

through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. –  
(John Wesley's *Journal*, May 24, 1738)

Strangely warmed, indeed. My heart's on fire with joy that God's in charge now, that my life finally has meaning and depth I could not have imagined before my "conversion experience" December 17, 2006.

In God's good plan, he sent leanness among his fat ones, including me! Thanks, God!

### Slimming Steps

We tell our stories, what it was like, what happened, and what it's like now. Lest we forget, tell me. What was it like for you? What changed? What's it like now? You may email me your story at [oastepper@gmail.com](mailto:oastepper@gmail.com) if you wish.

## Past Possible

We'd settle for freedom from addiction  
when we come – it's all we hope for,  
past what we could fancy, for dreams have gone.  
Yet this gift of grace blossoms, grows —  
we chance to let hope bud once more,  
find a full-blown plant before we know,  
watch it spread, enfolding all around,  
passing to our loves, our friends unbid,  
expanding to sing harmony with sun and moon,  
higher than soul can hope or mind hide.

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## Meditation

Meditate.

Wait. I hesitate,  
I can vacillate, translate, inflate,  
celebrate, masticate, conjugate...

But meditate?

When I wake my mind skates  
straight to figure eights. I cannot sate  
the breakneck gait.

Meditate?

It's some mistake.

Wait. Intake breath, deflate.  
Thoughts abate, calm, sedate.

God awaits.

Relate.

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## First Things First

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ... But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” – Matthew 6:25, 33 (NIV)

We came to Overeaters Anonymous to lose weight. Somewhere along the way, the goal became a side effect. The side effect we expected – or dreaded perhaps – on first reading the Steps, that of a closer relationship with God, has become the of-all-and-be-all, the only goal. And we need only the one all-encompassing goal.

At Step Eleven, we’re in this for the long haul, the rest of our lives. The Big Book instructions at this point are simple – some might even say simplistic. We’re told:



on awakening think about the twenty-four hours ahead



consider plans for the day



ask God to direct your thinking



that it be divorced from self-pity

















without dishonest or self-seeking motives



we may face indecision

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-  ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision
-  relax and take it easy
-  don't struggle
-  conclude the period of meditation with a prayer
-  that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be
-  that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems
-  ask especially for freedom from self-will
-  make no request for ourselves only, though we may ask for ourselves if others will be helped
-  if circumstances warrant, we ask our spouses or friends to join us in morning meditation
-  we attend to any requirements of our religious denomination
-  we sometimes select and memorize a few set prayers which emphasize the program
-  through the day, pause when agitated or doubtful and ask for the right thought or action
-  humbly say to ourselves many times each day "Thy will be done."
-  let God discipline us in this simple way

I used to frequent a pharmacy with a crewel embroidery motto on the counter: "Eat a live frog the first thing in the morning. Nothing worse will happen all day." You know, that's the way we compulsive eaters once lived our lives. If not for breakfast (when others might be looking) at least as soon as we were safely anonymous in our car we stuffed something

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horrendous down our throats. And sure enough, nothing got worse all day long. Nothing got better, either.

Now we have a new guidebook. First things first. Seek first the kingdom of God and everything you ever needed and lots you couldn't dream of wanting will be given to you, in good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over. Amen and amen!

### *Slimming Steps*

Have you tried the Eleventh Step morning routine as outlined in the Big Book? Will you do it the next seven days?

## The Perfect Me

For years I strove  
to pick and choose  
the prime tidbits of me,  
to add your traits I coveted,  
to pick and choose and rate.  
I scrubbed, patched, tossed  
and found habits, ways and bents,  
molding, twisting, forcing joints  
where pieces didn't fit.  
While others may have praised  
the work, I always looked and cringed;  
while others said they loved the mix,  
I saw scrapheaped used parts.  
Then God came with an artist's hand  
and used my trash to mold  
a new creation, what I'd dreamed of,  
for he approached with love.

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## Your Father's Good Pleasure

And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. – Luke 12:29-32 (KJV)

“The Father’s good pleasure.” Isn’t that neat? Fear not! How great is that? God knows we think about food and drink obsessively. He knows we desperately want to be able to control how much and what kinds we stuff into our bodies. He knows our illness, that our willpower – so strong in so many aspects – vanishes with craving-creating foods laid out before us. He knows we need control and can’t beg, borrow or steal the discipline we need. It’s not for sale at any price and it’s as rare as the everybody-must-have widget on December 24.

So what does he say? Don’t look for it. Don’t worry. Fear not! First, last, and always seek the kingdom of God, that special place where his presence is omnipotent, omniscient, and obvious. Walk in the garden with God. Relax. Let go. Forget the world, forget the deadlines, forget the donuts and fudge by the office coffeepot. Charles Austin Miles (1868-1946) captured it:

I come to the garden alone  
While the dew is still on the roses  
And the voice I hear falling on my ear  
The Son of God discloses.

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And He walks with me, and He talks with me,  
And He tells me I am His own;  
And the joy we share as we tarry there,  
None other has ever known.

You can't buy this peace. You'll never attain it by working for it. You don't earn it by being good and following all the rules. It's GRACE! It's divine love and protection granted freely by God. It's a favor for coming to the party! "For it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Wow!

### Slimming Steps

When have you experienced God's grace?

## The Greatest Possession

Cling to the thought that, in God's hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have – the key to life and happiness for others. (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 124)

Humiliation, shame, rage —  
hurling dung on the hopes of family,  
treacherous dealing with friends,  
debauchery, self-contempt.  
My pain, my agony, my hopelessness.  
Talk about magic, about being born again.  
How deep is God's grace to go so far  
in rescuing me as to give such scum value,  
but even more, to make it priceless!

## Conscious of God

For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

“He committed no sin,  
and no deceit was found in his mouth.” – I Peter 2:19-22 (NIV)

The Eleventh Step requires we improve our “conscious contact” with God. Peter wrote it is commendable if, because of consciousness of God, we bear up under unjust suffering. As we looked at our past in Step Four many of us found situations in which we actually had no fault in the initial event, though our dealing with it later may and usually did cause greater or at least longer suffering.

We’re not guaranteed life from this point on, free of the injustices of life – accidents, illness, and catastrophic events. What is the benefit of this way of life then?

Conscious is an adjective. Its meanings\* include:

- ✓ Having an awareness of one’s environment and one’s own existence, sensations, and thoughts.
- ✓ Subjectively known or felt: *conscious remorse*.

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\* The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.

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- ✓ Intentionally conceived or done; deliberate: *a conscious insult; made a conscious effort to speak more clearly.*
- ✓ Inwardly attentive or sensible; mindful: *was increasingly conscious of being watched.*
- ✓ Especially aware of or preoccupied with. Often used in combination: *a cost-conscious approach to further development; a health-conscious diet.*

How do the definitions assist in understanding the kind of contact we should have with God? An awareness of God's presence like we'd know the sun is in our eyes? Or perhaps like the car in the rear-view mirror? Subjectively known or felt like the new knowledge of a coming long-anticipated birth? Or like a nagging pain we're careful not to stir up by turning the wrong direction? Mindful, meaning apprehensive? Or meaning the accepting love of a loyal spouse undergirding us? Preoccupied. Not of this world? Present in daily life in body only?

Maybe all of these descriptions fit at different times. I tend to think the driving analogy fits best, the requirement for a driver to know all kinds of things all the time. Sometimes, though, the knowledge comes to the forefront. We cultivate the level of consciousness wisdom and planning control rather than give in to impulse when we walk past a treat. We have to learn to recognize the feeling of restlessness and discontent often means a decision looms just under the edge of awareness. We live a coexistence with God, yielding daily – and moment by moment – the control to him.

Then we may suffer, but we only suffer the initial injury and don't compound it with our self-will, following the rabbit trails, and building resentments while yielding to fear.

Jesus left us the example. If sin is separation from God, we follow Jesus' steps by staying the course with God who then will control our mouth and our actions so we do not practice deceit in word, thought, or deed. One day at a time.

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### *Slimming Steps*

Describe how well you succeed in maintaining conscious thought of God throughout your day. How could you improve?

## Sought and Found

I found him! I win!  
Clever, how hidden  
he was, out in the open  
where I thought I'd looked  
but like those puzzles  
when words are secluded  
in random letters in  
plain sight but darned near  
impossible to spot!  
You told me I wasn't looking  
for the God of my childhood  
or that of the TV preacher  
but could make up my own  
and sure enough  
when I knew what  
I wanted to find  
there he was,  
waiting for me,  
rooting for me.

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## Redefining Rest

Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary,  
and his understanding no one can fathom.

He gives strength to the weary  
and increases the power of the weak.

Even youths grow tired and weary,  
and young men stumble and fall;

but those who hope in the LORD  
will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint. – Isaiah 40:28-31 (NIV)

My daughter-in-law and I chatted on the Internet. “Sundays are supposed to be a day of rest, but for me they’re sometimes the most productive!” she said.

I didn’t think about my answer – until I read it and saw the wisdom: “Having work done is restful, even when you’re tired.”

Sloth, one of the deadly sins, was once our constant companion along with the food. For me, sloth’s cohort procrastination, also known as chronic low-intensity fear, tagged along. My procrastination wore many faces, but two dominated: Making lists of things to do and playing computer games. I even wrote computer macros to make the list-making more effective and impressive. With the touch of a

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key combination I could stamp the date an item took its place on the list and, in the next column of the table, a place sat blank waiting for the completion date. With another macro I changed the type in a cell to the same letters but with a strikethrough. It worked fine. I didn't. Instead, I whiled away countless hours on Sudoku, Spider Sol, Tetris, Yubotu – anything I could justify as “thinking through an issue” or “rewarding my completion of a task.” Yet it seemed the games took far more time than the paltry little task being noted.

I still occasionally make the lists, but they're simple lists, and instead of dramatically marking the accomplishments, I simply delete the item finished, being actually rewarded by a shrinking list and the diminished chronic low-intensity fear praying for games of distraction.

Work needs no rewards. Work *is* the reward, once we've stopped trying to prove we can be perfect or at least convince others we can be while “knowing” at a terrified depth of intuition we're really worthless. When we start the day with “Your will be done” or “God, let me walk with you” then truly we can – and do – soar on wings like eagles, run without wearying, and walk without fainting. Having work done is restful, even when you're tired.

### *Slimming Steps*

What is your experience with procrastination, fear, and sloth?  
How does Step Eleven make the day better in these areas?

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## Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive overeaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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## Thorns in the Garden

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

"What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

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When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." – Mark 10:35-37, 41-45 (NIV)

The email conversation involved a mutual friend's insisting on her own way in meetings and writing scathing attacks on those who questioned her right to decide all matters in issue. "And this part bothers me. Never got it that she could be so threatened. As we've mentioned before, she has a fine life of her own. Why would she be jealous???"

Why, indeed? Why did James and John (and in another gospel their mother) want favored treatment when they already were among the top tier, two who went when the select of the select were chosen to accompany the Christ. Greed raises its ugly head in such diverse situations! With

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our friend, financial security, wide recognition and influence in her chosen field, and success after success, might seem to be sufficient from the outside – or, in recovery, from the inside. Many of us in the rooms weren't always so quick to recognize our blessings either. We spent our lives craving more whether we had much or little, grappling up the ladder of success, more than willing to knock off competitors and companions to clear more room for ourselves at the top.

Our friend thrives on attention, craves it, demands it. Any room becomes filled with her presence from her entry (late and dramatic) to her exit, breathless to reach the next center stage. She's earned a permanent perch on my resentment list. I pray her off and she swoops back again.

The Big Book tells us to do our own inventory, not that of any other person:

Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person involved entirely. Where were we to blame? The inventory was ours, not the other man's. (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 67)

Sometimes, though, looking at another's motivation can be a matter of finding not fault but forgiveness. If a person grew up in an abusive home, in poverty, or separated too early from the nurturing adults, or if later in life adversity seems to hone in on them for target practice, they may develop problems like those leading us to Overeaters Anonymous. Whatever the recovery needed, the person is sick, and we must see them as a prospect for recovery. Our message helps not just alcoholics and compulsive eaters but about a hundred other identified classifications of problems. We have a message of hope to spread. It doesn't have to be to strangers. If we simply love the people who seem frequently to be the thorns in our lives, we're working the

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Twelfth Step just as surely as when we visit with a newcomer in a meeting. The message of hope is for everyone, no matter how obnoxious. You just might bring greater peace and serenity to your own life as well as the other's.

### *Slimming Steps*

Who are the thorns in your life? Pray they have all the hope, peace, serenity, joy, self-esteem, success, and recognition you want for your own life. And love them off your resentment list as many times as it takes.

## My Soul Mate

I love you more easily than myself,  
feel for you, ache for you, as you walk  
into these rooms. Your pain, fear, desperation  
confound my heart with memories —  
no, far too calm a word.  
Residual angst, assonance,  
antiphony. You and I are one  
sharing imaginings, madness, this stage.  
You are the frightened child within me  
I've fought so long to accept and love.  
I love you more easily than myself  
and, loving you, love me.

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## The Lesson of Balaam's Donkey

Then the angel of the LORD moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff. Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"

Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now."

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Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown. – Numbers 22:26-29, 31 (NIV) [Read Numbers 22.]

"They" say in writing children's stories not to use anthropomorphic characters in books and stories. We who grew up with Winnie the Pooh and Beatrix Potter's books find this a little sad. It still feels like Peter Rabbit and Eeyore have something to teach us. I guess "they" would have told the author of Numbers not to speak of Balaam's donkey. If "they" did, I'm glad they were ignored.

The story and words of Balaam take three chapters, Numbers 22 through 24, but the delightful story of Balaam's donkey takes only a few verses. Obviously Balaam trusted and followed God; Balaam made his living by divination for

fees, cursing or blessing events and people according to God's instruction. The journey with Balak's agents began with God's blessing but a limiting instruction to wait for divine direction. Had Balaam actually been open to that guidance, we'd never have met his mode of transportation, though.

What happened to change Balaam's focus, to shift his attention from God, is never stated. However, evidently he'd been promised opulence and traveled with esteemed companions. Often when we're recognized we make the mistake of believing it to be for our own abilities, even knowing full well we're powerless on our own, that our progress and abilities come through turning our lives over to God. A gentleman I see most weeks just asked if I'd been losing weight. Yep. Over a hundred pounds since he's known me, more than fifty in the last year. He commented that it takes a lot of work, real will power. I disagreed and told him with OA, it's easy, the compulsion's been taken away.

The Twelfth Step gets scary. What do we have to offer others? How can we guide? WHAT? You want ME to be your sponsor? We tremble. Why? Because we forget those divine directions. We forget we don't have to sponsor, we just have to pass on God's words.

Balaam didn't listen, didn't see an angel blocking the path. The donkey did. The donkey stopped short, refusing to go even when Balaam beat him. Three times. Balaam threatened to kill the donkey for embarrassing him. And the donkey spoke. "What's going on? We've been together a while, don't you trust me? Look around!" Well, not quite, but just the speaking is the point.

And the point of my speaking to you through this text is to say don't worry about being a sponsor. Just look around, be aware of God's presence, and be a spokesman for him. That's all. That's all? That's POWERFUL!

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And after all, if you don't do it, God can use the nearest donkey, kitten, or goldfish. Relax. You're in God's hands.

### *Slimming Steps*

Think about times you've heard somebody speak, either in an OA meeting, on an email, reading the Big Book, or even a novel, and known that God directed you to that statement at that time. Write about the times you think of. Then write about times God's had you say something you had no idea would mean anything to the person you were talking to and it did.

## The Circle

We stand hand in hand,  
ready to practice principles  
outside the rooms, in life,  
in all our affairs. Hand in hand,  
we transfer strength,  
receiving, giving, sharing,  
endowed with power of the whole  
to buoy us, to carry us,  
until we once more return to  
the rooms, full circle.



## Bread upon the Waters

Cast your bread upon the waters,  
for after many days you will find it again.  
Give portions to seven, yes to eight,  
for you do not know what disaster may come upon the  
land. – Ecclesiastes 11:1-2 (NIV)

An odd book, Ecclesiastes often leaves room for interpretation and confusion. Is the advice to cast your bread on waters suggesting generosity yields return in kind, or would it feel right to a financial adviser suggesting diversified holdings?

I think it resembles the directive attributed to Anne Herbert, “Practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty.” At least I hope that’s what it means. We compulsive overeaters have hoarded food for years, protected it so we could eat it in secret later. We looked at a plate in a restaurant and wondered if that was all we got for the price. We gulped down the first helping so we could reach for the second and third. Sharing those things important to us seems unnatural. Now we can watch the platter empty with a sense of relief in potential irritants being removed.

And our world has grown beyond the food, beyond making sure our own needs are met. The bread we cast on the waters quite often is service, taking the time and effort to walk the Steps with another. We share our experience, strength, and hope, finding it refreshed in the very act of sharing, then finding the serendipitous joy of blessings beyond our wildest dreams, of being “rocketed into the fourth dimension.”

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In another way, service acts as a diversification of investment as well. We recover and sometimes even unwittingly share that betterment with our close friends and family. Then their recovery blesses us with peace, hope, and love. We watch with the pride of parents as those we sponsor move to understandings enriching our own and those of many others as recovery spreads.

As we cast our bread on waters, it comes back to us enhanced. We find the truth in Jesus' words, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." – Luke 6:38 (NIV)

When disaster comes on the land and our character defects crop up, anger and resentments build, food once again beckons us to find comfort in isolation and indulgence, then the true bread, the service we have done, returns to us and we truly find serenity to accept what we cannot change, courage to change what we can, and true wisdom, leading us to know the difference and to guide our steps, thoughts, and growth.

### *Slimming Steps*

What led you to recovery? What ways do you practice casting your bread on waters? What can you do today to spread the message you have received?

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## Without Honor

Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" And they took offense at him.

But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor."

And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith. – Matthew 13:54-58 (NIV)

Addictions run in families. It would seem recovery should be as well. Why, then, does it so often happen that those closest to us are blind to the recovery, to the changes, to the new way of life?

The logical place for a Twelfth Step is often in our own home or family. Yet the message falls on deaf ears. These very people who more than most should be able to see our transformation may find themselves so threatened by it, so unaccustomed to the different responses to the same old stimuli that they resent us all the more for recovery, longing sentimentally for the old, sick, version of us.

The mother who ate with us, teaching us to stuff down feelings with food, continues to urge food on us, pshaw-ing our protestations, telling us we've lost too much already, we don't look healthy. How can we convince family members to come join us?

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We don't. We can either live the program, quietly and without offering opinion or advice, so they may choose to come, or we can make it possible for others to work with our family members, perhaps while we reach out to someone more receptive to our message.

It's not a comfortable position. Jesus didn't like it, either. Besides the reception in Nazareth, he felt the same way about Israel as a whole.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" – Luke 13:34 (NIV)

While we can't help but be sad, it's really none of our business. We gave that concern up. It's God's now, and our duty is not to tell him how to do his job, just to report for duty each morning, tell him we're ready to go to work, and take our Twelfth Step wherever he leads us. Perhaps he'll send us to our friend's house – and our friend to ours. Thanks be to God!

### *Slimming Steps*

How are you doing in turning over the agenda to God? Did you come up with this conclusion to the concern over your own family and friends before reaching the end? Why not?

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## Go!

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." – Matthew 28:16-20 (NIV)

We come into Overeaters Anonymous doubting, isolating, scared, apart. We remain socializing, confident in God's presence with us, still doubting perhaps but a part. How different! We know the steps are actually a circle, that the Twelfth Step sends us out to work with another as they tenuously venture into the First Step. We know as well we'll never finish the steps. Not only are Ten, Eleven and Twelve lifetime Steps, we'll find need again to confront our powerlessness over something else, or, if we falter in program, again over food. We continue to understand God better and on a deeper level, to again decide to ask his control over our lives, to inventory, admit, recognize and relinquish character defects, to make amends. We're in for the long haul, delighted to be hooked to the plow.

Where does the road lead? Look at tenuous commitments we remember thousands of years later. God called Moses to the burning bush, asked him to confront Pharaoh. Moses said, "Who? ME?? Those guys hate me, Pharaoh

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and the Israelites!" God gave him the staff, an evidence of God's presence with him.

Moses still argued, "They won't believe you're with me. I don't even know your name." God said, "I am. Tell them 'I am' sent you."

Unconvinced, Moses countered, "I can't talk well, send somebody else." An angry God offered Aaron to speak for Moses who spoke for God, gave Moses the rod to throw down before Pharaoh, and stood by his choice.

Isaiah confronted a similar call in the Temple. Peter moved from the trembling fearful man who denied even knowing Jesus to the leader of a movement changing the world.

Yes, they're ancient examples. Consider another, a shy woman afraid of public speaking, preferring instead the life of a wife, mother and librarian. When her husband decided to seek public office, she gave her blessing with the caveat she should never have to speak in public. He agreed. The first time he ran for office, he was defeated, and she continued within her comfort zone. The second? He was elected Governor of Texas. Tenuously, she occasionally would speak to women's groups, then the arena grew and grew. Eventually her comfort level strengthened to gargantuan proportions, and Laura Bush found herself a national spokeswoman for literacy as well as an informal ambassador to all of Africa.

When God controls your will and your life, where will you end up? Many experience apprehension, fear of being sent to the mission field. It can happen. Or you may find yourself like the third member of Alcoholics Anonymous, running for office. Perhaps, like Laura Bush, you'll find yourself speaking in public – a situation more frightening to many than any other activity short of (and for some including) death. Can you do it? Yes. You can. And, like the disciples even after the resurrection, you'll still have your fears and doubts. But it's

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not you there, outside your comfort zone, but God, working through you. God doesn't just tell us "GO!" any more than he did the apostles. He also says, "I'll be with you always."

Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. May God bless you and keep you – until then. (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 164.)

### Slimming Steps

In what direction do you feel God guiding you? How can you be of service?

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## To Speak for God

Dear Lord of life, my hope, my joy —  
I see your path for me.  
You ask that I be your envoy  
To set your people free.

You call for me to teach and lead  
The high, the low, the poor,  
To show the path that you've decreed  
For those I stand before.

But like the prophets called of old  
To speak your holy word,  
I bow my head; I can't be bold.  
They'd laugh. I'd feel absurd.

Isaiah spoke the words I mean,  
"My lips are too impure."  
I'm low, I'm dumb, I am not clean.  
How can I serve you, Sir?

You cleansed his lips with fiery coal.  
You answered Moses' fear.  
You made the shy apostles bold.  
Send me. Your grace I'll share.

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