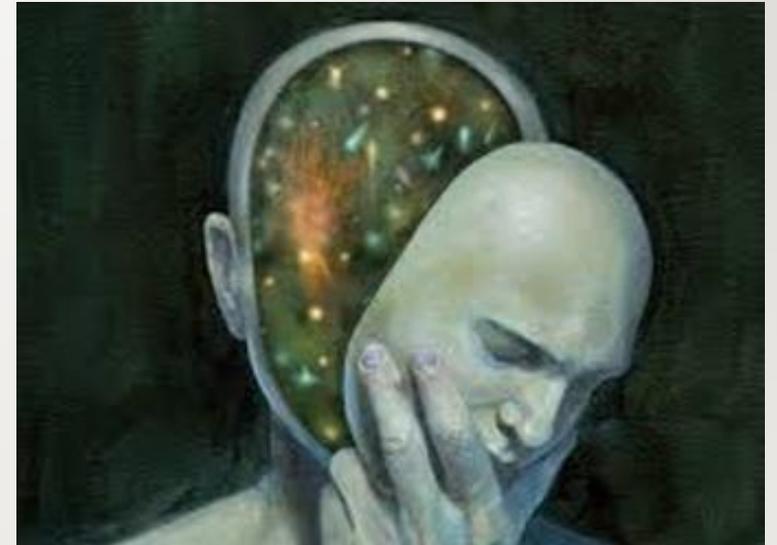


# Spirituality of the 12 Steps

## Step 4 A Good Lamp

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON  
RICHARD ROHR'S  
*BREATHING UNDERWATER*



• **Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.** — Step 4 of the Twelve Steps

“Sacrifice gives you no pleasure, were I to offer a holocaust, you would not have it. My sacrifice is this broken spirit. You will never scorn a crushed and broken heart.” —Psalm 50:16–17

“If inside you have the bitterness of jealousy, or a selfish ambition, never make any false claims for yourself or cover up the truth with lies.” —James 3:14

“Be awake and pray that you pass the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” —Matthew 26:41



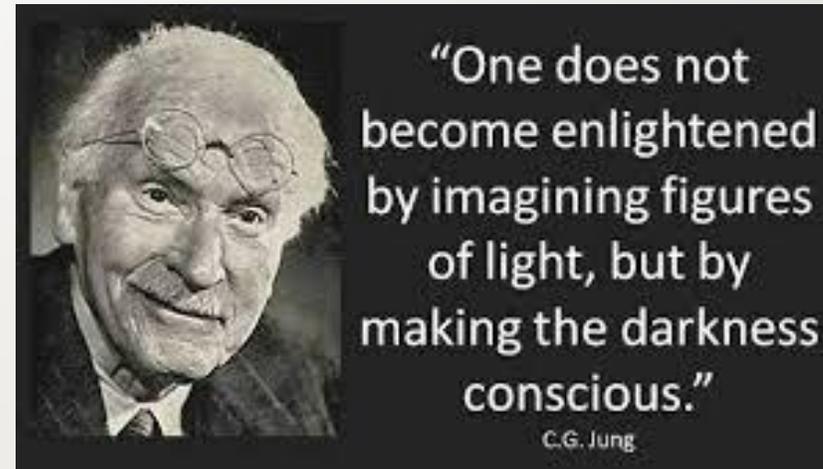
“Analysis is paralysis” is surely true for many people.

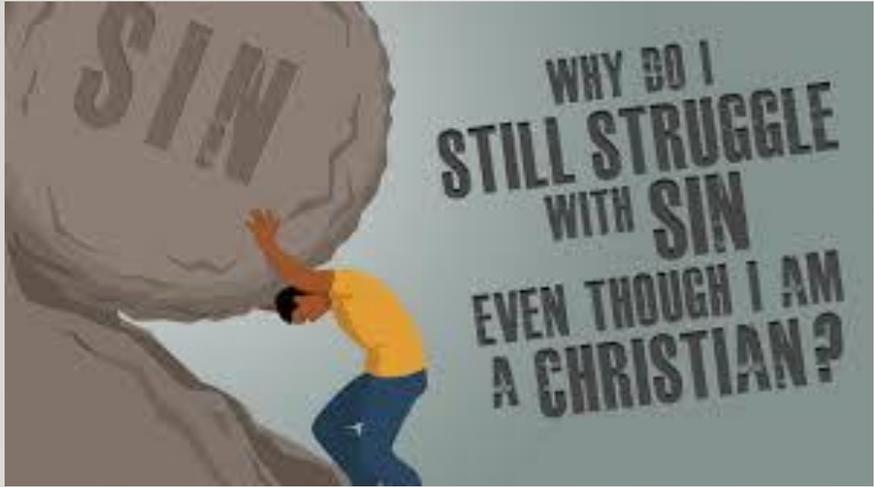
**Moral scrutiny** is not to discover how good or bad I am and regain some moral high ground, but it is to begin some honest “shadow boxing” which is at the heart of all spiritual awakening. **Yes, “the truth will set you free”** as Jesus says (John 8:32),



**compunction**, the necessary sadness and humiliation that comes from seeing one’s own failures and weaknesses.

**Without confidence in a Greater Love, none of us will have the courage to go inside, nor should we.**





People only **come to deeper consciousness by intentional struggles** with contradictions, conflicts, inconsistencies, inner confusions, and what the biblical tradition calls “sin” or moral failure.

In other words, **the goal** is actually not the perfect avoidance of all sin, which is not possible anyway (1 John 1:8–9; Romans 5:12), **but the struggle itself**, and **the encounter and wisdom** that comes from it.



“We must try to make it easier for others to love us.”



**Simple honesty and humility.** There is no other way to read Jesus' stories of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32) or the publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:9–14). In each story, the one who did wrong ends up being right—**simply because he is honest about it.**

How have we been able to miss that important point? Rohr asks:

...the ego wants to think well of itself and deny any shadow material. Only the soul knows that we grow best in the shadowlands.



## Questions for Reflection

- Rohr writes, “The game is over once we see clearly because evil succeeds only by disguising itself as good, necessary, or helpful. No one consciously does evil.” Have you had an experience not seeing clearly and causing pain or suffering?
- How well do you know your shadow self (seeing and naming our actual faults)?
- Do you agree that, “People who are more transparent and admitting of their blind spots and personality flaws are actually quite easy to love and be with.”
- Do you think that making “a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves” can bring us closer to our true self, our companions, and God?