

This is not to dilute our confidence in the prayer, but to leave open other options we may not have envisioned. Remember, we receive guidance from God for our lives to the extent that we stop making demands upon God to give it to us on order and on our terms.

The final portion of Step Eleven suggests that after we have asked for knowledge of God's will, that we then ask for the power to carry it out. To start, we must exercise our will power, and after we have done the footwork, God will supply us with the additional power to carry out God's will.

The entire Twelve Step program is spiritual. Step Eleven is where we start to practice the methods that will allow us, if we put forth enough concentration persistently and on a daily basis, to gain a deeper and deeper awareness of God's guiding presence. This Step cannot be bypassed if we are sincerely seeking a spiritual awakening. We will be comforted and granted glimpses of the Kingdom so long as we try, however unflattering, to find and do the will of God.

STEP 11 WRITING GUIDE

1. Why is it necessary to improve our conscious contact with God?
2. What are the principal means of improving our conscious contact with God?
3. What is the object of prayer and mediation?
4. How do you attempt to get God to do your will? How do you attempt to give God orders? Give examples.
5. What should you ask God for in your prayers?
6. Is your prayer and mediation practiced throughout the day? How might that happen?

Eleventh Step Prayer

*Lord, make me a channel of thy peace
that where there is hatred, I may bring love
that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness
that where there is discord, I may bring harmony
that where there is error, I may bring truth
that where there doubt, I may bring faith
that where there is despair, I may bring hope
that where there are shadows, I may bring light
that where there is sadness, I may bring joy.*

*Lord, grant that I may seek rather
to comfort than to be comforted
to understand, than to be understood
to love, than to be loved.*

*For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.
It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life.*

Amen

Eleventh Step Guide

“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.”

Step Ten is the first of the maintenance Steps:

1. Suggests taking a daily personal inventory, and when we are wrong, promptly admitting it.
2. Helps us to develop the habit of accurate self-appraisal.
3. Makes us aware of the necessity of admitting our wrongs, first to ourselves, and then to others when the admission would be helpful.

Also, we are starting to develop self-restraint and build character by spotting, admitting and correcting the acquired defects of character. Step Ten is the beginning of a lifetime practice centered in the here and now.

Step Eleven, the second maintenance Step, is also a NOW Step. Previously, in Steps One through Three, we found that:

1. Our lives have been, are NOW, and will remain unmanageable.
2. God can restore us to sanity if we rightly relate ourselves to Him.
3. We made a decision daily to turn our lives and our will over to His care.

Since we are undisciplined in almost all areas of our lives, we now must use prayer and meditation as the principal means of maintaining a conscious contact with God.

The first element of Step Eleven concerns itself with prayer and meditation as the principal means of improving our conscious contact with God. Meditation is the process that allows us to become closer to God and gain a deeper and deeper awareness of HIS presence within.

In the beginning, we use the prayer found in Step Eleven of the *Twelve and Twelve*, which is given below. Praying this prayer several times very slowly, we dwell on and savor every word, letting God illumine the deeper meaning of each phrase. We relax and breathe deeply of the spiritual atmosphere with which the grace of this prayer surrounds us.

Let us still the thinking mind, gently, and allow ourselves to then focus undisturbed on the essence of the prayer. For example, being “*an instrument of peace*,” asking for the grace to bring love, forgiveness, etc. to others, seeking to give comfort, understanding and love rather than receiving it – trying to self-forget.

Meditation is something that should always be further developed. The object of meditation is to improve our conscious contact with God and allow God’s views, ways, and grace to permeate and shape our personality. Prayer is the raising of the heart and mind to God. Using meditation to open ourselves, we use prayer to acknowledge God’s Sovereignty and right to guide our lives – we praise God’s capability, competence, and skill in managing our recovery – then and only then, we ask for those right things of which we and others are in the greatest need. Too often we make our prayer time a To Do List for God.

We need to grow towards the balance of praising God as well as petitioning for our and others’ needs. We may thus end our meditation session with a prayer in which we ask especially for the freedom from self-will. We never pray for our own selfish ends. In the morning we ask God to direct our thinking so that it may be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.

Throughout the day, we constructively review the day (actually, an “*interim Tenth Step*” before the end of the day!) and ask God’s forgiveness and guidance. The second prayer given below may help with this day-long praying.

The second element of Step Eleven suggests that we pray only for the knowledge of what God’s will is for us. Our immediate temptation will be to ask God for specific solutions to specific problems; however, this is asking God to do it our way. Since our purpose is to conform our will to God’s will, we should ask only for the guidance to follow God’s will and leave our will out. If we do make specific requests, we might add, “*if it be thy will.*”
