

God's Great Design
Steps for Spiritual Growth

Ephesians 1:11 (MSG) It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living.

God's Great Design for Our Lives

In God's great design He planned and prescribed for certain things to help us grow, develop, be healthy, and become mature. If we don't make use of these specific means of grace, we will become anemic, malnourished, weak, sickly, and ready to die – if they are not corrected. What is this great design God has planned for us?

1. **God planned that you and He would have a time of _____ and fellowship every day.**

Matthew 6:6 (TEV) But when you pray, go to your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you.

Big Book, p59 - Step 11 -- Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

2. **God planned that you would personally learn His heart mind, and values by reading His _____ daily.**

Psalms 119:9-11 (TLB) (119:9) How can a young man stay pure? By reading your Word and following its rules. **(10)** I have tried my best to find you--don't let me wander off from your instructions. **(11)** I have thought much about your words and stored them in my heart so that they would hold me back from sin.

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, [*all come from the Bible*]" he said. This was the beginning of

A.A.'s "flying-blind period." They had the Bible, and they had the precepts of the Oxford Group. They also had their own instincts. They were working, or working out, the A.A. program, the Twelve Steps, without quite knowing how they were doing it. Dr. Bob went on to say, "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. We must have had them. Since then, we have learned from experience that they are very important in maintaining sobriety. We were maintaining sobriety; therefore, we must have had them.

3. God planned that you would have spiritual brothers and sisters to give you encouragement and share their experience, strength and _____ with you.

Romans 15:13 (NLT) I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

1 Timothy 4:8-10 (CEV) (4:8) As the saying goes, "Exercise is good for your body, but religion helps you in every way. It promises life now and forever." These words are worthwhile and should not be forgotten. **(9) (10)** We have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of everyone, but especially of those who have faith. That's why we work and struggle so hard.

Big Book, pxxii - Recovery begins when one alcoholic talks with another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength, and hope.

Big Book, pxiv - In any meeting, anywhere, A.A.'s share experience, strength, and hope with each other, in order to stay sober and help other alcoholics.

Big Book, p66 - It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. To the precise extent that we permit these, do we squander the hours that might have been worthwhile. But with the alcoholic, whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal. For when harboring such feeling we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns, and we drink again. And with us, to drink is to die.

4. God planned that you would care for others, daily demonstrate acts of kindness, and be involved in _____ as a means of developing growth.

1 Peter 4:10 (NCV) Each of you has received a gift to use to serve others. Be good servants of God's various gifts.

Galatians 6:9-10 (CEV) (6:9) Don't get tired of helping others. You will be rewarded when the time is right, if you don't give up. **(10)** We should help people whenever we can, especially if they are followers of the Lord.

Big Book, pxvi-xvii - This physician (Dr. Bob) had repeatedly tried spiritual means to resolve his alcoholic dilemma but had failed. But when the broker (Bill W) gave him Dr. Silkworth's description of alcoholism and its hopelessness, the physician began to pursue the spiritual remedy for his malady with a willingness he had never before been able to muster. He sobered, never to drink again up to the moment of his death in 1950. This seemed to prove that one alcoholic could affect another as no nonalcoholic could. It also indicated that strenuous work, one alcoholic with another, was vital to permanent recovery.

Big Book, p77 - Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.

5. God planned for trials and adversity to enter your life so that you might become _____.

Ephesians 6:10 (AMP) In conclusion, be strong in the Lord [be empowered through your union with Him]; draw your strength from Him [that strength which His boundless might provide].

Philippians 4:11-13 (CEV) (4:11) I am not complaining about having too little. I have learned to be satisfied with whatever I have. **(12)** I know what it is to be poor or to have plenty, and I have lived under all kinds of conditions. I know what it means to be full or to be hungry, to have too much or too little. **(13)** Christ gives me the strength to face anything.

Big Book, p13 - I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within. Common sense would thus become uncommon sense. I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me.

Big Book, p68 - We never apologize to anyone for depending upon our Creator. We can laugh at those who think spirituality is the way of weakness. Paradoxically, it is the way of strength. the verdict of the ages is that faith means courage. all men of faith have courage.

6. God planned (in all the negative things of life) for you to exercise _____ and endurance for they will refine your character and bring about maturity.

Hebrews 11:6 (MSG) It's impossible to please God apart from faith. And why? Because anyone who wants to approach God must believe both that he exists *and* that he cares enough to respond to those who seek him.

Hebrews 11:1 (TLB) What is faith? It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead.

Big Book, p14-15 --- Faith without works was dead, he (Ebby T.) said. And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed. With us it is just like that.

Big Book, p16 - Faith has to work twenty-four hours a day in and through us, or we perish.

Big Book, p50-51 - Once confused and baffled by the seeming futility of existence, they show the underlying reasons why they were making heavy going of life. Leaving aside the drink question, they tell why living was so unsatisfactory. They show how the change came over them. When many hundreds of people are able to say that the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith.

Answers: prayer, word, hope, service, strong, faith