

# AA and the Gospel

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## Introduction

Who here has ever been to an AA meeting?

Do you know an Alcoholic?

You do now...\*

What do you know about Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)?

## Lutheran Service Book;

## Pastoral Care Companion

[Alcohol] addiction becomes a substitute for God as the object, alcohol, becomes the center of one's life and enslaves that person into a bondage from which he cannot free himself. (p. 363)

## What is Alcoholics Anonymous?

### Preamble of Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

### (AA Preamble Continued)

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. **Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.**

## Law & Gospel

in

## The 12 Steps of AA

Law

Threats, punishment, delivers wrath, death, condemnation

Gospel

Promises grace, forgiveness, life and salvation

**1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.**

Key words

Powerless

Unmanageable

What are these words evidence of?

Law or Gospel?

**2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

How does a person 'come to believe'?

Law or Gospel gives power to believe?

Step two wrongly assumes that the crushing blow of the Law in step one is able to create a belief in a 'Power greater than ourselves'

Bible ~ Only the Gospel can create faith

Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see God." (John 3:3)

You did not choose me, I chose you (John 15:16)

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

While this is a laudable goal, there are a few questions that need to be asked

What kind of god is this Power who is going to take care of a person's will and life?

If it is not a God of compassion and mercy then what good is he or she?

A god of the Law? A god whose only job is to help a person stop drinking?

**4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

Whose morality?

The Law (Ten Commandments) of God can be used to make a moral inventory

**5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

Repentance

Is repentance caused by knowledge of the Law?

Only faith in the Gospel produces repentance

**6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**

Let them go!

The Gospel does that!

**7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.**

Are shortcomings sin?

Most likely, but why not call a thing what it is?

SIN IS SIN

Whether these shortcomings be drunkenness, swearing, lying, cheating a short temper...it doesn't matter.

**8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.**

No absolution or request for forgiveness, just restitution

The ability to make amends comes as a result of?

Fear of drinking again

Getting caught

The Gospel?

**9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**

The alcoholic always has the thought of drinking again in the front of his mind. Hopefully he wants to do anything and everything to stay stopped drinking.

The purpose of this step is to clear away any possible resentments or guilty conscience that might drive a person to drink again.

**10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.**

Continuous review life according to?

Daily life of repentance?

**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.**

What is the medium for this conscious contact?

Does God communicate to us through prayer?

How does God speak to human beings?

God's will for us is contained in and revealed in the Bible.

**12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.**

Spiritual Awakening?

Bill W., one of AA's founding fathers had one of these. He described it as a white light.

I haven't had one of these kind of spiritual awakenings...

## Family and Friends of an Alcoholic

## What can you do?

## Theme of For You 2007

The Gospel is not that Christ was born, that He died, or even that He rose on the third day. The Gospel is the proclamation of Christ and

Him crucified FOR YOU. The Gospel is in the FOR YOU.  
Everything that Jesus did, He did FOR YOU!

## What can you do to bring an Alcoholic Christ?

Notice I did not say bring them TO Christ.

I said bring them Christ.

Don't talk about Jesus

Give them Jesus

Tell them, 'Jesus is for you'

His forgiveness is ongoing

Not once, not twice

Jesus comes to forgive you over and over and over again

He comes,

JUST

FOR

YOU

## What does this Mean?

Tell them that you love them. Tell them that you support them, especially when they fail! And when they fail give them Jesus.

Tell them that Jesus is available FOR YOU to receive forgiveness!

Tell them to go where Jesus promises to be

Absolution and the Word of God

Hearing the Gospel of forgiveness for Christ's sake

Stay within your own vocation (office)

## What this does not mean

Do not give advice or counseling in areas that you know nothing about

DO NOT tell them only that you forgive them.

Tell them where to go and receive forgiveness from God Himself

NEVER tell an alcoholic to forgive themselves!

Not only does this pile on the LAW but you also deny the reason for Christ's incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection!

## Three Steps of Counseling an Alcoholic

Help them understand, recognize and accept

Step 1 of AA's Twelve Step Program

Lower defenses by hearing what God wants the Alcoholic to hear:

Law and Gospel

Apply Law and Gospel

This may be the most difficult task

Obtain professional treatment

Encourage attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous closed meetings

Encourage regular meetings with their Pastor that consist of Private Confession and Absolution

## **Lutheran Service Book;**

### **Pastoral Care Companion**

In his ministry to the addict (alcoholic), the pastor will call the addict to repentance and a lively trust in the freeing Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The pastor will encourage the addict to rely on the strength of Christ and will shepherd him to live in the newness of life given in Holy Baptism. (p. 363)

## **Lutheran Service Book;**

### **Pastoral Care Companion**

The Family:

In his ministry to the members of the addict's family, the pastor will encourage patience and perseverance, appropriate confrontation and forgiveness, and, above all, reliance on the sure mercy of God to provide for their every need. (p.363)

### **Concluding Remarks**

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