

Praying for Potatoes

One of the things I've always enjoyed about A.A. meetings is our ability to poke fun at ourselves and have others poke fun at us, in a lighthearted way. We laugh at things that others would consider having been tragic incidents in our lives, but we seem to have come to terms with these past negative experiences and what we are really laughing at is how absurd our old way of thinking had been. Sometimes we need to have things explained to us in simple terms. The world of A.A. is ripe with metaphors, similes, and allegories that make the learning process much easier. With all the re-learning we go through to help us in changing our old way of thinking, we are faced with the task of setting new principles, new disciplines and new priorities for our actions and behaviors in the future. Starting with the first and most important priority, we must be convinced that, *we are like men who have lost their legs, they never grow new ones*. It can't be put any better than that. Then you may hear it said about relapse: *It's the first drink that gets you drunk, not the Fourth fifth or, you may hear, taking that first drink is like dancing with a gorilla, the dance isn't over till the gorilla says you're done*. These things are truths that we all hear at meetings, but these things won't stop anyone from picking up a drink if they're not done yet

In A.A. we hear a lot about prayer and meditation, and it seems that everyone has their own way of defining what that means to them. Some may be reunited with the religion of their childhood, while others may feel that they are agnostics and seem to find a sort of neutral approach in finding a power greater than themselves, and that seems to work for them. Then there are those that consider themselves atheists and, as it says in the 12X12, "A, one- time, Vice President of the American Atheist Society got through with room to spare." However, we as individuals, frame our own approach to how we incorporate this concept into our lives is equally acceptable, if it replaces our own, failed way of thinking.

What we pray for is another, sometimes, misunderstood practice that may be clarified by a few metaphors that we hear in meetings. Asking God to cure someone of an illness seems, well-meaning but misguided. If God worked his wonders at that level, *the hospitals would be full of sinners and the people we pray for would all be healthy*, and if God did cure sick people, did he not also make them sick, and does he not have the power to make everyone well? I can only pray for the understanding and strength to deal with these things when they are presented as it is suggested in step eleven, " *praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that 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.

In my early days of sobriety, I heard a metaphor that explained this idea and I've never forgotten it. A man was driving down a road and as he passed a farmer in a field cultivating his crop and he pulled over and parked, got out of his car, and was impressed by how beautiful the farm looked. He commented to the farmer, " *Isn't it wonderful what God can do with a little plot of earth?*" the farmer took his handkerchief out, wiped his brow, and replied, " *You should have seen it when God had it by himself.*" Most of the principles I live by today are backed up by stories that *illustrate a point* that may have been easy to misunderstand when my old way of thinking was involved. The next thing that I find important is that I should do the things that I learn when I ask for guidance and not just give them lip service, after all, " *If you're going to pray for potatoes, you better grab a hoe*".