



RECOVERY ROAD ONLINE

RECOVERY STEP ELEVEN

ZOOM UP THE HIGHWAY OF HOPE



WORKING THE RECOVERY STEPS

“STEP ELEVEN”

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out

Spiritual Principle: **SPIRITUALITY**

ELEVENTH STEP PRAYER

Higher Power,
As I understand You, I pray to keep my connection with You open and clear from the confusion of daily life. Through my prayers and meditation, I ask especially for Freedom from rationalization, self-will, and wishful thinking. I pray for the guidance of correct thought and positive action. Your will, not mine, be done.



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Many compulsive gamblers feel that there is something quite significant that is missing in their lives when they quit gambling. For most of us gambling had been a focal point in our lives since adolescence or earlier. In some cases, it seems like there is now an unfilled void in our very soul. Remarkably, this is precisely a “God size hole”. When we improve our conscious contact with our higher power, we usually begin to feel that this void is filled.

For those who are less familiar with the practice of prayer and meditation, we assure you that this is much less challenging and mysterious than it may first seem. Some people have described prayer as simply “talking to God” and meditation as “listening for the answer”.

Let’s discuss prayer first. We should have gained some experience with prayer while working the Third Step and the Seventh Step. By



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now, we have hopefully used the Serenity Prayer, the Third Step Prayer, and we have humbly prayed to have some of our shortcomings removed. We may also have asked to have some fears removed and perhaps we have prayed for willingness to work an especially difficult step. In addition, many of us have learned to simply start each day when we awaken by saying, "Good morning God. Please give me this day without placing a bet". Then at night upon retiring we simply say, "Good night God. Thank you for another day without gambling". One thing that these prayers all have in common is that by now we are confident that these things we are praying for are assuredly consistent with God's will for us. We are not asking for material things for ourselves, but rather the ability to be of service to others and to practice kindness, generosity, honesty and humility. Certainly, we are incapable of practicing these spiritual principles if we are still trapped in the bondage of our gambling addiction.



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With respect to prayer, Step Eleven could hardly be clearer in directing us. “Praying only for knowledge of God’s will for us and the power to carry that out”. In other words, we no longer pray for what we think we might want. We do not pray for a new job, a new partner, a child, or even our own health. We only ask to better know God’s will for us and then the power to carry that out in every challenging situation we face. This greatly simplifies this seemingly mysterious and ancient practice. In addition, members are encouraged to incorporate any other prayers from their faith or spiritual practice into working this step.

There are many ways to meditate and we do not claim to have the monopoly on this wisdom. Many faiths and philosophies offer much direction in this area and we certainly encourage our members to seek out the methods that are most comfortable for them. The Internet and smart phone apps provide a myriad of wonderful and proven approaches to the practice of meditation. Many people find that guided meditations are the most beneficial for them.



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One approach that has been used is to base the meditation on a famous prayer that is often somewhat mistakenly called “The Prayer of St. Francis”. In actuality, the author of this prayer is unknown, but it was in fact written almost 700 years after St. Francis of Assisi died. Following is an older version as you will see in the written language and then on the next page, we modify it slightly and label it as:

Lord, make me an instrument
of your peace,
where there is hatred, let me sow love,
where there is injury, pardon,
where there is doubt, faith,
where there is despair, hope,
where there is darkness, light,
and where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are
born to eternal life.



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“ELEVENTH STEP PRAYER”

God, make me a channel of thy peace.

That where there is hatred, I may bring love.

That where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness.

That where there is discord, I may bring harmony.

That where there is error, I may bring truth.

That where there is doubt, I may bring faith.

That where there is despair, I may bring hope.

That where there are shadows, I may bring light.

That where there is sadness, I may bring joy.

God, grant that I may seek rather

To comfort, than to be comforted.

To understand, than to be understood.

To love, than to be loved.

For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.

It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.



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We now reread this prayer slowly focusing on every word and phrase. We now think about the true meaning of this wonderful prayer and how it can apply in our lives. Is this not truly God's will for us? If we can strive to follow these directions in all of our relationships, in all situations, will not we be truly in synch with our higher power?

This is what we mean when we talk about God's economy. We see now that the God simply does not care about so many of the issues that we obsess about. God does not care about our income, our job title, our social status, our credit score, or the kind of car we drive. God is only concerned with our behavior toward others. The reason that we find this prayer so useful is that it captures the meaning of human perfection so elegantly. If, indeed, we could practice these prescriptions 100% of the time in all situations, we could claim to be the first perfect humans to inhabit the planet. Once again, however, we must settle for "progress, not perfection". We see this prayer as the ideal that we strive for. We now have a measure to empirically gauge our performance with respect to seeking and doing God's will.



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We can now also use this prayer as a basis for meditation. For this, we find it helpful to break it down into small parts. We focus on one idea such as “God grant that I seek rather to understand, than be understood”. We close our eyes and steady our breathing. Many members like to picture themselves in a “happy place” such as a beach, meadow, or mountaintop. We repeat these words slowly, “God grant that I seek to understand rather than be understood”. We let our mind wander. We think of times that we tried to force our will on other people and to make them understand us. Now we try to imagine ourselves trying to understand their point of view and to see the world from their perspective. What was their life like growing up? What experiences formulated their views? We keep repeating, “God grant that I seek rather to understand than be understood”.



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As with most things, prayer and meditation improve with practice. Making these a priority in our busy lives is essential for our continued recovery. Putting aside 5 - 10 minutes daily invariably yields enormous returns. Some members like to set a daily reminder on their phone. Our clarity of thinking and productivity are significantly enhanced. Just as people who make time for regular physical exercise extoll the benefits in productivity, so also do people who make prayer and meditation a priority in their daily lives. In both cases it is not a zero-sum game. People who exercise and pray, generally have more time available for other tasks – not less.

After adhering to a daily regimen of prayer and meditation, in whatever method is most comfortable for the member, for at least a week, we may move on to Step Twelve. However, we should certainly continue with this spiritual practice.



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We are now ready to move to Step Twelve.

