

## Removing Sinful Behaviors and Living By God's Word

Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers - Pg# 96-97 .... Dr. Bob, noting that there were no Twelve Steps at the time (1935) and that "our stories didn't amount to anything to speak of," later said they were convinced that the answer to their problems was in the Good Book. "To some of us older ones, the parts that we found absolutely essential were the Sermon on the Mount, the 13th chapter of First Corinthians, and the Book of James," he said.

"We already had the basic ideas, though not in terse and tangible form. We got them ... as a result of our study of the Good Book.

One of the principles that Dr. Bob and the old-timers taught was removing of sinful behaviors from your life in obedience to God's will for your life.

In Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, page 131, we read about Frank Amos describing the AA program of Dr. Bob's to John D. Rockefeller Jr., who had sent him to investigate the program.

Mr. Amos said that the alcoholic group comprised "some 50 men and, I believe, two women former alcoholics-all considered practically incurable by physicians-who have been reformed and so far have remained teetotalers." In meeting with a number of the men, their wives, and "in some cases, their mothers," Mr. Amos heard varying stories, "many of them almost miraculous." He noted, however, that when it came to recovery, they were all remarkably alike in "the technique used and the system followed." He described the "Program" as follows:

"1. An alcoholic must realize that he is an alcoholic, incurable from a medical viewpoint, and that he must never again drink anything with alcohol in it.

"2. He must surrender himself absolutely to God, realizing that in himself there is no hope.

"3. Not only must he want to stop drinking permanently, he must remove from his life other sins, such as hatred, adultery, and others which frequently accompany alcoholism. Unless he will do this absolutely, Smith and his associates refuse to work with him.

"4. He must have devotions every morning a 'quiet time' of prayer and some reading from the Bible and other religious literature. Unless this is faithfully followed, there is grave danger of backsliding.

"5. He must be willing to help other alcoholics get straightened out. This throws up a protective barrier and strengthens his own willpower and convictions.

"6. It is important, but not vital, that he meet frequently with other reformed alcoholics and form both a social and a religious comradeship.

"7. Important, but not vital, that he attend some religious service at least once weekly."

Mr. Amos said, "All the above is being carried out faithfully by the Akron group, and not a day passes when there is not one or more new victims to work on, with Smith as their leader by common consent."

As you study the Steps, you find that Steps 4 through 7 deal with the same principle – removing sinful behaviors from your life.

- 4 - Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5 - Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6 - Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7 - Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

A common definition of a “dry drunk” is someone who has stopped drinking, but who still demonstrates the same alcoholic behaviors and attitudes.

Dr. Rose Alexander writes, “A Dry Drunk has been described as a condition of returning to one's old alcoholic thinking and behavior without actually having taken a drink. Or as one wise old drunk put it, if a horse thief goes into A.A. what you can end up with is a sober horse thief. Or a personal favorite: you can take the rum out of the fruit cake, but you've still got a fruit cake! Those who quit drinking often are still angry about it, wind up living miserable lives and usually make everyone else around them miserable too”.

There are many who get sober, but still demonstrate all the sinful behaviors of their drinking days. **God has a different plan for our lives.** He not only wants us “sober”, he wants us to live a godly life.

In James 1:21-25, we read ...

*Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. <sup>(22)</sup> Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. <sup>(23)</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>(24)</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. <sup>(25)</sup> But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does. **James 1:21-25 (NIV)***

Last week we discussed part of James 1:21 to see what the Bible has to say about removing sinful behavior from our lives.

*Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent. **James 1:21 (NIV)***

Another version of this verse says, “You must stop doing and get rid all immoral behavior, all the evil habits and conduct that are part of your life.” **James 1:21 (EXP)**

This week we will finish the second part of this verse which says,

*“...humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. **James 1:21 (NIV)***

Another version of this verse says, *“Humbly yourself and submit to God. Accept the message he has placed in your hearts. This word has the power to save your souls.” **James 1:21 (EXP)***

This is a picture of accepting, believing and applying the Word of God to our lives. When we have a teachable spirit we are able to face the truth, even when it hurts and convicts us of sin. The teachable spirit is not blinded by its own prejudices but is clear-eyed to the truth.

Remember a few words from the Big Book (page 586).

“Most of us think this awareness of a Power greater than ourselves is the essence of spiritual experience. Our more religious members call it “God-consciousness.” Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problems in the light of our experience can recover, provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial. We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. Willingness, honesty and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.”

“There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance—that principle is contempt prior to investigation.” —Herbert Spencer

If we are to accept, believe and apply the Word of God to our lives, let’s see what they Bible has to say about itself.

Examine 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

### **2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)**

All Scripture is God-breathed [everything in the Scriptures is God's Word; it is inspired by God] and is useful for teaching [what is true], rebuking [showing us what is wrong in our lives; pointing out errors], correcting [it shows us out to straightens out what is wrong] and training in righteousness [showing us how to live God’s way], (17) so that the man [or woman] of God may be thoroughly equipped [prepared] for every good work [to do good things].

1. What 4 things is the Bible useful for? Explain each one.
2. What is the result of living by the principles of the Bible?

Here are two questions what will help you decide what you think about the Bible.

- a) Will God tell me a lie? What do you think, Yes, or No.

b) If God will not tell a lie, will I accept the Bible as His Word? Yes or No.

If you answered one of those questions with a “No”, the Bible will mean nothing to you and you will live by our own set of values, morals, ethics and standards. If that is what you want, that is your choice. However, I hope that you will consider your situation and recognize that living your way has not resulted in the things you have wanted for your life. It might be time to try another way.

If God will not tell me a lie and I can accept the Bible as His Word, then the Bible is God’s instruction manual for my life. He tells me how to live. When I live by God’s instructions, God blesses my life.

Examine Psalm 119:9-11.

**Psalm 119:9-11 (NIV)**

<sup>(119:9)</sup> How can a young man [or woman] keep his [her] way pure [live a godly life]? By living according to your word [doing what God says to do; reading your Word and following its rules; conforming my life to it]. <sup>(10)</sup> I seek you [God] with all my heart; do not let me stray [walk away; wander away] from your commands [either in ignorance or willfully]. <sup>(11)</sup> I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you [living by your Word keeps me from sinning against you].

1. How does a person live a godly life? (vs9)
2. If we are to live a godly life, what must we do? (vs10)
3. How do we hide God’s Word in our heart? (vs11)
4. What is the result of living by God’s Word? (vs11)