

Principles from Alcoholics  
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Principles from Sermon on  
the Mount

Ted Bratter Memorial

Joshua Tree Retreat

Step# 1: P. 21 Complete Defeat:

Who cares to admit complete defeat?  
Not Me! Practically every natural instinct in me cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness. Until I have accepted my devastating weakness and all of its consequences, my sobriety, if any, will be precarious. Of real happiness I will find none at all.

Step# 2 P. 25:

Sometimes I can't believe in God, and sometimes I won't believe in God, and sometimes I lack the faith that he will perform His miracle in my life... You've got me over a barrel, all right – but where do I go from here?

P. 24: *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven:*

To be *poor in spirit* does not in the least mean the thing we call "poor spirited" nowadays. To be *poor in spirit* means to have emptied yourself of all desire to exercise personal self-will, and, what is just as important, to have renounced all preconceived opinions in the wholehearted search for God. It means to be willing to set aside your present habits of thought, your present views and prejudices, your present way of life if necessary; to jettison, in fact, anything and everything that can stand in the way of your finding God.

We reject the salvation that Jesus offers us—our chance of finding God—because we "have great possessions"; not in the least because we are very rich in terms of money, for indeed most people are not, but because we have great possessions in the way of preconceived ideas—confidence in our own judgment, and in the ideas with which we happen to be familiar; spiritual pride, born of academic distinction; sentimental or material attachment to institutions and organizations; habits of life that we have no desire to renounce;

P. 32: *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

If you want spiritual unfoldment and growth in the knowledge of God, you must think spiritual thoughts – God thoughts – and give your attention, which is your life, to God rather than to limitation.

If you want material prosperity, you must first think prosperity thoughts, and then *make a habit* of doing so, for the thing that keeps most people poor is the sheer habit of poverty

thinking. If you want congenial companionship, if you want to be loved, your must first think thoughts of love and good-will. *Like begets like*, is another way of stating the Great Law, which means that as a man soweth in his unseen thoughts, so shall he reap in that which is seen. "All things work together for good to those who love good," and to love good means to occupy oneself with thoughts of good.

Step# 2 P. 26:

The hoop that I have to jump through is wider than I think... Looking back, I find that I took it piecemeal myself...

P. 50: *As a Man Thinketh (ON THE SPIRITUAL COMING OF AGE ~ COMING TO BELIEVE)*

This Spiritual Coming of Age cannot be hurried or forced, but must appear in its own good time, when the consciousness is ready, exactly as the flowering of a bulb can only be the result of natural growth. You have to demonstrate where you are. Let this be for frontlets between your eyes, and write it upon the doorposts of your heart—you *have to demonstrate where you are*. To seek to demonstrate beyond your understanding is not spiritual. Spiritual development is a matter of growth, and he that believeth shall not unwisely make haste. Fix your attention wholeheartedly upon spiritual things, and meanwhile do all that needs to be done in the ordinary way; and without consciously trying to make haste you will be amazed to discover the pace at which your soul has hastened.

Step# 2 P. 28:

The Bewildered One: Consider my plight; I am the one who once had faith and has now lost it... Faith comes harder for me than for others who never had it because I have tried the way of faith and found it wanting...

P. 38~39: *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. (THE FLOWER GARDEN)*

We are very much in the position of a color-blind man in a beautiful flower garden. All around him are glorious colors; but he is quite unaware of them and sees only blacks, whites, and grays. If we suppose him to be

also devoid of the sense of smell, we shall see what a very small part of the glory of the garden exists for him. Yet it is all there, if he could but sense it.

This limitation in us is known in theology as the "Fall of Man," and it arises from our using our free will in opposition to the Will of God.

Step# 2 P. 30:

Self-righteousness, the very thing that I condemn in others, is my own besetting evil. This phony form of respectability is my undoing, so far as faith is concerned.

*P.45: Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

Nothing can come into our experience it finds something in us with which it is attuned so, to have trouble and difficulty is only a sign that our own mentality needs clearing up; for *what you see at any time is nothing but your own concept*. There is at this point a grave danger for weak, or vain, or self-righteous people. Because others do not treat them just as would like to be treated, because they do not get the consideration that they probably do not deserve, they often inclined to claim that they are being "persecuted" on account of their spiritual superiority... This is a pathetic fallacy... for we can only get only what belongs to us at any time, and nobody can prevent our getting that: so all persecution and hindrance are absolutely from within.

Step# 2 P. 32

Quality of Faith: this has been my blind spot. I supposed that I had humility when I really hadn't. I supposed that I had been serious about (spiritual) practices when, upon honest

*P. 31: Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

If it were possible for us to affect externals directly without changing our thought, it

appraisal, I found that I had only been superficial.

would mean that we could think one thing and produce another; and this would be contrary to the Law of the Universe. Indeed, it is just this very notion which is the basic fallacy that lies at the root of all human trouble—all sickness and sin, all strife and poverty, and even death itself.

The great Law of the Universe, however, is just this—that what you think in your mind you will produce in your experience. *As within, so without.* You can not think one thing and produce another. If you want to control your circumstances for harmony and happiness, you must first control your thoughts for harmony and happiness, and then the outer things will follow.

Step# 3: P. 34

Turning my will and live over to God: I can have faith and yet keep God out of my life. Therefore my problem now becomes just how and by what means shall I be able to let Him in?

P. 21: *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for they shall see God*

To be *poor in spirit* does not in the least mean the thing we call "poor spirited" nowadays. To be *poor in spirit* means to have emptied yourself of all desire to exercise personal self-will, and, what is just as important, to have renounced all preconceived opinions in the wholehearted search for God. It means to be willing to set aside your present habits of thought, your present views and prejudices, your present way of life if necessary; to jettison, in fact, anything and every thing that can stand in the way of your finding God... We reject the salvation that Jesus offers us—our chance of finding God—because we "have great possessions"; not in the least because we are very rich in terms of money, for indeed most people are not, but because we have great possessions in the way of preconceived ideas—confidence in our own judgment, and in the ideas with which we happen to be familiar; spiritual pride, born of academic

distinction; sentimental or material attachment to institutions and organizations; habits of life that we have no desire to renounce.

Step# 3 P. 34:

How do I make a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understood him?

P. 28~29: *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth*

The true significance of the word "meek" in the Bible is a mental attitude for which there is no other single word available, and it is this mental attitude which is the secret of "prosperity" or success in prayer. It is a combination of open-mindedness, faith in God, and the realization that the Will of God for us is always something joyous and interesting and vital, and much better than anything we could think of for ourselves. This state of mind also includes a perfect willingness to allow this Will of God to come about in whatever way Divine Wisdom considers to be best, rather than in some particular way that we have chosen for ourselves.

This mental attitude, complex in analysis but simple in itself, is the Key to Dominion, or success in demonstration. There is no one word for it in common speech, because the thing does not exist except for those who are upon the Spiritual Basis of the Jesus Christ teaching; but if we desire to *inherit the earth* we must absolutely acquire this "meekness."

Step# 3 P. 37:

But the moment that my mental or emotional independence is in question how differently I behave. How persistently I claim the right to decide all by myself just what I shall think and how I shall act... the decisions are mine alone.

P. 37~38: *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

We live God's world, but we do not in the least know it as it is. Heaven lies all about us – it is not a distant locality afar off in the skies, but all around us now—but because we are lacking in spiritual perception, we are unable

to recognize it; that is to say, we are unable to experience it; and, therefore, so far as we are concerned, we may be said to be shut out of Heaven. We do contact a very tiny fragment of it, and that tiny fragment we call the universe; but even that little bit, we see, for the most part, all awry. Heaven is the religious name for the Presence of God, and Heaven is infinite; but our mental habit leads us to mould our experience into three dimensions only. Heaven is Eternity, but what we know here, we know only serially, in a sequence called "time," which never permits of our comprehending an experience in its entirety.

Step# 3 P. 37:

The acid Test:

This brave philosophy, wherein I play God, sounds good in the speaking, but still has to pass the acid test: How well does it work? One good look in the mirror should be good enough (for an alcoholic).

P. 132~133: *By their Fruits (THE TRUTH TEST)*

(There is a) fundamental test for Truth—does it work?—because Truth always works. The Truth always heals. A true story always turns out to be consistent when thoroughly sifted, while the most plausible lie will break down somewhere if sufficiently investigated. Truth heals the body, purifies the soul, reforms the sinner, solves difficulties, and pacifies strife. From this it follows that, according to Jesus, teaching that is true will automatically prove itself by practical demonstration... False teaching, on the contrary, no matter how attractively it may be presented, no matter what social or academic prestige may be attached to it, will fail to do all or any of these things;

Step# 3 P. 38:

Dependence upon a Higher Power has not produced any baleful results.

P. 50: *As a Man Thinketh (ON WHAT ONE HAS TO SACRIFICE)*

You cannot lose anything that is worth having through acquiring knowledge of the Truth.

Sacrifice there has to be, but it is only sacrifice of the things that one is much happier without—never of anything that is really worth having... The things one has to sacrifice are selfishness, fear, and belief in necessary limitation of any kind. Above all, one has to sacrifice the belief that there is any power or endurance in evil apart from the power that we ourselves give it by believing in it... It is only things not worth having that would disappear under the action of Truth.

Step# 4: P. 44

Whenever (my soul) becomes a human battleground for the instincts, there can be no peace at all... This collision of my instincts can produce anything from a cold snub of someone else to a blazing revolution...

P. 42: *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God*

The *peacemakers* spoken of in this Beatitude are those who make or bring about this true peace, or *serenity*, in their own souls, for it is they who surmount limitation and become actually, and not merely potentially, the *children of God*. This condition of mind is the objective at which Jesus aims in all the instructions which he gives us in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you... let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." As long as there is fear, or resentment, or any trouble in your heart, that is to say, as long as you lack serenity, or *peace*, it is not possible for you to attain very much.

Step# 4: P. 47

I thought "conditions" drove me to drink (think), and when I tried to correct these conditions and found that I couldn't to my entire satisfaction, my drinking (thinking) went out of hand, and I became an alcoholic (went into our alcoholism). It never occurred to me that I needed to change myself to meet conditions, whatever they were.

P. 12~13: What did Jesus teach

And the truth turns out to be nothing less than the amazing but undeniable fact that the whole outer world—whether it be the physical body, the common things of life, the winds and the rain, the clouds, the earth itself—is amenable to man's thought, and that he has dominion over it when he knows it. The outer world, far from being the prison of circumstances that it is commonly supposed to be, has actually no character whatsoever of its own, either good or bad. It has only the character that we give to it



by our own thinking. It is naturally plastic to our thought, and this is so, whether we know it or not, and whether we wish it or not.

All day long the thoughts that occupy your mind, your Secret Place, as Jesus calls it, are molding your destiny for good or evil; in fact, the truth is that the whole of our life's experience is but the outer expression of inner thought.

Step# 6 P. 67:

Self-righteous anger can be very enjoyable. In a perverse way I can actually take satisfaction from the fact that many people annoy me.

P. 50: *As a Man Thinketh (ON OVERCOMING ANGER)*

Spiritual demonstration demands that an get itself be overcome. It is simply not possible to get any experience of God worth talking about, or to exercise very much spiritual power in the way of healing, unless and until you have got rid of resentment and condemnation concerning your brother man. Until you are prepared to get rid of this sort of thing, your prayers will have very little effect... People of developed spiritual perception take constant pains to keep themselves free from thoughts of criticism and condemnation. They know that they can have either their demonstration or their indignation, but that they cannot have both; and so they do not waste time in trying to.

Indignation, resentment, the desire to punish other people or to see them punished, the desire to "get even," the feeling "it serves him right"—all these things form a quite impenetrable barrier to spiritual power or progress.

Step# 7 P. 71: Character Building:

I lack the perspective to see that character building and spiritual values have to come first; that material satisfactions are not the purpose of living.

P. 164~165: *Our Daily Bread*

If our reliance is upon God, he will be comparatively indifferent to the channel and so that channel will be easily supplanted by a new one. In short, we

have to train ourselves to look to God, Cause, for all that we need, and then the channel, which is entirely a secondary matter, will take care of itself.

In its inner and most important meaning, our daily bread signifies the realization of the Presence of God—an actual sense that God exists not merely in a nominal way, but as *the* great reality; the sense that He is present with us; and the feeling that because He is God, all-good, all-powerful, all-wise, and all-loving, we have nothing to fear; that we can rely upon Him to take every care of us; that He will supply all that we need to have; teach us all that we need to know; and guide our steps so that we shall not make mistakes. This is Emanuel, or God with us; and remember that it absolutely means some degree of actual *realization*, that is to say, some experience in consciousness, and not just a theoretical recognition of the fact; not simply talking about God, however beautifully one may talk, or *thinking about* Him; but some degree of actual experience. We must begin by thinking about God, but this should lead to the realization which is the *daily bread* or manna. That is the gist of the whole matter. Realization, which is experience, is the thing that counts. It is realization which marks the progress of the soul. It is realization which guarantees the demon stration. It is realization, as distinct from mere theoriz ing and fine words, which is the *substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*.

Step# 7: P. 72”

But whenever I have to choose between character and comfort, my character building is lost in the dust of what I think is happiness.

P. 48: *As a Man Thinketh (ON CHANGING ONE’S CHARACTER)*

If you seek system atically to destroy in yourself everything which you know should not be there, things such as

Seldom do I ever think of character building as something that is desirable in itself... This lack of anchorage to permanent values produces a bad result... a working faith in a Higher Power is impossible.

selfishness, pride, vanity, self-righteousness, jealousy, self-pity, resentment, condemnation, and so forth —not feeding or nourishing them by giving in to them, but starving them to death by refusing them expression; if you extend the right thought loyally to every person or thing within your ken, especially to the people or things you dislike; then you are worthy to be called *the salt of the earth*.

If you truly live this life, then it does not in the least matter what your present circumstances may be, or what difficulties you may have to struggle against, you will triumph over them all.

Step# 7 P. 75:

I began to get over the idea that the Higher Power was a sort of bush-league pinch hitter, to be called upon only in an emergency.

P. 50: *As a Man Thinketh (WATCH AND PRAY – BEING THE WATCHER OF THE MIND)*

It is ever so much easier to overcome a difficulty if you tackle it immediately, at its first appearance, than it will be after the trouble has had some little time to establish itself in your mentality—to dig itself in, as the soldiers say. Soldiers know that as long as troops are marching across open ground it is not hard for the enemy to scatter and destroy them; but once let them dig into the ground and entrench themselves, and they become exceedingly difficult to remove. So it is with evil. The moment it presents itself to your attention, you should immediately turn it out, repudiate it, refuse to accept it; and by quietly affirming the Truth, give it no chance to dig itself in.

Step# 7 P. 75:

I needn't be always bludgeoned and beaten

P. 65: *Resist Not Evil (INTEGRITY OF THE SOUL)*

into humility. It can come quite as much from my voluntary reaching for it as it comes from unremitting suffering.

The soul's integrity is the one and only thing that matters. Jesus in his teaching is almost exclusively concerned in impressing us with the overwhelming fact of its importance, and with instructing us in how we are to accomplish it. He insists that positively no sacrifice can be too great to insure the integrity of one's soul. Anything; *anything* that stands in the way of that, must be given up. Cost what it will, involve what it may, the integrity of the soul must be preserved; for all other things—conduct, health, prosperity; life itself—follow upon that.

Step# 8 P. 80:

To define the word “harm” in a practical way, I might call it the result of instincts in collision, which cause physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual damage to other people.

P. 65: *Resist Not Evil (ON GETTING BACK AT OTHERS)*

Jesus says that when someone injures you, instead of seeking to get your own back or to repay him in his own coin, you are to do the very opposite—you are to forgive him, and set him free. No matter what the provocation may be, and no matter how many times it is repeated, you are to do this. You are to loose him and let him go, for thus only can you be freed yourself—thus only can you possess your own soul. To return evil for evil, to answer violence with violence and hate with hate, is to start a vicious circle to which there is no ending but the wearing out of your own life and your brother's too.

Step# 10 P. 90:

The Spiritual Axiom: It is a spiritual axiom that every time that I am disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with me (I am responsible). If somebody hurts me and I am sore, I am in the wrong also... But what about

P. 44: *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted*

justifiable anger?

*they the prophets which were before you.*

All this is indeed very startling, and it is perfectly correct; only we have to understand that the source of all this persecution is none other than our own selves. No outside persecutor, but only our own lower selves. When we find righteousness or right thinking very difficult—when we are very strongly tempted to hold the wrong thoughts about some situation, or some person, or about ourselves; to give way to fear, or anger, or despondency—then we are being *persecuted for righteousness' sake*, and this is for us an extremely fortunate or blessed condition, for it is in such moments that we are really advancing. Every spiritual treatment or scientific prayer involves a tussle with our own lower self, which wishes to indulge the old habit of thought, and, in fact, persecutes and reviles us...

Now, since these combats with the lower self have to be fought out sooner or later, then the sooner they are over and done with the better, and so, relatively speaking, they are great blessings.

Step# 10 P. 91:

Restraint of tongue and pen: In all of my strivings I need Self-restraint, and an honest analysis of what is involved... One unkind tirade or one willful snap judgment can ruin my relations with another person for a whole day, or maybe a whole year. Nothing pays off like restraint of tongue and pen.

P.35: *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall find mercy*

Kind actions coupled with unkind thoughts are hypocrisy, dictated by fear, or desire for self-glory, or some such motive. They are counterfeits and they bless neither the giver nor the recipient. On the other hand, the true thought about fellowman blesses him spiritually, mentally, and materially; and blesses you too. Let us be merciful in our mental judgments of our brother, for, in truth, we are all one, and the more deeply he seems to err, the more urgent is the need

for us to help him with the right thought,  
and so make it easier for him to get free.

Step# 12: P. 113 Life Happens:

Then perhaps life, as it has a way of doing, suddenly hands me a great big lump that I can't begin to swallow, let alone digest. I fail to get that worked-for promotion, or I lose that good job. Maybe I have serious domestic or romantic difficulties...

P. 24: *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted*

It is usually only when people are feeling the pinch of poverty very acutely, that is, when ordinary material sources of supply have dried up, that they turn to God as a last resort and learn the lesson that the Divine Power really is the *Source* of man's supply, and all material agents but the channels.

Now this lesson has to be learned and thoroughly realized before man can pass on to any experience higher or wider than the present one. In our Father's House are many mansions, but the key to higher mansions is always the acquiring of complete dominion over the one in which we are.