

TURNING IT OVER

I came into A.A. Bankrupt in every department. When I started to take the steps, my first big challenge was to find a power greater than myself that could solve my problems. What an order for a guy who they describe in step two in the 12+12 as the one who had tried religion and found it wanting. I could see the examples of people around me that seemed to have it figured out and I became a nuisance trying to corner them to get them to explain to Me how they do it and they had as much trouble explaining it as I did. One day I confronted my friend, Jim, and asked him to let me in on the secret. Frustrated, He asked, "Do you want to drink right now"? My answer was "NO". He then asked me, "Did you want to drink a year ago"? And my answer was "YES". Next, he asked me "what made the difference"? My answer was that I was influenced by the AA program. His next question was, "Do you have any Problem calling that God? WOW! What a concept. That, I think, is when I turned my will and my life over to the care of God, or Higher Power, if you like.

I have never had or wanted a drink since I entered the program and the only answer I could come up with was the influence of AA in my life. For a guy who couldn't conceive of a day without alcohol, to a guy that has never wanted a drink since, was all I needed to know about God at the time. I wish I could tell you who or what God is, but I can't. I can, however, tell you what God does for me, but I'll get to that later.

When I'm sitting in an AA meeting, as I listen to all the different people sharing, it occurs to me that there may be as many different examples of spiritual experiences as there are people who have had them, and they come in different forms. They can be of the burning bush variety or a psychic change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism. Or, as I like to believe, my spiritual experience came in the form of a "*profound change of perception*". When it occurred to me that all my thinking was flawed and that I was finally in an environment where I could, with the help of the group, start to follow simple unselfish guidelines that would restore my self-esteem and put me at peace with myself and others, I started this wonderful journey, and I've never had it so good. These *universal truths* are common in all philosophies, and I must seek them out if I want to heal.

I pray to God every day, even though I don't know who or what God is. My mind is not sophisticated enough to understand God and I'm not sure that God hears my prayers, but *I HEAR MY PRAYERS* and that puts me in the best possible attitude I can have about the issue I pray for. My prayers are always the same. I pray for knowledge of his will for me and strength to carry it out. I.e. "*God, please show me what to do and give me the strength to do it, I don't do to well on my own*". I often knew what to do but wasn't always strong enough to do what was right. Today I'm stronger. The most important thing to me, when it comes to turning it over to

God (as I understand Him) is to *trust this process*. It has worked for millions of alcoholics exactly as it is promised in the Big Book.

Who or what is God? I'm not sure anyone can define God any more than they can answer a few simple questions, such as: 1) where does space end and what is beyond that? 2) When did time start and what came before that? My simple mind may never know the answers to these questions, but I do know what God does. When I ask for guidance, I become a better listener, and I hear the answers that used to pass right over my head when I thought I had all the answers. I thank God for an *open and trusting* mind.

It may turn out that we are all praying to the same God, and I am more in that vein of thinking. If faith in God started in one place and spread out all over the world, that would be one thing, but the faith in God started in separate civilizations all over the world and when they came together, they all had similar basic concepts. It may be as easy as praying to the same God in different languages. If that's the case, I can only say one thing. When my time is up and I pass on, I'll go to any God that will have me cause I'm doing the best I can down here on earth.

Rick R.