

Steps for Spiritual Growth

In the 12 Steps & 12 Traditions (p31), we read ...

Psychiatrists have often observed, defiance is the outstanding characteristic of many an alcoholic. So it's not strange that lots of us have had our day at defying God Himself. Sometimes it's because God has not delivered us the good things of life which we specified, as a greedy child makes an impossible list for Santa Claus. More often, though, we had met up with some major calamity, and to our way of thinking lost out because God deserted us. The girl we wanted to marry had other notions; we prayed God that she'd change her mind, but she didn't. We prayed for healthy children, and were presented with sick ones, or none at all. We prayed for promotions at business, and none came. Loved ones, upon whom we heartily depended, were taken from us by so-called acts of God. Then we became drunkards, and asked God to stop that. But nothing happened. This was the unkindest cut of all. `Damn this faith business!' we said.

When we encountered A.A., the fallacy of our defiance was revealed. At no time had we asked what God's will was for us; instead, we had been telling Him what it ought to be. No man, we saw, could believe in God and defy Him, too. Belief meant reliance, not; defiance. In A.A., we saw the fruits of this belief: men and women spared from alcohol's final catastrophe. We saw them meet and transcend their other pains and trials. We saw them calmly accept impossible situations, seeking neither to run nor to recriminate. This was not only faith; it was faith that worked under all conditions. We soon concluded that whatever price in humility we must pay, we would pay.

On page 33, in the 12 Steps & 12 Traditions, we read ...

True humility and an open mind can lead us to faith, and every A.A. meeting is an assurance that God will restore us to sanity if we rightly relate ourselves to Him.

For this study, we will consider 3 ideas. (1) Resisting God, (2) Asking for God's will in our lives, and (3) Submitting to God.

RESISTING GOD

In the above paragraph, we read, "Psychiatrists have often observed, defiance is the outstanding characteristic of many an alcoholic. So it's not strange that lots of us have had our day at defying God Himself." And, we read, "No man, we saw, could believe in God and defy Him, too. Belief meant reliance, not; defiance."

This passage is the result of David's resistance to God and his sin with Bathsheba ... the story is found in 2 Samuel 11.

Psalms 32:1-5 (TLB) ^(32:1) What happiness for those whose guilt has been forgiven! What joys when sins are covered over! What relief for those who have confessed their sins and God has cleared their record. ⁽²⁾ ⁽³⁾ There was a time when I wouldn't admit what a sinner I was. But my dishonesty made me miserable and filled my days with frustration. ⁽⁴⁾ All day and all night your hand was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water on a sunny day ⁽⁵⁾ until I finally admitted all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, "I will confess them to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

- What was the result of David's resistance? v3-4
- What was the result of David's submission to God? V1,5

Acts 7:51 (MSG) (Peter preaching to people in Jerusalem) "You continue to be bullheaded! Calluses on your hearts, flaps on your ears! Deliberately ignoring and resisting the Holy Spirit, just like your ancestors did.

- When we resist God, in what 2 ways do we act?
- What is the result of being bullheaded and putting flaps on our ears?

Ephesians 4:29-32 (MSG) (4:29) Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift. (30) Don't resist and grieve God. Don't break his heart. His Holy Spirit, moving and breathing in you, is the most intimate part of your life, making you fit for himself. Don't take such a gift for granted. (31) Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. (32) Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.

When we resist God, in what ways do we act?

What is the result of resisting and grieving God?

When we submit to God, what is the result?

ASKING FOR GOD'S WILL IN OUR LIVES

In the above paragraph, we read, "When we encountered A.A., the fallacy of our defiance was revealed. At no time had we asked what God's will was for us; instead we had been telling Him what it ought to be."

Instead of telling God what we want, we need to ask what he wants. We should be asking for His will to be done in our lives. Then we will experience the peace, power and presence of God in our lives. We will be happy, joyous and free.

Matthew 6:9-13 (NIV) (6:9) "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, (10) your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (11) Give us today our daily bread. (12) Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Matthew 26:36-39 (CEV) (26:36) Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane. When they got there, he told them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." (37) Jesus took along Peter and the two brothers, James and John. He was very sad and troubled, (38) and he said to them, "I am so sad that I feel as if I am dying. Stay here and keep awake with me." (39) Jesus walked on a little way. Then he knelt with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, don't make me suffer this way. But do what you want, and not what I want."

SUBMITTING TO GOD

In the above paragraph, we read, "This was not only faith; it was faith that worked under all conditions. We soon concluded that whatever price in humility we must pay, we would pay."

And, we read, "True humility and an open mind can lead us to faith, and every A.A., meeting is an assurance that God will restore us to sanity if we rightly relate ourselves to Him."

James 4:7-10 (EXP) (7)Place yourselves under God's authority, give yourselves completely to him, submit to what he wants for you and let him work his will in you. Then, resist the devil, stand firm against him, yell a loud no him, and he will run away from you. (8)Come close to God saying yes to him and he will come close to you. Quit playing around with sin and clean up your lives. Fill your hearts with God alone and He will purify your hearts and minds. Then you will be pure and true to him; your loyalty will not be divided between God and a sinful culture. (9)As you draw near to God, there will be grieving, weeping and sorrow for the way you have lived. When you see what you have done, your laughter will change to sadness and your joy into shame for your sins. It is time to get real serious with God. (10)So, get down on your face before God; it's the only way to get on your feet. He will lift you up.

- Who do we submit to? V7
- Who do we resist? V7
- Who do we say yes to? V8
- Who live do we clean up? V8
- What happens when you draw near to God? V9
- What happens when you get on your face before God? V10