

## My Thoughts on the Step 11

Like step 10, step 11 is a maintenance step that is crucial for our continued growth in our sobriety. This is because our sobriety is contingent on our Spiritual fitness. There are many levels of Spiritual fitness because we look for Spiritual progress, not Spiritual perfection. What's the old saying, ... "Two steps forward, and one step back." A hundred people in recovery will have a hundred different levels of Spiritual fitness. This is because each of us have our own concept of a Higher Power. I choose to call mine God. All that being said, what does the eleventh step really say? Let's break it down.

*"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."*

It's easy to see that this is a step that requires a more *personal* approach to get results. It tells us to seek out God through prayer, and meditation. So, what does that mean?

Prayer and meditation are a form of communication that is on a Spiritual level (not earthly). It is used to improve our conscious contact with God (as we understand God). An attempt is made, through this contact, to communicate our needs to God, and reflect upon the will of God. The meaning of meditation is derived from the Latin word *meditari* (to concentrate). Meditation is the process of deliberately focusing on specific thoughts like the will of God, a beautiful experience, a spiritual desire, or relief from specific mental or spiritual pain, etc. In the case of the eleventh step, we are concentrating on the will of God. When we do this, we think on the meaning of God's Love, and our perspective of that love. This type of meditation is intended to stimulate thought and receive a deeper understanding of God. It is for cultivating the personal relationship with God, His will for us, and how we can achieve that will.

Most AA's that have been in recovery for a long length of time pray and meditate daily. Some attend religious services, or have a specific place that suits them for prayer and meditation. Some are also able to achieve the meditative state by using yoga, or another form of exercise such as tai chi. I choose to just pray daily in the morning. I occasionally pray the Rosary. Since I would like to try tai chi for fitness, I might try meditating when I start that. There is no set way of talking to God. God can always hear us, and always knows what we need. We can't always hear God, however. This is why most people that want to communicate with God try to do so in a quiet place, or with an activity that stimulates the meditative state of mind. God likes us to talk with Him, because He wants us to be happy, joyous, and free. This prayer and meditation is not to be selfish. It is to be *selfless*.

If the eleventh step is performed regularly, and frequently you will most surely improve your perspective, outlook, and daily contentment. You will enjoy your sober journey more, and have a peace and inspiration that you never had before.