



AA District 18

Newsletter

Volume 6 | Issue 5 | May 2026

Editor: Matt B. Tuesday Night Group, Main St. Community Center, Edwardsville

Serenity Prayer

God, grant me...

*The serenity to accept the things I cannot
change,*

The courage to change the things I can,

And the wisdom to know the difference!

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Announcements

Birthdays

Saturday Night Library Group - 5/9/26 Karin S. 8 years

Looking for Volunteers to "Bridge the Gap" - helping newcomers coming out of Treatment. [Click to Sign UP](#)

- New Women's Meeting Granite City -Saturday 1pm [Click for Info](#)
- New Meeting in Granite City- Sat. 2116 Club Meeting 7pm - 8pm, Closed Discussion [Click for Info](#)
- New Meeting in Granite City - Thrs. Attitude Adjustments a New Way of Living [Click for Info](#)
- Open Speaker Meeting 7:30pm
*District 18 GSR's *- Southern Illinois Area 21 presents a new Service Information YouTube video. [Click here for GSR Training Video.](#)

We need your help! Area 21 and the GSO are wanting to make sure they have the correct information for each group's GSR in District 18. **You can make sure your group's GSR is current by filling out the below form.** All GSRs will receive a digital GSR kit and can sign up for a GSR kit to be mailed. [Link to GSR change form.](#) You can also go directly to the Area 21 website, hover over home, and click "change form" to access the same form. [Link to Area 21 website.](#) We have also posted a link on this website under District 18 for easy access. **Thank you!!!**

Click [here](#) to download 2024-2026 AA Service Manual.
[AA Service Manual](#)

Spotlight on Step 5

"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

Step Five is where honesty finally leaves the shadows. After making a searching moral inventory in Step Four, we are asked to speak that truth aloud. For many alcoholics, this is terrifying. We spent years hiding, minimizing, blaming, pretending, and protecting secrets. Alcohol often thrives in isolation and dishonesty. Step Five begins tearing down those walls.

The purpose of this Step is not humiliation. It is freedom. When we admit the exact nature of our wrongs to God, to

Humor Corner

I got so drunk one night I tried to unlock my apartment door with my car remote.

I stood there clicking it over and over like I was defusing a bomb.

When the hallway light came on, I whispered, "C'mon baby... don't embarrass me now."

My neighbor opened his door and said, "That's not gonna work."

I said, "Well it worked on the Honda."

He said, "Sir... this is a building."

I used to pour myself a "small drink" in a glass big enough to baptize a toddler.

Then I'd stare at it proudly like I'd shown incredible restraint. If somebody questioned me, I'd say, "I'm cutting back."

Yeah—cutting back on trips to the kitchen.

Thoughts on Step 5

Step 5 is meant to be a once in a lifetime job to resolve your past. Austin Ripley, my friend, used to say, "It's value will come to you only after you have done it." But its value was great indeed. It's the most humiliating thing that can happen to anybody., so it's meant to be done once in a lifetime. I know AA's who have taken it too soon when their memories weren't straight and have had to go over it and over it. They've had to live in agony, and some give birth to scrupulosity, and it's nothing more than a hindrance to their progress.

**Father Joseph C. Martin,
12 Steps of AA with Fr. Martin**

ourselves, and to another human being, we stop carrying the crushing burden alone. The Big Book reminds us that many of us tried to take secrets to the grave, only to find that those hidden things continued to poison us from within. Confession breaks isolation and destroys the power secrecy holds over us.

Step Five also teaches humility. We begin to see ourselves truthfully—not as monsters beyond hope, nor as victims without fault, but as sick people in need of grace and change. Speaking honestly to another trusted person often reveals something surprising: we are not uniquely broken. Others have walked the same dark roads and survived.

This Step is one of courage and release. Many who complete it speak of feeling lighter, freer, and closer to both God and other people. Step Five reminds us that recovery is not built on image management, but on rigorous honesty and the willingness to live in the light.

God is Always Present

I need to remember that God is already present in the middle of my confusion, even when I cannot feel Him clearly. My old way of living taught me to trust my fear, my impulses, and my own desperate thinking. If something felt uncertain, I rushed to fix it. If I felt afraid, I grabbed for control. But recovery keeps teaching me that peace does not come from managing everything around me. Peace comes from trusting that God does not abandon me in hard moments. Some days I still want immediate answers, immediate relief, immediate certainty. Yet God often works more quietly than that. He steadies me a little at a time. He gives me enough strength for today, enough light for the next step, enough grace to keep moving forward without knowing everything ahead. When I stop demanding that God explain everything and simply trust that He is with me, my fear begins to loosen its grip. I do not have to carry the whole world today. I only have to walk faithfully beside the God who already carries me.

O God, when fear and uncertainty rise within me, teach me to trust that You are near even when I cannot clearly see Your hand. Help me to rest in Your care instead of running toward fear and control. Give me strength for this day, peace for this moment, and faith to follow where You lead. Amen.

Living one day at a time in recovery means I've had to learn

AA 5th Step Prayer

Oh God
My inventory has shown me who I am,
Yet I ask for Your help
In admitting my wrongs to another person & to You.
Assure me, & be with me, in this Step,
For without this Step I cannot progress in my recovery.
With Your help, I can do this, & I do it.

<https://www.aacle.org/twelve-step-prayers/>

Another prayer for Step 5 ...

O God, who searches the heart and knows all my ways, grant me the courage to confess my faults before You and before another, that I may walk in truth and humility. Strengthen me in this task, for without it I cannot grow, but with Your help, I will persevere; through Jesus Christ, my Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

“I have never seen a greater monster or miracle in the world than myself.”

— Michel de Montaigne

Recovery slowly reveals both sides of that sentence. Left to myself, I can become selfish, dishonest, fearful, and destructive in ways I once denied or minimized. Yet the same life that caused harm can also change. The miracle is not perfection; it is transformation. A person once ruled by compulsion can become honest, useful, accountable, and compassionate. The longer I stay sober, the more I realize both the danger and the hope were living inside me all along.

O God, keep me honest about my capacity for harm, yet grateful for the change You continue working within me each day. Amen.

substitute for actually dealing with it. There was a time when I believed if I worried hard enough, analyzed deeply enough, or mentally revisited something often enough, I was somehow making progress.

These days, I notice how tempting it still is to stay in my head instead of taking simple action. Thinking feels productive because it creates the illusion of control, but sometimes all I'm really doing is pacing in circles mentally while nothing actually changes.

Recovery teaches me that clarity often comes after action, not before it. Most problems do not need endless analysis. They usually need honesty, willingness, and one simple step in the right direction.

Living this way keeps me sober because it helps me stay engaged with real life instead of trapped in endless mental loops. I can do what needs to be done, let go of overthinking, and trust that not everything has to be fully solved before I move forward. When I practice that just for today, sobriety holds—and that steady willingness becomes a healthier way to live.



AA History in May

May 1

1939 – Lois and Bill Wilson left their home at 182 Clinton St., Brooklyn.

1940: Rollie H, Cleveland Indians, first anonymity break on national level.

Humor in Sobriety

I used to treat wrapping extension cords like an optional activity invented by overly organized people with too much free time. I'd unplug one and just toss it into the garage in a loose knot of electrical confusion, figuring future me could deal with it. Then a few months later I'd need it, pull it out, and spend twenty minutes untangling something that looked like it had been recovered from the ocean floor. By the end of it I'd be sweating, irritated, and somehow blaming the cord for the situation we were both in. In sobriety, I've become the kind of person who wraps them up properly when I'm done, which still feels suspiciously responsible. It takes maybe thirty extra seconds and saves me from fighting for my life with twelve feet of tangled regret later on. Turns out, a lot of peace comes from handling small things while they're still small, instead of waiting until they've twisted themselves into a problem with knots in it.

I used to treat returning a shopping cart as if it were a complicated moral dilemma with no clear answer. I'd unload the groceries, look at the cart, then look at the cart return five spaces away like I was being asked to transport it across state lines. Sometimes I'd give it a little shove toward the curb and convince myself that was close enough for a man who'd already done his part for society by buying paper towels. In sobriety, I've become the kind of person who actually walks the cart back where it belongs, which still surprises me a little every time I do it. It takes maybe thirty seconds and keeps the thing from rolling across the parking lot into somebody's driver-side door during a strong breeze. Turns out, a lot of being a functional adult is just handling small responsibilities before they become somebody else's problem, which is not nearly as glamorous as I once imagined adulthood would be.

1941 – First Wisconsin AA meeting was held in a Milwaukee hotel.

May 2

1941 – Jacksonville, FL, newspaper reported start of a new AA group.

1941 – First meeting was held in San Bernardino, California.

1941: The first AA group in New Orleans, Louisiana, was formed. (sometimes dated as May 2, 1943) by New Orleans Times

May 3

1941 – First AA group formed in New Orleans, Louisiana.

1943 – Democrat Chronicle in Rochester, NY, reported first annual AA dinner at Seneca Hotel with 60 attending.

May 4

1940: Sunday Star reported founding of first AA group in Washington, DC.

1946 – Marty Mann explained Alcoholics Anonymous and the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism on the “We the People” radio show.

May 5

1940 – Washington, DC, Sunday Star reported formation of first AA group in the District of Columbia.

May 6

1939: Clarence S of Cleveland told Dr. Bob, his sponsor, he would not be back to Oxford Group meetings in Akron and would start an “AA” meeting in Cleveland.

1946: The long form of the “Twelve Traditions” was published in the AA Grapevine.

May 7

1956 – The first English AA Convention was held in Cheltenham, England.

May 8

1943 – Akron AA group had its 8th anniversary celebration with 500 present and sober.

1971 – Bill Wilson was buried in private ceremony, East Dorset, Vermont.

May 10

Tech Corner / Cyber Security Tips

Cybersecurity criminals often target people through fake emergency messages. Imagine an elderly woman receiving an email that appears to come from her grandson. The message says he is stranded while traveling, lost his wallet, and urgently needs money wired immediately. The email sounds emotional and desperate, which is exactly what scammers want. They pressure people to act quickly before thinking carefully. Warning signs include unusual requests for money, poor grammar, unfamiliar email addresses, or instructions to keep the situation secret. A safe response is to slow down and verify the story directly. Call the family member using a trusted phone number instead of replying to the message. Never send money or gift cards based only on an email or text. Cybersecurity awareness is not only about protecting computers—it is also about protecting emotions from manipulation and preventing criminals from exploiting trust and fear.

Matt B.

Step 5 Thoughts

We know that Step 5 says, ‘We admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs’. But if you’ll notice here in the narrative, he said the exact nature of our defects. Now people used to ask Bill about this and we’ve known two ladies that worked with him/for him for years and they both tell us the same thing. People would say Bill, why did you use the word ‘wrong’ in Step 5, yet in the narrative here in the book you use the word defects? And by the way Bill, what’s the difference anyhow between a wrong in 5, a defect in 6, and a shortcoming in 7? And they both said that Bill would just rear back and smile and he would say when I took English and Writing courses in college they taught me not to use the same words over and over. It shows how dumb you are. He said there really are no differences in these things.

R., Linda. Joe and Charlie: The Big Book Comes Alive . UNKNOWN. Kindle Edition.

members

that the Cleveland members were starting a meeting in Cleveland and calling it Alcoholics Anonymous.

1946 – Searcy W. had his last drink. (Searcy died September 30, 2003.)

May 11

1935 – From the Mayflower Hotel, Bill Wilson called Walter Tunks who referred him to Henrietta Seiberling who introduced Bill to Dr. Bob.

1939: First group to officially call itself Alcoholics Anonymous met at Abby G's house in Cleveland. (some sources say the 18th)

May 12

1935 – Mothers' Day – Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith met for the first time in Akron, Ohio, at the home of Henrietta Seiberling.

May 14

1948 – Long Beach, California. Central Office was opened.
1998 – Sybil C., first woman to enter A.A. west of the Mississippi, died. Her Dates of sobriety was March 23, 1941. Her name at the time was Sybil Maxwell, though she later opened her talks by saying, "My name is Sybil Doris Adams Stratton Hart Maxwell Willis C., and [I'm an alcoholic](#)."

May 15

1961 – Bill Wilson's mother, Dr. Emily Strobell, died.

May 16

1941 – Ruth Hock learned that Joe W. (credited with coming up with the name Alcoholics Anonymous) had a "wet brain."

May 17

1942 – The Journal-Herald in Dayton, Ohio, ran a story on A.A. with photos of members in Halloween masks to protect their anonymity.

1942: New Haven, Conn paper has article on AA. Picture shows faces of members sitting in a circle.

May 18

1950 – Dr. Bob told Bill "I reckon we ought to be buried

May 11, 1935

A Call That Changed History

On May 11, 1935, a struggling New York stockbroker named Bill Wilson sat in the lobby of the Mayflower Hotel in Akron, Ohio, fighting the familiar urge to drink. Desperate to stay sober, Bill reached out for help instead of reaching for a bottle. That single decision would change countless lives forever.

Bill called a local minister named Walter Tunks, who then referred him to Henrietta Seiberling. Henrietta, recognizing Bill's sincerity and desperation, arranged a meeting with Dr. Bob Smith, an Akron surgeon who also struggled with alcoholism. What began as a short conversation became hours of shared experience between two alcoholics who understood each other completely.

That meeting marked the beginning of what would become Alcoholics Anonymous. From one phone call and one honest conversation grew a worldwide fellowship that has helped millions find sobriety and hope. AA history records May 1935 as the month Bill and Dr. Bob first met in Akron.

The lesson still speaks today: sometimes recovery begins with the courage to ask for help.

An Ode to Sobriety

There came a day I finally sat
And spilled the contents of my hat.
Not rabbits, coins, or clever tricks—
Just selfishness and dirty fix.
A lifetime stuffed in hidden drawers,
Behind polite and bolted doors.

I talked so long my coffee died,
While pride crawled off somewhere and cried.
I told of lies both large and small,
And things I swore weren't wrong at all.
The sort of tales a drunk defends
By saying, "Well... compared to friends..."

I spoke of grudges packed away,
Like moldy sandwiches from May.
Of fears I fed like household pets,
Of schemes, excuses, old regrets.
And when I stopped, prepared for doom,
The ceiling didn't split the room.

The other fellow simply grinned
Like he'd heard worse from half of mankind.

like other folks” after hearing that local A.A.’s wanted a huge memorial.

May 19

2000 – Dr. Paul Ohliger died at the age of 83. His story, “Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict,” was retitled “Acceptance Was the Answer,” in the 4th edition.

May 22

1948 – Atlantic City Group celebrated its second anniversary with Dr. C. Nelson Davis of St. Luke’s Hospital, Philadelphia, and other A.A.s speaking.

May 28

1974 – The first World Service meeting of AA outside of America was held in London.

May 29

1980 – “Dr. Bob and the Good [Oldtimers](#),” AAWS biography of AA co-founder and a history of early Midwest AA, was published.

May 31

1938 – Bill and other AA’s began writing the Big Book.

Highlighting the 5th Promise of AA:

“That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.”

Few things chained many of us to the bottle more than self-pity. We drank because life felt unfair. We drank because we felt misunderstood, overlooked, wounded, or broken. Beneath much of our anger was the quiet belief that we had somehow been cheated by life.

Alcohol fed that misery. The more we drank, the more isolated we became. The more isolated we became, the more useless we felt. It became a vicious cycle. As the book says, self-pity is one of the most destructive defects because it cuts us off from others and turns our eyes inward toward our own suffering rather than outward toward gratitude and service.

He didn’t faint or run in fear
Or say, “Good heavens, get out of here!”
Turns out my sins, though dark to me,
Were garden-variety misery.

And that’s the joke sobriety plays—
We think we’re monsters for our days.
Then honesty walks through the door
And says, “Relax. We’ve seen this before.”
Now secrets lose their poison sting,
Once dragged out blinking in the spring.

So now I laugh when memory crawls
Out from the damp behind the walls.
The truth may ache, it may feel raw,
But sunlight’s better than the flaw
Of lugging shadows year by year
While smiling like “all’s fine” out here.

Turns out confession, strange but true,
Did not destroy me through and through.
It simply swept some garbage clear
And let a little peace draw near.

A Haiku to my Disease

Bottle hits the floor,
Morning light finds shaking hands—
Silence tastes like ash.

A haiku to Sobriety!

Coffee at sunrise,
One more day without the chains—
Breath returns in peace.

A Devotion for the Christian in Recovery

Verse

Psalm 19:14 “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, Yahweh, my rock, and my redeemer.” (WEB)

Promise Five offers hope that this burden does not have to remain forever. As we begin to live honestly, make amends, help others, and grow spiritually, something changes inside us. We slowly discover that our lives still have purpose. We learn that even our painful experiences can help another alcoholic who still suffers.

The feeling of uselessness fades when we become useful. Self-pity loses its grip when gratitude begins to grow. We stop asking, “Why did this happen to me?” and begin asking, “How can I help someone else today?”

That change is nothing short of a quiet miracle.

Spotlight on Tradition 5:

“Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.”

Tradition Four gives each **Alcoholics Anonymous** group the freedom to find its own way of carrying the message. No central authority dictates how meetings must look, sound, or operate. Each group develops its own personality, shaped by the needs of the members and the community it serves. This freedom is a remarkable strength of A.A. Groups can adapt, experiment, and respond to local circumstances without waiting for permission. One group may focus on discussion, another on literature, another on speaker meetings. The form may vary widely, but the purpose remains the same: helping alcoholics stay sober and helping the next one find recovery.

Yet Tradition Four also includes an important safeguard. Our freedom stops where harm to other groups or A.A. as a whole might begin. Autonomy is not independence from responsibility—it is freedom guided by wisdom.

In practice, this Tradition calls for balance. We are free, but not reckless. Creative, but not divisive. Independent, yet still part of a larger fellowship. Tradition Four reminds us that A.A. thrives when groups are trusted to serve their members while still honoring the unity that holds us all together.

Meditation

When sobriety gets real, the mouth often tells the truth about the heart. Many in recovery can keep the bottle out of hand yet still let sharp words, sarcasm, and half-truths slip out. Psalm 19:14 reaches deeper than speech. The psalm asks that the hidden “meditation” of the heart would also be acceptable to God. That is where relapse thinking often begins—private rehearsals of resentment, secret self-pity, and quiet fantasies of control. The Lord is named “my rock,” because shifting feelings cannot carry the weight of temptation. The Lord is named “my redeemer,” because guilt cannot be scrubbed off with better behavior. Christ has already paid for unclean mouths and restless hearts. Under that mercy, honest prayer can replace dishonest talk, and the inner life can be steadied before the next hard moment arrives.

O Lord God, set a guard over our mouths and cleanse the meditations of our hearts. Expose hidden resentments and secret lies, and replace them with the truth of Christ crucified for sinners. Let our words be gentle, our thoughts be honest, and our worship be acceptable before You, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

I’ve noticed how easy it is to confuse movement with progress. I can stay busy, overthink everything, and fill my day with activity while avoiding the one thing I actually need to face. When I’m honest, busyness can become another way to hide from myself. Recovery has taught me that slowing down is sometimes more important than pushing harder. Staying grounded helps me notice when I’m running on noise instead of purpose. I don’t need to prove my worth by exhausting myself. I just need to stay present and honest about what matters today. That kind of honesty clears away a lot of confusion. Surrender, for me, is trusting that I don’t have to force everything forward to be okay. And in that space, I find a quieter kind of progress that feels real, steady, and enough for today.

Spotlight on Concept 5 of Service

Concept Five guarantees the “Right of Appeal” and protects minority opinion within A.A.’s service structure. It recognizes that even when a majority decision is reached, those in the minority still deserve to be heard. This safeguard helps prevent hasty decisions, resentment, and the misuse of authority.

Bill W. understood that trusted servants are still human. Majorities can become overconfident, while minorities may sometimes see dangers or truths others overlook. Concept Five therefore encourages careful listening, humility, and continued discussion before final decisions are made. The minority voice may contain wisdom that protects the fellowship from serious mistakes.

This Concept also reflects a spiritual principle deeply rooted in A.A.: no person or group possesses perfect judgment. By allowing appeal and minority participation, A.A. seeks guidance through shared conscience rather than domination. This spirit strengthens unity because members know they are respected, even when they disagree.

In practical terms, Concept Five helps create trust in service work. Members are more willing to participate when they know their concerns can be expressed honestly without fear of dismissal. Healthy discussion often leads to wiser and more balanced decisions.

At its heart, Concept Five reminds us that love and tolerance are not merely personal virtues but essential principles for A.A. service. By protecting the right to be heard, A.A. guards both its unity and its future. The development of these safeguards grew out of A.A.’s evolving service structure and Bill W.’s emphasis on balanced responsibility and participation in world service.

Some suggestions for Meeting Topics

- **Admitted to God, to Ourselves, and to Another Human Being**
Why honesty spoken out loud breaks isolation and shame.
- **The Freedom Found in Confession**
How Step Five relieves the burden of secrets and hidden guilt.
- **Fear of Being Fully Known**
What keeps us from complete honesty with another person.

Kratom—Am I Still Sober If I Use This?

Kratom is often presented as a harmless plant, a legal herbal aid, or a safer alternative to alcohol and opioids. That framing deserves careful scrutiny. Kratom is not pharmacologically neutral. It is a psychoactive substance derived from *Mitragyna speciosa*, and its primary alkaloids—mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine—act directly on brain systems involved in reward, pain modulation, tolerance, and dependence. Despite its “natural” label, kratom exerts measurable effects on the same neural pathways that underlie addiction.

At the neurochemical level, kratom’s most important action is at the mu-opioid receptor, the same receptor system engaged by morphine and other opioids. Mitragynine functions as a partial agonist at this receptor, while 7-hydroxymitragynine contributes more potent opioid-like effects. However, kratom is not a classical opioid. It is better understood as an atypical opioid receptor modulator, with additional activity at adrenergic, serotonergic, and dopaminergic systems. This multi-receptor profile explains its dose-dependent effects: lower doses may produce stimulation and increased alertness, while higher doses lead to sedation, analgesia, and, in some cases, euphoria.¹

This pharmacology is not academic—it has real implications for recovery. Addiction is not defined by legality or origin, but by what a substance teaches the brain. Kratom reinforces a familiar pattern: *when I feel discomfort, I can take something to change how I feel quickly.* Through repeated activation of opioid and reward pathways, the brain adapts. Over time, this can lead to tolerance, where increasing amounts are needed for the same effect, and dependence, where the body begins to rely on the substance to maintain equilibrium.

Clinical and observational evidence confirms that kratom can produce a genuine withdrawal syndrome. Individuals discontinuing regular use commonly report anxiety, irritability, insomnia, muscle aches, sweating, gastrointestinal distress, and depressed mood.² These symptoms are often described as similar to opioid withdrawal but typically milder; however, severity varies widely. In heavy or prolonged use, withdrawal can be significant enough to sustain continued use simply to avoid discomfort. This variability underscores an important truth: kratom’s impact is not uniform, and its risks are often underestimated.

Another important concern is inconsistency. Unlike regulated medications, kratom products vary widely in alkaloid concentration and purity. Some preparations, particularly concentrated extracts, may contain elevated levels of active compounds, including 7-hydroxymitragynine, increasing both potency and risk.³ This lack of standardization makes dosing unpredictable and complicates both

- **Rigorous Honesty in Recovery**
The difference between partial confession and thorough honesty.
- **Shame vs. Accountability**
Learning the difference between toxic shame and healthy responsibility.
- **Listening Without Judgment**
The role of the sponsor or trusted person hearing a Fifth Step.
- **Our Primary Purpose**
Tradition Five — “Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”
- **Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing**
How groups stay focused on helping alcoholics recover.
- **Carrying the Message vs. Carrying Opinions**
The difference between sharing recovery and promoting personal agendas.
- **New Freedom and New Happiness**
Promise Five — “No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.”
- **Turning Pain Into Purpose**
How our past suffering can help another alcoholic survive.
- **Experience That Helps Others Recover**
Why honesty about our failures can become hope for someone else.
-

Life is Life-ing, Yet I CAN Remain Sober

There are seasons in sobriety when life does not come at us one problem at a time. It arrives all at once—grief stacked on grief, worry layered upon exhaustion, and fear sitting quietly in the corner waiting for us every morning.

My brother is in hospice now with advanced emphysema. He still smokes. Since November of 2024, he has been hospitalized more times than I can count without stopping to think. Since Easter alone, three more hospital stays. Eight weeks ago, his wife died, and afterward he began drinking heavily again. The truth is hard to say out loud: he may be gone in weeks, or perhaps months.

At the same time, my sister is fighting stage-three cirrhosis caused by nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. For over a year she has moved between hospitals and rehabilitation facilities. She is

safety and dependence potential.

Public health authorities have taken notice. The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports that kratom can produce both stimulant and opioid-like effects and may lead to substance use disorder.⁴ The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued warnings about its association with liver injury, seizures, and addiction, emphasizing that kratom is not approved for any medical use.⁵ These statements reflect growing concern within the medical community about the gap between public perception and pharmacological reality.

This brings us to the central question: can a person truly claim sobriety while using kratom? The answer depends on how sobriety is defined. If it is reduced to abstinence from alcohol alone, some may argue that kratom use qualifies. But that definition does not fully reflect the deeper purpose of recovery. In a more meaningful sense, sobriety is freedom from reliance on substances that alter mood, regulate emotions, or provide escape.

By that standard, kratom presents a clear challenge. It is psychoactive. It engages reward pathways. It can produce tolerance, dependence, and withdrawal. Most importantly, it can quietly reintroduce the same behavioral and neurological patterns that recovery seeks to undo.

This is not a call to judgment, but to clarity. Many individuals turn to kratom seeking relief, stability, or a perceived safer alternative to more harmful substances. That desire is understandable. But recovery is not built on substitution alone. It is built on freedom—freedom from the need to rely on a substance to feel okay.

Kratom may appear different. It may feel safer. But at the level of the brain, where addiction takes hold, the distinction becomes far less reassuring.

Thanks to my friend Bob H. for starting me on the journey to learn more about this substance and its effects!

now on the liver transplant list, waiting and hoping her body can hold on long enough for help to come. And just yesterday, we discovered she has Stage 3 Chronic Kidney Disease as well, and a spot on her mammogram that looks suspicious!

These past eighteen or nineteen months of sobriety have been lived in the middle of all this. I have made trip after trip to Texas, so many that my home group in Wichita Falls has begun to feel like a second home to me. I recently took a part-time job just to help make ends meet, but long hours on my feet remind me daily that I am no longer young. The aches settle deep now. Fatigue lingers longer than it used to.

And yet, through all of this, something remarkable has happened.

I have not wanted a drink.

No craving. No obsession. No compulsion. No temptation. The desire itself has been lifted. But that does not mean life suddenly became easy. Even working a program—sometimes imperfectly, sometimes inconsistently—I still find myself frustrated, weary, tense, ungrateful, and emotionally worn thin. Sobriety does not make us immune to sorrow. It simply gives us a way to walk through sorrow without destroying ourselves in the process.

So I keep trying to do the next right thing. Some days that looks heroic. Most days it looks very small: making a phone call, going to work, saying a prayer, showing up at a meeting, getting enough sleep, or simply putting one foot in front of the other.

I know this much now with absolute certainty: sobriety is no longer negotiable for me. To drink again would not solve my pain. It would only add another funeral to the list. It would mean spiritual death long before physical death arrived.

So today, tired as I may be, I remain grateful. Grateful for another sober morning. Grateful for the people who walk beside me. Grateful that even in the darkest seasons, hope still quietly survives.

Matt B.

When life is life-ing, God is still God. Things can feel uncertain, exhausting, or heavier than I think I can handle, and my mind quickly starts searching for control or answers. But recovery keeps reminding me that difficult days do not change who God is. My circumstances shift, my emotions shift, and people around me shift, but God does not. When I stay honest, I can admit that I do not always understand what is happening or why things unfold the way they do. Staying grounded helps me remember I do not have to understand everything to keep trusting. I can still take the next right step, even on hard days. Surrender, for me, is letting go of the belief that peace only comes when life feels manageable. And in that truth, I find strength to keep moving forward today.

O God, when life feels heavy and uncertain, help me remember that You remain steady and unchanging. Give me strength to trust You, courage to keep moving forward, and peace for this day. Amen.

Morning Prayer for Sobriety

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, for bringing me to the dawn of a new day. I pray that You would give me strength this day to remain sober and free from the temptation to drink. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Your will be done, and not my own. Amen.

Evening Prayer for Sobriety

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, for bringing me to the close of this day. I thank You for another day of sobriety, kept by Your grace and mercy. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Your will be done, and not my own. Amen.

DO YOU HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT OR A BIRTHDAY IN June, or are you interested in contributing an article to the newsletter? Please send any of the above to info@aa-district18.org, by May 21, being mindful of our Steps and Traditions. Any suggestions or comments are always welcome and appreciated, and may be sent to info@aa-district18.org !!!

THANK YOU for subscribing to our newsletter!!!

***Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in
heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.***