

My Own Ideas Did Not Work

The God Idea Did

In the meetings that I attend on a regular basis the topic of God comes up quite often and that's not surprising since there is such an emphasis on trusting in some form of a higher power to stay sober. Alcoholics who continue to show up at the doors of A.A. all come from differing cultures and it is a blessing that the founders of A.A.; when forming the structure of the steps and traditions, had the insight to insure that no alcoholic was left out, regardless of where they stood on this topic. The question of whom or what God is may never be answered to everyone's satisfaction lest A.A. could be turned into a religious organization and the Oxford Group proved that it does not work. In A.A. we have members from many different religions with different versions of what God means to their members. We have Buddhism which does not worship any form of a God. We have atheists that get sober in A.A. and do fine if they have a conscience and live by good moral standards.

On page 52 in the Big Book it says *"When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance on the spirit of the universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did."* When I first read this line, it made me ponder. Is the Spirit of the universe God, or is God the spirit of the universe? Considering the fact, I have never seen God in person (that I know of) it occurred to me that God resides in the Spiritual Realm. Most of my life troubles stem from my instincts gone astray and they are spiritual in nature. Fear, guilt, shame, dishonesty and above all, pride and selfishness all reside within my spiritual makeup. As the result, I cheat, steal, and lie. As I progressed through the steps I was introduced to several prayers to help me to weather the storms that I faced as I took responsibility for my past failings and they helped me to get right with myself and the people I had harmed in the days when I had no scruples. Things changed dramatically for me when I addressed step nine with the faith that I acquired in the program up to that point. When I reached step eleven the word "ONLY" threw me a curve ball. It tells me that I should ONLY pray for knowledge and strength. I read that to mean, *God show me what to do and please give me the strength to do it.* I do not know if anybody hears my prayers, *but I hear my prayers and the right answers seem to come to me in time.*

Well-meaning people sometimes talk about praying for people to get well from a somewhat hopeless physical illness and I have got to question the "ONLY" Clause in step eleven. The conclusion comes to me that if praying for that to happen and it worked, the hospitals would be full of sinners and the people we pray for would be healthy and happy. I do not see any evidence that God works at that level. When someone I know is in a grave condition I ask for guidance and it usually ends up with me being quietly realistic and giving as much support to the family members and Loved ones around that person. I have heard of miracles happening in some cases, but I have seen just as many or more tragedies.

We take the best that religion has to offer as we do with all respected philosophies and hopefully, we become better human beings and deep down inside every human being is the fundamental idea of God. We all have a Consciences and an EGO. As my friend once said, *"you don't have to understand thermodynamics to enjoy the warmth of the sun"*. I say, *"Don't let anything block you from the sunlight of the spirit"*.