the most popular books in early A.A. was Professor Henry Drummond's study of 1 Corinthians 13. The title of the book, *The Greatest Thing in the World*, was taken from the last verse of the Corinthians chapter, which reads: And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity (**1 Corinthians 13:13**).

Dr. Bob said A.A.'s basic ideas had come from Bible study. Early on, A.A. was known as a "Christian Fellowship." The A.A. book said early Akron meetings had been described as "old fashioned prayer meetings." (*DR. BOB and the Good Oldtimers.*)

In December of 1934 Bill Wilson was in Towns Hospital off Central Park in NYC for what would be his last detoxification. During this hospitalization Bill had a dramatic “spiritual experience.” Bill describes this dramatic experience in his history of A.A. (1957, p.63):

“My depression deepened unbearably and finally it seemed to me as though I were at the bottom of the pit. I still gaged badly on the notion of a Power greater than myself, but finally, just for the moment, the last vestige of my proud obstinacy was crushed. All at once I found myself crying out, ‘If there is a God, let Him show Himself! I am ready to do anything, anything!’

Suddenly the room lit up with a great white light. I was caught up into an ecstasy which there are no words to describe. It seemed to me, in my mind’s eye, that I was on a mountain and that a wind not of air but of spirit was blowing. And then it burst upon me that I was a free man. Slowly the ecstasy subsided. I lay on the bed, but now for a time I was in another world, a new world of consciousness. All about me and through me there was a wonderful feeling of Presence, and I thought to myself, ‘So this is the God of the preachers!’ A great peace stole over me and I thought, ‘No matter how wrong things seem to be, they are still all right. Things are all right with God and His world.’”

“Bill was soon walking through the gutters of the Bowery, into the (psyche) ward at Bellevue Hospital, down the slimy corridors of fleabag hotels, and into the detox unit at Towns with a Bible under his arm. He was promising sobriety to every drunk he could corner if they, like he, would only turn their lives over to God.”

