# Thank God, The Nightmare is Over

## My Life Has Meaning at Last

By Rick R.

It was 9 AM and I was just waking up with a terrible hangover and, for some reason, my brain was telling me that I was going to die prematurely if I didn't do something about my drinking, BUT WHAT was I supposed to do, that was the question. I was leading a *meaningless life/existence* and the only thing that meant anything to me was the ability to promote enough money to support my drinking habit. I was running out of options, and of friends that wanted to help me. I was desperately rummaging around my apartment to find something to drink, and for the first time, that I could remember, I couldn't find a drop of alcohol in the place. An hour later I was sitting on the grass in the front lawn of a small yellow house where they held AA meetings. Three sober members of AA greeted me with compassion and understanding and two minutes later, I laid back in the grass, covered my eyes with my forearm, and said to myself, "*Thank God, the nightmare is over;*" and it was. That was on Oct. 15, 1969, and I haven't had, nor wanted, a drink since that very moment. What happened to me that day? I have been an avid member of the program from that day until now, I have always strived to understand what took place at that exact moment, and as best I can describe it, I had *a profound change of perception*. Some will call it spiritual awakening but that's where, I believe, we have our most difficult challenge when we try to clarify the word spiritual. I find two definitions that show the different ways we are conditioned to understand spirituality. *1.) Of, or relating to, or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things. And 2,) of, or relating to religion or religious belief*. Neither definition refers to anything of a material nature. I've resided in my current community for the last 40 years and I attend 8 or 9 meetings weekly and have seen the comings and goings of thousands of A.A. members, and I seem to recognize a difference in the sharing of two groups of people. One will share about material problems or their drinking escapades, and the other will share about things of the inner self, the immaterial or the unseen things such as *guilt, fear, shame, pride, trust, and conscience*. We all have these things, to one degree or another, and the sooner we recognize the value of being rig*ht in spirit,* the more we distance ourselves from the useless, meaningless thinking of the past. My heart goes out to those who haven't experienced that spiritual awakening and if they haven't, they may not even know that they haven't. I wish there was a simple way to induce a spiritual awakening in someone but, without desperation, I may never have experienced it myself. I believe that the futile effort to find alcohol in my apartment that morning, and being unsuccessful, was my bottom and immediately searching out A.A. was like a slingshot for me and I was launched into the program, desperately searching for answers. Until my *desperation outweighed my denial,* my alcoholic thinking had been the only thing I could rely on, for my decision making. Now all my decisions are based on spiritual (unselfish) principles and most of those material problems are but distant memories. It didn't happen overnight, but it did happen. We all come to A.A. with material problems and we must give them due diligence until those issues are resolved. We learn from our past mistakes and find better ways of doing things. If we dedicate ourselves to *understanding the spirit of the things we learn in the program, and not settle for the letter of the law*, so to speak, we can outdistance the failed ideas of yesterday. We will find peace; happiness and *life will have meaning at last. A profound change of perception (spiritual awakening)* will make it so.